Chapter-IV

Social Profile of Respondents
CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Kusumpur Pahari Slum: An Overview

The Kusumpur Pahari slum is located behind the CBI colony in Vasant Vihar, New Delhi. It is called Kusumpur Pahari for its being situated on a 'pahari', a ridge of the Aravali Mountains. This settlement is considered to be about thirty to thirty-five years old, which according to the inhabitants came up during the time of emergency. The slum is surrounded by posh colonies, posh markets and a posh theatre. The slum life exists amidst fashionable residential areas, glittery shopping centres, luxurious hotels and restaurants, high style recreational centres as well as sophisticated and imposing offices and educational and other complexes. The slum and prosperity coexists, yet there is a wide gap between the two. This slum has an approximate population of thirty thousands, which mainly comprises of migrants from various parts of India, mostly rural. An elected 'pradhan' is responsible for looking into the day-to-day problems of the inhabitants.¹

The Kusumpur Pahari slum has grown from a very small area near ‘Chinmaya Public School’ in Vasant Kunj to a vast expanse that it covers now. To check its uncontrolled expansion, five to six years ago, the government demarcated its border and made a boundary wall around it. Spread over five blocks, the Kusumpur Pahari presents a varied picture with houses in various shape, size, colour and make, which tells us about the differences in status even within the slum. While, some houses are double storeyed, others are single storeyed. While, some houses are in good condition, most others are poorly ventilated and paint a picture of the poor economic status of their owners. The majority of the houses are poorly constructed, with tarpaulin, tin sheets and asbestos used

¹ The ‘pradhan’ is the elected representative of the slum dwellers. Although, unauthorised slums are not officially sanctioned and therefore do not fall within formal institutions of governance, yet in Kusumpur Pahari, which is an unauthorised slum in Delhi we found that inhabitants would have regular elections for pradhan. The elections are generally perceived as fair even though they are organised by the members of the community by forming a committee for conducting the election. The candidates are usually affiliated with political parties, and the winning candidate has electorally legitimised authority. The elected pradhan largely functions as an intermediary between slum-dwellers and agents of the state. His prime role is to help constituents obtain ‘ration cards’, ‘voter identification cards’, ‘BPL cards’ and other tokens of citizenship. He is also supposed to help them get access to jobs in government offices, and try to persuade bureaucrats to provide public services - such as water trucks and toilets - to the slum.
for roofing (See Picture-1, 2 & 7 in Appendix-5). Some houses have rooms so dark that even during the day, inmates cannot see each other in passages or in the single rooms, without the help of light. Fresh air is completely lacking. Very often there is no passage of air from room to room, many of which are built back to back.

**KUSUMPUR PAHARI IN VIEW**

![Map-1: Sketch Map of Kusumpur Pahari](image)

There are many single room houses, which serve as a living room, bedroom, sick room, dining room, etc., and to add to this, the number of persons living in the single
room ranges from one to six. The houses though, poorly built and poverty-stricken bears proudly the cultural symbols of its residents. The residents have tried to beautify their houses as best as they could (See, Picture-7 in Appendix-5). The front walls and doorways of some houses/jhuggis of people from Bihar and U.P were found to have the religious symbols ‘swastika’ and ‘om’ inscribed on them. The strings of lemons and chilies were found hanging in some houses to ward of evil eye. There was no caste or regional group specifically associated with this practice. In front of few jhuggis and hutments, old shoes and slippers were found to be hanging right in front of the main door or at the top of the houses. These houses and jhuggis primarily belonged to the Raigar caste people.

In front of some jhuggis and houses, one could find sheep and goats tied to a pole. These houses were later discovered to belong to the people of the Khatik caste, who are traditionally into this practice. The main entrance and doors of people belonging to Tamil Nadu and other southern states had beautiful and aesthetically drawn ‘rangolis.’ Few houses/jhuggis had the pictures, captions and stickers of religious symbols such as ‘Kalma’, ‘786’ and ‘Kaba’ on the doorways or inside the house. The symbols were meant to proclaim the Muslim identity of the residents. This tells us about the urge among the migrant community to assert their caste and cultural identity and to recreate them at the place of destination. This also reflects the vibrancy and enthusiasm in the life of the slum dwellers amidst poverty, struggle and hardships.

The understanding of the basic amenities like toilet facilities, electricity and water is also necessary here, as these greatly impact the life style of the people living in the slums. It was interesting to see how people organised themselves on caste and regional lines to get water from the trucks supplied by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB). The distribution of water is guided by the notion of dominance and community sentiments. The Valmiki caste is the dominant community in Kusumpur Pahari owing to their numerical strength. The Valmikis have the first chance to get the water from the DJB trucks, followed by other caste people. Even among the Valmikis, those from Haryana enjoy greater clout, as they are more in number as compared to the Valmikis from U.P. Although, the Valmikis

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2 These are religious symbols particularly associated with the Islamic religion. These symbols are a way of cultural expressions practiced by a community.
are ranked lowest in the caste hierarchy, their dominance here is purely on the basis of their numbers. ³

Similarly, one could find that the slum dwellers prefer being in their own social group based on sex, age, region, caste and language, in their day do day life, like, going for work, women going to fetch water or people going for open toilets. This gives us a glimpse of the group dynamics and group behaviour among the inhabitants of the Kusumpur Pahari. Open defecation due to poor toilet facilities in the slum, sights of women carrying water jars, buckets, plastic vessels due to unavailability of supplied water and children playing traditional games like, 'gilli-danda', 'kabbadi', 'kancha', 'pitthu', etc., on the streets and lanes of the slum depicts a life very similar to that of any rural hamlet. The kind of games the children play also indicates their social status and their socio-cultural background, which could be the subject matter of an independent research. Though the slum appears to be a continuation of the rural way of life, but differences could be seen in the occupational, linguistic and regional composition, which villages generally lack.

The inhabitants who live within the demarcated boundary of this slum do not constitute a homogeneous group. They differ in their socio-cultural and economic characteristics. They differ in their economic activity as marginal workers, casual labourers, industrial workers, domestic helps, petty shopkeepers and government or private employees or unemployed persons, in their social roots based on caste, religion, language and area of origin, in their degree of urbanisation as recent migrants or older migrants and also in their skills, education, attitudes, value systems, etc. The residents also differ in terms of culture, values and organisation patterns. But despite the differences they have some crucial commonalities. They all belong to the poor socio-economic strata of our society who find it difficult to make two ends meet. These facets have been taken up in detail in this chapter and other empirical chapters in this thesis. The social profile of the respondents is being discussed below, as it was necessary to examine if the factors like, age, sex, region, religion, occupation, etc., had any linkage with the change in the social identities of the slum dwellers after migration.

Social Profile

Here, an attempt has been made to present the social profile of the respondents who are settled in the Kusumpur Pahari slum located near ‘Vasant Kunj’ in South Delhi. The social profile tells us about the general characteristics of the respondents such as their age, gender, caste, occupation, religion, region and language. The analysis of the structural features of the slum society was helpful in identifying the areas of change. These aspects have a definite bearing on the objectives of the study undertaken and the findings have served as the basis for the analysis and interpretation done in the chapters five, six, seven and eight of the thesis. The knowledge of the social profile of the respondents further helped in correlating the variables, like age, sex, gender, duration of stay, etc., with the factors influencing the social identity of the respondents, like the neighbourhood preference, inter-caste relations, occupation, etc., in chapters five and six.

