CSR Initiatives for Empowerment of Slum Dwellers – A Study in Mysuru City

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Abstract

Influence of technology is making life comfortable for most of us. Infact, there is a sea-change in the way we live with everything being based on comfort, well-being and sophistication. All this is due to advancement & influence of technology. However, not all people share the same providence in society. There are many who still live under substandard environments and are yet to be introduced to basic essentials. This observation is seen in underdeveloped and developed countries as well. The disadvantaged individuals are called slum dwellers and the place they live is identified as slum area. The Indian Governments (Centre and State) along with NGO's are putting their best efforts in alleviating the divide between the haves and have-nots, through several schemes, meant to benefit slum dwellers. Infact, the Karnataka Slum Development Board has built houses under the JnNURM scheme and allotted houses for the slum dwellers is some parts of the city (SoM, 2021). However, the expected change, as observed through this study, is less visible. There are 72 slums located in the city, spread over 60 wards . Migration of the rural population seeking employment opportunities leads to increase in slums. (Hanjagi, 2021). The study reveals that the rate of unemployment among the slum dwellers is on a higher percentage, in spite of education. Majority of those employed are in the unorganized sector like housekeeping staff, vegetable vendors, helpers, mechanics and construction workers. This short-term survey study conducted in Mysuru City, tries to analyse opportunities that can be provided by corporate houses for slum dwellers, through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, which could facilitate and create a win-win situation for both.

Keywords – Business Opportunity, Business Outsourcing, CSR-Corporate Social Responsibility, Empowerment, Lifestyle, Slum-Dwellers.

Introduction & Review of Literature

The objective of every business venture is earning profits. Though it is easier said than done, business houses have to build goodwill in order to ensure the profits they seek. To warrant this, a company, on one hand can focus on manufacturing quality products and on the other, focus on social activities. These are two faces of a coin and when they go hand-in-hand, a company can safeguard its long run and an all-round stability. This study focuses on the social activities part of the corporate activities. The Company Act 2013, mandates corporates to contribute 2% of their profits, after tax, towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The corporate has the liberty, based on the guidelines provided under the Act, to decide on the most suitable social activity that they can accomplish. This study focuses on the CSR activity that can be help accomplish a significant task and activity, that could not only ensure CSR activity, but could also effectively empower the slum dwellers through sustainable development.

A post by Perspectives (2020), highlights ten areas that can empower the Indian Slums. This interesting article highlights education while also insisting on orienting the dwellers on the significance of savings which will help in creating a formal economic structure, all by identifying a defined process that can put in place a well strategized plan . The article also highlights the need to focus on sanitation. By engaging in CSR activities, a corporate can ensure that its employees work with a higher level of drive and optimism which in turn assures better employee productivity (Fernando, 2021). Infact such activity not only helps in building employee morale but also enhances the goodwill of the company. Corporates should develop their CSR initiatives based on societal expectations (Esen, 2013). The stakeholder theory of corporate governance emphasises the need of the business entity to focus on all its stakeholders, and not merely on shareholders. Corporate Governance is becoming seemingly important across the globe and along with it, the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as well. An article in Mondo

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mentions that businesses that effectively practice CSR have happier and more satisfied employees. In effect, this reduces employee turnover. (Vize, 2016). The findings of a study (Kim, et.al. 2018) suggest that CSR can function as an active investment for a company, as it enhances quality of member's attitudes, beyond the concept that CSR is merely a cost or obligation for firms.

There are several social activities that a corporate can undertake to work towards progress of society. Not only does CSR impact society we live in, but can also work as a business strategy for success (Wong, 2020). Therefore, it would be prudent for corporates to look for ideal activities that could be a win-win for the beneficiary as well as for the business entity as well. This study attempts to focus on company's CSR activity focusing on slum dwellers and probable outcome.

