

**BEGGARS IN URBAN INDIA: AN INTERACTIONIST
APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF BEGGING IN THE CITIES OF
DELHI AND MUMBAI**

*Thesis Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

SABINA YASMIN RAHMAN



**Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi India - 110067
2019**



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067

Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences

Tel.: 91-11-26704408

DECLARATION

Date: 03-01-2019

I declare that this thesis entitled “**Beggars in Urban India: An Interactionist Approach to the Study of Begging in the Cities of Delhi and Mumbai**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been specified in the thesis. The thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree of this University or any other university.

Sabina Yasmin Rahman

Signature

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Professor Vivek Kumar

Name of Chairperson

Chairperson
CSSS/SSS
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

Professor Vivek Kumar

Name of Supervisor

Professor
Centre for the Study of Social Systems
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This PhD like any other academic endeavour would not have seen the light of day without the help and good will of a number of people from a number of countries. I would begin with the person without whose guidance and timely support I would have never been able to put an end to this chapter of my life and academic career, my supervisor, Professor Vivek Kumar. Thank you so much for believing in me and supporting my work at a time when very few were ready to take it on. I am grateful to you for letting me bring to the department of Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, the stories of people who we encounter everyday but never think are capable of imparting knowledge that could change how we look at society, marginality and crime. I thank you for helping me organise my thoughts into an intelligible framework and guiding my efforts in the right direction. I thank you also for your patience and constant encouragement in the absence of which the entire process could certainly have appeared insurmountable.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank faculty members at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems (SSS) but also others departments who have advised and facilitated the study at different stages of the research process, which also happens to be a bureaucratic challenge for most students: research proposal discussant Professor Sanjay Srivastava; ethics review committee members, Professor Mohan Rao and Professor Nilika Mehrotra; research advisory committee members, Professor Tanweer Fazal and Dr. Nupur Chowdhury; 9B committee member, late Professor Edward Rodrigues; and Dean's nominee for fellowship enhancement, Professor Jayati Ghosh. I am indebted to Dr. Ghazala Jamil for her kindness in offering last minute suggestions and advice. I am grateful to all of you for your contribution of time and effort. I must extend my sincerest gratitude to Ms. Shalini Pruthi, Section Officer, and the entire SSS administrative staff, for facilitating this study and ensuring its timely completion. I would also like to thank Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, Delhi and DSA Library at CSSS, JNU for providing me access to books and other relevant research materials. I am also grateful to Sanjay Photocopier at SSS,

JNU for their services throughout the entire period that I have been a student at the Centre.

My direct engagement with the begging and homeless communities, and the custodial institutions that operate under the anti-begging laws in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai began as a postgraduate student of Social Work (Criminology and Justice) at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. I would therefore like to thank Professor Vijay Raghavan and Koshish Director, Mohammad Tarique, for opening my critical faculties to the issue in the first place, and equipping me with the tools and practices to view the world of crime in ways I never had before. I am ever so grateful to the both of you for educating and training me for the field. Your tireless efforts and quiet commitment continue to be a source of inspiration for me. I am also thankful to Professor Chandrajyoti Sonowal for his goodwill and his faith in my abilities as a researcher. In Delhi, I would like to extend my gratitude to Mr. Fazle Haque, social worker with SPYM and caretaker of the permanent homeless shelter in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti (at the time of the study) for his generous donation of time and sharing with me his immense wealth of experience as a community worker involved with begging and homeless populations around the city. I hope my work is able to do justice to the spirit of interventionists like him. I would also like to thank Mr. Samudra Sangkha Gogoi, currently a research scholar at Delhi School of Economics, who was my research assistant for a brief period when I first commenced fieldwork in Delhi.

I would also like to thank Dr. Olivier Brito, a friend and one of the most passionate ethnographic researchers I have known in my life, for pushing me to embark on this journey and pursue my PhD in this particular area. I am grateful to him for helping me source material to develop my own understanding in order for me to be able to formulate a framework based on the empirical reality of begging in the Indian context. Thanks to our discussions and endless arguments at the initial stages of my research, I am today better able to defend the scope of my work within the discipline of sociology. I have learned much from him. Olivier, your faith in fieldwork and research never ceases to motivate me. Here, I would also like to thank Dr. Isaac Karikari for recognising my work and inviting me to virtually collaborate and present my work and share fieldwork expertise with his students at the Indiana University

School of Social Work. My special thanks to Dr. Archana Yadav and Vikram Singh at Guru Ghasidad Viswavidyalaya for inviting me to present and publish part of my work, and Mr. Zafar Ullah at the AlterNotes Press for publishing the same.

I was going through a rather difficult time of my life during the years leading up to my submission, and this thesis could not have been complete without the love and constant support of friends and fellow-academics, most of whom – not surprisingly at all – happen to be women. I would like to thank: Nupur Asher, linguist and a great friend of mine for years now, for helping me with proofreading and cross-checking references in my drafts; Anita Sharma, a sociologist herself, for her love, friendship, and help with referencing parts of my thesis draft; Sylvie Dominique, historian and “my twin,” for believing in me and my work from the very start and for her generous “tips” at every stage that I got stuck, be it in life or while writing (thank you William Dalrymple for introducing us); Sanjana Pegu, writer and feminist, for her unfaltering solidarity and friendship since the time we became friends; Swar Thounaojam, playwright, performer and activist, for our many discussions, her monumental solidarity and clarity of vision, and specifically for her comments on my conference paper; Sudhamshu Mitra, independent researcher, for being an ally and helping me meet deadlines by providing online help on days I was too unwell to work; Uday Bhanu, student of law, for being a good friend, keeping a check on me, and reading various drafts and providing comments; Andrew Lathuipou Kamei, fellow-research scholar, for reading drafts of my articles and providing suggestions; and Rahul Sonpimple, fellow-research scholar and student activist for helping me tackle bureaucratic and administrative hurdles. Thank you.

I would also like to thank journalist Abhimanyu Kumar Singh for the number of times he has accompanied me to campus over the years since I have not kept well, and more specifically, for reporting on the serious crimes against the homeless families, the facts of some of which emerged in course of my fieldwork in Delhi. I must mention too that I, in fact, might not have been able to bring this project to fruition without the dynamic and powerful network of online communities constituting of researchers, journalists, and activists belonging to different social locations from various parts of the world. Many of us may never meet in real life, but my PhD is a testimony to the fact that these digital solidarities indeed work, and are capable of providing a good

deal of moral support and courage to minority scholars such as myself, who decide to invest in unusual topics. But working without the benefits one accrues from having godfathers within the academe, or the social and cultural capital of scholars from more privileged sections of our society, we are often placed at the receiving end of the wrath of an insidious system, and face the constant danger of being thrown off the academic grid for belonging to structurally disadvantaged groups.

