

## Public Support System of Night-Sheltered Population in Delhi

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### ABSTRACT

The role of social support for homeless population is immensely important since it helps to sustain the survival of the homeless population in adverse times. Two-third of homeless population lives without family or relatives in Delhi. They face not only a problem of shelter but also a negative response from society. So how do they manage themselves in emergency situations? And what are the institutional cares for their support? In search of answers to these questions, a field survey (November 2014 to January 2015) was conducted on 212 homeless persons in three districts that was North, Central, and West Delhi. These districts which possess eighty percent of the total night shelters users of Delhi. The study finds that 54.39 percent, 46.81 percent and 32.41 percent of homeless people do not possess citizenship card (Voter ID/Aadhar/Ration Card) in West, North and Central Delhi respectively. They cannot access government schemes without any legal documents and depend upon NGO. In Delhi, the homeless person has been doubled during the last decade (Census, 2011). But the Government has prepared to provide night shelter facility only 50 percent of homeless populations. Additionally, improper planning in these night shelters is threatening the homeless population. Concluding section of this study offers some practicable policy measures to implement downstream approaches that substantially reduce homelessness.

**Key Words :** Homeless Population, Social Support System, Permanent Night Shelter, Government Schemes

### INTRODUCTION

The Census of India uses the notion of “houseless population,” for people who are “homeless” and defines them as persons who do not live in “census houses” (Gupta, 2006). It Means people who do not live in buildings or census houses but live in the open on roadside, pavements, in hume pipes, under flyovers and staircases, or in the open in places of worship, mandaps, railway, platforms, etc., are to be treated as Houseless (Census 2011).

Homeless people are found in every city in India (Census, 2011). The society also has a negative perception towards the homelessness because most of them are unclean, alcoholic, drug addict, beggars, and use abusive languages (Pellegrini, Queirolo, Monarrez, and Valenzuela, 1997). Homeless people not only have

problems with housing but also have to face negative response from society (Speak and Tipple, 2006). A homeless person is also part of society but this part of the society is treated like an unwanted section, and nobody wants to tolerate them. Most of them live alone or without family. The economic reason is seen as the most influencing problem (Anderson, 1995). But social norms, especially in the Indian context, are also an important factor behind homelessness. For example, “A person from an upper caste background cannot work as a labour in his village due to his high social status whereas when he comes to the city, he readily works even under somebody who is from a lower caste”(TISS Report 2009: pp. 9). Thus homelessness emerges not only as a financial but also as a social problem.

It is not possible to categorize the heterogeneous homeless population, using any single criteria. The

homeless population is a composition of single men, single women, and women with children, the homeless family, people with special needs, elderly and essentially a neglected group. Identifying and locating a homeless person is not a simple task (Shlay, 1992).

Homeless persons do not have any fixed place. They are transient groups (Saxena, 2007; Lee, 1989). Their address is depended upon their livelihood. In this context, metropolitan cities are provided with better and for more job opportunities. Thus the cities are witnessing a higher concentration of homeless people than the other region. However, they live a silent and visual part of our metropolitan society.

Almost in every city in India, homeless people have remained almost completely neglected by local and state government policies because of they are unable to raise their voice against the injustice (Harriss, 2005). Although there is the provision of night shelters for homeless people in government plans. Night shelter may be defined as place provided for poor persons to pass the night under a roof either free of cost or upon payment of a small fee. There are mainly two types of night shelter in Delhi. Permanent night shelter is running throughout the year whereas temporary night shelter is running in winter season or as per requirement. In this research paper is focused only permanent night shelter.

This study has the following objectives:

1. To explain the availability of social support system for homeless persons in Delhi.
2. To discuss basic amenities of the night shelter and NGO's role in support of homeless people.
3. Evaluate the government schemes and NGO role to the betterment of homeless people.

### **Research Questions:**

Homelessness is one of the country's most pressing social problems which get aggravated in cities; it can be easily seen in metropolitan areas. These homeless people are understood to be a nuisance to the city. However, the moot questions are: Who are these people? How do they live? Who helps them in their problems? And what are the roles being played by the government and NGOs for their development?