The social profile of the respondents has also helped us in comprehending the social composition, social organisation and way of life of the inhabitants of the Kusumpur Pahari slum. The life style, attitudes and cultural identity of the slum dwellers are an outcome of their socio-economic conditions. This chapter examines various factors (both direct and indirect), which serve as indicators of the socio-economic status of the migrants in this slum. The information relating to the social and economic life of the respondents has helped us to know them better and has served as the backbone of the study. Due to these reasons, the study of the social profile of the respondents was taken up as one of the important objectives of the study.

An understanding of the social profile of the respondents was required to see its connection with the diverse identities of the slum dwellers. People have many different social roles and many identities associated with these roles. Socio-demographic attributes are one of the key generators of social roles and tend to generate identities. The variables such as age, gender, region, occupation, income, education, ethnicity, caste, etc., provide a basis for social ranking, which largely regulates the social behaviour, interaction and worldview of the people in this slum. These factors influence the manner in which the

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migrants comprehend, negotiate and transform the social structures that impinge on their lives and get manifested in their social identity.

The above-mentioned attributes are some of the most important sources of identity in any society. The markers of identity such as, caste, gender, region, ethnicity, etc., influence the formation of migrants' subjectivity, which affects their identities. These social categories affect people's perception of themselves and their relationship to others. Where and how people live in cities is a question that is also filtered through socio-cultural identities. To identify the changes in the social identity of the slum dwellers after migration, some of the categories discussed in the social profile, like age, sex, gender, etc., have also been co-related with the indicators of social identity, say, neighbourhood preference, occupational group preference, linguistic preference, etc. This has helped in identifying the variation in changes with respect to the categories co-related. Let us start with the age-structure of the respondents. These are not the only sources of identity, nor do they necessarily appear in all known societies, but they are a significant selection of the main sources of identity in modern societies, such as our own.

**Age Group**

The phenomenon of age is not only a biological fact but it also has a social meaning. Age is a structural feature of changing societies and groups, as both people and roles are differentiated by age. The age composition of a population affects its social life in many ways. Understanding the 'age stratification' has helped us to know the basic age composition of the respondents. How age defines the social behaviour and responses of people have been taken up in the next chapters. The age profile of the respondents as indicated in table-4.1 shows that the majority of the slum dwellers (60.8%) are in the age group of 20-40 years. This age group has been called the working age group by the theorists on migration. The research findings have shown that persons in their teens,

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Social Profile of Respondents

twenties and early thirties migrate more in number than other groups. The percentage of respondents in the age group of 50 and above is considerably low (14 %).

As has already been said that age is a cultural category and its meaning and significance vary both historically and cross-culturally, it has an important role to play in the social life of the people. Knowing the age composition of the respondents was necessary to see if there is any co-relation between the age group of the population and say, the nature of social interaction among the slum dwellers. Similarly, other indicators of social living could be seen in relation to the age group of the respondents. The age-bands define the social status, permitted roles and activities of those belonging to them.

Table-4.1: Age Profile of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 &amp; above</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figure-4.1 shown below graphically represents the age-composition of the respondents. The figure clearly shows that there is a dominance of the people in the age group of 20-30 and 30-40 years. The number of respondents in the higher age-category of 40-50 years is less and is even lower in the 50 plus category. This makes it clear that the youngsters have a higher propensity to migrate. Some of the possible reasons for this could be that the return on investment in human capital declines with the increase in age. It could also be that the older people tend to develop stronger attachments to their property and family, so there is less mobility in this age category. It is so because they come out in search of work when they are still physically fit to do the rigorous works that usually a slum dweller gets due to his poor education and technical skills. Secondly, it is


also in the younger age group that there is a greater desire to improve the living condition and earn well. In villages, we find that there is a total disenchantment, especially among the youth, from the rural life. Its economy is burdened by over-population and structural precariousness. Also, the people in this age group generally have fewer stakes in their parental home, frequently lack control over resources and are at a transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood.

The dominance of the young migrants among the respondents could also be due to the fact that they are physically strong and are more adaptable to the demands of urban environment. The other reason for the less number of migrants in the fifty-plus category could be the return migration. Many respondents said that their parents returned to their native place as they had grown old and getting work was increasingly becoming difficult for them. It was observed during the study that most of the respondents had come to Delhi at a relatively younger age.

Since, age is understood here as a social phenomenon, its relationships with the changes taking place in the social identities of the respondents after migration was an important dimension of the study so the information on age was necessary. The different age groups are considered to have different biological and sociological characteristics, so, the knowledge of the respondent’s age group was helpful in understanding and explaining
the difference that exist between people based on their age category. Various ways in which the biosocial category of age influences the social identity of the slum dwellers and how their social identity varies with respect to the variation in age has been discussed in the next chapters. It also proved helpful in exploring the various ways in which age as a social category influences the process of identity construction and re-construction among the migrant slum dwellers.

**Gender Composition**

Gender is a social and cultural construct, which is different from sex, which is a physical distinction. Gender is defined in terms of the particular cultural characteristics that people give to different biological sexes. In our society, for example, we recognise only two sexes (male and female) defined by the physical differences between the two though the existence of the ‘third sex’ such as the ‘transgender’ has also begun to be recognised lately. A person’s gender is complex, encompassing countless characteristics of appearance, speech, motive, behaviour, worldview and other factors not solely limited to biological sex. Gender is a very significant source of identity in our society, mainly because of the social characteristics we give to persons of different gender. The different perceptions of people around us clearly affect the various ways we behave with them and the way they see themselves through our behaviour.

When we think about any form of social identity, we talk about the way we see ourselves and the way others see us. It has been seen that the social positions, decision-making and social interaction in the family, community and the wider society have always been centred around the gender difference. The unequal sex roles and expectations mean that men and women behave differently in a number of situations. It is evident from the review of literature that women have been left out in many studies or their experiences have generally been subsumed under those of men. According to Dumon, women have been treated as ‘migrants wives’ rather than as ‘female migrants’, and their roles have been relegated to the background.\(^\text{10}\) For this reason, it was important

to know the gender composition of the respondents and see if there was any variation in the responses to the research questions based on this distinction.

During the study, it was found that the number of males outnumbers the number of females in the total composition of the slum. This has also been highlighted in the study by Caplan who says that in the case of rural-urban migration, males are more in number than females.\textsuperscript{11} Even the 2001 census finding says that the Delhi's slums have 56.5% male and 43.5% female inhabitants.\textsuperscript{12} As shown in table-4.2, there are 56.8% male respondents as comparison to 43.2% female respondents.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
Gender & Number & Percentage \\
\hline
Male & 142 & 56.8 \\
Female & 108 & 43.2 \\
Total & 250 & 100.0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Gender Distribution of the Respondents}
\end{table}

We could see the gender composition of the respondents from figure-4.2 shown below. Purposely, 40% female respondents were chosen to offset the injustice done to the ‘weaker sex’ in most of the studies on migration and slums. Here, though, the sample was chosen to give proper representation to women, nevertheless, the studies mentioned above in this section have clearly shown the domination of males over females. The reason for males outnumbering females could largely be due to the fact that many male migrants are unmarried at the time of migration. Even if they are married, they do not prefer to bring their spouse with them, as they are insecure about the conditions at the place of destination. Secondly, they also do not unnecessarily want to burden themselves with family responsibilities unless they themselves have made their position secure in an unfriendly and unknown terrain. But both these arguments hold true for short-term migration and not for this slum as the migrants here are settled for more than five years on an average and the new entrants to the slum who are mainly living on rent are not too many to offset the average.


\textsuperscript{12} Government of India, Census of India, (2001), \textit{Gender Composition of Delhi's Slums}. 