Though such an acknowledgement may raise a few eyebrows, my lived experience has taught me that these vulnerabilities are real, and we in academia must recognise them instead of glossing over them, if we truly wish for education to be just and equal for all. I would hereby like to acknowledge the love, solidarity and support that has come to me from friends and online collaborators, Raya Sarkar (attorney), Afreen Firdaus Adrees (research scholar), Soraya Chemaly (writer and activist), and (Ammu Kannampilly (journalist), who I have met and worked with primarily through online social justice forums and solidarity networks. To me, this is a reminder of Manuel Castells's powerful proposition that "the culture of the network society is a culture of protocols of communication between all cultures in the world, developed on the basis of a common belief in the power of networking and of the synergy obtained by giving to others and receiving from others." Thank you.

I feel blessed to have had the love and friendship of my dear friends and well-wishers, Devika Daulet-Singh (gallerist, a mentor, and my favourite "boss"), Aanchal Kataria (writer), Daniel Jamang (photojournalist), Rashi Vidyasagar (criminologist), Paras Sharma (therapist), Carol Humtsoe (model), Ayesha Maria Mualla (researcher), Ramya Patnaik (artist), Noopur Tiwari (journalist), Anas Tanwir (advocate), Sumeet Samos (activist and rapper), Rosalyn D'mello (journalist and author), Loitongbam Kishan Singh (student and founder of Jamia Queer Collective), Raj Das (content specialist), Lainie Yeoh (communications consultant), Muntaha Amin (writer), Mira Malholtra (graphic designer), Nayan Jyoti (activist), Richard Kamei (research scholar), Raile Rocky Ziipao (researcher and development practitioner), Shaheen Ahmed (research scholar), Sohni Chakrabarti (research scholar), Kanupriya Kaikeya (media consultant), Greeshma Rai (lawyer and activist), and Kumuda Chandra Panigrahi (sociologist). My heartfelt thanks to all of you for being there for me in whatever way you could and for having faith in me and my work. Moreover, I extend

my earnest appreciation to my therapists and lawyers, who I would name for ethical reasons, for helping me through some of the most trying situations of my life.

I would also like to thank my landlady, Sunita Grover and her two wonderful children, Nupur and Karan, for making available the space I needed to live and work, and for sharing their lives with me. I honestly owe my ability to function towards the last months of my PhD greatly to my help, Mitron, for her everyday care and friendly reproaches, her entertaining updates from the neighbourhood, and her hand in making my home habitable, especially on days when I simply did not have the strength to pick myself out of bed. I am so grateful to you, Mitron, and to my brothers of the neighbourhood – Ravi, the grocery deliverer; Abdul, the garbage carter, and Hari Om, the gardener – for your everyday kindness and for keeping my life from becoming an insufferable mess. I cannot thank you all enough, but please know that I really appreciate your assistance.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. I am fortunate to have the presence of my dear parents in my life, and I thank them for their thoughts, prayers and patience, for putting up with me today as someone who is merely a step away from becoming a faithless heretic, and for choosing to love and trust me even when I have done nothing to deserve it. Thank you, *Abba* and *Ma*, for your unwavering faith; it rubs off on me even when I think I am a denier. I want to thank my brother, Max, and all my lovely girl cousins – Shagufa, Froza, Asfia, Yasmin, Zana and Nazneen – for being a constant source of love, laughter and pure joy in my life. Above all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all my research participants – Koshish teams in Delhi and Mumbai, SPYM team, Delhi and Mumbai Police, Beggar Home Chembur staff, and especially to my other family, the begging and homeless communities of Delhi and Mumbai, who welcomed me with big hearts and opened up their lives and losses to me, teaching me by example, perhaps, the greatest lesson in resilience that there is to human life. Some of them did not live to share this moment with me. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi ra'jiun*. May you get justice in the Afterlife...May your souls rest in peace!

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

To begin with its very terminology, begging is a complex and contested category. It is an ancient practice associated with all kinds of traditions, myths and imageries. Being acutely aware of the irony of what he points out, Dean (1999) says, “If one so much as scratched the surface of begging as a distinctive phenomenon, it reveals a seam of symbolic meanings and moral conundrums that is as perplexing as it is *rich* [emphasis added]” (p. 1). Scholarship on begging attributes the persistence of this phenomenon to the failure of social policy, and emphasise on how it is intrinsically linked to the questions of homelessness and poverty. Yet it is necessary to address begging more generally as a distinctive form of informal economic activity that reflects fundamental changes in the economic environment and in the role of the welfare state (Dean, 1999). According to McIntosh and Erskine (2000), there is always a certain degree of ambivalence and contradiction involved in people’s attitude toward begging. The common perceptions regarding a beggar often swing between extremes of portraying him/her as “an ascetic pilgrim or a lawless wanderer, a deserving object of pity or an undeserving scrounger, a hapless victim of welfare state or a venal representative of an emergent modern underclass” (Dean, 1999, p. 13).

This chapter discusses the origin of the anti-begging laws in the global context before tracing its history and relevance in India. It is hoped that such a discussion would provide a robust foundation to the various approaches and discourses around begging – religio-cultural, legal, social policy, sociological – that the current study wishes to highlight, ultimately enabling the readers to view the phenomenon as a political symbol in its own right, deserving of rigorous independent scrutiny in order for it to yield itself as a meaningful subject of study for the sciences to reckon with today. This chapter also includes the problem statement and research questions that the

present study wishes to address, and the objectives it aims to achieve. It is followed by a brief overview of how the material has been organised in the rest of the chapters for the purpose of this PhD thesis, albeit with certain limitations that inevitably creep in in course of any similar project. Care has been taken however to keep the impact of these limitations to the larger implications of the study at a minimum.

Background and rationale of the study

For many scholars, the question of begging and its criminalisation becomes morally perplexing because it is related to a much more fundamental aspect of being human, the one associated with the expressive liberty of the beggar (Schafer, 2007). Begging, as an area of study has largely remained under-researched, which is partly the reason as to why a comprehensive operational definition for it is absent (see Brito, 2013). A review of related literature reveals that there has been a lack of interest within the social sciences to address the subject matter of begging in an adequate and systematic manner. This is especially true for the Indian context, where the little mention that the subject finds is often smothered by debates and discussions around issues of chronic poverty and crime. It is generally understood within a reductive construction in which it is identified as a stigmatised activity (Erskine and McIntosh, 1999) situated outside the gift-exchange theory (Swanson, 2007; see also Mauss, 1966), and relying on simple requests for money, food, or other goods, with little or nothing of value given in return (Lankenau, 1999a, 1999b; Snow and Anderson, 1993).

It is also quite difficult to analyse begging in the sense that the boundaries between work, informal street activity, religious charity, and begging often become quite fluid and indistinguishable (Mukherjee, 2008; Baumohl, 2004). There is an understandable tendency, for instance, to view begging increasingly as an urban phenomenon, and as one of the most stigmatised and ostensible manifestations of poverty in cities around the globe. However, such a view of begging does little to inform the sciences of the deeply relational nature of poverty as experienced by the beggar, or to give voice to the subjective experiences of 'being' poor. There is a need therefore to further investigate and understand the practice of begging in its entirety, without stripping it off its nuances and complexities.

