

Chapter V: Urban Poverty

Basic Services to the Urban Poor

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter an overview of the urban poverty situation in Vijayawada urban agglomeration are discussed. About 26 per cent of the population reside in slums, squatters and other poor settlements in the city and in Mangalagiri municipality and surrounding villages. In the VMC they are mostly concentrated on the south-eastern part of the city. They are predominantly spread along the banks of river Krishna and many canals that flow through the city. Their contribution to city's economy has been growing over decades. With soaring land prices and absence of clear policy framework to address their problems, the poor suffer without access to basic services, like housing, livelihoods, education and health services, etc. There is need to clearly articulate policies and programmes to address these concerns and meet the infrastructure and social and economic development needs to improve their quality of life.

5.2 Growth of Slums and Slum Population

Vijayawada urban agglomeration is characterized by a very significant presence of the urban poor, with a growing poverty profile. Slum settlements have multiplied over years and the living conditions of the poor have not improved much. Environmental decline, inadequate basic services and infrastructure in the poor settlements hit the poor hardest. Slums are scattered across the city in different wards. It is estimated that many slums are located on private lands without access to basic services. The poor, not only habitate the slums of the city but are spread in squatters and informal settlements in small groups on the hillocks, river beds, etc., deprived of basic services. This makes them more vulnerable to vicissitudes of nature and periodic threats of eviction, ejection and demolition. No authentic data is available on the number of such settlements and their population. Another feature is that the Vijayawada urban agglomeration consists of out growths which are presently not part of the corporation area but inextricably linked with the city both spatially and economically. In all these areas the poor population is very high and all these areas can be considered to be slums without basic infrastructure – physical and social.

The number of slums and slum population in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation are increasing at a faster pace over the decades. The slum population as per 2001 census is over 30,851 and is presented in Table 5.2. The slum population has gone up substantially over the last few years and as per the 2005 survey it stands at 42,554, an increase of about 38 per cent which is very high.

Table 5.2: Slum Population and Literacy - 2001

City Name	Number of slums	Slum Population	% of Slum Population	Literacy rate	Female Literacy rate
Vijayawada	136	263973	30.31	70.59	64.26
Mangalagiri	35	30,826	51.86	72.51	65.08

Source: Census 2001

5.3 Socio-economic Characteristics of slum population

5.3.1 Literacy

The literacy rate of slum population in Vijayawada Urban Agglomeration as per census 2001 was about 70 percent and the female literacy in slums was about 65 percent. Table 5.2 gives the literacy status of slum population in Vijayawada and Mangalagiri. Despite increased literacy rates, the dropout rate in schools in the vicinity of slums has increased. Most of these dropouts are being drawn into the labour market. This is an area of concern.

5.3.2 Communities

Slum population in Vijayawada Urban Agglomeration is heterogeneous in character - with Hindus, Muslims and Christians having migrated from different neighbouring villages and districts in search of better employment opportunities in business, industry and other informal sector activities. The language predominantly spoken in slums is Telugu.

5.3.3 Land Status

Slums in Vijayawada Urban Agglomeration, as elsewhere in the state, are located on state and central government, municipal, private and other unclaimed lands. Slums are classified as objectionable and unobjectionable based on location and land use - location on riverbeds, low lying areas, drains, road margins, etc. Some of the very objectionable slums in VMC area were relocated and the communities rehabilitated. But those who live in hazardous areas is still large. It is estimated that about 30% households in VMC area live in unauthorised structures. In case of Mangalagiri and other villages, they were the small and scattered villages inhabited by the poor; particularly the labour from the agricultural lands and industrial areas. They suffer from worse deprivations in terms of physical and social amenities as well as sustainable livelihoods.

5.3.4 Environmental Conditions and Health Status

The environmental infrastructure in the slums is very poor and most slums lack basic civic amenities like proper roads, drainage, protected water supply, streetlights and toilet facilities. Studies show that the most common diseases prevalent in slums include gastro-enteritis, Malaria, diarrhoea, malnutrition, ringworm etc. To overcome these health problems the corporation runs five maternity hospitals and 17 urban health centres. The VMC has also started Reproductive and Child Health project and it is being implemented through non-governmental organizations. With their participation, 20 urban health centres were established to provide better health services to the women and children, particularly in slums and hill areas. There are also government dispensaries, which are visited by the poor. The poor from the peri-urban areas and the villages have to come to Vijayawada to meet their health needs. There is need to strengthen health infrastructure.

5.3.5 Basic Infrastructure

Access of slum population to basic services is a key indicator of the quality of life of people in slums in particular and those in the city in general. The infrastructure status in the slum is presented in *Table 5.3*.