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During the study, it was also found that the percentage of marriage induced female migration was very high as reported by the respondents. Among the sample interviewed, not a single woman was found heading the household. The finding of the study is in line with ‘Ravenstein’ who says that females predominate in short-distance migration stream, which in the Indian context is largely due to marriage. In this slum, the majority of the migrants are from the near-by areas like, Western U.P, Rajasthan and Haryana. The census 2001 figures on the reasons for migration shows that marriage induced migration for females was 64.9% which, was the highest among all forms of migration. Although, the phenomenon of sex selectivity of migrants is not as clear as that of age selectivity because it depends on the employment opportunities available to each sex and other considerations, such as migration due to marriage, but still it could be made out from figure-2 that males outnumber females as far as rural-urban migration is concerned.

Since, the prime concern of the study was to examine the changes taking place in the social identities of the respondents owing to migration, their responses based on gender differences was helpful in figuring out the differences in the way the two sexes

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have been influenced by the changes brought about by migration and urban living. Premi has also shown the prevalence of gender differentials in the consequences of migration.\textsuperscript{15} Divya’s study emphasises that due to the gendered differences in the assigned roles to the two sexes, women are so overburdened that they hardly get any time for socio-cultural activities.\textsuperscript{16} This aspect was also probed further during the study to see if her finding was relevant for this slum and in what way it impinged upon the social identity of the female migrants.

**Marital Status**

The marital status of the respondents was enquired as it was assumed that the knowledge of the marital status would be helpful in establishing its relationship, if any, with social identity. The marital information was sought in order to examine if the nature of adjustment after migration and the resultant changes in identities of married respondents living with wife and children were in any way different to either those who were married but staying alone or those who were unmarried or widowed. All societies have their own customs and systems of marriage. The marriage relationships are guided strongly within very definite channels of caste, class, region, income, education and religious backgrounds. The importance of marriage in the life of the migrant slum dwellers could be gauged from the fact that the percentage of married respondents (88.4\%) far exceeds those who are unmarried (10\%) as is evident from table-4.3. The fact that only 1.6\% respondents have been found to be separated or divorced suggests that the process of migration does not adversely affect the married life of the people.

The studies conducted on the marital status of the migrants have shown that a large proportion of the Indian adult male migrants to cities are married and that they leave their families behind in rural areas.\textsuperscript{17} Although, some other studies carried out for the same purpose have pointed out that married men are relatively immobile because they develop a strong sense of familial bonds and an increasing sense of obligation to the


family of origin after their marriage.\textsuperscript{18} But no such study was found which had tried to see the impact of married life on the migrants’ reluctance to return back. The fact of being married and staying in the host area with the family helps the migrant in the cultural re-territorialisation process, which leads to the re-construction of their identities in the host societies and check return migration.

Table-4.3: Marital Status of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widower</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that the overwhelming majority of the respondents living in the slum are married (figure-4.3) and most of them have their spouse and children leaving with them suggests the importance of the institution of marriage in the life of the migrant slum dwellers. Thus, it could be inferred that migration does not inhibit the chances of getting married. Also, this was helpful in studying the way the marriage decisions are taken and how the people respond to the changes taking place in this institution, say for example, inter-caste marriage.

Since the institutions of marriage and family are complementary to each other, they are examined here in relation to one another. Both the institutions are inter-connected and it is difficult to separate the two. As we know that marriage does, not only mean coming together of partners of opposite sex and getting social sanction but, it also involves coming together of the families of the spouses. Information was collected around these institutions for better analysis and interpretation.\textsuperscript{19} Each spouse before marriage has a social network, which comprises of a number of people with whom he or she interacts with on a fairly regular basis. These linkages continue to influence the social identity of the married couples.

Family Type

The family is the basic unit of almost all societies. It could be understood as an intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating or legal ties.²⁰ It forms the basis of social organisation and it is difficult to imagine how human societies could function without it.²¹ The identity of a person is also dependent on the status and positions of his or her in the family and its social status. It is the place where early socialisation of the person takes place that largely shapes his or her identity. It caters to the needs and performs functions, which are essential for the continuity, integration and change in the social system. Kingsley Davis has distinguished four major social functions of the family, namely, reproduction, maintenance of immature children, placement and socialisation.²² Broadly, the types of families on the basis of numbers could be classified into the nuclear family, the joint family and the extended family.²³

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²³ In a nuclear family the husband, wife and their unmarried children live together. It is also called the ‘conjugal family’. In a joint family, several generations live in one household. Property belongs to the family as a whole and all family income is pooled together. The whole family has a common kitchen. The extended family consists of all consanguinal relatives and one other relative. It may be uni-lineal and bilineal. The numbers of members in such family are relatively very high.
Table-4.4 shows, that almost three-fourth of the respondents (74.4%) had nuclear families, which comprised of husband, wife and unmarried children, while 22.4% respondents were staying alone. The percentage of respondents living in joint or extended family comprising of a few more kins than the nuclear type was a just 3.2%. The size of the migrant’s family at the place of destination best describes the nature of stay like temporary, seasonal, long term or permanent and also his material and social conditions. The nature of the family helps us to probe the inter-relationships among the family members and also other linkages like social network and occupational distinction.

Table-4.4: Family Type of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single/Staying alone</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint/Extended</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In figure-4.4 we could clearly see that the majority of the respondents are living in a nuclear family setup which is a peculiar feature of the metropolis. But, the majority of the respondents claimed to have a joint family set-up in their native villages before migration. Most of the respondents said that here joint family system would be very difficult to maintain due to the shortage of space. The low and irregular nature of the earnings was also not favourable for having a joint or even extended family as reported by the majority of the respondents. The possible reasons for the shrinking family size could be attributed to the fact that the joint family system is undergoing structural transformation due to the process of migration, urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation. This has also been substantiated by other studies on this aspect. But, during the study it was found that the physical separation does not speak for the departure from the ‘spirit of jointness’ of the family structure. The sense of effective co-operation in need and obligation to each other has remained prevalent among the family members in spite of being separated from the erstwhile joint family.

It could be said that the joint family sentiments widely prevail over 'nuclearisation' of family units in spite of residential separation due to migration. All of these could be said to be influencing the way in which the social life and the social identities of the migrant slum dwellers are structured, which has been discussed in detail in the next chapters. The nature and type of family has been found to be an influencing factor as far as shaping the social identity of its members is concerned. People throughout history depended on families and the kinship system for their survival. This dependence permitted and required that they conform to expected family roles depending on their living circumstances. This gave a family strong control over its members, a circumstance that is changing in the modern world because people no longer always need families for economic survival. But, despite this trend, it is a known fact that the individuals gain social identity and group identity by their affiliation and membership in various groups. These groups might include, among various categories, family, ethnic, occupation, friendship, sex roles and religion.

To read more on Family Roles - Cultures And Role Restriction, Personal Identity and Roles, Roles Expectations and Demands, see, http://family.jrank.org/pages/581/Family-Roles.html#ixzz0owdUpksk, last seen on 25th May, 2010.

Caste Group

We are aware of the nature of the Indian society and how it is based on caste. It is the basis of stratification in India society. The caste can be understood as 'a small and named group of persons characterised by endogamy, hereditary membership and a specific style of life which sometimes includes the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system, based on the concepts of purity and pollution'. The caste is a social fact, as understood by Durkheim, which is more or less general and widely spread in society. It is an institutionalised form, which exists independent of the individuals' will or desire. The caste status is ascriptive in nature and it exists independently in its own right. An individual cannot simply wish away his caste. It has a deep influence in shaping one's personal and social identity.