A slum is characterized by an area which is over-populated, clustered, consisting of poor housing and people of little means, living in isolation from the middle-class , upper middle-class and wealthy counterparts. The word 'Slum' has mainly been used to describe people living under substandard conditions and squalor (Mahabir, et.al. 2016). The area clearly shows unhygienic and poor environmental surroundings characterizing the region. The housing facilities, sanitation facilities, drinking water facilities, supply of electricity, and other basic amenities seem to be far-fetched for the slum dwellers. India, which is being termed a developing country (The Hindu, 16th Feb 2020), has its share of such deprived citizens or rather, slum dwellers. The level of awareness about health is less when compared to the mainstream (Zaman, 2017). The Governments both at the Centre and State, throughout the country are always focusing their developmental schemes on such population and the rural masses. It is argued that the growth of slums could have significant impact on the slum dweller as well as on the environment (Mahabir et.a.2016). It is important to create a slum free society by ensuring that health and education go hand in hand (Zaman, 2017).

The focus on empowerment should be sustainable to ensure fulfilment of objective towards development of the identified group. Therefore it is important to identify activities that can create a sense of accomplishment both, to the benefactor, as well as the beneficiary.

Keeping in mind the lack of skill set observed among respondent slum dwellers (Chart-2), a company trying to identify a suitable CSR activity could think of outsourcing appropriate work activity. As we are observant that outsourcing is a smart trend that is being accepted by many companies as it minimises routine work and also help employees concentrate on constructive and productive activities for the company. Outsourcing specific work can be accomplished by the slum dwellers which could help them fetch a livelihood, while at the same time ensure effective CSR activity as well.

Though India is being considered a 'developed country', which on one hand is a matter of joy; however ground reality is quite different. India has 364 million people living in multidimensional poverty (Ranjan , Prabhash 2019). Infact, Dharavi in Mumbai has a population of more than 420,000 and is considered as the largest slum in Asia. This study tries to analyse the opinion of the identified slum dwellers regarding their responsiveness and utilization of facilities provided to them specifically by the government and also their approach towards the need for education. The study also tries to examine awareness about various schemes that are being promulgated by the administrators and challenges faced by the slum dwellers in availing of schemes as such. The outcome of the study shows that there definitely is a positive influence of technology and modern surroundings, on the respondents; and they wish to ensure better education for their children. However, the level of awareness is not far-fetched, as only a few are aware of the impact of technology, and fewer among the respondents are making use of schemes being provided by the government (Table-2) (Chart-4). This finding further reiterates that corporates can play a central role in providing these residents a platform to imbibe skill to help them earn a livelihood.

The major problem while studying slum population is that their issues relating to needs and problems being faced become invisible despite being ubiquitous (Roy, D., Palavalli, B., Menon, N. et al. 2018). However, studies reveal that the proportion of slum decreases with the decrease in population size as well as the industrial status of a city (Kumar, Jitendra. 2014).

An interesting study on Bangalore slum (George, C.E., Norman, G, Wadugodapitya, A. et al. 2019) conducted a health survey in a Bangalore slum and found that, majority of the respondents were unaware of their disease/ailment prior to the screening conducted by the researchers. This reveals that access to food and nutrition among the identified respondents is low. This again is an offshoot of poverty due to lack of decent employment. Further, the study mentions that

the illness identified was, prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, anemia and childhood malnutrition.

Another interesting study (Shekar, Sulochana 2019) describes itself as a first of its kind in terms of developing slum ontology to identify slums with inputs from the urban development authorities. The study was able to give reliable results regarding current slum distribution and also possible occurrence of slums in future. Infact, emphases on the need for geospatial images using remote sensing technology to monitor slums in space and time perspective is being called for (Ron Mahabir, Andrew Crooks, Arie Croitoru & Peggy Agouris 2016). Further, it is also suggested that the social and physical constructs typical of slums has to be taken into consideration using qualitative and quantitative data.

Majority of the residents in a slum are people who have migrated from rural areas in search of livelihood. We may call it the rural-urban migration. These migrants usually are farm labourers and hence do not possess technical skills or education. Therefore, they tend to seek jobs as labourers or are menial helpers in towns and cities. However, since they do not have the required financial resources to obtain a decent living space, they tend to settle is makeshift tents and houses which collectively join to form a slum. The government both at the Centre and State including NGO's , have been working towards providing facilities and have been attempting to bring these residents to the mainstream through awareness, education and related schemes. However, providing schemes would not be a solution by itself in bringing these identified people to the mainstream. They need to be provided with a sustainable livelihood that would help them join the mainstream. A business entity could play a major role through its CSR and business activity by involving the slum dwellers in the industry process by outsourcing specific jobs. However, before embarking on the CSR activity it is necessary to study background of the slum dwellers with reference to their present source of livelihood, occupation, their level of awareness regarding development schemes provided by the government. This would help business houses identify the right activity that could fulfill their objective towards a win-win situation.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine lifestyle of the slum dwellers and check if they are collective and communal.
2. To observe the problems faced by the slum dwellers
3. To study the possibility of outsourcing business activity among the slum dwellers.
4. To study the opinion of respondents regarding utilization of facilities provided by the government.

