CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have witnessed an expansion of basic education opportunities throughout the world and particularly in the developing countries. After attaining independence, many Asian, Latin American and African countries motivated by the direction provided by UNESCO and other national and international agencies, recognised basic education as a fundamental right. This has been prominently highlighted in their development agenda and political declarations and India has been no exception to this.

The rapid increase in the urban population has given birth to the poorly built compact household with lack of basic facilities of life. Since 1980, the number of undernourished and poor individuals has increased in the urban areas. The slum areas are characterised by compact settlement with a collection of poorly built residence mostly of temporary nature, overcrowded usually with inadequate drinking water facilities and sanitation in unhygienic conditions. In these areas, meeting of basic needs tend to become more important than receiving of education as most of them suffer for livelihood.
According to the “Revision of World Urbanisation Prospects” in 2014 by the United Nations, urbanisation is on the upsurge trend. More people live in urban areas than in rural areas throughout the globe. Cities are growing faster that have resulted in generating more number of slums. In 2014, 54% of the world’s total population is residing in the urban areas; whereas, in 1950, only 30% of the world’s total population was urban and by 2050 it was projected that 66% percent of the world’s total population will be the urban population. India is projected to have 404 million urban dwellers followed by China and Nigeria having 292 million 212 million respectively. Further as per the 2011 Census of India, the urban population of the country is 377 million or 31.2% of the total population. The empirical evidences suggested that the people living in urban poverty will increase faster than the urban population growth, which will result in a substantial increase in the slum incidences.

1.01: MEANING OF SLUM

The word ‘slum’ appeared in the beginning of the 19th century. Initially ‘slum’ was designated as ‘a room of low repute’ or ‘low, unfrequented parts of the town’. During the middle part of the 19th century, this word appeared in the written language in quotation marks mostly as ‘backslum(s)’.

Slums are not a new phenomenon. They have been a part of the history of almost all cities, particularly during the phase of urbanisation and industrialisation. Slums
are generally the only type of settlement affordable and accessible to the poor in cities, where competition for land and profits is intense. The main reason for rapid increase in slum population is due to unplanned patterns of urbanisation along with a rapid increase in rural migration to urban areas.

The word ‘slum’ is often used to describe informal settlements within cities that have inadequate housing under miserable living conditions. They are often overcrowded, with many people in a very limited or small living area. The word ‘slum’ has added more complexities as the word have many term used by the people which justify different kind of yard stick for measurement.

Generally, a slum is defined as a compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate and drinking water facilitates in unhygienic conditions. An area is considered as “non-notified slum” if at least 20 households lived in that area and areas that are notified by municipalities, corporations, local bodies or developmental authorities are termed as “notified slum”. One out of every seven persons living in the urban areas is living in the slums of India

1.02: DEFINITION OF SLUM BY UN-HABITAT

According to the UN-HABITAT, “A slum household is defined as a group of individuals living under the same roof lacking one or more of the conditions like
access to improved water, access to improved sanitation facilities, sufficient living areas, not overcrowded, structural quality/durability of dwellings, security of tenure.”

These conditions indicated most of the slum dwellers and presence of any one condition relate to the dwellings to slum. However in the developed countries, access to better water and sanitation is nearly universal and the most significant indicators of slum dwellers are overcrowding and dilapidated dwellings. This is taken as the operational definition by the UN-HABITAT that reflects the condition that characterized slums in the world. This definition is also universally accepted however locally available definition, if any, has been accepted to define the slums in that particular region.

1.03: DEFINITIONS OF SLUM ACCORDING TO VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Different nations and cities across the globe had defined the term slum in varied manner. Some of the definitions used are reflected below:

**Thailand:**

Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (since 1991): “An overcrowded, unorderly and dilapidated community with unample environment which can be harmful for health and lives. The minimum number of housing units per rai is 15”. [Slums of
Pakistan:

Slums: The government definition of a slum in Pakistan is an informal settlement created through the ISDs of agricultural land. Unlike the “katchi abadis”, these settlements have tenure security and consist of villages that have become part of the urban sprawl and/or the ISDs created out on their community and agricultural land. There is no programme to improve their conditions except for those which, through political patronage, have been declared as “katchi abadis”. [Source: Slums of the world: The face of urban poverty in the new millennium- United Nations Human Settlement Programme; UN-HABITAT, 2003]