### **Data Base:**

The research is based upon primary and secondary data sources. In the Secondary sources of data include Census of India (Primary census abstract 2001 and 2011);

DUSIB and government departments or institutions report. The first time, census of India released data on homeless population in detail 2001 census. It was covered mainly demographic aspect. It was included more socio-economic indicators in 2011 census. And Delhi urban shelter improvement board (DUSIB) release month wise data about the daily occupancy of homeless people in night shelters. In the primary sources of data includes, A field survey was conducted in selected night-shelters in three North, West and Central districts of Delhi.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A field survey has been conducted in selected night-shelters in three districts of Delhi through a key informant and detailed questionnaires that incorporate various social and economic aspects of urban homeless. In this regard, methodology and questions developed by the Planning commission of India in urban areas have considered formulating the basic questions of the primary survey.

It is so difficult to locate any fixed place of a homeless person. But homeless people can be located by night shelters in which they are living. The government of Delhi has been running permanent and temporary night-shelters with the support of NGO's. Night shelter has been provided as free or inexpensive accommodation for a short duration to homeless people.

This study is based on the single homeless person who has completed 18 years of age. Majority of homeless people works as a daily wage laborer. So night shelter provides an inexpensive or cheap place to sleep and prepare them self for the next day. The infrastructure of night shelter plays an important role in their health condition.

Delhi has eighty-two permanent night shelters (DUSIB 2013-14) in its nine districts (The Census of India 2011). Eighty per cent of those homeless population using night shelters are living in Central, North and West Delhi districts (DUSIB 2013-14). This has been the base for selecting these three districts for primary field survey. A field survey has been conducted in three districts of Delhi: North, West, and Central; the sample size is 212 homeless persons who used permanent night shelters regularly during the winter of (November to February) 2014-15.

The data are procured from field survey that analyzed by various statistical tools such as cross-tabulation, pie chart, graph and other relevant statistical methodology.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Role of the Government:

In 1992, The Shelter and Sanitation Facilities for the Footpath Dwellers were launched as a small programme by the ministry of urban development. The main basic objective of this program was to improve the conditions and to provide the shelter facilities for street dwellers of urban areas. The scheme was implemented by HUDCO. The main key point was the construction of night shelters and provides basic facilities and also provides pay and use toilet facilities. This scheme was known as Night Shelter for Urban Shelterless in 2002. But it could not succeed and was finally withdrawn because many of the states did not utilize their funds properly that was allotted to them.

*Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)*: This mission was initiated on 3rd December 2005. To improve the condition of the urban poor, Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) was the part of this scheme. Under this program, basic amenities were provided in the slum of cities. BSUP was mainly focused to provide basic amenities in a slum area. Rajiv Awas Yojna (RAY) or slum-free city planning was initiated in 2010. These are evidence of a major shift in the role of states, from being only tax generator to a provider of housing and basic amenities to the urban poor. Homeless survey 2010, by the government of Delhi, had an estimated 55000 homeless population in 2010.

*Mission Convergence*: This scheme entitled in 2008, covers the most marginalized section of the society, and relies on Public Private Partnership model with the active involvement of NGO's. Mission Convergence is an umbrella programme. The objective of the Mission is to bring together to a single platform the various welfare schemes. BHAGIDARI was taken the initiative with the help of government, civil society and citizens. A survey was conducted under the project BHAGIDARI with the help of Delhi government; it was estimated to be 55,000 homeless persons in 2010. Whereas census of India counted the number of homeless people was 47,076 in NCT Delhi (2011). However, NGO's figures show a huge difference from the census data. It was estimated to be 1.5 lakhs by IGSSS, 2012.

*Sanjha Prayas Program*: This scheme is made for poor communities since 2009-10 under Bhagidari Mission. It is a pilot project of socio-economic survey and upgrading in slum project on existing location under DUSIB. It has been launched since the last couple of

decades, various programs but has been discontinued due to lack of sustainability.

The current Master Plan 2021 (Delhi Development Authority, 2007) for Delhi, which is a mandatory document, stipulates for the first time a ratio of one night shelter to be provided for 100,000 populations. National *Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM)*- The main components of NULM for urban poor includes, Employment through Skill Training and Placement (ESTP), Self Employment Programme (SEP), Social Mobilization and Institutional Development (SMID), *Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH)*, Support to Urban Street Vendor (SUSV) and, Capacity Building and Training Programs (CBT). Delhi's main emphasis has been on SUH which aims to provide night shelters during different seasons.