Hypothesis

H_0: Issues perceived by slum dwellers are associated with their age and occupation.

H_1: Issues perceived by slum dwellers are collective and communal.

Research Methodology

The study has adopted the exploratory method of research. The sample size is 124 respondents, who were identified from their place of residence (slum area) in Mysuru City. The total population (average) as per the observation made is around 2000 residents. Therefore as per the Slovins formula, the ideal sample size should have been 342. However it was difficult to convince the respondents to answer the required question and collect data. Only 150 responses were received, of which only 124 responses could be considered as valid. The data was collected through direct interview with the identified respondents. The respondents were identified from major slum identified for the study, in Mysuru City. The methods adopted is depicted in Table-1

Table-1: Showing the Summary of Research Methodology adopted

Research design	Exploratory and Descriptive Research
Sampling Technique	Convenience sampling
Sampling Frame	Slum dwellers from a slum area chosen for the study, in Mysore City
Sample Size	150 slum dwellers were approached of which, 124 responded to the study (total number of households in the slum is 160)
Research Instrument	Questionnaire
Data Collection	Direct interviews
Analysis	Charts , Graphs and statistical analysis

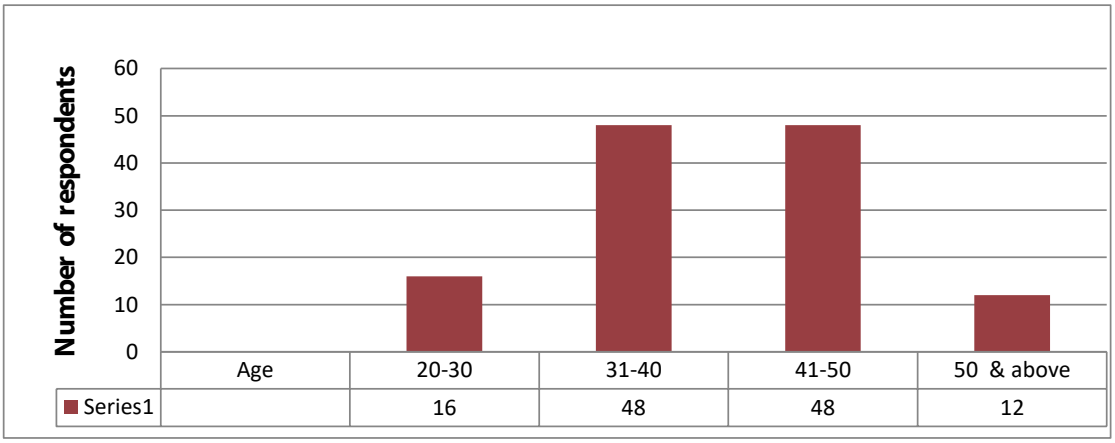
Limitations of the study

The study has been undertaken as a pilot study. The outcome of the study is based on responses received from respondents living in the identified areas in Mysuru City. The responses can be varied in different cities, as individuals can have different perspective on their lifestyle and therefore can be skewed.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

The study follows the exploratory method for collecting data. The analysis is based on the responses received from the identified respondents using the interview method as it was found that many were unable to answer the questionnaire, but felt comfortable answering questions posed by the researcher. Chart-1 shows the age distribution of respondents. From the data collected from the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board, the total number of residents in the slum area chosen is 800 residents (considering 5 members in a family, on an average) in 160 households. The study was able to interact with 150 respondents but only 124 of them responded positively to the study.

