



SLUM DWELLERS' HUMAN RIGHTS: A STUDY OF SLUMS IN MEERUT CITY

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Abstract: Slum dwellers live in most sub-human conditions and most of them survive by adopting the informal work of rag picking, which is undoubtedly one of the worst hazardous and inhuman activity. The purpose of this research is to carry out study on living conditions of rag pickers in slums and to provide suggestions to lay down specific legal frame work for the protection of their rights as human beings. Rag picking is one of the most critical aspects of the cyclical mechanism of reusing the products in the formal industrial market economy. Given this, the rag pickers, first link in the entire chain have always been a mistreated and deprived section of the society. This poor section does not get proper consideration from either the society or the government. To improve the situation of this group of people, the government must come up with workable ideas and appropriate policies to improve their quality of life and prevent violation of their basic rights as human. Individuals in the community should change their attitudes toward this group and try to integrate them into the mainstream in order to create a safe and respectful place for them in the society

Keywords: Slum Dwellers, Rag Pickers, living conditions, Human rights, Solid Waste Management, Indian Law.

Introduction

India produces about 5.31 million tons of waste each year and is facing an unprecedented solid waste management crisis. Coupled with an upward trend in industrialization, rural migration, spending and an increasing propensity for capitalist consumption, the amount of waste generated in the country will continue to increase rapidly with time. Till now, India has managed to collect, segregate and dispose waste largely due to the efforts of waste pickers, who form the backbone of this sector. Unfortunately, their profession remains unrecognized under the law in India. Rag pickers/Waste pickers are a sizeable proportion among the poorest workers in the urban informal economy. This societal segment earns it's livelihood through the segregation and

sale of scrap for recycling. Majority of the rag pickers have migrated from nearby villages looking for better opportunities, from other states as a result of famines & draughts, and even from other countries like Bangladesh as refugees. In the modern context, rag pickers are considered to be self-employed having no legally tenable employer-employee relationship either with the municipalities or the recycling industries to which they contribute. Waste picking is one of the most accessible means of livelihood for the impoverished in India as it requires minimal skills, knowledge or capital investment. As per the definition adopted by the S.W.M.R, 2016, the term “waste picker “can be defined as a person or collection of persons who is or are directly engaged in the compilation of reusable and recyclable solid waste from the source of wastes for sale to be recycled directly or through intermediaries to earn their subsistence¹. The rag pickers often collect rags from the bins used for storing garbage or from the dumping grounds. Average working age of a rag picker is considered to be between 6 to 55 years though most productive years are taken from 6-35 years. Small children rather than going to school are seen picking waste from street corners or rummaging through the trash dumps facing the risk to be injured from the sharp objects like needles and getting exposed to the hazardous hospital waste. They are likely to contact dangerous diseases, respiratory problems, cuts, rashes, and rabies.²The problem of rag-picking is not an old phenomenon; it is relatively new, which is restricted to urban and industrial cities only. In fact, the recycling of the waste material has emerged due to increase in the cost of raw materials for producing paper, plastics, glass products and miscellaneous packing materials. However, the materials which rag pickers collect include waste and unused paper, card board boxes, plastic bags, containers, tins, discarded utensils, glass bottles, jars, broken glasses, medical waste, screws, bandages, tablet containers from garbage dumps and residential areas.³

Unfortunately, the Indian Society regards rag pickers as antisocial elements, an embarrassment to the community and unfit to live with the civilized society. They mostly reside in the slums in sub-human conditions devoid of safe drinking water, public toilets, sanitation, health care and schooling for the children. However, their useful contribution to society and ecology is little understood and generally ignored. The waste collected by them is recycled and produces 25% of the paper, the packing materials, egg trays, plastic and metal household items used at homes. This benefits the society and world-ecology enormously by the production of cheaper household goods, and the slowing down of the destruction of the already threatened forests. It also helps to prevent the waste materials piling up like mountains in city centers. The rag picker's valuable contribution to society should not be ignored and taken for granted.⁴

