

Research Article

## Homeless Pavement Dwellers: A Case Study of their Social Awareness in Kolkata from Human Rights Perspective

Bela Bhattacharya

Professor, Department of Anthropology, Calcutta University, contact address AH 234 Salt Lake, Kolkata 700 091

Email: cuanthmb2010@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

Since the last few decades, 'homelessness' has become an important international issue inviting attention of the Human Rights Commission. At present, there is hardly any country without homeless urban poor who are facing serious trouble during winter and rainy seasons both in developed and developing countries and take shelter at public places. India is not an exception. The United Nations adopts a universal strategy in the rights of Human Settlements, and the UN-Habitat was created in 1978 as a follow-up measure. The Human Rights Commission has adopted a resolution in 1991 on homelessness during the last two decades. The UNCHS was actively involved with issues relating to improvement of cities and shelter provision for the urban poor. However, basic human rights related to safe and secure housing have been the universal issue. In 2003, the UN-Habitat Report stated that there were 924 million people, or 31.6 per cent of the world's total urban population, who live in life- and health-threatening houses. Now, the homeless population has become more than a billion in the world. About 45 per cent of the urban population of all developing regions combined and 80 per cent of the urban population in the 'least-developed countries' are homeless and deprived of fundamental human rights. India has more than twenty million homeless people, and Kolkata alone has one million homeless people. This paper focuses on pavement dwellers of Kolkata in the backdrop of human rights and attempts to suggest some measures for their rehabilitation. The main objective is to discuss their social demography, social structure and economic life with special emphasis on the demographic change that has taken place between 1990 and 2007.

**Keywords:** Pavement Dwellers, Homelessness, Human Rights, Demographic Profile, Occupation, Kolkata, Rehabilitation

### INTRODUCTION

The Human Rights Commission has adopted a resolution in 1991 on homelessness, which is an alarming global issue but the declaration remains to be sincerely followed. Although the UN announced the Millennium Declaration for the poor in 2000, and Ban Ki-moon (2007) had addressed on the UN Millennium Declaration programme, professional and academic attention on the issue of human rights and homeless are limited. However, there are some contributions from Casavant (1999), Jacobs *et al.* (1999), Springer (2005) and Tipple and

Speak (2005) in defining the homeless. Speak (2003, 2004) has discussed a typology of homelessness in developing countries, and Glasser (1994) treated homelessness with a global perspective. Aubry *et al.* (1992) prepared a report on the development of a homeless data collection and management system. Feantsa (1999) recommended strategies to combat homelessness. Lynch (2002, 2004) and Gleeson (2000) argued for deprivation of human rights of homelessness. Korboe (1996) narrated a profile of street children in developing countries, and Speak (2005) had sought to

find out factors of children's homelessness. In their works, Chung and Wendt (2000) talked about homeless women and domestic violence, Syngajewski *et al.* (2007) about women who are single and Copping (1998) about working with street youth. Drummond (2001) explored resettlement of homelessness, Harriss-White (2002) reported on destitution, Gray *et al.* (1994) talked about pavement people as informal communities, and Messe (1993) published information on human rights and mental illness of pavement dwellers. In another manner, Dupont (1998) has shown a mobility pattern and economic strategies of homeless people. Lusk (1992) demonstrated the grave situation of the street children of Rio de Janeiro.

In Calcutta, Jagannathan and Halder (1988), Banerjee (1989), Bannerjee and Das (2002) and Bhattacharya (1997) presented case studies of pavement dwellers residing in the Kolkata Municipal area. In addition, Das and Ray (1996), Chakraborty and Halder (1989-90) and Kundu (1993) studied the urban poor's access to basic amenities. Menon (2001) showed conversion of skilled artisan to rag picking. Mukherjee (1975, 2001) and Mukherjee and Singh (1981) studied the hierarchical and symbiotic relationships among the urban poor, including pavement dwellers in Calcutta. The study by Furedy (1992) revealed how the homeless were depending on garbage, and Hutnyk (1996) narrated about the rumour of Calcutta's tourism and the poverty of representation. The Government of India, 2007, published the 'Report on Comprehensive Legislation for Minimum Conditions of Work and Social Security for Unorganized Workers', which remains to be implemented.

## I

The homeless population has acquired an accelerated growth trend with more than one billion of the population spreading over the boundary of nations both in developed and in developing countries. In 1991 and 1993, the Human Rights Commission urged all nations to pursue effective policies and to adopt legislation aimed at ensuring the realisation of the right to adequate housing for the entire population. Accordingly, all nations have accepted as fundamental obligation the provision of shelter to citizens whatever poor as they may be. Housing is defined within the global strategy as adequate privacy,

adequate space, adequate security, adequate lighting and ventilation, adequate basic infrastructure and adequate location with regard to work and basic facilities - all at a reasonable cost.

Both in developed and in developing countries, a considerable proportion of city dwellers live on the street as homeless. This condition is more prevalent in our country as there are huge numbers of poor people living on the street side under the open sky in all Indian cities, and the Kolkata metropolis is not an exception. The United Nations Housing Rights Program with the joint initiative of the UN-Habitat was launched in 2001 with the intention to establish a human rights programme on the right to adequate housing, but the UN-Habitat and the World's Cities Report, 2006/07, clearly shows that most of the countries are struggling to cope with the growth rates of homeless people and some have shown least concern on the matter. The UN's Financing Urban Shelter, Global Report on Human Settlements 2005 has laid down that one of the key challenges is the need of mobilising the financial resources necessary for slum and pavement dwellers by supplying new housing facilities affordable to the poor on a large scale.

### Definition of Homelessness

There are as many definitions as there are studies on the subject. On the one hand, a homeless person is defined solely with reference to the absence of shelter and on the other hand, in a broad and inclusive sense, a homeless person is not only someone without a domicile who lives on the street or in a shelter but can also equally be someone without access to shelter, meeting the basic criteria considered essential for health and human development. The UN has adopted 'homelessness' in the broader sense, in terms of continuum, at the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Neale (1997) sees homelessness as a highly ambiguous and intangible phenomenon, which lies at housing need/experience. At a theoretical level, the definition of homelessness generated differences among scholars, namely Casavant (1999), Jacobs *et al.* (1999), Springer (2005) and Tipple and Speak (2005). In a practical context, there is a link between homelessness and a basic lack of sufficient housing to accommodate everyone. However, in a real situation, homelessness can be defined as a category

against those who are living at home. Non-homeless people possess some perception whether illusory, false or correct in their own ideology or the practical situation they are facing in their day-to-day life.

### **Perception and Attitude towards the Homeless**

In the perception of non-homeless people, homeless people/pavement dwellers are seen as mentally ill and considered personally defective. In developing countries, there is a general tendency among the public to alienate the situation of the homeless by categorising them as mentally unbalanced, socially alienated and morally stigmatised individuals. The social situation of the homeless in developing nations is full of hostility, suspicion and apathy. They are socio-culturally isolated with negative attitude and addressed by derogatory language. They are attributed unemployed, beggars, drunks and criminals. The media in their usual portrayal of homeless people falsely represent them as antisocial, dirty and criminal; such medial stigmatisation of the homeless goes into the deep core of the public and creates antipathy. A finding from a first-hand field study (Speak and Tipple 2006) rejects such perceptions. Even this study arrives at the conclusion that such perceptions are not only erroneous but also largely false. The New Delhi police have considered the homeless as beggars. In a study in Calcutta, it was found that some of the homeless people are involved in begging or marginal work such as rag picking (Jagannathan and Halder 1988; Bhattacharya 1991). The majority of homeless people in India are casual labourers who often travel long distances across the city to reach work, although in Delhi, only 44 per cent of homeless people manage to find work daily (PUCL 2000). However, the image of homeless people is that they are scruffy, unkempt, dirty and wholly negative and unsympathetic. A positive notion is adopted by religious and philanthropic institutions with pity, charity and compassion in their acceptance.

### **Homelessness: An Overview**

Homelessness persists on a vast scale in both rich and poor countries because of economic and political disregard for the human rights of the poor. Each country adopts a different approach for counting homeless people; hence, comparisons should be made with caution.

Therefore, this globally alarming issue needs special attention of the human rights. An estimated 2.5 million people are homeless in the European Union countries; in 2003, the UN-Habitat Report stated that there were 924 million people, or 31.6 per cent, of the world's total urban population who live in life- and health-threatening houses. Most of them live in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The report further noted that 43 per cent of the urban population of all developing regions combined and 78.2 per cent of the urban population in the 'least-developed countries' are without safe and secure homes. India has more than twenty million homeless people, and South Africa has four million homeless people living in sub-human conditions. It is the result of urbanisation in the Third World, and such urbanisation is rampant with millions of children living and working on the streets. In reality, there is no country and virtually no city anywhere in the world today which is without the presence of street children and other homeless people. Homeless people in eleven large cities in the world have a population estimate of (in million): Greater Mumbai 27.4, Kolkata Municipality 0.9, Dhaka 19.3, Karachi 20.6, Jakarta 21.2, Beijing 19.4, Shanghai 23.4, Tokyo 28.7, Mexico City 18.8, Sao Paulo 20.8 and Lagos 24.4.

