CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 SUMMARY

The rapid growth of urban population, particularly in the large metropolitan cities, poses a threat for improving and maintaining a minimum comfortable living condition in urban areas as the resources, fiscal and institutional, are seriously inadequate to provide basic amenities of city life. Slums in the urban areas are the manifestation of the inadequacy of basic amenities of shelter, water supply, sanitation, education and health care facilities. Due to lack of basic amenities and insanitary living conditions people in the slums experience high rate of morbidity along with high incidence of infant and child mortality. The low family planning performance and high birth rate in the slums are the results of poor health and high infant and child mortality. The slum people have limited educational opportunities, both general and vocational. Therefore, the enrolment rate in schools is lower among the children of slums and adult illiteracy rate is very high. The workforce of the slums is considered as a pool of unskilled labour. Poor education, poor skill and poor health creates a blind alley for the slum population from which they find no opportunities to come out.
Since the independence of the country, some programmes were implemented to ameliorate the condition of slum population. But, even now, the condition of slums has not improved much inspite of these measures. This is because, most of these policy designs are carried on as professional technocratic exercise in isolation from the socio-economic and cultural dimensions and pattern of behaviour of the urban people living in slums. The present study is conducted with the objective of examining the magnitude and dimensions of basic amenities and their relationship with different socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the households living in the slums of Calcutta city.

In the study, first, the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the surveyed slums of Calcutta are examined. (The ten surveyed slums are: Parshi Bagan, K.C. Sen Street, Kalabagan, Ponditia, Chetla, Tiljala, Tangra, Shyambazar, Paikpara and Belgachia.) Thereafter, the magnitude and dimensions of basic amenities of these slums are studied in detail. Finally, we have analysed the relationship between the socio-economic and demographic characteristics and basic amenities.

7.1.1 Household Characteristics of the Slums

The study on the household characteristics of the surveyed slums has shown that there are 28.7 per cent of the population in the age group of 0-14 years.
Slightly less than two-third (65.4 per cent) of the slum population is in the age group of 15-59 years. The remaining 5.9 per cent of the population is in the above 60 years age group. The number of females per 1000 males in the slums is 825 and this figure is higher than the Calcutta's recorded sex ratio of 799 in 1991 census. The average family size in the slums is 6.2 persons and it is also higher than the city's 1991 census figure of 5.1 persons. In Calcutta slums there are only a few single member households (2.5 per cent). A substantial proportion of households (48.3 per cent) in the slums have a family size between 5-7 persons. A quarter of the surveyed households (25.1 per cent) have high family size of higher than 7 persons. Incidentally, slums with higher proportion of households in higher family size category are dominated by Muslims. Among the surveyed households 44.6 per cent have reported their head as migrant.

It is found that a majority of the households in the slums of Calcutta are have nucleated family (50.2 per cent). The Joint family system is also prevalent among surveyed households (40.2 per cent) while extended families are very small in number (7.1 per cent). A majority of the households in the slums has reported Bengali as their mother tongue (53.3 per cent). Mother tongue of Hindi and Urdu were reported by 23.8 and 22.4 per cent households. The composition of the religions of the surveyed households shows that 63.2 and 35.8 per cent households are Hindu and Muslim by religion respectively. Except Chetla and Tiljala, all the other slums surveyed are either dominated by Hindus or Muslims.
The share of SC and ST among the slum population is reported to be 16.7 per cent and this figure is higher than the over all SC and ST population of the city which is 6.6 per cent in 1991. In the slums there are only a few ST households.

70.7 per cent of the population of the slums are literates (excluding 0-4 age group). Among the males and females these percentages of literates are 84.2 and 61.7 respectively. The attainment of educational level of the literates shows that 31.1 per cent of the population had studied upto class IV, 38.9 per cent between class V-VIII, 25.1 per cent between IX-XII and only 5 per cent are above class XII. The education of the head of the households is also examined. Of them 38.7 per cent are found illiterate while 12.8, 21.1 and 23.8 per cent have attained the level of primary, middle and higher secondary education respectively. Only 3.8 per cent head of the households are educated above the level of higher secondary.