Chart-1: Showing Age Distribution of Respondents



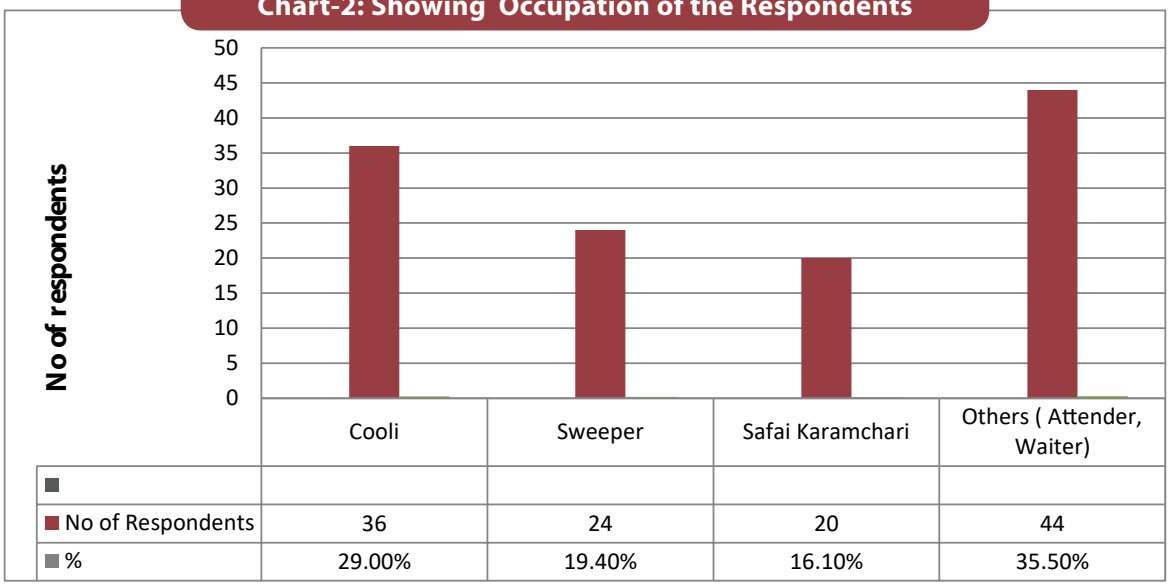
Age	20-30	31-40	41-50	50 & above
Series1	16	48	48	12

Source: Survey data

The researcher observed that older respondents hesitated to share information and were unwilling to take part in the survey. However, they actively involved in the discussions and shared their views. The study has attempted to take into consideration opinion from both male and female respondents and as such out of the 124 respondents, 60 are male respondents and the rest 64 are female respondents.

The study reveals that majority of respondents were into menial jobs (Chart-2), that did not require much skill-set. Many of them lacked formal education and were therefore taking up jobs that were performed

Chart-2: Showing Occupation of the Respondents



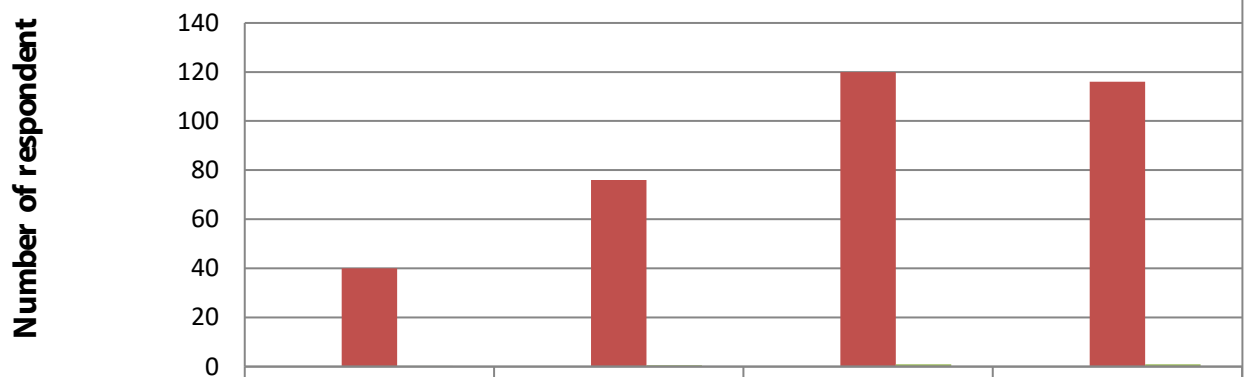
	Cooli	Sweeper	Safai Karamchari	Others (Attender, Waiter)
No of Respondents	36	24	20	44
%	29.00%	19.40%	16.10%	35.50%

Source: Survey data

& executed by their parents and relatives. However, it is heartening to note that majority respondents were eager to educate their children and make them eligible for white collar jobs. They also seem to understand the importance of education for augmenting their income and improving their living standards.

