

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

**Determinants of School Enrollment of Children in Slums of Varanasi**Pallavi Nayak<sup>1</sup>, Payal Singh<sup>2</sup>, Neeraj Tripathi<sup>3</sup>, Akash Mishra<sup>4</sup>, RN Mishra<sup>5</sup>

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**Abstract**

**Introduction:** Education plays a vital role to developing a nation. In India, urban slums constituting about 22.6% of the urban population are the poor and socially disadvantaged. This slum community is least concerned for school enrollment of their children inspite of the fact that primary education is compulsory and is free in public schools. In urban areas schools available are mostly of private sector that are not free and beyond affordability to slums; government and corporation schools are few, but beyond reach. Motive of the parents is to involve children in income generating activities and the girls are more deprived of school enrollment in poorer society. The, present analysis aim to: 1) assess the enrollment status of slum children and 2) determine the factors influencing school enrollment. **Methodology:** The data was collected during 2011-12 from 15 randomly selected slums out of 227 in which a total of 893 families were contacted and mothers with children aged 5-15 years interrogated. In addition to child history on age, sex and school enrollment, the family background characteristics were e.g. religion, caste, and family size as well as age, education and occupation of both mother & father were recorded. **Results:** Out of 1145 children, male and female equal represented; mostly (90.9%) were Hindus and half were SC/ST class. About 30% father and 57.2% mothers were illiterate; about half fathers were unskilled-worker and 96.0% mother's house wife. Education of father and mother had significant role to enrollment but not the age and occupation of father and mother. Female child enrollment was poor if father was in business and mother was aged. Logistic regression analysis indicated that school enrollment of children aged 5-7 years was associated with age of mother and educational combination of father and mother, while of children 8-15 years caste/religion, family size, sex of child and educational combination of father and mother were found associated. **Conclusion:** Findings suggest that slum community as a whole is the pocket constituted by habitats of socially disadvantaged class has to be promoted with attitudinal change to schooling of their children without discriminating child sex.

**Key Words**

Slum population; School enrollment.

**Introduction**

Education plays a vital role to developing any nation. Millennium Development Goal (MDG-2) to achieve universal primary education and MDG-3 to promote gender equality and empowering women are vital to

achieve almost all other MDGs. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE), notified on 1 April, 2010 translates right of children to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education with removal of

all barriers. In India, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM), has made tremendous change in universalizing primary education. The girl's enrollment to schools in primary school was poor but now catching rapidly. In 2008, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had reported that an estimated 3.7% of children in the age-group 6-10 and 5.2% in the age-group 11-13 were out of school, indicating very high dropout rate (1). In terms of numbers, about eight million children in the age-group 6-13 are out of school, about 6.7 million in rural and 1.3 million in urban areas (2). One of the important education goals of World Fit for Children (WFFC) to ensure that by 2015, all children have access to and complete primary education.

Youth literacy rate that indicate school enrollment, is the worst in Uttar Pradesh (66.5%) followed by Jharkhand (65.2%) and Bihar (56.8%); while the best performing states are Kerala (98.3%), Himachal Pradesh (92.3%) and Maharashtra (89.5%). The levels of literacy among the disadvantaged community (SC/ST) in 2001 were even lower than that for 'Others' in 1991 and the Scheduled Tribes female literacy rate is the lowest among all the categories, being 34.8% (3). The gender parities are also dismal, in spite of some improvements between 1991 and 2001. The attendance rate of children in the age-group 5-14 for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes for years 1999-2000 and 2004-2005 in rural India is reported poor and about 8% children of Muslim community are still out-of-school (4). It is well established that at a micro-level, children of poor households receive less education (5).

The urban population of India is growing fast and is predicted to rise to 33% by 2026 (6, 7). The community constituted by poverty pockets, so called slum, is growing faster because of poor rural migrants and their high level of fertility. The growth rate since 1991 to 2001 of the country was 2% per annum, of the urban population 3%, of mega cities 4% while of slum population it was 5% (3, 8). Currently 22.6% urban slum population is scattered in 640 cities in India. In Uttar Pradesh, the slum populations in Meerut and Faridabad cities were nearly half of the city population (43.9% in Meerut and 46.6% in Faridabad respectively) (8) and in Varanasi of eastern UP it is about 40% (9). The slum community is constituted by mainly socially disadvantaged community (SC/ST and Muslims) with poor literacy level and economic condition. To this

community, education of children is on low priority; rather children are engaged in income generating activities. In urban areas plenty of schools are available but mostly of private sector and are beyond affordability to the slum community. Government and corporation schools are not enough and also beyond reach. Hence, mainly girls are deprived of school enrollment due to male preference and are forced to either house-hold activities or to work as labour for income generation. Eastern Uttar Pradesh is backward region of the state with poor literacy and economic condition. The slums of this region are the poorest among poor's for whom earning of bread and butter is of utmost importance than education of children.