In the slums, 31.6 per cent of the population is reported as worker which is marginally lower than the Calcutta's 1991 census figure of 32.8 per cent. In the total workforce the share of female workers is very low, only 7.0 per cent. This is also lower than the 1991 census figure (9.3 per cent) of the city. A majority of the workers of the slums have regular employment (86.4 per cent). The workers in the slums are engaged in a wide range of occupations. Business, household industries and services are the three major occupations in the slums which absorb more than three-fourth of the workers. In the business and household
industries which require small capital there are 9.2 and 14.5 per cent of workers respectively. Services related to blue collar jobs absorb 8.6 per cent of the workers. Skilled mechanics and drivers of car/bus/trucks constitute 4.8 and 5.8 per cent of the workers. The monthly total income of the households in the slums is Rs. 2090 while their monthly per capita income is Rs. 336. A sizeable proportion of the households (42.9 per cent) have a monthly per capita income below Rs. 251. There are 39.7 per cent households who have monthly per capita income between Rs. 251-500. Less than one-fifth of the households in the slums have per capita income above Rs. 500.

7.1.2 Magnitude and Dimensions of Basic Amenities

From the study of basic amenities in the slums of Calcutta it is seen that like other slums in metropolitan cities, in the slums of Calcutta also, a majority of the households (70.3 per cent) are living in a single room and one-fifth (20.3 per cent) of the total households have two rooms. Most of the rooms are small in size and over crowded. Nearly half of the households (49.0 per cent) of the surveyed slums have reported that 4-6 persons are living in a single room. 21.6 per cent households have more than six persons per room and in 9.0 per cent households there are more than one couple per room. A sizeable proportion of households (43.3 per cent) do not have any separate space for cooking and are forced to cook within the living room. The other aspects of the housing show that nearly three-fifth of the households (77.2 per cent) are living in rented house. On
and average, they pay Rs. 50 for the rent and four-fifth of the households (79.8 per cent) of the slums have reported their expenditure below Rs.61 for the rent of the houses. A majority of the structure of the houses are mixed (pucca and kachcha) type (59.6 per cent) and only 34.5 per cent houses are pucca in nature.

A large percentage of households (78.5) in the slums have water supply within the home and mostly the facility is shared by a group of households in a house. On an average, 86 persons depend on a single source of water within the house and this number is 409 for households who do not have water supply within the house and collect water from public stand points. Among the households who have water supply within the house, 43.3 per cent have reported that they collect water from public stand points also. Tap water is the main source of drinking water in all the slums and, in general, it is observed that in the slums of north Calcutta the duration of tap water supply is higher (18 hours a day) due to nearness of Tala water supply station and this duration decreases towards south (5 hours a day) of the city. Most of the households of south and east Calcutta have reported that the water supply is inadequate due to short duration of supply and that water is available at very low pressure.

Most of the households (96.0 per cent) of the surveyed slums have toilet facilities in their house. Like water supply, toilets are also shared by a number of
households living within the same house and it is seen, on an average, 62 persons share a toilet. Households who do not have toilet in their house, mainly use community toilets near their house.

A majority of the households (81.2 per cent) in the slums of Calcutta have electric connections in their house. Out of the total households with electric connection (authorised connection) 50.2 per cent households have permanent connection and the remaining 49.8 per cent have temporary connection (unauthorised connection drawn from permanent connections). The average monthly electric bill for permanent connection is Rs. 148. However, there are 23.5 and 31.9 per cent households who have electric bill below Rs. 51 and Rs. 51-100 respectively. There are only 26.8 per cent households with monthly electric bill above Rs. 150. In the case of temporary connections a sizeable proportion of households (45.0 per cent) are using two electric points. Nearly a quarter of the households are using only one electric point. The payment for temporary connections shows that there are 26.1, 39.6 and 19.0 per cent households in the payment range of Rs. 1-50, 51-100 and 101-150 respectively. The payment of the temporary connection is usually based on the number of points and purpose of points (light, fan, Television etc.) used by the households. Reasons for households not to have electricity are: i) lack of political and administrative connections, ii) lack of money, and iii) owner of the house has not given the required permission. A majority of the households of temporary
electric connection have also reported that owner of the house has declined to give permission to obtain permanent connection.