One of the characteristic features of urbanisation in Afro-Asia and South America is increasing concentration of street children and homeless people, which is alarming and escalating. Many girls live on the streets and a considerable number of them are not reported due to them being more 'useful' at home, taking care of younger siblings and cooking.

Homeless people of all ages including children live on pavements or some other public places in horrible conditions. In a global estimate, ~40 per cent are dependent children and the other 60 per cent work on the streets to support their families.

### **Homelessness and Human Rights**

Homeless people/pavement dwellers are deprived of basic human rights of safe and secure housing, which are violations of a wide range of human rights, especially (1) the right to an adequate standard of living, (2) the right to education, (3) the right to liberty and security, (4) the right to privacy and freedom from discrimination

and (5) the right to vote and many more. There are a number of international human rights treaties, in particular, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Hence, homeless people are not merely objects of charity, seeking help and compassion, and since human rights belong to everyone, the rights of homeless people are respected and protected.

Among the homeless, the most affected sections are women and children - ~50 per cent of homeless people are female and children constitute ~40 per cent of the total pavement dwellers, which is unprecedented in the history of civilization. Homeless women are often less visible than men. This is because of their fear of being subjected to violence, rape or other forms of abuse (Syngajewski *et al.* 2007).<sup>1</sup> Domestic violence, sexual assault and family breakdown are major causes of homelessness of women. Some women do not identify themselves as homeless due to several reasons (Chung and Wendt 2000).<sup>2</sup> They risk control over their lives because they depend on others to provide them accommodation. They may be pressured to enter into and remain in relationships that offer shelter, even if this places them at risk, in order to meet their immediate needs. Girls are also more vulnerable to trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation or other forms of child labour. Homeless women and children require specialised support services to cater to their particular needs.

Next to women are children and young people, who are severely affected by homelessness. They are strongly linked to relationship and family unemployment and substance abuse. Homeless children are likely to face constant violation of these rights and are forced to endure conditions that are detrimental to their health and development. Homeless children and young people often suffer from extreme levels of distress, low self-esteem, depression and behavioural problems because they are victims of abuse and are at a high risk of exploitation. Some street children suffer from mental illness by being homeless. They are one of the most vulnerable and isolated groups in our society. Children under the age of 18 years are entitled to special rights under the

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These include the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development and the right to protection against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. In fact, homeless people mainly have nine kinds of human rights: breach of the right to adequate housing; right to health; right to personal safety; right to privacy; right to an education; right to work right to non-discrimination; right to vote right; right to freedom of expression and right to freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. However, the human rights approach can ensure them with regard to the following:

1. That recognising a person's ability to enjoy basic rights and freedom in the way that our society perceives and treats homeless people;
2. That homelessness is more than just a housing issue, and requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that takes into account its many and varied causes and effects;
3. That a human rights approach departs from a welfare approach to homelessness by demonstrating that homeless people are not merely objects of charity, seeking help and compassion. Like all Australians, they are individuals who are entitled to protection and promotion of their human rights under international law;
4. That a rights-based approach highlights the need to directly and meaningfully involve people experiencing homelessness in the development of solutions to homelessness;
5. That active and informed participation of homeless people is likely to result in services, which are more effective and relevant to their needs;
6. That a human rights response to homelessness would involve all levels of government committing to and taking concrete and targeted legislative, policy and budgetary steps towards the full and immediate realisation of the human rights of homeless people;

It is in the interests of the Indian community as a whole to ensure that the rights of all people are respected and protected. In the context of homelessness and human

rights, a case study on pavement dwellers of Kolkata might give a vivid picture of the reality.

## II

### **Pavement Dwellers in Kolkata**

The pavement dwellers of Kolkata are probably as old as the city itself. They came and settled at different times in temporary huts and on pavements. Sometime they construct a single slope-covered space, utilising walls or fences that separate building compounds from the pavements and streets outside. The estimated total homeless population in India is 78 million of which more than 1 million live in Kolkata. Calcutta's homeless people/pavement dwellers have attracted world-wide attention. Attention has increased because of the activities of Mother Teresa and publication of the book "The City of Joy," by Dominique Lapierre. In the city, the population of the poor is growing at twice the national rate. They have been left unnoticed by the civic authorities. It is a typical scene in Kolkata wherein millions of people sleep, bathe and eat on street pavements. Over an open fire on a noisy traffic island, a woman was cooking lunch while her children, naked or in rags, pushed each other waiting for something to eat. Piles of garbage surrounded a tiny tent of plastic sheets and gunnysacks that served as the family's shelter. Here, fumes poured in from the traffic and crows hopped about, scavenging for an extra scrap themselves. Choked by traffic, garbage and a rotting sewer system built nearly 100 years ago, it nonetheless provides a livelihood for the poorest of the poor. When one asks why they stay here, the readymade reply is, 'This is my homeland now. There is no place better than this city where we can earn our livelihood'.. They had come to the city to escape the deprivation of the countryside, which is even worse than that of the city. They further clarify that they can make a living in Kolkata and would rather spend their money for food and clothing than on rent. Rents are high even in the bustees. During the monsoon rains, they scramble for shelter under awnings or doorways.

Pavement dwellers are mostly migrants; 70 per cent are permanent migrants and 30 per cent are seasonal migrants. They are largely concentrated in the central business district, the poorest section of the metropolis,

earning their livelihood from informal and marginal sectors, namely by working as porters, rickshaw pullers, vegetable vendors, hawkers, sweepers, beggars, etc. Pavement dwellers are on the lowest rung of the earning ladder with an average weekly income of about Rs. 100.00, i.e., approximately \$2.00 US Dollars. They are mainly self-supporting and adopt variegated means of earning such as begging, washing and cleaning cups and dishes in street side eateries and so on. This study has noted that far from being a burden to the city's economy, they supply it with a vast pool of cheap labour for unpleasant jobs, which organised labour does not like to do. They clean the homes of wealthier groups, work on garbage dumps, move goods from one place to the other and bring a varied selection of daily consumption items to street corners and people's doorsteps at a low price. They can do this with such low incomes and survive only because they are living on pavements, and initially did not incur costs on either shelter or transport.

By and large, moving to the city is the choice for survival for people who are trying to go for a better life for their families. Here, migrated people usually come with their families from adjacent towns and villages of West Bengal and from other states. Besides, there are a number of infiltrators across the Bangladesh border. Calcutta's urban life has been attracting poor rural families. However, the city of Calcutta has failed to fulfil their aspirations. However, there was no way of return for those poor families and ultimately they have taken shelter under the open sky on the streets and vacant areas of the city. It may be attributed that the macro-cephalic growth of slums, shanty and pavement dwellers is the result of such uncontrolled population growth and declining opportunities in overpopulated rural areas. They constitute more than 67 per cent of the population of the Kolkata Metropolis. Both rural push and urban pull factors are the major causes for such unprecedented growth of slums and pavement dwellers in the mega city. Such homeless people live in various open spaces, i.e., pavements, open verandas, abandoned places, railway platforms and others. It was estimated that a little less than 50 per cent of West Bengal's homeless population have been residing in the Kolkata Municipality Corporation.

### **Ethnic Background of Kolkata Pavement Dwellers**

Most of the pavement dwellers migrated from Bihar and they constitute 18 per cent of the total pavement dwellers. Next are Bangladeshis who constitute ~9 per cent. Of the total pavement dwellers, 4 per cent are from Uttar Pradesh, ~1.6 per cent from Madhya Pradesh and 1.4 per cent from Andhra Pradesh. About 89 per cent migrants came to the city for economic causes and 11 per cent for socio-political causes. More than 70 per cent of pavement dwellers are mostly Hindus. Muslims constitute 28 per cent and the remaining 2 per cent belong to others, including tribes. On the basis of languages, pavement dwellers can be largely divided into the following groups: 64 per cent Bengali speaking, 23 per cent Hindi speaking, 5 per cent Urdu speaking and 8 per cent speaking other languages. Pavement dwellers are on the lowest rung of the earning ladder with an average weekly income of Rs. 85, i.e., approximately \$1.70 US Dollars. A cursory glance on the occupation structure of population reveals that 20 per cent are casual day labourers, more than 22 per cent are beggars, 15 per cent are rickshaw and handcart pullers and 6.6 per cent are rag pickers. Among peddlers, 90 per cent are hawkers, vegetable and food sellers, 5 per cent are regular day labours and the remaining can be categorised as working in other occupations. A recent study also revealed that a considerable population are street children.