The following sections, therefore, seek to focus on the historical roots of both the act of begging and the trajectory of legislations around the same, which then put together are intended to further the understanding of the nature and direction in which discourse surrounding begging has evolve overtime, and the role that the criminal justice system plays in regulating the functioning of a society at its various developmental stages, prioritising the rights and liberties of certain sections while systematically disenfranchising others. With the aforementioned intention in mind, this chapter draws from the case of criminalising of beggars in contemporary societies, and attempts to critically examine the various justifications for persecution of individuals under the anti-begging laws even today. As pointed out by Ramanathan (2008), “This perception continues to permeate views on people who beg, perhaps because begging is identified with attributes of criminality, and beggars perceived to be threatening” (p. 35). In addition, it is hoped that analysing the implications of such laws would provide a necessary sense of disenchantment with the notions of crime, justice, development, and public space.

Begging and its perceived embeddedness in religion

The cultural context of begging, as common in the previous centuries of all developed economies, was one of alms-giving as the predominant form of poor relief, and one that was embedded in systems of religious belief and duty, and in interactions between fellow members of the greater religious faiths (Jordan, 1999). All through Christendom, in the Middle Ages, begging was an accepted and vital practice for many (Baker, 2009). The Church took responsibility for providing relief to the impoverished. In early Saxon times, such alms-giving were considered self-sacrificing, saintly and noble. Holy days even today provide an occasion for liberal alms-giving. The motivation for such acts of charity was understood as the god-fearing Christian’s commitment to the cause of alleviating the sufferings of “God’s poor.” Moreover, Christian monastic traditions included mendicant friars who travelled in the pursuit of their missions of education or healing, and survived on begging.

According to Jordan (1999), in medieval Europe, as in the Orient and the Middle East, the faithful were exhorted to give alms not merely to relieve the poor, but also to support travelers and pilgrims to religious sites and shrines, something similar to what Muslims did for pilgrims to Mecca. Obligatory alms-giving or *zakat* is considered to be one of the five pillars of Islam, a private practice of piety by the Muslims that is believed to narrow the gap between the wealthy and the poor, and rehabilitates the poor (cf. Bamisaiye, 1974; al-Qardawi, 1999; Weiss, 2007 cited in Massey, Rafique, and Seeley, 2010). Similarly, within the Jewish tradition, alms-giving is represented by *tzedakah*, or justice, entitling poor to charity as a matter of right rather than benevolence (Becknell, 2000 cited in Massey et al., 2010). Within the Buddhist tradition too, begging has a religious context, and when practiced appropriately, is considered to be the reverse of a shameful activity, that is, it denoted a spiritualistic calling or an evangelistic task (Jordan, 1999). Alms-giving, or more generally ‘giving’, is referred to as *dana* in Buddhist texts and marks the beginning of one’s journey to faith (Nyanatiloka, 1980 cited in Massey et al., 2010).

In Hinduism, *bhiksha* is a devotional offering made at a temple or to a priest, and there is traditional symbolic significance attached to spiritualism and leading a humble life. In traditional Shaivite Hinduism, old men, having lived a full life as householders in the world, give up materialistic possessions and resort to becoming wandering ascetic mendicants or *sadhus*, dedicating their last few months of years to the cause of spiritual enlightenment. According to Dumont (1980), “the secret of Hinduism maybe found in the dialogue between the renouncer and the man-in-the-world” (p. 270), and that only the renouncer or *sanyasi* is a true individual. Similarly, there exists a tradition of *Svetambar Murtipujak* mendicants within Jainism who renounce their worldly life and take initiation or *diksa* into mendicancy usually between the ages of 15 to 30 as a “life-long vocational decision, not a retirement option” (Cort, 1991, p. 653).

Thus, it is seen that almost all major religious orders adhere to a certain mendicant way of life as an act of spiritual seeking and gaining religious merit, and thereby, hold alms-givers of worthy beggars in high regard. It hardly ever occurred to canonists that the law should seek to “deter” or punish men for being afflicted with poverty anymore than we would think of punishing a man from being afflicted with tuberculosis

(Tierney, 1959 cited in Quigley, 1996). However, with the advent of the Poor Law, there emerged the concept of the “undeserving” poor; vagrants and beggars also numbered among them (Vorspan, 1977 and Slack, 1995 cited in Massey et al., 2010). Begging was eventually regulated and then generally forbidden.

Anti-begging laws and the beggar as a political symbol

The Greeks of the classical period made distinction between a poor person (*penes*) and a beggar (*ptochos*, “one who crouches or cowers”). In Rome, beggars or landless wage earners were described by Cicero as “the poverty stricken scum of the city” who should be “drained off to the colonies,” but they did not represent a serious social problem in the minds of the Greek and Roman city leaders; the unemployed were merely lazy (Ocobock, 2008). Many countries, such as Finland and Portugal, are more tolerant toward begging, or at least, it does not amount to a crime if found soliciting alms in public, while in many others, it is regarded as undesirable behavior and still continues to be a punishable offence. The indiscriminate alms-giving of the medieval era has been rapidly replaced in industrial societies by developing more or less elaborate social security systems. According to Dean (1999), “The transition has involved a relational inversion: social redistribution is no longer associated with the gaze of the multitudinous poor upon the spectacle of their masters’ riches, so much as the gaze of the state upon its multitudinous administrative subjects” (p. 2). Though it is highly doubtful that an enlightened answer to the current problems of widespread socio-economic deprivation and inequality of access could be found in the criminal law, nonetheless, an examination of the various older statutes that were put in place at different points in history in order to regulate the activities of the poor would probably aid the understanding of the relevance of such laws in contemporary society. Feudalism and church institutions have had major influence in the development of English poor laws, and the context out of which poor laws grew at large.

Regulation of the “undeserving” poor in England

Quigley (1996) points out that under feudalism there could be, at least in theory, no uncared-for-distress and the people who would today be in the most economic danger

were presumably protected by their masters from acute economic suffering: “Insurance against unemployment, sickness, old age was theirs in the protection of the liege lords” (p. 2). He further states that this system changed due to various reasons including phasing out of slavery-serfdom, the outbreak of the Black Death, the onset of the industrial revolution, rise of factories and growth of the wool industry. As feudalism waned, wage labour rose, increasing the freedom of the workers and consequently vagrancy. According to Baker (2009), “Quixotic notions about begging being credible were ultimately superseded by more practical intrusions. There was an increasing focus on the character of the beggar and his or her deservedness. Those who worked were considered to be good Christians because they contributed to society through their work. Meanwhile, those who were not working were thought to be anti-social, immoral and fraudulent” (p. 215).