¹<https://vikaspedia.in/energy/environment/waste-management/solid-waste-management-rules#:~:text=No%20person%20should%20throw%2C%20burn,for%20Littering%20and%20Non%2Dsegregation.>

²Shishir Srivastava, RAGPICKERS IN MODERN DAY INDIA, merinews, June 2, 2008

³Lal B. Suresh (2019): Child Ragpickers in India: An Investigation in Waste Management Health Hazards and Earnings, Economic Challenger, Issue 85, Oct.-Dec. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336639554>

⁴Ray M R, Mukherjee G, Roychowdhury S and Lahiri T (2004): Respiratory and general health impairments of rag pickers in India: a study in Delhi; an International archive of occupational and environmental health; November; Vol. 77; No 8.

Objective of the study

Objective of this study is to carry out analysis of living conditions of the rag pickers residing in selected slums of Meerut City and see if there are any human rights violations.

Area of Study

Meerut City has been taken as area of study however it will include only selected slums for the purpose of collecting desired samples. Meerut is one of the major districts of Western Uttar Pradesh and is governed by Meerut Municipal Corporation. As per the census of 2011, its' population was 1,305,429 whereas the current estimated population is 1,799,000, worked out on the average of annual growth. The city has multiple educational institutions, including number of universities both in government and private sectors. There are several colleges providing professional education in multiple disciplines and provide opportunities for education and training. According to the Census of India 2011, there were 185 slums in Meerut city with a total population of 722281 which was almost half of the total population of the city. This number certainly must have increased which is evident from the slum dwellings which have come up around the city. The city is situated 70 km North-East of Delhi, and 453 km North-West of Lucknow which is the state capital. Meerut is the second largest town in the National Capital Region having municipal area of 141.89 km² with the cantonment covering 35.68 km². The city is one of the largest producers of sports goods, and musical instruments in India and also an education hub in Western Uttar Pradesh. (Census of India: 2011)

There are number of slums in and around Meerut City where economically weak and socially deprived families are staying under deplorable living conditions. There number is in thousands and large percentage of them survive on incomes generated by trash picking from street corners, municipal dumping areas or large dumping grounds of the city. Women and children are also involved in rag picking or work in the nearby houses and road side hotels as helpers. Men also are rickshaw pullers or daily wage casual laborers in nearby industrial areas. These slum dwellers are mainly migrants from villages who have come for better life of the city due to industrialization, from other states due to poverty or floods and draughts in their areas. They are compelled to live in slums because of their poor economic condition and not many avenues available for better earnings due to lack of education and skills to do any other work. Children are also involved either in rag picking or other menial jobs along with their parents. Rag pickers have recently become part of the growing population of urban poor. They collect waste materials of plastic, tin, iron and bottle from garbage and dirty places of urban area. Average age of economically active rag picker is 5 to 35 years but preferred age amongst the communities is 8 to 18 years when children are considered to be more productive in this profession. Literacy rate of rag pickers is very low, with majority of them being illiterate.(Census of India: 2011).

Literature Review

Bal Kumar K. C.⁵ conducted by selecting a sample of 300 children involved in rag picking from six different municipalities in Nepal. Objective was to study the living and working conditions of this deprived community. The main occupation of these children was found to be collection and selling of waste reusable material like metals, glass, papers and rags from streets and junk yards. The main reason for getting in to rag picking was poverty of the parents, lack of educational opportunities and involvement of children in supporting the household income. They live in extreme unhygienic conditions without proper sanitation and water supply in make shift slums. The article suggests a three pillars action plan first, it emphasizes on a policy that could research in people's capabilities to enable them to attains skills and sustain them through various transitions they face in their daily life. Secondly, creating institutional framework to ensure that these people have work freedom in future with pride, dignity, economic protection and equality.