### **Distribution of Pavement Dwellers**

The city homeless are largely concentrated in the central business district, Burra bazaar and Chowrangee, and even in the high-income areas of Park Street and Alipur. Presently, almost all parks, vacant plots, porches and even pavements in the metropolis have been occupied by the poorest of the poor migrants. In a proper city street of Kolkata, there are ~60,000 people who live on pavements without even a thatched roof over their heads. There are other categories of poor too who live on the roads, but they have a fixed territorial location, which they can seldom change. In principle, tenure tenancy is not available to pavement dwellers residing on road sides (*jhupri*), along canals (*khaldhar*) or on other vacant lands (*udbastu*) at the periphery of the city. All these are unregistered land encroaching settlements and do not get

water supply, electricity, toilet facility and as a result live in horrible inhuman conditions. *Tangra* and the adjoining area of Eastern Kolkata is mainly a congested *bustee* or area of irregularly built huts, with a total population of ~80,000.

### **Economic Life of Homeless**

The average weekly income is Rs. 85, i.e., approximately \$1.70 US Dollars. Pavement children's monthly earning on average varies depending on their nature of work and daily hours of work. Their monthly earnings on an average is Rs. 111.90 in garages and small engineering units, Rs. 96.16 in small hotels and restaurants, Rs. 90 in tea stalls and Rs. 92.03 in sweetmeat shops. In fact, 55 per cent of working children in Kolkata earn less than Rs. 100 per month (IPER, 1983-85), and there are many who work just for two meals a day with little or without any cash by compensation. A survey of 2,500 street children by CINI-IPER in 1994 reported that a large number of these children are engaged as casual labourers. About 32 per cent are engaged as domestic helps, ~21 per cent as helpers in unorganised sectors, 27 per cent as rag pickers and 6 per cent as factory workers. They virtually live at the bare existence level without a square meal in a day, without electricity, water and sanitation facilities, in a deplorable situation. 'Scavenging and recuperation' is one of the survival strategies of pavement dwellers in Kolkata. In this mega city, recuperation and recycling take place at all levels as survival strategies. In fact, scavengers in different areas of Kolkata are described as pavement dwellers. Even the poorest section of slum dwellers in many instances are engaged in scavenging and waste recovery cycles of the metropolis. Often pavement dwellers are attributed as parasites destroying the city's environment and are considered an economic burden. This is rather a half-truth, which is more dangerous than reality. Not only do they keep the city clean but they are also a part of the city's structured economy. Their economic and beneficial role in city life can be easily sustained by the following case study on rag pickers. This context study by Furedy *et al.* (2000) on rag pickers at the main garbage dump of *Dhapa-Bantola* is very illuminating. In fact, pavement dwellers working as pickers have very low earnings. Family incomes range from Rs. 200 to 1000 per month. However,

72 per cent of them earned below Rs. 600. In most cases, it is a single member of the household doing waste picking, except in the case of children, who usually reported that another member of the family was also a picker. However, 50 per cent of pickers said that other family members helped with sorting, cleaning and selling materials to small waste shops. The processing done by the pickers is elementary; apart from sorting and drying, they pass on their pickings daily in the same condition in which they obtain them. Further sorting and cleaning is organised by the dealers. However, during rains, they cannot sell damp paper or very dirty plastic; hence, they may take the wastes home and dry them out for a day or two before selling. The capacity to do this depends on the amount of living space the family has around the dwelling. Many pickers abandon work during heavy rains and seek manual labour. They sell materials, on a weight basis, to dealers who operate in small shops, depots or good owns (warehouses). Most pickers prefer to deal with the same trader over a period of time, usually the one most conveniently situated. Pickers who work in affluent areas of the city earn more than do those in poor areas. They did not pay any fee for the right to work in these areas. This is one of the reasons why street picking is likely to remain a popular occupation, one that is easy for new arrivals to the city to enter, and one that offers more money for a hard worker than many other unskilled jobs.

### III

A rigorous survey was carried out at two different points of time, 1990 and 2007, from the Calcutta University on pavement dwellers at six different locations in Kolkata, namely North Kolkata (22%), North Central Kolkata (18%), Central Kolkata (24%), South Central Kolkata (19%) and South Kolkata (7%). The common feature is that all the selected areas were in congested localities where pavement dwellers of both the Hindu and Muslim religions lived in large numbers for a long period. Brief characteristics of the sample population are given in Table 1.

The survey reveals that 30 per cent households considered themselves as permanent city dwellers of Calcutta. They argued that their parents had migrated from their home

**Table 1: Pavement dwellers, Kolkata, at a glance**

Population characteristics	1990	2007
Sex ratio	792	859
Masculinity proportion	55.8	55.4
Median age	18.6	26.8
Age-children ratio	25.3	18.7
Age-dependency ratio	47.1	41.3
Unmarried	62	47
Married	31	48
Widowed	04.4	05.0
Separated	02.6	—
Literacy	44.41	73.5
Work participation	83.0	75.2
Mean monthly family income	Rs. 770.2±330	Rs. 1700.00±419
Crude birth rate	6.2	4.2
Infant mortality rate	2.3	2.1
Child-women ratio	75.2	80.39
Mean family size	4.2	5.6
Single member	11.7	2.7
Member and above	8.9	21.2
Nuclear family	68.0	49.2

districts much earlier and before their birth. The remaining 70 per cent emigrated population consider themselves as recently migrated into the city. Among the early migrants after the partition (1947-50), 88 per cent were Hindus and 12 per cent Muslims. Among the recently migrated pavement dwellers, 67 per cent were Hindus, 32 per cent Muslims and 1 per cent others, including tribes.

### Population

Sex-wise divisions of the population are 56 per cent males and 44 per cent females; the age structure shows that 45.5 per cent are children in the 0-14 years age group, 4.1 per cent are aged people and 50.4 per cent are adults belonging to the 15-60 years age group. In all, 62.4 per cent are unmarried, 30.6 per cent married, 4.4 per cent widowed and 2.6 per cent separated of which 0.5 per cent are males and 2.1 per cent females (Table 2). Over the time period between 1990 and 2007, the percentage of children under 5 years reduced from 16 per cent to 6

**Table 2: Percentage Distribution by Age**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Under 5 years</b>	<b>5-14 years</b>	<b>15-24 years</b>	<b>25-34 years</b>	<b>35-44 years</b>	<b>45-60 years</b>	<b>Above 60 years</b>
1990	100	15.8	29.7	16.4	13.3	13.2	7.5	4.1
2007	100	6.1	16.8	22.8	21.6	11.3	13.2	8.2

**Table 3: Distribution of Males and Females by Age Group during 1990 - 2006**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>1990</b>			<b>2007</b>		
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
0-14	24.5	21.1	45.5	21.8	26.6	24.0
15-60	29.1	21.1	50.3	67.0	68.0	67.8
Above 60	02.2	02.0	04.2	11.2	14.5	8.2
Total	55.8	44.2	100.0	54.00	46.00	100

**Table 4: Marital Status of Pavement Dwellers**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>1990</b>			<b>2007</b>		
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Unmarried	39.1	23.3	62.4	51.2	40.2	47.3
Married	15.5	15.1	30.6	42.0	51.6	47.7
Widowed	0.7	3.7	4.4	4.8	5.2	5.0
Separated	0.5	2.1	2.6			
Total	55.8	44.2	100.0	54%	46%	100.0

per cent, but the percentage of old people increased from 4 per cent to 8 per cent. Decreasing child and increasing older population indicates a substantive change of the population structure due to welfare work (Tables 3 and 4). The crude birth rate is 43.5, the gross fertility rate is 2.3, whereas the total fertility rate is 6.1. The general fertility rate is 1.2303 and the general reproductive rate is 72.3. The mean size of the household is 4.2 (with  $\pm 1.2$  standard deviation). In all, 68 per cent of the population lives in nuclear families and 1.9 per cent in extended families. Incomplete families comprise 28.2 per cent and other type (single person) comprises 1.9 per cent. The average family size of pavement dwellers is a little more than four individuals as the mean value is 4.2. The main reason for higher incidence of nuclear families and even extended families is the persistence of Indian social values

among pavement dwellers, in spite of their living in variant and chaotic socio-cultural and physical conditions in the metropolis. Here, they maintain some regularity in a societal context as far as family members and kindred are concerned (Table 5).