The Statute of Labourers (1349) was the first Act to criminalise vagrancy, and it aimed at providing the feudal lord with a sufficient supply of agriculture labourers after the Black Death, which along with other social and economic factors had created grave labour shortage. It was enacted in order to restrain the labouring population from moving outside their designated area, to fix wages at pre-plague rates and to check the vice of idleness amongst the able-bodied (cf. Quigley, 1996; Baker, 2009; Boyer, 2010). The first Statute of Labourers of 1349 was quickly enlarged by the second Act in 1350, and soon the runaway worker came to be subjected to increasingly harsh punishments including public whippings, brandings and imprisonment. Along with the stated economic justification, these laws also made accompanying reference to maintenance of public order and crime prevention, outlawing alms-giving to able-bodied beggars in the process. The relationship however, between such laws and crime has been perceived as one that of mutual reinforcement. As stated as by Webb and Webb (1963):

“Such severe and persistent oppression, enforced by cruel punishments and the exercise of tyranny by landowners and employers, led naturally to every kind of evasion of the laws...accompanied by no small amount of crimes and violence and breaking out repeatedly into organized insurrections on a large scale.”

– (Webb and Webb, 1963 in Baker, 2009, p. 216)

This altered the traditional employment relationship by introducing the new penalty of imprisonment for workers for changing their employers or quitting work prior to the end of their term. In a sense, by law, Parliament sought to overturn, or at least, restrict the principles of religion and the church, which directed the giving of alms to the poor (Quigley, 1996). Though the legislation was meant to tackle widespread poverty, its oppressive application led to crime and social upheavals; number of vagrants grew despite the enactments becoming increasingly punitive in the succeeding years (Baker, 2009).

While legislation dealing with vagrants and beggars dates back to the 14th century, perhaps the first English poor law legislation was enacted in 1536 as the first comprehensive system of poor relief (Boyer, 2010). However, these laws also continued and expanded the previous system of punishments for the able-bodied beggars and vagrants. The first state regulation of relief is found in the 1531 statute “concerning the punishment of beggars and vagabonds.” According to Baker (2009), the justification of retaining vagrancy offences during the welfare period (1547-1824) was premised on the belief that those without a consistent means of support were a dangerous class who were likely to engage criminal activity. By this time, the focus had shifted significantly from merely motivating idle members of society to working to prevent crime.

The increase of vagrancy during this period is attributed to a number of factors including population increase in the 16th century, population gravitating toward towns, widespread unemployment, bad harvests, inflation, the economic changes brought about by the Enclosure Acts, and also to a collapse of the monasteries and subsequent loss of the religious order which had until that time administered a sort of ‘public assistance’ in the form of lodging¹ – local officials were now faced with these responsibilities (Quigley, 1996; Baker, 2009; Briscoe, 2011). The vagrant came to be regarded as a real threat to national security and soon, the infamous Slavery Act was passed in 1547, which repealed all other statutes on the subject, because they came to

¹ In 1536 Henry VIII had dissolved the smaller religious houses of monks and nuns, and in 1539 large abbeys and monasteries were dissolved, which led to an upsurge of beggars and decline in resources to relieve the poor (Quigley 1996).

be considered as being too lenient. The preamble of this Act recognised the vagrant as a probable criminal².

By 1600s the State accepted responsibility to provide for the poor at the national level. The Poor Law of 1601 in Elizabethan England firmly established relief of the poor as a local responsibility of the parish, which by then was a traditional unit of English local government. This law was considered as a major leap toward modern governance since it recognized the responsibility of the state toward the administering and providing relief to the poor. But as pointed out by Baker (2009),

“The poor law was not intended to cure the problems caused by hardship and poverty, but to reduce the cost of public of maintaining the indigent. Once the public agreed to fund the cost of providing for the indigent it became concerned about the cost of doing so. Through this period crime prevention was only a secondary concern.”

– (Baker, 2009, p. 219)

It was thought that the aforementioned intention was best achieved by forcing the idle to work and by restricting people from moving to other parishes where they would be a burden. The poor were divided into three groups: able-bodied adults, children, and the old or the non-able-bodied or impotent. Relief was administered by a group of overseers who were to assess a compulsory property tax called the poor rate, and were instructed to put the able-bodied to work, to give apprenticeships to poor children, and to provide “competent sum of money” to relieve the impotent (Boyer, 2010). There was much variation in the application of this law, and it led to influx and concentration of destitute to more generous parishes usually in the towns.

The Settlement Act of 1662 came as an answer to this problem, and it allowed relief to only to established residents of the parish and discouraged people from leaving their original parish of settlement (Quigley, 1996; Boyer, 2010). However, the Vagrancy Act of 1824 was the first Act to operate separately from the poor law, and

²After 1500, as the labour market shifted to one that of surplus in England, and as civil and ecclesiastical authorities, merchants and landowning elites were confronted with a growing number of mobile, unskilled and unemployed poor, the primary function of vagrancy laws became labour discipline and social control (Ocobock, 2008).

its approach was to punish “conduct” which it did by labelling vagrants and sturdy beggars to the specific commission of criminal acts. This Act and the legislations that followed focused exclusively on crime prevention or rather deterring those within the presumed criminal class from engaging in other criminal activities.

A brief overview of vagrancy laws in the global context

According to Ocobock (2008), by the end of the seventeenth century, European efforts to relieve poverty and compel the idle to work still faced large number of paupers, while government officials and wealthy elites continued to panic, producing accounts of wandering criminal gang terrorising the respectable classes. It was believed that great bands of vagabonds pillaged the northern French countryside and that England was flooded with Irish and Scottish indigents. Vagrants became increasingly connected to organised crimes and violence, and were perceived as a dangerous and subversive subculture flourishing in the slums of European cities. European cities increasingly resorted to institutionalisation and incarceration in response.

France sought new repressive means for controlling the poor such as urban police sweeps, mass arrests and conviction, expanded facilities to punish vagrants, and new schemes to prevent criminality. Accordingly, two separate schemes were developed in France: one, for the relief of the able-bodied poor willing to work (*ateliers de charité*); and the other, for the incarceration and punishment of vagrants (*dépôt de mendicité*). In 1773, when 13,899 of the 71,760 vagrants placed in the *dépôt* died while in imprisonment, the horrific conditions led many, including Voltaire and Montesquieu, to decry the confinement of the poor, and to demand for employment opportunities to be made available to them.

In Spain, the Bourbons worked to expand the power of the state and brought poor relief under greater state control by constructing workhouses (*juntas de caridad*), a reform that was also embraced and replicated by many Catholic clergies to open their own. The Spanish public however condemned these workhouses as prisons and continued giving private alms to beggars. During the same period, the Ottoman subjects also continued to rely of private individual charity from wealthy elites, and

Ottoman officials took few actions against beggars and wandering poor except during periods of crisis. In the Tsardom of Russia, a complex system of internal and external passports regulated movements, and vagrancy was defined in different terms. A vagrant was the one could not prove his own standing or who changed his residence without permission from the authorities.

