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PLATINUM JUBILEE SPECIAL VOLUME
*Social Work, Human Development and
Sustainability*

JOURNAL OF THE MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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Editor's Note

Marginalization in its myriad forms continues to impact individuals and communities worldwide. It is a stark reminder of the inequalities that persist in our societies. Yet within these narratives of adversity, lies a wealth of resilience, courage and wisdom that deserves recognition and celebration.

The platinum jubilee special volume of the MSSW Journal on the theme "Social work, Human Development and Sustainability" captures the everyday struggles of people for whom the profession of social work exists while we reflect our journey of the past 70 years in higher education in the field of social work and allied disciplines.

Beginning with Medha Patkar's speech delivered during an International Social Work Conference held at MSSW, this issue of the Journal explores the lives of various groups of marginalized persons echoing the college's journey in pursuit of social justice through higher education. Setting the context, Medha Patkar's speech dwells on the various forms of injustice meted out to common people ranging from farmers to adolescent girls.

Building on the theme are two papers on the Homeless and one on slum dwellers. While one of the papers on Homeless by Vanessa Peter advocates for an intersectional approach to dealing with homelessness, the other paper by Swati Singh and Amol Jayprakash highlights the State has been discriminatory towards the Homeless. The situation of slum dwellers is no less different as captured by the paper by Shreya Chatterjee and Subashree Sanyal. This issue also features a paper on women with disabilities by Keyali Roy and Shaurya Prakash who look at the experiences through a feminist lens.

Empowerment of marginalized persons through social entrepreneurship is the focus of a paper by Ruchi Gautam who highlights the significance of social entrepreneurship in bringing about positive change and fostering a more equitable and inclusive society. The issue of diversity and inclusion is

beautifully captured in a paper by Anju Parvathy. The Paper by Deepika Easwaran, Barbara Regeer, and Vandana Gopikumar focuses on the mental health-homeless/social disadvantage nexus, its linkages to sustainable development goals (SDGs), and the multi-dimensional role social work practitioners can play in bringing about change. Our engagement in social justice for the marginalized has received a major fillip by the establishment of a Centre for Social Justice and Equity at MSSW by the Department of Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu.

We believe that this Centre will be a catalyst for critical inquiry and knowledge sharing in the coming years and provide a platform for publishing the work of researchers and practitioners.

We extend our gratitude to the contributors who have shared their expertise and experiences in this issue of MSSW Journal, as well as to the readers who engage with these important narratives. Together we can forge a path towards a more equitable and compassionate world where every community and every voice is acknowledged respected and empowered.

**Dr. S. Raja Samuel,
Editor, JMSSW
Principal, MSSW.**

Ms. Medha Patkar, Social Activist

Keynote address on Social Work Education, Social Equity & Social Development at Platinum Jubilee

It is indeed a pleasure and privilege to be here at the Madras School of Social Work, an institution established by a distinguished philanthropist and legendary Social Worker, Mary Clubwala Jadhav, to whom I pay heartfelt tribute.

Undoubtedly, I, too, belong to the family of so-called 'Professional Social Workers' who have passed out of these revered schools of social work.

Although we have put school well behind us, and some of us have done the same with university, we keep learning more and more about "what social work really is".

When the term 'social' includes everything that is economic and political as well, there is no doubt that the vast range of activities the Madras School of Social Work is committed to, with its faculty, is something I salute.

MSSW is active on so many issues, and in so many sectors, that if I were to start reading them out from the annual report, it would probably take me hours to understand the contribution to vulnerable communities. The greatness of this institution, however, lies in the vastness and widest possible vision that it embodies, not just in terms of academic interventions but rather as something of a value framework. Such a value framework is imbibed and inculcated in the hearts and minds of everyone who becomes part of this family, and supports issues ranging from child rights and human rights to environmental issues and entrepreneurship.

MSSW have been dealing for a while now with a new course, and I hesitate to use the term 'disability' in this context simply because the people we speak of *vikalaangat nahin, vo divyaang hote hai* (are not handicapped, but differently-abled).

These people have different senses and abilities, and the college empower them through a course that is part social work.

MSSW do this not merely by integrating the course into the curriculum but by making it action-oriented. And hence, I am really thankful to this institution for bringing this particular community into focus in terms of work and attention to them which, generally speaking, is not accorded to them in so-called 'civil society', despite the laws and legal framework in place.

Social Work Education, Social Equity and Social Development, It is certainly a great theme chosen, not just for my keynote address but for the conference when you celebrate 70 years of work. I think, following your platinum jubilee celebrations, you have five years ahead of you for celebrations that will mark the completion of 75 years - with a diamond jubilee. Therefore, social work is to be defined, in truth, in terms of the twin causes of social equity and social development. Social work is something that takes into account every struggle and reconstructive work as well-*sangarsh aur vimaan (fight and flight). Hindi samajne vaale bi yahan hai na? (There are people here who understand hindi too, am I right?)*

You have come from 18 states, I am told, which certainly makes you true *bharatiyas (Indians)*. And so I am sure that even in Tamil Nadu you will not object to my saying something in Hindi! Such a well-selected theme will showcase your commitment to the cause, from your actions on the ground, rather than through a few minutes' conversation and interaction between us all.

Today, when the focus is invariably on *what's up* - not WhatsApp, pardon me - *what's down* must motivate and inspire us to work with such sections of the population. You and I know who we are referring to. And so, when we enroll in a professional, academic, career-oriented course, we comprehend that professional does not mean commercial. A professional approach requires that we have knowledge which goes hand-in-hand with ideology. What is your idea of India? What is the value framework you work with?

Is it the constitution of India, a copy of which I carry in my bag here? Is it the value framework of equity, justice, secularism, socialism, freedom and liberty that you carry forward, not just with a flag or a banner but as a cause that you will work with?

It is that self-same ideology which must, of necessity, be brought to bear on your transformative action. Such action becomes meaningful only if we have the appropriate skills needed to reach out to people - not just to suffering, oppressed communities facing injustice-related inequity, but also to those who may be assured equity and justice at a cost that is not burdensome.

we attempt to bring together the *buddhijeevi aur samajeevi (intellectuals and socialites)* Broadly, these two sets of people - intellectuals and socialites - include advocates, media persons, writers, creators, corporate white-collar workers, blue-collar workers, the organised and unorganised working class, and women at large who face gender inequity.

Further, there are those who continue to go hungry and thirsty because they are kept deprived, as well as those whose sources of livelihood are snatched from them in the name of development. Consequently, we must be prepared to fight battles that are most likely viewed as wars going on in the country today And this vision in front of us goes beyond ideology, for every social worker will be required to have the appropriate skills to organise conferences and communities, and galvanize those sections of the populace that need to be at the forefront in the struggle for rights.

So then, such a rights-based approach will help you determine what social development is and isn't. Nevertheless, there can be no professionalism without ethics.

Ideology, skill and ethics - these are the three pillars that fully equip any social worker with the capability to carry out the task laid out, which is to usher in a changed vision for those with whom you work, not for those you work for. And the course of the process is something that will surely empower you yourself! So, our endeavour is not just to empower

women, farmers, labourers, and the differently-abled (as you call them) - but to empower you yourself which really is our goal. is particularly so when we all are committed to change - some basic transformation that is yet to come to this country, irrespective of the celebration of *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*.

So, aap ka amrit mahotsav bi aap manayinge panch saal ke badh. Par aapne abhi shuruadh ki hai aur us disha mein jaane ki ye bi ek bahut badi bath. Aur panch saal koi chotta samay nahi hai. Bahut lambi safar aapke liye sambhav hai, joh aapko manzil tak zaroor paunch jayengi - yeh mera vishvas. (You will also celebrate your diamond jubilee in 5 years. You have, however, now started moving in that direction, which is a big deal, and 5 years is not a short time. This long journey will certainly take you to your destination - it is entirely possible, and this is what I believe). We talk about equity, a goal that is far off even today When you read the Oxfam or Hindenburg reports, you realise what state the economy is in today, not only in a country like Sri Lanka (which Tamilians are very well acquainted with) but right here in India as well. Gross inequity is the underlying cause of the countless problems faced by a large majority of the poor in this country, and this is heart-wrenching for us all when you realize that 80 crores of the total population comprise the poor, who must be offered food security and a right to food. Food security cannot come through a 5 kg bag of rice or wheat that is distributed free. Today, however, the quantity distributed has gradually dwindled to a mere 1 kg.

What purpose is served when wheat is given without dhal or pulses, or when cylinders cannot be purchased because oil and gas belong to someone who profits from their sale? Firewood and kerosene are not available either. How do we really ensure food security for all? We fought tooth and nail for the 2013 Right to Food Act to come into being. However, the Act has not been fully or fairly implemented, owing to rampant corruption everywhere - at the level of small traders who fix prices in their little establishments as well as at the seat of the largest possible economic regime - the result of which has been a failure to ensure basic food security. It is not just food it is also water.

You know, in cities like Chennai or Mumbai, where the slum population (The slum population of Mumbai, India's financial capital) comprises at least 60% of its total population. Slums do not constitute unhygienic communities. On the contrary they are the real contributors to high-rise buildings, highways and flyovers, and the beautification of malls, as well as of assorted so-called developmental activities and their particular symbols. But what do they receive in return to fulfil their basic needs? Sadly, their lot is eviction. When a flood inundates the land, slums on the banks are the first to get evicted, not structures (probably unauthorized) put up by a senior politician. So it is invariably the poor who are forced to come to terms with one crisis after another. When it comes to water scarcity, the water is so distributed that 80% of the population in any city hardly gets 20% of the water. You will see, in any slum in Chennai, colourful plastic *andaas* (*water pots*), with the women waiting - standing or sitting - on the roads for hours together. For these women, fetching water is no leisure time activity. Given a choice, they would much rather spend time with their children. Instead, they drive themselves to actively engage in work that helps them put food on the table - in other words, their support generates a second income. The underlying issue, then, is not only about food and water. In the final outcome, it is about sources of livelihood, of land and of landlords. That is why I was wondering how the **Lady Clubwala** was called **landlady**. This is perhaps because, right in front of our eyes, the whole pattern of land use is changing in a way that is troubling. It is not just the joshi mutt that is coming down. The Himalayas are coming down, not just by melting, but also due to the havoc that is played with the natural ecosystem. Otherwise, *Uttarakhand ka ek khand nahi bachega - Char Dham project (Not even one part of Uttarakhand will remain, because of the Char Dham highway Project and its repercussions)*. And Joshimath, where I stayed for the relief work after the Kedarnath tragedy, was once such a beautiful place with bountiful resources. I have no doubt that hundreds of cars were submerged when the landslides began.

We wasted 9 hours trying to reach Joshimath because vehicles were being stopped everywhere. The police had barricaded roads because of

the landslides and the resulting debris formed barriers all along the route. The little town of Joshimath has women working in the tourism sector, but they do so in a manner that is in keeping with the peace and calm of the place, not with *havai jahaj planes (aeroplanes)* reaching Uttarakhand.

We couldn't help but notice the numerous advertisements that promise to take visitors to see the elephants, hills and mountain ranges during their vacation, when they opt to stay at grand hotels and spa resorts scattered across Uttarakhand. Who thinks of the impact of such tourism on nature and on the local townspeople whose fundamental right it is to survive, to live, and to protect their livelihoods. When that is taken away, how can there be equity and not vulgar inequity? Friends, this is what is happening across the country. Land is basic, indispensable capital. No one can survive solely off a huge stash of currency - be it rupees or dollars or euros - alone. Money cannot bring anything; money can be made out of a factory with paper or metal. But what do we esteem as our most basic and indispensable resource? We realise, when we become susceptible to an unexpected attack by an unknown virus, that it is oxygen, not money, that matters - oxygen, that indispensable, life-sustaining resource. Friends, what's happening? Saving lives and saving nature must go hand-in-hand, particularly of people and communities living on natural resources for their livelihood. The Tree of Wisdom can give you the wisdom you need, but you too must be prepared to go and reach out wherever we have gone to support a struggle. If you don't really support the struggles by those who are the first losers and we too are losers of our lives, not just their livelihoods if we don't save those trees. Hence, if we are to work on equity, we need to consider, analyse, and go on a fact-finding mission to discover what is happening to the country's resources. The whole list of the billionaires and millionaires brings to us if the country is really poor, who is poor and who is not the net worth of the country's billionaires and millionaires has risen in 6 years from Rs 1024 crores to Rs 2020 crores, and we know this because those figures are in the public domain. Their profit margins kept rising, notwithstanding the ill effects of the pandemic. How is it that thousands lose their livelihoods and do not even get the support to

get back to how it was before the pandemic The hawkers for whom we fought were evicted from Kolkata's streets in 1996 because a UK prime minister was slated to visit then. It was a sorry affair that in a Left Front-ruled state we had to stage protests to assert the rights of the hawkers concerned.

When there is ample space for parking, how is there no space for the hawkers who carry forward the bazaar of the *gareei (poor)*? *Gareeion ka bazaar jo malls mein nahi ja sakte hai. Joh itna infrastructural resources ko price mein dalkenge baath gareeb nahi sakte. Joh ek water bottle joh mein hardam udaran dehte hun. Bachpan paise ke kam pari gareebi hai groundwater for bottling. Uspar samjo do se theen rupe karjatha hai. Aur bejde kitne rupe mein? (The little shops servicing the poor will never find their way into a swanky mall. The well-to-do have the infrastructural resources needed at hand to equip their premium outlets fully, something the poor can never dream of. Let us, for instance, look at the price at which a single water bottle is sold at a mall. Stemming from a poverty-scarred childhood, the poor think nothing of working for a pittance to bottle groundwater. Let us assume that the total costs incurred do not exceed Rs 3 for a 1-litre bottle of water.*

And how much is it sold for?) And what price do they sell it for? At Rs 18 to Rs 20 a litre. So then, this huge profit-making venture does not help our farmers, labourers and slumdweller who are the producers and distributors behind all of the bottled water we see everywhere today.

The ones who provide much-needed; real service does not receive adequate water to meet their daily needs. The two sides of the coin must be understood. Are these circumstances unchangeable? Is it that you and I cannot fight against inequity? We can, if we have courage and are committed to equity. We can challenge further corporatization by making forays into education like Mary Clubwala Jadhav did, and into doing business with ease, and into the healthcare sector too. You and I need to challenge the public healthcare system, a basic amenity that is not fully functional or being developed on a priority basis. Why do we instead see a spurt in the growth of multi-specialty hospitals? With the National Health

Authority's Ayushman Card and the upgrade it offers, a patient stands to lose about Rs 5 lakhs for a day spent in hospital.

Canny employers have realized that with employees holding the Ayushman Card, a sum of Rs 5 lakhs can be accessed from them with considerable ease. Look at how cocooned education is too, as is evident when we delve into the past history of *Brahmanvaad*, which exemplifies how *Brahmanism* has always excluded Dalits from mainstream society. Today, with better systems in place, there is little vocalisation of specific concerns. Dalit and Adivasi children are losing access to education, regardless of whether or not the statistics are in full view. Our Narmada Jeevan Shalas have completed 30 years, though we are nowhere near a platinum jubilee yet. The children in our Jeevanshalas who pass out of Std. 4 and move on to high school, enter university thereafter and become graduates.

Some have gone on to become sportsmen, teachers, fishing cooperative office bearers, and full-time social activists, among others. We think of them not as *dropouts* but as *drop-ins*, and that is what we call them. Regrettably, 6000+ students who have passed out of our Jeevan Shala residential schools have been unable to pursue a higher education, given the changing scenario in the education sector. But those who are in government schools which are getting closed - thousands of schools are getting closed in states like Madhya Pradesh especially in hilly areas where Adivasis live Is it not our duty to reach out to these students? We do this by ensuring that the government, instead of focusing on school closure, works towards raising standards so there remains a promise of education of the best quality for these young people. The Allahabad High Court has recommended that the children of bureaucrats attend public schools. When 80% to 90% of all children in every county in a country like the USA go to public schools, why isn't it a feasible proposition in our country?

When we consider, especially, that the constitution has made education an endowment and a duty to be fulfilled by the state, why the constitutional framework is not being followed is a question to be raised. Friends, you are aware that farmers in the country are committing *atmahatya* (*suicide*). Is it

atmahatya or *hatya* (murder) by the system? *Kyun ho rahi hai atmahatya?* (Why are these suicides happening?) Why are farmers killing themselves in such large numbers? Our *Samyukta Kisan Morcha* (Joint Farmers' Force or United Farmers' Front, formed in Nov 2020) had 550 organisations coming together to fight for farmers' rights on Delhi's borders. This March, we celebrated women's power on the 8th (International Women's Day), for which I salute you, my girls. Remember, however, that 40,000 women farmers had reached Delhi's borders the same day, 8th March, to join the struggle. And why? That is because women bear the brunt when there is no food security, which has happened because our farmers have not been paid their dues for their produce. produce comes from natural reserves and human power, two capital resources without which you and I do not get to eat ...today's lunch. The produce is underestimated and undervalued. Farmers are reduced to labourers who serve us and the industry. We are not against industrialization, but if the MRP of the produce assures sellers profits that are 10x the real cost, what exactly is the input and how much is the output? Why can't farmers get paid on the basis of the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission (NCF M S Swaminathan's 5 landmark Commission Reports between 2004 and 2006)? When Swaminathanji met me here with **C Subramaniam, former Minister of Agriculture (1964 - 1966) and later, Governor of Maharashtra (1990 - 1993)**, they wanted to discuss the Narmada Bachao Andolan and related issues. I recall their saying that no one could be bothered about their recommendations.

Friends, the fact that no one is bothered about their recommendations implies a lack of concern on the part of the authorities. but we should be concerned about the fact that the farmers, the indebted community and the farmers are making all other inputs but they are getting no value for it When we speak of farmers, we mean, in the broadest sense, small landowners, cattle raisers, fish workers and Adivasis - any community that lives on natural resources. The fish workers who were fighting a battle against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant project with Udayakumar (writer and anti-nuclear activist) fasted in thousands for a hundred days,

yet their vision did not see the light of day Not just the experience, it is clear that the corporate world has its own vision for development without giving priority to saving natural resources as life support and livelihood support And so it is that agricultural land is being sold like nobody's business. *Baccha bolta hai ki papa, dada, kya karna hai? Is zamin se kuch nahi nikalta hai - bej do isko. Mein ek Bolero kareedhoon? Mein ek motorcycle kareedhoon? Apne ghar tho banane? (The young son of the family says, "Papa! Grandpa! What do we do now? This land is yielding us nothing of value. Come now, let's sell it. Shall I buy a Bolero with the sale proceeds? Shall I buy a motorcycle? I shall have to build my house and get everything ready for it").*

What is happening today? In the industrial sector, attrition is high with workers getting thrown out. This was not the case only during the lockdown but continues still, chiefly because companies are only interested in profits over people and nature. Nothing else is their objective. The young men and women who have lost their jobs go back home to their parents and return to farming. Friends, when all of this is happening, the big question you have to ask yourselves is how to fight against inequity but there are answers that will compel you to look for alternative technologies.

How can we not go in for decentralised water and renewable energy management so that every community can harvest the water that comes their way as an endowment from nature?

We can help farmers opt for alternative farming technologies that do not pollute river water. Water from the Narmada is non-potable today. If its water is used for organic farming, officials do not issue farmers a certificate to say that their produce is organic because the water is not. If the basic resources are spoiled how can deprivation be converted into destitution, is something that should make our hearts active on all these issues We must question the prevailing gaping financial inequality and not merely content ourselves with reading the Oxfam report which declares that 1% of India's population owns 40% of all its wealth. We need to work towards an alternative taxation policy.

When 2% tax is applied every year to public expenditure, the government nets Rs 7.5 lakh crores. If 50% of the tax on inherited property is applied once when the property is transferred and the individual receives the inheritance, why not 50% of the value be paid once to yield Rs 9.5 lakh crores? The sum of Rs 16 lakh crores generated is adequate enough for all state governments to bypass the liquor business entirely - supposedly their only source of income - which instigates violence against women and children and does nobody any good.

The money may be offered to farmers (without sourcing revenues from the liquor trade) as a Minimum Support Price (MSP), or put to use in the health and, particularly, the education sector. The Constitution of India stipulates that children up to 14 years of age are entitled to free education.

So, there are ways and means, my friends, to review our development paradigm honestly. If we do not do so, people are compelled to stand up and fight for what is rightfully theirs. Those who can easily buy water bottles, and air-conditioned houses and cars without any problems, it is a different story. But those receiving an education in social work are the ones that rise above personal gain and their own personal lives.

If you look at the wider society, I am sure you will say that inequity is intolerable, unconstitutional and inhumane. When you want to define for yourself what social development is, you have to consider what is happening in this country. The country's economic development is symbolised, typically, in its high-rise buildings, malls and massive industrial complexes. Nevertheless, such high unemployment rates have not been seen over the years.

Faculty members were telling me that you now find yourselves getting jobs easily, passing out from such a reputed institution as this. Those jobs, however, may not necessarily be the ones you choose to settle for and you might eventually end up working in the corporate sector. Nevertheless, if you are truly committed to equity and justice, you will be able to find an alternative in life that is fulfilling.

A Future Powered by Diversity and Driven by Sustainability

Anju G Parvathy, Assistant Vice President – Research & Solutions, Avtar
(India's premier Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion firm)

We are in an era where organizations are rethinking their approaches- inside and out to accommodate more of a humane factor in their ventures. Products are being rebranded to accommodate the woke new generation of customers, many seeking purpose in the brands they associate with. Workplaces are being remodelled to be more human and less employee-centric. As per the CGS's 2019 Retail and Sustainability Survey, one-third of consumers are ready to pay 25% more for products that are sustainable, with Gen Z willing to pay 50-100% more compared to the rest (1). This sheer sense of purpose is what binds sustainability and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI).