In 2007, families with 4-5 members constituted 41 per cent and those with six members were more than 11 per cent. In 1990, the majority of pavement dweller families (55 per cent) had 5-7 members (Table 6).

A small family increased from 28 per cent to 32 per cent between 1990 and 2007. There were twelve individuals who lived alone. Among these single-member families, seven were males and five females. Few old male and female members lived alone.

Table 5: Distribution of Family Type

1990	2007				Total
Family type	Nuclear	Extended	Incomplete	Others	
11	0.9	0.9	0.9	2.5	3.2
10	0.9	0.9	0.9	2.3	8.2
9	0.9	1.9	1.9	4.1	9.8
8	1.9	2.9	2.9	5.5	9.8
7	12.6	12.6	12.6	20.8	8.2
6	9.7		9.7	13.7	11.5
5	14.6		17.5	20.6	16.4
4	6.8		8.7	8.2	24.6
3	9.7	16.5	11.7	8.2	8.2
2	10.7	5.8	16.5	7.8	
1	11.7	11.7	2.7	8.2	-
Total	68.0	1.9	28.2	1.9	100
100	-				

Table 6: Family Type and Change during 1990 – 2007

(In percent)

Family	1990	2007	Change
Nuclear	68.0	49.2	18.8
Extended	1.9	24.6	22.7
Incomplete	28.2	24.6	3.6

### Occupation

All people above 80 years are engaged in cash-earning activities. As a result, the work participation rate is more than 80 per cent. Main occupations are rag picking (13 per cent), begging (12.5 per cent), daily labour (10 per cent) and some are also engaged in petty theft (9 per cent) [Table.7]. Among the self-employed, petty traders and vendors are quite significant as they constitute 20 per cent. Nevertheless, it is equally important to remember that pavement dwellers have been engaged in household work. Household work includes domestic labourers engaged in domestic work who earn wage in cash or kind (10 per cent are very-low-paid maid servants).

However, those who worked in the hidden category can be divided into the following sub-categories:

1. **Service:** Those who work in hotels, restaurants and shops, and earn in cash or kind.

2. **Helpers:** Those who are engaged in vehicle repairing and maintenance work in garages. Some also work as helpers in taxis, matadors, etc.
3. **Self-employment:** It includes small-scale market operations, petty traders, street hawkers, caterers and beggars and people who earn their living by selling goods of others and get commission.
4. **Rag pickers:** They collect discarded plastic, paper, iron, etc., and also collect some sellable goods from the garbage for recycling materials from waste. They live on profit from the sale.
5. **'So-called' non-earners:** The non-working sub-category includes those people who engage in informal income-generating activities such as petty theft, drug pushing, smuggling, pick-pocketing, bag snatching, prostitution, etc.

### Occupations and Income

From a recent survey, the main occupations of pavement dwellers from selected places were as follows. Occupation of pavement dwellers of Kolkata falls in twenty-one categories of which 95 per cent work in marginal sectors and 5 cent are engaged in income-generating activities. The servant category of workers constitute 33 per cent of the total workers of pavement

Table 7: Occupational Category of Pavement Dwellers

Occupational category	Male	Per cent	Female	Percent	Total	Percent
Rag picker	21	13.8	13	9.8	34	12
Beggar	23	15.1	29	22	52	18.3
Servant	25	16.4	70	53	95	33.5
Ricks/thelawalas	9	5.9	-	-	9	3.2
Hawker	20	12.2	-	-	20	7
Mason helper	14	9.2	5	3.8	19	6.7
Service	4	2.6	-	-	4	1.4
Sweeper	6	3.9	-	-	6	2.1
House painting	10.7	—	1	0.4		

dwellers, beggars 18.3 per cent, rag pickers 12 per cent, daily labourers working as helpers of construction work ~7 per cent, vendors/salesmen 7 per cent and rickshaw/rickshaw van pullers (thelawala) 3 per cent. Sex-wise occupational variation is obviously quite prominent. There are nineteen categories of occupations found among males and seven for females. The common occupations shared by both sexes are servants (males 16 and females 53), rag pickers (14:1) beggars (15:22), helpers in restaurants (1:5) and income-generating activities, namely petty thefting, burglary (1.8) and drug smuggling (2.5). Exclusive male workers were engaged as hawkers/salesmen (16.8 per cent), rickshaw pullers/thelawallas (6), sweepers (4), cobblers (2.6) helpers of mechanics (1.3), potters, barbers, handicrafts and house painters. About 4 per cent females were also engaged in selling sex (prostitutes).

Income of the pavement dwellers varies from person to person, as well as family to family. An average monthly income of a family is less than a thousand rupees and the estimated mean-monthly income is Rs. 770.2 with  $\pm 330$  standard deviation as calculated in 1990. The monthly earnings about 10 per cent people fall in the income range between Rs. 100 and Rs. 200; 5 per cent family earn between Rs. 1300.00 and Rs. 1400.00. However, most of the family incomes belong to the Rs. 300.00 to 800.00 per month group. In a recent survey, the average earnings considerably increased to about Rs. 1700.00 $\pm$ 419. Considering the base year (1984-85=100), the consumer price index in Kolkata was 164 in 1990-91. In 2006-07,

the corresponding figure was 439 (2.68 times more and in 2007-08, it was 476. Therefore, their real income has not increased, although their earning increased by 2.21 times. In real situations, earnings on average are lesser by 0.5 points comparing with the price index levels between 1990 and 2007. The average income was Rs. 770.00 in 1990 and subsequently increased to Rs. 1700.00 in 2007. Hence, the real income is less and pavement dwellers are becoming poorer in the true sense. However, the average monthly income of males is Rs. 1691.00, the lowest income is Rs. 700.00 and the highest income is Rs. 3080.00. About 3 per cent of pavement dwellers belong to the lowest category of earning Rs. 700.00 per month and 14 per cent in the highest category of Rs. 3080.00 per month. Rag pickers and cobblers earn the highest, that is, more than Rs. 3000.00 per month. People involved in drug smuggling earn more than Rs. 2000.00. The average monthly income of females is Rs. 1265.00. The lowest income of Rs. 900.00 was for 1.5 per cent, who are engaged in theft/burglary, and the highest earners are prostitutes whose monthly income is about Rs. 1800.00 per month. Overall, 3.8 per cent of the total female population sell themselves to earn a livelihood. Women working in restaurants earn a sum of Rs. 1433.00 per month, and maid servants and rag pickers earn Rs. 1296.00 and Rs. 1238.00 per month, respectively.

Male income occupations are generated from various sources; the earnings of each occupation category is as follows: beggar Rs. 1504.00, rag pickers Rs. 3080.00, mason helpers Rs. 1671.00, porters Rs. 1700.00,

salesmen/vendors Rs. 1514, cobblers Rs. 3090, potters Rs. 1900, helpers of mechanics, handicrafts, helpers/restaurants and barbers all earn Rs. 1300.00, rickshaw pullers/thelawallas Rs. 1122.00 and sweepers Rs. 1166.00. There are sex- and age-wise variations of income; females earn less than males and children and older persons earn less than other adult in all categories of occupations. The incomes of female members who are engaged as beggars are Rs. 1120, servants Rs. 1294, rag pickers Rs. 1238, mason helpers Rs. 1140, helpers/restaurant helpers Rs. 1433, petty thieves/burglars Rs. 900, drug smugglers Rs. 1300 and sex workers (prostitutes) Rs. 1780.

### **Floor Area and Rent**

Pavement dwellers live on pavements, but they have to pay for the space they occupy to the police and local musclemen. The floor space available for pavement dwellers can be divided into four categories on the basis of area occupied by their family; 70 per cent of the total pavement dwellers families cover a living space area between 75 and 84 sq ft and roughly between 6 and 6.5 sq m. Only 9.8 per cent of the total family covers 85-89 sq. ft or roughly 7sq m. However, 20 per cent have a living space of only 70-75 sq ft or roughly 6 sq m. Pavement dwellers have to pay a certain amount of money either to the police or to the local goons (musclemen) or sometimes to both. However, the rent of a spot depends on the nature of space area and locality, as well as the whims of the collectors. In addition, some women dwellers have to offer their bodies to the collectors (local musclemen or even police constables) for their regular night stay (Table.13).

