CHAPTER VIII

PROBLEMS OF THE SLUM DWELLERS
Morton Grodzins has labelled the slums as the new shame of the cities. He says that new housing projects by their inadequacy in number have become new slums.

Michael Harrington writes with verve about the hopeless half of America living in slum with full of vices and disorganization. He has pointed out that the old ethnic slums had its 'culture of aspiration', whereas the new slums are 'slums of despair'.

If the ethnic slum had been a narrow world of a single religion caste language and culture, it was also a good toward the outside world. The new type of slum, groups together failures, rootless people, those born in wrong time, those at the wrong industry and the minorities. It is felt that the slums have
a wall around it and it contains vices and dis-organizing elements.

We find that most of the slums in Agra are predominantly inhabited by the Muslims and low caste groups, such as Jatavas, Balmikis, Kolis, Kumhars etc.. Old Agra is over-crowded, congested and having unhygienic surroundings. If an outsider walks through these localities he can very easily find the people living in different moods and activities such as drinking, gambling, chatting, loafing, abusing, passing remarks etc..

In these pages we shall concentrate ourselves on the individual and social problem of the respondents living in slum areas duly surveyed. Under section XIV of the Schedule, the respondents were asked in respect to their personal problems and under X, they were asked to mention the problems of the locality in which they are living along with their suggestion to solve these problems. Besides this, with a view to have general information regarding the slums under
study. The information was also drawn on the basis of discussion with some of the local leaders of that area. Although it is very difficult task to search out the elements of vices and dis-organization. Further it is equally difficult to conclude something only on the basis of observation. Even then an attempt has been made to have maximum possible information.

The respondents were asked to mention some of their personal problems. In this respect only 432 respondents told about their personal problems, whereas the rest of the respondents give vogue responses to this question. They gave different responses, (i) they have countless problems, (ii) the other said what you have to do with our personal problems (iii) why should we tell our personal problems (iv) it is of no use to tell our personal problems etc.. In spite of repeated and polite requests made by the researcher, they expressed their inability and indifference to respond.

The following table indicates the personal problems of the respondents.
Table No. 48

- Personal Problems of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Personal Problem</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Poor Housing</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Insanitation</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Unhygienic surroundings</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Spoiled children</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Per cent of respondents pointed out they have so many problems, but they have in particular pointed out towards the above mentioned problems besides insufficient clothing, rise in prices, indebtedness, illiteracy in their family, unwillingness of other family members to help in the earnings of the family, non-co-operation and indifference of the relatives living in the neighbourhood etc. 94% of the respondents have indicated that they have low income, 100% have pointed out towards poor housing and unhygienic surroundings.
91% have told about insanitation. Only 74% of the respondents pointed out that their children are spoiled. No one has indicated about his family life, family relation, or problems.

In response to another question regarding the feelings of the respondents in respect of their personal problems, most of the respondents gave no satisfactory answer. It was thought by the researcher that the respondents are unable to understand the question itself. The question was made clear to them to express their opinion or suggestions regarding their problems but in vain. Only 19.3% per cent of the respondents pointed out in general that the environmental conditions of our Bastis should be improved so that we may live like human beings.

Another question was asked regarding the type of medical treatment they have during their illness or that of their family members. 842 per cent could not indicate Allopathic, Homeopathic or Ayurvedic. They simply said that they approach the nearby doctor who give them medicines, but they don't know what type of medical treatment they get. In Agra, there is a large number
of unlicensed and unqualified persons who have entered Medical profession and have good earnings out of their private practice, although they do not know even ABC of the Medical Science. Very few of the respondents know about the different (16.8%) types of treatment. It appears that 84% of the respondents take allopathic treatment. Very recently the Lions Club, Agra has opened two Homeopathic Dispensaries in two different slum localities (one of the slum is predominantly populated by Balmikies (Sweepers) and the other by Jatavas). Two qualified Homeopath physician and one compounder is appointed in each of these two localities (Rui-ki-Mandi and Nagla Mohan).