A foreigner who had been twice expatriated with prohibition to return to the Empire, if arrested again in Russia was also recognised as a vagrant, and systematic vagrancy was punishable up to two years of imprisonment³. In the United States, the same vagrancy laws used in England as they stood in the middle 18th century were adopted (Chambliss, 1964). However, the black Americans were the primary targets of these laws⁴. With reference to the era of Imperialist expansion, Ocobock (2008) further states that, “The expansion of European economic interests and overseas territories had profound implications for the uses of vagrancy laws and the indigenous peoples who would come to be known as vagabonds” (p. 12).

England and Portugal were some of the earliest countries with the most systematised schemes for transporting vagrants abroad. The imperial frontier, according to many, offered a safety-valve of sorts to banish the poor and criminal, and an opportunity to transform vagrants into productive forces in the construction of the empire. However, not all European vagrants living overseas were seen in the same desirable light, and vagrancy laws were established in the colonies to expel or to control the increasing number of failed entrepreneurs and unsuccessful adventurers. In the British Empire, these laws were quickly employed to rid port cities of drunken, idle or disorderly Europeans. Besides, these laws were not confined merely to transporting and deporting European paupers, but also were also rigorously implemented to shape the labour discipline and social order of the indigenous communities.

³ According to Kivelson (1997), “Wanderers and vagrants generally reached the attention of the authorities not because of any kind of official sweep of the countryside designed to find them, but rather because villagers and townspeople had a tendency to report them” (pp. 653-654).

⁴ In 1865-66, “Black Codes” were enacted by the ex-Confederate southern states following the Civil War that sought to restrict the liberties of the newly freed slaves, ensure supply of inexpensive labour and maintain white dominated hierarchy. Many states required blacks to sign yearly labour contracts, failing which they risked being arrested as vagrants (Retrieved from: <http://www.history.com/topics/black-codes> last accessed on March 29, 2012).

Vagrancy laws also played a major role in colonies where slave economies did not exist, but rich natural resources were found. In some colonies such as Peru and Kenya, the need for vagrancy arose, when Europeans in their process of expansion, forced dislocation unto their indigenous population who were consequently rendered homeless and pushed to the peripheries of urban and commercial life. Arrest, incrimination and institutionalisation controlled the unemployed and rooted people in their deplorable conditions, while simultaneously preserving and reinforcing the social boundaries between the elite, the middle class, and the poor. According to Ocobock (2008), in the context of India the East India Company, and later, the British state played a marginal role in the relief of poverty in colonial India. He further argues that though vagrancy laws could be cut from the European law books and pasted into the colonial context, their application often diverged dramatically due to factors such as strong racism, financial and logistical shortcomings, colonial notions of indigenous social structure, and genuine lack of interest in relieving the suffering of indigent subjects of the empire.

In the twentieth century, the world wars and the rise of welfare-oriented states had a profound impact on the nature of dealing with vagrancy and homelessness. In Europe and the United States governments moved away from their previous approach of compulsory labour of the idle to violent repression of the homeless. Ocobock (2008) points out that mechanisation of industry also had a visible impact on the demand for unskilled labour. What became perhaps more noteworthy, were the changing perceptions of the poor and personal freedom. Poverty rather than laziness came to be recognised as the root cause of vagrancy. Yet not all states abandoned the notion of institutionalising and reforming beggars and vagrants.

Statement of the problem

Fear of the disorderly and the element of potential criminality associated with beggars and the homeless persist, as does the efforts by many criminal justice systems world over to arrest, process, institutionalise, discipline, reform and reeducate their most marginalised citizens. India is one such nation in which these notions still perpetuate. There is a common perception of beggars being organised criminals and therefore a

legitimate need for the continued existence of anti-begging laws. These views are constantly reinforced in popular mainstream media, be it in the news, or entertainment industry through films like *Slumdog Millionaire* that caters to negative and dehumanising stereotypes of India's urban poor as being active agents in running multimillion-dollar racket, as if it were the grim reality of the urban underbelly. However, in the absence of any systemic inquiry or credible evidence, such notions as the "begging mafia" must be treated with caution, as they seem to be nothing short of an urban myth. Moreover, scientific literature on the subjects of poverty and crime has done little to fill the gap that exists when it comes to addressing the social phenomenon of begging. This study therefore undertakes the process to bridge that lack in the Indian context.

Accordingly, examining the historical roots of legislations designed to tackle vagrancy crimes as done above ought to help shed some necessary light on the larger principles on which the older statutes were based. Doing so provides us a scope to, first, measure the extent of transformation these laws have undergone over time, and second, to better investigate the rationale behind their continued existence and usage in their current form. In fact, it would be worth noting here that the imprisonment of the idlers and itinerant poor marks the very origin of the modern prison system in the form of bridewells and house of correction in mid-16th century England (see Sellin, 1931; Pollock, 2009; Gibson, 2011). Since, the social and economic conditions that led to beggars being regarded as a major threat to the community during the Middle Ages have changed almost in their entirety, the likelihood of begging causing the same social problems, and thereby, the presumption of them presenting the same kind of threat also necessitates further scrutiny (Baker, 2009).

Hence, through the medium of this study, a credible case is hopefully being made that would allow one to argue that there is no normative rationalisation for incriminating an already marginalised section of the society in the 21st century. Subsequent sections try to explore newer ways of approaching the phenomenon in order to shed light on the less discussed aspects, and even potentials of begging and panhandling encounters using the lenses of symbolic interactionism. By highlighting the symbolic interactionist dimensions in the study of begging, the current research also attempts to widen the scope of understanding the substantive experiences of ostensible poverty by

exploring ways to engage with the realities of a community for which empirical knowledge is close to absent, and so are effective policy measures directed towards their well being, rehabilitation, and empowerment. Furthermore, begging in India largely being an extremely visible urban phenomenon, also needs to be understood in the broader contexts of how it positions and sustains itself alongside the elite and middle-class city dwellers' aspirations for sanitised globalised city spaces.

Research questions

The main questions that this study seeks to provide answers to are: *Who* are beggars outside of their stigmatised identities? *What* does it mean to be a beggar, and to live by begging in urban India? *How* and *why* do people beg, and is there a common repertoire, a culture, or a set of practices that cut across national and geographical lines and provides an understanding of begging globally, rather than locally? And finally, *why* the ideas of asceticism and almsgiving that have historically been tolerated and even encouraged within various religions in the world have increasingly come to be conflated with criminality (in the nature of a begging mafia) in our own times? Does evidence from the field adequately substantiate the well known and often widely represented, circulated, and consumed “facts” about the existence of a rather surreal underworld of the begging mafia. Alternatively, is it possible that the current state and civil society responses to begging point toward other graver and more damaging underlying biases that have not yet been adequately interrogated, and thereby inhibit our understanding of begging as a social phenomenon?

