

## Effects of Eviction Drive on Human Life of Slum Dwellers and Environment at Dhaka Metropolitan City

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**Abstract:** The study aimed to investigate the effects of eviction on the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of slum dwellers in the selected evicted slums of Dhaka Metropolitan City. The study was conducted in 10 selected evicted slums in Dhaka and data were collected from 100 randomly selected respondents through personal interviews. The collected data encompassed various aspects, including age, occupation, family size, property ownership, migration patterns, as well as the effects of eviction and the opinions of the respondents. The data underwent coding, tabulation and analysis using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The study revealed that a majority of the evicted population was involved in business and sales activities. Family sizes ranged from 3 to 11 members, with an average of 5.8 members. The respondents generally had limited property ownership. In terms of migration, 53% of the respondents stayed in the same location, 20% moved to other areas, 15% sought refuge with relatives and 12% relocated to another slum. The research identified 20 significant impacts of eviction, including challenges in accessing clean drinking water, disruption of education, homelessness, increased open defecation at night, higher rent in alternative slums and loss of livelihoods. The evicted individuals faced difficulties due to the absence of a rehabilitation plan and the destruction of essential belongings during the eviction process. Unfortunately, government assistance was lacking. Furthermore, the study examined correlations between different variables. Although the age of the respondents displayed a positive trend, it did not reach statistical significance. Similarly, there were no significant correlations between the gender composition of families and the effects of eviction. However, a significant and negative correlation emerged between the number of earning family members and the consequences of eviction. Additionally, property ownership and the type of dwelling exhibited significant positive correlations with the effects of eviction. In conclusion, the study shed light on the detrimental consequences of abrupt eviction drives on the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of slum dwellers. It emphasized the necessity for justified eviction drives and the establishment of rehabilitation plans in advance. The government should extend support to evicted individuals, allow sufficient time for relocation, create employment opportunities and address the issue of rural-urban migration. Long-term rehabilitation and eviction plans should be formulated, alongside the implementation of environmental recovery initiatives.

**Key words:** Effects of Eviction • Socioeconomic Conditions • Environmental Conditions • Slum Dwellers • Dhaka Metropolitan City

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### INTRODUCTION

In a multitude of developing urban centers, the relentless expansion of the population and the ever -

evolving nature of its characteristics have precipitated substantial shifts in the prevailing land use patterns within and in the vicinity of these cities, thereby exerting a profound and discernible impact on the urban

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environment [1]. Urbanization, as a global phenomenon, has emerged as a formidable and pervasive environmental challenge, necessitating concerted efforts to address its multifaceted ramifications [2]. The urban population has experienced an unprecedented surge, skyrocketing from 751 million in 1950 to a staggering 4.2 billion by 2018, with Asia alone accommodating a significant 54% of this burgeoning population [3]. Consequently, cities across the globe are grappling with the deleterious consequences of overpopulation and rampant environmental degradation, precipitating a host of pressing issues [4, 5]. Regrettably, the dearth of sustainable and integrated strategies for effective urban environmental management has engendered a litany of challenges, encompassing environmental pollution, transportation infrastructure, housing deficiencies, inadequate health facilities and the provision of essential civic amenities and services, all of which underscore the need for comprehensive and forward-looking interventions [1]. Moreover, the rapid and uncontrolled urban expansion engenders heightened vulnerability to natural hazards, compounding the magnitude of the challenges faced by urban areas and underscoring the pressing need for prudent urban planning and holistic management of urban services [6, 7].

As the capital and the fastest-growing megacity of Bangladesh, Dhaka confronts a multitude of challenges, including escalating traffic congestion, surging energy consumption, extensive waste generation and ineffective implementation of environmental regulations, culminating in increased emission of pollutants into the air, water and soil [8-11]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018, Dhaka is ranked as one of the most severely air-polluted cities among the top 20 cities globally. The air quality and urban environment in Dhaka have witnessed a substantial decline over the past decade due to a confluence of factors, including heightened vehicular emissions, worsening congestion, the proliferation of industrial activities, extensive construction undertakings, road dust, residential and commercial biomass burning, waste incineration and diesel generators [12-15]. Additionally, Dhaka suffers from a severe dearth of outdoor facilities attributable to unplanned growth, despite being referred to as the city's "lungs" [16]. Studies conducted by Dewan *et al.* [17] and Islam *et al.* [18] have elucidated the grave environmental pollution concerns arising from urbanization, encompassing alterations in land use, inadequate settlement planning, deficient water and sanitation services and degradation of the local

ambient environment [17,18]. These studies predominantly focus on the intricate issues of land use change and its consequential environmental impacts within the city.