Diversity is the practice of inviting different people to be seated at the table, believing in the power of uniqueness they each bring. Inclusion makes sure they are comfortable, and equity takes care to understand their unique needs and serve them what they prefer. It is about breaking personal barriers and thinking about the collective. What, then, connects sustainability and DEI? Diversity, equity, and inclusion are a means for social sustainability and leverage differences between people to fuel the collective best. Divergent perspectives result in more responsible decisions being taken, the end outcome being more optimal. The terms intersect in the social and cultural spheres. It means that they tackle problems related to human conditions and subsequent betterment of the same. The core lies in the fact that every human is as entitled to the future as the other. They both appeal to active action from the heart and soul. It is about understanding humans and their deepest needs to build a framework that stands the test of time.

It is perhaps the juncture that is right, but it cannot be denied that DEI is now an undercurrent of universal thinking and decision-making. We are right at the epicentre of an era that is precariously tipping- environments on the brink of irreversible degradation, and employees on the verge of exhaustion. We have women that are educated that do not make it to company doors and those that stall careers by glass ceilings within. Legislations allowed people to come out but we haven't yet made space for them to speak up. This calls for the coming together of solutions that not only focus on billboard topics and large-scale issues but granular ones too. *Sustainable innovation driven by DEI* is the way forward. Nike expressed this best in their campaign for 14-year-olds when it was observed that around the age of 14, twice the number of girls drop out of sports. 'Made to Play' was Nike's innovative sports gear designed for women and girls. This created a revenue stream in itself waxing from 10% in the 1990s to 25% today. We are dealing with a strong business case here. The All-World Country Index shows that sustainable companies live longer in the market, and their lifetimes stand at 87 years (as opposed to the MSCI average of 63 years).

If we dissect the success of this campaign, we can observe the following:

- The campaign found its roots in DEI, neatly identifying the diversity strand (the 14-year-olds) that was subject to a lack of inclusion and offering them an equitable solution.
- The brand's intent on sustainability forged a strong business case that was ethically progressive and enabled wins outside the business realm.

This concept is especially relevant in workplaces. It starts with the initiation of diverse talent, sensitization of the peer group, accommodating cohort-specific needs, and creating a conducive environment for talent growth. Employees at DEI-forward companies are 3x times happier, 1.8x times more likely to have a good work friend, and 2.2x times more likely to have a healthy work-life balance (4). These figures underline the fact that DEI-

forward workplaces nurture sustainable life-spaces. Included, happy employees transmit their energy to their homes, families, and children, thereby creating positive spaces for the future to thrive in.

A significant aspect of sustainability stands not just in innovating relevant solutions for the future but in passing the knowledge. It is akin to inviting the less privileged to share a hearth on a cold day. A relevant example is Avtar's BIG (Business is Good) campaign (5), an initiative that believes in the collective development of MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) under the guidance of front-runners in the field. The campaign sounded a call-out to corporate giants to turn their attention towards small-scale enterprises to grow together, leveraging the power of diversity, equity & inclusion. Sustainable empowerment through DEI comes through with the simple motto that 'being good is good for businesses. Sustainability, in all its simplicity, boils down to being good.

In the collective fabric of functional existence, it is key to understand the power of the collective and its consequences. Sustainability is continuous and ever-evolving with every step we take, and DEI matures with every unique person that steps in. This is precisely why we would probably never fully achieve optimality, but the bar keeps getting higher. With DEI to drive sustainability around, the future is never in brackets.

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Eviction and Everyday Struggle of Homeless Amidst Shelter Homes Crisis in Mumbai

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Abstract

Homelessness revolves around being legal and illegal occupants adding burden on their citizenship rights which leads to denial of their basic human rights. This paper critically examines Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act (BPBA), 1959, Provision of Shelter Homes and everyday struggles of homeless people. BPBA consists of reviews of various provisions whereas everyday struggles provide dense narratives on their lives, the state's language, and the atrocities inflicted on the homeless which reflects the exploitative nature of the state towards the homeless. The visits to shelter homes depict the state's neglect to adequately provide services to this section of society. It is longitudinal study using a qualitative research paradigm. Data was collected from in-depth interviews. The findings of the study show that state policies and the manner of their implementation are discriminatory towards homeless people.

Key Words: BPBA, Everyday Life, Eviction, Homeless, Shelter Home

Introduction

Scholars and human rights activists have raised the issue of homelessness multiple times, though policy responses to the problem reflect state apathy and have been mostly punitive in nature. It is necessary, therefore, to critically examine the policies and legislations framed and implemented to address the issue. In this context, a review of the Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act (1959) and the provision of shelter homes in Maharashtra (India) would be an appropriate starting point. The former is discriminatory

in nature, whereas the latter fails in terms of implementation and reflects a lack of political will. It is also necessary to consider the radical transformation in the urban environment resulting from rapid urbanization, the reshaping of the built environment, and the dramatic changes in the cityscape.

These changes largely address the sensibilities and needs of the urban elite and the middle class, excluding the poorer sections of society whose issues do not seem to matter much to policymakers. Another policy which failed in its implementation is that of Rehabilitation and Resettlement, which severely impacted the homeless and, as their everyday lived experiences show, made them vulnerable to exploitation by the state.

Family homelessness is a reality in cities, affecting children, women, and men, as well as the elderly, poor, mentally ill, and destitute. This study found that most homeless people worked in the informal sector and were deprived of both the right to live with dignity, a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of India and of shelter, a basic human right. The word 'homeless' indicates depersonalization of the individual on the ground that the person does not have a home. Dupont (2000: 101) is careful to avoid using the term 'homeless', because it adds the loss of familial roots to a lack of shelter. Apart from a lack of housing, language also becomes a tool for discrimination in both developed and developing nations. In Finland, homeless people are often addressed as '*pummi*', which means 'human trash', an expression whose use has been widely criticized in that country (Singh, 2019). Although Finland's 'Housing First' model has been a success, negative attitudes towards homeless people persist and remain deep-rooted, as in most societies.

Speak and Tipple (2006) mention the language in terms of which homeless people are labelled in several countries. For example, in South Africa, homeless are referred as *Mukomana/ musikana wekuseri*, or adult lodgers who live in backyard shacks; in Indonesia they are called '*tunawisma*' (no house); in Bangladesh, the homeless are known as '*shariohara*', meaning

utterly destitute; and in China, they are '*Jiaohuazi*', or beggar, which also means homeless people. The study also mentions that in most countries, the homeless are commonly viewed as criminals or villains'. In India, they are often stigmatized as beggars, drunks, and the mentally ill. Much needs to be done to change public perceptions and attitudes towards homeless people.

According to the Census of India, 2011, there are 17.73 lakh or 1.77 million homeless people, of which about 210,908 live in Maharashtra. Mumbai alone has 57,416 (Census 2011) homeless people in the city. Latest data on homeless people is not available as there have been no recent surveys. However, it is reasonable to assume that the number of homeless people in Mumbai has increased significantly in the last ten years. Field studies suggest that most single homeless individuals live in areas like Bandra, while the majority of homeless families are concentrated in South Mumbai, some of whom have been living in this state for more than two generations. Single or families, the homeless are engaged in some kind of informal work. Nearly all (one might say 99%) are engaged in casual or informal work like daily wage work, selling toys and cheap goods at traffic signals, part time employment with caterers, as domestic help, *safai karmachari*¹, pulling loads at stations, etc. Those who begged were mostly the ones having a physical disability or health issues, or were too old to work. This research suggests that most homeless people in South Mumbai are from interior Maharashtra (Pune, Solapur, Ratnagiri and Nasik). Some are from other States like U.P., Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Most of the homeless from U.P. and Bihar are single migrant men with families in their villages, while the homeless from within Maharashtra lived with their families on Mumbai's streets.

Methodology

This research is based on a qualitative research paradigm. It is a longitudinal study which gathered data over many years for arriving at meaningful

insights into the problem of homelessness. The lived experiences of homeless people were recorded from in-depth interviews with twelve participants whose families have been homeless over two or three generations. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used for sample collection. The data collection methods included in-depth face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. The questions were open-ended and the duration of each interview was more than one hour. The interviews were conducted in various settings. In addition to interviews, data was also collected through non-participant observation. The study was conducted at the *Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST)*², Maharashtra (India), with the *Cross Maidan* area 'home' to homeless families for over two to three generations. Twenty-three homeless families were living on the pavement around *Cross Maidan*. Some families were even given a *jhuggi* or *jhonarpati number*³. There were families living inside *Cross Maidan* that were evicted fourteen to fifteen years ago, only a few of which were rehabilitated near Govandi and Mankhurd. They are denied state assistance despite possession of *jhuggi* numbers, birth certificates, Aadhaar Card etc.

The Supreme Court took suo moto notice of a case assessing the state of shelter homes in India. The Second National Report on the Status of Shelters for Urban Homeless submitted to the Supreme Court averred that the state government had not taken adequate action to ensure that shelter homes were provided. This led to the Supreme Court's monitoring process, the Office of Commissioners of the Supreme Court led to a collective process/ initiative by various NGOs to submit a report on the condition of Shelter Homes in all the cities of India. The present field work was carried out by the researcher (along with other stakeholders) in 2014, for the development of the Third National Report on the Status of Shelters for Urban Homeless to understand the progress of shelter construction and provision of facilities for homeless people in the city of Mumbai. The data have since been updated and their current status highlighted through

secondary sources like newspaper articles, government reports and court orders.

The semi-structured interview guide regarding Shelter Homes was designed to assess their situation, analyze the facilities, infrastructure, health provisions, counseling, and whether they abide by the Supreme Court and High Court guidelines for livable shelter homes. The semi-structured interview guide pertaining to eviction and everyday lives can be categorized into four themes. Firstly, everyday lives and struggles entail causes of migration, the state they belong to, reasons for being homeless, how they obtained their current place of residence, etc. Secondly, the aim is to understand their understanding of concepts such as what home means to them, the difference between home and shelter, the idea of privacy, public and private space, homelessness, their citizenship rights, identity, and the role of the state, among others. Thirdly, the focus is on understanding their daily struggles, including their daily schedule, access to water and sanitation facilities, experiences of discrimination, experiences of eviction, interactions with the police, identification of the most vulnerable groups, and capturing their colloquial language, among other aspects.

The fourth aspect of the questionnaire aims to assess their knowledge of various policies and facilities available to them. It involves asking about the policies and facilities provided by the Government of India, identifying any gaps or shortcomings in these policies, and inquiring about any relevant government documents they possess.

Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act (BPBA), 1959: Criminalisation of Homelessness

Beggary and homelessness do not mean the same, but homeless people are nearly always labelled as beggars and hence, are punished under the provisions of the Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act (BPBA), 1959. Homelessness is criminalised under miscellaneous state Acts and policies. A common perception among the public for the homeless people is that they all are beggars, criminals, parasites, drunkards, mentally ill, unemployed,

and thieves. However, a study conducted in Calcutta⁴ found that only 8% of homeless people are involved in begging or marginal work such as rag picking. The majority of the homeless population in India are casual labourers (Speak and Triple, 2006). A writ petition filed with the Delhi High Court, and interviews with lawyers in Delhi who were providing legal aid to the underprivileged, revealed that 74% of arrested persons were engaged in informal sector jobs like employment in small hotels, construction work and markets, and 45% of the arrested were homeless (Mander, 2018). Begging continues to be regarded as a crime and beggars as criminals rather than a social issue that deeply impacts the homeless, disabled, working poor, sex workers, transgenders, and other marginalized segments of the population (Guha, 2010).

The Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act, 1959, is among the many laws that stigmatizes the homeless as beggars and punishes them for their status of being homeless. But the criminalization of homelessness can be traced back to the 14th century in England, when the first Vagrancy Law⁵ came into effect in 1349. In India, anti-beggary laws are mainly derivatives of vagrancy laws introduced in the colonial period, which criminalized begging and homelessness. The BPBA defines begging as receiving alms in a public place under any pretence: singing, dancing, performing, fortune telling, or offering any articles for sale, entering any premises for the purpose of receiving alms, exposing a sore, wound, injury, disease, or deformity for the purpose of receiving alms, wandering in public places, and asking for alms. The act penalizes first time 'offenders', who are convicted for begging with three years in prison. A repeat offence can lead to 10 years of detention. Though the core objective of the BPBA, 1959, is rehabilitation, preventing people from begging, and imparting vocational skills to them, it is, in its design and practice, punitive and targeted at the homeless. Moreover, the vocational skills or training the 'offenders' receive is barely enough to provide them with jobs that can raise their socio-economic condition.

The anti-beggary law also goes against the principles of the Indian constitution. It is in violation of Article 14, the Right to Equality, which states, "It does not make any distinction between persons who solicit or receive money for authorized purposes and those who are singing, dancing, or engaged in similar activities. Further, pretence is a very vague term for the police to take action on beggary". Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India safeguards Freedom of Expression under Article 21 (the right to live with dignity and with the necessities of life required for it). Under the Beggary Act, people can be arrested without a warrant and not be informed about the reason for their arrest, which violates the right of an arrested person to know the grounds on which he/she is being arrested, as provided by Article 22 of the Indian Constitution. Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits the use of the term 'beggar' (when, in fact, the word used in the Constitution is *begar*, meaning bonded labour). In addition, Article 41 of the Indian Constitution secures the right to work, education, public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement, making unemployed and disabled persons the state's responsibility (Jamil, 2005).

Thus, as the argument in the previous paragraph shows, the BPBA, 1959, is enforced contrary to all constitutional provisions. It is rooted in a colonial anti-migrant mind-set of preventing labour movement from rural areas to cities and towns, like in 2007, inmates from the beggars' home can only be released on the condition that they would go back home (Ramanathan 2008). On August 8, 2018, the Delhi High Court delivered a landmark judgement that decriminalised begging in the national capital, deeming the penal provisions in the law unconstitutional. As this judgement is only applicable in Delhi⁶, in the rest of the country, beggary continues to be treated as a criminal act. The BPBA, however, does not differentiate between people who beg, work in the informal sector, and the homeless. Therefore, this law is used arbitrarily to restrict the movement of beggars and those who are not.

The failure of the government to repeal or amend this draconian law may be seen as an indication of the state's insensitivity to the issue of homelessness.

In the site of the fieldwork for this study, the transport vehicle used by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation⁷ (BMC) to round up homeless people is colloquially known as *Bhikhari Gari*⁸. The homeless described their traumatic experiences of the *bhikhari gari*. The sighting of this vehicle brings fear to the people who gather their meagre belongings, run to avoid detention and also to save their important belongings. Those who were employed could be arrested too because of their 'looks' or for not being 'appropriately' dressed. Obviously, the BMC's criterion for identifying *bhikaris* was subjective and reflected the typical bias in society that only those who beg or are unemployed are not appropriately dressed, overlooking the fact that many may not be earning enough to afford 'decent' clothes. The multiple layers of exploitation, and exclusion, and state action render such people even more vulnerable to loss of job, stigmatization, and criminalization, leaving their families to suffer financially, etc.

Aristotelian and Smithian views are far more sensitive to social exclusion. Smith explains, 'By necessity, I understand not only the commodities which are indispensable for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even the lowest order, to be without Custom has rendered leather shoes a necessity of life in England. The poorest credible person of either sex would be ashamed to appear in public without them' (Sen, 2000, p.7). The point of Smith's argument was to see deprivation in the form of an inability to appear in public without shame, thus restricting a person's participation in community life, and the lack of freedom for an individual to decide on his behalf about the living standards.

These norms exist not merely in terms of clothing or looks, but also in terms of what urban public spaces must look like. Urban spaces are being restructured to cater to the wants and desires of upper and elite classes of society, where there is no space for the poor. Lifestyle, infrastructure, urban spaces are modelled for the elite's consumption, which is unaffordable for the poor. With economic liberalization and globalization, the major cities are trying to attract the real estate developers and builders to redevelop slums and dilapidated open spaces on a commercial basis (Guha, 2010). Formal housing has gone out of reach not only for the poor, but also for the middle-class population in cities like Mumbai (Jana, et al., 2016). This initiative created a new regime of regulations in the urban sector where the cities are hyperactive sites for creative destruction by dismantling existing spaces and creating new ones by pushing out the poor from the new urban public space. These instances were clearly visible when Delhi swept its beggars, homeless people and the urban poor under the rug in its preparations for the Commonwealth Games in 2000 using the provisions of the Act, and embarked on a 'slum clearance'⁹ or demolition drive (Iyer, 2010). From 1994 to 1998, around 3,60,326 slum dwellings were demolished in slum clearance drives in Mumbai (Mahadevia and Narayanon, 1999:16). During the Mumbai Makeover project between November 2004 and February 2005, an estimated 90,000 homes were demolished in 44 areas of Mumbai, clearing 288.8 acres of land. In a few months, the demolition rendered more than three lakh people homeless (IPTEHR, 2005). This plan was part of a project for making Mumbai a world class city with the vision of transforming it into Shanghai. Developmental projects of this nature consider homeless and the urban poor as hurdles to achieving the goal of 'world class city' and thereby eliminating them from the state's vision in urban planning.

Rising Contradictions in Policy and Implementation of Shelter Homes

This section reviews the Shelter Homes of Mumbai. In 2014, Maharashtra was said to have had 11 functional shelter homes. For this, the researcher (along with other stakeholders) had carried out field work in the same year on the functioning of these shelter homes for the development of the Third National Report on the Status of Shelters for Urban Homeless. The detailed inspection of various night shelters in terms of basic facilities like mattresses, sheets and blankets, drinking water, lights, sufficient lockers, vector control, provision for complaints, facility of kitchen and display board etc were to be analysed.

Five out of eleven shelter homes were found to exist only on paper and the remaining six had failed to comply with the guidelines and were unfit for housing humans. The first shelter home visited by the researcher was Pathan Chawl, Byculla, established in 2011. The nameplate in English should, rightly, have been in a local language, i.e., Hindi or Marathi. The shelter had the capacity to accommodate twenty persons but at any given time, there were twenty-five or more homeless adults in it. Six to seven people shared one toilet. Cleanliness and hygiene were major issues. Besides accommodation, the inmates are provided two meals a day and a television set for entertainment. The Pathan Chawl shelter home, however, lacks a counselling centre and counsellors. Furthermore, it charged Rs. 1000/- per month from each homeless adult which is against the shelter home provision. The shelter home for girls, Asha Sadan, was run by the Maharashtra State Women's Association. Asha Sadan caters to the needs of the orphan girls aged 6 – 18 years and boys till they complete eight years. The third shelter home was Niradhar Yuvak Ratri Nivas Kendra which can accommodate three to four homeless persons. This shelter does not have the basic amenities like bed rolls or mattresses, blankets, first-aid facilities or potable water. The fourth shelter home was Salam Balak Trust, Bandra, which was established for street children. At the time of the survey, it had a capacity of 200 children but only twenty-eight were housed there. The shelter home is attractively decorated with graffiti, both inside and outside.

Children are sent to this shelter through Childline services. They are provided free meals, an informal education, some recreational activity, and a bank account with a passbook titled 'Children Development Khajana'. The visitors' list is properly maintained and updated. The fifth shelter home for girls, Asha Sadan at Dongri, Mumbai, is well-equipped with facilities provided in line with the guidelines laid down. The sixth home, run by the Mother Foundation, houses homeless males aged 5 – 25 years. Against a capacity of 50, it had 40 inmates at the time of the survey. Of the forty, 21 children were enrolled in schools. This shelter home worked with the support of the community. The cooperation is reflected in the community hall at the Shelter which was donated by the residents. The BMC provides free water and, in addition, there is a kitchen for the inmates, a refrigerator, and a TV. Vocational training is imparted as well. There is an old building on Jail Road, Bandra, which was built during British rule. The building in dilapidated conditions where few BMC families were still residing. The plan was to demolish the building and construct a shelter home. According to the BMC, this shelter home would be ready before the monsoon. Since it was not constructed, this 'home' did not fulfil the criteria for a shelter home.

The Supreme Court compiled a report which stated that the city should have night shelters, but the lack of initiative from both the state government and the local administration resulted in a poor assessment of the situation, inadequate infrastructure, and continuing insensitivity towards the issue of homelessness. The huge unfulfilled demand for shelter homes, which is a result of the inadequate capacity of the existing ones and incomplete new homes, reflects the government's lack of political will. The report also expressed disappointment in the implementation of the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) and asked the National Legal Service Authority (NALSA) to look into the matter. NALSA submitted a report on 11th Nov, 2016 which was not satisfactory, therefore, Justice Kailash Gambhir Committee was appointed to submit another report.

The Indian judicial system has acknowledged that homeless people are dying because of a lack of shelters, which violates the fundamental 'Right to Life' under Article 21. To address the problem, the Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH) Scheme was created under the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM)/Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY). The program comes under the preview of the Urban Development Department, Maharashtra, which is responsible for the construction and maintenance of shelter homes. According to the SUH Scheme guidelines, Mumbai's population is 12.5 million (Census, 2011) and, therefore, the city needs 125 shelters. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL No. 11703 of 2001 at High Court) filed by an NGO, Homeless Collective, questioned that if a government agency takes so long to provide shelter homes, then there would be no space left to construct one (Bhasin, 2014). It also held the state responsible as many cancer patients who came to the city for treatment slept on pavements due to a lack of shelter homes. As per the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM) guidelines, there should be one permanent community shelter with a minimum capacity of 100 persons per one lakh of population (NULM, 2013:2).

As pointed out in the PIL, the administration had promised 25 shelters in 2012 (Bhasin, 2014). In 2014, the Indian Express reported that there should be 207 shelters but there were only nine night shelters. Sunavala (2018) laments that there are only 14 BMC shelters and another seven run by NGOs which, together, house around 1,920 people. In one judgement, the Supreme Court ordered that Mumbai should have 184 shelter homes capable of housing 18,400 persons. But this is only one-third of the total homeless population in Mumbai (Singh, 2019). A reply to a query under the RTI stated that the civic body planned to construct 148 shelters across Mumbai, of which work on 125 was underway, with 20 being made available in a few months (TOI, 2019). Ghar Bachao-Ghar Banao Andolan (GBGBA) reports that there are 22 existing shelter stating that Maharashtra is one of the worst performing States as no shelter in Mumbai is set up following the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) guidelines (Deshpande, 2021). Deshpande (2021) reports that, according to the 2011

Census, Mumbai had over 57,000 homeless persons, a number which is increasing with the years and COVID-19, worsened the problem. The Census was last conducted in 2011 which was 12 years ago and surely with the rising population, COVID-19, rising unemployment etc these numbers would have gone quite up. To describe the situation of homeless in India, Harsh Mander (Hindustan Times, August 2012) stated that the homeless people have been 'not only socially excluded, but also expelled'.