Research objective(s)

The general objective of this study therefore is to explore the possibility of understanding the contemporary practices of begging and homeless, and the manner in which the state and civil society members deal with this social reality through an interactionist perspective. By doing so, the study aims to highlight the deficiencies of the current approaches in addressing the phenomenon at hand adequately. The following chapter would therefore review and engage with some of the major interactionist concepts – namely, stigma, dramaturgy, and behaviour in public place –

in an attempt to fill some of the gaps in the understanding and analysis of begging and homelessness as two distinct but often overlapping phenomena. Furthermore, the rest of the study is an endeavour to come up with a grounded theory of begging based on subjective experiences of individuals actors and institutions who participate and/or are directly associated with these aforementioned practices. Towards its very end, the study hopes to move the discussion on begging and homelessness from the narrow and reductive frameworks of crime and chronic poverty, and encourage common readers and researchers to engage more deeply with the lived experiences and day-to-day realities of those who beg, and of those who interface with them – either as agents of the state or of civil society; either as those interested in maintaining status quo, or those challenging it in favour of social change.

The current study aims to achieve the aforementioned objective by focusing on specific aspects surrounding the practice of begging that would enable the researcher to unpack the larger phenomenon under study in a coherent and timebound fashion. These specific objectives are listed below:

- i. To investigate into the backgrounds from which individuals who live by begging emerge – how they differ based on gender, regionality, age, caste, or other specificities of individual location – and thereby contextualise individuals’ entry into begging and/or homelessness.
- ii. To explore and describe the everyday lived experience of begging individuals, and understand based on these subjective experiences what begging actually means to those that beg, or what constitutes their “everyday.”
- iii. To compare how a change in the urban locale (Delhi or Mumbai) might or might not impact the lives of people who beg, thereby intensifying the influences of geography and space-temporality on how begging could be defined and made sense of sociologically.
- iv. To examine the role that state institutions – such as, the police, the beggar homes, the municipalities, etc. – and the civil society organisations that

play in the construction or deconstruction of begging as a “crime”, and compare the perspectives provided by those from within the institutional settings as opposed to those without to come to a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

- v. Lastly, certainly not least importantly, to arrive at a grassroots-level up understanding of the State, its welfare policies towards its most marginalised citizens, and the concept of rehabilitation.

Chapter scheme

This chapter, *Chapter I*, lays the ground for the study by providing the background, context and rationale of the study. It begins by dealing with the perceived embeddedness of begging in the practice in alms-giving common in all the major world religions. It then traces the history of anti-begging laws in the global context in order to better understand their implications in their present form. Further, having stated the research problem, it delineates the research questions and the objectives that study wishes to realise. In accordance with the above stated objectives, the following chapter of the study, *Chapter II*, throws open a theoretical discussion on how symbolic interaction is a valuable approach that yields itself to the study of begging of as a sociological phenomenon by rescuing it from within the discourses of poverty and crime that often overwhelm it, and obfuscate the comprehension of it as a unique practice that populations living at the margins of a neoliberal state increasingly engage in. This chapter discusses how conceptual models of interactionism, and more specifically the works of Erving Goffman, provide indelible insights into the workings of individuals’ behaviour in relation to each other, to institutions, to the State, etc. This chapter therefore employs the interactionist concepts of shame and stigma, dramaturgy, and behaviour in public spaces to analyse begging for what it is.

The *Chapter III* is devoted to an in-depth discussion on methodological approach and research design that has been used for the purpose of this study. The study is qualitative in nature, and uses multi-sited ethnography to gather primary data following a middle-ground approach to arrive at an understanding of begging and

homelessness based on subjective experiences of individuals who beg, or those that are directly or indirectly associated with begging and homeless populations. *Chapter IV* carries the discussion on the research design further by elucidating the research setting for the ethnographic exercise to unfold. It defines the universe and sample for the study, and describes the use of theoretical sampling to gather data, populate and saturate categories. This chapter also contains the available government statistics as per 2011 Census on begging and homeless populations in the cities that were chosen for the purpose of the current study. Through intensive fieldwork in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai, both in the community and custodial settings, the study proposes a grounded theory of begging that would hopefully enable interested readers – researchers, policy makers, and other social scientists – to have a deeper and more critical understanding of begging as a social phenomenon that is mired in myths and stigma due to lack of empirical research in this field.

Based on analysis of data thus produced, the next three discussion chapters follow the begging and/or homeless individual's life trajectory, as it were, from one end of a visible spectrum to another – that is, tracing the history of life circumstances that brings an individual to the streets of big metropolitan cities of the country, and later into the ignominy of incarceration in Beggar homes – thereby, giving rise to a vicious cycle of poverty, stigma, criminalisation, and further marginalisation. *Chapter V*, deals with what could be referred to as individuals “entry conditions” into begging, and the associated determining factors that mark people's view of begging as an “income-generation activity”, a “livelihood strategy”, a matter of “fate”, or even a legitimate choice of “work.” Based on patterns that emerged from ethnographic data, this chapter tries to understand the circumstances that lead people into begging and homelessness, and how individuals come to perceive and frame their current predicament. It was found that most individuals who beg and are homeless exist in a continuum of voluntary to involuntary migration, particularly from rural to urban areas, due to what they refer to as “*majboori*” or constraints, and/or “*naseeb*” or fate. Though often also motivated by economic factors, we would see from the data that such migrations are not always a product of financial constraints alone.

Chapter VI, elucidates the life circumstances of begging and homeless individuals, and the everyday hazards that they have to face and navigate around while trying to

simultaneously earn and sleep rough on the streets. This chapter posits a view of begging as a “practice of resilience” among people trying to make a living by negotiating with various structures that not only invisibilise the poorest of the poor, but also actively works against their reasonable concerns for welfare and progress, partly by weaponising an archaic colonial law, and partly by keeping alive damaging unsubstantiated notions and public opinions against the structurally disadvantaged and socioeconomically marginalised groups. *Chapter VII*, therefore provides a view of begging from within the criminal justice system of the state, as well as from civil society organisations that work with begging and homeless populations in either or both the cities. This chapter focuses on the modus operandi of the police when it comes to begging, and discrepancies or gaps in the functioning of various criminal justice and state institutions that obstructs production of systematic knowledge on the subject matter, thereby adversely impacting policies to make seamless and holistic rehabilitation a real possibility.