In the slums there is a considerable proportion of children (5-14), (23.4 per cent) who do not attend school. The household expenditure per continuing student has shown that 69.6 per cent households spend between Rs. 1-150 per student and there are 23.1 per cent households in the expenditure range of Rs. 1-51.

An examination of health status of the households has shown that 845 persons out of 3245, (26.2 percent) have reported being ill in the last one month preceding the survey. The illness among the children (0-4) is found to be very high where 39.4 percent children reported ill in the last one month. The percentage of illness among population aged above 5 years is 25.1. The ailments of people in the slums are mainly related to their living condition. In the slums, children mostly suffer from respiratory illness (cold, fever, asthma, measles etc.) and water borne disease (diarrhoea, polio etc.). Also among the population above five years, respiratory illness is the most common. The next most important illness in this age group is the stress related psycho-social illness (heart disease, hypertension, peptic ulcer, persistent headache etc.). A majority of the persons obtain medical treatment for their illness and have consulted allopathic doctors. In the slums the average monthly medical
expenditure of the households is Rs.79 and the per capita medical expenditure is reported to be below Rs. 21 for four-fifths of the households.

7.1.3 Relationship Between Socio-economic and Demographic Characteristics and Basic Amenities

The analysis of socio-economic and demographic determinants of different basic amenities in the slums of Calcutta has shown that family size, migration status, education of the head of the households, religion and per capita income are have significant influence on the different measures of basic amenities.

Family size has shown its significant relationship with housing and electricity in the slums. Households with larger family size have higher density per room. It is also seen that they prefer electricity to kerosene so that usage of kerosene is reduced. This preference for electricity is mainly because of the difficulty in obtaining kerosene. Often, kerosene is not available and when it is available, it is difficult to obtain. The residence of the slums have to stand in long queues and when their turn comes for obtaining kerosene there may be no kerosene at the ration shop. Kerosene can be purchased in 'black market'. But because electric lights are preferred the head of the households try to obtain electric connection even if it means an illegal one. In the slums, households with larger family size have more number of rooms (although that does not reduce their
density per room) and higher number of points of fans and lights which leads to higher expenditure on electricity.

The non migrant households in the slums have relatively higher ownership of a house and they have less number of persons per room and their cooking arrangement is separated from living room. In the study, we observe that non migrant households have water supply through tap, toilet and electricity (a majority of them have permanent electric connections). The non migrant households usually send their children to school and spend more money on medical care.

Like non migrants, non Muslims also have better living conditions in slums with less pressure on living room (lower density and number of couples per room, and kitchen outside living room) and toilet and permanent electric connection within home. They are also owners of houses and their children are enrolled in the schools.

The head of the households who are better educated manage to have better living standards in the slums. Not only do they have less pressure on living room (lower density per room and cooking outside living room) but also they live in the houses which have tap water supply, less pressure on a tap and toilet and permanent electric connection. The head of the households who are educated
are much concerned about the enrollment of their children in school and medical care of the members of the household and they spend more money for these purposes.

The analyses have also shown that the households who have higher per capita income spend more money for electric consumption and schooling of the children. In case of housing, per capita income has a limited influence. The other findings obtained from the analyses is that SC is not an important variable in determining the basic amenities. In general, the study has observed that demographic and social factors have a rather higher influence on basic amenities than the income of the households.