Observation and interaction reveal that a majority of children seem to have low self-esteem levels. They do not seem to be motivated to complete their education as there were found to be dropouts. They were following in the footsteps of their parents and employed themselves in the same job. Overall, it was observed that majority of the respondents lack self-confidence and foresight which is mainly due to lack of education. Parents too were either illiterate or school dropouts. Such environment would fail to create a suitable atmosphere that motivates the younger generation to seek a better lifestyle. However it is also heartening to note that a few families had supported and motivated their children to pursue higher education and shared their dreams of securing administrative positions for their children. In contrast, the study reveals that majority of the respondents were content with their present lifestyle and have taken up the same jobs that their parents and grandparents had been carrying out. Infact, they did not have any opinion to share regarding their future prospects with the researcher and seem to have accepted their present living condition, to circumstances and deem it their fate. However not all respondents feel the same. It was observed during the interaction that a few children were studying for their graduation or post-graduation courses. It was also shared that some of the residents had secured better jobs, had shifted their homes and were living in developed areas. Infact, it is these few, who are building confidence and motivating the present residents to pursue education for ensuring a better living. Further, it was observed that the girl children were being married off at a very young age, though a few have started thinking otherwise.

Chart-3: Showing Basic Issues Faced by The Respondents



	Water	Food	Electricity	Housing
No of Respondents	40	76	120	116
%	32.26%	61.29%	96.77%	93.55%

Source: Survey data

Chart-3 reveals problems faced by respondents majorly relating to electricity supply, followed by housing facilities. However during interaction it was gathered that though the government has built houses for the residents, some of the beneficiaries have handed it over to moneylenders, to whom they owe money. Further, the rations that residents are being provided under the BPL (Below Poverty Line) scheme (rice, cooking oil, salt, cereals) are being sold to nearby shops, hotels or households to finance their addiction to alcohol. Both men and women seem to be addicted to alcoholism.

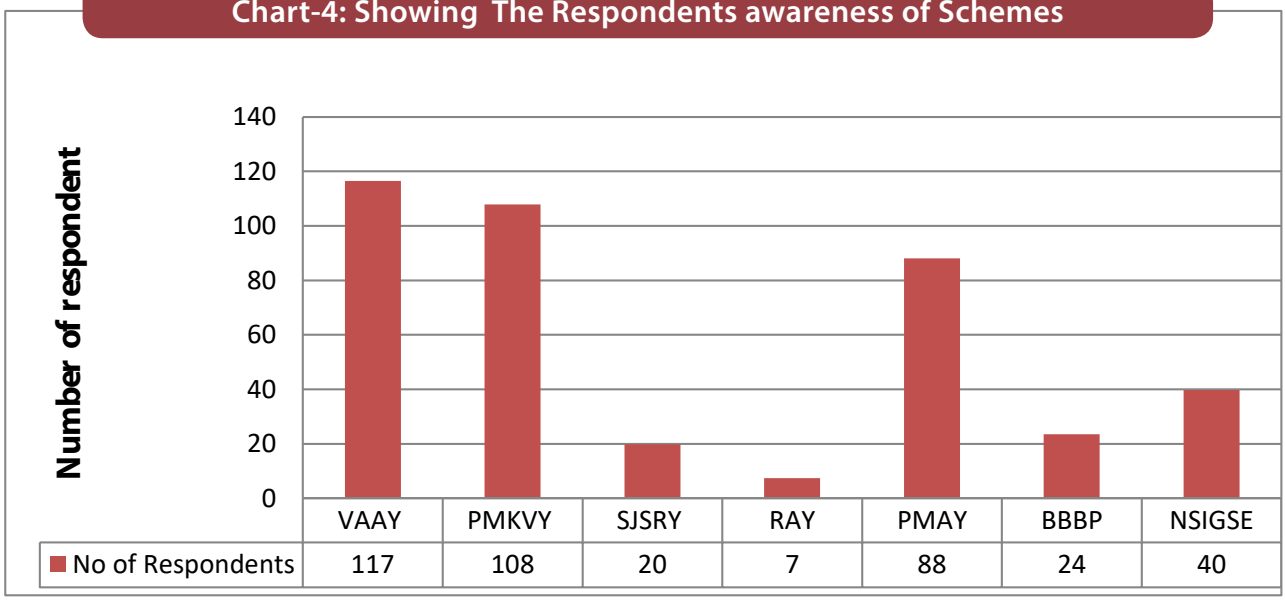
Further due to lack of discipline and restraint among the slum dwellers, they tend to destroy facilities provided like water taps, street lights, culverts, etc., and do not recognize the need to follow proper codes and hygiene practices. It was surprising to note that nearly 46% of the respondents were not aware of the schemes provided by the government for their welfare. Out of the rest (54%) who were aware of the schemes, very few have availed of it. It may be observed that the respondents are not aware of majority of the schemes that are being made available to them by the government (Table-2) (Chart-4).