There are several policy recommendations with regard to shelter homes. Firstly, they should be constructed in such a way that the needs of the homeless people are fulfilled. The present review of the shelter homes, the field reveals a wide gap between policy and implementation. Secondly, family homelessness, a significant component of homelessness, has been neglected. None of the homes in this review have enough space to accommodate homeless families. Rather, they only serve adult homeless males and street children. It is necessary to make provision for homeless families so that the families remain together without separating the children. Thirdly, there is a need for an inclusionary approach to accommodate single homeless women who are most vulnerable to discrimination and harassment. Fourthly, there is a growing need for dedicated homes for underprivileged and marginalized groups like the elderly, mentally ill, destitute, and transgender. Interventions like psychiatric treatment and counselling are needed to address mental health issues. Fifthly, it needs to be understood that since many of the homeless people are working in the formal sector, not all of them may have the same work routine to make shelter homes more accessible. Finally, many deaths among the homeless are due to the extreme weather conditions; therefore, while shelter homes are in construction, ready for occupation, arrangements should be made for their stay in night shelters

Evictions and the Everyday Struggles of Homeless Citizens

Homeless people have been criminalized for decades, resulting in their stigmatization and being regarded as a social embarrassment and a public

nuisance. They are regarded as encroachers on public space; are forcibly evicted, beaten up and arrested by the police; their shanties burned, and belongings confiscated or destroyed by BMC personnel. Instead of the state acting to protect its citizens, it views homeless people as illegal occupants of public spaces. Proving their identity and entitlement is difficult because homelessness is illegal because of which the homeless cannot get identity documents. The case study below explains the vicious circle of exploitation to which homeless people are subjected.

About three hundred families were living inside *Cross Maidan*, harmoniously sharing public space with street vendors. Radha, a participant and community leader, narrated the story of their eviction from *Cross Maidan*. The then community leader, along with a few BMC personnel, visited the place and informed the families living there that they would be relocated from *Cross Maidan* with proper rehabilitation facilities. The part of *Cross Maidan* they occupied was required for a park, a demand made by the Resident Welfare Association of the area. Barely twenty families were provided with housing, and that too at Mankhurd and Govandi, which are at the other end of Mumbai. The other families were told that they would be provided temporary accommodation before being allotted a house. Some families moved out, believing it would be a temporary shift. A few wanted temporary shelters and rehabilitation in nearby areas for various reasons, such as schools which, they felt, were better at *Cross Maidan*, greater access to hospitals, and proximity to their workplace. The CST area, being a prime location for commercial activity, it is easy for the homeless to find work. Relocation to the periphery of Mumbai would mean additional travel time and expenses. As some families were not willing to move too far off places for these reasons, the community leader, for financial consideration, used his power to evict the unwilling dwellers without arranging rehabilitation facilities for them.

Images-1



Image 1: A homeless woman in her home on the footpath outside *Cross Maidan*. It is only during the rainy season that homeless people are permitted to construct a shade (known locally as *tarpatri*).

Rabia (one of the participants) states, 'The police used *lathis*¹ to forcibly evict homeless families. A twelve-year old girl was also beaten up. We were also not given (the mandatory) one month's notice to vacate the place'. The failure to give notice to vacate is another instance of a violation of constitutional provisions by the state (Supreme Court of India, 1985). Ahmad (another participant) describes how 'people were forcibly evicted (because of which) many families started living outside the *maidan*. Even then, the BMC would come to evict us periodically. The BMC staff would make their rounds once a day or sometimes even twice the same day. They would confiscate our belongings. Thus, when we came to know that the BMC is coming, we have to leave aside all our important work and rush to saving our belongings'. The participants also complained that when they went to the BMC personnel collect their belongings, the personnel and officers fined them with Rs. 1200/-. The amount charged as fine is not fixed.

BMC officials are arbitrary in their decisions to impose the fine and the amount. The Acts passed do not give the BMC the right to collect fines on confiscated belongings. Radha said that 'the first thing which we try to save among all other belongings is important papers in a trolley with which it is easy to carry and run. Belongings left unattended are either burnt or taken away by BMC personnel. Our children also help us to save our belongings but they have to skip school.'

Image -2



A participant, Azad, explains how the homeless sometimes try to prevent the confiscation of their belongings. 'Sometimes, when the BMC arrives without warning, we try to protect our belongings by hiding them in the big garbage bin kept inside the compound of the railway offices or throw them on the roofs'. Often, these homeless families get into heated arguments with the guards at the *Cross Maidan* and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) railway station. The guards, under instructions to not allow homeless people to keep their belongings within the station's periphery, say that they make the place look dirty. But the participants say that that they

retrieve their belongings as soon as the BMC's anti-encroachment vehicles leave so that the security guards have nothing to complain about. Azad asks, 'Do (our) belongings really seem that dirty? What is so dirty about them?'

The notion of an 'appropriate' citizen and how one must appear in public seems to be linked, ostensibly guided by the concept of territoriality. Donaldson et al. (2017) explains that citizenship in the modern era is usually territorially bounded, to which is assigned a certain legal and political status. The homeless people in this study had *jhuggi* numbers allotted by the state government, as well as birth certificates showing their birth in 1984, 1988, 1990, and 1992, in Mumbai's government hospital, which validates their claim of inhabitation in the city for decades. Consequently, they also possess important documents such as ration cards, PAN cards, and other identity cards. Radha said that "it was told to them by the BMC that rehabilitation will be provided if they (the evicted homeless) have one identity card. I have the birth certificates of my children, my voter identity card issued in 1992, *jhoparpatti* number, and PAN card. All these identity documents were provided by the government; but the government changes its rules every now and then. The most recent one is the Unique Identification Card i.e., the Aadhaar Card'. The homeless families living here started getting their Aadhaar cards made, but the difficulty for most families was that their possessions, including identity documents, were confiscated and destroyed by the BMC. Without a document to prove their identity, homeless people cannot lay claim to their citizenship rights, which amounts to discrimination. An identity card cannot be issued without proof of residence (or ownership of property), and proof of residence cannot be established without an identity card. Trapped in this vicious cycle, homeless people survive without rights.

Maringanti (2009) discusses how the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) intervention will deepen 'the reach of e-governance, which can have dramatic consequences for everyday lives and for the organisation of physical space in which citizens move. The portability, instant

transmissibility, and interoperability of information across a variety of hardware and software platforms across space, reconfigures and rescales extant power relationships.' Corbridge et al. (2005) states that the poor in several parts of India have had to surmount great difficulties in obtaining citizenship, primarily due to their invisibility to the state. Partha Chatterjee's analysis shows that a large number of the poor live in peasant societies, and in the urban informal economy, for their survival they will choose when to become visible to the state and when should not be counted because they are the ones to suffer the most in terms of the legality and illegality of their being.

According to the Indian Citizenship Act of 1955, Indian citizenship can be acquired by birth, descent, registration, and naturalization. Applying these criteria, homeless people fall into the category of Indian citizens. However, it is a long struggle for them to prove their identity and establish their citizenship rights through various identity documents. Ahmad, one of the homeless participants, said that it took seven to eight years for getting an identity card like PAN cards, Voter identity cards, etc. Only because he is Muslim, while other homeless citizens received their document in one month. His worry was not just about getting an Aadhaar card. Ahmad said that being a homeless Muslim might make it even more difficult for him to claim his citizenship rights with the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act of 2019.

Conclusion :

In their present form, laws and provisions made by various states to address the problem of homelessness are discriminatory in nature or lack political will in their implementation. Arresting homeless people on the pretext of preventing begging; the limited number of shelter homes; a lack of rehabilitation measures; and the constant threat of eviction and confiscation of their belongings, including basic necessities like food, clothing, cooking utensils, and identity documents (ration card, Aadhaar card, and birth certificate, to mention a few) have only worsened their

condition and struggles, increasing their anxiety over being excluded from citizenship.

The problems of homeless people have aggravated with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. They are trapped in a vicious cycle of exploitation, their human rights are violated, and they remain an extremely vulnerable population group. As Foucault explains, the state has various tools and techniques to exercise control over its citizens. One example is the BPBA Law, which is based on the British Common Law which sees the homeless as a nuisance in public places and an obstruction to public order. The legal and technical mechanisms through which a court procedure runs seem to turn into a discourse.

Ghertner (2008, p. 57) uses the discourse analysis of Foucault to understand how “taken-for-granted truths are, in fact, the products of intense struggles over power”. He laments that although slums are the state’s responsibility, in the 1980s, the narrative shifted from the inadequacy of states in providing services to one in which slums are illegal and a public nuisance. A recent judgement in a PIL reflects intense power and control over the narrative to establish a truth that blames homeless citizens. The Public Interest Litigation (2021) filed by the NGO, Homeless Collective, sought the Mumbai Government to provide nutritious cooked meals thrice a day, potable water and sanitary napkins, soaps, clean public toilets, and bathrooms at no charge for Mumbai’s homeless people. The petitioner referred to the ‘Right to Food’ as an implicit aspect of Article 21 of the Constitution. The response of the Mumbai High Court of PIL (2021; p. 5-6) was that “the State cannot be reasonably expected to feed a largesection of the population or to provide everything for free if the ‘homeless’ are not encouraged to work for the country in return to what the State has been providing for their shelter and sustenance, we do fear that the schemes could become counter-productive and increase the population of the ‘homeless’”. In a reflection of the state’s insensitivity to the issue of homelessness, the Delhi

Development Plan 2041, has shirked responsibility for constructing shelter homes, with the excuse offered being space constraints.

The larger question facing us is 'Who, then, qualifies for citizenship?' James Tull uses the term 'citizenship' to describe an ongoing process that reflects the prevailing hierarchy and the new norms of inter subjective recognition and participation coming into play, which rejects older hierarchical relations based on equality and consent (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2017). Clearly, here is equality in citizenship rights for which the government has various policies, provisions, and laws. Yet, it would seem that their implementation is sorely lacking, because of which social exclusion continues to prevail. On one hand, homeless people can seek protection and assistance under various policies and laws designed for their upliftment whereas, on the other, these policies and social interactions seem to be discriminatory in nature.

End Notes:

¹*A safai karmachari is a person employed for sanitation work like cleaning drains and sewers.*

²*Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) is the Central Railway's terminus in South Mumbai. Trains arriving at or departing from CST connect Mumbai with all major cities and towns across India, bringing an influx of tourists, migrants, business people, street children, and homeless people into the city. Mumbai is India's financial capital and provides a range of livelihood opportunities not found elsewhere in India. The research site for the theme of eviction and everyday struggles is Mahatma Gandhi Road, New Marine Lines, Colaia, where beautification and infrastructure upgradation projects have led to conflicts between the authorities and public space occupiers.*

³ *A jhuggi or jhoparpatti number is allotted to the homeless by the state, which legalizes their stay.*

⁴*Previously Calcutta, the city's official name was changed to Kolkata in 2001. It is the capital city of the Indian state of West Bengal.*

⁵*When feudalism was giving way to capitalism, an epidemic bubonic plague killed nearly 75 million people, creating a huge shortage of labour in cities. Farm-based labourers saw better prospects (wages) in industrial work and began migrating in huge numbers to cities and towns, resulting in a shortage of labour in the feudal landowning class. To clamp down on the movement of people to the cities, anti-vagrancy laws were introduced by King Edward III, which prohibited people from living in cities without proper housing and, thereby, criminalizing homelessness (Afroz, 2015).*

⁶*Delhi/New Delhi is the capital of India.*

⁷*The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) or Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is the governing civic body of Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra. It was established in 1888.*

⁸*Bhikhari Gari literally means a ieggars' vehicle. It is used to round up beggars but, in reality, anyone who fits the common notion of what a beggar looks like faces arrest.*

⁹*Ghertner (2008) laments that slums were considered a nuisance only when a middle-class citizen, through a Residents' Welfare Association (RWA), filed a Writ Petition requesting the removal of a neighbouring slum. In the 1980s and 1990s, the State was held responsible and its statutory duty was to ensure public health, particularly that of slum residents, which is clearly evident in the landmark 1980 case of Ratlam Municipal Council vs. Vardichan. Perceiving slums as being a 'nuisance' started only recently in the judicial discourse, particularly in the early 2000s, when the case of Almitra Patel Vs. Union of India radically altered the discursive terrain of the nuisance law, justifying 'slum clearance'. Ghertner (2008) explains this through a discourse analysis by Michel Foucault, stating that the 'goal of inquiry is to determine how taken-for-granted "truths" are, in fact, the products of intense struggles over power'. The existing 'regime of truth' that is formed is fragile and disturbs the truth regime by to allowing alternative possibilities to emerge.*

A lathi is a stick that police personnel use to beat homeless people, representing violent behaviour, a serious misuse of power, and a human rights violation.

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Social Entrepreneurship amongst the Marginalised Groups of Jharkhand and Odisha

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Abstract: Social entrepreneurship is a rapidly growing phenomenon driven by voluntary organizations seeking to create employment opportunities for marginalized groups and to address social needs. This study focuses on marginalized communities in Jharkhand and Odisha, where indigenous people, children, women, and individuals with disabilities face economic, social, and political disadvantages. These communities have been excluded from the development process for the past two decades.

To address these challenges, numerous social entrepreneurship initiatives have emerged in both states. Findings reveal the severe disparities faced by marginalized communities, including limited access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Several initiatives are addressing these challenges, such as Maati Ghar, Avika, Caritas India, Jharcraft, Menstrupedia, and Didi Cafés in Jharkhand. In Odisha, initiatives like Karmaar Crafts, Basanti Rana's sewing program, Jagriti Yatra, and Centurion University's enterprise programs empower marginalized individuals, create market access, and preserve traditional practices. The initiatives showcase the potential of social entrepreneurship in promoting inclusive development and improving the well-being of marginalized communities. Such social entrepreneurship initiatives demonstrate the importance of inclusive and sustainable development for marginalized communities. They provide market access, empower individuals, preserve traditional practices, and create opportunities for livelihood and economic empowerment. By addressing the specific needs of marginalized groups, the initiatives contribute to fostering social inclusion, economic growth, and improved well-being. This study highlights the significance of social entrepreneurship in bringing about positive change and fostering a more equitable and inclusive society. However, the focus of this paper is limited

to examining the initiatives themselves, rather than delving into the development models adopted by these states.

Keywords: *Marginalized, social entrepreneurship, social needs, social enterprise, tribal*

Introduction:

A social enterprise is an organization or business that applies entrepreneurial principles and practices to address social, cultural, or environmental issues. It operates with the primary objective of creating positive social impact, rather than solely pursuing financial profits (Hayes, 2023). Social enterprises often reinvest their profits into their mission and work towards sustainable solutions to societal challenges (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022).

Marginalized communities refer to groups of people who experience social, economic, cultural, or political exclusion and face systemic disadvantages. These communities are often disadvantaged in terms of access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power. Examples of marginalized communities include ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, people living in poverty, persons with disabilities, and marginalized genders or sexual orientations. Marginalization can occur at various levels, such as individual, community, or societal, and is influenced by power dynamics and structural inequalities. (Social Inclusion, n.d.)

By engaging in social entrepreneurship, individuals and organizations aim to address the needs and challenges faced by marginalized communities while striving for social transformation and inclusive development (Bansal et al., 2019).

Jharkhand and Odisha are two states in eastern India. The population of Jharkhand stands at about 37 million approximately. It has 32 tribes and most of them reside in villages. It is estimated that the Scheduled Tribes account for 26.3% of the state's total population. Odisha's approximate population stands at 46 million. According to current estimates, 32.6% of people in Odisha are poor. As a result of imbalanced power dynamics in the

economic, political, social, and cultural spheres, marginalized groups and communities face exclusion and prejudice (social, political, and economic) (Boardman et al., 2010).

Marginality affects millions of people all over the world. Marginalized people have little control over their lives and resources. As a result, when it comes to contributing to society, they are at a disadvantage. Their lack of positive and supportive relationships creates a vicious circle in which they are unable to participate in local life, leading to further isolation. This has far-reaching implications for human development and society as a whole (European Liberties Platform, 2021).

Every society has specific populations that lack access to socioeconomic opportunities and face social, cultural, and political marginalization. Despite its wealth and natural resources, Jharkhand suffers from malnutrition, starvation, unemployment, illiteracy, corruption, poor healthcare, and turbulent politics. Even though Jharkhand is one of India's richest states in terms of natural resources, the majority of its people are impoverished. According to the study, 42.16% of Jharkhand's population is poor, the highest percentage in the country after Bihar (Niti Ayog, 2021). Odisha's marginalized groups include the rural poor, Scheduled Castes and Tribes, unorganized manual labourers, women, people with physical disabilities, and others. Odisha is one of the top ten states with a high percentage of the population living in poverty, according to the NITI Aayog National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2021 study (Niti Ayog, 2021).

The majority of the population in the state of Jharkhand consists of the Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minority class members. Jharkhand has 32 tribes, eight of which are PVTGs (Primitive Vulnerable Tribe Groups) - Asur, Birhor, Birajia, Korwa, Parahiya (Baiga), Sabar, Mal Pahariya, and Souriya Pahariya (Sahu, 2019).

When it comes to accessing healthcare, quality education, and jobs that would improve their well-being, the marginalised populations of Jharkhand are frequently at a disadvantage, despite a plethora of welfare schemes currently running for the welfare of the tribals and the Particularly

Vulnerable Tribal Groups (Jharkhand's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups Are yet to Experience the "Benefits" of Aadhaar, 2018).

The PVTGs are connected to *jal*, *jungle*, and *zameen* and have a seamless interaction with their land and ecosystem (The Avenue Mail, 2022). These tribes are on the verge of extinction, there is no doubt about it. The PVTGs require undivided attention to protect them from vulnerable living conditions, widespread socioeconomic insecurity, and shrinking numbers. Their level of penetration and implementation remains another area for an interesting study altogether.

The Parhaiyas tribe of Jharkhand has a history of exploitation and exclusion from mainstream Society with most other tribal communities, despite possessing a rich cultural past. The Jharkhand-based Asur Adivasis lost their traditional trade of iron ore smelting years ago.

Currently, bauxite mining is destroying the livelihoods of nearly a thousand Asur. They lack access to potable water, and very few have benefited from the government housing programme. Further, the tribe faces a major problem in accessing healthcare (Khan, 2022)

In the East Singhbhum district, Sabar- a marginalized tribe in Jharkhand lives in hamlets of misery and despair. They have barely any possessions except tiny huts made of twigs, leaves and sticks, a few pots and some sort of thin bedding. Hunger and illness hover over every family of this tribe (Drèze, 2015). Sabar families seem to eat rice when they can afford it; otherwise, they survive on forest produce. Severe acute malnutrition in children, Chronic diseases, tuberculosis and jaundice prevalent in women and children, is most commonly seen in this tribe. Teaching standards in schools run by local NGOs with government support are dismal, with very poor management.

Jharkhand has 941 females for every 1000 males in terms of sex ratio. 54.13 percent of people are literate, with 67.94 percent of men and 39.38% women. The majority of women in Jharkhand experience domestic violence, cruelty, child marriage, witchcraft, the practice of dowry, child

abuse, trafficking, distress migration, incest, and battering as widespread forms of violence within the family and community. Like any other community in India, Jharkhand women's social standing is based on the old patriarchal structure, which has long been successful in exerting control over women's lives. Their function is only understood in terms of managing the home and fulfilling marital duties. For the vast majority of them, navigating life has been an uphill battle, both inside and outside of the family. Regarding prejudice and difficulties, women in Jharkhand are not all that different from women nationwide.

In terms of compensation and power, female entrepreneurs continue to be at the bottom of the labour market. They often work in occupations with lower status and pay. Compared to men, women have a higher percentage of unemployment and considerably more women than men work in the unorganised sector. Even if they have the advantage of education and skills, the number of women in the organised sector is very low. Odisha, too, has a significant number of marginalized communities, and the majority of the population continues to depend heavily on state assistance for survival while still living in subsistence economies. Serious unemployment and massive migration from distressed areas have been ominously rising recently (Richards, 2022).

Odisha is home to 62 Scheduled Caste community members. This includes 13 Primitive Tribal Groups (PVTGs), which are primarily rural and account for 95% of the state's tribal population, ranking it third in India. Among the 75 listed PVTG's as per records, the highest numbers are found in Odisha (13) (Insights Editor, 2020). The tribal communities, which make up the lower echelons of the informal sector, are in varied phases of development and empowerment. When it comes to access and control over resources, Adivasi and Dalit women in Odisha's rural communities are systematically discriminated against (Women Empowerment – Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha, n.d.). The state government of Odisha lacks leadership and coordination in the micro, small and medium enterprises eco-system, which makes it difficult to construct a plan for the benefit of the state's marginalized groups. Since the commercial and industry collectives in the

State, which are largely controlled by the ruling elites, are silently indifferent to such issues, the marginalized sections in Odisha lack such a visible platform to address the issues in proper public venues (Pioneer, 2016)

The rapidly growing aspirations of educated young people from underprivileged groups are generally ignored in Odisha. In trying to establish a social enterprise, people from

marginalized groups are frequently bullied and demoralized. Together with the inherent societal limitations brought on by caste and class prejudice, social acceptability, and a lack of social support, they must battle a shortage of capital as well.

The Khonds are an indigenous Adivasi tribal community of Odisha. In recent times, due to decreased access to forest, they have started migrating to the town in search of livelihood opportunities and have started working as casual labours (Shaan, 2023). Due to lesser access to forests, this tribe has widespread prevalence of malnutrition as forests are the main source of livelihood for them.

Although the districts' ratios in Odisha are higher than the state average, the poverty index in nearly half of them is concerning. Odisha is one of the most unfavorable regions for women's development, as is demonstrated by the presence of regressive customs like dowry, child marriage, and high rates of girl child dropouts, as well as by women's engagement in the labour market (27.16%). When compared to men, women are seen as having significantly less autonomy in both the states of Jharkhand and Odisha, particularly when it comes to financial matters. Women, for example, are less free to make financial decisions, have fewer resources, have a weaker social identity, among other things.