7.2 A SEARCH FOR POLICY

Our study has shown that the slums of Calcutta city are deficient in terms of required shelter, water supply and toilet. A substantial proportion of children in the slums is not attending any school. A large proportion of the slum dwellers, including both children and adults is suffering from the diseases which are mainly related to their poor living conditions. They have limited employment opportunities. Less than 50 per cent population of the working age group of 15-59 (2123 persons) is employed and a considerable proportion of them are unskilled and engaged in low paying jobs. To uplift the poor slum dwellers from
their sub-human living conditions a systematic comprehensive planning intervention, encompassing the demographic and socio-economic matrix of the vulnerable groups is necessary.

The problem of basic amenities in Calcutta is not new and there have been many attempts to ameliorate the conditions of the slums. The resource base of the city was not sufficient to provide shelter and other basic amenities to the continued streams of migrants who came in the city for search jobs from neighbouring districts and states. The after effects of World War II, followed by the Bengal Famine and the influx of the displaced persons from East Pakistan aggravated the condition to such an extent that the municipal services of the city was completely broken down. To eradicate the ill effects of the slums the government of West Bengal enacted the ‘Calcutta Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers Act’ in 1958. The aim of this enactment was the clearance of slums and rehabilitation of the slum dwellers in new buildings erected near to the slum areas. The scheme had very limited success since the cost of rehousing was too high and it was not accepted by the slum dwellers.

Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation (CMPO) was set up in 1961 which drafted Basic Development Plan (BDP) 1966-86 in 1966. The plan, in the right direction, stressed the need for formulation and implementation of the essential economic, social and administrative policies together with the development of
physical environment. But, due to political turmoil in the state in the late 60's and lack of funds, the recommendations of BDP were not implemented. In 1971, Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) came into being which took over all the development functions of the city and Calcutta Metropolitan Areas (CMA). The plan interventions of CMDA (from the early seventies) reflected little of the philosophy underlying the BDP. The “CMDA's actions have so far been addressed almost exclusively to the physical development plan.” The importance of social input in the development plan is seriously lacking and “the thrust is still on the physical development of the city” (Banerjee, 1991: 26). The different physical development models conceived for the Calcutta slums may broadly be grouped as:

1. Slum Clearance Scheme: i.e., rehousing of slum dwellers outside but within close proximity of the slum areas.

2. Slum Redevelopment Scheme: i.e., on-site rehousing within re-developed slum areas.

3. Slum Resettlement Scheme: i.e., re-settlement in the fringe and peripheral areas with site and services.

4. Slum Improvement Scheme: i.e., on-site environmental improvement without disturbing the hutments.
The Slum Clearance as mentioned earlier has been practically rejected by the slum dwellers, and the other two schemes, viz. 'Redevelopment' and 'Resettlement' have been found to be costly and time consuming and, therefore, quite unimplementable. The remaining scheme viz. the 'Slum Improvement Scheme' is currently being employed on a massive scale. This scheme does not disturb the existing layout of the slums and it tries to remove the basic environmental deficiencies by providing drinking water, toilet, street light and facilities for collection and disposal of garbage and drainage of sullage and storm water. However, the scheme does not pre-empt options for further modifications and it is not enough to bring a change in social habits incompatible with living in the urban environment. To initiate the maximum use of the amenities provided under the scheme, the social and economic upliftment of the slum dwellers is essential. The socio-economic development of the targeted groups is necessary to ameliorate and to sustain the improved living conditions provided by the slum improvement scheme.

Taking stock of the present situation that is prevailing in the slums of Calcutta, this study has put forward some recommendations to combat the growing problem of basic amenities. From the analysis done so far it is seen that the family size (due to natural increase) is negatively associated with basic amenities. Households with higher family size are more deficient in terms of basic amenities. In the programmes of basic amenities, along with the
improvement of physical environment, packages related to motivating people to have lower family size should be incorporated. The lower education, poor health of mother and child, high infant and child mortality and nutritional deficiencies are the major causes of lower family planning performance in the slums (Oberai, 1989, Population Bulletin, 1992). Therefore, to promote the lower family size norms among the slum dwellers, along with family planning services, programmes on education, improvement of level of nutrition and mother and child health should be emphasised. Some of the basic services programmes for the urban poor have the component of mother and child health and nutrition. But during implementation, programmes are more concerned about the improvement of physical condition of living, and the education and health are totally neglected. The promotion of small family size norms not only helps the households to have more basic amenities but it will also help to reduce the pressure on the basic services and will check further deterioration by lowering down the growth of population of the slums.