Data collected from civil society organisations also add further insight to the challenges that interventionists have to face while working in community and custodial setting with a population that is often perceived as being in conflict with the law. These organisations also problematise the ideas of rehabilitation and institutionalisation of marginalised populations, and shed necessary light on the survival and kinship networks, culture, and community practices of begging and homeless populations in both cities. Chapter VIII is the conclusion that summarises the various discussions and findings, and identifies scope of further research. It makes a case for begging to be interpreted as a political symbol, one that involves exercising agency in what could also be imagined as one of the most cynical displays of inversion of power, through simulation and adaptation of exploitative capitalist principles, by its most exploited members. The act of begging interpreted in this manner allows a view of begging individuals not as hapless victims of the state, but as active agents of social change, and the act itself as a practice of resilience among the poorest of the poor. Finally, this study ends with a hope for new beginnings and suggesting a way forward towards a possible “sociology of begging.”

Limitations of the study

This study is interested in an inductive model to be able to arrive at an understanding of the realities of beggars in urban Indian cities in the nature of grounded theories. It therefore focuses on begging, and not poverty, which is a relatively well-researched and well-documented domain. At the same time, the findings of this study, hopefully, will also be able to convince readers to see that poverty may have explicit, but not necessarily absolute causal relationship with begging and homelessness. Poverty however could be seen as an inevitable consequence of these phenomena in most cases. As such, the study does take into account all relevant literature in the area to make sense of the data gathered and to enhance the understanding of begging and homelessness in the light of already existing established theoretical frameworks. Further, this study does not promise to provide accurate insights into the specificities of begging through its findings, if such a study were to be replicated in rural settings. It tries to evaluate begging and homelessness solely in their urban manifestation, making an attempt as it were to rid these social realities of the stereotypes that are generally associated with them in popular imagination.

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CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE PRACTICE OF BEGGING

Introduction

In recent studies, the beggar has come to be addressed as a powerful symbol in the globalised postmodern world. According to Dean (1999), the rise of begging as a global phenomenon has been associated not with some state of stasis into which the poor descend, but with highly dynamic processes of disruption and displacement in time and space, which uproot individuals and/or entire communities from self-sustaining social networks. Further, it exposes them to new environments and alien rhythms of living and functioning that may as well be referred to as “hostile” marked by experiences of routinised marginalisation, exclusion, and more often than not, violence in their daily lives. Bauman (1998) explaining this symbolism in the context of restructured time and space in the process of globalisation speaks of the schism between the two worlds: the world symbolised by the ‘tourist’, representing the cosmopolitan elite that may move freely across geographical and electronic boundaries; and the world symbolised by the ‘vagabond’ or beggar, representing the socially excluded that are bound to an immobile and monotonous street existence.

Keeping in mind the power of the symbolism that the beggar (and the activity of begging in general) possesses to illustrate the predicament of the contemporary urban scene, this chapter introduces a theoretical discussion on how symbolic interactionism could furnish a valuable approach that yields itself to the study of begging of as a sociological phenomenon by rescuing it from within the discourses of poverty and crime that often overwhelm it, and obfuscate the comprehension of this phenomenon as a unique practice that populations living at the margins of rapidly gentrifying hubs of a neoliberal state increasingly engage in. This chapter discusses how conceptual models of interactionism, and more specifically the works of Erving Goffman,

provide indelible insights into the workings of individual behaviour in relation to each other, to institutions, to the State, etc. This chapter thereby employs the interactionist concepts of shame and stigma, dramaturgy, and behaviour in public spaces to analyse begging for what it is. In the following sections, an attempt is being made to introduce symbolic interactionism as a vital perspective to understand the phenomenon of begging by emphasising both on its symbolism and its interactionist elements.

Various studies have also identified begging to be a vibrant form of informal economic activity in many cities in Ghana, especially, among people with mobility difficulties who view begging as ‘work’ (Kassah, 2008). According to Swanson (2007), as seen in the context of rural indigenous women and children migrating from Andes to Ecuadorian cities, beggars are not passive victims in the face of oppressive socio-economic conditions; rather, begging represents initiatives of reworking and resilience on the part of individuals to actively engage with the forces that affect their everyday lives (see also Abebe, 2008). Another study that views begging as a livelihood strategy amongst Bangladeshi migrants in rural West Bengal in India, suggests that it could be precursor to another more permanent way of making a living, or it might be an enduring phenomenon (Massey et al., 2010). It is not to say however that begging is an enthusiastic choice, as most people indignant at the sight of a beggar would like to readily believe. The view of begging as a ‘choice’ of economic activity is largely confined to the extreme case of the marginal within the marginalised, such as, women, children⁵, aged and disabled, and migrants. This too raises doubt about begging being a ‘deliberate’ choice, and homelessness, a preferred ‘lifestyle’. In fact, even more studies indicate that begging is not a choice in terms of alternatives to career or profession but rather a lack thereof (cf. Borchard, 2009; Foscarinis, 1996; Lee et al., 2003).

In a study conducted by Dean and Melrose (1999), it was found that, many wanted work very badly, though few were employable in their present conditions, and some of them were even engaged in entirely unassisted and self-evidently futile attempts at job search. The nature of begging as a stigmatised activity makes it an economic

⁵According to Coles and Craig (1999), “...a growing number of young people have become so excluded from mainstream forms of economic and social and social support, that they have had to turn to alternative- and inherently risky- sources of income...*young people* may resort to begging, rather than begging by other age groups.”

activity of last resort. Besides, begging confers low prestige, low income, no fringe benefits, no opportunity for advancement, and working conditions that vary with weather, which makes it all the more doubtful that beggars would personally find their job satisfying or enjoyable (Smith, 2005). Thus, it is both productive and more interesting to identify and intensify the symbolic interactionist dimension of begging to delve deeper into the implications of what it means for individuals to be engaged in this practice today, and also to recognise the message that it entails for the society at large.

Symbolic interactionist perspective

Symbolic Interactionism is a major sociological perspective that is influential in many areas of the discipline and offers a wide range of interesting possibilities. The birth of symbolic interactionism as a distinct theoretical framework dates to 1937, when Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) first coined the term and outlined the central concepts that would form its foundation. A great deal of Blumer's inspiration lay on the ideas developed by George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). Blumer was a student of Mead's at the University of Chicago during the period in which the sociology department was consolidating itself as a leading voice within the larger context of the discipline. His work focused on the ways human beings took control of their lives, as "acting people" in a society that is "complex of ongoing activity" (Blumer, 1969, p. 85 cited in Adams and Sydie, 2001). The three premises on which Blumer (1986 [1969]) bases his understanding of a symbolic interactionist approach to social life is as follows:

“The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them. Such things include everything that the human beings may note in his world-physical objects, such as trees or chairs; other human beings, such as a mother or a store clerk; categories of human beings, such as friends or enemies; institutions, such as a school or a government; guiding ideals, such as individual independence or honesty; activities of others, such as their commands or requests; and such situations as an individual encounters in his daily life. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is deprived from, or arises out of, the social interaction

that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters."