Adivasi and Dalit women, in particular, are constantly disadvantaged in terms of access to, and control over, resources in rural Odisha. The social spaces that these native women enjoyed have been diminished by a number of development initiatives as well as by prevailing socio-cultural,

economic, and sociological changes. Women who suffer from structural, social, and sociopolitical exclusion, marginalisation, loneliness, poverty, and abuse are purposefully and methodically driven to the periphery, either as individuals or as groups. Based on the value hierarchy of numerous religious scriptures, caste, class, ethnicity, and other identities are easily aligned with the gender gap. Their participation is deemed to be of the least importance, stemming from these factors that isolate or cut them off from the rest of society (Women Empowerment – Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha, n.d.)

While the idea of social entrepreneurship dates back to the 1950s (Bowen, 1953), research in social entrepreneurship has only lately become a significant area of study. According to Bloom (2009), social entrepreneurship is seen as a potent tool for empowering women and eradicating poverty (Datta & Gailey, 2012), facilitating structural reform (Alvord et al., 2004), cultivating shared prosperity in subsistence marketplaces (Azmat et al., 2015), and helping to bring about systemic change (Nicholls, 2008).

"Social entrepreneurs are a separate species of the genus entrepreneur," Dees explains (1998). Social entrepreneurship is the practice of using business to advance society's social, cultural, and environmental aspects.

A social entrepreneur is an individual who manages a business or organisation with the goal of addressing societal issues and enacting change in society through creative solutions. Instead of focusing on personal wealth, social entrepreneurs act in ways that advance society. These business owners can be categorised as social enterprises or entrepreneurs, and they may operate for profit or non-profit organisations (Hayes, 2023b)

It acknowledges social ills, donates profits, looks for grants or funding, and gathers resources for the betterment of all. The most frequent topics addressed by social entrepreneurs include the eradication of poverty, restoration of children's rights, accessibility to financial and medical services, women's empowerment, and community outreach. They typically compel governments, large organisations, and communities to encourage social transformation through addressing social problems and unmet

demands. In India and across the globe, social entrepreneurship has gained popularity. This idea of generosity has been regarded by some as being somewhat intriguing. It has the ideal fusion of enterprise and social service, which makes it very alluring and exceptional.

Social entrepreneurship is becoming more and more popular in India and around the world. For social entrepreneurs in general, envisioning a transformed future begins with a fundamental belief in the power of human beings to improve their lives. Effective change agents like the Colemans breathe life into their vision of a new equilibrium that benefits those most disadvantaged by the current system. By engaging key actors and envisioning a more equitable and sustainable future, social entrepreneurs drive transformative change and make a lasting difference in the lives of the communities they serve (Martin, 2015).

Saluzzo et al. (2022) suggests that for systemic change to occur successfully, a cognitive shift must take place within the community. This shift is the result of an existing set of shared rules and beliefs that guide the community's actions and behaviours. In other words, the solutions put forward by social entrepreneurs must be context-specific, considering the unique geography, culture, and people of the area. Social problems are deeply contextual and, therefore, solutions should be tailored to fit the specific circumstances of the community. When the proposed solution aligns with the community's norms and values, it becomes more readily accepted and integrated into their communal living. This embeddedness creates a strong foundation for triggering systemic change.

For such a cognitive shift to occur, community members need to be actively involved in the problem-solving process and embrace the proposed solution. If the social entrepreneur's solution does not resonate with the community's shared norms and values, it becomes challenging to activate the process that leads to systemic change.

A Review of Literature:

In general, the term 'marginalization' describes the overt actions or tendencies of human societies, where people who they perceive to undesirable or without useful function, are excluded, i.e., marginalized (Paricha, 2018).

Marginalized communities are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life. Examples of marginalized populations include, but are not limited to, groups excluded due to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, language, and/or immigration status. Marginalization occurs due to unequal power relationships between social groups (Baah et al., 2018).

Selvakumar (2022) argues that throughout history, communities such as forest people and the labouring classes have been marginalized in the process of social formation, with little or no access to political and economic power and resources.

Social entrepreneurship (SE) has progressed as a research domain of great significance for firms and researchers (Rey-Martí et al., 2016).

(G. M. S. Mort et al., 2003) conceptualises social entrepreneurship as a multidimensional construct involving the expression of entrepreneurially virtuous behaviour to achieve a social mission, a coherent unity of purpose and action in the face of moral complexity, and the ability to recognise social value-creating opportunities and the key decision-making characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking.

Gupta et al. (2020) found two sub-themes under the main theme of social entrepreneurship (SE) which are SE phenomenon and Entrepreneurial orientation.

SE acts as a catalyst for social change, and social entrepreneurs do not expect direct monetary benefits from their social ventures (Barberá-Tomás et al., 2019).

Tshikovhi and Shambare (2015) claim that although SE intentions are significantly influenced by the altruistic orientation of an entrepreneur, entrepreneurial knowledge and personal attitudes, personal attitude is an even stronger influencer (Fowler 2000; Dees 1998).

Social entrepreneurs are driven by a sense of commitment and an ethical responsibility to help others (Renko, 2013). Consequently, they take transformative and innovative action to bring about social change and tackle social problems such as unemployment, poverty, and gender differences (Di Zhang & Swanson, 2013).

Moreover, social entrepreneurship empowers women and contributes to altering the social order in which they are embedded (Haugh and Talwar 2016). To discover its potential of SE for disabled people, political-economic and socio-cultural factors are to be considered (Harris et al. 2014b). Social enterprises generating employment are likely to receive financial support and have an experienced founder (Rey-Martí et al. 2016a).

Social entrepreneurs create viable and sustainable organisations by developing capabilities and arranging valuable resources that enable them to maximise their resources' utility (Renko 2013). Generating earned income, engaging stakeholders, creating awareness about social problems in marginalized communities, and attracting government support are decisive factors in scaling up the social impact of a social enterprise (Thorgren & Omorede 2018).

Social entrepreneurship is thus an umbrella term for all “activities and processes undertaken to discover, define, and exploit opportunities to enhance social wealth by creating new ventures or managing existing organizations in an innovative manner” (Zahra et al., 2009).

Significant obstacles hinder social entrepreneurship endeavours and the wonderful opportunities they provide. The most significant of these challenges is the lack of a legislative framework that helps organize the association and serves the needs of every party; it is the responsibility of government to develop such a framework. (Jarrar, 2022).

According to a study by Fink et al. (2017), social enterprises do not receive appropriate support from public administration units. In comparison to business for corporate entities, social enterprise support networks and infrastructural facilities remain underdeveloped. Social entrepreneurship also continues to face a lack of exposure, recognition, and media exposure. There is a scarcity of specialized training, education, and transfer of knowledge.

Most social entrepreneurs, like mainstream entrepreneurs, report having difficulty accessing finance. Alternative funding sources are used, with little reliance on family or friends, instead seeking funds from charitable trusts or the public sector (Certo & Miller, 2008). There is an urgent need to increase the amount of social business start-ups that create material profit while not contradicting public benefit, as well as their achievement is determined by benefit to society in addition to material profit. (Jarrar, 2022)

Increased female entrepreneurial activity has been linked to improved women's status, better family and community well-being, and broader societal gains. Market-based approaches for women in resource-poor communities have been shown to be effective (Haugh & Talwar, 2016).

Local government involvement in social projects serves as a model of collaborative and caring behaviour. Public administration institutions can help social entrepreneurs obtain financial resources by providing funding opportunities (startup or seed capital) and assisting them in obtaining additional resources from private organizations to carry out social projects in their communities. This approach has the capability to increase the supply of potential social entrepreneurs in a society, resulting in citizens' positive perceptions of government efforts to stimulate social projects (Schin et al., 2023).

Research Methodology:

The study was qualitative in nature. Various Scopus, Springer Link, Google Scholar journals were analysed. A systematic literature review was conducted. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-

Analyses (PRISMA) was used for selecting various research papers (Moher et al., 2009). All research papers with marginalized and social entrepreneurship as keywords were part of our sample-size. Around 285 research papers were downloaded for study out of this only 61 samples bore relevance to our area of study. Various cases were considered for case study and the criteria used for selecting our cases is listed below:

The criteria considered when selecting cases for marginalized groups in Jharkhand and Odisha included:

Marginalized population: Cases focused on communities or groups that are marginalized or disadvantaged, such as the Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), Primitive Tribal Groups (PVTGs), women, or other vulnerable populations.

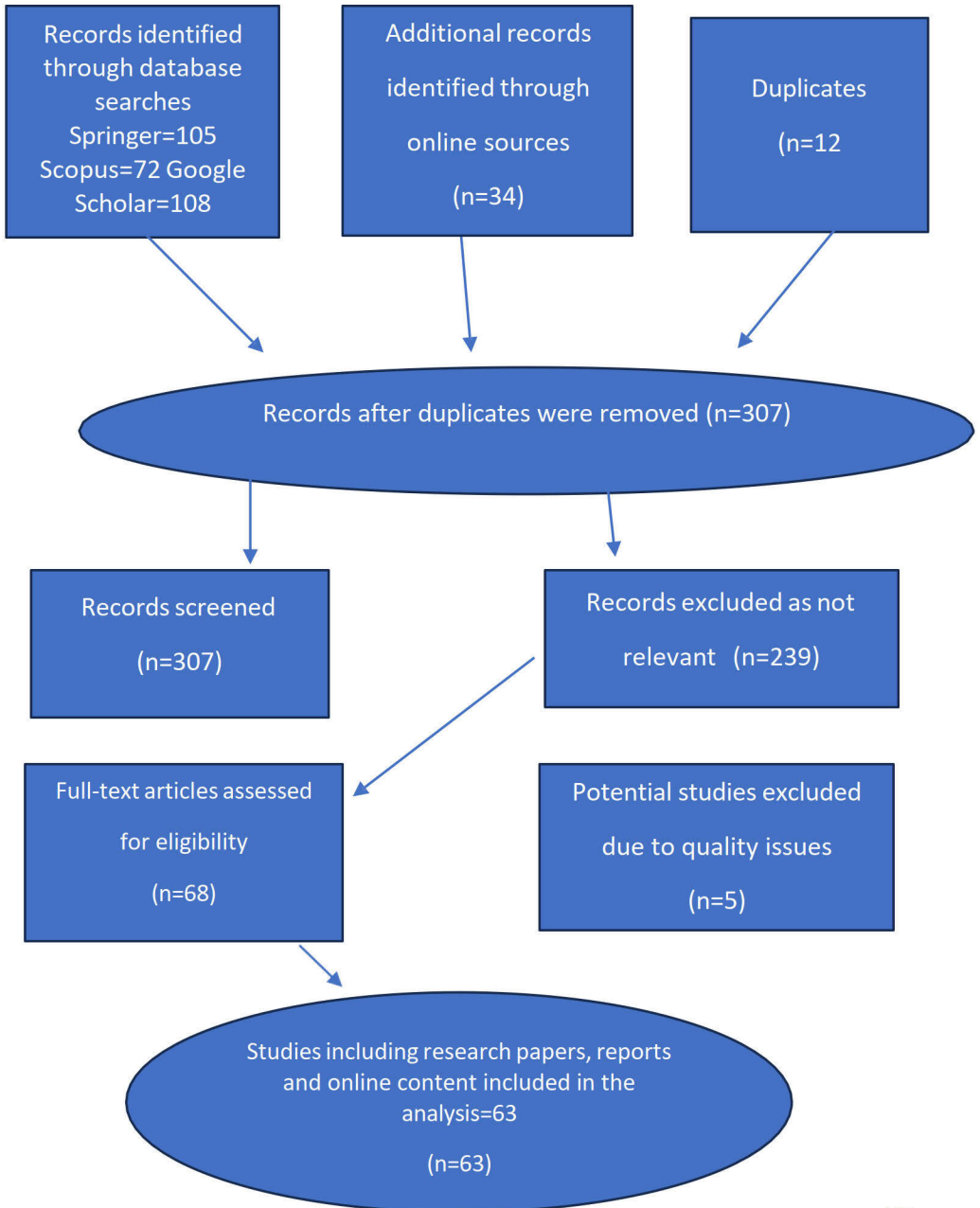
Impact: Cases which highlighted initiatives or efforts that have had a positive impact on the lives of marginalized groups, addressing their socio-economic challenges, improving their access to education, healthcare, livelihood opportunities, and overall well-being.

Longevity and sustainability: Cases that demonstrated sustainability and long-term impact are important. This includes initiatives that have been successfully implemented over a period of time and have the potential to create lasting change in the lives of marginalized groups.

Collaboration and partnerships: Cases that involved collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities, and private sector entities can provide insights into effective partnerships for addressing the needs of marginalized populations.

Success stories: Cases that highlighted success stories, individual achievements, or positive outcomes that have resulted from the interventions can be inspiring and demonstrate the potential for transformation within marginalized communities.

Fig 1: The PRISMA analysis used for screening research papers (compiled by the researcher)



The cases below represent different areas of focus and initiatives that have had a positive impact in Jharkhand and Odisha.

a) Jharkhand:

- I. Empowering Rural Artisans - Traditional paintings Maati Ghar & Jharcraft
- II. Economic Empowerment of Women -Organic food product –Avika & JSLPS
- III. Skill Development for Tribal Youth - Social and economic entrepreneurship -Caritas India
- IV. Menstrual Health and Awareness - Menstrupedia
- V. Renewable Energy for Rural Communities - Solar-powered lac processing Birsuni Oraon
- VI. Government Initiatives - Entrepreneurship promotion – JSLPS & Palash
- VII. CMEGP (Credit-cum-Subsidy Scheme for Rural Entrepreneurship)
- VIII. PhuloJhano Ashirwad Yojana

b) Odisha:

- I. Empowering Indigenous Women - Bamboo crafts, Karmaar Crafts, Phalguni Joshi
- II. Skill Development for Women – Sewing Basanti Rana
- III. Youth Empowerment - Social entrepreneurship journeys, Jagriti Yatra
- IV. Women Empowerment through Education - Social entrepreneurship programs , ThinkZone
- V. Women Empowerment - Collective action , Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha (OSM)

Research Questions:

1. To understand social entrepreneurship initiatives in Jharkhand
2. To understand social entrepreneurship efforts in Odisha

Research Gap:

There was a shortage of relevant literature and research on social entrepreneurship with respect to the states of Jharkhand and Odisha.

Discussion & Findings: Table 1 summarizes the social entrepreneurship efforts in motion for marginalized groups in Jharkhand.

Theme	Sub-theme	Initiatives
Empowering Rural Artisans	Traditional paintings	MAATI GHAR: Promotes traditional paintings like <i>Sohrai</i> , <i>Khovar</i> , <i>Paitkar</i> , and <i>Jadupatua</i> by rural women and artisans and provides access to markets (Maati Ghar - Maati Ghar, 2021)
		Jharcraft: Empowers artists and craftsmen, boosts entrepreneurial spirit, supports the revival of art, craft, and culture, and advocates for STs and SCs (Being the Change: Jharcraft in Jharkhand, 2021)
Economic Empowerment of Women	Organic food products	Avika: Provides a platform for rural women to market organic food items, including dairy, fresh milk, honey, and vermicompost (Social Entrepreneurs, Theme: Vocal for Local IIM Ranchi, n.d.)
		JSLPS: Supports women in opening Didi Cafés, promoting scientific farming techniques and select occupations, district-wise (Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society State Rural Livelihood Mission, Rural Development Department, Govt. Of Jharkhand, N.D.)
Skill Development for Tribal Youth	Social and economic entrepreneurship	- Caritas India: Provides training to tribal youth, aiming for progress, stable livelihoods, and self-sufficiency (Caritas_India, n.d.)
Menstrual Health and	Menstrupedia	Menstrupedia: Provides information on menstruation,

Awareness		youth, and welfare, transforming the lives of girls and women (Staff, 2019)
Renewable Energy for Rural Communities	Solar-powered lac processing	- Birsuni Oraon: Runs a small-scale renewable energy business, producing edible oil with a solar-powered lac processing machine (Aggarwal, 2022)
Government Initiatives	Entrepreneurship promotion	- JSLPS: Operates Didi Cafés and promotes scientific farming techniques (The Role of NGOs in the Development of Women’s Entrepreneurship in Jharkhand - Issuu, n.d.)
		- Palash: A brand established by rural women entrepreneurs, selling various products under the brand (Ranjan, 2021)
		- CMEGP and PhuloJhano Ashirwad Yojana: Government initiatives promoting an entrepreneurship culture (CoffeeMug, 2022)

a. Table 1: A Thematic Analysis of Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives in Jharkhand

The initiatives focus on aspects such as preserving traditional art, promoting organic food products, providing skill development, raising awareness about menstrual health, utilizing renewable energy, and supporting entrepreneurship through government initiatives. They aim to empower marginalized groups, enhance livelihoods, and create sustainable economic opportunities.

b. Table 2 summarises the social entrepreneurship efforts in action for marginalized groups in Odisha.

The initiatives focus on empowering indigenous women through bamboo crafts, providing skill development in sewing for women from low-income families, inspiring youth through a journey of social entrepreneurship, and empowering women through social entrepreneurship programs. They aim to create economic opportunities, enhance skills, and promote self-sufficiency among marginalized groups in Odisha.

Theme	Sub-theme	Initiatives
Empowering Indigenous Women	Bamboo crafts	- Karmaar Crafts: Empowers indigenous women in Nilagiri by creating eco-friendly bamboo products (Gupta, 2021)
		- Phalguni Joshi collaborates with over 300 tribal women, creating micro-entrepreneurs in rural Odisha (Dogra, 2021)
Skill Development for Women	Sewing	- Basanti Rana: Trains over 1,200 women, including 200 girls, from low-income families in sewing, enabling them to start their own businesses (Banerjee, 2022)
Youth Empowerment	Social entrepreneurship journeys	- Jagriti Yatra: Takes motivated youth on a 15-day train journey, introducing them to social entrepreneurs and inspiring them to take up enterprise-led development (Program Details, n.d.)

Theme	Sub-theme	Initiatives
Women Empowerment through Education	Social entrepreneurship programs	- ThinkZone, a Cuttack-based award-winning social impact startup that offers underprivileged children in low-resource regions high-quality, affordable education, has just revealed plans to grow in the state of Odisha by hiring 300 women micro-entrepreneurs (Odisha Diary, Latest Odisha News, Breaking News Odisha, 2019).
Women Empowerment	Collective action	- Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha (OSM): Empowers Dalit and Adivasi women through collective action, advocacy, and capacity-building to address social, economic, and political inequalities in Odisha. By fostering women's leadership and promoting inclusivity, OSM strives to build a more just and sustainable society (Women Empowerment – Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha, n.d.).

In Jharkhand, several social entrepreneurship initiatives have been undertaken to empower marginalized groups. Maati Ghar, a socially responsible organization, focuses on preserving traditional paintings and empowering rural women and artisans by promoting their work and providing access to markets. Avika, led by Ms. Alka Singh, aims to empower rural women in Jharkhand economically by providing them a platform to market organic food items. Caritas India is working towards encouraging social and economic entrepreneurship among tribal communities by providing vocational training to teenaged tribal boys and girls. Jharcraft, an initiative supporting artists and craftsmen, aims to develop an

entrepreneurial spirit among women and underprivileged communities, creating sustainable options for their livelihood. Menstrupedia, founded by Aditi Gupta, is transforming the lives of girls and women by providing information on menstruation, youth, and welfare. These initiatives showcase the diverse efforts in Jharkhand to uplift marginalized groups and promote social entrepreneurship for their empowerment.

In Odisha, social entrepreneurship initiatives are impacting marginalized communities significantly. Phalguni Joshi's Karmaar Crafts, working with bamboo, empowers indigenous women in Nilagiri by creating eco-friendly products and collaborating with over 300 tribal women, creating micro-entrepreneurs in rural Odisha. Basanti Rana has been instrumental in training more than 1,200 women in sewing, including 200 girls who have started independent businesses as entrepreneurs, promoting skill development and economic empowerment. Jagriti Yatra, an annual train journey, introduces motivated youth to social entrepreneurs, inspiring them to take up enterprise-led development and impact society positively. ThinkZone, a social organization headquartered in Cuttack, is dedicated to enhancing the educational achievements of children from disadvantaged backgrounds through a combination of technology and personalized teaching methods. The approach involves equipping community educators, *Anganwadi* workers, and primary school teachers with ThinkZone's technology, teaching materials, and interactive learning activities, facilitating the delivery of high-quality early-grade education programs. The Odisha Shramajeebee Mancha (OSM) exemplifies social entrepreneurship by empowering marginalized communities, especially Dalit and Adivasi women in Odisha. Through innovative approaches, advocacy, and community engagement, OSM creates positive social change, addressing issues like water availability and equitable access to government schemes. By fostering women's leadership and promoting inclusivity, OSM strives to build a more just and sustainable society.

These initiatives in Odisha demonstrate the ongoing efforts made to empower marginalized groups, promote skill development, youth

empowerment, and women's entrepreneurship through social entrepreneurship initiatives.

These initiatives reflect the commitment by social entrepreneurs in both Jharkhand and Odisha to uplift marginalized groups, provide economic opportunities, and promote sustainable development through social entrepreneurship. These cases represent diverse efforts to address the specific challenges faced by tribal communities and marginalized groups in Jharkhand and Odisha, aiming to empower them and improve their overall well-being.

Conclusion & Suggestions

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the status of marginalized groups in Odisha and Jharkhand, with a particular focus on women and tribal communities. It highlights the challenges faced by these groups, their socio-economic conditions, and the need for inclusive development. The study further examines the social entrepreneurship efforts in both states, showcasing various initiatives by socially responsible organizations aimed at empowering marginalized sections, particularly tribal communities and women. These efforts emphasize self-dependence, local empowerment, and sustainable solutions.