The caste is a principal identity for many Indians, defining whom they might marry, associate with and fight against. The very idea of belonging to a caste group creates a sense of caste consciousness and caste-based social identity. Those who belong to a particular group or stratum have some awareness of common interests and a common identity. They share life style, which to some degree distinguishes them from members of other social strata. The information about the caste status of the respondents was necessary to understand the intra and inter-caste relationships among the slum dwellers and its impact in shaping or influencing their social identity.

The caste composition of the respondents shows that caste range is as diverse in Kusumpur Pahari as in larger society. While, the share of upper castes (9.6%) and Other Backward Classes (castes) (21.6%) among the total respondents is very low, the share of Scheduled Castes (68.8%) is quite high which is clear from the table-4.5, given below. There was not a single respondent from the Scheduled Tribe category. This reflects the

31 The term scheduled caste signifies those groups of people who are out of the caste system or the Varna hierarchy in the past. These groups or castes have been discriminated against by the superior castes through the ages and they never had any kind of social acceptance from the majority of the superior caste people. The term scheduled caste is a politico-legal term. It was first coined by the Simon Commission and then Government of India Act, 1935. When India became independent this term was adopted in the Constitution for the purpose of providing them special facilities and constitutional guarantees.
general population composition of the Kusumpur Pahari slum. The high representation of the scheduled castes among the respondents suggests that the percentage of scheduled castes belonging to the under-privileged sections of Indian society is quite large. The 'Sachar Committee Report' states that the scheduled castes throughout India are economically and socially backward in almost every sector of Indian society.32

Table-4.5: Caste Status of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper/High</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding is also corroborated by another study carried out by ISI covering 2422 households distributed over 40 slum clusters and settlement colonies spread across five zones of Delhi.33 This study shows that Dalits constitute the majority segment of the slum population. Similar findings have also been given by other studies.34 Figure-4.5 clearly shows the dominance of scheduled caste population in Kusumpur Pahari slum. The inter-relationship between various caste groups, between caste and occupation, caste and marriage relations, caste and religion, etc., have been discussed in the next chapters. For this, it was important to know the caste status of the respondents. The tendency for members of each stratum to develop their own sub-culture that is certain norms, attitudes and values, which are distinctive to them as a social group has also been analysed in the following chapters.35

It has been seen that a person's position in a stratification system may have important effects on many areas of his life. It may enhance or reduce his 'life chances', that is his chances of obtaining those things defined as desirable and avoiding those

things defined as undesirable in his society.\textsuperscript{36} The caste determines its members' prestige, occupation and social relationships. The social relations between members of different castes are severely limited and formalised. The varying relationships of caste with various markers of social identity have been discussed at length in the next chapters.

It is necessary to discuss here the overall caste composition of the Kusumpur Pahari slum for better understanding of the analysis done in the later chapters. The Valmiki caste people (a scheduled caste considered the lowest in the caste hierarchy) form the major proportion of the multi-ethnic Kusumpur Pahari population. The other numerically strong scheduled castes in the slum are Raigar, Bairwa, Khatik, Jatav, Od, Dhobi, and Charmkar. The 'other backward classes' (castes) here are Yadav, Gujjar, Badhai, etc. The upper castes with some representation in the slum are Brahmins and Rajputs.

Out of five blocks in the slum, block-A is dominated by people of Valmiki caste from Haryana followed by Valmiki caste people from UP and then the other caste people like Jatav, Thakur, Raigar, Dhobi, Brahmin, etc. The block-B includes Valmikis, Jatavs, Khatiks, Yadavs, and others. The block-C has Khatiks, Raigars, Bairwas, Charmkars, Gujjars, Valmikis, Jatavs, Shankwars, Brahmins and others. The block-D has Valmikis, Dhobis, Gujjars, Yadavs, and others, while block-E comprises of Khatik, Bairwa, Raigar,

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, p. 26.
Social Profile of Respondents

Od, Valmiki, and other caste people in the decreasing order. There are few Tamil households in block-B and few Muslim households in blocks-A and E of the slum. Few households belonging to the emigrants from Nepal were also found in block-D.

Although, we could see this slum being inhabited by people belonging to diverse caste, region and religion yet, the majority of the respondents (68.8%) belong to the scheduled caste category (table-4.5). The scheduled castes do not constitute a homogeneous group. They are internally differentiated in terms of occupation, numerical strength, geographical spread and ritual status. This results in them having different sub-caste identity though falling under the broader caste category of the scheduled castes. The major scheduled castes in the cities are found with their separate nomenclature, hierarchies and sub-hierarchies in which, each caste rates itself higher than the others.

Table-4.6: Numerically Dominant Castes in Kusumpur Pahari

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Traditional Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valmiki</td>
<td>Haryana, U.P</td>
<td>Scavenging, Sweeping, Pig Breeding, Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raigar</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Shoe making, Leather Tanning, Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatik</td>
<td>Rajasthan, U.P</td>
<td>Leather Dying, Pig &amp; Goat Rearing, Meat Selling, Vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&amp; Fruit Selling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairwa</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Domestication of Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Od</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Labourers, Donkey Breeding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The populations existing on the fringes of the social order face constant denial of social resources and they form the vulnerable population driven by the extreme need to take up any job for survival. Poverty and inability to support the family was the main reason for migration in most of the cases. Some respondents even said that they moved primarily to avoid the traditional caste identity attached to conventional low-level occupations. This finding also is validated by the findings of other studies that point out that many low caste people migrate from villages to cities chiefly with a view to liberate themselves from age-old social discrimination and to conceal their low social status in the

38 Ibid, p. 236.
hierarchy of caste system. Table-4.6 shows the traditional caste based occupation of some of the prominent caste groups inhabiting the slum.

The knowledge of the caste composition of the respondents facilitated the study of the inter-caste relations between the diverse caste groups in the Kusumpur Pahari slum. Since we know that the social relations among castes depend upon the ranking of castes in caste hierarchy, the relationships were examined based on the marital relations, alliances, power relations and conflicts among various caste groups and sub-groups. Furthermore, we also identified the settlement pattern based on the caste membership of the people and the reasons for caste and region based segregations in the neighbouring households in the Kusumpur Pahari slum. The knowledge of the caste-based traditional occupation as evident from table-4.6 helped us to identify the changes in the occupation of the respondents after migration. Earlier studies on scheduled caste migrants in cities have shown that the majority of them engage in occupations similar to their caste callings in cities. However, the findings in this study have shown significant changes in the occupational patterns of the scheduled caste migrants, which have been discussed ahead in this chapter.

Educational Status

Education is considered here as the formal system of schooling which is elaborately organised to meet the requirements of the society for basic moral education, literacy and for specialised training related to the demands of the economy. It performs manifold functions for individual as well as the society. Educational attainment in advanced societies is increasingly linked to occupational status, as they form the basis for the allocation of an individual to a particular occupation. This holds true in the case of migrants also. The level of educational attainment of a migrant determines to a certain degree the kind of work he/she moves into. According to the functionalists, the major function of education is the transmission of society’s norms and values, which prepares

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the child for the essential requirements of the collective life.\textsuperscript{41} Education is the mechanism of the society to weld the individuals into a united whole. In other words, it leads to the creation of social solidarity.