### Aims & Objectives

1. To assess the enrollment status of slum children.
2. To determine the socio-economic factors that are responsible for no school enrollment.

### Material and Methods

A cross sectional study during 2011-12 was carried in 15 randomly selected slums out of total 227 slums of Varanasi city. A total of 894 families were randomly selected from 15 selected slums and mothers with children age 5-15 years were interviewed on a pre-tested schedule. Major objective of data collection was to assess fertility behaviour, contraceptive practices and school enrollment of children. Out of selected families, a total of 1145 children were found in the age group 5-15 years. In addition to status of school enrollment of children, socio-demographic profile of families including age, education and occupation of both mother & father of children was also listed. The categories made of religion was as Hindu and Muslims; of caste as SC/ST, OBC and Others (10-13), of type of family as nuclear and joint, of literacy status as illiterate, up to middle and above middle, of occupation of father as small scale business, skilled worker, unskilled worker and service and of mother as house wife and worker, of Per Capita Income (PCI) as lower, middle and upper (14) and of age of both father and mother as below 25, 25-34 and 35 years

**Statistical analysis:** The data was analysed by SPSS version 16.0 and the results were presented in percent for qualitative as well as categorical quantitative characteristics. Firstly, data was summarized for background characteristics of family, parents of children and then association of school enrollment with their background characteristics

was judged by bivariate analysis and finally, logistic regression analysis was carried by including only those characteristics significantly associated in bivariate analysis to adjust the confounding effect. Statistical significance was considered at  $p = 5\%$ .

## Results

[Table-1](#) indicates that mostly children (90.9%) were Hindus out of which half (50.1%) are of SC/ST and one third of OBC (32.5%). Children belonging to family size 5-9 members were three fourth (74.7%) while in families with 3-5 members there were 14.9% children. Age of the father of the majority (57.6%) of the children was  $\geq 35$  years, while age of mothers of majority (60.0%) of children was “between 25 to 34” years. Nearly one third father (29.3%) and three fifth mothers (57.2%) of children were illiterate. More than half (54.8%) fathers of these children were unskilled worker and almost all (96.0%) mothers were house wives. Male and female children were almost half and equally distributed in the age groups 5-6, 7-9 and 10-15 years.

As indicated in [Table 2](#) overall, nearly one third (31.3%) children were not enrolled in the schools at the time of survey; 45.1% among aged 5-7 years and 20.8% among aged 8-15 years. Non enrollment in schools of the children aged 5-7 years was almost same irrespective of their sex, while among children of age 8-15 years significantly much higher female children (24.3%) than male children (17.3%) had not been enrolled ( $p = 0.033$ ).

Bivariate analysis as shown in [Table 3](#) indicated that religion, education of father and age & education of mother were significantly associated background characteristics with school enrollment among children aged 5-7 years; while significantly associated background characteristics among children aged 8-15 years were religion, family size and education of both father & mother. Compared to Hindus, in both the age groups children not enrolled were higher in Muslims (61.9% in Muslims and 43.5% in Hindus in the age group 5-7 years and 41.9% in Muslims and 18.5% in Hindus in the age group 8-15 years). Smaller was the family size higher was the proportion of children aged 8-15 years being not enrolled in schools? As literacy level of father and mother increased, children not enrolled in both the age group decreased. Non enrollment of 5-7 years children among illiterate fathers were 60.1%, among up to middle level 43.2% and among above middle level 32.9% while among children aged 8-15 years

these were 32.8%, 16.4% and 14.5% respectively. Non enrollment of children was significantly lesser among younger aged mothers than older aged mothers in both the age groups of children; 56.2% children of age 5-7 years among illiterate mothers and 26.2% among above middle pass mothers were not enrolled, while these children age group 8-15 years were 26.9% and 6.8% respectively. No association of non-enrollment was found whether mother was house wife or working.