So there was taken many initiatives for the relief of vulnerable section by the government. But there was not a proper mechanism, coordination, and lack of knowledge about the ground reality. Therefore these all schemes did not expect a result.

### Role of Non- Governmental Organizations (NGO):

Government first initiated night shelter programs for the homeless people in 1985. From the 1990s till 2010, it was run by the Slum Wing, under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). It is now operated by Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) under the Government of Delhi. The plan consists of operating night shelters located in areas of homeless people's concentration.

DUSIB run night shelter through NGO on a contract basis. Following the pressure of NGOs on Delhi government, The Revenue Department gives tents under emergency relief, and NGOs manage these shelters. The NGO's should be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and Trust Acts or other similar laws of the state governments. The NGO's like Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan, SPYM, Sampurna, etc. are working for homeless people on a large scale in Delhi.

Unemployment or poor income (financial problem) can be one of the main compelling factors for the homeless person to live in the night shelters (Field Survey data 2014-15). Night shelters often come into existence in the locality which provides employment opportunities to the marginalized sections of the labour force. This saves valuable man hours as well as the transportation cost from the shelter to the place of work. In this way, the

homeless people of the night shelters divert some of their limited savings to procure other additional utilities, which they could not probably afford if moved to a relatively distant shelter. This seems to be one of the reasons for continued living in the night shelters.

The North, West and Central Delhi's permanent night shelters were selected for field survey. Their selection was based on the density of homeless persons in permanent night shelters and locality of night shelter, e.g., Rakshak night shelter is situated along the Bangla-Sahib Gurudwara; Chameliyan Road night shelter in Karol Bagh is situated near by whole sale market; Phool Mandi night shelter is constructed near by railway station; In North Delhi, Kabir-Basti night shelter is situated in middle of JJ Colony and Sarai Pipalthala night shelter is located on the main road near Adarsh Nagar metro station. West Delhi Night shelters are situated near Mangolpuri industrial area. They are given basic facilities such as night stay, toilets, blankets, and jute mats at nominal charges. In December 2009, before the campaign for the homeless, there were only 12 Permanent night shelters run by the Municipality; the number increased to 82 in 2014. Except for permanent night shelters, temporary night shelters are also run free of cost during the winter season. This scheme was continued in 2002.

### The Infrastructure of Night Shelters:

**Building:** All permanent night shelters are being run in concrete structures except Bangla Sahib night shelter. Phoolmandi Parisher, Mori Gate night shelter is running in a three-story building which is located near big drainage; the ground floor is a big hall, with a sleeping capacity of two hundred homeless people. The first and second floor has four big rooms. Two rooms are used as medicine storeroom and committee room. These rooms are not allowed for staying. All other night shelters are located in Paharganj, Chameliyaan road, Lahori Gate, Regharpura, Kabir Basti, Sarai Pipalthal and Mangolpuri; these are run in a single hall, and the hall size varies according to available night shelter space.

**Water facility :** All night shelters are getting water supply from Delhi Jal Board. Water cooler facility is available in all of the night shelters except for Kabir Basti night shelter. Kabir Basti night shelter has only reverse osmosis (RO) system without a water cooler. Regharpura female night shelter has a water cooler with RO system. And other night shelters have water coolers without RO system. The picture is shown the unhygienic condition of Watercooler at Phoolmandi night shelter in Mori Gate.

