

HEALTH CARE IN URBAN SLUM COMMUNITY

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The growth of cities has always been accompanied by the growth of slums. The industrial revolution in Western Europe led to the migration of people to slums in cities, which created new conditions of ill health due to overcrowding, poor housing and unsanitary environment, coupled with poverty¹. Urban health was not at the focus of public health practice in the years after Independence, since India was viewed as a largely rural society and, thus, the government's conception of primary healthcare was almost entirely rural oriented. This bias was also not corrected by the voluntary community health movement, which too focused on the problems of providing primary healthcare to the rural poor. The recent National Sample Survey also indicates that the proportion of the population living below the poverty line in rural and urban areas equalized in 2004–05. In each, it is estimated that about 22% of the population lives below the poverty line. It has been observed that the decline in poverty has been lower in urban compared with rural areas. Thus this paper will bring out the health status of slum dwellers and the constraints they are facing in the existing urban health delivery system and also attempt to examine the quality of primary services provided by the health centres in urban slums of Puducherry.

¹ Engels F. *The condition of the working class in England. 1845*. London:Penguin; 1987.