Bivariate analysis cannot reflect true association of the characteristics; therefore, multivariate analysis carried and results are shown in [Table-4](#) & [Table 5](#) for children 5-7 and 8-15 years separately. For children aged 5-7 years, non-enrollment was significantly associated by only mother's age and educational combination of father & mother; while for children aged 8-15 years significantly associated characteristics were caste/religion, family size, sex of the child and educational combination of father & mother. Compared with mothers age  $\geq 35$  years, the risk of no enrollment in school of children aged 5-7 years is lesser by about half (OR = 0.54; CI: 0.34 – 0.86) if mother was of age 25-34 years while almost similar to mothers of < 25 years. No enrollment risks of children was 3.93 (CI: 1.87 – 8.35) higher if both father and mother were illiterate and 2.55 (CI: 1.21 - 5.36) times higher if mother illiterate but father up to middle than those if both father and mother were middle and above. The risk of no enrollment in school of children aged 8-15 years was lesser by one fifth (OR = 0.22; CI: 0.07 – 0.68) if the child was of general class, while lesser by two fifth (OR = 0.40; CI: 0.20-0.79) and by about two fifth (OR = 0.45; CI: 0.25-0.83) if the child was of OBC and SC/ST children respectively when compared to children of Muslims. Compared to family size 10 members, risk of no enrollment was 3.06 (CI: 1.14 – 8.25) time higher among children of family size below 5 members but similar to those of 5-10 members. Non enrollment risk was lesser by 0.63 (CI: 0.42 – 0.95) for male children compared to female children. Risk of no enrollment of those children was 8.77 (CI: 2.02 – 38.09) times, 5.70 (CI: 1.31 - 24.85) times and 5.78 (CI: 1.22 – 27.22) times higher whose both father and mother were illiterate, mother illiterate but father up to middle and mother up to middle and father above middle than those whose both father and mother were above middle level

## Discussion

Education irrespective of gender is an essential and integral component to develop a nation in every sphere of development. In developing nation poor economy, poor access of schools, and poor attitude of the community towards education are the major impediments for both school enrollments as well as continuation, if enrolled. India is the male dominance country and if children are deprived of education, girls are the mostly affected. Empowering women is the need to faster development of nation and can be achieved by raising their education. Many strategic changes like right to all to free and compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education with removal of all barriers, SSA and MDM schemes has made tremendous change in universalizing primary education resulting to accelerated girl's enrollment to schools. Under the goal of WFFC, all children should have access to and complete primary education. But recent data on poor youth literacy rate in many states like Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar indicates poor school enrollment and moreover, much less in disadvantaged community with substantial gap between male and female. The urban slums are constituted mostly by disadvantaged community and are increasing faster. Due to poor economic condition, poor accessibility of public schools in urban, children are engaged in income generation activities rather than to enroll to schools. In urban areas schools are mostly of private sector that is beyond affordability to the slum community. Government and corporation schools are limited and are beyond reach. Because of this, girls are more deprived of school enrollment. Eastern Uttar Pradesh is backward and slums of this region are the poorest among poor's for whom earning of bread and butter is the first priority than education of children. Slums of Varanasi is predominated by Hindus children (90.9%) and among these half are of SC/ST and one third of OBC (32.5%). Three fourth children belonged to family size 5-9 members indicating overall family size will be larger. Nearly 60% father and mother of these children are of either age  $\geq$  35 years or 25 to 34 years. Illiteracy was about 30% of father and almost double of mothers of these children. More than half (54.8%) fathers were unskilled worker and almost all (96.0%) mothers house wives. The caste/religion composition, age and education of parents are favoured characteristics to poor school enrollment of children. Sex ratio was 1:1 and equally distributed

in the age groups 5-6, 7-9 and 10-15 years. Overall 31.3% children aged 5-15 years were found not enrolled till the survey date. Nearly half children (45.1%) of age 5-7 years irrespective of sex had not been enrolled, while in age group 8-15 years significantly more female children (24.3%) than 17.3% male children had not been enrolled indicating more girl children are deprived of schooling. Non enrollment in schools of children aged 5-7 years was affected by religion, education of father and age & education of mother; while for children aged 8-15 years caste/religion, family size and education of both father & mother. Compared to Hindus non-school enrollment was much higher in Muslims among both the age groups of children (43.5% in Hindus and 61.9% in Muslims for the children of age group 5-7 years and 18.5% Hindus and 41.5% Muslims for the children of age group 8-15 years). Poor school enrollment was in families of relatively larger size. As literacy level of father and mother increased, children of both the age group that were not enrolled decreased from 60.1% among illiterate fathers to 43.2% among below middle level and further to 32.9% among those above middle level pass for children of age 5-7 years; while for children aged 8-15 years these were 32.8%, 16.4% and 14.5%. Significantly lesser children were not enrolled of younger aged mothers than older aged mothers in both the age groups of children. Among illiterate mothers 56.2% children of age 5-7 years were not enrolled, while only 26.2% if mothers were above middle level, but for the age group 8-15 years, 26.9% children were not enrolled if mother was illiterate as against only 6.8% if above middle pass. Multivariate analysis indicated that non-school enrollment of children aged 5-7 years was influenced by only mother's age and educational combination of father & mother; while for children aged 8-15 years caste/religion, family size, sex of the child and educational combination of father & mother. The risk of non-enrollment in schools to children aged 5-7 years is lesser by about half (OR = 0.54; CI: 0.34 – 0.86) if mother is of age 25-34 years compared to mothers of age > 35 years; while almost similar to children of mothers < 25 years. Non enrollment risks of children when both father and mother were illiterate and mother illiterate but father up to middle was 3.93 (CI: 1.87 – 8.35) times and 2.55 (CI: 1.21 - 5.36) times higher than those whose both father and mother were above middle pass. For children aged 8-15 years when compared to