**Electricity and lightning:** All night shelters have been provided with cooler and fan facilities during the

Table 1: Basic Amenities in the Permanent Night Shelters											
Serial. No.	Location of Night Shelter	Homeless Person (Night Shelter-Wise) Actual Capacity (Present Occupant)	Facilities In Permanent Night Shelters								
			Rooms/Hall	Toilet/Bathrooms	Water Cooler/RO	Mats/Blankets	Fan/Cooler/Room-Heater	Primary Medical Help (Y-yes, N-no)	Locker Facility (Y-yes, N-no)	T.V. (Y-yes, N-no)	News-Paper/Library (Y-yes, N-no)
1.	Mori Gate	300(400)	6R/2H	6T/2B	1W/0R	250M/726B	-	Y	N	Y	N
2.	Pahar Ganj	30(15)	1H	2T/2B	1W/0R	40M/70B	6F/2C	Y	N	N	N
3.	Karol Bagh	40(56)	1H	1T/1B	1W/0R	105M/215B	8F/1C	Y	N	N	LIB
4.	Ajmeri Gate	350(400)	1H	6T/4B	1W/0R	350M/700B	-	Y	N	N	N
5.	Karol Bagh(F)	40(30)	1H	3T/2B	1W/1R	25M/ 70B	10F/4C	Y	Y	Y	Y
6.	Bangla Sahib	60(40)	2H	4T/3B	1W/1R	40M/110B	-	Y	N	N	N
7.	Kabir Basti	70(35)	1H	3T/1B	0W/1R	60M/140B	9F/1C	Y	N	Y	N
8.	Sarai Pipalthala	110(80)	1H	14T/8B	1W/0R	80M/400B	14F/8C	Y	N	Y	N
9.	Mangol Puri (A)	190(65)	1H	6T/3B	1W/0R	50M/200B	22F/18C	Y	N	N	N
10.	Mangol Puri (B)	150(40)	1H	6T/3B	1W/0R	52M/200B	22F/10C	Y	N	N	N

R-Rooms, H-Halls, T-Toilets, B-Bathrooms

W -Water Coolers, R- Ro, M-Mats, B- Blankets, F- Fans, C-Coolers,

Source- Field Survey (December-January 2014-15)

summer season.

**Toilet and washroom facility:** Every night shelters have a toilet and washroom facility on the premises. But the number of toilet and washroom are not enough in comparison to the number of homeless people. Lahori Gate night shelter has a capacity of three hundred fifty homeless people which has only six toilets and four bathrooms; the similar condition is there in Mori gate night shelter.

**Blanket and Mat facility:** All night shelters have more than a double number of blankets in comparison to the actual capacity of homeless people. For example, Paharganj night shelter has a capacity of 30 to 40 homeless people, and they have stock of 70 blankets, more or less the same condition prevails in other night shelters. Regharpura and Mangolpuri night shelters were provided with coat facilities for temporary homeless people.

**First aid box, Locker, and Library facility:** First aid box facility is available in every night shelter. But dispensary facility is available at Regharpura night shelter only. Locker facility is not available for any night shelter. That is why most the homeless people do not keep daily utilities like cloth, toothbrush, soap, shaving kit, etc.. Library facility was also not available in most of the night shelters except Regharpura and Chameliyaan Road in Karol Bagh, whereas many of night shelters have available proper space for these facilities.

**Television and News Paper facility :** Mori gate, Paharganj, Saraipiplathala and Regharpura night shelters are available television facility. Newspaper facility is available in only female night shelter at Regharpura.

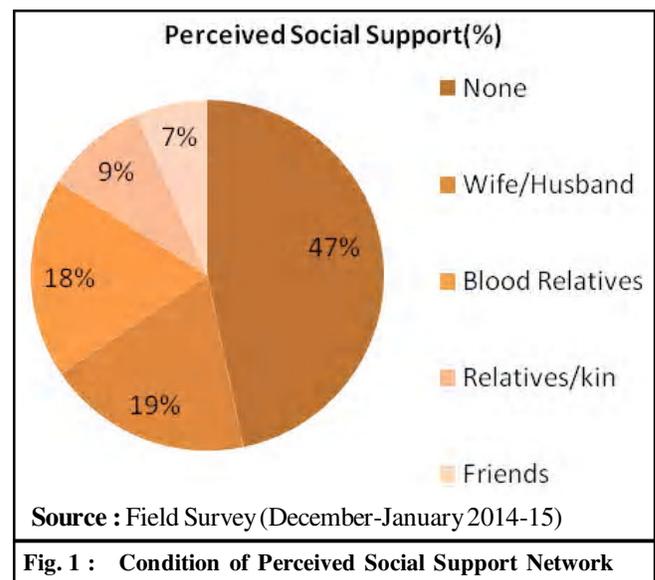
These basic facilities are important for a good physical and mental health. The poor condition of night shelters mainly is based on the overcrowding and lack of basic facilities such as lack of availability of water supply, toilet facilities, proper ventilation, and electricity, etc. The poor condition of night shelters is one of the major reasons for the spread of communicable diseases such as TB, skin diseases, etc.. A proper night shelter condition has an important role in the health condition of a homeless person. Night shelter facilities and health are interrelated with each other.