Further research endeavors have delved into exploring the perceptions of urban residents pertaining to their communal environment and the quality of life they experience. These endeavors aim to ascertain the key variables that influence such perceptions [18]. The perceptions of environmental risks and hazards are shaped by a dynamic amalgamation of intellectual and emotional factors [19-26]. Gaining an understanding of these perceptions necessitates an examination of individuals' knowledge, thoughts and attitudes toward their surrounding environment [27]. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that different residents harbor distinct perceptions regarding various environmental issues, given that human actions, whether direct or indirect, contribute significantly to the deteriorating state of the environment.

The objective of the study was to observe and describe the effect of eviction drives on human life (slum dwellers), to explore the relationship between eviction drives and environmental hazards and to determine the necessary actions to eradicate environmental hazards after eviction drives.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Dhaka, a city in Bangladesh, is characterized by densely populated residential areas, uncontrolled expansion of commercial and industrial establishments and scattered slums lacking proper amenities. A survey was conducted in ten different locations within Dhaka Metropolitan City. The survey included the following locations: (i) Korom Alir Bosti, (ii) BNP bosti of West Agargon at Sher-E-Bangla-Nagar, (iii) Uttar Begunbari, (iv) Dhakkin Begunbari, (v) Macher arot of karwan bazar, (vi) Kalshi Bosti and (vii) Baunia-badh-Tin-bed colony of Mirpur 11. Additionally, the survey covered (viii) Tejkunipara of Tejgaon, (ix) Nakhhal para of Mohakhali and (x) Vashantek Bosti of Mirpur 14 in the Metropolitan City, as shown in Figure 1.

In these selected areas, a total of 9150 people were affected by evictions. The data was collected from these individuals. For this study, data were collected from 10 randomly selected slum dwellers in each area affected by evictions, rather than the entire population. The purpose of the sampling was to select 10 evicted individuals from