B. Suresh Lal .⁶ Professor of Economics Department of Economics of Kakatiya University, Warangal-TS-India paper deals with various issues related with child rag pickers, at Warangal City. 80% of child rag pickers were found to be of the age group from 11-15 years, 74% of them illiterate, and 85% of them were living in extreme poverty. Nearly 68% of child rag pickers' income was below Rs. 11,000/ pa. 90% of child rag pickers go on foot for collecting garbage. 85% of child rag pickers are facing health hazards and major sum of their earning was spent on getting treatment for the ailments. 94% felt that their job is not appreciated by the society and they are being treated as criminals. The study concluded that poverty, unemployment, and poor economic conditions are the causes of child rag picking in urban towns and social development model is the only alternative for eradicating child rag pickers and child labor problems.

Santosh Kumari (2022). "Prevalence of health problems of rag pickers due to various hazards at Lucknow City"⁷. This study was carried out on four hundred rag pickers both male and female from Lucknow city. It was observed from the data that rag pickers generally suffer from respiratory problems (19%), eye problems (40%), dermatological problems (22%) and injuries (60.5%). Additionally the high prevalence of general health problems such as fever (78%), cough and cold (83.5%), diarrhea and dysentery (40%) was reported. Road accidents and fall (23%), animal bite (16.5%)) and frost bite (16.5%) were significantly found to be high among rag pickers. The study concluded that work related health problems were alarmingly high amongst the rag pickers. The study recommended that the rag pickers be provided safety equipment and training for their work. Also endeavor should be made to provide them safe work environment.

⁵ Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 4, Nepal Situation of Child Ragpickers: A Rapid Assessment Central Department of Population Studies (CDPS), Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal November 2001, Geneva, ISBN: 92-2-112808-3

⁶ <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340310091> World at Work: Indian Women Ragpickers Article · March 2020 DOI: 10.2015/IJIRMF.2455.0620/2020

⁷ Challenges and Opportunities in Nutrition Environment and Agriculture (pp.340-354) Publisher: Rathore Academic Research Publication, New Delhi

Sekar (2004) in his book entitled “Child Labour in Urban Informal Sector: A Study of Rag Pickers in NOIDA”⁸ described Child labor as a vital area of social apprehension. All over the world millions of children start working at a tender age and as a result they are exposed to diverse forms of exploitation and abuse. They work in large numbers in different sectors of the informal economy. One of the evident examples is children engaged in rag picking. Rag pickers job is humiliating, hazardous and against the norms of employment of child labor. The work they perform is not environment friendly and it deprives them of their growth as a dignified human being. They are compelled to work as rag pickers because of the poverty of their parents, lack of schooling facilities and the circumstances under which they are born and brought up. These children are denied all their rights which are provided by the constitution and various other rules and regulations in order to provide them a decent living and growth. The book also deals with certain compulsive factors under which the work and trade of rag picking and recycling is performed.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study three slum areas were selected randomly through local knowledge of Meerut City and a sample of 100 was decided for random sampling out of these slums. Descriptive research design was used and accordingly a questionnaire was prepared and used for conducting interviews of the respondents. The data was mainly collected from primary sources through field survey, households and interviews. Secondary data was obtained from government agencies like Municipal Corporation, District Census Office and Meerut Development authority. Some of the findings of survey are enumerated below:-

The survey revealed that only 36 % respondents were residing in Pakka houses, 20 % in Kuccha houses, 42 % in hutments and 2% had no house to live.

43 % were having toilet facility of their own, 24 % had shared toilets and 33% were defecating in open. On further probing the respondents revealed that they defecate on the open land around their living areas and women would wake up as early as 4 AM to ease themselves. Respondents living on Garh Road used Abu Nala for defecation.

69% had one room in their house, 31 % had two rooms whereas there was no house having three or more rooms.

