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RESEARCH ARTICLE
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Homeless Population and the Status of Urban Shelters: A Study on the Major Districts of Uttar Pradesh

ABDUL MOMIN
Student of Masters
Department of Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi (India)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight the gap between the existing urban shelter homes of the State Government and the homeless population living in the major districts of Uttar Pradesh. The major districts this study focuses on are Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Bareilly, Kanpur, Agra, Meerut, Allahabad, Ghaziabad, Aligarh and Moradabad. The difference between the two has been marked by comparing the data of the homeless population as per the census 2011 with the status of urban shelters based on the national report on the status of shelters for urban homeless. The research is totally based on the secondary data available in the form of reports, documents and handbooks.

Key Words : Homeless, Population, Urban Shelters

INTRODUCTION

According to (Census, 2011) 'homeless' as those who do not live in Census houses, but rather stay on pavements, roadsides, railway platforms, staircases, temples, streets, in pipes, or other open spaces[1]. (Scheme of Shelters for Urbanhomeless (SUH), 2018) defines homeless as persons who do not have a house, either self-owned or rented, but instead live and sleep on pavements, at parks, railway stations, bus stations and places of worship, outside shops and factories, at construction sites, under bridges, inhume pipes and other places under the open sky or places unfit for human habitation[2].

While Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines 'homeless' as those who do not live in a regular residence due to lack of adequate housing, safety, and availability[3].

There are 1.77 million homeless people in India which is the 0.15% of the country's population consisting of single men, women, elderly, mothers, street children, mentally ill and disabled[4]. Like other states of the country, Uttar Pradesh has 329125 homeless people living in the various district. In Uttar Pradesh, Kanpur has the maximum number of Urban homeless population while Lucknow has the second maximum number of homeless people. But there are very few shelter homes available in operating conditions to cater the population of homeless in these districts.

Constitutional Provisions and Safeguards for Homeless People in India:

1. **Article 21** guarantees the protection of life and personal liberty No person shall be deprived of his life or

1. Census of India 2011
2. Scheme of Shelters for Urban Homeless (SUH) (Revised Operational Guidelines) DeendayalAntyodaya Yojana National Urban Livelihoods Mission by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 18th July 2018
3. Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
4. Wikipedia: Homelessness in India

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personal liberty except according to procedure established by law[5].

2. **Article 14** says' the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or equal protection of law within the territory of India.

3. **Article 19 (1) (d) (e)** guarantees to every citizen of India right to move freely throughout the territory of India and to reside and settle in any Part of the of the Territory of India.

4. **Article 39 (1):** State policy to be directed in order to secure for both men and women, equal right to an adequate means of livelihood.

5. **Article 42:** Provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.

6. **Article 47:** Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.

Directions of Supreme Court and Policy Framework:

(PUCL People's Union for Civil liberties) in 2001 filed a petition on "Right to Food"[6]. The commissioners of Supreme Court were installed by the interim order of the supreme court with the power to investigate the violation of interim orders. On 13 January 2010 the commissioners of Supreme Court wrote a letter to the apex court to bring into the notice of the court the distressing condition of people living on the streets of Delhi. Supreme Court sent an urgent notice to the Delhi Government to immediately provide shelters to all those without shelter.

On 25th August 2010 the Commissioners of Supreme Court wrote another letter to the court and informed the court of a similar situation and severe denial of right to food and shelter throughout the country.

On 12th March 2010, they submitted detailed guidelines for states to establish shelter homes and other basic rights of homeless. Later, Supreme Court reiterated that right to dignified shelters was a necessary component of the Right to life under Article 21 of Indian Constitution[7].

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission:

The National Urban Livelihoods Mission is a scheme under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA) which has been implemented in all the district headquarters (irrespective of the population). It aims to provide permanent shelters equipped with essential services to the urban homeless. It sets the norms of the shelters and provides all the important details like facilities at the shelter homes, location and design of shelters, project proposal, sanction of project, operation and management of shelters, funding patterns, user fee, monitoring and evaluation, identification and rescue and registration form etc.