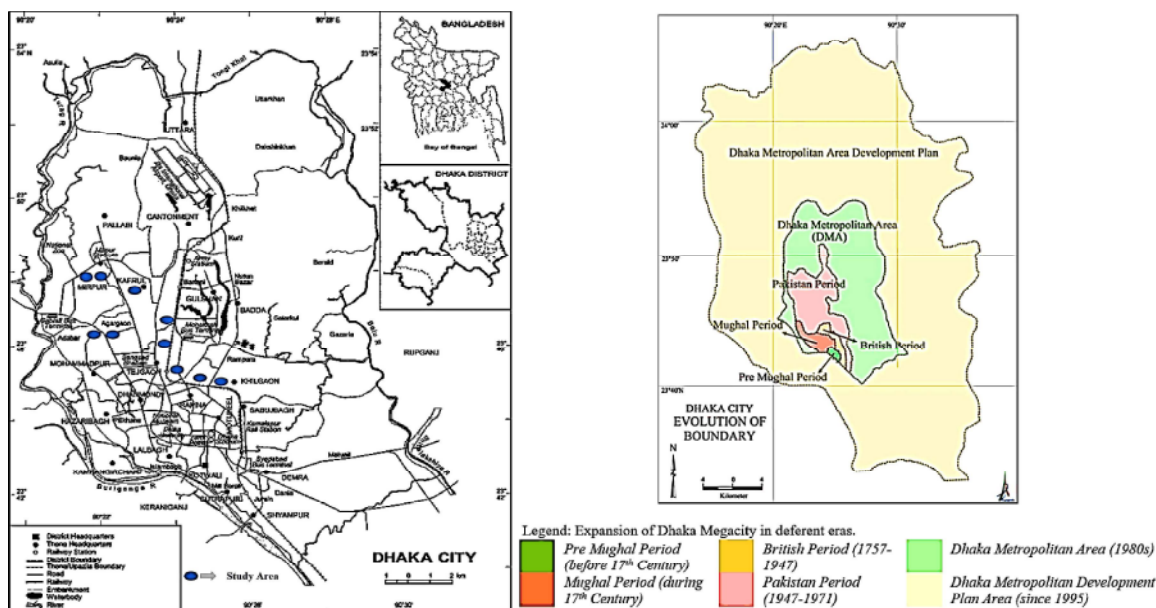


Fig. 1: A map of Dhaka Metropolitan City showing 10 selected study area

each area as a representative sample for the study. The primary data collection took place from the selected residential areas using various processes. A quantitative approach was used and a detailed semi-structured questionnaire survey was conducted within those areas to collect primary data. The questionnaire was developed based on residents' experiences and incorporated discussions with other researchers and experts in the field. To identify any mistakes or contradictions, a pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted before the main study. Some minor difficulties and issues with the wording and sequencing of questions were identified and addressed before the main research. Each questionnaire was translated into Bengali from English to ensure residents' understanding and fruitful responses. A face-to-face questionnaire survey was conducted, as it is considered the most effective method for data collection. Due to difficulties encountered during data collection, a purposive systematic sampling technique was used to select participants. Residents of high- and middle-income residential areas were often unwilling to be interviewed and share their views, primarily due to busy schedules and concerns about security. Some apartment buildings also prohibited outsiders from entering. As a result, the sampling interval varied in different study areas. Participants were informed about the purpose and potential use of the data before the interview and they were assured that they could withdraw from the survey at any time without consequences. The study targeted

household heads over 20 years old that had been living in the area for more than 5 years and anonymity was ensured for all participants. In the absence of the household head, an adult member of the household was interviewed. A total of 100 households were studied to assess their perceptions and behaviors regarding environmental risks, pollution and other scarcities. An in-depth study was conducted to understand their interactions with city corporations, NGOs and healthcare facilities. Secondary data were collected from government and non-government official documents and statistics, yearly reports, published books, research papers, journals, articles, daily newspapers and web-based documents to gain background knowledge.

The data processing and analysis methods were employed in the study. It highlighted the careful collection of data and the use of a Likert scale to assess residents' perceptions of hazards and risks. The collected data were analyzed using statistical software and presented using descriptive statistics. Additionally, a map of the study areas was created using Arc GIS. Overall, the text emphasized the systematic approach that was taken to process and analyzes the data in the study.

## RESULTS

The study findings unveiled significant insights into the ramifications of eviction on a particular demographic cohort. Predominantly engaged in business and sales