Table 5.3: Basic Infrastructure in Slums

Services	Units	Vijayawada	- Mangalagiri	Other Areas
Roads	Km		87	
Sewer Lines	Km		Nil	
Storm Water Drains	Km		159	
Community Latrines	Seats		5	
Street Lights	No.		2131	
Drinking Water Supply Piped Supply	Km		45	
Drinking Water Supply Public Stand Posts (PSPs)	No.		450	
LCS Units	No.		4691	
Community Centres	No.		Nil	
Schools	No.			
Water Supply Coverage	%			
Sanitation Facility	%			
Electricity	%			

A significant feature VMC is that despite 90% coverage of slum areas with water supply lines, about 70% households do not have access to water supply, 5% to sanitation, and 15% to primary health care. In Mangalagiri and other peri-urban areas the situation is much worse. Thus, the basic infrastructure facilities in the slums indicate that they are minimal and inadequate and need to be strengthened.

5.3.6 Community Facilities

The community facilities in the slums comprise of schools, community halls, etc. No other amenities are available in the slum areas. The existing community infrastructure facilities in slums are presented in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Community facilities in Slums of Hyderabad

Sl. No.	Description	Schools No.					Community Halls (no.)
		Municipal School	Schools running in Pvt. Bldg.	Anganwadi	Sarva Siksha Abhiyan	Bala Jyothi	
1	Vijayawada	99	99	222			73
2	Mangalagiri	18	3	Nil		Nil	Nil
	Total	117	102	222			73

5.4 Unorganised and Informal Sector

The unorganised and informal sector's contribution to the city's economy is considerable. About 30% of the industrial workforce depends on this sector for livelihoods. The income per employed person in the organised sector is estimated to be 3 to 6 times more than the income of those employed in the informal sector. Studies conducted by Ministry of

Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation in 2001 indicate that informal sector accounts to 50-60% in a majority of cities in the country and their share in the urban employment is increasing. The salient features are:

The sector derives its importance due to the scale and nature of operations;

The activities are concentrated around the business districts, along the important road network in the city. They occupy the road margins, footpaths, riverbeds, hill slopes, etc. and are spread all over the VMC and surrounding urban and rural areas forming part of the urban agglomeration; and

The major areas of concentration of informal activities are MG road, Eluru road, Patamata in VMC area and extends to the urban and even rural areas surrounding the city ; and

The people involved in the informal sector constitute a major portion of urban poor and their incomes are very low though the entire family are involved in work in most cases.

5.5 Poverty Reduction Initiatives

The urban community development programmes in VMC started soon after it was upgraded as a municipal corporation in 1979 with the establishment of Urban Community Development (UCD) department in 1982. This is one of the successful and acclaimed programmes of poverty reduction in the country. After its initial success the Overseas Development Administration of the British Government supported the poverty reduction programmes during 1990-96 through the Slum Improvement Programme. In Mangalagiri several urban poverty programmes are under implementation and similarly in the villages in the surrounding villages the rural poverty alleviation programmes. The details of the ongoing poverty reduction under implementation in VMC and Mangalagiri municipality are presented in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5. List of Poverty Alleviation Programs

Nature of Funding	Vijayawada	Mangalagiri
Externally Funded	SIP	APURMSP
Central Sponsored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swarna jayanti sahari rozgar yojana • National slum development programme • Balika samrudhi yojana • Special nutrition programme • Individual Latrines - Low Cost Sanitation Programme • VAMBAY 	
State Sponsored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rajiv Nagar Bata Programme • Urban Programme for Advancement of Household Incomes • Rajiv Yuva Sakthi • Rajiv Gruha Kalpa • INDIRAMMA • Welfare programmes sponsored by Women, SC, ST, Minorities and other Corporations 	
ULBs Funds	Basic Services	

As we shall see later, several government agencies and NGOs also implement programmes relating to education, health, welfare and others. Studies indicate that there is lack of coordination and convergence in programme implementation. There is need to bring all these efforts under a single authority to facilitate coordination and convergence and to avoid duplication of effort and resources.

To achieve sustainable development the state government has taken the following policy decisions:

Water supply connection should be given to BPL families in urban areas for Rs 1200 to be paid in twelve instalments;

The urban local bodies should spend 40 % of net municipal fund for slum improvement and poverty reduction;

The urban local bodies should notify all the un-notified slums as per the government guidelines; and

Identification of slums for improvement based on priority as per the matrix prepared.

These programmes are being implemented effectively and the initiatives will benefit the poor most in terms of providing basic needs.

5.6. Community Structures

Community based organisations have a long history in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation having been established in early 1980s. Similar structures were also established in Mangalagiri as per the SJSRY guidelines. UCD Department and UPA Cell respectively in VMC and Mangalagiri municipality mobilize the communities and involve them in development programmes. The community based organisations include neighbourhood committees, resident welfare associations, Mahila Mandals, etc. Under the urban poverty reduction programs, community structures were established with the community having a major say in the provision of infrastructure and other services. In addition, the socio-economic programmes, especially those aiming at empowerment of women and weaker sections by generating self-employment through skill improvement, are under implementation through SHGs, DWCUA and other community based organisations.