### **Social Life**

As far as the social organisation of pavement dwellers is concerned, it has been found that individuals (societal members) have their own definite and demarcated 'home territory' where they sleep and eat together in the evening. There is a prevailing social norm not to encroach each other's territory. This sort of territorial norm has a tremendous effect on the social organisation of pavement dwellers to maintain social group solidarity and identity. In this context, it is important to mention that to some extent they also maintain a certain code of conduct and

norms in order to control their social life and day-to-day activities. However, some cases of elopement exist in their social milieu, but it is not a very easy process. In fact, it is very difficult for an outsider to elope with a girl without her consent. However, owing to sheer poverty, such elopement of girls is not that uncommon an event. Such couples have to face passive social resistance prior to getting a social sanction from the community and a place to reside. It implies that among pavement dwellers, there are distant social norms and traditional values that govern their lifestyles.

The social and economic situations compel each individual to earn his/her bread. Under the circumstances, the work participation rate is very high. Table 9.9 reveals that the work participation rate of pavement dwellers is very high, i.e., 83.0 per cent. Almost all members above 10 years have to work to earn money. Some of them engage in income-generating activities, viz., petty theft, burglary, drug smuggling and in addition some women are prostitutes (Tables 8, 9 and 10).

The grave situation of pavement dwellers can be readily ascertained from the fact that a considerable section of children below 15 years has been engaged for earning bread. Even female children are working in larger numbers than male children especially as beggars, rag pickers and many other odd jobs (Tables 11 and 12).

With regard to social position, the low status and low self-esteem of pavement dwellers are due to the social stigma they would bear throughout their lives. They also suffer from active discrimination and harassment in the course of their work and daily lives. Most of the pickers learnt the work from a relative or friend; few said that they were recruited to work by waste shopkeepers or learnt by their own observation. About 59 per cent started on the work as children, aged 12 years or less. About a third of the respondents preferred to pick straight from the roadside, another third preferred to pick from street bins and the remainder had no preferred spots. Rag pickers collect what they can. Most of the materials available are paper, plastics and broken glass, with metal scraps being the most prized. They may also find leather scraps, rubber and bones. Whatever they are able to retrieve represents the leftovers after the better recyclables have been set aside in households, shops and businesses

**Table 8: Occupation and Income of Pavement Dwellers**

	<b>Male Per cent</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Female Per cent</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>
Beggar	15.1	1504	22	1120
Servant	16.4	1300	53	1294
Rag picker	13.8	3080	9.8	1238
Ricks/telesales	5.9	1122		
Hawker	12.2	1240		
Mason helper	9.2	1671	3.8	1140
Service	2.6	700		
Sweeper	3.9	1166		
House painting	0.7	900		
Helper of mechanics	1.3	1300		
Porter	2.6	1700		
Salesman/Vendor	4.6	1514		
Handicraft	0.7	1300		
Cobbler	2.6	3090		
Potter	0.7	1900		
Helper/restaurant	0.7	1300	4.6	1433
Barber	0.7	1300		
sub total	94.7		123	93.2
Income-generating activities	0	0	0	0
Petty Theft/burglary	2	1433	1.5	900
Bag snatching Drugs, smuggling, etc.	3.3	2100	1.5	1300
Prostitute			3.8	1780
Sub-total				
Total	100	132	100	13.8

**Table 9: Occupation and Income of Pavement Dwellers**

<b>Broad occupation categories</b>	<b>Male Per cent</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Female Per cent</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>
Hawker, salesman and vendor	18.8	1200		
Beggar	15.1	1504	22	1120
Servant	16.4	1300	53	1294
Rag picker	13.8	3080	9.8	1238
Rickshaw, Thellawallas and porter	7.6	1900		
Traditional occupation / (Barber, cobbler, potter temporary service, sweeper)	4.7	2500		
	6.5	1200		
Mason helper	9.2	1671	3.8	1140
Helper/Restaurant	0.7	1300	4.6	1433
Petty theft/burglary	2	1433	1.5	900
Bag snatching Drug, smuggling, etc.	3.3	2100	1.5	1300

Table 10: Percentage of Workers

	Population	Worker	Percentage of Income-activities	Unreported	Percentage generating
Persons	342	284	83.0	20	7.04
Male	188	152	80.8	11	11.9
Female	154	132	85.7	9	6.8

Table 11: Family Income of Pavement Dwellers Kolkata, 2007

	500- 1000	1000- 1500	1500- 2000	2000- 2500	2500- 3000	3000- 3500	3500- 4000	4000- 4500	4500- 5000
Amount in Rs.									
Per cent	17.4	33.8	9.8	6.6	5.7	8.5	7.3	4.3	6.6

Table 12: Distribution of Floor Area of Pavement Dwellers  
by Family 2007

Floor Area (esq.)	Total number of families	Percentage
70-74	12	19.6
75-79	22	36.1
80-84	21	34.4
90-109	4	6.6
140-150	2	3.3
Total	61	100

Table 13: Rent Paid by Pavement Dwellers for Unauthorized  
Occupancy, 2007

Rent amount (Rs.)	Total number of families	Percentage
30-49	4	6.56
50-69	5	8.2
70-89	21	34.3
90-109	6	9.8
140-150	38	62.3
Total	61	100

to be sold to itinerant buyers or local waste shops. None of the pickers had ever approached a house or shop to buy better materials as itinerant buyers of wastes are a different social category from street pickers.

They are mostly illiterate or have very low levels of education. Such a high illiteracy rate is the main cause

for their unawareness of health hazards and elementary precautions. They seem unaware of possibilities of increasing their earnings by adding value through more cleaning and sorting, or by seeking better prices from dealers. They see their job security resting on establishing a good relationship with dealers. Experiments in containerisation of wastes and an increase in street bins have not decreased picking in Calcutta city.

They start work early in the morning, and may go out again after a rest in the afternoon. About half of them work a regular beat and the others move around according to their anticipation of availability of wastes, and their energy for walking and carrying. Recently, few of the pickers have a handcart to carry materials; they mostly carry their findings in gunny sacks. Occasionally, pickers report friction with other pickers over territory presumably when someone intrudes upon another's regular beat. Some respondents commented that picking is becoming more competitive. The capacity to do this depends on the amount of living space the family has around the dwelling. However, many pickers abandon work during heavy rains and seek manual labour.

### Rehabilitation: An Alternative Approach for Homeless/Pavement Dwellers

More than a thousand organisations are working hard for rehabilitation of the homeless. Through the experience of working with them, it has been concluded that the issue is incredibly related to age-old Indian ethos and social structure. The homeless situation in India has a historical dimension and has been intricately related to the Indian

social development processes for centuries. It is true that homelessness essentially has multifaceted social problems that need to be understood in its proper perspective, that is, in both social and historical contexts. Considering the economic development point of view alone is not sufficient to tackle the critical situation. It demands something more in the pragmatic context and conceptual level with multidisciplinary holistic approaches. Homelessness is basically a national issue and requires public involvement. The problem is not only limited to administration but also extends to civil society. For a pragmatic approach, people participation and mass movement is essential for public awareness of the situation and sensitisation of the issue, which are complementary and vital to dealing with the problem of homelessness. Even though a very large section of mainstream population witnesses the daily pathetic conditions of pavement dwellers, there is hardly any substantial response from them towards remedying the situation. Sensitisation of people about the problem is one of the main tasks that remain to be done. Following is a case study and findings of research work carried out by the public health discipline, which reveals the tragic situation of pavement dwellers. A study on sex behaviour was investigated in 2007 to see whether homeless men are a bridge group in the transmission of HIV to the general population. This cross-sectional study reveals that past and current sexual activities of the homeless, who belong to the 18-49 years age group. They live in the public places of Kolkata, have sex with commercial sex workers, have multiple sexual partners and have inconsistent condom use. About 90 per cent of married homeless men visited commercial sex workers and only 3.3 per cent consistently used condoms. AIDS awareness and risk perceptions are very low. Furthermore, those who have less education and are married but were not currently living with their wives were associated with high-risk sexual behaviours. This study suggested that the homeless should be considered as a potential bridge for HIV transmission from commercial sex workers to the general population. This investigation of the public health situation points out the alarming state of the adolescent homeless population, which requires institutional/organisational intervention. Adoption of appropriate non-written communication strategies and

community intervention programmes, such as the 'Popular Opinion Leader' model, are necessary and should be urgently targeted at homeless people. In fact, motivated social awareness should be designed and executed for the benefit of homeless pavement dwellers.