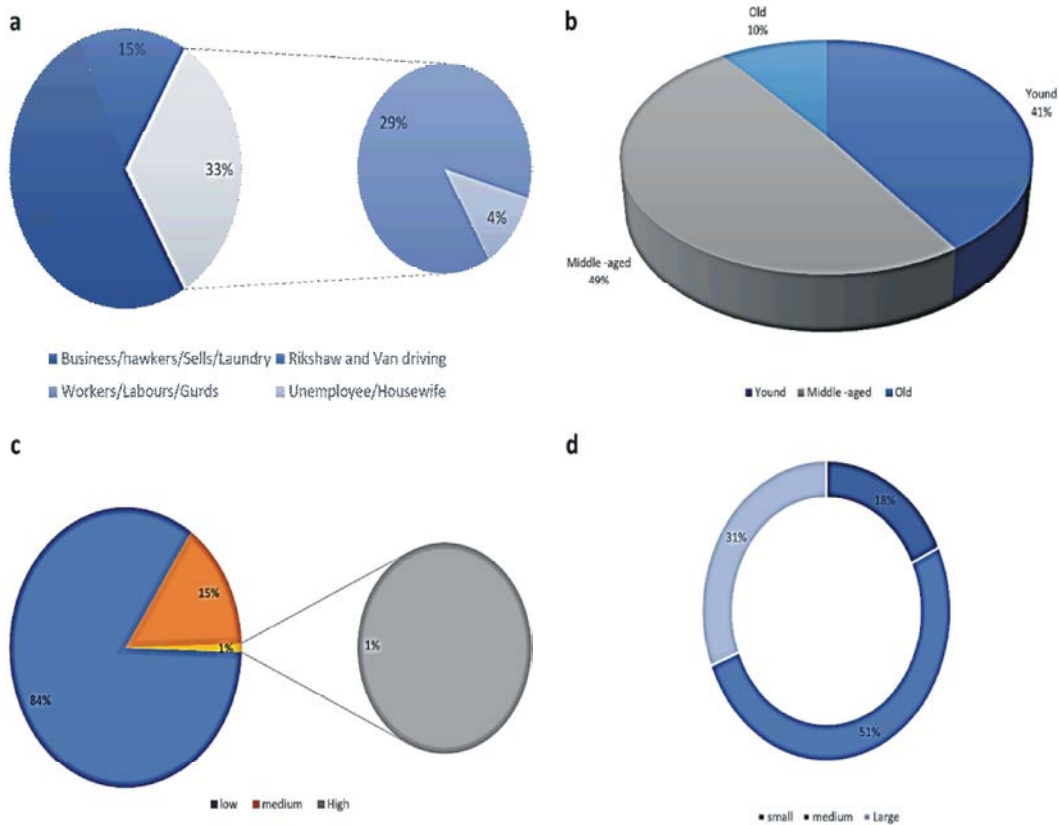


Fig. 2: Pie graph showing (a) age, (b) occupation, (c) family size and (d) property ownership of evicted slum dwellers

activities, the evicted population represented individuals who garnered their livelihoods through informal means. This underscored the precariousness of those immersed in the informal sector, as they lacked the safeguards and legal protections accorded to formal enterprises. The evicted families, encompassing a spectrum of sizes ranging from 3 to 11 members with an average of 5.8, exemplified the far-reaching implications of eviction, impacting not only individuals but also larger household units (Figure 2 & 3). The heterogeneous composition of these families delineated the potential disruption to social dynamics and support systems resulting from eviction.

Furthermore, the research shed light on the limited extent of property ownership among the respondents, signifying that they predominantly inhabited rented or informal dwellings. Such tenure arrangements often suffer from legal ambiguity and susceptibility to arbitrary eviction. In addition, the study examined the migration patterns post-eviction, revealing that 53% of the respondents chose to remain in their original location, demonstrating resilience and an inherent desire to retain their community ties amidst adversity. Conversely, 20% sought refuge in alternative areas, highlighting the

disruption wrought upon established social networks and support structures. This suggests that eviction not only dislocates individuals but also fractures vital social connections.

The study identified an array of noteworthy consequences arising from eviction, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the affected populace. These consequences encompassed impediments in accessing potable water, which bear grave health implications and compromise overall well-being. The disruption of education emerged as another salient outcome, potentially curtailing the educational opportunities available to children and youth, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Homelessness constituted a pressing concern as well, as evicted individuals grappled with the dearth of secure and adequate housing. Such instability exacerbates their vulnerability and impedes efforts to regain stability (Figure 4).

Additionally, the research documented an escalation in nocturnal open defecation, underscoring the absence of adequate sanitation facilities after eviction. This engenders a plethora of health hazards and