1.04: MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SLUM IN INDIA

A total of 65.49 million population living in 13.9 million households have been enumerated in slums of 2613 cities/towns spread across 31 States and Union Territories in the 2011 Census of India. While the non-slum population was 311.61 million according to that same census report. The slum population enumerated constitutes 5.4% of the total population of the country and 17.4% of the total urban population of all the States and Union Territories against 82.6% of the non-slum urban population in 2011.
As per Census of India 2011, Andhra Pradesh has the highest proportion of slum population (36.1%), followed by Chhattisgarh (31.98%), Madhya Pradesh (28.35%), Maharashtra (23.32%), Odisha (22.28%) and Sikkim (20.43%). With Jharkhand (4.7%), Arunachal Pradesh (4.9%), Assam (4.5%) and Goa (2.9%) being the other states with less than 5 per cent of the city population living in slums. Kerala (1.3%) has the lowest of city population living in slums.

According to the Slum Area Improvement and Clearance Act, 1956, slums have been defined as mainly those residential areas where dwellings are in any respect unfit for human habitation by reasons of poor buildings, narrowness streets, lack of ventilation, light, sanitation facilities or any combination of these factors which are unfavorable for safety, health and morals.

Three types of slums have been defined in the Census of 2011, namely, Notified slum, Recognized slum and Identified slum. It has been briefly described below:

(i) All areas in a town or city is categorized as “notified Slum” by State, Union territories Administration or Local Government under any Act including a ‘Slum Act’.

(ii) The areas recognised by state administration as well as by the local Government, but have not been formally notified as slum under any act may be considered as Recognized slums
(iii) *Identified slums* are those which are identified by the Directorate of Census Operations. These areas have at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built overcrowded dwelling, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities. (Source: Census 2011)

1.05: DEFINITIONS BY VARIOUS ORGANISATION AND GOVERNMENTAL BODIES

i. Definition of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act 1980, “Area containing land not less than seven hundred square meters in area occupied by or for the purposes of any collection of huts or other structures used or intended to be used for human habitation.”

ii. According to the Compendium of Environment Statistics, 1997, CSO, Government of India: A slum is defined as an aerial unit having 25 or more katcha structures mostly of temporary nature or 50 or more households residing mostly in katcha structures huddled together or inhabited persons with practically no private latrine and inadequate public latrine and water facilities.

National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) operational definition of slum in the 69th Round survey in the year 2012 is, “Any compact settlement with a collection of poorly built tenements, mostly of temporary nature, crowded together, usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions, was considered a slum by the survey, provided at least 20 households lived there.”

1.06: DEFINITIONS ADOPTED BY VARIOUS STATE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Some of the definitions of slum according to different states of India are as follows:

I. Andhra Pradesh

The Definition of Notified Slum Area as provided in “Andhra Pradesh Slum Improvement (Acquisition of Land) Act, 1956. Act. No. XXXIII of 1956” is “Where the government is satisfied that any area is or may be a source of danger to the public health, safety or convenience of its neighborhood by reason of the area being low lying, insanitary, squalid, or otherwise, they may by notification in the Andhra Pradesh gazette declare such area to be a slum area.” (Slums in India, A Statistical Compendium, 2015, page no. 6)
II. Uttar Pradesh

“Any area that a majority of the buildings in the area are by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding; faulty arrangements of design of such buildings, narrowness or faulty arrangement of streets, lack of ventilation; light or sanitation facilities, or any combination of these factors, detrimental to safety, health or morals of inhabitants in the area, or otherwise in any respect unfit for human inhabitation, it may by notification in the Official Gazette, declare such area to be slum area.

The building shall be deemed to be unfit for human habitation if any defective extent of necessary repairs; extent of dilapidation; water supply; arrangements for drainage and sanitation; facilities for storage, preparation and cooking of food and for the disposal of waste matter and water; and as aforesaid if it is so far defective in one or more of the aforesaid matters that is not reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition. (*Slums in India, A statistical Compendium, 2015, page no. 8 & 9*)

An analysis of the definitions used by various national and state governments, statistical offices, reveals the following characteristics of slums:

- Lack of basic services: Lack of access to improved sanitation facilities, improved water sources, absence of waste collection and drainage, etc are the basic facilities lacking among slum dwellers.
- Substandard housing: Slum areas are associated with a high number of substandard and illegal housing structures. The houses are built with non-permanent materials which is unsuitable for living under the given conditions.

- Overcrowding and unhealthy living conditions: Overcrowding is linked with a low space per person and high occupancy rates. Slum dwellers live in unhealthy living conditions as a result of a lack of basic services.

