

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-59099

Title: The Challenges of Socio-economic and other living conditions of Slum dwellers in Kolkata

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality			X	
Techn. Quality		X		
Clarity				X
Significance		X		

Reviewer's ID: JPR-212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

General Assessment:

This manuscript addresses a highly relevant and important topic: the socio-economic and living conditions of slum dwellers in Kolkata. The study is grounded in a significant body of literature on slums in India and presents data from a survey of 200 households (822 individuals) in Kolkata. The paper's descriptive findings—that the majority of slum dwellers have low incomes, low educational attainment, poor housing conditions, and limited access to sanitation and kitchen facilities—are consistent with the existing literature and provide a useful empirical snapshot of the challenges facing this population. The recommendations proposed are practical and address the key areas of concern identified in the findings.

However, the manuscript suffers from significant weaknesses that prevent it from meeting the standards of a scholarly publication. The most critical issues are: an underdeveloped and poorly articulated methodology, a lack of rigorous data analysis, a superficial engagement with the existing literature, and a discussion that largely restates the findings without providing deeper interpretation or theoretical insight. The paper reads more like a descriptive survey report than a rigorous academic study. Major revisions are required to strengthen the methodological foundation, deepen the analysis, and improve the overall scholarly quality of the manuscript.

Major Issues:

1. Insufficient Methodological Detail and Rigor:

- The methodology section (Page 4) is extremely brief and lacks essential details. The author states that a "Qualitative Survey Research method" was adopted and that "random sampling technique" was used to select 200 slum families. However, crucial information is missing:
 - **Sampling:** How was the sampling frame constructed? From what list of slum households were the 200 families selected? What was the total population of the slum(s) studied? Was the sample representative of the slum population in Kolkata? The author should describe the sampling procedure in sufficient detail to allow for replication and to assess the representativeness of the sample.
 - **Data Collection:** The author mentions "participant and non-participant observations and interview methods," but does not describe how these were conducted. What was the structure of the interviews? How long did they last? Were they recorded and transcribed? How were the observations documented? What was the role of the researcher in the community?
 - **Data Analysis:** The author states that "qualitative content analysis method" was used, but does not explain how this was operationalized. What were the coding procedures? How

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

were themes identified and developed? Was there any attempt to ensure inter-coder reliability? The analysis presented is almost entirely quantitative (frequencies and percentages), which contradicts the stated qualitative approach. The author needs to clarify whether this is a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods study, and align the methodology and analysis accordingly.

- **Ethical Considerations:** There is no mention of ethical approval, informed consent, or how the privacy and confidentiality of participants were protected. This is a significant omission, especially given the vulnerable population being studied.

2. Lack of Analytical Depth:

- The "Data Analysis and Findings" section (Pages 5-10) is primarily descriptive. The author presents tables and charts showing frequencies and percentages for various socio-economic indicators, but does not go beyond surface-level description. There is no attempt to explore relationships between variables (e.g., how does education level relate to income? How does family size relate to housing conditions?), nor is there any inferential statistical analysis.
- The discussion section (Pages 11-12) largely restates the findings and compares them to other studies without providing a deeper interpretation or theoretical explanation. The author could have drawn on theories of poverty, social exclusion, or urban marginalization to explain *why* these conditions persist and *how* they are reproduced. The work of scholars like Amartya Sen (capability approach), Saskia Sassen (urban marginality), or Mike Davis (planet of slums) would provide valuable theoretical lenses.
- The paper lacks a clear conceptual framework. What is the theoretical basis for understanding the socio-economic conditions of slum dwellers? How do concepts like "poverty," "deprivation," "social exclusion," or "informality" inform the analysis?