However, the study also reveals that there is limited interest and awareness in the social entrepreneurship sector in these states. Despite the natural wealth and resources of Jharkhand and Odisha, poverty remains widespread, and a change in mindset is required to move beyond occasional charity towards more innovative and sustainable solutions. Promoting social entrepreneurship can be a crucial step in addressing gender prejudice and providing opportunities to tribal women in both states.

Further, the study underlines the importance of protecting the land, water, and forests of tribal communities and ensuring that social entrepreneurship initiatives do not unintentionally harm their well-being. It calls for the development of more entrepreneurial programs specifically tailored to the

needs of tribal communities, which are among the most marginalized sections of Indian society.

Encouraging more young people to become social entrepreneurs is essential, and a supportive ecosystem with access to legal and financial assistance should be established. Government support, investor incentives, and college-wide awareness campaigns can help create a conducive environment for aspiring social entrepreneurs. Furthermore, governments should prioritize investments in education, skill development, and critical support for production-centric self-employment to improve the economic conditions of marginalized groups.

Clearly, social entrepreneurship is emerging as a powerful tool for addressing societal needs and driving meaningful change. Collaborative efforts involving social enterprises, stakeholders, and the government are necessary to tackle systemic issues and ensure that individuals have the freedom and capacity to lead the lives they aspire to. By recognizing and supporting social entrepreneurship, we can work towards transforming the face of Indian society and creating a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Limitations of the Study:

The study may suffer from a sampling bias as it focuses on specific social entrepreneurship initiatives in Jharkhand and Odisha. The selected initiatives may not fully represent the entire range of social entrepreneurship efforts in the region, leading to potential limitations in generalizing the findings to other initiatives.

The study may not extensively address the scalability and replicability of the examined initiatives. The success of social entrepreneurship initiatives often depends on their ability to be scaled up and replicated in different contexts to reach a significant number of beneficiaries.

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The Urban Homeless in Chennai – A Review

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The central and transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁰ is Leaving No One Behind (LNOB). Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), goal 11 that focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, is relevant for the most vulnerable communities in urban spaces, like the urban homeless who are often left behind and excluded from existing policies and programmes.¹¹

The COVID-19 Guidance Note issued by the United Nations Special Rapporteur¹² on the right to adequate Housing in April 2020 reveals that the pandemic has exposed the harsh reality that persons in homeless situations were pushed into increased vulnerable situations as ‘housing’ was the frontline defense against the coronavirus and all policies to flatten the pandemic curve and decrease infection rate of coronavirus assumed that people had access to housing.¹ Whereas for the 800 million people residing in homeless situation globally non-access to adequate housing was a death sentence. (Farha L, 2020)

In Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu, like the other parts of the globe, the pandemic has exposed that “stay-home”, “self-isolate”, “maintain physical distancing” and “washing hands” were irrelevant for those in homeless situations who had neither access to housing or to adequate water and sanitation facilities. There was neither no specific targeted intervention for the urban homeless during the pandemic nor where they included in the existing interventions. The urban homeless were neither

tested, nor were there any specific efforts to identify persons with symptoms and follow-up health interventions.¹³

Persons in homeless situations were only further criminalised and stigmatised, thirty families in homeless situation were 'home' quarantined in a street with both the ends of the street barricaded unmindful of access to food, water, and sanitation when someone other than the homeless in the streets where tested positive for coronavirus.ⁱⁱ Those who tested positive were also quarantined in the pavements forced to stay in tin sheet enclosures with the names of those who tested positive stuck outside in the tin sheet enclosure.¹⁴ For people already facing disproportionate access to health, timely access to food, healthcare services and shelter, the pandemic further curtailed access to these services that are fundamental to human dignity and the right to life. For those in homeless situation suspension of basic needs during crisis and emergency is a prima facie violation of human rights. (Farha L, 2020)

1. The Urban Homeless in Chennai – An Introduction

In Chennai, 9,087 persons in homeless situations were identified by a third-party survey undertaken by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) in 2018. The study reveals that 82% of the urban homeless are found to be residing in platforms, 6% reside in multiple locations (they keep wandering and do not sleep in the same places), 5% reside underneath bridges and flyovers and 3% in bus stands/terminus.¹⁵ The study conducted by GCC also reveals that 83% of the urban homeless population resides as families which is one of the unique demographic trends of the homeless in Chennai. The number of families in homeless situations in the city is higher than the number of individuals that comprise predominantly of workers and destitute individuals. (Nundiyny A.D, 2018)

The families in homeless situations in Chennai have lived for several generations on the same piece of pavements, their grandparents came to the city sometimes 80 years earlier. New generations were born, one following the next, they all grew in the same stretch of pavement.”¹⁶ These homeless families have been demanding permanent housing from the Government of Tamil Nadu for over a decade now. The families residing in the pavements for generations prefer to reside in their current area of residence as their livelihood is location-specific and they do not have fixed timings for their employment and can be called for work at short notice. Therefore, they continue to reside in the pavements, near to their areas of work to avoid transportation cost and because of non-availability of alternate housing near their areas of livelihood.

With families residing in homeless situations, the number of children in street situations is also high in Chennai. There are nearly 2,361 homeless Children in Chennai residing with their family members as per Census 2011. Publications and research reports of civil society organizations also reveal that children comprise over 29% to 35% of the urban homeless population in the city (Nundiyny, 2018).

The individuals in street situations residing alone without their families consist of the elderly men and women (above 60 years); persons with different types of disabilities; orphans, runaway, and street children; single women; and trans persons. The survey undertaken by GCC reveals that 20% of the urban homeless families are women-headed households residing alone and as families with children. (Nundiyny A.D, 2018)

The urban homeless in Chennai also comprise both seasonal and permanent intra- and interstate migrants. The homeless in Chennai comprise inter-state migrants from the states of Andhra Pradesh (34%),

Pondicherry (23%), Telangana (20%), Kerala (9%) and others from Bihar and Rajasthan. The urban homeless in Chennai have migrated from nearly 27 Districts of the 38 districts of Tamil Nadu with majority coming from Villuppruam (16%), Tiruvannamalai (13%) and Vellore (7%). It is also to be noted that migration from the southern districts of Tamil Nadu to Chennai has dipped because of increased migration to other southern cities like Madurai, Coimbatore, Tiruppur, and Tiruchirappalli (Nundiyny, 2018).

Over 90% of the homeless belong to the Scheduled Caste, with 53% of them having had no schooling. The persons in homeless situations are exposed to extremely vulnerable conditions because of several socio-economic factors. Therefore, to understand the issue of homelessness in the city and to evolve a comprehensive and sustainable intervention to address the needs of the communities understanding the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities is crucial.

2. Multi-dimensional Vulnerabilities of the Urban Homeless:

a. Safety for Women and Girls in Homeless Situations: In Chennai where there is a higher number of persons living as families in homeless situations, women and children are the most vulnerable groups residing in street situations. The unsafe habitation, sans shelter, exposes the homeless women and children to different forms of abuse. The women and children residing in the streets have to struggle in order to safeguard themselves from miscreants. Women and girl children especially those with psycho-social disabilities are more prone to abuse because of their vulnerability. Women and children who 'runaway' often becomes victim of trafficking. There are also instances of non-institutional delivery and trafficking of children.¹⁷ With child marriage and teenage pregnancies prevalent among homeless adolescent girls, a lack of safety is considered to be a reason for parents forcing adolescent girls into child marriage. Lack of awareness on sexual and reproductive rights have also been one of the reason for teen

pregnancies. As most of the women and children access public toilet they find menstrual hygiene a challenge.

Children belonging to 0-5 years are the exposed to increased vulnerabilities because of their rough living conditions, many children have been victims of hit and run accidents that has claimed their lives. Children are also denied access to early childcare services including nutrition, healthcare, and preschool education. Though schemes like ICDS are available it is to be noted that 66 per cent of the children (0-5 years) in Chennai are unable to access services from ICDS. As most of the urban homeless reside in commercial areas there are no anganwadi centres available in these areas, in some cases though there are anganwadi centres in the neighbourhood these children are not enrolled because of discrimination. In Chennai, most of the urban homeless families reside in the same place for a long period of time, access to *anganwadis* is determined by the availability of the centre and the attitude of the anganwadi workers. In some areas though anganwadi centres are available, discrimination against homeless children is one of the reason for parents not willing to send their children to the centres. (Nundiyny A.D and Peter. V, 2018) Children belonging to 0-5 years are the exposed to increased vulnerabilities because of their rough living conditions, many children have been victims of trafficking, and hit and run accidents that has claimed their lives.ⁱⁱⁱ

For children, access to education is a challenge too. 19% of the children of 6-14 years of age are school drop outs of which 4% are employed in hazardous work places including slaughterhouses and steel factories. The number of school dropout increases in the age group of 15 to 18 where almost 42% of the children are not pursuing higher education.¹⁸ The children in street situations are also not included in the Children in Street Situation (CiSS) Programme to include them in the Baal Swaraj Portal. Many children continue to study in street situations after returning from school

and do not have access to Illam Thedi Kalvi a scheme for ensuring education at doorsteps which is critical for children in street situation.

b. Limited access to basic services: Food, water and sanitation continue to be areas of challenge for the urban homeless. In Chennai, 39% of the urban homeless have provisions for cooking; 37% buy food from local vendors; 17% beg for food; 5% buy leftover food from the hotels, and 5% depend on those providing free food (especially at places of worship). Further, it is to be noted that 79% of the homeless depend on public toilets. however, they have to pay nearly Rs. 50 per person for using the public toilets that includes Rs. 10 for washing clothes, Rs. 7 for bathing and Rs. 5 every time they use the toilet. 20% of the urban homeless continues to use the open space (open defecation) as public toilets are not affordable. 85% of the urban homeless depend on public taps for water and they procure can water for drinking purposes. (Nundiyny A.D, 2018) The limited access to water and sanitation facilities has increased the vulnerability of the homeless during natural disasters and the recent pandemic.

c. Access to healthcare facilities is a continuing challenge: Access to health has always been a struggle for the urban homeless. The homeless persons rescued from street situations both by GCC and the Greater Chennai Police (GCP) are often referred to the 'Unknown Ward' only in Government Hospital (GH). At times, those rescued and admitted are found yet again in the streets in a day or two without receiving the required treatment. Many times those who are discharged will require follow up and for homeless who are individuals without any caregivers, follow up is not possible in street situation and therefore there is a requirement for recovery shelters. Caregivers are compulsory for those referred for admission to hospitals from shelters for the urban homeless. The existing shelter staff or residents of the shelters act as care givers for a short period, but when the treatment period extends the shelters are unable to provide the services as there is only one Project Coordinator and a cook cum caretaker apart from security staffs in a shelter who has other specific services to provide in the shelters. There is also no adequate services for 'dying destitute' in the city and hence

providing palliative/pain management care for the individual homeless without care givers is also an area of concern.

As the Urban Health Posts are functioning only 9 am to 5 pm most of the persons in homeless situations requiring immediate treatment and first aid are accessing private clinic. They are also taking medicine directly from the pharmacist without the prescription of a doctor which can result in adverse side effects and increased health expenditure. There is a need for a 24 hour health care facility in the major hotspot location where the urban homeless reside. A Mobile Medical Unit may also be deployed with 24-hour healthcare services. Addiction is common among issue among the adolescents' boys and older men. Most of the street children, especially boys, are found to be addicted even as early as 10 years of age. There are no adequate de-addiction facilities for the urban homeless individuals, especially for children into addiction.

d. Intersectionality and vulnerability: Non-access to geriatric care is a major issue for the homeless elderly. In Chennai, most of those who are engaged in begging (especially near the places of worship) are the destitute elders. The institutions providing long-term care for the elderly do not have space for additional persons. Hence the homeless individuals are often found in the streets, or those in shelters continue to reside in shelters because of lack of scope for reintegration with families and rehabilitation measures. The existing shelters do not have provision for providing geriatric care services to the elderly that requires trained helpers and medical professionals. There have been instances where elders without care givers from affluent sections are forced into homelessness because of financial abuse and neglect. Among the homeless, persons with psycho-social disabilities, persons with disabilities and trans persons are extremely vulnerable to various forms of abuse because of the existing 'stigma' against them. They are often victimized because of their existing vulnerabilities and stigma that they face.

The homeless residing in the streets and other public places are vulnerable to police excesses as their presence is construed to be 'illegal'. Homeless

youths are often targeted by police officers, and some are victims of false accusations. One of the most common occurrences is that in the pretext of rescuing mentally ill persons and those involved in begging, the homeless are forcefully 'rescued' and referred to homes/shelters run by Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the process in which these rescues are undertaken is extremely insensitive, failing to uphold the dignity of the urban homeless.

e. Employment and livelihood: 40% of the urban homeless men are employed in daily wages; under the unorganized sector of employment 3% of the men and 22% of the women are employed in construction work; 17% of men and 29% of women are engaged in street vending; 3% of homeless men are rickshaw pullers and another 3% are auto drivers, 7% of homeless men and 4% of homeless women are employed as 'sanitary workers', 10% of the urban homeless women are employed as domestic workers; 3% men are working as security, 2% of men are involved in rag picking and 1% are tailors. Some of the homeless men and women are also involved in begging. (Nundiyny A.D, 2018) Non access to skill development initiatives and social security measures for the unorganised workers further increases their vulnerabilities. A recent survey carried out among 400 unorganised workers in homeless situation in Chennai has shown that 99% of workers in homeless situations were not enrolled with the Tamil Nadu Unorganised Workers' Welfare Board which is essential for availing financial aid such as for marriages of children, education, and pension benefits, among others.¹⁹

Those employed in vulnerable occupations like sex work, begging, rag picking, manual scavenging, and conservancy work face challenges in the form of police excesses and health-related problems. Street vendors often face eviction because of several court orders that prohibit them from vending. Often the products sold by the vendors are confiscated or destroyed when they refuse to pay bribe.

f. Limited access to identity documents and social security measures: The unavailability of identity documents like PDS card and Electoral Identity Cards has been a deterring factor for the homeless to access social safety measures available for the most vulnerable groups. 48% of the urban homeless do not have access to PDS cards and 42% do not have electoral identity cards. Persons without access to PDS cards (homeless individuals who do not have possession of their ration cards, or homeless families with no ration card) will not be registered under the Population Health Registry (PHR) and hence will not be able to access Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam (Healthcare at doorstep). The lack of documents also disqualifies homeless individuals from accessing the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme (CMCHIS) (Peter, 2022).

Most of the urban homeless have no access to an Old Age Pension (OAP), a Widow Pension, and a Disability Pension because of a lack of identity documents that provides proof of age and address. 66% do not have bank accounts and 83% do not have medical insurance. 17% have access to the health insurance scheme of the State Government. (Nundiyny A.D, 2018).

g. Exclusion from existing housing programmes: The urban homeless families are not included in the existing housing programmes of the State Government, nor is the housing continuum ensured for those in the shelters as part of the rehabilitation programme. Therefore, non-access to housing schemes, especially within the city, is one of the reasons for the increased number of urban homeless families in the city of Chennai (Peter and Stephen, 2022).

As most of the families in homeless situations are residing in pavements they are construed to be 'illegal' or 'encroachers' often the local bodies are forced to evict the homeless from their place of residence because of the mounting number of petitions sent by the general public to 'clear' them. Often GCC's garbage vehicles perceive the belongings of the homeless to be 'garbage' and dispose their belongings in the dumping yards. This is a deliberate attempt to ensure that they are forced to move from their current places of habitation. The frequency of such eviction is high and as a

result the homeless families refer to the garbage vehicles as 'kolla lorry' (lorry that loots). Some of the urban homeless are also street vendors, and they face several issues because of evictions. Many vendors in Zone 5 (Royapuram, North Chennai) were prohibited from vending as their areas of livelihood were declared as 'non vending zones'. Since 2010 for a period of 5 years, nearly 400 homeless families were evicted because of the construction of Metro Rail and they were shifted to alternative housing located in massive resettlement sites like Kannagi Nagar (South Chennai) located nearly 35 kilometres from their previous place of habitation in North Chennai. (ICWO, 2015)

h. Increased vulnerability to disasters: For the homeless, life in the streets is a never-ending battle against the summer's heat, the winter's cold, and the monsoon rains. Even the slightest of rains is a major disaster for the urban homeless because their regular activities are affected by rains. With clothes getting wet, children are unable to go to school and some of them even lose the important documents because of rains. They are the worst affected during floods and cyclones and many do not know the location of the nearest shelter where they can approach for safety. They are often prone to the seasonal diseases, especially during the summer season when availability of water is a serious concern and during the monsoon when they are forced to reside near stagnant water puddles for days. Access to relief with dignity is one of the problems faced by the urban homeless in Chennai after any disaster.^{iv}

3. Towards Sustainability – Need for policy safeguards

i. The need to address discontinuity in programmes for the urban homeless: The Supreme Court in Francis Coralie vs. Union Territory of Delhi, 1981, upheld that the "Right to life includes the right to live with human dignity and all that goes along with it, namely, the bare necessities of life such as adequate nutrition, clothing and shelter over the head and facilities for reading, writing and expressing oneself in diverse forms, freely moving

about and mixing and commingling with fellow beings.”²⁰ Shelter as a basic right to human need is also endorsed in the National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (NUHHP), 2007, that intends to promote sustainable development habitat in the country with a view of ensuring equitable supply of land and shelter.

Historically, there has been a discontinuity in the programmes implemented for the urban homeless in the country. Specific programmes intended for the urban homeless date back to 1992, when the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, introduced ‘The Shelter and Sanitation Facilities for Footpath Dwellers in Urban Areas’ Programme with an objective to ‘ameliorate the living conditions and shelter problems of the absolutely shelterless households till such time as they can secure affordable housing from the ongoing efforts of state housing agencies. This scheme was renamed as ‘Night Shelter for Urban Shelterless’ in 2002. The scheme was limited to construction of composite night shelters with toilets and baths for urban shelterless. This scheme was withdrawn in 2005 because of poor utilization of funds. (Commissioners of the Supreme Court in the Case of Writ Petition (Civil) 196 of 2001, 2014)

The Commissioners of the Supreme Court in Writ Petition 196/2001, brought to the notice of the Supreme Court vide letter dated 13 January 2010, the appalling conditions stemming from the complete denial of the right to food and shelter of people living on the streets in Delhi, especially in the context of the extremely cold weather that threatened their fundamental right to life.

Recognizing their intense vulnerability, denial of rights, and extreme poverty, the Supreme Court directed the Central and State Governments to provide permanent 24-hour homeless shelters in 62 cities (in a phased manner). The order emphasized that for every one lakh of the urban population, facilities for shelter and allied amenities must be provided for at

least one hundred (100) persons and that the shelters are to remain open 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. It was also stipulated that the shelters for the homeless should have basic amenities including mattresses, bedrolls, blankets, portable drinking water, functional latrines, first aid, primary health facilities, and de-addiction as well as recreational facilities. Further, 30% of the required shelters are to be special or recovery shelters for single women, the mentally challenged, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups. Since then, the Supreme Court has been regularly reviewing the implementation of its directions for the urban homeless by all state governments.

In 2013, the Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH) Scheme was launched under the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), later renamed the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY). This scheme has acknowledged the contribution of the urban homeless to the economy of the cities and sought to provide permanent shelters equipped with basic services for the urban homeless because the urban homeless reside in the cities with no access to basic public services like food, water, health, education, sanitation, shelter and social security protection. The Government of Tamil Nadu has sanctioned 242 shelters across the state and is currently operationalising nearly 150 shelters.

Till date there is no announcement about the continuation of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM)^v that is to end in the year 2020. The Revised Operational Guidelines for the Scheme of Shelters for Urban Homeless (dated July 2018) mentions that the “Project should also clearly state the process to be adopted for sustaining the shelter after 5 years of operation with indicative sources of funding support for the operation and management of the shelter”. This is also imperative in the decisions taken by Government of Tamil Nadu in the State Project Sanctioning Committee (Shelter for Urban Homeless Scheme) dated 10.12.2014 which stated that “resources from CSR funds (2% CSR being made mandatory for the corporate body towards social activities) was highlighted as a strategy proposed in sustaining the operation of the urban homeless after 5 years”.

j. The need to ensure convergence of schemes and coordination among departments:

To address the heterogenous nature of the urban homeless, the intersectional issues faced by the different vulnerable groups residing in homeless situation, to widen the horizon of interventions for the homeless beyond the 'shelter approach' and to ensure access to basic services and schemes vested with different departments there is a need for evolving an exclusive policy.

The directions issued by the Honourable Supreme Court of India (W.P.Civil)

"We are of the opinion that proper Rules and Regulations for monitoring night shelters must be enacted by each State and the Union Territories which would have some statutory force ... It is further directed that the learned counsel for the States and the Union Territories are at liberty to involve concerned officials of the Government and other authorities and design shelter homes according to the particular geographical or other requirements of each State/Union Territory.

Comprehensive Rules and Regulations are to be prepared by various States and Union Territories".

Despite the order issued in 2012, till date there is no rules, regulations or guidelines prepared by Government of Tamil Nadu. In the absence of a specific policy for the urban homeless, the sustainability of the existing shelters (if the programme is not extended) will be a challenge. Lack of convergence of various schemes (housing, livelihood, entitlements, and legal aid) and programmes vested with different departments continues to be a challenge in accessing basic services by persons in homeless situations. Therefore, there is an emerging need to draft a comprehensive policy on urban homeless so as to facilitate inter-departmental coordination and to bring the various programmes implemented by multiple departments under a policy framework to facilitate effective planning, implementation, and evaluation.