Education has considerable influence on the choice of occupation, amount of income, style of life and worldview of the migrants. Therefore, the educational status of the respondents was taken as yet another criterion to find out if educational attainment acts as an instrument to bring about changes in the social identity. Table-4.7 shows that the majority of the respondents (54.4\%) are illiterate, with no formal schooling and many of them are even unable to write their names and only 14\% respondents have high school or graduate level qualification. No respondent was found to be having technical qualification. Illiteracy was prevalent mainly due to the non-availability of resources and gendered idea behind who should get education. Illiteracy as a natural consequence of pressing poverty has also been substantiated by several studies on this aspect.\textsuperscript{42}

\begin{table}[h!]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Education} & \textbf{Number} & \textbf{Percentage} \\
\hline
Illiterate & 136 & 54.4 \\
Primary (Class 1-5) & 33 & 13.2 \\
Middle (Class 6-8) & 46 & 18.4 \\
High (Class 9-12) & 25 & 10.0 \\
Graduate & Above & 10 & 4.0 \\
\hline
\textbf{Total} & \textbf{250} & \textbf{100.0} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Educational Status of the Respondents}
\end{table}

Figure-4.6 gives a clear picture of the educational status of the slum dwellers. The finding here has also been corroborated by other studies which have shown low educational attainment among the migrants of poor socio-economic status.\textsuperscript{43} This also establishes the relationship between the class position and educational attainment. Based on the findings it could be said that the poor educational achievement of the migrants is one among the host of factors that draws him or her towards the slum life. Since our society is based on the hierarchisation of professions, the less educated generally finds

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{41} Michael, Haralambos (2001), \textit{Sociology: Themes and Perspectives}, op cit.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Connel, John. et al. (1976). \textit{Migration from Rural Areas: The Evidence from Village Studies}, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
\end{itemize}

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themselves placed at the lower rung of the occupational ladder and end up earning less. Thus, there is no way left for them rather than to stay in low cost houses or pavements.

It was found during the study that almost all the respondents who are married and have children of school going age are sending their children to schools either here or at the place of origin, if the children are not staying with them. Since, Kusumpur Pahari is centrally located it has good number of schools both ‘public’ as well as ‘government’ in its vicinity. A famous public school named the ‘Chinmaya Public School’ shares its boundary with the slum. A Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) School is also being run in the slum and another one is located very near to the slum. Besides these, some primary schools are run by the voluntary organisations in Kusumpur Pahari like, ‘Naya Prayas’ in block-B. It provides informal schooling and bridge course to children from an MCD building located in the slum. It is also running two other schools in blocks- A and E of the slum with around 40 children each.

Educational Status

![Educational Status Chart](image)

There are also organisations like the ‘Search’ and ‘Rotary International’ in block-A, ‘Asha Clinic’ in block-C, ‘Bal Vikash Dhara’ in block-E, ‘Santi Devi Charitable Trust’ located in the MCD compound between blocks-B and C and ‘Ritinjali’ in block-C, which are providing formal and informal educational facilities to the children of this slum. These organisations are also involved in activities, such as vocational training for women, adult education, primary health facilities, childcare services, crèches, etc.
Broadly speaking, various organisations fall into two categories - those initiated by slum dwellers, like, caste and religious organisations (have been discussed ahead in this chapter) and those initiated by non-slum dwellers like the voluntary organisations. The former focuses on the collective identity of the slum dwellers while the latter focuses on the humanitarian and developmental aspects (See, Chapter-6 for details).

As we know that in modern society with the shift from the ascribed status to the achieved status of the individual, the role of education has grown manifold. Educational achievement now plays a prominent role in determining the occupational and social attainment of the individual as it greatly influences the choice and availability of occupational opportunities. It therefore seems obvious that a relationship exists between occupational identity formation and educational achievement. The fact, that large majority of the slum dwellers is into low paying and unskilled jobs could be seen in relation to their poor literacy levels which we get to know from the occupational profile of the studied population discussed ahead.

Table-4.8: Comparison of Educational Status of Male and Female Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Status</th>
<th>Gender Profile of the Respondents</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Class 0-5)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (Class 6-8)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (Class 9-12)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate &amp; Above</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table-4.8 shows the comparison between the educational status of male and female respondents. From the table it becomes clear that the literacy rate among women is lower than males. While, 41.9% male respondents were in the illiterate category there were 58.1% females in this category. Even the other educational categories exhibit similar trend as evident from the table-4.8. The differences in the educational level of the males and females explain the reason for the dependency of the female migrants on the male members of the family. The low educational status of women further leads to the

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44 Here, ascribed status means those statuses that are inherited by an individual with birth, say caste status and by achieved status it means the status acquired by a man by dint of hard work and education.
perpetuation of their low socio-economic status in the family and society as there is a clear link between education and occupation. This could also be the reason that women’s lives are generally lived within the familial parameters. The roles that men and women play in society are socially determined, changing and changeable. Education certainly has the power to alter the roles set up by the society. Higher levels of women’s education are strongly associated with higher levels of upward social mobility for women.

![Comparison of Educational Status of Male and Female Respondents](image)

**State of Origin**

The region or geographic location is a further example of the way we use our perception of physical objects (in this case, places where we were born or now live) as a means of constructing a sense of identity both personal and social. People who are born and live within certain geographic boundaries have a sense of belonging to or being part of that region. We have seen how regional identity has led to the rising regional aspirations manifested in the demand for separate states, greater autonomy or the famous inter-states water disputes. The people of one region are connected by the ethnic sentiments and linguistic and cultural homogeneity, although there could be differences at the level of sub-culture, local dialects and food habits within a state. The sense of belonging to a

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region has emotive cultural connotations which get all the more pronounced in an alien setting.

The regional and cultural identities are anchored to various socio-cultural traditions, language, fairs and festivals, culinary culture, dress and style of living, folk culture, and mythological and historical personalities. All of these a migrant carries with him when he leaves his place of origin. For this reason the knowledge of the regional and linguistic composition of the respondents was equally important for the study undertaken. When we identify with the people belonging to our region, we get a feeling that something is common with that group of people and we quite often show a favourable bias toward the group to which we belong.\(^4\) Table-4.9 shows that the highest percentage of respondents (54.4\%) is from the state of Uttar Pradesh followed by Rajasthan (25.6\%) and Haryana (8.8\%). Other states like, Tamil Nadu and Bihar have five or less than five percent representation. We find that the regional composition of the slum is quite diverse with people belonging to several regions of the country. This provides us a glimpse of the social interaction between the people of these regions and how that influences their social identities based on regional affiliations.

**Table-4.9: State of Origin of the Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar/Jharkhand</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From figure-4.8 shown below, we can get an idea of the diversity of the regional composition of the Kusumpur Pahari slum. It would be interesting to know in what way the regional heterogeneity evident in Kusumpur leads to the process of the transfer and sharing of culture. The process of acculturation which involves change in customs

resulting from the contact of people of different cultural backgrounds has been examined in this heterogeneous slum. The process of socio-cultural interaction between the migrants of diverse regions of the country and the impact of such interactions on the social identities of the migrants has been discussed in detail in the following chapters of the thesis.

As we know that, the migration has an important role in the contemporary form of cultural changes. It expands the scope and speed of cultural, social and economic interactions. However, the cultural processes that it sets into motion acquire significance, as there are possibilities of cultural assimilation, adaptation, integration or conflict in course of such cultural contacts.48 There are various ways in which the coming together of migrants of diverse caste, region and language influences the pattern of social interaction among them. Eisenstadt states that a heavy influx of internal migrants differing greatly in social and cultural backgrounds usually creates stresses and strains in the host community.49 Other studies have also highlighted the complete change and adjustment of the community affiliation of the individuals resulting due to migration or

the formation of heterogeneous character in terms of ethnicity, caste, race and class in the destination areas.  

