

The New Indian Express 15.03.2013

Magnitude of urban poverty rising

The magnitude of urban poverty in the state is increasing, according to the Economic Review 2012 released here on Thursday.

Nine risk factors have been considered for determining poverty of households. Those with less than 5 cents of land or no land, with dilapidated house or no house, no sanitary facilities, no access to safe drinking water within 150 metres, woman-headed household, no regular employed member in family, socially disadvantaged group, mentally retarded, disabled, chronically ill member in the family and families without colour TV have been considered as factors for determining the poverty. Any family having 4 or more such risk factors is classified as family at risk of poverty.

The increase in poverty is due to the stagnation in manufacturing industry resulting in lower income for urban dwellers. Due to rapid increase in land prices and construction costs, a good number of urban people in Kerala are forced to live in slums, the report says. Availability of drinking water and sanitation facilities are grossly inadequate. Urbanisation

has an important impact in social and economic development and is associated with many problems, the Review says.

Urbanisation is related to issues like migration from villages to towns and relative cost of providing economic and social services in towns of varying sizes, providing housing, water, sanitation facilities, transport and power. Only one-fourth of the households in slums have electricity. While rural poverty is getting concentrated in the agricultural labour and artisans households, urban poverty results in casual labour households.

Kudumbashree Mission had played a role in alleviation of poverty to a certain extent. The Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) had received Rs 138 crore through linkage banking as on September 30, 2012. The Economic Review states that 97,993 NHGs had availed linkage banking so far.