Muslims, the risk of non-school enrollment is lesser by one fifth, two fifth and nearly half (OR = 0.22, 0.40 and 0.45) in general class, OBC and SC/ST respectively. Compared to family size of < 10 members, non-school enrollment risk was 3.06 (CI: 1.14 – 8.25) time higher among children of family size below 5 members but similar to those of 5- 10 members. Non enrollment risk was lesser by 63% (OR: 0.63 CI: 0.42 – 0.95) if the child was male than female. Risk of non-enrollment was 8.77, 5.70 and 5.78 times higher if both father and mother were illiterate, mother illiterate but father up to middle and mother up to middle and father above middle than those whose both father and mother were above middle.

### Conclusion

Findings suggest that slum community as a whole is the pocket constituted by habitats of socially disadvantaged class has to be promoted with attitudinal change to schooling of their children without discriminating child sex.

### Authors Contribution

All authors have contributed equally in the study and manuscript.

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### Tables

**TABLE 1 BACKGROUND PROFILE OF CHILDREN AND THE FAMILY**

Profile of children's family					
Background Characteristics	No.	%	Background Characteristics	No.	%
<b>Religion</b>			<b>Occupation of father</b>		
Hindu	1041	90.9	Business	210	18.3
Muslim	104	9.1	Skilled worker	163	14.2
<b>Caste</b>			Unskilled worker	627	54.8
General	95	8.3	Service	145	12.7
OBC	372	32.5	<b>Age of mother</b>		
SC/ST	574	50.1	Below 25	124	10.8
<b>Family size</b>			25-34	687	60.0
Below 5	171	14.9	More than 34	334	29.2
5-9	855	74.7	<b>Education of mother</b>		
More than 9	119	10.4	Illiterate	655	57.2
<b>Age of father</b>			Up to middle	370	32.3
Below 25	28	2.4	Above middle	120	10.5
25-34	458	40.0	<b>Occupation of mother</b>		
More than 34	659	57.6	HW	1099	96.0
<b>Education of father</b>			Working	46	4.0
Illiterate	335	29.3			
Up to middle	505	44.1			
Above middle	305	26.6			
<b>Profile of children</b>					
	No.	%		No.	%

Sex			Age of children		
Male	580	50.7	5-7	495	43.2
Female	565	49.3	8-15	650	56.8
Enrollment in school					
Enrolled	358	31.3			
Not enrolled	787	68.7			

TABLE 2 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN BY THEIR AGE AND SEX

Age of child (years)	School enrollment status	Sex				Total		$\chi^2$ , df p value
		Male		Female		No.	%	
		No.	%	No.	%			
8-15	Not enrolled	57	17.3	78	24.3	135	20.8	4.80
	Enrolled	272	82.7	243	75.7	515	79.2	1
	Total	329	100.0	321	100.0	650	100.0	0.033
5-7	Not enrolled	112	44.6	111	45.5	223	45.1	0.04
	Enrolled	139	55.4	133	54.5	272	54.9	1
	Total	251	100.0	244	100.0	495	100.0	0.846

TABLE 3 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT STATUS BY FAMILY BACKGROUND