**Nature of Place of Origin (Rural/Urban)**

The rural and urban character of the migrant deeply influences his adjustment in the urban environment. The migration from a village to the city involves a change not merely in the physical but also in the social environment. A migrant belonging to the rural setting might find it extremely difficult to adjust in an urban environment, where the way of life is considerably different to that of his rural origin. A migrant from an urban area might not have to face similar problems although, the urban to urban migrants also have problems in the beginning owing to dislocation, but the problem in adjustment is not as unpleasant as in the case of the rural to urban migrants. The urban to urban migrants do not have to struggle much as in the case of rural to urban migrants as they are familiar with the urban and occupational situations. Studies have shown that the urban to urban migrants, as a whole, are more successful in their adjustment to city life than rural to urban migrants.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study of the rural or the urban nature of the origin was necessary to compare the differences if any between the coping mechanisms of the migrants belonging to two different settings. Transplanted from their relatively homogeneous social environment, the difficulties faced by the rural migrants in adjusting to the new social relations could be different to that of the migrant from an urban area. For this, it was necessary to know the rural or the urban character of the place of origin of the migrants. The table-4.10

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shows that while 77.6% of the respondents have migrated from rural areas only 22.4% have moved from other urban areas or in some cases from other areas in Delhi itself.

In almost all hutments, especially in India, people who inhabit in the hutments generally come from the poor, illiterate, rural backgrounds almost without having any subsistence for livelihood. It has been pointed out that the rural to urban migrants have to face the problems of maladjustments at the place of destination. They in fact, present cases of ‘marginal man’ who is in the process of changing from one culture to another. The migrants feel lost amidst the pressures of two different cultures, one, of the place of his origin and the other of the place of destination. The domination of migrants coming from rural areas of the country in the regional composition of the Kusumpur Pahari slum can be clearly deciphered from figure-4.9.

When the migrants from rural areas shift to a new environment where they find different social, economic and cultural settings, they are in a state of cultural vacuum. In the social setting of the village, an individual has an intimate and organic relationship with reciprocal control and obligations under a familistic atmosphere within the small groups of a family, kin and friends. In contrast, in the new environment of the city, the relationships are diffused, superficial and contractual. The way in which these migrants

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cope with the alien environment and how those differences affect their social identity has been dealt in the next chapters.

**Linguistic Composition**

India is a country of great linguistic diversity. Thousands of languages are spoken in the country. Indians speaking one tongue have fought with Indians who speak another.\(^53\) Language, which is another marker of identity, forms a very vital part of one’s identity. Historically, language has formed an important factor in India around which regional and cultural identities have been articulated.\(^54\) Languages in many ways reflect the culture of a society. The local and regional cultures are manifested through linguistic diversity.\(^55\) Language assumes great importance for any study on identity. Ethnic groups may utilise their languages as a symbolic means of fostering or developing their own self-identity.\(^56\) Language also plays a vital role to play in the cultural and social mobilisation of people’s consciousness.

**Table-4.11: Linguistic Composition of the Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthani</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryanwi</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avadhi</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language assumes considerable significance in the life of a migrant who find himself in a condition when bilingualism becomes a necessity for him, as he has to adjust in a different environment and among different groups of people who might fail to understand his native language. For these reasons, understanding the linguistic profile of the respondents assumes importance. Table-4.11 given above shows the linguistic composition of respondents. According to the table, around two third of the respondents

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\(^{53}\) Ramchandra, Guha (2008), op cit., p. xix.  
\(^{54}\) Singh, Yogendra (2003), *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalisation*, op cit., p.89.  
\(^{55}\) Ibid, p. 47.  
(65.6%) speak Hindi, while 12% and 11% speak Rajasthani and Haryanvi respectively. The percentage of respondents speaking other language is quite insignificant.

The language is not just a tool to communicate but also a way to connect people with, something greater than themselves. A common language breaks barriers between people. It allows people that share a language to identify with each other although they are different. The interactionist literature on identity articulates the construction, negotiation, and communication of identity through language, both directly in interaction and discursively, through various forms of media.\textsuperscript{57} At the most basic level, people actively produce identity through their communication. Many studies (generally ethnographic) analyse identity work through everyday interaction.\textsuperscript{58}

It could be inferred from figure-10 that the majority of people in this slum are from Hindi speaking areas having Hindi as their mother tongue. For those speaking the Hindi language, communication with other people knowing Hindi was not a problem but those who knew only their local dialect, communication with other not knowing their


Social Profile of Respondents

dialect posed considerable problems in the beginning. These people had to learn the local language for adaptation and integration with the local community.\(^{59}\)

**Duration of Stay**

The knowledge of the duration of stay of the respondents in the Kusumpur Pahari slum is quite significant for examining if there is any co-relation in the changes taking place in the social identity of the residents and their length of urban stay, particularly in this slum. The motive was to see if there was any difference in the responses of the not so old settlers and the old settlers to get an idea of the likely patterns of change undergone after migration. A comparative analysis has been done in the next two chapters based on the information collected here, to examine the influence of duration of stay on the changes after migration. The minimum duration of stay of five years was one of the important criteria for selecting the sample for the present study. From table-4.12 which shows the period of stay of the respondents in this slum, it becomes clear that around two-third of the respondents (64%) have been living in this slum for more than fifteen years. The percentage of respondents living in Kusumpur Pahari for five to ten years is 22.8%.

**Table-4.12: Duration of Stay in the Slum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of Stay (in Years)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 &amp; Above</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From figure-4.11, it could be inferred that the highest number of respondents are living in this slum for fifteen to twenty years. The finding points to the considerably settled and permanent nature of stay, of the respondents in this slum. The duration of urban stay was one of the important indicators to examine the changes that have taken

place in the social identity of the slum dwellers after migration and the way they are manifested in their social identities.

It was revealed during the study that many of the respondents are staying in Kusumpur Pahari from generations together. The number of new settlers is fairly less. The long settlement of migrants tells us about their work sustainability in Delhi and their social adjustment in this slum. The period of urban stay has a definite bearing on the changing value systems of the people, which ultimately lead to a change in their social identities. This has also been shown in many studies dealing with migration and social change.\(^6^0\) The impact of urban living on the social structure of the various migrant groups in the realm of family, marriage, religious beliefs, groups and associations, etc., have been discussed in the next two chapters.

**Religion**

India being a land of multiple religions where people belonging to diverse faiths co-exist, religion is an influencing factor in the Indian social system. Religion provides a certain degree of social solidarity, value consensus, harmony and integration in the society, but at

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In a broader sense, religion is considered as ‘a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden’.

Religion is another fundamental feature of human identity. It is another factor, which has an important role in influencing the identity of a person. It provides guidelines for human action and standards against which man’s conduct can be evaluated. The fact of belonging to a religious denomination infuses a sense of identity in the person concerned.

From table-4.13, it becomes evident that the overwhelming majority of the respondents belong to the Hindu community (97.2%) with the only other religious group present in the slum being the Muslims. The Muslims constitute a bare 2.8% of the total respondents. There was not a single respondent belonging to other faiths like Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. The presence of the people of other religions was either negligible or were not known to the informers and the pradhan. As we are aware of the fact that religion permeates all aspects of our life like, social, economic and political, understanding the religious composition of the respondents was very important for the study.

Table-4.13: Religious Composition of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion has not only a belief element but also an active participative element, which is found in rituals and ceremonies. It becomes an important source of social identity because many people participate in religious activities to get acceptance in the community and society to which he/she belongs. Religion also becomes at times the rallying point around which the groups mobilise themselves towards a cause. The presence of different religions in the society may also lead to religious conflict. The religion becomes a vehicle of expression, a form of identity around which a group gathers either for mustering more power for itself or any such similar cause. Each group then

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forges an identity, one of them being the religious identity, which helps them in the pursuit of their goals.