- Insecure tenure: Lack of security of tenure is considered as one of the vital characteristic of slums.

- Poverty: Poverty or economic constraint is considered as a central characteristic of slum areas.

Henceforth, slums manifest deprivation that result in income poverty. They are characterized by acute over-crowding, unhygienic, unhealthy living conditions which is unfit for human. A significant proportion of the slum dwellers also face social burdens and health problems worse than their non-slum and rural counterparts. Municipalities and local bodies do not provide the required civic services in slums on the ground that these are located on ‘illegal’ space.

1.07: EDUCATION IN SLUM

Education leads to improvements in the quality of life, promoting equity and enhancing many opportunities to participate in the society. India has wedded to
the democratic principles of equality, justice, fraternity since its independence. It is committed to the fulfillment of educational goals by providing universal access and a satisfactory quality of elementary education. The recently enacted 86th Constitutional Amendment recognises elementary education between the 6-14 years age group as a fundamental right. With this act, for the first time since framing of the constitution, education has been provided as the fundamental right.

Attempts were made to make primary education free and compulsory long before in the pre-independence period. Yet, Indian history had witnessed free and compulsory education under the kingship of Maharaja of Baroda in 1893 in his own kingdom. Inspired from this act, Gopal Krishna Gokhale plea Imperial Legislative Council to make primary education free and compulsory. However, his untiring efforts have been turn down by the then British Government in India. In the pre independence era many committees and commissions had recommended on improvement of primary education in the country without making it free and compulsory. In fact some Acts on primary education like Bombay Primary Education (District Municipalities) Act 1917; Bengal Primary Education Act 1919, Assam Primary education Act 1926; the Travancore Primary Education Act 1945 etc were passed with partial success in fulfillment of its mission.
1.08: CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS REGARDING PRIMARY EDUCATION

Article 45 of Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian constitution has provided that “A state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.” Education was included in State List at the time of adoption of the constitution.

The 42nd amendment of the Indian constitution in 1976 education was added under article 42 and it became a concurrent list subjects which enables the central government to legislate it in any manner along with state government. The 86th constitutional amendment making education as fundamental right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing free and compulsory education under the article 21A was passed by parliament in 2002. The article 21A state that, “The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6 to 14 years in such as the state may, by law, determine.” (Source: “Constitutional Amendment to make Education Fundamental Right Issues for a Follow-Up legislation”, Naline Juneja: NIEPA). The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act was passed by Parliament for implementation of the fundamental right in 2009. However both the constitutional amendment and new law came to effect from 1st April in 2010.
According to the Right to Children for Free and Compulsory Education Act, “Every child of the age of 6 to 14 shall have a right to free and compulsory education in neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education.” (The Gazette of India, Extraordinary; Part-II; Section -1; Government of India, 2009).

‘Free’ here means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fees or expenses which may prevent the child in pursuing or completion of primary education. ‘Compulsory’ implies that irrespective of any artificial barrier to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children of age group 6-14 years. It also make provision for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class. The act has suggested for infrastructural improvement as well as qualitative improvement of elementary education. (The Gazette of India, Extraordinary; Part-II; Section -1; Government of India, 2009).

In order to fulfill the objectives of reaching education to all, the following five conditions are required to be satisfied simultaneously and on sustainable basis (Aggarwal and Chugh, 2003):

- Provision of easy access to an educational facility for all children in the eligible age group (6-14 years) irrespective of the caste, creed or location.
• All children must be enrolled at the right age, implying universal intake through formal, non-formal or alternative modes of educational facility.
• Universal retention throughout the primary and upper primary education cycle, implying no dropout and repetition once the children are enrolled.
• Universal transition from primary to upper primary grades for all children irrespective of the type of school from which they started their education.

1.09: VARIOUS SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES OF INDIA

After India got independence in 1947, primary education acts were passed such as Assam Primary Education Act, 1947, Madras Elementary Education Act, 1952, Assam Basic Education Act, 1954; Kerala Education Act, 1958; the Delhi Primary Education Act, 1960; Assam Primary Education Act 1962 etc. These reflect that there is no dearth of legislative acts on primary education since independence in India. The enforcement of these acts requires provision for many facilities to enable the children to attend school. However, in reality financial difficulties, adult illiteracy, lack of infrastructural facilities, absence of trained teachers, improper execution etc were certain reasons for failure in successful implementation of these acts. Many centrally sponsored schemes in primary education were launched like Operation Black Board, Mid-day Meal Scheme, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, National Programme for Education of Girls at elementary education. Apart from these schemes certain literacy programme were
also launched like Total Literacy Campaign (TLC), National Literacy Mission (NLM), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Sikha Abhijan (SSA) etc to universalized primary education and attain 100% literacy in the country.