**Table No. 49**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Expenditure</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 15</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 20</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 30</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 per cent of the respondents spent on medicines between Rs 5 - 10, whereas 76.4% between Rs 10 - 30. It is evident that they spend as a whole 4% of their income on medicines. But it does not mean that the low percentage of amount spent on medicine is positively correlated with the general health of the dwellers. Besides that they may be having free treatment in Government Hospitals or Municipal dispensaries. The incidence of illness may be greater in slum areas, as no evidence is available. Therefore, this fact cannot be proved. In Agra there are 6 dispensaries run by the Municipal Corporation in different parts of the city. They distribute medicines at nominal charges (10 paise per day per head). In all these dispensaries whole time qualified allopathic physicians are appointed. Most of the people rush up to these dispensaries as the charges for the medicine charged by other private physicians is considerably higher.

PROBLEMS OF THE LOCALITY:

1. Basai and Basti Taj Ganj are Predominantly inhabited by Muslims. It has been observed that each locality has
its own problem along with its peculiarities. The Muslim population, indicates its major problems as, insanitation, no permanent water outlets or drainage, inadequate water, provisions, no electricity in the basti, r katcha streets, no common laterines provided by the Municipal Corporation etc. They have blamed the Corporation and the Government for these problems. They also pointed out that every time, during the course of elections, we are promised that our problems shall be dealt with, soon after the elections, but they do not fulfil the promise. Further they pointed out that these problems can only be solved by the Government or the corporation. In response to the question all the Muslim respondents replied that they did not have any problem of their non living in the slum. Only 4 per cent of the Muslim respondents intend to leave the locality and desire to shift to some other refined locality. These 4% are tenants and not owners of the tenements. 96% of the respondents did not intend to leave the slum. The various reasons expressed by them are low rent, homely environment and long period
of residence. Only 13 per cent of the respondents preferred to shift to some better place, in case the Municipal Corporation intend to do this. Such respondents are tenants. The reason for doing so in respect of 10 per cent is to have better accommodation on low rent. 2 per cent of the respondents mentioned no reason.

2. Nagla Chidda and Nagla Faqir Chand are predominantly inhabited by Jatavas with no high caste Hindus or Muslims. The respondents of these localities, indicated their major problems as, unhygienic environment, collection of wastes at different places, the sweepers do not clean their streets and latrines regularly. They are very much harrassed by the sweepers. The Municipal Corporation authorities do not listen to their complaints but also as a reward for such complaints the dwellers are challaned and fined by the courts. They have electric poles in their locality but without bulbs. In response to a question as to where the bulbs have gone, they pointed out we do not know. For this, the corporation or Electricity Board is not be blamed but
PUBLIC LATRINES IN SLUMS

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the dwellers of these localities are to be blamed.

For dirty streets and blocked drainage both the dwellers and sweepers can be blamed. The respondents indicated that the corporation should do justice with them. None of the respondent is willing to leave the locality. The reason for not leaving is caste-brotherhood in case of 87% of the respondents and 13% of the respondents gave different reasons, such as low rent, occupational fellows etc.. None of the respondent expressed their willingness to shift to some better place if the corporation so desires. They indicated that the corporation can improve their environmental conditions of their present locality in what they are living since a very long period.

3. Nala Noori Darwaza (Kalka Pd. Chowdhry Marq and Soron Katra) are predominantly inhabited by Balmikis, Although there are few houses of upper caste groups. The basic problem of Nala Noori Darwaza is mackey and unhygienic environment. The big Nala creates much of
the suffocation because it is one of the uncovered central drainage in the city. The dwellers of this locality is comparatively rich and well-to-do amongst the Balmikis of Agra. Kalka Prasad Chowdhry who is the inherited chief (Takhat Chowdhry) of Balmikis Panchayat of Agra lives in this locality. In Soron Katra, the route problem is the drainage, Kachha streets, inadequate water provisions. In the entire locality there is only one tap whereas the total number of house-holds is 391. There is no street light provision. Only 10 common laterines and 1 bathroom are there that are insufficient. They lead to frequent querrels and exchange of hot words amongst the dwellers in this locality. 92% of the dwellers of Soron Katra complained against the Chowdhry of the locality and pointed out that he is responsible to create nuisance, disruption, thefts and crime that occurs in the locality. The entire locality - dwellers are afraid of him. It was further pointed out that he makes false-complaints against his neighbours in the Police Station with a view to harrass them. No one dares to have enemity with him.
The researcher himself confirmed this fact. This locality also covers 32 Municipal quarters inhabited by the Balmikis. There are also owned tanements. All the 92% of the respondents indicated that if the problems in the locality are to be solved they can only be solved when the chowdhry leaves the locality. Otherwise it is impossible to lead a peaceful life. Internal frictions are also one of the basic problems of Saron Katra and Nala Noori Darwaza. Quarrels among the men and women on both the slums are of the daily routine of most of the families due to one reason or another. When asked for the main causes of the problems of the area no definite reply was received from the respondents, but in general they blamed the local leaders of their locality. In Nala Noori Darwaza the Chowdhry is said to be cunning and notorious but is clever and due to this no one blames him directly or indirectly for any activity in the locality. There is nothing like theft, crime or delinquency in this locality as reported by its dwellers. Some of the dwellers of Saron Katra also talked about the problem of their own (23.6%) such
as insecurity of life and property, mental tensions, humiliation etc. whereas none of the slum-dwellers of Nala Noori Darwaza indicated about their personal problems.