![Religious Composition](image)

Given the pervasive influence of religion in Indian society, most Indians seem apt to view themselves in role relationships of a religious nature with fellow religious adherents. The members of such a religious group expect that each individual member will perform certain normative religious behaviors and adhere to certain normative religious beliefs. A particular kind of role performance, a key concept in identity theory, is expected from members of a religious group. As is evident from figure-4.12, Kusumpur Pahari is dominated by the believers of Hindu religious faith. Although, there is domination of the followers of one particular faith, yet the enquiry of this kind was necessary to study the religious belief of the slum dwellers and the changes it has undergone since their migration and settlement in an urban location. The religious values and beliefs have been found to influence the social norms, social action and social consciousness, which have been discussed in detail in the fifth and the sixth chapter of this thesis.

**Participation in Socio-Religious Organisations**

The membership and participation in socio-religious organisations and the nature and activities of such organisations greatly influence the social identity of its members. The
social identity theory focuses on the extent to which individuals identify themselves in terms of group memberships. The central tenet of social identity theory is that individuals define their identities along two dimensions: social, defined by membership in various social groups; and personal, the idiosyncratic attributes that distinguish an individual from others. The inter-group relations are also affected by such organisations, which at times lead to the creation of different types of boundaries between the groups. The ‘idea of ‘we’ and ‘they’ also becomes very strong, if the activities and goals of such organisations become exclusivist in nature. Because, people are motivated to evaluate themselves positively, they tend to evaluate positively those groups to which they belong and to discriminate against groups they perceive to pose a threat to their social identity. These were the reasons behind collecting information on the presence of socio-religious organisations in this slum and the participation of the members in such organisations.

Knowing an individual’s identity affiliations can be the key to understanding attitudes and opinions, as individuals tend to adopt opinions compatible with their salient identity groups. When one has a sense of belongingness to an identified community, he or she anticipates receiving resources from that community and then reciprocates by responding in kind when the community requires something of his/her resources. Satisfaction is viewed by the utilitarian value (of an organisation) to meet certain basic needs ranging from sociability to services. Although, considerable attention has been paid to the problems and issues of immigrants, not much attention has been paid to the questions of internal-migrants with distinct identities living outside their homes. For the

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purpose of maintaining their distinct caste and religious identity and to identify with their
romanticised homeland the migrant community constructs socio-religious organisations. 68

The migrants belonging to various caste and regions have organised themselves
and have formed various socio-religious organisations to serve the interest of their
respective community. The caste and religion based organisations present in this slum are
based on formal and informal criteria of membership and the members share a feeling of
unity to these groups and associations and are bound together in relatively stable patterns
of interaction. Some of organisations are quite formal and structured type with regular
elections of secretaries and other members, like the ‘Valmiki Samaj’ and the ‘Khatik
Samaj’, but others are at an informal level. The location and regional composition of
these organisations could be seen in table-4.13, shown below.

Table- 4.14: Caste and Religious Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups and Associations</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Region of Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Khatik Samaj</td>
<td>Block-E</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valmiki Samaj</td>
<td>Block-A, Block-C</td>
<td>Haryana, Uttar Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairwa Samaj</td>
<td>Block-E</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raigar Samaj</td>
<td>Block-E</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Od Samaj</td>
<td>Block-E</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There have been instances when these organisations have come forward to resolve
immediate grievances of the residents. Some of these organisations are also related to
organisations outside the slum. They have distinct political leanings and affiliations.
Contrary to Lewis depiction of a slum having ‘the culture of poverty’ and characterised
by the absence of organised groups and associations, the idea of such groups and
associations seems to have taken root among the inhabitants of this slum. 69 The
Information about attitudes, aspirations, community organisation, and economic and
social activity in Kusumpur Pahari argues significantly against Lewis's expectations.
Instead, a highly organised network of secondary relations appears to permeate social life
within the settlement and to orient members of the community to the city as a whole.
Socio-religious organisations here have served as extra-familial bases of affiliation for

68 Ibid, p. 171.

113
the inhabitants and they play an active part in the social life of the residents of this slum. We find, rather than fatalism and antagonism toward society-at-large, a worldview that is mildly optimistic, continually resourceful in the face of scarcity, and receptive to the general values and goals of non-slum Delhi. The detailed functions of these organisations have been discussed in chapter six of the thesis.

Economic Status (Income & Occupation)

The economic status of the respondents gives us an idea of their standard of living. The monthly family income and occupational status were assumed to be the most objective criteria to know the socio-economic status of the respondents. The worldview of the people is largely influenced by their economic position. The understanding of the economic status of the respondents becomes important for the present study, as the attempt here is to see it in terms of impact it has on the social identities of the slum dwellers. The economic condition has a bearing on the identity of the person. The study by Oscar Lewis on the slum life has shown that poor economic status leads to a 'culture of poverty', characterised by feeling of marginality, helplessness, fatalism and the lack of effective participation and integration in the major institutions of the larger society. Lewis has further pointed out that the culture of poverty tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effect on the children as they tend to absorb the basic values and attitudes of their sub-culture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities, which may occur in their lifetime.

To enquire about this aspect and to see its impact on the social identities of the slum dwellers the economic status of the respondents was taken into account. It shows that the slum dwellers are economically at the lower rung of the urban society. This hypothesis gets tested by the income pattern shown in table-4.15, which shows that about three-fourth of the respondents (76%) have monthly household income of less than three thousand rupees. Only 9.6% respondents claimed to have monthly household income of more than five thousand. The figures reflect the poor economic status of the majority of

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the respondents. The low monthly earning is also due to the nature of the jobs the migrant slum dwellers perform, which has been mentioned later in this chapter while discussing the occupation of the respondents. During the study, it was observed that these people are leading a simple life with bare minimum amenities. The study by Manjistha Banerji has also drawn similar conclusions. ⁷²

### Table-4.15: Monthly Household Income of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income (in Rs.)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1500</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-3000</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3000-5000</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5000 &amp; above</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>250</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The income of an individual is an indicator of his class position. India is not only a land of unparalleled cultural diversity but also, of massive social deprivation. The unfavorable economic circumstances (such as landlessness, indebtedness) in the village are likely to be a major contributory factor in the migrant’s decision to move out. The social and economic reality of people compels them to migrate to destinations, which provide some hope for betterment on either front. ⁷³ The slums are the best place available to them to reside as the cost of living in slums is low. Besides this, they choose to stay in slums that are (generally) closer to their working place, as well as, offer a neighbourhood close to their kins, friends and co-villagers.

The majority of the respondents in this study said that they had left their ‘homes’ primarily due to economic reasons such as, inadequate income, low wages, insufficient land holding, irregular jobs, indebtedness and unemployment. But their income status after migration shows that they are still precariously close to the ‘poverty line’ and the condition has only marginally improved. Figure-4.13 gives a clear picture of the income status of the respondents. In many cases, the household incomes are derived from two or more earners. The income is certainly not enough by today’s rising living cost and

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aspirations of the people. What impact this has on the identity of the respondents has been examined in the later chapters discussing the changes brought about in the social identity of the migrants post migration. The low-wages contribute to the continued exploitation of the working class. 74

![Monthly Household Income](image)

Figure-4.13

The migration to urban areas is, usually closely related to employment and earning opportunities in the formal and informal sectors of urban economy. The migration is a routine livelihood strategy adopted in India and not simply a response to shocks. 75 People certainly do migrate because of the unavailability of enough work at the place of origin, but such migration should not be understood as forced or distress migration. Many poor people perceive migration as an opportunity. It allows them to escape highly exploitative patron-client relationships in their home village, earn more than they would have done before and provides them with improved roads, communication networks and an expanded informal economy. 76

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The nature of work changes to a greater degree after migration, particularly in the case of the rural to urban migrants, which results in the change in the social identity especially resulting due to the change in their occupational category. In the traditional rural society, every caste is associated with a traditional occupation. The hereditary occupation reflects the caste status of the person. Though, things have changed even in the rural society, the changes, however, are more pronounced in the urban society. The occupational status of the respondents in table-4.16 show that 76.4% of the respondents are employed, while, 16% respondents are unemployed and 7.6% respondents are self-employed. The majority of the respondents among the employed category are casual workers, mainly engaged in the construction sectors. The occupational position is a major indicator of social status. The poor rural migrants who mostly belong to lower castes and economically backward regions constitute the bulk of migrants working in the informal sector. The migration provides an opportunity of livelihood to many poor people without which they might have faced threats to their existence.

