

Violence's on Homeless People in Chennai City

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Abstract Homelessness is a word we often come across and rarely think about it. Homelessness is the biggest social problem which the whole world faces in the twenty- first century. Being homeless is human rights violence in addition they faces various types of abuses such as physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Though whether they ready to report? If reported, will there be any action taken? Do they aware of shelter home? The author studied all variables of needed and collected data via structured questionnaire and analysed with Microsoft Excel 2013.

Keywords: Abuse, Homeless, violence

INTRODUCION

“Homelessness” is a bitter phenomenon which is prevalent all over the world. We often notices people residing over platform, pathways and sidewalks or under the flyovers or at major bus terminal. Have we ever wondered the lifestyle they are operating? Have we ever imagined the violation and violence on those people? Absolutely not. Homelessness itself is a violation of human right and it makes them vulnerable. Homeless people especially women are among them most marginalized, ignored and discriminated.

Approximately there are 7.8 billion people are living across the world where the population of homeless is around 150 million estimated by ‘Habitat for Humanity’. India has 0.15% of its population as homeless which means 1.77 million are homeless. Majorly the homeless in Chennai found living in places such as roadsides, pavements, drainage pipes, under staircases, temple, platforms, bus terminal and under the bridge. Homeless individuals may experience improper treatment such as abuse, maltreatment and lack of access to schools and healthcare and other facilities. Over the past decades, governments have rarely provided them minimal essential services necessary for basic survival, such as shelters to ensure them not sleeping under the open sky. Therefore It is not only government duty to look upon them but ours also.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

The Census of India defines ‘houseless people’ as the persons who are not living in ‘census houses. It also define census houses as ‘a structure with roof’.

In 1999 The United Nations defines homeless as “those sleeping without shelter, in constructions not meant for habitation and in welfare institutions.”

UN Habitat Defining homelessness as “living in severely inadequate housing due to a lack of access to minimal acceptable housing”.

Therefore I conclude that homelessness is state of being without a proper house, livelihood, care and protection.

WHAT DATA SAYS?

Health department of the Chennai Corporation said, there were over 40,000 homeless people in the city in 1990, which declined to 27,000 in 2001. Similarly, after a decade, the number of homeless people further declined to 16,000. In a survey conducted in 2017, the Corporation had identified 3,500 roadside residents in the city. But the survey held in 2018 revealed the presence of 9,087 homeless in the city.

A study conducted by the Madras School of Social Work (MSSW) and the Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCUDC) revealed that currently there are 40000 homeless in Chennai city and at least 90% live in families with no access to shelters or a social security scheme.

HOMELESSNESS AND VIOLENCE

It is obvious that homelessness concatenates violence around the world. Inadequate housing make people vulnerable to various types of violence. Across India homeless encounter several kind of abuse including foul language, verbal abuses by police and passer-by and physical abuses.

Violence can be defined as an undesirable behaviour which is cause or likely cause injury or harm or result in loss as well as create a bad impact socially. We often witness an undesirable

behaviour of individual or group of people towards homeless. That is violence and punishable by law.

Harassment, sexual abuse, ill-treatment and assault are presumed to be violence faced by homeless though there are lot can be listed.

GOVERNMENT POSITION AND SHELTER HOMES

In 2010, the Supreme Court of India added that right to dignified shelter is a part of right to life enshrined in article 21. The apex court also directed all states and union territories to have one shelter home at least per lakh population in all urban areas with a basic amenities such as drinkable water, adequate lighting, clean toilets along with provisions made for their security.

The Supreme Court guidelines for Chennai's population of over 70 lakh means at least 70 shelters in the city alone. However, according to the Greater Chennai Corporation's figured, only 51 shelters are functional in the city for men, women, girls, boys, men and women with psycho-social needs, Trans persons, and the elderly.

In February 2021, Madras School of Social Works (MSSW) and Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC) have urged the state government to formulate an integrated shelter and housing policy for the urban homeless with security schemes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Homeless are viewed as lazy, antisocial, dangerous and barrier to the developing society (Harsh Mander and Smita Jacob, 2010). Urban homeless found to be wealthier than rural homeless and comes with more vulnerability for violence. Their work is basic, exploited and without security and dignity. Their livelihood is brutalized, threatened and lack in access to public services (Harsh Mander-2009). Among homeless, children are more prone to physical and sexual abuse at the same time adults are prone to family violence or domestic violence (Ben Roebuck, 2008). The social, economic and mental growth of children are affected due to drugs.

Actually poverty is the main root cause for homelessness (Tamara L Roleff, 1990) and others are use of drugs (Osama Alowaimer, 2018), broken families, slum abolition and disaster etc. Mental illness and physical disability also a reason for homeless (Harsh Mander and Smita Jacob) as well

as violence particularly leads to sexual abuse and mental abuse. Due to inadequate housing, homeless become victims of violence especially women becomes victims of sexual assault. They become victims of police brutality and getting annoyed by wealth people. They are falsely arrested by police under provision of Begging Act (Sanjoy Roy, Chandan Chaman, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

It explains the research objectives and a suitable methodology to achieve those objectives. The objectives of this study were to identify and explore the different aspects of the life homeless people in Chennai city. The present study is exploratory in nature to understand the situation of homeless people and what are the issues they've been facing during their life time. This chapter describes the pilot study, participants of the study, data collection, and data analysis procedures for the entire study.