### Social Support Status of Homeless people:

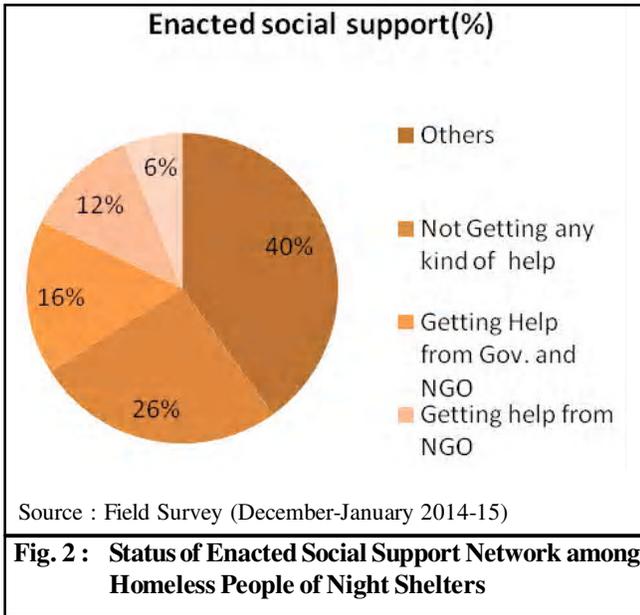
Family, relatives, and friends are an important part of social life. They are not only attached emotionally but also economically helpful in our bad times. These are the

social relations which attach us to the mainstream of the society. Majority of homeless people live not only without family but also without their reliable friends. Bathany (1996) explained in his article, three types of social support networks are available for a person. His study was based on single homeless mother. It may be applied to Delhi homeless people. It may be useful to measure the role of the government and NGO's in development of homeless people. First, Social embeddedness depends upon, connections of the individual to other. Social embeddedness concept is based on the size of social connections. It is difficult to measure in respect of homeless person due to lack of any reliable sources. The mobile phone is a simple and effective source of the social network. But homeless person unable to use the mobile phone because they don't have legal identity cards to buy the mobile SIM card. Some have citizenship card, but they could not afford. And some can afford, but due to fear of theft, they do not like to keep a mobile phone. But rest of two social support networks could be important to understand the condition of homeless people.

Second, Perceived social support defined as a cognitive measure of being reliably connected to others (Elena, 1995). It is judged as the degree of support to get in the difficult time from their society. According to the Field Survey, 47 per cent homeless people are without family or absolutely detached from their family. Majority of them have been living for many years as homelessness in Delhi. Although 19 per cent of the residents have wives or husbands who are living in Delhi while 18 per cent has blood relatives are in Delhi (Fig. 1).



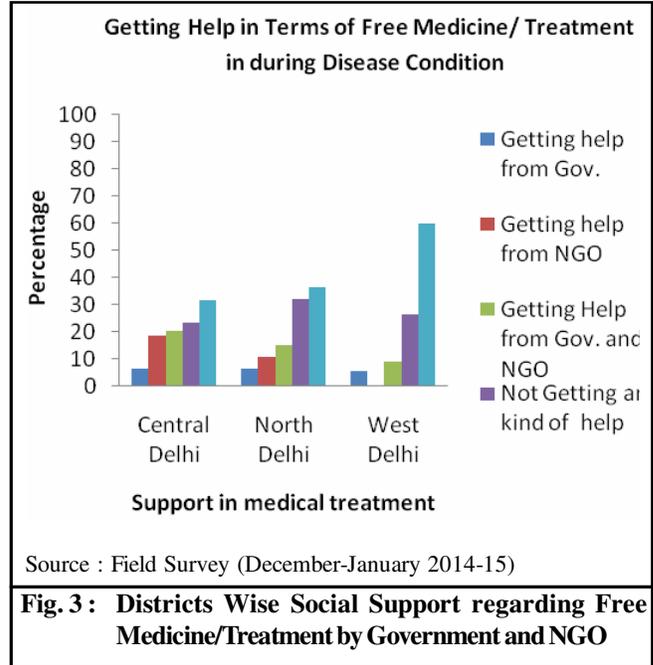
There are living 47 per cent homeless people without any social support from anyone. So the government has a responsibility to provide help to them. Majority of homeless people have taken help of government hospital and NGO support for free medicine and medical treatment during any health problem.