End Notes:

¹¹The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 to provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. Available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

¹²Peter, Vanessa and Stephen, Antony M., Policy, 2022, Policy needed to help homeless people lead a dignified life in Tamil Nadu, The New Indian Express, 8 October 2022. Available at:

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2022/oct/08/policy-needed-to-help-homeless-people-lead-dignified-life-in-tamil-nadu-2505878.html>

¹³Special Rapporteurs are independent experts who are responsible for monitoring human rights. The monitoring system was established by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and taken over by the Human Rights Council within the Special Procedures mechanism. The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law, Medecins Sans Frontieres. Available at:

<https://guide-humanitarian-law.org/content/article/3/special-rapporteurs/>

¹⁴Farha Leilani, 2020, COVID-19 Guidance Note, protecting those living in homelessness, Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, 28 April 2020. Available at:

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Housing/SR_housing_COVID-19_guidance_homeless.pdf

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¹⁶Vishwanathan, Nirupama, 2020, Around 30 homeless people 'street' quarantined in Chennai without toilets and masks, 31 March 2020, The New Indian Express. Available at:

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¹⁷Chennai Corporation draws flak for barricading the homeless, The Hindu, 09 August 2020. Available at:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chennai-corporation-draws-flak-for-barricading-the-homeless/article32307051.ece?homepage=true>

¹⁸Dr. Nundiyny, A. D., 2018, Socio-Economic Demographics of the Urban Homeless in Greater Chennai Corporation, Prepared by Uravugal Social Welfare Trust for the Greater Chennai Corporation.

¹⁹Harsh Mander, 2009 Living Rough, Surviving the Streets, A Study of Homeless Populations in Delhi, Chennai, Patna and Madurai for the Planning Commission of India. Available at:

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²⁰Dr. Nundiyny, A. D. and Vanessa Peter, 2018, Access to Child Care, Education and Nutrition Services by the Urban Homeless Children in Greater Chennai Corporation: Assessment, Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC) and Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS).

²¹Peter, Vanessa, 2022, Challenges in Accessing Health Care Services by Persons in Homeless Situations in Chennai.

²²Detailed Survey of the Urban Homeless in Chennai, Hotspot Locations of Zones I, II, III, V, VI and XI, Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC) and Indian Community Welfare Organization, Chennai, 2015. Available at:

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²³ Study Report: Access to Membership in the Tamil Nadu Unorganised Workers' Welfare Boards by Unorganised Workers in Homeless Situations, Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC), 2022.

²⁴Understanding Disaster Vulnerability of Chennai's Homeless – A Policy Paper, 2021, Okapi Research and Advisory, Uravugal Sustainable Development Trust (USDT), Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities (IRCDUC) and Azim Premji University.

²⁵Shelter for Urban Homeless – A Handbook for Administrators and Policy Makers, Commissioners of the Supreme Court in the Case of Writ Petition (Civil) 196 of 2001. 2014.

²⁶Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) is a scheme launched by the Government of India in 2013 to reduce the poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities, resulting in an appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong grassroots-level institutions for the poor.

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The Quality of Life of the Slum-dwellers of Kolkata: A Cross-Sectional Study from the Slum Zones of Kolkata

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Abstract:

Slums are mostly without any basic facilities for life, like, as lack of proper housing conditions, absence of proper environmental amenities, poor health facilities, etc. Urbanization has led to an increased population in the slums throughout the world. One-third of the total population of Kolkata, India is occupied by the slum-dwellers. They live under similar conditions of inadequate facilities, overcrowding, and lack of proper sanitation and drainage facilities. Everyday challenges are faced by them due to the presence of worsening social infrastructure and poor environmental quality which pressurizes the urban infrastructure and services to provide access to these slums. Hence, this highlights the prevalence of poor Quality of life in the slums of Kolkata.

Concerning the Sustainable Development Goals-11, which points to sustainable urban development with the upgrading of slum settlements,

this study seeks to highlight the socio-economic conditions of the slum dwellers, with the availability of infrastructure facilities in the slums of Kolkata. In the present study quantitative data has been collected from two slum zones of Kolkata (West and North zone) which highlights the quality of life in the slums and is more relevant for the inclusive development of society and the country. Therefore, to achieve the goal of sustainable urban settlements, this study's findings would help address the sufferings of the slums of Kolkata with suggestive methods to provide a better living for these slum dwellers.

Keywords: Quality of Life, slum, Kolkata, socio-economic conditions, slum-dwellers

Introduction:

Slums being informal settlements developed within the cities with dilapidated conditions related to infrastructure, overcrowding etc are detrimental to life, safety and health. These residential settlements are easily affordable and accessible for the poor to settle down in the cities with the intense struggle for land and profits (Malviya and Bhagat, 2013).

Urbanization and industrialization have contributed to the proliferation of slums in cities. It is estimated that the urban population will increase by about 60% in the next thirty years in India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and other Asian countries. The Asian region is the continent in the world having the largest population residing in the slums with a faster rate of urbanization. It is also estimated that one billion of the world's population resides in slums or squatter settlements. Urbanization is increasing both in terms of population and poverty. Hence, this urbanization has increased the population, poverty and poor quality of life among the slum dwellers (Ooi and Phua, 2007).

United Nations Report (2014) stated that there has been a faster rate of urbanization in developing countries than the developed nations. It was recorded that in 2018, 4.2 billion people, i.e., 55% of the world's population, resided in cities. Nevertheless, the reasons for urbanization in

most African and Asian countries are not due to the better services of the cities but due to the presence of poverty, suffering in the rural areas and in search for employment opportunities to have a better life has led to the migration from rural to urban areas. The basic need for these migrants is the requirement of a place to reside. Therefore, they select the places nearer to the job market and the neglected areas of the cities which are unfit for habitation such as along the side of the drains, and railway tracks which lead to the formation of slums and the high cost of land in these cities which they cannot afford. Thus, rapid urbanization and migration lead to the increased population in the cities and the expansion of these informal settlements. Henceforth, urbanization should be properly managed so that this influx of population does not pressurize the urban services and can lead to further growth (Khan et, al,2021), (Malviya and Bhagat, 2013).

These insecure settlements with poor environmental and living conditions, overcrowding, and lack of healthcare facilities and security affect the quality of life of slum-dwellers, particularly children. Quality of Life (QoL) of the slum dwellers is one of the important issues which is imperative and needs to be addressed to take forward the goal of Sustainable Development Goals-11 and ensure safe and affordable housing, upgradation of these slum settlements to provide a better and a sustainable environment for these slum dwellers. Several studies conducted by Ghosh (2013), (Das et al., 2012), (Mallik, 2014), (Mandal et al., 2014) and (Dey, 2008) have highlighted that the conditions of the slums of Kolkata are the worst situation. The slums of Kolkata lack basic facilities of life, lack availability of basic infrastructure, lack or poor sanitation and drainage system, poor nutritional status of children, the prevalence of poor literacy rates with high dropout, gender inequality, poor socio-economic condition of the families which shows the prevalence of child labours in the slums of Kolkata to supplement the income of their families etc. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct a study on the quality of life of the slums of Kolkata which this paper tries to highlight and address the sustainable development goals.

Conceptual Framework of the Quality of Life:

The Quality of Life (QoL) is a multi-dimensional concept that the World Health Organization defines as *'an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live with their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.'* (Attafuah, 2022). Although there are two conflicting definitions for QoL one from the Scandinavian approach and another from the American approach. The Scandinavian approach defines QoL where it is measured with objective indicators of the standard of living, and the American approach uses the subjective indicators of well-being for conceptualizing and measuring the Quality of Life. Hence, for measuring the QoL from both the concept using the objective and subjective indicators, the range of factors which has been considered are income, material living conditions, health, education, employment, family, social relationships, civic participation, security and state of the environment (Khan, et. al,2021).

Morris, in his study, tried to describe the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI); the factors for PQLI are infant mortality, life expectancy and basic literacy. PQLI is the direct index of the Human Development Index (HDI), the quality of life index. The Human Development Index (HDI) comprises indices related to health, education and income. There were several studies which highlight the indexes of quality of life, although the newer Quality of Life index is 'The Economist Intelligence Unit's Quality of Life index which includes 9 indicators for determining the quality of life, which is adopted by India also (Jha, et, al, 2014).

"Slums have the basic features of settlement with overcrowding, poor housing conditions, lack of safe water and sewage, insecure residential status or tenure and lack of services like health, security and education" (Keilland and Fafo, 2015). These conditions highlight the poor Quality of Life in the slums. Similar conditions prevail in the slums of Kolkata whereas Ray (2016) in her study also observed that the slums of Kolkata (Kakulia road and Panchanantala slum) lack proper drinking water facilities. This highlights the lack of availability of basic services to life which lowers the

quality of life for the slum dwellers. Therefore, to provide the Government with further plans to enhance better living conditions for the poor urban population, it is imperative to understand the areas that highlight the poor or low conditions of Quality of life conditions.

The present study attempts to examine the socio-economic conditions of the slums of Kolkata along with the availability of infrastructural facilities related to health and education, highlighting the Quality of Life of these slum dwellers from the different slum zones. The study also attempts to suggest measures to improve the QOL in the slums. Hence the objectives of the study: (i) to examine the socio-economic conditions of the slums of Kolkata and (ii) to explore the availability of several services - health, education, livelihood and protection.

Methodology of the Study:

The study area is the metropolitan city of Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal. The total population of Kolkata's urban slums is 1,409,721, accounting for about 31.35% of the total population of the city. Kolkata is one of the cities and districts of the West Bengal state of India and is controlled by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation. The Census of 2011 puts the total population of Kolkata city at about 4,496,694, of which males and females account for 2,356,766 and 2,139,928, respectively. Kolkata city is governed by a municipal corporation that comes under the aegis of the Kolkata Metropolitan Region. Although Kolkata city has a population of 4,496,694, its urban/metropolitan population is 14,035,959, with 7,251,908 males and 6,784,051 females (Census of Kolkata, 2011).

Since the total population of urban slums in Kolkata is 1,409,721, employing the statistical formula, with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5, the sample size is 385, which is rounded off to 390.

We categorized the slums of Kolkata into five different zones - central, east, west, north and south. Therefore, from these five slum zones, only two slum zones, the North and the West zone were selected and from each zone, two slums were selected for the present study. The slums selected for the detailed

study include Narkeldanga and Dakshindari from the North zone and from the West zone, the slums are Brace Bridge and Khidderpore. This comprises 52 households from the slums which include interviews with the parents of children between the age group of 8-18 years and who are the beneficiaries of the NGOs operating in the slums of Kolkata have been taken into consideration for the study to explore and to assess the vulnerabilities of these slums. From each zone, two slums were identified through the NGOs purposively based on the following criterion of selection. The criterion for selection of these slums or families was - registered and unregistered slums, socio-economic condition and accessibility to services like health, education, livelihood and protection. The sample households were selected purposively for the study and both qualitative and quantitative data collected from them to determine the objectives of the study. The sampling technique used for this study is purposive in nature, given that the slum population is mobile. A mixed methods research design (an eclectic approach) has been adopted to integrate and interpret the data and concurrently validate the results.

Parameters of the Quality of Life: For the present study, 10 parameters or variables have been chosen to determine the current quality of life in the slums of Kolkata.

Parameters of the Quality of Life	Indicators
Physical profile of the slums	Physical location or setting of the slums
Housing conditions	Type of houses, housing structure and land occupancy
Sources of lighting	Availability of electricity
Sources of drinking water	Availability of drinking water
Sanitation and drainage facilities	Access to proper sanitation and drainage facilities
Health facilities	Access to health facilities, expenses on health issues, health conditions

Migration and its underlying reasons	Issues related to migration
Education facilities (male and female literacy)	Presence of schools and educational qualifications of the slum-dwellers
Safety and security	Social and economic security

Table 1: Parameters of the Quality of Life in the slums of Kolkata

Findings and Discussions

a) Physical location of the slums:

For the present study, we have selected two slums from the West zone of Kolkata the slums are Brace Bridge and Khidderpore. **Brace Bridge (Indirapalli No.4)** is an unregistered slum located along the railway track leading to Sealdah railway station and is enclosed by a major industrial area. **Khidderpore (East Yard)**, is an unregistered slum situated along the major transport alignment and is surrounded by an industrial area. The physical location of the slums in this western zone is a deterrent to the survival of the slum dwellers and children due to the incidence of several accidents and illegal activities which occur highlighting the vulnerabilities of these slum dwellers. Unregistered slums or squatters are illegal settlements that are not provided with minimum basic services to life and are also under the threat of constant evacuation from their settlement areas (Bag et al., 2016).

Similarly, from the northern zone, two slums were selected i.e., Narkeldanga and Dakshindari for the present study. **Narkeldanga**, this unregistered slum is situated along the side of the major drain (*nallah*) of the city of Kolkata and is located by the major road transport alignment. **Dakshindari**, a registered slum, is along the side of a railway line that leads to Sealdah railway station. Similarly, the physical location of the slums in this zone also highlights several vulnerabilities due to the occurrence of accidents on the main road and also from the railway line. Hence, the physical location of these slums is a challenge for the existence of the slum dwellers and children.

b) Housing Conditions:

One of the parameters for assessing the quality of life is the housing conditions and the land status of these slums. This section highlights the condition of the families wherein they reside. Figure 1 shows the type of settlements to be found in the west and north zone slums. The information related to the condition of the houses and the land status highlights that 96% of the families reside in kaccha houses, only 4% reside in semi-pucca houses and the room density is also very high in this zone, while 100% of the families reside with the occupancy right in this western zone. For the northern zone (Narkeldanga and Dakshindar), it was observed that 62% of the families reside in kaccha houses, 19% reside in pucca houses, and 19% in semi-pucca houses, and the room density is also very high in this zone. Besides, the land occupancy in this zone also shows that 92% reside with the occupancy right which means they do not have any land rights nor have any land-related documents or papers for their houses, while only 8% of them reside in rented apartments.

Following this, the materials used for preparing these settlements for both zones are usually very poor. They use materials like polythene sheets and asbestos for semi-pucca settlements, while in the case of the pucca houses they are made of concrete with closed ventilation. Subsequently, the poor condition of these settlements with poor housing conditions, and a lack of well-ventilated environment affect the children as well as the slum dwellers. Moreover, these settlements pose a terrible threat during the rainy season. Similar studies conducted by Purkait and Halder (2016) and Marimuthu et al. (2017), have highlighted the poor housing conditions in the slums of Bangalore and Kolkata.

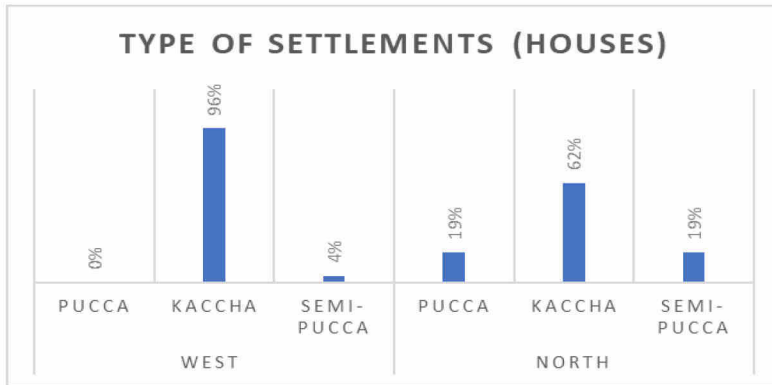


Figure 1: Type of settlements (houses) in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

Migration and its Reasons:

Migration is one of the pivotal reasons for the growth and development of slums. Figure no. 2 shows the type of migration typical in the slums of Kolkata. It can be observed from figure no. 2 that for the western zone, 73% of the families have migrated from rural to urban areas and 27% of the families have migrated from urban-to-urban areas. Again, in the northern zone, it can be observed that 58% of the families have migrated from rural to urban areas and 42% of the families have migrated from urban-to-urban areas.

Hence, migration has been majorly from rural to urban areas and as such from different districts of West Bengal, across the different states of India (like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand) and also across the border of India (from Bangladesh) through districts like 24 Parganas.

Following this, the reasons for migration from rural to urban areas in the western zone as shown in figure no 3 highlight that 55% of the families have migrated after facing the challenges of unemployment and low wages, and 24% of them have migrated due to several other reasons like conflict, drought, etc., 17% of them have migrated on the account of getting married and the rest 4% of them have migrated to access education for their children which were not available in their native villages. For the northern

zone, the reasons for migration are 38% of the families have migrated due to lack of employment and low wages, 35% of them have migrated due to marriage, 24% include reasons like conflict and other problems, and the rest 3% of the families have migrated due to lack of education in their villages.

A similar study by Sen (2014) observes that employment and marriage are two major reasons for the migration for males and females in West Bengal.

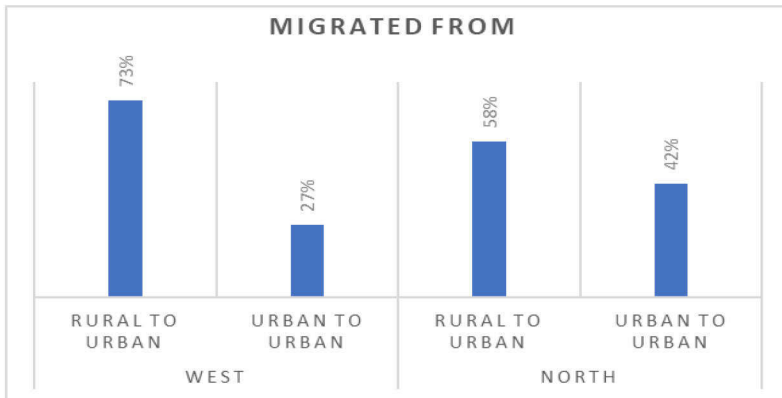


Figure 2: Migration of families from slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

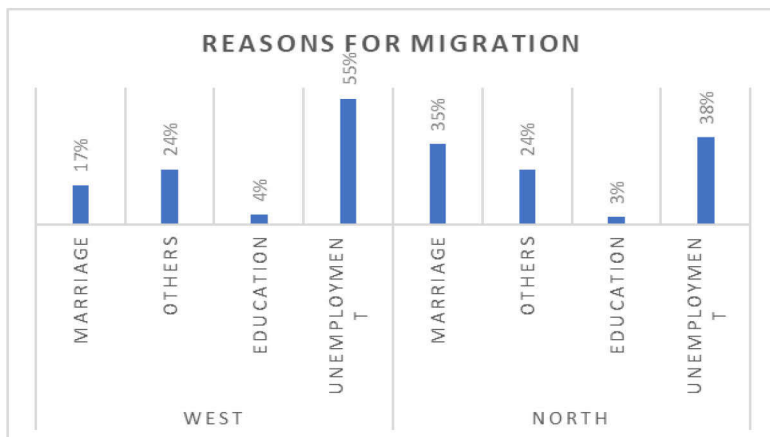


Figure 3: Reasons for the migration of families from slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

Sources of Lighting:

Electricity is one of the major indicators for measuring the quality of life. Therefore, regarding this parameter, it has been observed that in the west zone, 96% of the households have an electricity connection while only 4% (use kerosene) do not have an electricity connection in the household. In the north zone, 88% of the households have a source of light (electricity) connection while only 12% of the households do not have an electricity connection in their households while they use kerosene.

Drinking Water Facilities:

The availability of drinking water facilities is one of the basic requirements for life. For the present study, figure no 4 reveals that in the western zone, 50% of the slum dwellers have the facility of drinking water in their slum while the other 50% face similar problems with drinking water facilities in their slums as in like eastern zone. The availability of drinking water facilities in the northern zone shows that 54% of the slum dwellers have the facility of drinking water in their slums while the 46% of them face the problem of drinking water facilities i.e., standing in a long queue for fetching water, due to its absence.

The lack of these basic amenities to life prevalent in the slums of Kolkata is similar to the findings of the study conducted by (Kimani et al., 2007), (Sohel et al., 2017) and Rana (2008) who also highlight the problem related to poor drinking water in the slum of Kenya, the slums of Dhaka and Rupsha Ferighat slum of Khulna, Bangladesh.

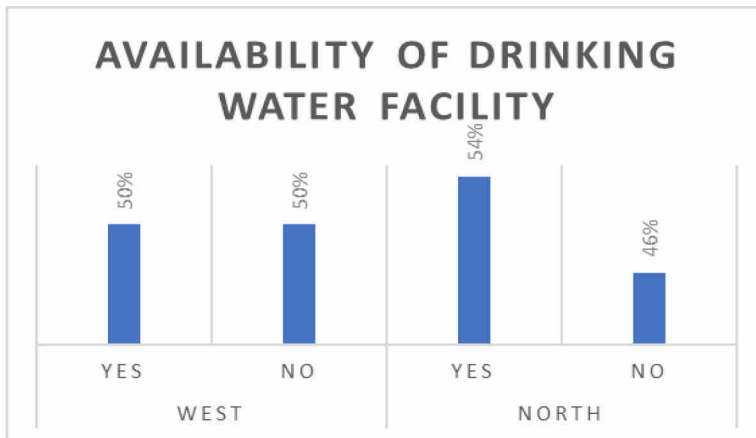


Figure 4: Availability of drinking water facility in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

Sanitation and Drainage Facilities:

The availability of sanitation facilities in the slums is important for leading a healthy life and is one of the basic requirements for daily life. The sample study highlights that in the western zone, there is the availability of community bathrooms and toilets for slum dwellers. In the northern zone, the slum dwellers use the toilet and bathrooms present in the slums. The availability of sanitation facilities in both the zones i.e., the western and northern zone do not serve the purpose, because as reported by the slum dwellers, the condition of the community bathrooms is extremely poor, with unhygienic conditions, followed by other problems like mismanagement, ashamed to use the toilets.

The proper drainage system is an essential requirement for a clean and non-pollution environment in the slums to avoid several incidences of diseases among children and slum dwellers. The present study from the sample reveals that in both the zones i.e., the western and north zone, there is no proper drainage facility in the slums, therefore resulting in an unhygienic environment and also impacting the poor health condition of the children and slum dwellers. Thus, the lack and poor condition of the sanitation and drainage system highlights the prevalence of a poor and unhygienic

environment in the slums of Kolkata and consequently, this leads to poor health of the children and the slum dwellers.

Health Facilities:

The presence of poor drainage and filthy sanitation facilities in the slums of both the zones i.e. west and north zone highlights that the health condition of the slum dwellers is also very depressing. The slum dwellers suffer from diseases ranging from fever, cold and cough, asthma, diarrhoea, typhoid, and other digestive diseases, rheumatism or other bone-related ailments, cardiovascular/blood pressure, mental health problems, tuberculosis, diabetes other problems such as skin diseases, etc. Moreover, there is no primary health centre in the slums of the western and northern zone. Therefore, the slum dwellers travel about 4-6 km and 1-2 km respectively for the slums of the west zone and north zone to avail of health services.