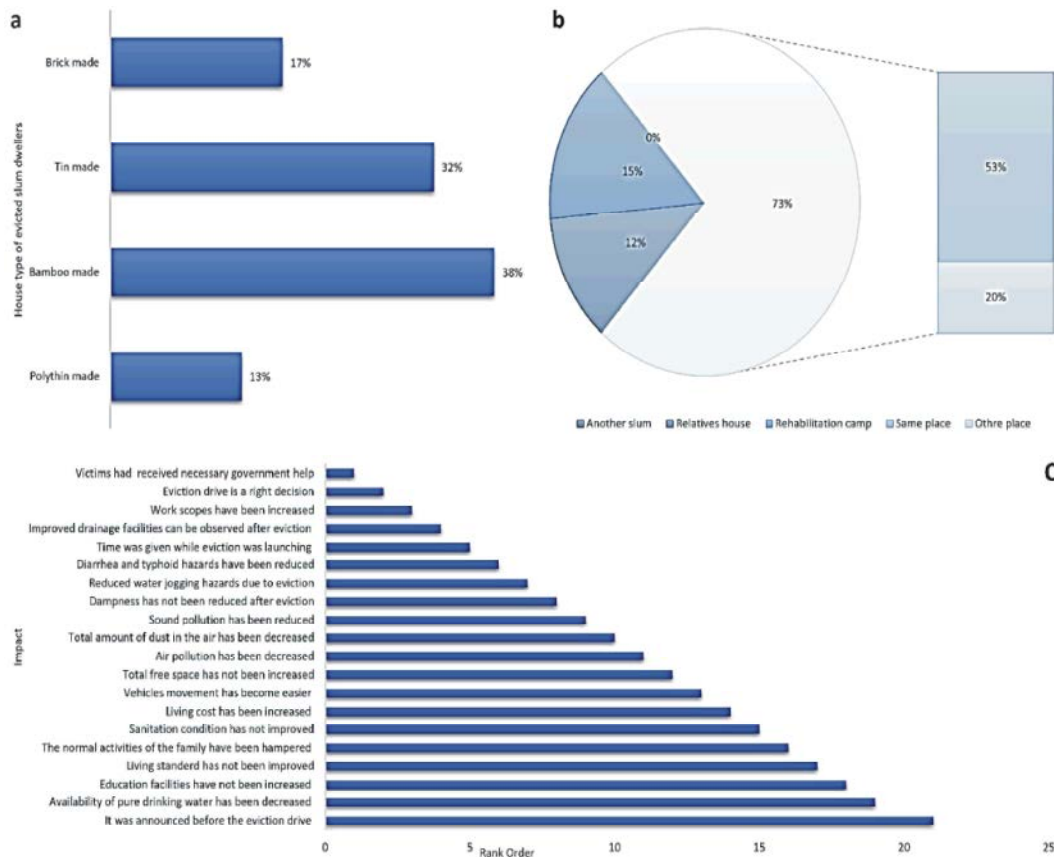


Fig. 3: Graph showing (a) house type, (b) migration and (c) impact of evicted slum dwellers.



Fig. 4: Impact of eviction drive on slum dwellers at Dhaka Metropolitan City

compromises overall hygiene. Another notable repercussion was the observed escalation in rental costs within alternative slum areas. Forced to seek alternative housing options, evicted individuals encounter a scarcity of affordable dwellings, compelling them to settle for

substandard living conditions burdened with inflated rents. Loss of livelihoods constituted another significant impact, elucidating how eviction disrupts income-generating avenues and contributes to economic instability among the affected population (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of evicted people and evicted houses in the study area

SL No.	Site of eviction	No. of evicted people	No. of evicted houses
1	Korom Alir Bosti of West Agargon at Sher-E-Bangla-Nagar	70	300
2	BNP bosti of West Agargon at Sher-E-Bangla-Nagar	150	550
3	Uttar Begunbari, Karwan bazar	100	500
4	Dhakkhin Begunbari, Karwan bazar	70	350
5	Macher arot of karwan bazar	50	150
6	Kalshi Bosti of Mirpur 11.5	250	1000
7	Baunia-badh-Tin-bed colony of Mirpur 11.5	80	350
8	Tejkunipara of Tejgaon	200	700
9	Nakhhal para of Mohakhali	400	1500
10	Vashantek Bosti of Mirpur 14	1200	5000
	Rang	50-1200	150-5000
	Mean	257	990
	Standard deviation	348.63	1295.24

Table 2: The problem after the eviction drive in Dhaka Metropolitan City (n=100)

SL. No.	Problems	Ranking
1	No management of rehabilitation	12
2	No place for migration	11
3	Scarcity of employment opportunities	12
4	Problems of latrine	9
5	Drainage problem	8
6	Severe crisis of drinking water	7
7	Great watery hazard after a little rain	6
8	Destruction of household commodities	5
9	Increment in daily expenditure	4
10	Family conflict has increased	3
11	Stealing, pilferage and snatching have almighty increased	2
12	Education institution has been broken down	1

Table 3: Opinions of respondents after eviction drive in Dhaka Metropolitan City (n=100)

SL. No.	Opinion	Ranking
1	Government-oriented rehabilitation program	11
2	Without rehabilitation, an eviction drive is not right	10
3	Reconstruction of latrine	9
4	Proper management of drainage facilities	8
5	Provision of permanent employment opportunity	7
6	Increase micro-credit program	6
7	NGOs activities should increase	5
8	NGOs should credit program	4
9	Great opportunities for a handicraft business	3
10	Reconstruction of destroyed road	2
11	Reconstruction of fragile school	1

Moreover, the evicted individuals encountered additional adversities stemming from the absence of a comprehensive rehabilitation plan and the destruction of essential possessions during the eviction process. This exacerbates their already tenuous circumstances, underscoring the imperative for a more compassionate and well-coordinated approach to eviction. Regrettably, the study exposed the dearth of governmental assistance in addressing these challenges, emphasizing the need for robust support systems and policies to safeguard the rights and well-being of evicted individuals (Table 2).