Background Characteristics	Age of child						Total		
	5- 7years			8 years & above					
	N	% not enrolled	P value	N	% not enrolled	P value	N	% not enrolled	P value
Religion									
Hindu	453	43.5	0.022	588	18.5	0.000	1041	29.4	0.000
Muslim	42	61.9		62	41.9		104	50.0	
Caste									
General	44	36.4	0.169	51	9.8	0.126	95	22.1	0.000
OBC	260	39.4		212	17.0		372	26.6	
SC/ST	149	47.4		325	20.9		574	32.4	
Size of the family									
Below 5	99	47.5	0.387	72	20.8	0.043	171	38.3	0.002
5-9	356	45.5		499	22.4		855	32.0	
10 & more	40	35.0		79	10.1		119	18.5	
Age of father									
Below 25	11	63.6	0.142	17	5.9	0.185	28	28.6	0.439
25-34	254	41.3		204	23.5		458	33.4	
35 & above	230	48.3		429	20.0		659	29.9	
Education of father									
Illiterate	143	60.1	0.000	192	32.8	0.000	335	44.5	0.000
Up to middle	89	43.2		299	16.4		138	27.3	
Above middle	146	32.9		159	14.5		305	23.3	
Occupation of father									
Business	100	43.0	0.847	110	24.5	0.126	210	33.3	0.343
Skilled worker	75	40.0		88	22.7		163	30.7	
Unskilled worker	266	47.0		361	21.6		627	32.4	
Service	54	46.3		91	11.0		145	24.1	
Age of Mother									
Below 25	57	43.9	0.002	67	22.4	0.352	124	32.3	0.128
25-34	329	40.4		358	18.7		687	29.1	
35 & above	109	59.6		225	23.6		334	35.3	
Education of mother									
Illiterate	265	56.2	0.000	390	26.9	0.000	655	38.8	0.000
Up to middle	169	34.3		201	12.9				
Above middle	61	26.2		59	6.8		120	16.7	
Occupation of mother									

House wife	475	44.6	0.361	624	20.8	0.844	1099	31.1	0.600
Working	20	55.0		26	19.2		46	34.8	

**TABLE 4 DETERMINANTS OF DELAYED OR NO ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN AGED 5-7 YEARS IN SCHOOLS: A LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULT**

Determinants	$\beta$	Wald Value	P Value	AOR	CI of AOR
<b>Caste/Religion</b>					
General	-0.67	1.97	0.160	0.51	0.20 – 1.30
OBC	-0.65	2.75	0.097	0.52	0.25 – 1.13
SC/ST	-0.48	1.68	0.195	0.62	0.30 – 1.28
Muslims	Ref.				
<b>Mother's age (years.)</b>					
Below 25	-0.47	1.86	0.173	0.62	0.32 – 1.23
25 - 34	-0.62	6.78	0.009	0.54	0.34 – 0.86
≥ 35	Ref.				
<b>Sex of the child</b>					
Male	0.04	0.03	0.857	0.97	0.66 - 1.41
Female	Ref.				
<b>Education of father &amp; mother</b>					
Both mother & father illiterate	1.37	12.93	0.000	3.93	1.87 – 8.35
Mother illiterate & father up to middle	0.94	6.04	0.014	2.55	1.21 - 5.36
Mother illiterate & father above middle	0.85	3.18	0.074	2.34	0.92 – 5.96
Mother up to middle & father illiterate	0.51	0.81	0.368	1.66	0.55 – 5.10
<b>Both mother &amp; father up to middle</b>	0.34	0.74	0.389	1.41	0.65 – 3.05
Mother up to middle & father above middle	0.01	0.01	0.999	1.00	0.42 - 2.38
Mother above middle & father up to middle	0.31	0.15	0.700	1.37	0.27 – 6.73
Both mother & father above middle	Ref.				

**TABLE 5 DETERMINANTS OF NO ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN AGED 8-15 YEARS IN SCHOOLS: A LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULT**

Determinants	$\beta$	Wald Value	P Value	AOR	CI of AOR
<b>Caste/Religion</b>					
General	-1.51	6.90	.009	0.22	0.07 – 0.68
OBC	- 0.92	7.04	.008	0.40	0.20 – 0.79
SC/ST	- 0.80	6.44	.011	0.45	0.25 – 0.83
Muslims	Ref.				
<b>Family size</b>					
Below 5	1.12	4.89	.027	3.06	1.14 – 8.25
5 - 9	0.79	3.73	.053	2.20	0.99 – 4.90
10 or more	Ref.				
<b>Sex of the child</b>					
Male	- 0.46	4.90	.027	0.63	0.42 – 0.95
Female	Ref.				
<b>Education of father &amp; mother</b>					
Both mother & father illiterate	2.17	8.40	0.004	8.77	2.02 – 38.09
Mother illiterate & father up to middle	1.74	5.37	0.020	5.70	1.31 – 24.85
Mother illiterate & father above middle	1.23	2.14	0.144	3.43	0.66 – 17.89
Mother up to middle & father illiterate	1.35	1.94	0.164	3.88	0.58 – 26.09
Both mother & father up to middle	0.70	0.77	0.380	2.02	0.42 – 9.71
Mother up to middle & father above middle	1.75	4.92	0.026	5.78	1.22 – 27.22
Mother above middle & father up to middle	0.45	0.12	0.730	1.56	0.12 – 19.65
Both mother & father above middle	Ref.				