

KARNATAKA

Four years on, those evicted struggle to make ends meet



Y.J. Rajendra, president, People's Union for Civil Liberties, Violet Mary, a resident of of Ejipura slum, and Rajendran Prabhakar, president, Forum against Economically Weaker Sections, releasing the report in Bengaluru on Saturday.

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Assessment study shows a deficit of ₹3,700 a month to each EWS household

She had gone to school in the morning, and by evening when she returned, her

home was no more. Today, this 14-year-old has dropped out of school to work as a salesgirl.

Like her, many of the 5,000 residents of Ejipura's Economically Weaker Sections Colony that was demolished in January 2013, the four years since have been a struggle to eke out an existence.

On Saturday, a group of researchers from Bengaluru and New Delhi released a report that showed that the eviction impact on each family amounted to a deficit of ₹3,700 a month.

The authors have recommended that the State government pay ₹4 lakh as compensation to each evicted family. The residents say that they have not received any compensation.

The study, conducted by Fields of View, Bengaluru; Forum against EWS Land Grab, Bengaluru; and Housing and Land Rights Network, New Delhi, between June and August 2015, surveyed 102 of the evicted families who have now moved to different parts of the city's outskirts. Around twenty families continue to live in tarpaulin tents on the streets outside the original site. The government has promised alternative housing at Sulikunte, 18 km from the original site.

According to Bharath M. Palavalli, one of the authors with Fields of View, close to 80% of those surveyed were living in tents on the pavement in Ejipura. "Some of them have moved to slums across the city, and some are staying in temporary settlements the government has provided in Sulikunte," he said, and added, "The quality of food was mostly affected: the amount of meat and fruits eaten went down drastically as the families were no longer able to afford the same." Many children also dropped out of school in the period since the eviction.

The study showed that quality of life had fallen on several parameters. These include access to food, healthcare, and job opportunities. Expenditure on health dropped from ₹7,000 to ₹2,660. Consumption of milk had gone down from 17.64% to 15.91%, while that of fruit had gone down from 9.52% to 3.81%. The quantity of meat and chicken consumed had fallen drastically – from 23.17% to 6.34%. The only number that showed a rise is expenditure on alcohol

and intoxicants, which had gone up from ₹928 to ₹982.

Twenty two children dropped out of school owing to financial losses caused by the eviction. Many lost their jobs and spent months to find a new job. After the eviction, the 102 households surveyed reported a fall in monthly household income from ₹5,130 to ₹4,720.

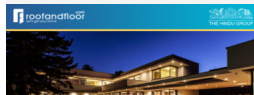
Vinay Sreenivasa, of Alternative Law Forum, said that even today, many of the families lived on the streets. “For them the toilet is the open street,” he said. Having relocated to distant places, adults and children had to pay for travelling by bus. “Their incomes have gone down while expenditure has gone up,” said Mr. Sreenivasa.

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