**Fig. 2 : Status of Enacted Social Support Network among Homeless People of Night Shelters**

Lastly, enacted support addresses the actual assistance provided by one’s social environment. This is measured by the amount and type of help which one received from a specific individual or any institution Fig. 2 show the actual picture of enacted support for homeless people by the government and NGO. It depicts that 6 per cent are getting help from the government only and 12 per cent are getting help from non-governmental organizations while 16 per cent are taking help from both. Majority of the people (26 %) are not getting help from government and NGO’s. There, 40 per cent homeless person told that they had not got any help from government and NGO still. In reality, the homeless often don’t have a job, no function, no role within the community; they have few social supports (Mustaquim, 2013).

As far as the district wise analysis is concerned, there is a high percentage of homeless people who are getting support from government or NGO’s and both in Central Delhi in comparison with other districts. Majority of homeless population is living in Central Delhi night shelters. Central Delhi provides better opportunities for jobs during the day. Central Delhi is also showing a high



**Fig. 3 : Districts Wise Social Support regarding Free Medicine/Treatment by Government and NGO**

percentage of homeless people who suffered from health problems. According to the analysis, its location is one of the responsible factors for that. In Central Delhi, most of the night shelters are located in congested or unhygienic conditions; it is showing the comparatively high percentage of health-related problems.

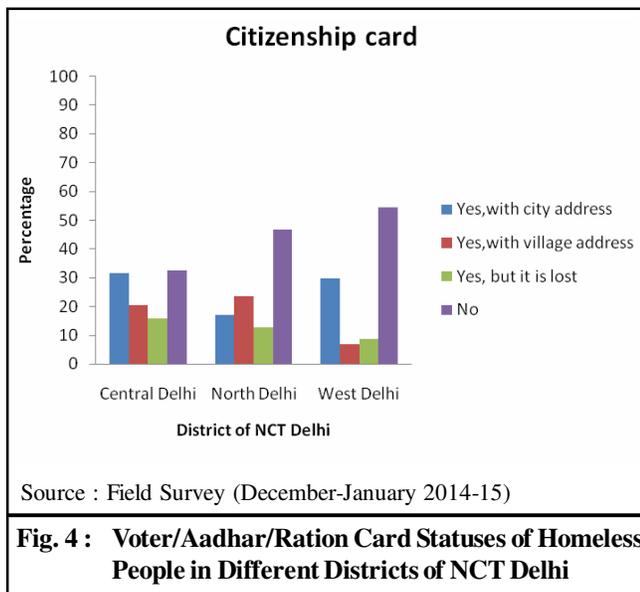
**Accessibility Barriers of Getting Public Support: Citizenship Status of Homeless People:**

India is the largest democracy in the world. Equal access to the right to vote is an important part of securing a real democracy. Voting right empowers the people. The people are to play deciding role to elect the government in favor of their communities. This is important and relevant to their lives. Citizenship cards (Voter ID/ Aadhar/Ration card) are very crucial documents, especially for the marginalized section. It is providing help not only for government scheme but also for security.

In 2008, the Delhi government had launched Mission Convergence, a new flagship program to reach the poor through a single window system in 2008. This programme includes homeless resource centers run by NGOs. This mission conducted a homeless survey by GNCTD with the support of UNDP in 2011. An identity card is also given under this to the homeless and link this exercise with enrolment in the project of the unique identification number. However, the biometric identification implied by this operation faced practical feasibility difficulties as well

as controversies (Dupont, 2013). While there was a consensus among civil society organizations and the homeless to recognize the lack of legal identity and residence proof as a major problem. The enrolment methodology of in this project raised a series of criticisms (Ramanathan 2010). However, the majority of homeless people live without any citizenship card in West Delhi (67 %) followed by North (60 %) and Central Delhi (55 %) (Fig. 4).