Furthermore, the study probed correlations between different variables to unravel the factors influencing the

impact of eviction. While the respondents' age displayed a positive trend, it failed to reach statistical significance, implying that while age may contribute to the repercussions of eviction, other factors may exert a more substantial influence. Conversely, the gender composition of families exhibited no significant correlations with the effects of eviction, suggesting that eviction engenders comparable consequences across genders. However, a significant and negative correlation materialized between the number of earning family members and the repercussions of eviction. This implies that a higher number of earners within a family ameliorate some of the adverse effects of eviction, potentially owing to increased financial resources and heightened resilience (Table 3, 4).

Table 4: Relationship between effects of eviction drive and the selected characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Age	Family size	Property		
Ownership	Types of dwelling				
house	Effect of eviction drive on Livelihood				
Age	1	0.222*	0.128 <sup>n.s</sup>	0.215*	0.062 <sup>n.s</sup>
Family size		1	0.135 <sup>n.s</sup>	0.106 <sup>n.s</sup>	-0.052 <sup>n.s</sup>
Property					
Ownership			1	0.455**	0.329**
Types of dwelling					
house				1	0.517**
Effect of eviction drive on Livelihood					1

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

<sup>n.s</sup> Correlation is non-significant.

Moreover, property ownership and the type of dwelling exhibited significant positive correlations with the effects of eviction. This implies that individuals with more secure property rights or those inhabiting higher-quality housing experience comparatively milder adverse consequences.

### DISCUSSION

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the detrimental consequences of abrupt eviction drives on the socioeconomic and environmental conditions of slum dwellers. According to Baser *et.al.* similar findings were observed in different residential areas of the Dhaka Metropolitan area [28]. The research shed light on the vulnerabilities faced by individuals primarily engaged in informal business and sales activities, as well as the larger households affected by the eviction. Limited property ownership and the subsequent disruption of social networks were evident among the respondents. The study identified a range of significant impacts resulting from eviction, including challenges in accessing clean drinking water, disruption of education, homelessness, increased open defecation at night, higher rent in alternative slums and loss of livelihoods. Similar results were found in several studies [28-32]. These consequences highlight the profound disruption to basic needs, well-being and economic stability experienced by the evicted population. Importantly, the absence of a rehabilitation plan and the destruction of essential belongings during the eviction process exacerbated the hardships faced by the evicted individuals. The study highlighted the lack of government assistance in addressing these challenges, underscoring the need for comprehensive support systems and policies. The examination of correlations between variables provided further insights. While the age and gender composition of families did not exhibit significant

associations with the effects of eviction, the number of earning family members demonstrated a notable negative correlation. Moreover, property ownership and the type of dwelling showed significant positive correlations with the impacts of eviction, suggesting the importance of secure property rights and improved housing conditions in mitigating adverse consequences. In light of these findings, the study emphasized the necessity for justified eviction drives and the establishment of rehabilitation plans in advance. The government's role is crucial in providing support to evicted individuals, allowing sufficient time for relocation, creating employment opportunities and addressing the underlying issues of rural-urban migration. The formulation of long-term rehabilitation and eviction plans, coupled with the implementation of environmental recovery initiatives, is essential for promoting sustainable development and ensuring the well-being of vulnerable populations. By illuminating the multifaceted impacts of eviction and advocating for comprehensive measures, the study calls for a more humane and inclusive approach to address the challenges faced by slum dwellers. It underscores the urgency of bridging the gaps in policy, governance and support systems to protect the rights and improve the living conditions of those affected by the eviction.

### CONCLUSION

The study revealed that evicted individuals predominantly engaged in business and sales activities, with families ranging in size from 3 to 11 members. Limited property ownership and varied migration patterns were observed. The eviction had numerous detrimental effects, including challenges in accessing clean water, education disruption, homelessness, increased open defecation, higher rent in alternative slums and loss of livelihoods. The absence of rehabilitation plans, destruction of



belongings and lack of government assistance compounded the difficulties faced by evicted individuals. Age and gender showed no significant correlations, but a negative correlation was found between the number of earning family members and eviction consequences, while property ownership and dwelling type exhibited significant positive correlations. The study emphasized the need for justified eviction drives, rehabilitation plans, government support and long-term strategies to address the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of eviction on slum dwellers.

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