However, education of underprivileged deprived children living in slums continues to remain a challenge. They suffer from malnutrition, poor accommodation, poverty, hunger, orphaned early in life, etc. They continue to live under the umbrella of diseases, inadequate health services, over crowdedness, poor sanitation, violence, sexual abuse, and un-conducive learning environment. India’s performance on the educational sector has not been impressive in the post-Independence era. Literacy rate of India in 2011 is 74.04% against the 64.84% in 2001. It is noteworthy that only 44.6 million slum dwellers are literate i.e., 84.11% slum dwellers according to the Census Report of 2011. Even after several decades of independence statistics indicate that India has lagged behind even countries like Sri Lanka.

The recent rapid urban population growth and relative lack of attention to urban poverty has possibly intensify deprivation in urban areas. Many poverty studies of slums households in India indicate that the urban poverty can be spatially concentrated in slums, although not all slum households fall below the poverty line. However, the poverty and education nexus is complex, partly attributable to
the difficulty in distinguishing the effects of poverty on education from the effects of education on poverty. There are a few surveys on slum households in India to investigate educational deprivation of slum dwellers.

According to the 2001 census Assam has a slum population of 8,05,701 that occupies 1.07% of total slum population of India. However the 2011 census show a incredible increase in slum population in Assam with 1,97,266. Slum areas are growing fast in the metros. Out of 88 towns in Assam, 31 towns have slums. In Guwahati, slums population has been mainly cited near the Harijan colonies and by the side of the railway tracks. The biggest slums in Guwahati are located at Athgaon, Fatasil Ambari colony, Solapara harijan basti, Islampur Hedaytpur harijan basti, Hatigaon, Sijubari, etc. Slum populations of about 1.6 lakh have been recognised by Guwahati Municipal Corporation.

1.10: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Primary education can be considered as the backbone of a nation’s development. The success of every developmental plans programmes or schemes are highly dependent on this level of education. This is the basic level to consider one as a literate. Illiteracy is one of a major factor which stands as a hurdle in bringing any positive change in the society. Our society is still suffering from many ill practices and superstitious beliefs. On one hand our nation is developing in the technological fields and trying to introduce as ‘Digital India’ in the Global
Platform, while on the other hand we have 26% of illiterate population (as per 2011 census). However, illiteracy is mainly found among the masses living below the poverty line. Generally, in a city we can clearly distinguish between two classes of people one is above the poverty line and the other is below the poverty line.

There has been more political and constitutional commitment to elementary education in the recent years. 73rd and 74th amendments to the Indian constitution encouraged decentralisation and community participation in education. Free and compulsory elementary education from 6 to 14 years of age has been added as a fundamental right in 86th Constitutional Amendment of India, 2002, and was legislated as an act in 2009.

The development planners in India also made basic education as an integral part of the national development perspective plan for achieving the objectives of growth with equity and social justice. The country since independence is committed to the fulfillment of educational goals by providing universal access and a satisfactory quality of basic education. The 86th Constitutional Amendment recognizes elementary education (6-14 years age group) as a fundamental right.

Even though the Indian government has launched various programmes and projects to meet the basic learning needs of all children, the reality is far short of expectations. The reason for such unwanted results of our various plans and
policies and missions are due to the fact that these plans and policies are not able to encourage the targeted groups, i.e. the poorer section of the society, mainly the families belonging below the poverty line. There must be some root cause that the Government programmes are not able to reach their targeted goal. The recent rapid urban population growth and lack of attention to urban poverty, has possibly intensify multi-dimensional deprivation, including deprivation of education, in urban areas.

There are 2,613 slums in India with the population of 6,54,94,604 according to 2011 census. The literacy rate is found to be 77.7% according to 2011 census. It has further stated that 31 out of 88 towns in Assam have slums. Of the total number of slum dwellers in the State, 1,17,124 reside in identified slums, 70,979 in recognized slums and 9,163 in notified slums. (Source: Census Report, 2011)

As per provisional reports of Census India, population of Guwahati in 2011 is 963,429; of which male and female are 502,255 and 461,174 respectively. Literacy rate in Assam has seen upward trend and is 72.19 percent as per 2011 population census. Of that, male literacy stands at 77.85 percent while female literacy is at 63.00 percent. In 2001, literacy rate in Assam stood at 63.25 percent of which male and female were 75.23 percent and 51.85 percent literate respectively. In education sector, total literates in Guwahati city (according to 2011 census) are 798,726 of which 426,401 are males while 372,325 are females.
Average literacy rate of Guwahati city is 91.11 percent of which male and female literacy was 92.89 and 89.16 percent. This overall picture of education in India implies that educational opportunities and attainment for the urban deprived are much lower than for the affluent sections of the population.