Pavement dwellers and street children have emerged rapidly not only due to industrialisation and rapid urbanisation but also due to various historical and socio-political reasons in India. Rampant inequality of access to the basic resources and lack of welfare economic planning are two prime causes among many others. It is rooted in the age-old social exclusion mechanism of the Indian tradition that has permeated through culture, and it would be wise to treat it not only in the economic dimension but also to view it as a relic of feudal hegemony. Modern civil society cannot ignore the responsibility of the malady of such a traditional value-oriented socio-cultural situation, but must take an initiative to replace them with modern humanistic values and actions. Although economic planning and time-bound programme implementations are imperative, the issue nevertheless needs the active participation of civil society. Therefore, an effort must be made to create public motivation and to generate a situation for mass participation. This can be done through increasing social awareness by various methods and means. It is true that there are many voluntary organisations that are engaged seriously with welfare programmes, but participation of the educated and resourceful section is not yet satisfactory due to the lack of awareness of these people. As homelessness is also a social and ethical problem of modern civilization, an endeavour must be made through social and cultural processes. As such, the traditional value-oriented social problem needs a social solution with the participation of people. Two main methods are to create and mobilise public opinion and to increase awareness of the people and sensitisation towards the issue of homelessness. Systematic campaigns will definitely enhance social awareness and participation of people. Therefore, sensitising the public about the problem is one of the main tasks that need to be done. The fact that the Indian mainstream population is not adequately concerned about the problem of homelessness is not at all exaggerated. Even our Union and State

governments do not possess adequate data with regard to population size, age and sex composition and other vital demographic characteristics of pavement dwellers. The government's incompetence can be readily ascertained from census and official reports, which cannot even give the statistics of pavement dwellers and homeless orphaned children in the metropolis, let alone in other urban areas. Therefore, even social activists have not yet come forward in sufficient numbers. Many voluntary organisations and volunteers do not have the factual information necessary for conducting proper rehabilitation or other welfare programmes. There are gaps in information between the volunteer organisations and the practical situation of pavement dwellers. City dwellers in their day-to-day life come across and encounter the severe and miserable conditions of the homeless, but are not adequately aware of the degree of their vulnerability. Although some of them are frustrated to see the deep malady of our society, they do not know what to do under pragmatic circumstances. Therefore, reliable vital statistics of social conditions and economies of the homeless should be published at regular intervals. Their degraded conditions and programmes undertaken by the authorities, be it the government or NGOs, should also be published. In this manner, mass awareness can be mobilised. Understanding the gravity of the dismal conditions of the Indian homeless problem requires earnest cooperation of public-private endeavour.

The traditional Indian social structure is based on caste. A large section of the non-*varna* population belongs to the backward classes, who mostly live on the outskirts. Most of the homeless belong to this backward section. Indian ethos together with urbanisation and industrialisation has accelerated the situation of homelessness. As a matter of fact, homelessness has a socio-cultural foundation that is embedded in the tradition lying deep within the core of the Indian feudalistic society.

The problem of street children is multifaceted and needs to be understood in its proper perspective, including the historical context. Professional intervention strategies are necessary to address their needs and problems for appropriate rehabilitation. It becomes quite evident from studies on street children that they possess certain

specialised characteristics that are manifested in their lifestyles, which make them different from other broader categories of marginalised children. They are an extremely vulnerable group because of the way they are forced to live homeless on the streets. They are practically rootless and alienated from the main stream and live in sub-cultures. They are compelled to find shelter on pavements, railway stations and bridges, beneath flyovers, temples and *dargahs*. They grow up on the margins of the society without love, care, protection or the protective supervision of guardians/adults. They are deprived of their basic rights of survival. However, they have to be self-reliant in order to fend for themselves for their own survival and sometimes for the survival of their family as well. They mostly suffer from malnutrition, and constant hunger forces them to eat whatever they get at any time and place, even if it is barely edible. They always live outdoors in a state of constant exposure to the unhealthy surroundings of living on the streets and suffer from a range of ailments. Lack of civic amenities like latrines and bathing facilities are conspicuous by their absence. As there is no one to look after them and no guardians to guide their lives, children indulge in various addictions like smoking, sniffing glue and photocopy solutions that render them dissolute. Their deplorable living situations make them victims of drug abuse, gambling, drinking, vagrancy, thieving, prostitution and they even become a high-risk group for HIV/AIDS. Besides, street children are subjected to harassment and eviction by the municipal authorities, by the city police and railway authorities for infringements and are also often victims of physical and sexual abuse. Lack of an access to basic services of shelter, health care, education and training, lack of alternative livelihood options, societal acceptance and legal status (for want of ration cards) are the major issues of street children. In fact, homelessness influences every facet of a child's life — from infancy to young adulthood. The experience of homelessness inhibits the physical, emotional, cognitive, social and behavioural development of children. The difficulties faced by homeless children include depression, low self-esteem, lack of sleep and nutrition and feelings of shame and embarrassment. These children are exposed to the harsher realities of life. Since birth they have been brought up in an unkind environment,

which has a strong influence on their life. As a result, physical, social and psychological stresses are quite prominent and need to be understood in the proper perspective. Professional social work and intervention strategies are necessary to address their needs and problems. All these suggest that priority should be given to social awareness campaigns on the basic issues and challenges they face of which the most common are physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitative child labour and prostitution.

**Child Labour:** Boys and girls as young as 6 years are engaged in rag picking. They sift through garbage in order to collect recyclable material. Rag pickers can be seen alongside pigs and dogs searching through trash heaps on their hands and knees. Besides rag picking, street vending, dyeing, begging, prostitution, domestic labour and other odd jobs are available to them. Without education or training, they cannot avail better jobs.

**Health:** Poor health is a chronic problem due to malnourishment. Consequently they suffer from exhaustion, injury and exposure to dangerous chemicals in addition to muscle and bone afflictions. Street children are not only underweight but their growth has also often been stunted, which is why a 12-year-old often looks like an 8-year-old. Street children live and work amidst trash, animals and open sewers. Although they are exposed and susceptible to disease, most of them have not been vaccinated at all. They cannot afford to visit doctors or buy medicines.

**Addiction:** Common inhalants such as glue, gasoline, lighter fluid and illegal drugs (marijuana, cocaine and heroin) are what many street children often get addicted to.

Accordingly, intervention strategies must adopt a sympathetic attitude in understanding the specific characteristics of street children. It is very important to understand their lifestyle in order to evolve suitable strategies to address their needs. Street children are not willing to be helped unless they have faith and trust in social workers. Their life experiences have taught them to distrust adults. They are resourceful and have a high coping capacity. Their ego remains intact in spite of living under very adverse conditions.

The plus points of children on the street are their inner strengths and potentials, which can find expression in congenial situations. Such situations need to be created with social awareness and by generating sensitisation of people among whom they live. The traditional approach of custodial care in the form of institutional structure, like observation homes and juvenile homes, is not always suitable for them. With the good faith of the public, there is a necessity to generate community-based models with a special emphasis on 'contact programmes'. It is recommendable that social workers adopt programmes to contact children living and working on the streets 'through an outreach programme' and 'street presence' model, which also needs sensitisation of people. Through such model/programme adoption, social activists and volunteers may gain an insight into their problems and specific needs and motivate them to use the various services for their welfare and development. The main emphasis required to be given are on 'contact programmes', which aims to create awareness among street children about their life and work situation, enabling them to have access to basic services of health, education, vocational schooling and recreation. In this context, it is important to keep in mind that people's participation in the street children's own involvement in the decision-making process in their own lives is crucial for such an endeavour.

The prime necessity for the homeless and destitute is the arrangement for shelter. They should be provided with safe and clean accommodation, or at least with night shelters. For poor children and adolescents, there must be some sort of institutional care, employment opportunities and provisions for their eventual rehabilitation.

Social awareness and active participation of the public will also ensure donors, who are much required in order to sponsor programmes and services and various developmental and need-based projects and services to the homeless. It is necessary to arrange sponsorship for street children for their school enrolment, provision of study classes and supportive services in terms of educational materials and uniforms. Provision of counselling to street children and their families helps enhance the study performance of children and prevent

them from dropping out of school. They should also be encouraged to read newspapers to promote their general knowledge. In addition, educative and informative workshops on several topics like child rights and duty, legal awareness, healthy lifestyles and leadership development should be provided. Vocational coaching and skills training should be arranged alongside for better job opportunities and to increase their earning capacity, especially for children in the age group of 14-18 years. There must be facilities for training in mobile and auto-repair works, tailoring, screen printing, driving, security guard courses, soap making and phenyl preparation. Facilities for indoor and outdoor games, sports, film screenings, cultural programmes and such similar recreational activities should also be provided for these children.

As a strategy in social awareness, advertisement can achieve satisfactory results, as found in many countries. Campaigns for betterment of the homeless necessitate advertisements in different ways. The Homeless International believes that the issues surrounding life in India's slums, portrayed in the highly acclaimed film by Danny Boyle, 'Slumdog Millionaire', are real, important and need to be brought to the public spotlight. The movie itself is one big advertisement highlighting the issues of homelessness.