Table-4.16: Occupational Status of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>76.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In figure-4.14, we could see how migration has increased the possibilities of employment, as the majority of the respondents are engaged in diverse occupations to earn their livelihood. They are into construction work, sweeping, cleaning and whitewashing. Some are engaged as drivers, peons, masons, security guards, night watchmen, helpers, clerks and assistants in private shops, parking spots and hotels. Besides these, few of them are teaching in schools run by the NGO’s operating in the slum and even outside or are employed with MCD, hospitals, universities and other institutions. The employed, here refers to those respondents who are able to earn their livelihoods through various means and need not necessarily be formally employed. Casual work means those work which are irregular and also have irregular and fluctuating wages. Such works have high risk of employment instability. As there is no expectation in a casual work and no contract between employee and employer of ongoing work, employees can legally refuse a specific work opportunity at any time.
government offices in Class-IV jobs. Some own petty business, like kabari shop, phone booth, paan shop, utensil shop, beauty parlour, stationary shop, grocery and vegetable shop.

Many migrants are still continuing with their caste-based occupations and earn their livelihood as potters (kumhar), meat sellers, masons, carpenters (badhai), hairdressers (nai), sweepers (mainly Valmikis), gardners (mali), washermen (dhobi), blacksmiths (lohaar), vegetable sellers (mainly Khatiks and few Muslims), which were the source of livelihood for them even prior to migration. Though the percentage of women in work is less, as compared to men, still the majority of women respondents were found engaged in some work or the other to earn livelihood. Women are into less diverse occupations as compared to men. It has been found that the majority of the working women respondents are employed as domestic helps in the nearby posh colonies and middle class homes and few of them are working as casual labourers. Some women have also been trained and assisted by local NGOs to get work in tailoring shops and in beauty parlours and few of them are doing freelance knitting and stitching work from their homes.

A large number of Valmikis, a scheduled caste community residing in this slum, are working as sweepers. They have traditionally been engaged in the cleaning and sweeping work, and even now due to the lack of education and other professional skills majority of them are continuing the age-old practice. Broadly, it can be said that the slum
working class comprises of both the wage-labourers employed in the organised and the unorganised sectors. It also includes self-employed workers. The occupational division indicates that the residents of Kusumpur Pahari are interacting in a non-rural environment and participating in a modern economic system, seeking employment in new sectors and industries but many of them still have not left their caste based traditional occupations.

Table-4.17: Occupation of the Respondents: Before and After Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Before Migration</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Work After Migration</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily-Wagers/Casual</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Daily-Wagers/Casual</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Labour</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>Agriculture Labour</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Husbandry</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Animal Husbandry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maid-Servants/Servants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Maid-Servants/Servants</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caste-Based Occupation</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>Caste-Based Occupation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Shopkeepers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Petty Shopkeepers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt/Pvt Service</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Govt/Pvt Service</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener/Mec./Hotel</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Gardener/Mec./Hotel</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House Wife</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>House Wife</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Work</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>No Work</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of the occupations of the respondents prior to and after migration shows that there has been a clear shift in two main occupations. Table-4.17 shows that the percentage of daily wagers has gone up considerably from 8% to 25.2% after migration. Similarly, for the women migrants the percentage of those employed as maidservants has gone up from 3.6% to 16.4% after migration. The findings show that men have moved into more diverse range of works as compared to the women migrants.
The women migrants are mainly employed as housemaids, in the construction work, tailoring and beauty parlors, as already discussed earlier. Some studies on slums show that the migrants living in the slums exhibit features of organised community life and the migrants have achieved a level of occupational and social mobility when compared to their occupation and social standing in the place of origin, which is also supported by the findings of this study.79

The variation in the work profile of the respondents before and after migration is evident from figure-4.15 (a) and (b). We could see that a high percentage of respondents are involved in daily paid wages. From the figure, it could be understood that that the majority of the respondents are employed as casual workers with irregular source of work and income. This definitely influences their sense of occupational identity, which has been discussed in detail in the sixth chapter. We also find migrants continuing with their caste based occupation even after migration. The hereditary association of caste with an occupation used to be a very striking feature of the caste system. It was so much a part of the caste system that some sociologists even argued, “caste is nothing more than a systematisation of occupational differentiation”.80 Today we find that the caste system is

not as meticulously observed as they were some decades ago but it continues to guide and influence the social, economic, political and cultural domain of Indians. Though, the share of caste based work has declined from 15.2% to 10.4% as evident from figure-4.15 (a) & (b) yet, it could be inferred from the figures shown that caste based division of labour is still practiced even after migration. Those practicing caste based occupations said that it was easier for them to get into traditionally practiced occupation, as they were used to such work and was also easier for them to get and adjust to such work because they were merely continuing their age-old profession.

![Diagram: Work After Migration]

Because of the growing impact of urbanisation, industrialisation and migration, the traditional synchronisation between caste and occupation is fast changing. The majority of respondents earn their livelihood from informal sector activities located either within or outside slum areas. Most slum dwellers are in low-paying occupations, such as, daily wagers, construction workers, recycling of ‘rags’ and ‘kabadi’, domestic servants, security guards, hawkers, vegetable sellers, piece rate workers and self-employed, hair dressers, furniture makers, etc. The majority of the residents of Kusumpur Pahari are in the lower levels of the job structure of the city. The finding here is in line with Gould’s work that shows that the rural migrants of poor socio-economic conditions are usually incorporated into the hierarchy of the urban occupational structure at the lowest level of
income, prestige and power.81 There are other studies on Indian slums that show that poor migrants are employed in the organised and unorganised sectors of the urban economy.82

**Summing Up**

This chapter gives an overview of the social profile of the respondents and gives us a glimpse of the social life of the Kusumpur Pahari dwellers. The basic purpose of this chapter was to understand the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of the slum dwellers and to relate them with the various dimensions of their social identity in the next chapters. The understanding proved to be of tremendous help while drafting the other chapters as the social life and social system of the slum dwellers, have a great influence in shaping and moulding their identities. A careful reading of this chapter will also make the understanding of the subsequent chapters logical and comprehensible. The categories discussed in this chapter like, age, gender, caste, class, occupation, region, religion, language, period of stay, etc., have been used as the prime determinants of identity variations among the migrants which have been examined in the subsequent chapters. The knowledge of the age, sex, occupational and educational status and other such important socio-economic indicators of the respondents have helped in the better understanding of their social life, group interaction and social behaviour. How the residents of Kusumpur Pahari relate to one another or interact with each other is largely based on their social profile. The social processes are largely dependent on the nature of the social profile of the inhabitants in this slum.

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