Types of Shelters under the Scheme:

Some of these shelters may cater to the most vulnerable groups within the homeless populations such as (a) single women and their dependent minor children, (b) aged, (c) infirm, (d) disabled, (e) mentally challenged etc. Actual break-up would depend on local particularities, and size of the city and total numbers of shelters. States/ ULBs may consider setting up separate shelters to cater the special needs such as:

a) Men shelters: Since the proportion of men among homeless is higher separate shelters for men could be built to primarily cater to single working men.

b) Women shelters: Shelters for the exclusive use of women in terms of its location, design, services and support systems, could be designed to cater to the needs of women and their dependent children. In every ULB, no matter how small the populace, at least one such shelter for women would be constructed.

c) Family Shelters: For families living on the streets, family shelters may be provided with a special design for privacy, with shared common spaces.

d) Special Shelters: Considering special needs for segments of homeless persons, such as old persons without care, mentally or physically challenged, recovering patients and their families, attendants of the patients admitted in hospitals etc. special shelters may be provided. However, depending on the need, a shelter may cater to

5. Indian Constitution by D.D Basu.

6. PUCL v. Union of India and Others, W. P. (C) 196/ 2001.

7. Shelters for the Urban Homeless Commissioners of the Supreme Court Cover photograph: A Handbook for Administrators and Policymakers

working men, women and family with appropriate spaces demarcated for each of the categories.[8]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study shows the difference between the homeless population and the status of urban shelters. The study finds a huge gap between these two. The condition of homeless people in the major districts of Uttar Pradesh is pathetic. The Government is not paying much attention towards the homeless people. There is not even a single separate shelter available for women, the disabled, family and children in any district of the study areas. Though, there is not a big difference between the population of male and female homeless people. In some instances, in cities like Lucknow, Bareilly, Kanpur, and Allahabad, women are staying in separate rooms in men's shelters and the number is very low and varies[9]. There is a need to build more shelters. According to a report published in Hindustan Times, various state government are not spending enough money, which is sanctioned by the Central Government for the welfare of the homeless people. India has the largest number of urban poor and landless people in the world[10].

United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Leilani Farha visited India in April 2016. She said that "Government at central and state level appear to treat this very visible population as invisible," She also recommended the following points:

First, identify and address the structural causes of homelessness. Secondly, the National Urban Livelihoods Mission guidelines must be implemented with regard to the construction of shelters for the urban homeless. Thirdly, shelters for different and particular client populations (e.g.: families, women leaving violent relationships, street connected children and youth) must also be established. Fourthly, homeless shelters must be understood in the context of a housing continuum which includes a range of housing options and supports[11]. The district wise gap between the population of urban homeless including men and women and the existing shelters to cater this population has been discussed below:

1. Lucknow: In Lucknow, there are 18119 homeless people, in which 15813 homeless people live in urban areas[12], out of which 9670 are males and 6143 are females and only 6 shelter homes are operational. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 29 (in which 2900 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). There are only 23 permanent shelters in Lucknow. Average number of residents per shelter is 50. While 1190 is total capacity of the shelters. All these 23 shelters are for men. There is no separate shelter available for women, family, children, the mentally ill and disabled. Only 7.52% of the total urban homeless population is being covered by the state government's permanent shelters.

2. Gorakhpur: In Gorakhpur there is a population of 1187 homeless people living in urban areas. Out of which 653 are males and 534 are females. In Gorakhpur only 4 shelters are operational and there are no data available related to the average number of residents per shelter. All the shelters are for men and not even a single separate shelter is available for women. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 7 (in which 700 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). Average number of residents per shelter is not available. While 125 is total capacity of the shelters and only 10.53% of the total urban homeless population lives in the permanent shelters of State Government.

3. Bareilly: In Bareilly there are 2270 urban homeless, including 1303 males and 967 females. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 9 (in which 900 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). There are only 6 permanent shelters and all 6 are operational to cover this huge number of homeless populations. Average number of residents

8. Scheme of Shelters for Urban Homeless (SUH) (Revised Operational Guidelines) DeendayalAntyodaya Yojana National Urban Livelihoods Mission by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 18th July 2018

9. National report on the status of shelters for urban homeless 2014, Supreme Court's commissioner office

10. India must ensure that homeless people have access to housing options by Kumkum Das Gupta in Hindustan Times on 20 August 2016.