There are many brilliant advertisements for helping homeless people that have been created all over the world, of which one is captioned 'Donate Clothes'. 'Bench advertisements' is a kind of ad campaign that has brought full awareness of a serious issue to those using the benches. 'Tent cards' are used in coffee shops and restaurants. The cards show a child hidden in the middle and the copy reads, 'Over two lakh children live in places you can never imagine. Any old clothes will do. You wouldn't be caught dead in them but, for a homeless person, they could mean the difference between life and death. Please donate your unwanted clothes to the homeless this winter.' It has been proved that such ads have made effective impacts in Brazil. Many welfare organisations in Western countries raise public awareness through advertisements, as found in an Irish charity that helps the homeless. Stickers and posters created with sheets of battered cardboard, handwritten and then

inserted into the ad shell spaces have been found around Dublin. In Brazil, stickers with pictures of children who live on the streets were used [http://inventorspot.com/articles/homelessness\\_worldwide\\_issue\\_7898 - %23](http://inventorspot.com/articles/homelessness_worldwide_issue_7898-%23) and the copy read, 'Help a child escape the streets.' Besides clothes, nutritional aspects are also an issue that can be used in campaigns for the homeless. Such as, in Portugal, there are bills/posters pasted on the underside of lids on public trash cans that read 'Help so that no one has to come here for food.' Such stickers can be placed in public spots like trash cans with captions like, 'Your trash is someone else's food.'

Campaigns are very important, but they alone are not enough. Implementation of programmes and change at the grass-root level should never be assumed. These require additional activity.

A narrow focus can be effective in getting an issue formulated but problems caused by poverty are more complex. If the campaign is not widened out at a later stage, it is unlikely to achieve effective change. The challenge comes if there is a desire to go beyond informing the grassroots about what is good for them and moving towards ensuring a real change in empowerment at the grass-root level together with the development of civil society to ensure its potential influence on such other issues. Work at this level, that is, to change attitudes, behaviours, to build capacity and skills need a lot of trust with close personal contact and it is more difficult in the case of homeless street children.

Social awareness can begin at the high school level itself. In high schools and colleges, campaign and awareness programmes can be conducted by narrating brief backgrounds on the homeless and street children, telling students the fact that children roam the streets to make money by selling candy, cigarettes or toys, shining shoes, picking through garbage and begging.

It seems pertinent to explain to students that street children have the same rights as any other person under the age of 18 years. Street children are entitled to protection and services that enable them to live a healthy and prosperous life.

Copies should be circulated of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, where world

leaders decided that children under 18 years of age often need special care. It is a legally binding international instrument to incorporate a full range of human rights such as civil, cultural, economic, also political and social rights for children. It is also important to focus publicity on Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states with urgency the child's right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health. Again, Article 6 of the Convention asserts that the states should recognise that every child has the inherent right to life. Finally, in order to solve the issue of homelessness, not only campaigning but the aim of inculcating value that goes into making a human being more humane should also be put into practice at all levels.

Women experiencing homelessness require specialised support services to cater for their particular needs.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan. (2001).** 'The Capital's Homeless: A Preliminary Study'. Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan. New Delhi.
- Asian Development Bank. (2000).** Report and Recommendation of the President on a Proposed Loan to India for the Calcutta Environmental, ADB Manila.
- Aubry, T. D. Currie S and P Celine. (1992).** 'Development of a Homeless Data Collection and Management System: Phase One: Final Report'. Prepared for Social and Economic Policy and Research Division, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Ottawa.
- Banerjee, S. (1989).** 'The Parlour and the Street'. Calcutta: Seagull Books.
- Bannerjee P. and P.K. Das. (2002).** 'The Nature, Extent and Eradication of Homelessness in India: Report for the CARDO Project on Homelessness in Developing Countries', New Delhi.
- Berner, E. (2005).** 'The Relationship between Children's Homelessness in Developing Countries'. *Housing Studies* 19.3, 465-82.
- Bhattacharya Bela (1997).** 'Calcutta Slums and Pavement Dwellers'. Aparne Book Distributor: Kolkata.
- Bhattacharya, M. (2001).** 'Urban Environment Management: A Local Governance Perspective'. Conference Paper, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi.
- Census. (2001).** 'District Statistical Handbook: Kolkata – 2001', Bureau of Applied Economics. Kolkata.
- Canadian Council on Social Development (1987).** Homelessness in Canada, Ottawa, Canadian Federal Government – Library of Parliament – Parliamentary Information & Capital, *ASIEN: The German Journal on Contemporary Asia*, 103-45.
- Carl, H. (2007).** 'World Population Data Sheet', Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau.
- Casavant, L. (1999).** 'Definition of Homelessness', *Political and Social Affairs Division*.
- Chakraborty, A and Haldar . 'A Slum Dwellers of Kolkata, Socio-economic Profile 1989-90'. Kolkata.**
- Chakraborty, S. (1990).** 'The Growth of Calcutta in the Twentieth Century', in Sukanta Chadhuri *et al*(ed.) Calcutta: The living City, vol-II, Delhi.
- Chatterjee, Nandita, Nikhilesh Bhattacharya and Animesh Haldar (No date)** 'Socio-economic Profile of Households in Kolkata Metropolitan Area', 1996-97. CMDA, Kolkata.
- Chung D and S. Wendt (2000).** 'Homeless Women and Domestic Violence: Whose needs are Really Being Met?' Conference paper for Homelessness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Working together for change, March 2000, Glenside, South Australia.
- Cooper, B. (1995).** 'Shadow people: the reality of homelessness in the 90's'.
- Copping, P. (1998).** 'Working with Street Youth Where They Are: the Experience of Street Kids International 2007 URL street kids.
- CMDA 'Kolkata Slum Improvement Project' 1991-92. CMDA, Kolkata.
- Daly, G. (1996).** 'Migrants and Gatekeepers: the Links between Immigration and Homelessness in Western Europe Cities', 13.1, 11-23.
- Das. S and J. Ray. (1996).** 'The Goondas: Towards a Reconstruction of the Calcutta Underworld'. Calcutta: Firma KLM.
- S. Drummond (2001).** 'Homeless Twice: Exploring Resettlement and Homelessness for Refugee Young People' in *Parity*, vol 14, 1, pp. 10-11.
- Dupont, V. (1998).** 'Mobility Pattern and Economic Strategies of Houseless People in Old Delhi. Communication au Séminaire Delhi Games, Use and Control of the Urban Space: Power Games and Actors' Strategies: Session 2', Population Movement and Structuring of the Urban Space, New Delhi.
- Dutt, A.T. and Mukhopadhyay, (2005).** 'Two Slums - One in Delhi and the Other in Calcutta' - Economic and Political Weekly 23.
- Feantsa (1999).** Strategies to Combat Homelessness in Western and Eastern Federation *Europeenne d'Associations Nationales Travaillant avec les Sans Abri*.
- Feantsa. (1999).** Strategies to Combat Homelessness in Western and Eastern Europe.
- Furedy, C. (1992).** 'Garbage : Exploring Non-Conventional Options in Asian cities', in *Environment and Urbanization*, 4(2), pp. 42-61.
- Glasser, I. (1994).** 'Homelessness in Global Perspective'. New York, G.K. Hall.
- M. Gleeson (2000).** 'Obstacles to Surviving Homelessness' in *Parity*, November 2000.
- Ghosh, A. (1992).** 'Street Children of Calcutta'. New Delhi: National Labor Institute.
- Government of India. (2007).** Report on Comprehensive Legislation for Minimum Conditions of Work and Social Security

