

Water Supply in Bangalore's Slums

How slum dwellers navigate their lives around drinking water supply.

Research Setting:

My area of research was Bangalore, Sept' 17 – Dec' 17, the Silicon-Valley of India. I did my research in five different slums, all of them declared. Some of them were in the centre of Bangalore, others were at the outskirts. All of them were comparable in terms of insufficient water supply and neglect by the authorities. My research was supported by ActionAid, an NGO in Bangalore.

Hypothesis of the research:

In the last years water has been commercialized and partly privatized in India, which led to a rise of the water prices and the removal of public water taps. The aim was to improve the infrastructure and to ensure price recovery. Unfortunately, the poor can't afford the new water prices and installations. Looking at the daily life of slum dwellers the aim is to understand how these people organize their lives around water and how they deal with 'structural violence' (social structures that disadvantage people).

Methodology:

- Structured, semi structured interviews and open-ended interviews with slum dwellers, key informants and experts.
- Participant observation
- Literature (Newsletter, Journals, Blogs, ethnological Studies)
- Photography.

Research question:

How do slum dwellers navigate their lives around structural violence? With reference to water supply in Bangalore's slums.

Provisional Results of my Research:

Many slum dwellers are unable to pay for water or for the water installations, wherefore they rely on:

- Informal infrastructural arrangements
 - other better off households
 - unofficial water suppliers
 - gather water from open wells or borewell taps (unsure water resources)
 - Bribe giving to ensure water supply.
- ⇒ It is woman and kids who collect water.
- ⇒ Unlike the state perception of water as economical good, the poor perceive it as fundamental right. Water is shared for free.



The hole on the floor is where drinking water is collected.
Pic. by: Valentina Kroneberg Lopes

Contact: Valentina Kroneberg Lopes
Vale_puravida@outlook.de
M.A. Social and Cultural Anthropology
University of Tübingen



Woman and Kids collecting drinking water supplied every 2 days.
Pic. by: Valentina Kroneberg Lopes