3. Weak Literature Review:

- The literature review (Pages 2-3) is a summary of several studies on slums in India, but it is not critically synthesized. The author lists study after study without identifying common themes, gaps, or debates in the literature. There is no clear articulation of how the present study builds on or contributes to this body of work.
- The review is also somewhat dated and geographically limited. While Indian studies are relevant, the author could engage with the broader international literature on urban slums and informal settlements (e.g., UN-Habitat reports, work by scholars like Davis, Sassen, or Roy).
- The rationale for the study (Page 3-4) is weak. The author states that "the condition of slum dwellers has improved than their beginning state but till it's remained in backward," but does not clearly explain what specific gap in knowledge the study addresses or why a new study of slum dwellers in Kolkata is needed.

4. Inconsistencies and Errors in Data Presentation:

- **Table 1 (Page 5):** The table title says "Distribution of Annual income of the Slum Households," but the text describes it as "income below Rs. 50,000/- ;75.5% families have income between Rs. 50,001 to Rs 100,000/-..." The percentages in the table do not match the text. The table shows "52.5" for the first category, "15175.5" for the second (which appears to be a typo for 75.5%), "3618" for the third, and "84" for the fourth. These numbers are inconsistent and confusing. The author needs to carefully check and correct all data in the tables.
- **Table 2 (Page 5):** The total is 190, not 200. The author should explain the discrepancy (e.g., missing data, deceased fathers, etc.).
- **Table 3 (Page 6):** The total is 196, not 200. Again, the author should explain.
- **Table 8 (Page 9):** The total is 822, which corresponds to the number of individuals, not households. The author should clarify the unit of analysis for each table. The table also shows "77" for "Below 6 years of age," which seems to be a frequency of individuals, not households.
- **Chart on Page 6:** The chart for Table 3 is mislabeled and does not correspond to the data in the table.
- **Chart on Page 7:** The chart for Table 4 is mislabeled and does not correspond to the data in the table.

5. Weaknesses in the Discussion and Conclusion:

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

- The discussion is largely a repetition of the findings. The author does not engage in a critical dialogue with the literature or provide a nuanced interpretation of the results.
- The conclusion is brief and does not adequately summarize the key findings or their implications. It also includes recommendations that are not clearly derived from the data (e.g., "Cleaning of roads, drainage and canals should be periodical and monitored").
- The recommendations are generic and not specific to the Kolkata context. They could be made more actionable by suggesting specific policy measures or interventions.

6. Language and Presentation Issues:

- There are numerous grammatical errors and awkward phrasings throughout the manuscript (e.g., "they have chosen low paid jobs," "they can't to involve," "they have no provision to work regularly," "they receive their earring money even after 6-8 months later").
- The manuscript would benefit from a thorough proofread by a native English speaker or a professional editor.
- The tables and charts are poorly formatted and inconsistent.

Specific Comments for the Authors (for a Major Revision):

To transform this manuscript into a publishable journal article, the author should address the following major points:

1. **Strengthen the Methodology:** Provide a detailed account of the sampling strategy, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. Clarify whether the study is qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods. Include a statement on ethical considerations.
2. **Deepen the Analysis:** Move beyond descriptive statistics. Explore relationships between variables and consider using inferential statistics where appropriate. Engage with theoretical frameworks (e.g., poverty, social exclusion, urban marginalization) to interpret the findings.
3. **Improve the Literature Review:** Critically synthesize the existing literature. Identify gaps, debates, and themes. Clearly articulate how the present study contributes to the field.
4. **Correct Data Errors:** Carefully check all tables and charts for accuracy and consistency. Ensure that the text accurately reflects the data presented.
5. **Strengthen the Discussion and Conclusion:** Provide a deeper interpretation of the findings. Discuss the implications for policy and practice. Make the recommendations more specific and actionable.
6. **Proofread for Language and Style:** Conduct a thorough proofread to correct all grammatical errors and improve the clarity and flow of the writing.

Conclusion:

This manuscript addresses an important topic and presents useful descriptive data on the living conditions of slum dwellers in Kolkata. However, the study is undermined by significant methodological weaknesses, a lack of analytical depth, and numerous errors in data presentation. In its current form, it does not meet the standards of a scholarly publication. A major revision, including a complete re-analysis and a more rigorous presentation of the data, is required. The recommendation is for major revision.