It is the responsibility of government to secure the participation of homeless people in Indian democracy. The Supreme Court of India (2010) ordered to the states to issue immediate voter ID card with two years validity. However, the findings indicate failure of government and NGO in this regard. Interesting fact is that about 65 per cent of women residents have their citizenship cards in Central Delhi (*Field survey 2014-15*). This is essential with the help of NGO's who are playing important role in getting citizenship cards for female. But the overall homeless population is far away from universal citizenship. In west Delhi shows the highest percentage of the homeless population live without a card. This makes them exclude government programmes. The card status of the homeless population is given in the Fig. 4.



#### Analyzing the Roles of Government and NGOs:

Government agency is the reliable and authentic source of data. According to the census of India (2011), the homeless population in Delhi was 47076, another side NGO's estimated 110000 and state government-

sponsored survey like Bhagidari mission estimated around 55000 in 2010. These differences raise the question of enumeration of data.

Supreme Court directed to the government of Delhi in 2010, the MCD, the NDMC and the Delhi cantonment board to setup a minimum given number of temporary and permanent shelters and community kitchens for homeless people. Supreme Court mandated the following provision for all Indian state and Urban Local Bodies (ULB's) for cities covered in the scheme JNNURM and having a population of more than five lakhs.

1. Twenty-four hours and three sixty-five days in a year, a homeless shelter with a capacity of one hundred for every population size of 1 lakh. But Delhi population was around 1.67 crore according to the census of India 2011. So it should be around 167 permanent night shelters in Delhi, but there were only 82. It is about to half that makes worse of homeless population condition.

2. There are NGO responsibilities to provide basic amenities such as drinking water, toilet, electricity, etc. and maintain hygiene condition within night shelter premises. Field survey results revealed that the basic amenities are faced with the burden and lack of cleanliness.

3. 30 per cent shelters should be devoted to women, old and disabled and recovery shelters. But according to DUSIB data, woman night shelters are less than 10 per cent.

Shelter of the Urban homeless mission is going on under the NULM. But there is only 19 per cent of the homeless population to use night shelters. It means around 81 per cent of the homeless population are living in open spaces of cities.

According to the primary survey, night shelters are facing intake problem of homeless people. Seventy per cent of night shelters are running less than their capacity and rest of thirty per cent are overcrowded. It is indicated that selection of night shelter area is not appropriate according to the degree of concentration of homeless people. In the overcrowded night shelter, it was found that majority of the homeless population were living with bad condition of sanitation because of the extra burden of basic amenities, such as; water supply quality and proper drainage problem, cleanliness, proper ventilation, unclean condition of toilet and wash room, etc. In the Lahori gate night, shelter strength is 350 homeless population, but the present occupation was more than 400 only six toilets which are in bad condition. So the

majority of the population was going outside for open defecation. In the night shelter, there were no facilities of the locker, health dispensary, newspaper, and library.

### Conclusion:

Majority of homeless people lives without any social support whereas higher chances of disease. Results revealed that 47 per cent homeless people have been living without any social support. And around 26 per cent homeless people do not get support from Government and NGO's during their health problems whereas about 50 per cent homeless people do not have any kind of citizenship cards. Their condition becomes more adverse when they are unable to access government scheme due to citizenship card. It is a very vulnerable condition for homeless people, and it increases the responsibility of government and NGO's. Occupancy of night shelter is also a major area of concern arises the question of planning to set up night shelter. This affects the optimum use of resources. Sanitation is big issues in night shelters; inadequacy of toilets and Bathrooms and its maintenance, especially in Central and North Delhi night shelters. The locker facility is not available in any night shelter. It is one of the causes which keeps away homeless people from night shelters. In the absence of such basic requirements, homeless people depend, for their welfare, on government and NGO support. The role of NGO's and the government is very crucial for homeless people's development. Mirafatab (1997) well has said, NGO's should have begun to play an increasingly prominent role in the social and economic development of marginalized communities. NGO is working on the ground level and direct connected to the homeless persons. So there should be taken responsibility by the NGO to aware the state government about ground reality so that governments could be formed a better planning for homeless people.

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