Table-2: Showing The Percentage of Awareness About Schemes for The Slum Dwellers

Name of the Scheme	% of Respondents
VAAY - Valmiki Ambedkar Awas Yojana	94%
PMKVY- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana	87%
SJSRY- Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana	16%
RAY- Rajiv Awas Yojana	6%
PMAY- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana	71%
BBBP- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao	19%
NSIGNE- National Scheme of Incentive to girls for Secondary Education	32%

Source: Survey data

Chart-4: Showing The Respondents awareness of Schemes



Source: Survey data

It is therefore found important to create awareness and update the residents regarding specific schemes and how they could avail of such schemes. This would ensure that the beneficiaries are fully benefitted by the schemes. However, conducting a pre-check of the respondents and area by respective companies is called for. This will help categories the type of CSR / outsourcing job to be assigned to the identified slum dwellers.

Further, those who were aware mentioned that middlemen approached them and informed them about the scheme, while demanding bribes for helping them get the benefits. It is also heartening to note that the slum dwellers, wish to educate their children, improve their lifestyle and be part of the mainstream.

3. FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

The following are the findings, based on the objectives framed for the study, and relevant data collected. The study reveals that majority respondents are unaware of facilities that they are entitled to and therefore fail to make good use of the schemes provided by the competent authorities. Further, the government too needs to ensure that awareness of schemes should be made to the beneficiaries and ensure an open-door system which facilitates the beneficiaries to avail of the intended schemes without intervention of a middleman. This will help the beneficiaries make informed choices.

The study reveals that the slum dwellers wish to provide a better lifestyle for their children, and have recognized the importance of education. They wish to

educate their children and ensure that they are employed in white-collar occupations and move away from their present environs. Though they are vocal about boys and girls being equally competent, they still perceive that a girl is a burden on the family and therefore are not being encouraged to pursue higher education and are married off at a very young age. Therefore it is suggested that the corporate houses provide activities and jobs that ensure participation of women. When women are empowered, the mindset about the girl child can be erased.

Since majority of the slum dwellers are basically less educated, they find it difficult to find employment. This makes it difficult for them to cater to their basic needs. They tend to find employment in unskilled and menial jobs which generally gets paid as day wages. Their job type is more physical in nature, but their food intake does not match their body requirement and hence they get addicted to alcohol. This in turn destroys not only their mind and body but also their family and surroundings. With the cost of living rising, it becomes very challenging for the slum dwellers to cope up with their aspirations leading them to further loose their self-confidence and motivation. Introducing the slum dwellers to technical jobs that require skill will empower them and also create an urge to purse education. Further, the importance of education will get imbedded in their minds in a positive sense.

Hypothesis testing

H0: Issues perceived by slum dwellers are associated with their age and occupation.

H1: Issues perceived by slum dwellers are collective and communal.