In continuation of this, the preference for visiting hospitals and expenses incurred in health problems were also taken into consideration for the present study. Therefore, in the west zone, figure no.4 highlights that about 85% of the families visit government hospitals for accessing health-related services, while only 15% of them visit private doctors and hospitals. Followed by the northern zone, as the figure shows that about 54% of the families are opting for government health services whereas 46% of them visit private doctors or hospitals.

Followed by the expenses incurred by the slum dwellers related to their health problems. It can be observed from figure no. 5 that 42% of the families spend more than Rs.10, 000, followed by 27% of them have their health expenses between Rs.5000-10,000 regarding health issues and the rest 31% of the families incur expenditure about Rs.2000-5000, annually. In continuation to this in the north zone as shown in the figure, highlights that 31% of the families spent more than Rs.10,000, followed by 31% of the families spent Rs.5000-10,000 on their health problems, 23% and 15% of the families spent about Rs.2000-5000 and Rs.1000-2000 respectively on their health problems.

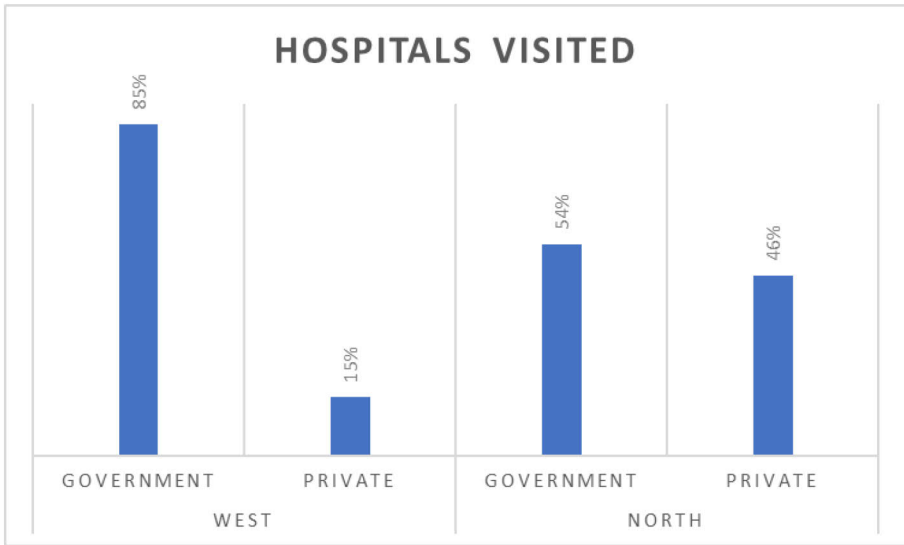


Figure 5: hospitals visited by families in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

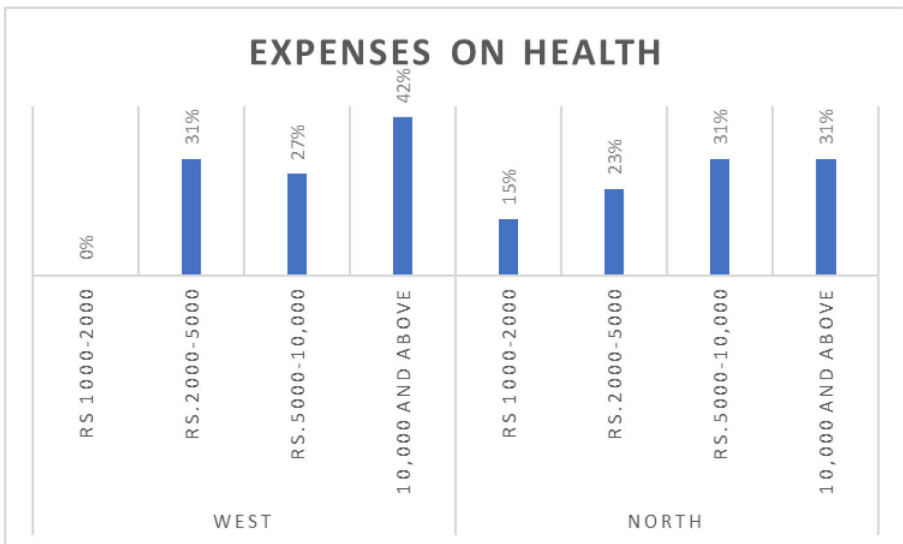


Figure 6: Expenses incurred on health by families in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

Education and Protection:

Mallik. S (2014) in her study highlighted the prevalence of the poor educational condition in the slums of Kolkata with a poor low literacy rate of the female slum dwellers and gender discrimination. Educational infrastructure and the literacy rate are significant factors that determine the quality of life. Similar conditions prevail in both slum zones. There is no such government school functional in all four slums and therefore the children have to travel about 500m-5km daily for attending their schools. Although there is supplementary education system that is operated by the NGOs in these slum areas. In the west zone, 88% of the children are enrolled in government schools, 4% in private schools, and 8% in madrasas. In the north zone, 85% of the children are enrolled in government schools, 11% in private schools, and 4% in madrasas. The majority of the children enrolled in government schools which provide them with a mid-day meal facility, material support with books, and dress materials.

Male and Female Educational Qualifications:

The literacy rate among the slum dwellers in the slums of Kolkata is very depressing. This is very much visible in figure no.6 which shows that in the western zone, 69% of the male adults are illiterate, 15% of them have crossed their middle schools level of education, 12% of them have crossed their primary level of education, and 4% of them are matriculate pass. In the north zone, it can be observed from figure no. 6 that 73% of the male adults are illiterate, 15% of them are crossed their middle school, 8% of them are matriculate pass and 4% have crossed their higher secondary examinations.

Similarly, for female educational qualifications, it can be observed from figure no.7 that in the western zone, 85% of the female adults are illiterate, 11% of them have crossed their primary level education, and the rest 4% of them have crossed their middle school. In the northern zone, the figure depicts that 85% of them are illiterate and 11% of them have crossed their primary level of education and 4% of them have crossed their matriculation examination.

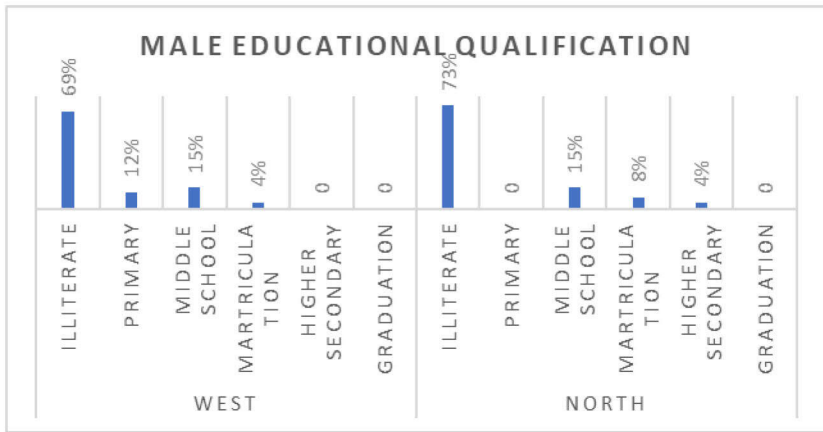


Figure 7: Male educational qualifications among slum-dwellers in the west and north zones of Kolkata

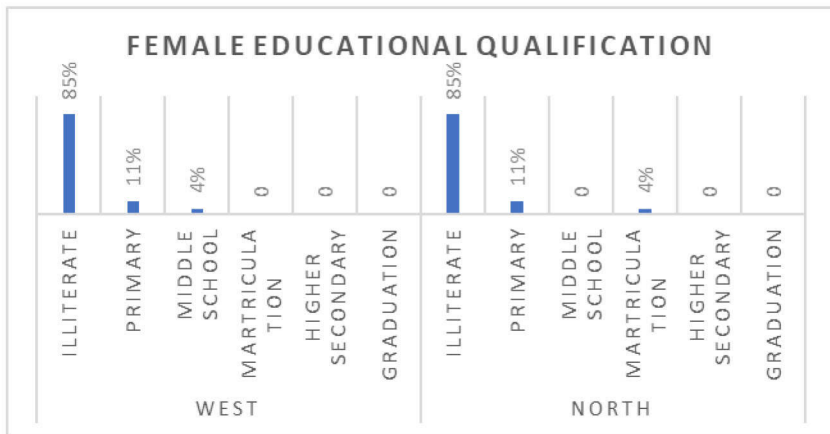


Figure 8: Female educational qualifications among slum-dwellers in the west and north zones of Kolkata

Safety and Security:

The section includes the economic (income) status of the families, social security in the slums of Kolkata, the status of jobs and the type of

occupations with which these slum dwellers are engaged. Figure 9 shows the income of families in slums in the west and north zones. It can be observed from the figure no. 8 that in the west zone, 85% of the families have an income of more than Rs.5000, followed by 11% of the families have an income between Rs.2000-Rs.5000 and the rest 4% between Rs.1000-2000. Further, in the north zone, 62% of the families have an income of more than Rs.5000, and the rest 38% have an income between Rs.2000-Rs.5000.

Following this, the type of occupation the slum dwellers (both male and female) are engaged with and the status of jobs highlights the economic security among these slum dwellers. Figure no. 9 shows that in the western zone, 50% of the male adults are working as daily labours, 15% of them are not working, and 27% are engaged in other occupations such as having their own business, begging on the street, work in factories and the rest 8% of them are working as drivers, rickshaw and van pullers, etc. Followed by the north zone, 4% of the male adults are working as daily labours, 31% work as drivers (rickshaw pullers, van drivers), 50% work as factory workers, having their own business, begging on the street and 15% are not working due to illness and other reasons.

For the female adults figure no.10 shows that in the west zone, 58% of the female adults are not working in this zone, followed by 23% of them are daily labours, 15% of them work as domestic maids, and the rest 4% of them are engaged in a different occupation such as own business, etc. Likewise, in the north zone, 27% of the female adults are working as domestic help, 35% of them have their own business and 38% of them are not working. In terms of the status of jobs, figure, no.11 shows that in the west zone, 65% of the members of the families of this zone do not have regular jobs while only 35% of them have regular jobs. In continuation of this, 81% of the slum dwellers from the north zone do not have regular jobs whereas 19% of the families have regular jobs.

Apart from economic insecurity, the slum-dwellers in the two zones, especially women and children, are victims of harassment and associated social problems. Consequently, figure no. 12 reveals that 96% of the women

respondents from the west zone, stated that the slums lack security and safety whereas only 4% of them reported that the slum is safe for them (slum dwellers). Following this, 65% of women respondents from the north zone reported that slums lack safety and security while 35% of the respondents reported that the slums are a safe place for them to reside and as they are no such problems related to safety and security. Consequently, this section highlights social insecurity and economic insecurity among the families residing in the slums of Kolkata leading to their poor Quality of Life. (Roy et al., 2014) his study observed that the slums of Mumbai are not safe for women; they are victims of several violence and crimes.

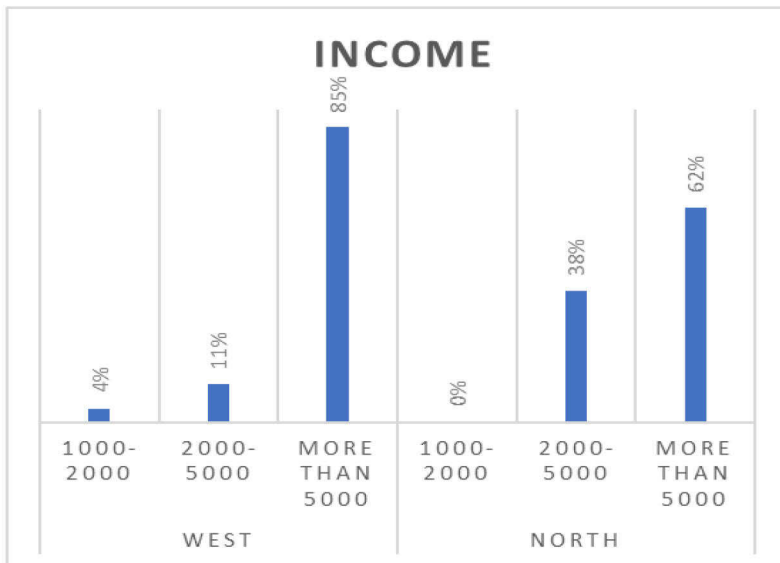


Figure 9: Income of families in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

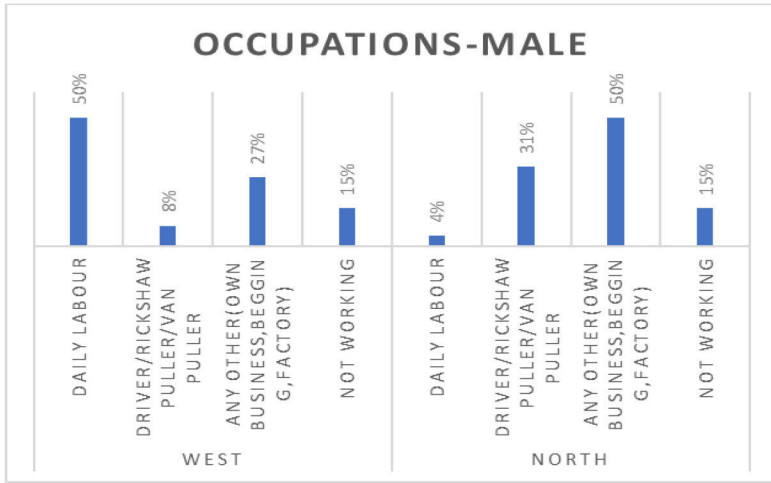


Figure 10: Occupations of males in slums in the west & north zones of Kolkata

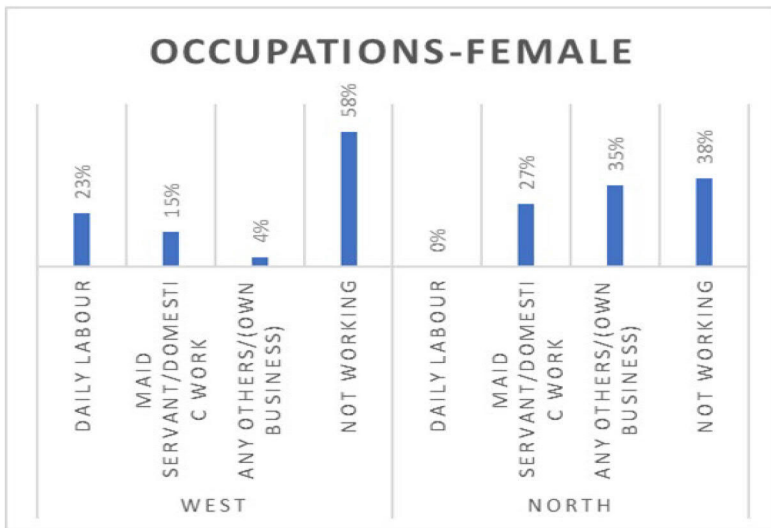


Figure 11: Occupations of females in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

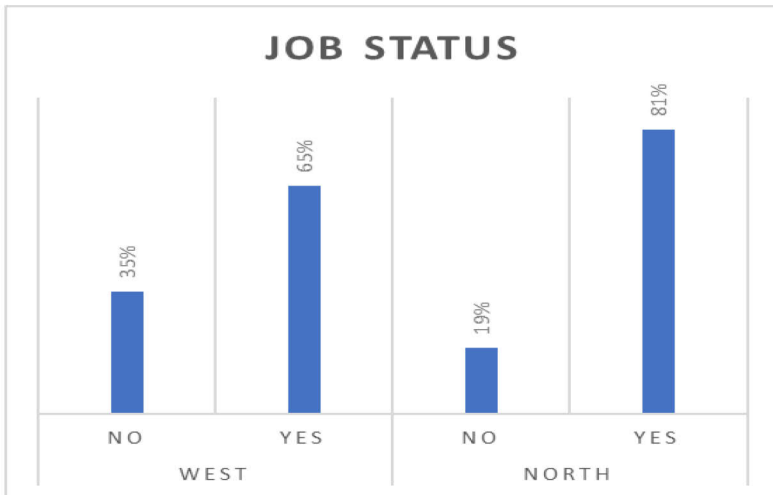


Figure 12: Job status in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

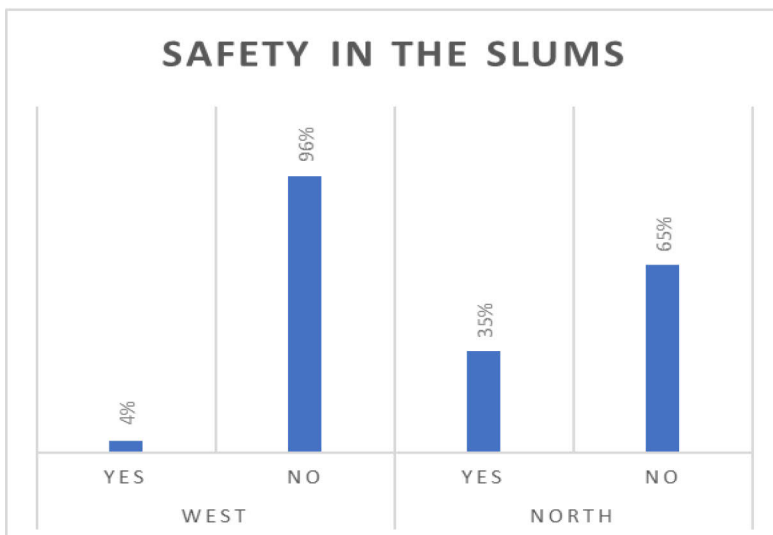


Figure 13: Safety in slums in the west and north zones of Kolkata

Discussions and Suggestions:

The study highlights the existence of poor quality of life in the slums of Kolkata. The vulnerable physical location of the slums, like, poor housing conditions, poor health facilities, lack of adequate drinking water facilities leading to standing long for collecting water, lack of hygienic sanitation facilities and drainage systems leads to several environmental pollution and incidences of diseases, especially among children and slum dwellers. Hence, these slum dwellers should be provided with the availability of basic services to life like drinking water, sanitation facilities, and hygienic conditions for the children as well as the slum dwellers which will help to improve the environment of the slums. Followed by this, the economic status of the families is also depressing. This is evident because the children of these families are engaged in child labour at a young age as reported by the family members to supplement the income of the families, moreover, large family size is another factor for the disparity in the income strata. Although both female and male members contribute to the workforce, poor financial conditions still exist for the families. The findings from the study also highlight violence, harassment and exploitation leading to a lack of safety and security for women and children in the slums of Kolkata. Another important factor is migration, findings show that the increased urbanization from rural to urban areas, due to several reasons like unemployment, lack of educational facilities, marriage, conflict etc, has escalated the slum population. This has in turn increased the imbalance and the families are deprived of an enhanced quality of life. Therefore, the suggestive measures for improving the quality of life are to curb the rates of migration from rural areas and also to improve the socio-economic condition of the families residing in these slums of Kolkata by bringing in several training programmes for the livelihood generation among the young male and female adult members of the slums. Furthermore, conducting several awareness programmes on child rights, health issues, and women's rights in these slum areas would also help improve the quality of life and create awareness and knowledge among the children and women. Following this, there is a need to strengthen the role of NGOs, civil societies and other

organizations working in these slum areas. They should focus on slum upgradation, participatory planning for the development of the slums, and utilization of the available resources judiciously to address the need for these slums. Convergence and proper coordination with the governmental allied departments to ensure proper implementation of the programmes. Finally, there is a need to work holistically to alleviate the problems of poverty along with the issues like access to education, and medical facilities, and provide services for other sections of the population in the slums like women and children so that there can be an improvement in the quality of life of these slum dwellers and also helps in achieving the target of SDG-11.

Conclusion: Therefore, we can conclude from the study that the increased inflow of the slum population in the urban areas of Kolkata has led to poor quality of life among the slum dwellers of the West and North zone. It is very obvious that slum dwellers and children are affected by the presence of poor quality of life in the slums of Kolkata. Consequently, this increased urbanization in the urban slums is a warning signal for the Government and concerned authorities to focus on providing provisions for essential services to life for these slum dwellers. As the present study highlights the prevalence of poor quality of life in the slum zones of Kolkata, with poor living conditions, increased migration due to the dearth of employment opportunities in rural areas, poor availability of services related to health, education, livelihood and protection leading to impoverished living conditions of these slum dwellers. Thus, in order to improve this poor quality of life among the slum dwellers of Kolkata, they should be provided with a healthy environment and enhanced economic opportunities that will enable them to have a healthy and better life. Furthermore, there is a requirement for further research to bring up other best practices for improving the basic amenities of life along with their availability in all respect to health services, education for each and every child, providing improved livelihood opportunities, and ensuring safety and security for both women and children residing in these urban slums which as a result will improve the quality of life of the slum dwellers in the slums of Kolkata.

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Women with Disabilities: A Feminist Perspective

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“Being disabled should not mean being disqualified from having access to every aspect of life”. - Emma Thompson.

Abstract

India is a vast country with a population exceeding a billion. According to the 2011 census, 1.18 crore disabled women in India out of 65.46 crore female Indian citizens. About 1.9% of women have multiple disabilities. Individuals with differential ability are deprived of opportunities for social and economic development. Basic amenities like health, education, and employment are generally denied to them. Most countries in the world, people with disabilities are the largest minority group. They are subject to a long history of neglect, segregation, isolation, deprivation, charity, welfare and even pity. Women with disability are assumed to have less of human needs at all level- physical, biological & psychological. There are threats as per convenience by people around. Women with disability are more marginalized and discriminated in the society. Feminist perspective on disability is actually revolutionary concept for the women with disparity. As we all know that women are oppressed in this male-dominating society. This paper mainly focused and contributed rich personal accounts as well as research-based documentation about the social circumstances of women with disabilities and a long-awaited theoretical framework to understand and interpret their lives and experiences. Women with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in today's society. Disparities between the abled and the differently- abled must be eliminated.