In the study it is observed that there are a sizeable proportions of slum population which is migrant and which lacks different basic amenities. These migrants have come to the city from the neighbouring districts and states in search of employment. In this context, the future plan interventions should go beyond the limit of the city and should be directed towards the hinterland of the city as well. To reduce the flow of migration towards the city the programmes on
the development of small and medium towns should be strengthened and an approach to develop a uniform hierarchical structure of urban centres from large cities to small towns should be adopted. Along with the urban development programmes, the rural development programmes should also be implemented effectively to check the rural migrants from coming to the urban areas for jobs. Therefore a comprehensive, well-knitted regional approach will be more effective to tackle the problem of migration and basic amenities.

The education of the head of the households is one of the most important determining factor of the level of basic amenities of the households. The study has shown that the households with better educated heads have better living conditions in the slums. Moreover, the educated head of the households are more concerned about the education of their children and health of the members of the households. So, the most important policy measure for improving the conditions of the slums should be the spread of adult education, informal education and vocational education for the adults in the slums. The lessons of education should be in conformity with their needs and social requirements. Here, it should be mentioned that the Small Scale Enterprise Programme (SSEP) has tried to give easy credit facilities to the unemployed youth but little effort is made to train them and to make them eligible for credit facilities for gainful occupations. Hence, the special vocational training should be imparted to the slum population for developing and upgrading their skill required for the job.
market. The spread of education will help to increase the general awareness and income opportunities of the people. The problem of community participation, education of the children, ill health and lower family planning performance can also be countered by the spread of education.

The study has revealed that due to socio-economic backwardness Muslims have less basic amenities than the non-Muslims in the slums. Planners should consider special policy measures for the socio-economic betterment of the Muslims in the slums.

The study has shown that unlike demographic and social factors, the income is not relatively so important to influence basic amenities. Income is found to have significant relationship with education of the children and electric consumption of the households. The influence of income on the shelter is rather small. In the study, it is observed that income has significant relationship with the social and demographic factors which also influence basic amenities.

The problem of urban poverty should be perceived as social, demographic and economic problem and not as an economic problem only. The policy reorientation towards attacking the low income will help to improve the health, family planning performance, literacy and hence awareness. For increasing the employment and income the specific areas of skill which are suitable for providing employment in small scale enterprises are to be identified. The skills
which have local demand for employment are: book binding, plastic toy-plate-pen making, tailoring, shoe making, carpentry, spinning and weaving, welding, electrician, motor mechanics and moulding. In these areas the organised institutional training and credit facilities should be given to the slum dwellers. The provision of counseling services should be made available as and when required.

To develop different small scale enterprises it is essential that supply of electricity should be made available. The study has indicated the difficulty on the part of the households to get power connections because of unwillingness of the house owners. Therefore, such procedures should be followed by the government and Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation (CESC) that do not debar the households from getting direct connection. This will also help stop the illegal practice of the house owner and will save money of the households due to temporary connections.

Finally, it is to be remembered that the developmental programmes should have an integrated approach considering all the demographic, social and economic dimensions of the people of slums. The active involvement of the people should be brought into at every stage of the programme starting from its formulation to the implementation. The success of the Urban Community Development (UCD) programme in Hyderabad, Slum Redevelopment Programme in the Rambagan
bustee of Calcutta is nothing but a reminder of the strength of community participation. The professional and intellectual designs, isolated from the socio-economic realities, characteristic bureaucratic hindrance in every stage of implementation of the programme and the inflexibility should be replaced with the multi-sectoral integrated approach based on the principle of flexibility and effective people's participation in plan design and implementation. A sincere approach in this direction will certainly lead us to the betterment of the slum conditions and provide a space for the people to live with dignity.