Table-3: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Occupation	4	31.00	11.015	20	44
Basic_Issue	4	88.00	37.665	40	120
Age	4	31.00	19.698	12	48
Schemes	7	57.71	45.471	7	117

Source: Survey data

a) Occupation include: Coolie, Sweeper, Safai Karamchari & Other occupation like waiter, attender, etc.

b) Basic Issues include: Drinking water, Food, Electricity & Housing

Table-4: Correlations

		Occupation	Basic-Issue	Age
Occupation	Pearson Correlation	1	-.116	-.965*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.884	.035
	N	4	4	4
Basic_Issue	Pearson Correlation			.237
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.763
	N			4

Source: Survey data

The correlation test scores reveal that there is a low degree of correlation (Table-4) between Age Factor and Basic –Issues (.237). Similarly the correlation test also reveals that there is a strong negative correlation between Age Factor and Occupation of the respondents (-.965). Further, a weak negative correlation is observed between Occupation and Basic-Issues (.237). Therefore, statistical inferences help us conclude that the null hypothesis associating the issues faced by the slum dwellers relating Age and Occupation of respondents, cannot be accepted. We may therefore accept the alternate hypothesis that

the issues perceived by slum dwellers are collective and communal. Further, this helps give the corporate an understanding /perception about the type of activity that can be introduced to the slum dwellers.

Table-5: ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Occupation	Between Groups	356.000	2	178.000	22.25	.148
	Within Groups	8.000	1	8.000		
	Total	364.000	3			
Basic_Issue	Between Groups	3288.000	2	1644.000	1.69	.477
	Within Groups	968.000	1	968.000		
	Total	4256.000	3			

Source: Survey data

A further test of mean scores (Table-5) between Occupation and Basic Issues faced by the respondents help us observe that there is no statistically significant difference between Occupation groups as demonstrated by one-way ANOVA (F (2, 1) = 22.25, p = .148). Further, it is also observed that there is no statistically significant difference between Basic Issue groups as demonstrated by one-way ANOVA (F (2, 1) =1.69), p = .477.

The One Way ANOVA test reveals the value of F Occupation) 22.250 which reaches significance with a p-value of 0.148 and F (Basic-issues) 1.698, which reaches significance with a p-value of 0.477. However, we may observe that the p-value in both cases is more than the .05 alpha levels. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the means of Occupation and Age or Basic-Issue and Age of the respondents. Therefore we may conclude that the issues perceived by the slum dwellers are not associated with age and occupation and hence, the null hypothesis cannot be accepted. Infact, we may conclude that the alternate hypothesis stating that the issues faced by the respondents are collective and communal is true.

To further test the hypothesis, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Table-6) was used to check whether the distribution is Normal, i.e., to check whether a sample comes from a specific distribution and is normally distributed. Here, we observe that the P value is greater than 0.05, which shows that the data is normally distributed.

Table-6: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Occupation	Basic-Issue	Age
N		4	4	4
Normal Parametersa	Mean	31.00	88.00	31.00
	Std. Deviation	11.015	37.665	19.698
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.475	.543	.612
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.978	.930	.848
a. Test distribution is Normal.				

Source: Survey data

Conclusion

Social implications: The study has helped in throwing light on various aspects in the lifestyle of slum dwellers. Though there are several initiatives for the identified beneficiaries, by the government, however the objective does not seem to have been met.

Statistical analysis reveals that there is group coherence between the slum dwellers and as such it is important to create awareness among them through orientation programmes and motivation, regarding avenues being made available for improving their lifestyle and help them join the mainstream.

The study observed that a few respondents who were graduate degree holders were unable to find suitable employment as they lacked the required skill matching their education. Sessions on counselling can be undertaken as a CSR activity to bring about a change in the mindset of the identified area resident.

Corporate implications: This can be taken as a blue ocean strategy for creating an environment where the slum dwellers can be taught skills to suit manufacturing process requirements. The concept of work from home could help in providing these people with jobs that could help them earn their livelihood as well as help the company outsource identified jobs, thereby both could be equally benefitted. Further this can be incorporated under CSR activity for corporates.

Scope for further research: It is suggested through this study that an in-depth study to explore the socio-economic and policy issues pertaining to the identified group may be undertaken to suggest specific and justified means of enhancing the living standards of the residents. This could ensure that the initiatives of the government could also be fruitfully achieved and economic development can be assured.

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