Keywords: *Disability, feminist, abled, differently-abled*

Introduction

People with disabilities constitute a significant segment of the world population. Their exact numbers are hard to determine, owing to suspected underreporting and differences in the definition of disability between countries and cultures (Yeo and Moore, 2003). It is estimated that approximately 650 million people of the global population, or 10% of the total population, live with differential abilities. It is also estimated that approximately 80% of the global population living with disabilities live in developing countries (Price, 2003; UN, 2006). The global prevalence of disability and impairment is expected to rise owing to factors such as an increase in the population, ageing, accidents, malnutrition, conflict, HIV, and advancements in medical treatment that preserve and prolong life (Thomas, 2005). The experiences of people with disabilities varies, depending on their personal circumstances, availability of resources and other external factors. Similarly, students with disabilities represent an emerging population in institutions of higher education. whose perceptions and experiences of higher education are ultimately shaped by their socio-cultural experiences, the existing of environment, and the availability of specific facilities, required by them. Despite notable progress in legislations and policies for these students in higher education institutions, many of them still face various challenges in completing their studies successfully. There is, unfortunately, a dearth of research studies in the Indian context. It is very important to conceptualise the term disability. Although various attempts have been made, it is very difficult to develop a universal definition of disability. This is mainly due to the fact that the perception and the understanding of disability are formed through influence of history, society and culture and how these are related to various aspects of the lives of people (Barnes 1994; Barton 1996). It is essential to remember that understanding the term disability does not necessarily mean understanding persons with disabilities. A number of other factors must be taken into account for a proper understanding and analysis of disability (WHO 1980; Pfeiffer 2000). However, there is no consensus on what constitutes disability in disability research.

Women and disability

India is a vast country with a population in excess of a billion. While estimates vary, there is growing evidence that people with disabilities comprise between 5 and 8 percent of the Indian population (around 55-90 million individuals). On the whole 41 percent of them are women. (NSSO 2002). The persons with disability are deprived of all opportunities for social and economic development. The basic facilities like health, education and employment are generally denied to them. Despite several international and national pronouncements, the rights of people with disabilities have remained on paper.

In contrast, the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) estimated that the number of persons with disabilities in India is 1.8% (18.49 million) of the Indian population, 76% of persons with disabilities live in rural areas, 24 % live in urban areas, 41% were females, 49% of the persons with disability population were literate and only 34% were employed. The NSSO also includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities (mental retardation and mental illness), but the distribution in each category according to the two surveys differs drastically. The difference in the estimates of the Census of 2001 and the NSSO of 2002 for different types of disabilities can be explained by the lack of universal definitions and criteria of disabilities used during the surveys (The NSSO Survey on Disability, 2002). According to the 2011 census, 1.18 crore disabled women in India out of 65.46 crore female Indian citizens. About 1.9% of women have multiple disabilities.

Challenges faced by women with disabilities

The preamble of Indian constitution does not do any discrimination among able and disable. But the attitude of society towards persons with disabilities has been changing with time. Most countries in the world, people with disabilities are the largest minority group. They are subject to a long history of neglect, segregation, isolation, deprivation, charity, welfare and even pity. Women with disability are assumed to have less of human needs at all level- physical, biological & psychological. There are threats as

per convenience by people around and with same nonchalance dumped out. Women with disability are more marginalized and discriminated in the society. The first problem lies with the family members, the care takers have to be cautioned more that they will encourage the women with disabilities and try to make them self-sufficient. They will show the real love and affection, accept their disability and will not think them as a burden. Every family member will keep an eye watch about the outsiders, relatives or neighbours so that they will not take advantage of the women with disabilities during the absence of their family members, particularly in case of blind or mentally disorder patients. It clearly shows that due to their disability, most of them are subject to violence, betrayed by husband; they are deprived of good education, livelihood for which they feel that they are being marginalized. Here the role of guardians, family members, society, social worker and government is very important to make them inclusive and lead a happy life.

Beginning with the idea that they could play a significant role in the globalized period, women with disabilities were conceptualized. The study largely proved that there has been a lengthy history of neglect, segregation, isolation, deprivation, charity, welfare, and even pity directed at people with developmental disabilities. Family members are the root of the first issue; caregivers need to be warned more against encouraging women with disabilities and attempting to make them self-sufficient. They will accept their condition and treat them with genuine respect and affection rather than viewing them as a burden. Every family member will keep a close eye on visitors, relatives, or neighbours to ensure that they do not abuse the women with disability while family members are away, especially in the case of blind or mentally ill patients. (Jogdand A. M.& Narke H. J. 2022)

Why is a feminist perspective on disability required?

Feminist perspective on disability is actually revolutionary concept for the women with disparity. As we all know that women are oppressed in this male-dominating society. So, it is necessary to highlight the feminist perspective of disability in order to safeguard the rights of women with

disabilities and provide them proper dignity in the society. Feminist perspective on disability is required in order to overcome the various challenges faced by the women with disability.

Women with disability grapple both with the persecution of being female in male-influenced or male-dominated society and the maltreatments of being differently abled in the community controlled over by abled. Feminist perspective brings the understanding and apprehension of women with differently abled into feminism and feminist perspective into the disability rights movement. To build a feminist theory of disability it takes requisite account of our differences, we will need to know how experiences of disability and the social maltreatment of persons with disability interact with sexism, racism and class oppression. Michelle Fine and Adrienne Asch (1988) have made a considerable benefaction to the understanding of the complex interactions of gender and disability. We require a theory of disability. It should be a social and political theory, because disability is largely socially-constructed, but it has to be more than that; any deep understanding of disability must include thinking about the ethical, psychological and epistemic issues of women with disabilities. Feminist thinkers have uplifted the most radical issues about cultural attitudes to the body. Some of the same attitudes about the body which contribute to women's oppression. Generally, also contributes to the social and psychological disablement of people who have physical disabilities.

Unfortunately, the feminist perspectives on disability are not yet widely discussed in feminist theory. Thus, it is high time to realise that there is a need of feminist theory on disability which will enhance the dignity and status of women with disability in our society. As it is clearly visible in our patriarchal society where women are continuously oppressed since long time. And it is obvious that women with disabilities are more vulnerable to the ill treatment by the society. So, they must be provided with proper social security so that they can live their life with worth and dignity. Below mentioned are some of the factors which actually accelerates and plays the role of catalyst when it comes to the feminist view of disability.

Women

As it is well-known fact that women are being oppressed since long time in this patriarchal society. They are oppressed, abused, killed, trafficked, mutilated and raped by men in every country of the world. The patriarchy seeks to control female sexuality, sexual preferences, sexual acts and sexual consent for several reasons. The patriarchy has long sought to control the reproductive power of women. The entire time, women have always been smart, strong, capable, competent and influential – but we have been systematically and carefully oppressed, controlled, abused, distracted, sexualised, objectified, infantilised, silenced, threatened and mocked. So, there is need of feminist approach in order to safeguards the rights of women.

Disability

Disability is another important factor associated to the feminist perspective on disability. In society like ours where women are oppressed, so just imagine the condition of a woman with disability. In order to provide the worth and dignity we must stand together and promote their well-being. This will certainly provide justice to the World Social Work Day theme of 2021 i.e., “UBUNTU – I Am Because We Are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connections”.

Stigma related to disability

People with disabilities have been stigmatized throughout history. In many cultures, a disability has been associated with curses, disease, dependence, and helplessness. As a result, these people manage their condition in ways that guard against their being stigmatized. In addition, they may be especially sensitive to signs of possible stigmatizing from their providers. Thus, it is necessary to look into the feminist perspective on disability in order to eliminate these types of stigma-related issues.

The conceptualisation of feminist perspectives on disability

Disability is a disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments and thus excludes them from mainstream activity. Thus, it is very important to conceptualise the feminist perspective on disability in order to overcome the challenges faced by the women with disabilities. Feminist Perspectives on disability provides a unique introduction to the key debates in relation to both feminism and disability. Feminist philosophical work has aimed at repairing the imbalance between men's and women's concerns and rectifying negative depictions of traits viewed as female that are found in traditional philosophical positions, paradigms and methodologies. Feminists have tried to remedy a pervasive narrowness in the usual ways of framing issues that philosophers have considered important enough to command attention and sustained work. To induce change, feminist philosophers have crafted approaches that draw upon the very limitations they encounter when attempting to pursue women's interests within philosophy. This effort has supplied stimulating ideas to philosophers seeking to import the singular insights and different perspectives of other subordinated groups, such as persons with disabilities, into contemporary philosophy to improve its inclusiveness and extend its scope. Specifically, persons with disability people's philosophical interests find ready-made conveyances in several of feminist thinking's signature reforms. Feminist philosophy has had a productive, but sometimes uneasy, engagement with the facts and theory of disability. Certain feminists who view feminist theorizing from a disability perspective, such as Morris and Wendell, are disturbed by evidence that feminism has not overcome a residual allegiance to normalcy. Indeed, some discussions on disability by feminists seem to proceed by laying aside feminism's own affiliations with liberation, self-affirmation, and inclusiveness. In general, however, philosophy has benefited from applying feminism's theoretical lenses to better understand disability. Polishing those lenses with the cloth of which the lives of persons with disabilities are made promises to engender more finely nuanced and perspicacious philosophical accounts, and theories broader in scope and farther seeing, than during the

centuries when philosophy overlooked disability. A feminist disability approach encourages a composite comprehension of the societal antiquity of the framework. Take into consideration the ability/disability system, feminist disability theory goes far away definite disability topics such as illness, health, beauty, genetics, eugenics, aging, reproductive technologies, prosthetics, and access issues. Feminist disability theory superscribes such inclusive feminist concerns as the unity of the category “woman”; the status of the lived body; the politics of appearance; the medicalization of the body; the privilege of normalcy, multiculturalism, and sexuality; the social construction of identity, and the commitment to integration. Disability is a pervasive, often unarticulated, ideology informing our cultural notions of self and other (Toni Morrison, 1992). Disability - like gender - is a concept that pervades all aspects of culture, including its structuring institutions, social identities, cultural practices, political positions, historical communities, and the shared human experience of embodiment.

Analysis and discussion

Traditionally, there has been a tendency to view persons with disabilities as a single homogenous group with no gender distinctions. The reality of being a woman with disability and having a physical disability has to a large extent been overlooked by both the disability and feminists’ movements. However, there is little doubt that the dual oppression of sexism and handicaps places women with disabilities in an extremely marginalised position. There is need to open up a debate about the position of women with disability and also this society demands a concerted effort is made to ensure the needs, wishes and aspirations of the women with disability that are incorporated in all feminist debates. By reflecting the previous studies on disability and gender, it is observed that the discussions of women with disability come upon at the fundamental of, both the disability rights and feminists’ movements. People with differently abled front towards many hindrances in their struggle for equality. Although men and women with disabilities are subject to discrimination because of their disabilities, women with disabilities are at a further disadvantage because of the combined discrimination based on gender and discrimination based on disability.

Women with disabilities are typically seen as helpless, childlike, dependent, needy, victimized, and passive, thus strengthening traditional female stereotypes. This may perhaps be one of the reasons why women with disabilities have been excluded from the women's movement at large. Women with disabilities have historically been neglected by those concerned with issues of disability as well as the feminist movement. It is only within the last decade that serious experiments have been undertaken to recognize and acknowledge the constraints shaping their lives. These endeavours have chiefly concentrated on assimilating how being female and having a disability interconnects, and how women with disabilities view their experiences. This decade of write up has contributed us with rich personal accounts as well as research-based documentation about the social circumstances of women with disabilities and a long-awaited theoretical framework to understand and interpret their lives and experiences. Women with disabilities are one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in today's society. We need to develop a better understanding of their lives in order to remove the obstacles that still remain on their way to equality.

Commentary

Women constitutes almost half of the total population in our society. So, they are equally provided platform to showcase their ability in order to remove social stigma. People with mental or physical conditions are thought of as being differently-abled because they possess a unique set of abilities and perspectives. Everybody has ability and everybody matters, it's all about acknowledging it. Oftentimes, differently abled people see what we can't, hear what we can't and think what we can't. This makes their ability different - not inferior, not superior - just different. The term differently abled recognises talent and value in everybody and treats them equally. Many differently people are known to flourish and rejoice in life with the right opportunity, support and love. So, it is quite relevant to have the feminist perspective on disability in order to uplift and provide worth and dignity to women with disabilities. The feminist approach to disability is one of the most crucial and revolutionary steps towards humanity in order

to provide the equal opportunity to the women with disability which will eventually promote the welfare of our entire society. Thus, it is very important to have an inclusive approach of development so as to attain holistic development of our society.

'There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women'.-Kofi Annan

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Mental Health and Social Care and Its Impact on Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of Social Workers

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Abstract

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a framework for societal change, equitable development, and improved quality of life. Trends suggest that while India has made progress towards some goals, there is a lag in several other areas which have not shown substantial progress. In this context, this article focuses on the mental health-homeless/social disadvantage nexus, its linkages to sustainable development goals (SDGs), and the multi-dimensional role social work practitioners can play in bringing about change. The importance of social workers' contribution to policy-making, mental healthcare services, research and pedagogy is outlined using a transdisciplinary lens in the backdrop of a social justice framework.

***Keywords:* Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, Mental Health, Social Work**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by member countries of the United Nations in 2015, laid out 7 wide-ranging Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), that cover themes including poverty alleviation, zero hunger, quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, and good health. Goal 3, in particular, is to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages”. The agenda also outlines specific targets as part of the goal, including - reducing global maternal mortality, bringing down the burden associated with non-communicable diseases, ensuring access to

reproductive health care services, and promoting mental health and wellbeing. As the World Health Organisation states, this goal, like the others, is also cross-cutting, such that progress in one area has a direct impact on the progress towards other goals.

The Sustainable Development Report 2022 (Sachs et al., 2022) offers global and country-wise data on the SDG indices. This report suggests that there is fall in the global average SDG score since 2021 partly due to slow/non-existent progress in poor and vulnerable countries, and that performance on SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) remain below pre-pandemic levels in many low-income countries and lower-middle-income countries. According to this report, India ranks 121 among the 163 countries in terms of progress. A broad look at global trends suggests that India (similar to some other low-and-middle income countries) has made adequate progress on goals 12 and 13 (responsible consumption and climate action). However, progress on several other vital goals appears stagnant or only moderately improving. This would also explain India's drop in ranking from 121 to 123 in 2021 and 117 in 2020. Several factors including low investment and commitment, leadership and implementation challenges, and poor convergence between the health and social sectors are linked to slow/delayed progress. In this context, we specifically discuss in this article, the mental health-homeless/social disadvantage nexus, demonstrate its linkages to multiple domains outlined in the SDGs using a transdisciplinary lens, and social justice and transformative change as frameworks, and reflect on the critical role that social workers can play in driving change.

According to the National Mental Health Survey, 2015-2016, about 150 million people in India are estimated to live with a diagnosable mental health condition, of which, nearly 83% do not have access to mental health services. In the context of several other social inequities, a common outcome of mental illness is homelessness. Poverty and homelessness, in turn, (due to the lack of basic needs like clean water, sanitation, food, clothing, shelter, physical safety, education, employment, health care, social security, etc.) increase the prevalence and risks of mental ill-health (Narasimhan et al., 2019). Addressing these social

determinants would entail changes not only in poverty alleviation policies but also in offering social security and housing as a basic right, offering out-of-work allowances and universal basic income can also have an impact on gender parity, child and adolescent well-being etc

Yet, 25% of the country's population lives in poverty, and at least 1.78 million individuals are homeless, (which is considered a gross underestimation). 45.6% have inadequate housing, 35.5% of children under 5 years of age are stunted, barely 12% of individuals complete 10-11 years of education, and at least 10.1 million children in the country engage in the informal sector with no security of income. (Census, 2011; National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) 2019-2020; NITI Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Indicator (MPI) (2021)). Further, these challenges exacerbate the growing vulnerability of young people. The Global Burden of Disease Study (GBD) 1990 – 2017 has pointed out that suicide was the leading cause of death in India for those in the age groups of 15–29 years. This is of utmost importance to note, as there are 472 million persons below 18 years of age, constituting 39% of the country's total population. UNFPA projections (2020) also suggest that India will have one of the youngest populations in the world by 2030. These challenges are all 'complex' i.e. "Multiple causes and consequences exist, they are rooted in social structures and institutions; they are uncertain, a lot of different actors (representing different interests) are involved, and lastly, they are difficult to grasp, and structure and boundaries are unclear in relation to a strong system dynamic." (Rotman, 2005 cited in Bunders & Broerse, 2010: 31). Hence, it is essential that a strong understanding of these complex problems and underlying factors determine interventions and practices.

In this context, the social sciences play an integral role. Adopting a transdisciplinary approach (Regeer & Bunders, 2009) which transcends disciplinary boundaries, encompassing disciplines ranging from sociology and anthropology, to psychology, economics, political science and the natural sciences and so on, is key to weaving an approach that is not merely robust, participatory, interconnected and cohesive but also effectively addresses social determinants of health and wellbeing in the real world. In the mental health context, social work has immense potential to advance these transdisciplinary methodologies and practices, and thereby promote

sustainable development goals, which are strongly grounded in the social sciences and simultaneously have strong linkages to real-world settings.

The role of social work in promoting sustainable development goals can be understood at four levels - policies, services, research and pedagogy. First, shifts on a policy level can substantially advance progress in sustainable development. Policy changes are key to improving the quality of services, ensuring clear pathways to care, promoting commitment to rights-based frameworks and facilitating budgetary allocations. Considering that mental illness and poverty are closely linked for many (as established above), it is essential for mental health policies to include concrete social care recommendations, as mandated in the 65th World Health Assembly. (World Health Organisation, 2012). In some areas, strong strides have been possible, owing not only to an increase in District Mental Health Programme sites, but also a surge in Disability Allowance in some states. Support from foundations and collaborations, for instance, with the National Health Mission - Tamilnadu and Azim Premji Foundation, that drive Emergency Care and Recovery Centres (offering multidisciplinary hospital-based care) for homeless persons with mental illness have been of immense help.

Despite such support service points for homeless persons with mental illness are insufficient to address the care gap. In other domains, progress continues to be further limited. For instance, 87.3% of persons with mental illness are not part of the workforce (Central Statistics Organisation, 2010), and access points for general healthcare support for persons with mental illness are low. As a result health concerns of persons with mental illness often go underdiagnosed/misdiagnosed (a significant problem, as the life expectancy for persons with psychiatric disorders, may be reduced by up to 24 years, Chesney et al., 2014). While the effects of these concerns on children are yet to be explored in depth, preliminary data and anecdotal experience from The Banyan's network of clients also suggest that children of persons with mental illness tend to drop out of school, in the absence of social care support. Hence, while the discourse on social determinants is gaining increased prominence, figures such as these suggest that the "know-do gap" (Pakenham-Walsh, N (2004)) is a critical challenge. In this context, social workers can play a key role. The engagement of social

workers is typically quite fluid and amorphous in policies. Miller et al. (2017) has pointed out a few challenges — that many social workers who are typically trained in clinical services as their key practice modality, are not trained to take up policy-making opportunities as policy making is typically viewed as requiring objective assessments of evidence by “policy experts”. Considering the expertise that social workers build on-ground with direct engagement with vulnerable communities, it is also important for social workers to be part of policy drafting committees. By grounding the policy in human rights and social justice values and frameworks at the core of social work practice, outlining the roles of different Human Resource cadres (social workers, sociologists, psychologists etc.), recommending social care interventions linked to field-level realities, and advocating for multi-sectoral convergence, policies can include sharper and more conscious focus areas.

Besides, drawing from policy recommendations, social workers play a crucial role in implementing mental healthcare services, by understanding complex problems and their causal factors, that go beyond strictly biomedical models. Recognising the role of systemic issues such as caste-based disadvantages, gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, increased homelessness etc. is crucial to develop comprehensive and inclusive services. Ensuring continuity of care; and an understanding of these complexities through rigorous and immersive social work practices also enables services to truly and authentically reflect values of social justice, inclusivity, diversity and collaboration.

In order to make progress and achieve these goals, a closer look at existing pedagogy then becomes important, to build a strong cadre of informed and skilled social workers. This is also in line with SDG 4, pertaining to inclusive and equitable quality education. Specifically, Target 4.7 focuses on ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity. Over the last few years, due to persistent and resolute advocacy efforts by several groups across the world, mental health has gradually begun to gain more prominence in

global and national-level discourse. With a continuously and rapidly evolving understanding of mental health, the sector is now experiencing a flux, attempting to respond to diverse needs and bridge the science-practice gaps. Therefore, it is important to also examine the pedagogy currently in use and to strengthen it such that it draws from existing wisdom and theories, but is also evolved to be — more contextualised and transdisciplinary, enabling teaching and learning material to be more attuned to present-day realities and vulnerabilities, and fosters critical thinking. Such shifts are requisite to address relative inequities and respond to the needs of underserved communities. Proactive efforts to collaborate with diverse stakeholders including - service users, caregivers, clinicians, researchers and academicians are vital and can support the development of a robust pedagogy for social work.

Finally, research (that is bottom-up, multi-stakeholder focused, and participatory) is crucial, to closely link services, pedagogy and policy to each other. Research must focus on understanding themes including social determinants and pathways in and out of poverty and mental ill health, intergenerational trauma etc. Innovative trials of interventions such as basic income should also be initiated and evaluated, such that emerging interventions actively address systemic problems. Foundational principles and innovations in disciplines such as neuroscience and epigenetics should also be integrated with social sciences research and pedagogy, to offer a stronger theoretical grounding.

Hence, it is of utmost importance to reflect on the current scenario and understand how to reinvigorate and expand the scope of social work practitioners and build more leaders and change agents. Drawing from these approaches, social work can play a transformative role in building mental health professionals (who can, in different capacities as clinicians, researchers, policy-makers etc.), can tackle pathways to ill health, build equitable access, foster collaborations (among transdisciplinary practitioners, researchers, entrepreneurs etc), bridge the science-practice gaps, and together, advance the sustainable development goals agenda.

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