11. The Special Rapporteur's report on the mission to India available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19861&LangID=E

12. Census 2011

per shelter is not available. While 450 is total capacity of the shelters. Only 19.82% urban homeless population is being covered by the permanent shelters running of the State Government. Even there is no separate shelter available for women and family all these 6 shelters are for men only.

4. Varanasi: In Varanasi 3380 homeless people live in urban areas in which 2045 are males while 1335 are females. There are 8 permanent shelters in Varanasi and only 1 is operational. All the 8 shelters are for men. Average number of residents per shelter is 35. While 420 is total capacity of the shelter. There is no separate shelter available for women and family in Varanasi also. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 14 (in which 1400 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions.) In Varanasi the state government's permanent shelter covered only 12.42% urban homeless population.

5. Kanpur: Kanpur is the most populous district in terms of the homeless population. In Kanpur City there are 80877 homeless people comprising of 68742 males and 12135 females. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 29 (In which the 2900 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). There are 26 permanent shelters in Kanpur out of which 4 are operational. Average number of residents per shelter is 40. While 1060 is total capacity of the shelters. All these 26 shelters are for men and not even a single separate shelter available for women, family, disabled and children. Total population covered by the government's permanent shelters is 1.31% of the urban homeless population.

6. Agra: In Agra city, the condition is more pathetic. 10555 urban people divided into 6271 males and 4284 females live in Agra city. There are 11 permanent shelters in Agra and only 1 is operational. Average number of residents per shelter is 40. While 240 is total capacity of the shelter. All these 11 shelters are for men and there is no separate shelter available for women, family, children and disabled. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 17 (In which the 1700 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). There is only 2.36% of the urban population is being covered by the available government's permanent shelter.

7. Meerut: In Meerut city, there are 2674 urban homeless people. In which there are 1509 males and 1165 females homeless. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 14 (In which the 1400 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). There are 8 permanent shelters in Meerut. While there is no shelter home is operational. All the shelters are for men and there is no separate shelter available for women, children and disabled. No data is available regarding the average number of residents per shelter. The total capacity of the shelters as per the report is 375, which is 14.02% of total urban homeless population.

8. Allahabad: In Allahabad city 15032 homeless people live in urban areas out of which 9817 are males and 5215 are females. Out of 12 permanent shelters only 8 shelters are operational in the city. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 12 (In which the 1200 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). Average number of residents per shelter is 50. While 522 is the total capacity of the shelter. All these 12 shelters are for men and there is no separate shelter available for women, family, children and disabled. Only 3.47% population as per the report is being covered by the state government's permanent shelters.

9. Ghaziabad: In Ghaziabad, there are 9976 urban homeless people, in which 5583 are males and 4393 are females. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 15 (In which the 1500 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions). There are 14 permanent shelters in Ghaziabad and 13 shelters are operational. Average number of residents per shelter is 30. While 580 is total capacity of the shelter. All these 14 shelters are for men and there is no separate shelter available for women, family, children and disabled. Total population covered by the government's permanent shelters is 5.81% of the urban homeless population.

10. Aligarh: In Aligarh, the number of urban homeless including men and women is 4952. In which, 2641 are males while 2311 are females. Data shows that there is a good number of homeless women in Aligarh but there is no separate shelter available in Aligarh for the women. Moreover, there is no data available related to the number of operational shelters in Aligarh. According to the report there are 5 permanent shelters in Aligarh. While the number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 9 (In which the 900 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions.) There is no data available related to the average number of per shelter. The total capacity of the shelters is 300. Only 6.05% population of the urban homeless of Aligarh is being covered by the state government's permanent shelters.

11. Moradabad: In Moradabad, there are only 4

permanent shelters available out of which only 3 are operational. The number of shelters required in the city as per the guidelines is 8 (In which the 800 people can be accommodated under ideal conditions) while there are 1219 Urban homeless people in Moradabad. In which 663 are males 556 are females. In Moradabad also, there is no data available as far as the number of operational shelters is concerned. All the shelters are for men and not even a single separate shelter available for women in Moradabad. The total capacity of the shelters in the Moradabad as per the report is 180. It indicates that only 14.76% population of the urban homeless of Aligarh is being covered by the state government's permanent shelters.

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