40 % respondents had individual water connections at their home, 23 % were fetching water from public tap whereas 37 % had no water supply of any kind within their living area. They collected water from as far as 500 meters from their living areas. 56% had open drainage system in their locality whereas 44% had no drains at all.

⁸ Child Labour in Urban Informal Sectors A Study of Ragpickers in Noida [Paperback] Helen R. Sekar Paperback – 1 January 2004

The area gets water logged during monsoon and routine disposal of waste water was a serious problem creating stink in the area leading to health problems of the residents.

53% houses had electric connection and 47 % did not have electricity. The respondents used oil lamps during night for their routine living. 17% respondents had a gas connection, no one used electricity for cooking, 72 % used wood or coal for cooking and heating, 11% use dried cow dung and none used kerosene oil. Use of wood and cow dung as fuel adds to poor quality of air in the city.

Health care was found to be a serious problem amongst slum dwellers. During sickness, only 18% were able to use Govt. facilities, 63 % visited private doctors. 19 % ignored illness and no one went to private hospital. It was revealed that good amount of their income was spent on treatment in case a family member falling sick. On being enquired, the respondents revealed that they did not go to private hospital because of not being able to afford the expenditure. Health is a major issue with slum dwellers because of their poor living and working conditions. 62 % respondents reported having fever in last six months, 15 % had dysentery, 16 % had cut injuries and 7 % had jaundice. Almost all respondents reported suffering with some or the other kind of skin problem which happens because of unhygienic living and inadequate or nil availability of water in their residential areas.

It was fairly difficult to ascertain their family income ranges because of their hesitation in responding to the question about income. However, it was informed that 12 % had income between 1000-3000 rupees per month, 63% earned between 3001- 6000 per month, 17% earned 6001-10000 and 8% had income ranging between 10001 to 15000 per month.

Only 46 % were availing school facility and 54 % did not send their children to schools for multiple reasons like not being able to afford fee, school being far from living areas, no Govt. school available nearby, children help in work of rag picking or other methods of earning and their community does not value schooling as it does not provide any advantage.

58 % respondents were males and 42 % females indicating disparity in sex ratio. Level of education was found to be most un-satisfactory. 31% of respondents had education between classes 1-5, 24 % between classes 6-8, 5 % between 9-12, there was none who was class 12 or above and 40% were found to be illiterate. 54% respondents were rag-pickers, 23 % were beggars, 12 % were domestic workers, 2% were rickshaw drivers, 2% were shop keepers and 7 % either had no work or worked as and when they wanted, may be called as casual workers.

On the question of availing Govt. facilities 56 % stated to have Aadhar card, 9% had ration card, no one had Ayushman Yojna Card, house under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna or Bank Account.

Marital Status of Respondents who are 18 years of age and above:-. 87 % were married and 13 % were unmarried.

There were a total of 316 children of all the respondents from age 5 to 15 out of which 172 were males and 144 females. This was considered as school going age but only 220 children went to school out of which 132 were males and 88 females. Thus only 69 % of school age children went to school and rest 31% did not go to school.

A total of 39 males and 54 females reported the cases of harassment by police or local administration for the reasons as under:-

- Threat of eviction from the land
- Accusation of theft
- Accusation of drug paddling
- Accusation of liquor selling illegally
- Prostitution
- Fighting amongst each other.

Indian Legal Framework for the protection of the rights of rag pickers:

Indian constitution pledges to create a social welfare state so it is very important that there must be some specific rag pickers' welfare law that should legalize waste picking as a genuine profession and must ensures that the rights and needs of waste pickers are recognised .There are many provisions in the Indian Constitution and also in different Indian Laws for this purpose.The Indian Constitution does not officially recognise the right to health of slum dwellers and ragpickers as a fundamental right. But the judiciary, through its historical pronouncements, has recognized the right to health of all persons of any race, religion, race , caste sex, as a fundamental right under Article 21 . Article 21 is the fundamental right to personal life and liberty.