7 per cent of the respondents in Nala Noori Darwaza intent to leave the locality as they have insufficient accommodation. They did not indicated as to where they would like to reside after leaving the present locality. Those who do not intend to leave the locality mostly expressed different reasons such as (i) they have their own tenements (ii) they feel at home (iii) they are paying very low rents, (iv) they have kinship relations etc..

In case of Saran Katra dwellers, 69% of the respondents are intending to leave the locality and want to reside in any other basti or colony where they may get suitable accommodation at a reasonable rent. 24 per cent of these respondents have also applied for the apartments constructed by the Municipal Corporation Agra at Idgah and Mal-ka-Chabutra. 23 per cent of the dwellers pointed out that they cannot leave the locality
as they have their own tenements. The rest of the respondents did not give any reason at all.

**Brief-note on the findings gathered on the basis of Observation Schedule:**

With a view to have general information of the slums, under study, an observation schedule was also used. The following broad-findings were drawn slum-wise:

(i) **Basai:** No proper drainage was found nor any outlets of water. At every place mud-water was found. Of course there is much of open space beyond the basti, but within the streets where the dwellers are inhabited there is only one pacca well. No provision for street lights. The streets are Kachcha and are in haphazard way.

(ii) **Basti Taj Ganj:** No drainage system, over-crowded, suffocation, full of dirty surroundings, collection of dirt at different places, katcha streets, one tap, 2 hand pumps, 1 well in the locality. So many stalls of meat-sellers, tea-stalls and chopals where the investigator found the people
engaged in playing cards for financial profits (gambling). People abusing one another. Both types of Kaccha and Pacca tenements were found mostly covered with white wash.

(iii) Nagla Chidda: Unhygienic environment, blocked drains, full of dirt, street light with bulbs on 2 poles out of many. Pacca and Kachha streets. Mostly Kachcha dwellings, 1 tap and 1 well.

(iv) Nagla Faqir Chand: Dirtiness, squalors, lanes and drains, full of mud and wastes. Mocky environment. It is difficult to have fresh air, too much suffocation, smoky surroundings. Electric Poles without bulbs, 1 water tap and 2 wells are in the locality.

(v) Nagla Noori Parwaza: Uncovered and large sized drain, (Nala) the dwellers inhibited on both sides of the Nala. Mocky environment, difficult to breath in, centre of flies and mosquitoes, unhygienic surroundings, Katcha and Pacca dwellings. Pacca Street. Street light provision. 2 Water taps and 1 well in the locality.
(vi) **Soron Katra**: Having Kachcha streets, no street light, 1 tap, 1 well located in this slum. The environment of this locality is unhygienic with improper drainage system.

A Note on the Problem of Vice and Disorganization

No authentic information could be gathered relating to the problem of vice and disorganization in slums under study. The researcher had some informal discussions with the slum dwellers and found that drinking and gambling were very much common amongst those slums predominantly populated with Jatavas and Balmikis, whereas in those bustids with concentration of Muslim population had some problems like loafing of their sons instead of going to the place of work. As a result, they had developed some bad habits like smoking, drinking and gambling to some extent. The querreling and abusing is very much common in almost all the slums duly investigated. It appears that these characteristics have become the part and parcel of their culture. What to talk about the slum-culture, abusing is very much common in the culture of Agra itself.
The children learn this from their parents. The different abuses and once they hear from their parents they further apply in their day to day behaviour amongst their own age-group. The information regarding to disorganization and crime could not be made available to the researcher.