OBJECTIVES

- Find out the extend of physical abuse among homeless people
- Find out the prevalence of sexual victimization among homeless
- Know about the extent of reporting behaviours among homeless
- Find out the awareness among homeless about night shelters

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The population of the study are the homeless in Chennai city.

SAMPLE

The sample of the study is homeless people who are staying near Paris corner, central railway station and mound road in Chennai city.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The purposive sampling technique, one of the non-probability sampling methods is employed in this study. Snowball and judgement sampling methods are used. Based on their willingness the respondents were included in the study.

SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 79 homeless have been chosen after getting their consent to participate in the study.

RESEARCH TOOL

A structured questionnaire constructed by the present researcher has been used as a research tool. The research tool comprised of total of 28 items. The first part with ten questions consists of profile of the respondents' questions such as age, educational qualification, occupation, family, residence and types of violence they've faced. Part 2 consists of seven questions to find out the extent of physical abuse. The part 3 consist four questions to find the prevalence of sexual victimization. The part 4 consists of four questions regarding reporting behaviour of victim and the part 5 consists of two questions relating to awareness of night shelters. The questionnaire comprised with close ended questions.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Microsoft Excel 2013 was used to analyse data. The pattern of responses was analysed on the basis of the percentages obtained on each item.

LIMITATION

In fact, the researcher wanted to conduct a survey of the homeless involving large number of samples. However, due to the pandemic COVID -19, the researcher was unable to conduct a planned survey. Hence, the study was conducted with 79 respondents.

CAUSES OF HOMELESS

The study reveals that Extreme Poverty drives many people to the streets of the cities. 51.1% of the respondents in the study reported poverty and unemployment as the reason that they chose the streets.

Lack of Education is another factors among children for homelessness. Education is the most important requirement for everybody to get a fit job ensuring a dignified life. Without education, the homeless people, especially children, will not have the opportunity to acquire important life skills. Researches show that nearly to three-quarters of homeless youth give up going to school. Even though the primary education is free in Tamilnadu, the homeless children don't want to go to get education.

In Chennai, in particular, we encountered several families which had lived for several decades on the same piece of pavement. It continued for generation and this is the only home that they know now.

EXTENT OF PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE

The common public are the perpetrator at most of the time. 60% of the homeless are faced physical abuse but physical abuse using weapon is low. Most of the time they get minor injury and they don't report or go to get medical assistance for that. Many homeless are left living in fear and isolation. The abuse would be random and mostly from strangers particularly from drunken fellow or groups. Homeless faced Being kicked, having collapsed of living place and being spited and urinated on, having stones thrown at them.

Female homeless are more likely to be the victims of violence and intimidation, sexual assault or verbal abuse and harassment. They faces it on the street and pavement very often. Railway station and abandoned place also to be vulnerable place. The study reveals that sexual abuse can be happen at anywhere. They reported that being groped in hips, back and it extend to breasts. Some of the incidents happened while they're sleeping.

In the homeless too have intimate partner sexual violence and it also got second place. Family members and friends are sharing equal parts. One of the respondents mentioned that the incident was disgusting and don't want to be remembered. The research shows that urgent action is needed by both the police and government. It is not acceptable that homeless people are put in harm's way on a daily basis.

AWARENESS AMONG HOMELESS

Even though there are 51 shelters are running, most of the homeless are not aware of it. Only 20% of the respondents are aware of shelter homes. Even if they aware, they won't go to shelters because it is far away from where they work or wanted to be. Homeless people know there is no security in staying outside, but it is at least in the open, where others will be able to see them. It is better than being in one closed place which is new to them. And they are used to it.

REPORTING BEHAVIOUR

The reporting rate of abuses among homeless people is very lower than expected. More than half of instances the victims said they did not bother to report their experience to the police because they expected no action to be taken. Instead of go to police, they prefer to be silent. Sometimes they seek medical assistance. The lack of reporting behaviour among homeless is due to lack of confidence, lack of trust on police and fear of

malpractices or fear of secondary victimization or fear of not getting proper treatment. As per our collected data the around 20% of the homeless only reported to police and percentage of action taken by police is lower than the reporting percentage. It clearly shows that why the reporting rate is very low. Even though the police take action, it takes lot of time that means there won't be any promise on when they take action.

CONCLUSION

Being homeless is a human rights violation. Their right to life is questioned. In this situation they face so many abuses and worst form of abuse. Women are more vulnerable target in homeless for both sexual and physical abuse. The worst part this study revealed that police are more likely to be perpetrator even though strangers are the highest ratio. The reporting rate among homeless is very low because of lack of trust and fear of police. The maltreatment of police also reason behind this. Most of the homeless people are not aware of night shelters. It's because of the poor administration of night shelters and where it functioning.

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