5.7 Institutional Structures

The UCD Department and Urban Poverty Alleviation Cell are the umbrella organizations for the implementation of programmes and schemes for the poor. UCD Department of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation is the lead agency for the implementation of urban poverty alleviation and slum improvement projects and is responsible for the coordination of different inputs. In Mangalagiri municipality a Urban Poverty Alleviation Cell has been established and one Community Organiser looks after the work relating to the poor and implement all the poverty reduction programmes under the overall supervision of the municipal commissioner. In addition there are a large number of agencies responsible for implementing programmes aimed at poverty reduction. They include the revenue, education, health, housing and SC, ST, BC, Physically Handicapped, Women and Minority welfare departments and their state and district level organisations, civil society and community based and non-government. The Table 5.6 gives an indicative list of agencies and the focus of their activities.

Overlapping jurisdiction and absence of coordination and convergence of programmes and activities is a serious problem in urban poverty alleviation. There is need, therefore, for integrated and unified arrangements for addressing the problems of poverty reduction comprehensively. This will facilitate better targeting of programmes, effective identification of beneficiaries, facilitates participation of community based organizations, better institutional coordination, etc. Linkages should be established between the UCD/UPA Cells and civil society and their role in poverty reduction should be clearly understood.

Table 5.6 Indicative list of Institutions and Programmes

S. No.	Institutions	Programmes
1	Vijayawada Corporation, municipality and Gram Panchayats	Municipal Mangalagiri and Gram Implementation of poverty programmes Notification and denotification UCD Health and Sanitation Town Planning Infrastructure
2	Revenue Department	Issue of Pattas
3	Development Corporations relating to SCs, STs, Women, and Minorities	Provision of loans and subsidy for livelihoods
4	Housing Corporation	House Development
5	Education Department	School education
6	Health Department	Health care and ICDS
7	Social Welfare Department	Welfare of weaker sections
8	Vijayawada, Guntur, Tenali and Managalagiri Urban Development Authority	Planning and development
9	Urban Health Centres	Primary health care
10	NGOs	Livelihoods and services
11	CBOs	Articulating needs and priorities Planning and implementation

In the urban agglomeration area coordination between the corporation, municipality and village panchayats is very critical for development poverty alleviation. There is also need for convergence of programmes and coordination between UCD wing of VMC and UPA cell of Mangalagiri and government agencies, for effective targeting and better impact. Similarly the village panchayats around Vijayawada mostly depend on the city and therefore institutional mechanisms should be established for convergence. In addition, there is also need to ensure coordination across the public agencies, private sector and the civil society.

Key Challenges

Despite several initiatives by the central and state governments and the Corporation and other agencies towards poverty alleviation there are several critical issues and challenges that need to be addressed. They include:

Lack of Authentic Data: Lack of authentic and dependable data on various aspects of poverty including number of slums, status of infrastructure and access to services like water and sanitation, livelihood, etc.

Land Tenure: Land tenure is a critical issue in addressing the problems of the poor. In the absence of tenure rights the poor people living in non-notified slums are not in a position to access social and economic benefits under several programmes.

Infrastructure Deficiency: Deficiency of infrastructure and deterioration of existing infrastructure pose a serious problem due to poor maintenance thereby denying the services to the poor. With fund constraints, service provision for the poor becomes a sporadic activity rather than a regular service delivery system.

Another problem is the absence of connectivity of the slum infrastructure to the city wide network.

Neglect of Informal Settlements: Programs are targeted mostly on notified and developed slums. Lack of awareness of non-notified slums and absence of de-notification policy for developed slums comes in the way of dealing with non-notified and informal settlements.

Weak Municipal Resource Base: Weak resource base of VMC and other local bodies for creating and constantly upgrading infrastructure is a major challenge. As they depend on adhoc grants, the service provision for the poor becomes difficult.

Lack of convergence: Absence of convergence between programmes and co-ordination between institutions to address the problems in an integrated and meaningful way is a major challenge in effective implementation of poverty programmes. Sectoral interventions would not mitigate the problems of the urban poor nor improve their quality of life. Lack of coordination leads to inefficient use of resources as well.

Vulnerability: Programs for the poor need also to focus on vulnerable groups among them, like women and children, disabled and destitute, aged and children, etc.

Civil society: The civil society needs to be actively associated with the poverty programmes. The community based and non-government organizations can contribute substantially in poverty alleviation. The CBOs have, over years, become weak and inactive and they need to be strengthened

Strengthening UCD: The UCD Department of VMC need to be strengthened with professional inputs and in its present form cannot deliver the services. Similarly, the UDA cell in Mangalagiri needs to be strengthened. There is also need for greater coordination between VMC and peri-urban areas to address issues of poverty holistically.