Thus, in light of the above situation, the present study becomes highly significant as slum education is a major part of concern so as to reach the target of 100% literacy and also to raise the standards of living of the slum dwellers.

1.11: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study aimed at studying the factors relating to the educational backwardness of the children in urban slums with special reference to the Guwahati city. The study has been formulated under the following title:

“A STUDY ON THE EDUCATIONAL BACKWARDNESS OF CHILDREN IN URBAN SLUMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE GUWAHATI CITY”

1.12: OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The terms used in this present investigation are defined as follows:

- **Educational Backwardness:**
  According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘backward’ means having made less progress than is normally expected. In this study the term ‘backwardness’ means,
state of being below the normally accepted level in learning of things. It is not abnormal which implies the worst level. On the other hand, it is a retrograde measure from the marked level of learning.

In this study, “Educational backwardness” means the inability to avail the adequate and normal elementary education and other educational facilities by the children in urban slums provided by the Government in Guwahati city.

- **Slum:**

In this study slums means the overcrowding residential areas that lack basic amenities of life. They basically settle in government land illegally. These areas are primarily found near the railway track, under the over-bridges, near the market and industrial areas

**1.13: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To find out whether the slum children of Guwahati are availing their rights to education or not.
2. To study whether the parents are aware of the different schemes and policies of the Government relating to primary education.
3. To study the parental preference in educating the boys as compared to girls.
4. To identify the major educational problems faced by the slum children.
5. To find out whether the schools located in or nearby slum areas fulfill the guidelines under the “Right to Education Act, 2009” or not.
1.14: HYPOTHESIS

In light of objective no. 3, the following hypothesis may be framed

\[ H_0: \text{Parental preferences in educating their children are independent of gender} \]

1.15: DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is delimited as follows:

a) In India the constitution states that the primary education should begin at six years of age and last till fourteen year of age. As such the “Right to children for free and compulsory Education Act, 2009” has been passed with the view to impart free and compulsory primary education to all children of the age group 6-14 years irrespective of any barrier. As this study is delimited to Guwahati’s urban slums, the present study will include only the children belonging to the slums of Guwahati between the age group 6-14 years.

b) Again, the study is delimited to the Government primary schools of Guwahati only which is present in or nearby slum areas.

1.16: PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA
Guwahati is considered as the gateway of the northeast India and the only metropolitan city of Assam. It is situated at 26°10’ North latitude and 92°49’ East longitude with settlement on both sides of the river. It is presently situated in Kamrup district (metro). In its northern side Guwahati is surrounded by Nalbari district and Darrang and Marigaon districts in the East. In the south there is Meghalaya state and Barpeta districts in the West.

The commercial as well as the administrative structure of the Guwahati city comprises of Pan Bazaar, Paltan Bazaar, Fancy Bazaar and Uzan Bazaar. With urbanization and commercialization, it has extended to Chandmari, Zoo Road, Noonmati and Ulubari. Ganeshguri in the south and Guwahati-Shillong Road in north-southeast form another sub-center of Guwahati. Further it has branched out in the west towards Kamakhya, Jalukbari and LGBI Airport and Noonmati and Narengi in the east.

The governance of Guwahati has been vested to Guwahati Municipality Corporation (GMC), administering an area of 216 sq.km, covering 60 wards, while the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) is a state semi-public agency, in-charge of planning and development of the Guwahati Metropolitan Area (GMA) covering an area of 264 sq.km. Guwahati has been mainly sub-divided into four assembly constituencies- Jalukbari, Dispur, Gauhati East and Gauhati West, all of which further form Guwahati Lok Sabha Constituency.
Guwahati is one of the most rapidly developing cities in India. According to the Census of 2011, the city's population was found to be 9,63,429. The males constituted 55% and females at 45% of Guwahati residents. It was found that 10% of the population is under 6 years of age. Guwahati has an average literacy rate of 78%, with male literacy at 81% and female literacy at 74 %. (Source: Census of India 2011)

Fig 1: Guwahati in the map of Assam and India
Fig: 2: Map of Guwahati