The right to personal life and liberty includes:

- The right to a livelihood;
- The right to a life of human dignity;
- The right to better standards of living; and

- The right to medical aid.

The Supreme Court of India implied the right to health as a fundamental right under Article 21 in the case of *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India*⁹.

Indian Constitution's 24th Article clearly implicates prohibition of employment of children below the age of fourteen in any factory place or mine or in any other hazardous service."¹⁰

Indian Constitution's 38th Article imposes duty on the State to promote the welfare of its people and eliminates inequalities in facilities

Indian Constitution's Article 39(e)¹¹ is basically a Directive Principle of State Policy which directs the State to shape its policy towards securing the health and strength of working Indian citizens both men and women and this article also directs the State to shape its policy to secure the tender age of children against any type of exploitation.

Indian Constitution's 45th Article is also a Directive Principle of State Policy which directs the State to provide, early childhood care and complete education facilities for all children till the age of 6 years.

Indian Constitution's 47th Article imposes the duty on the State to raise the nutrition levels, improve the standard of living

Under the provisions of The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986. There is strict prohibition of hazardous employment for children below 14 years of age, which includes ragpicking and scavenging beside this there is Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 for the welfare of unorganized workers under which rag pickers are covered.

Apart from the above constitutional provision, the following are the other laws framed for the development and protection of the children in India:-

1. The Children (Pledging of Labor) Act, 1929
2. Children Act, 1960

In one of the historic M.C. Mehta series case against the Tamil Nadu State,¹² the Honorable Supreme Court of India has given certain directions regarding the manner in which children working in hazardous occupations

⁹ 1984 AIR 802, 1984 SCR (2) 67

¹⁰ Mamta Rao (2013). Constitutional Law 268-269. Abhinandan Malik, 1st ed

¹¹ V N Shukla's Constitution of India by Mahendra P Singh

¹² AIR 1991 S.C. 417

should be shifted from such working conditions and be rehabilitated. In addition, the conditions of the children who work in the non-hazardous occupations should be improved and regulated by proper law. The Supreme Court directed that there should be complete prohibition of children working in dangerous manufacturing units. The Supreme Court also ordered the State Government to make policy to ensure education of such children in well placed educational institutions.

The Court also directed the employers of industries in which such children were being employed to provide compensation of Rs 20,000 per child to a fund created for the welfare of such children. The Court also directed the State Government to ensure the employment to one adult member from the family of such child and if that is not possible to implement then a Re 5,000 contribution must be paid to the welfare fund to be made by the State Government. This welfare fund will be utilized to provide financial help to the families of the children through the interest earnings on the corpus thus created. The Court held that there must be regulations for fixing the working hours for children who work in non-hazardous industries so that their working hours do not exceed six hours per day, and education for at least two hours is ensured.

a) MSWM (MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT MANUAL) Rules 2016- by MOEFCC(Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.)¹³

Urban: Duties of the Secretary–in-charge, Urban Development in the States and Union territories.

- Formulate a scheme on the registration of rag pickers and ragdealers.
- Create policy for the solid waste management strategy for the state or the union territory after the consultation with the representative of rag pickers, NGO's working in the field of waste management consistent with these rules, national policy on solid waste management and national urban sanitation policy of the ministry of urban development, in a period not later than one year from the date of notification of these rules.

Rural: Duties and responsibilities of local authorities and village Panchayats of census towns and urban agglomerations. -

1. Establish a system for the recognition of such type of organizations relating to rag pickers or informal rag collectors and also to promote and establish a system for the integration of these authorized rag-pickers and collectors to ensure their participation in solid waste management including door to door collection of waste;
2. **Setting up facilities relating to material recovery** and also secondary storage facilities with sufficient space for sorting of recyclable materials to enable informal or authorized waste pickers and collectors to

¹³<https://environmentclearance.nic.in/>

separate recyclables from the waste and **provide easy access to waste pickers** and recyclers for collection of recyclable waste such as paper, plastic, metal, glass, textile from the source of generation or from material recovery facilities.

b) Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016-

Responsibility of local body:

The local body shall be responsible for setting up, operationalization and co-ordination of the system relating to waste management and for performing the associated functions, namely:-

- Ensuring segregation, collection, transportation, processing and disposal of plastic waste;
- Ensuring a damage free environment during this process;
- Ensuring channelization of recyclable plastic waste fraction to recyclers;
- Ensuring processing and disposal on non-recyclable fraction of plastic waste as guide lines issued by the Central Pollution Control Board;
- Creating awareness among all stakeholders about their responsibilities;
- Engaging civil societies or groups working with waste pickers; and
- Ensuring that open burning of plastic waste does not take place.

c) SWATCH Survekshan Toolkit

Under the chapter of SWM: **Collection and Transportation**, around 32-35 marks are allotted for percentage involvement of Informal Waste Pickers formally integrated into Solid Waste Management (SWM) in the city (as per SWM 2016 rules) every year.

Purpose and Justification –

Formally engaging the self-employed rag pickers / waste material collectors and other city poor (informal economy) plays a key role **in strengthening door-to-door-collection (DTDC) of waste**. This indicator would assess to what extent ULB has engaged Informal Waste Pickers to manage SWM.

Means of Verification

- Via copy of survey report of on-field assessment or any study for identification of waste pickers in the city, ward-wise list of waste pickers with the ID numbers issued to them
- Copy of contract, if waste pickers have been integrated with an outsourced form. Or
- Copy of contract with SHGs (Self Help Groups) that have enrolled informal waste pickers in their groups.

- List of ward allocations by waste pickers.

d) The National Action Plan for Municipal Solid Waste Management by –Central Pollution Control Board

Provision for Up-gradation of Rag Pickers under Segregation of Recyclable/ non-biodegradable Waste

The local body may mobilize self- aided originations to share the responsibility to organize street rag-pickers and change them to door step "**waste collectors**" by motivating them to discontinue their habit of picking soiled and infected solid waste from streets, bins or disposal sites and generate habit of collecting recyclable clean material from the doorstep at customary intervals of time. The upgraded rag pickers on becoming doorstep waste-collectors may be given an identity card by NGOs organizing them so that they may have acceptability in society. The local body may notify such an arrangement made by the NGOs and advise the people to cooperate.

Formulation and Implementation of Plan

The Action Plan formulation and its implementation can be achieved by dividing under following Heads;-

Intra-city activities

Each local body is required to frame byelaws considering the provision of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. Notify user fee, tipping fee, spot fine, etc. for management of solid waste.

Each Local Body may at its own level undertake segregated collection of waste, material recovery facilities, storage and transportation. These activities otherwise also are being performed by them however, in each of these activities, participation of voluntary groups, NGOs can be considered and contracting / outsourcing can also be done.

It's the need of the hour that there must be a law which can create security among ragpickers and to ensure their human rights protection

Such law must include:

- Provision for the availability of identification cards of right of waste pickers to ensure their human rights must be protected especially their right of livelihood which includes their right to access, collect and sell waste in the country which is a fundamental right under Article 14 of the Indian Constitution and also

established a right to life by the Honourable Supreme Court in *Olga Tellis and others V Bombay Municipal Corporation and others*¹⁴

- Such law must devise a mechanism which can make available the subsidized waste picking materials including shoes with metal plated soles, gloves to the rag pickers
- Such law must create a nodal body for the enforcement of the rights of waste pickers;
- Such law must be based on the Brazilian Bank for Economic and Social Development which provide inclusion of waste pickers in all governmental social welfare schemes and also make provision the creation of a cooperative bank for this class.