- for Unorganized Workers, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector, New Delhi.
- Government of West Bengal, (2001).** 'The Conditions in the Bustees of Calcutta and Howrah Constructivist Approach', W.B.G. Press: Kolkata.
- Harriss-White, B. (2002).** A note on destitution. The Dissemination Workshop of the homelessness in Western Europe. *Cities* 13.1, 11-23.
- Hutnyk, John. (1996).** 'The Rumour of Calcutta: Tourism, Charity, and the Poverty of Representation'. London: Zed Books.
- IGIDR (2005).** India Development Report, 1999-2000. Oxford University Press.
- Jacobs, K., J. Kemeny and T. Manzi, (1999).** 'The Struggle to Define Homelessness: a Constructivist Approach'. In S. Hutton and D Clapham (eds.), *Homelessness: Public Policies and Private Troubles*, London: Cassells.
- Jagannathan, N.V. and A. Halder, (1988).** 'A Case Study of Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta'. *Economic and Political Weekly* 23, 4 June, 3 December.
- Jagannathan, N.V. and A. Halder, (1990).** 'Income Housing Linkages: a Case Study of Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta.' In M. Raj and P. Nientied (eds.), *Housing and Income in Third World Urban Development*, Delhi: Manohar.
- Kipling, R. (1888).** 'A Tale of Two Cities'. In Nathan H. Dale(ed.) *Poems of Rudyard Kipling*. New York: Thomas Crowell.
- Korboe, D. (1996).** 'A profile of Street Children in Kumasi'. *Report commissioned by UNICEF and RESPONSE*, Kumasi.
- Kundu, A. (1993).** 'In the Name of the Urban Poor: Access to Basic Amenities', New-Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Lynch P. (2002).** 'Begging for Change: Homelessness and the Law' in *Melbourne University Law Review*, vol 26, 2002, p. 694.
- Lynch, P. (2004).** 'Human Rights and the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program' in *Parity*, vol 17, no 1, 2004, p. 23.
- Lusk, M.W. (1992).** 'Street Children of Rio de Janeiro'. *International Social Work* 35, 293-305.
- Lapierre, Dominique. (1991).** 'The City of Joy'. New York: Warner Books.
- ILO. (2003).** 'Working Out of Poverty', *International Labour Organization*, Geneva.
- Menon, S. (2001).** 'From Skilled Artisan to Rag Picking'. Labour file. June-July, *Metropolises Journal of Development Economics*, Kolkata., 49, 137-50.
- Messe C (1993).** Human Rights and Mental Illness, in *HREOC*, p. 559.
- Mukhopadhyay, A. A. K. Dutt, and A. Haider. (1994).** 'Emergence of The Sidewalk Dweller: Socio-Economic and Urbanisation' in Ashok K. Dutt, F. J. Costa, Surinder Aggarwal (eds.) *The Asian City: Processes of Development, Characteristics and Planning*. Springer 93-112.
- Mukherjee, S. (1975).** 'Under the Shadow of the Metropolis — They are Citizens Too'. A report on the survey of 10,000 pavement dwellers in Calcutta, Calcutta. Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority.
- Mukherjee, S. (2001).** 'Low Quality Migration in India : The Phenomena Of Distressed Migration And Acute Urban Decay'. *24th IUSSP Conference, Session 80: Internal Migration – Social Processes and National Patterns*, Salvador, Brazil.
- Mukherjee, S., Singh, A.M. (1981).** 'Hierarchical and Symbiotic Relationships among the Urban Poor: a report on Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta'. In: *The Residential Circumstances of the Urban Poor in Developing Countries*, pp. 135-63. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements. Praeger: New York.
- Neale, J. (1997).** 'Homelessness and Theory Reconsidered'. *Housing Studies* 12.1, 47-61. New Delhi, April, New York: Institute of Public Administration
- Patel, S. (2001).** 'Shack/Slum Dwellers International: Exploring Global Spaces for Local Action in New York'. Mumbai.
- Patel, S. and Sharma, K. (1998).** 'One David and Three Goliaths: Avoiding Anti-Poor Solutions to Mumbai's Transport Problems'. *Environment and Urbanization* 10(2):149-59.
- Pellegrini, R.J., S.S. Queirolo, V.E. Monarrez and D.M. Valenzuela, (1997).** 'Political People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)', *New Delhi. Perceptions, Persecution and Pity: The Limitations of Interventions for Homelessness in Developing Countries*.
- PUCL, (1992).** 'Homeless Migrants in Delhi: Findings from a PUCL Investigation'. *Quebec, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, La Politique de la santé et du bien-être*, Sabine Springer.
- Speak, S. (2000).** 'Homelessness: a Proposal for a Global Definition and Classification, 1 Sabine Springer UNCHS (HABITAT), Tools & Statistics, Urban Secretariat, P.O. Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Roy, A. (2003).** 'City Requiem, Calcutta : Gender and the Politics of Poverty'. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Satterthwaite, D. (2003).** 'The Millennium Development Goals and Urban Poverty Reduction: Great Expectations and Nonsense Statistics', *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 15 No 2.
- Satterthwaite, D. (2004).** 'The Underestimation of Urban Poverty in Low- and Middle-Income Nations', IIED London.
- Singh, et al. (1980).** 'The Urban Poor, Slum and Pavement Dwellers in Major Cities of India. Manohar, Delhi.
- Singh, A.M. and A. de Souza. (1980).** 'The Urban Poor, Slum and Pavement Dwellers in Major Cities of India'. Manohar, Delhi.
- Smith, N. (1993).** 'Homeless/Global: Scaling Places'. In J Bird, B Curtis, T Putnam, G Robertson and I Tickner (eds) *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (pp 86–119). London: Routledge.
- Sosin, M. Piliavin and H. Westervelt,** 'Toward a Longitudinal Analysis of Homelessness', *Journal of Spatial Spread of Daily Activity Patterns of Slum Dwellers in Calcutta and Delhi*, 309.
- Speak, S. (2004).** 'Degrees of Destitution: a Typology of Homelessness in Developing Countries'. *Housing Studies* 19.3, 465-82.

- Speak, S. (2005).** 'The Relationship between Children's Homelessness in Developing Countries and the failure of Women's Rights Legislation'. *Housing Theory and Society*. 22.3, 113-28.
- Speak, S. (2003).** 'Strategies to Combat Homelessness'. *Habitat International*. Vol 27, 1 123-41.
- Speak, S. (2004).** 'Degrees of Destitution: a Typology of Homelessness in Developing Countries'. *Housing Studies* 19.3, 465-82.
- Speak, S. (2005).** 'The Relationship between Children's Homelessness in Developing Countries and the Failure of Women's Rights Legislation'. *Housing Theory and Society*. 22.3, 113-28.
- Speak, S. and G. Tipple. (2005).** 'Perceptions, Persecution and Pity as: the Limitations of Interventions for Homelessness in Developing Countries'. *Housing, Theory and Society*, Volume 22, Issue 3 , pp. 129-46 .
- Springer, S . (2005).** 'Homelessness: A Proposal for a Global Definition and Classification', *Sabine UNCHS (HABITAT), Tools & Statistics, Urban Secretariat, P.O .Statistical Institute*, 1999 Study on street children in Calcutta. mimeo ISI Calcutta.
- Syngajewski L, D. O' Leary, J. Koch, D. Flynn and H. Owens,** 'Women Who Are Single and Homeless: Myths and Realities' in *Parity*, May 2007.
- Tipple, A.G. and S. Speak. (2005).** 'Definitions of Homelessness in Developing Countries to Homeless People is desamparado (Without Protection or Comfort from Trade Organization (Geneva))'.
- United Nations,** 'World Urbanization Prospects:2006'. The 2005 Revision (New York: United Nations). London.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights,** UN, Geneva.
- UNCTAD (2007).** *World Investment Report 2007*, United Nations Publication Geneva.
- UNDP (2007).** *Human Development Report 2007/2008*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- UNDP (2003).** *Human Development Report*. 2003.s. New York: Oxford University Press.
- UN The Millennium Declaration (2007).** Lecture delivered by Ban Ki-moon (2007) address on *U N Millennium Declaration* and *UN- Habitata' Progress Report* have disclosed grave situation of Homeless population profess. 2007. Progress at the MDG mid-point between 1990 and 2004.
- UNCHS (2000).** Strategies to Combat Homelessness. UNCHS (Habitat), Nairobi.
- UNCHS (Habitat) (1994).** Homelessness in Global Strategies to Combat Homelessness, Nairobi.
- United Nations Centre for Human Settlements UN-HABITAT (2000).** UNCHS UN HABITAT, Tools & Statistics, Urban Secretariat, P.O . Box 30030, Nairobi, Kenya.
- United Nations (2003).** Demographic Yearbook New York: United Nations, 2006.
- United Nations (2007).** World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision.
- United Nations,** World Urbanization Prospects. (2006): The 2005 Revision New York: United Nations.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25, par. 1 University of Zimbabwe, Harare. University Press . *United Nations . 2007. World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision*.
- US Institute of Medicine (1988).** 'Homelessness, Health and Human Needs', National Academy of Press, Washington, p. 39.
- Watson, S. and Austerberry, H. (1986).** 'Housing and Homelessness: A Feminist Perspective', London: Routledge.
- Ward, J. (1991).** 'Organizing for the Homeless, Canadian Council for Social Development', Ottawa.
- Watson S., Austerberry H. (1986).** 'Housing and Homelessness: A Feminist Perspective', Routledge, London.
- World Bank (2007a).** *World Development Indicators 2007*, The World Bank Washington.
- World Bank (2007b).** *Doing Business 2008 India*, The World Bank Washington.
- Zhang, L., S.X.B. Zhao and J.P.Tian. (2003).** 'Self-help in Housing and Cheng Zhongcun in UNDP Report'. New York: Oxford University Press .