Rag picking is one of the inferior economic activities in the urban informal sector, largely undertaken by children belonging to weaker sections of the society for their survival and for supplementing their family income and is the profession mostly dominated by children aging 6 to 15 years who do not have any other skill and thus by way of refuse collection contribute to household income or own survival. These are mainly children of slum dwellers and poor people. Some of them are abandoned or runaway children. The continuous exposure to the common garbage and the hospital waste has led to various diseases. Many of them smoke beedi and cigarettes and some are also addicted to drugs and indulge in prostitution and homosexuality, robbery and gambling. All this has affected their lives in several ways and shortened their life spans considerably¹⁵.

Problems faced by the rag pickers in India

- **Lack of Formal Education:** The survey of the socio-economic conditions of Safai Saathis showed that they are employed mainly on the margins of the urban informal sector.
- **Their low incomes and job insecurity** is compounded by the fact that nearly 70% come from socially backward groups and over 60% have no formal education.
- **Obstructions in Formalization:** More than 90% of the workers reported owning an Aadhaar card - in line with broad national trends, but only a tiny subset owned an income, caste, or occupation certificate. This thwarts any attempts at formalizing their work and limits their access to government social security schemes.
- **No Health Insurance:** As per the UNDP survey, less than 5% of those surveyed had any health insurance, indicating very high degrees of health-shock vulnerabilities.
- **Not Connected to Government Welfare Schemes:** Out of the total Safai Saathis, surveyed, who had a bank account, only 20% were linked to the Jan Dhan Yojana — the government's flagship financial inclusion program.

¹⁴ 1986 AIR 180, 1985 SCR Supl. (2) 51

¹⁵ Deepak Saxena; A Research Report on Rag Pickers of Jaipur, for Enhancing Quality of Life of Rag pickers www.Kuhadtrust.org/pdf/ragpickers.pdf (2012)

➤ Only half of the surveyed people reported owning and using a ration card and this proportion was even smaller in cities where migrants formed a larger share among surveyed workers¹⁶.

By providing the employment opportunities to improve the economic conditions of rag pickers so that they do not choose occupation like rag picking. Medical facilities should be provided to the rag pickers and their family members living in the slums. Educational facilities should be provided to children of rag pickers. They should have access to different government schemes so that they come out of the vicious cycle of poverty. Women ragpickers should be provided with infrastructure facilities like supply of water, gas stove and electricity so that need not waste time and energy for their domestic works. The concerned civic authorities should provide minimum sanitary facilities as well as housing so¹⁷as to prevent sanitary related diseases. The regulatory and enforcement authorities should regulate waste disposal and collection. In nutshell we can say that income generating programs / schemes can bring a change in the socio-economic conditions of rag pickers and providing minimum health and sanitation facilities would ensure minimum standard in their quality of life. The authorities concerned can provide infrastructure facilities and accessibility to use those facilities for the empowerment of rag pickers. Families living in slum areas should be informed about the various schemes of the government relating to their development as well as for their children with the help of the NGO's.

The study concludes that they often face the situation of not having money to feed them. Quite a few percent of child rag pickers do not get meals twice a day. They generate bad practices like smoking, chewing pan, tobacco gutakaand and alcohol. They are more close to anti-social evils such as pick pocketing, gambling, theft etc. The growth of the country depends on the growth of its citizens and there shall be no discrimination in providing welfare schemes. Ho it can be possible that if the rag pickers did not develop physically and mentally then the growth of the country will increase? Government should try to bring new schemes for the development of the inferior part of the society. So that, no poor citizen will become rag pickers or become the victim of trafficking etc. Once the poverty from the society erased, then automatically all problems related to this will be finished. So, for the benefit of the country, poverty should be eradicated first. As this is one of the major causes behind any crime, exploitation etc and then only the Country will progress.

¹⁶<https://www.drishtiiias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-editorials/rag-pickers-in-india>

¹⁷ A FAMILY'S LIFE RAG-PICKING IN NEW DELHI: 'I DO NOT WANT MY CHILDREN TO DIE IN THIS TRASH', Fox News, December 01, 2014

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