– (Blumer, 1986, p. 2)

Adams and Sydie (2001) explain that *symbols* are abstract meanings attached to things, people, and behavior so that they can hold different meanings for different individuals, the important thing being, that individuals consciously and creatively evaluate, make decisions, and act. Whether the evaluation, decision and action are 'functional' or ethically commendable is not necessarily of any relevance, though there is an underlying assumption that individuals will gradually progress toward a more democratic society and that this progress will be aided by sociology. *Interaction*, on the other hand, involves the self engaged in communicating with the self: selecting, checking, suspending, regrouping and transforming meanings in terms of social context and the individual's intentions and interests (Blumer, 1986).

However, for Blumer, the most important feature of all "human association" is the fact that "the participants take each other into account" as a basis of conduct (1969, p. 194). Society is a "complex of ongoing activity" involving collectively initiated "joint actions." *Joint actions* are described as being "constituted by the fitting together of the lines of behavior of separate participants" and having a history that is "orderly, fixed and repetitious" because the participants have a common definition of the situation (Blumer, 1969, pp. 70-71). Blumer's methodology was inductive, that is, to put in his own words: "The isolation of relations, the development of propositions, the formulation of typologies, and the construction of theories are viewed as emerging out of what is found through constant observation of that world instead of being formed in an *a priori* fashion through deductive reasoning from a set of theoretical premises" (Blumer, 1975, p. 62). This approach to research is qualitative rather than quantitative and begins with an exploratory stage via which the investigator examines closely a 'sphere of life that is unfamiliar and hence unknown to him [her]' in order to develop a research focus (Adams and Sydie, 2001).

Blumer's theoretical and methodological focus provides a part of the background of the work of Erving Goffman (1922-1982). Though Goffman himself did not claim his

allegiances to any group, including symbolic interactionist, excluding him from this perspective would be equivalent to excluding symbolic interactionism of its soul (Fine, 1990 cited in Adams and Sydie, 2001). The 'self' is a concept of enormous significance to symbolic interactionists; Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) is considered as the most important work on the self in symbolic interactionism (Ritzer, 1996). According to Ritzer (1996), Goffman's idea of self is deeply indebted to Mead's ideas, in particular his discussion between *I*, the spontaneous self, and *me*, social constraints within self. According to Goffman, there is a tension or "crucial discrepancy between our all-too-human selves and our socialized selves" (1959, p. 56), which arises due to the difference between what people expect us to do and what we may want to do spontaneously.

In order to maintain a stable self-image people perform for their social audiences and this interest in performance leads Goffman to focus on *dramaturgy* – a view of social life as a series of dramatic performances akin to those on the stage. Thus, he perceived the self not as a possession of the actor but rather as the product of the dramatic interaction between actor and audience (Ritzer, 1996). Goffman's dramaturgical approach was inspired, in part, by the literary critic and theorist Kenneth Burke (1897-1993), who viewed language as a symbolically enacted drama, and his analysis of interaction was based on analogy with the theater. To this end, Goffman introduced a vocabulary normally associated with the world of theatre, using terms such as, front, backstage, setting, audience, performance, and perhaps almost provocatively, performer and character, all a part of his repertoire to examine the often unspoken and taken-for-granted subtleties that structure the interaction order (Appelrouth and Edles, 2008). For instance, he illustrates the notion of the *front* as:

"...that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during the performance."

– (Goffman 1959, p. 22)

Appelrouth and Edles (2008) further explain how Goffman divides the front into two parts: the setting and the personal front. The setting refers to the scenery and props that make up the physical space in which the performance is conducted. The personal front, on the other hand, refers to those items of “expressive equipment” that the audience identifies with the performer [her-] himself. For example, a professor needs a classroom as his *setting* if he were to perform his role. Whereas, emblems of rank or office, clothing, age sex, race, looks, posture, speech patterns, facial expressions, gestures, etc. make up the *personal front* that allow an individual to carry himself or appear before others in a particular light. Moreover, fronts tend to become “institutionalized” as performance conducted in similar settings and by similar actors give rise to “stereotyped expectations” that transcend and shape any particular presentation. Thus, when an actor takes on an established social role, he usually finds that a particular front has already been established for it; fronts, then, are typically selected and not created by performers. In the following sections the study borrows from three significant symbolic interactionist concepts- stigma, dramaturgy and behavior in public places- and applies them in order to attempt a fresh understanding of the concept of ostensible poverty and begging in the light of symbolic interactionism.

The beggar’s shame and stigma

Goffman (1963) elucidated the relationship of stigma and social identity by tracing the origin of stigma among the Greeks, who were apparently strong on visual aid, and used the term to refer to bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and bad about the moral status of the signifier. He says:

“The signs were cut or burnt into the body and advertized that the bearer was a slave, a criminal, or a traitor- a blemished person, ritually polluted, to be avoided, especially in public places. Later, in the Christian time, two layers of metaphors were added to them: the first referred to bodily signs of holy grace that took the form of eruptive blossoms on the skin; the second, a medical allusion to this religious allusion, referred to bodily signs of physical disorder. Today the term is widely used in something like the original literal sense, but it

is applied more to the disgrace itself than to the bodily evidence of it. Furthermore, shifts have occurred in the kinds of disgrace that arouse concern.”

– (Goffman, 1963, p. 11)

The above mentioned definition of stigma can also be used to understand the concept of “poverty stigma”, which is recognised by many scholars as a key component of social exclusion with important implications for health and well-being (see, for example, Reutter et al., 2009). In all the talk about multidimensional poverty, there is this one aspect which seldom gets mentioned, even though it is a *dimension* of poverty in the truest sense and is measurable, it concerns the lived experience of poverty as the government requires of poverty measures and it is something we all intuitively understand. It is the social stigma associated with poverty. Stigma is the external, social counterpart to internal feelings of shame, worthlessness and moral inferiority; in other words, shame is what individuals feel, while stigma is the imposition by others of a shameful identity (Gaffney, 2013).⁶

Similar ideas promoting psychosocial insight, though rare, can be traced in older literature like that of Townsend (1979) who noted the ‘social shame of those with little money’ and the desire ‘to avoid the shame of pleading poverty’ in the context of claiming benefits reflected in much subsequent work on stigma (Baumberg et al., 2012 cited in Walker et al., 2013). Sen (1983) also argued that shame is at the “irreducible absolutist core” of the idea of poverty, and as we consider richer and richer communities, the capability of avoiding the type of shame caused by inability to meet the demands of convention increases (p. 159). Mainstream research on poverty has avoided dealing with the issue of stigma to a large extent, often purging poverty of its associations with shame and moral condemnation. Replacing such concerns with objective measures as the ones mentioned in the previous chapters was an explicit aim of much of the poverty research of the 20th century, which in turn has informed the various definitions and measurements of poverty used by governments and international organisations. However, newer researches in this field not only echo Sen’s argument regarding the inextricable link between poverty and shame across

⁶ See Gaffney (2013), “The Missing Dimension of Poverty: Stigma”, *New Statesman*. Retrieved from <http://www.newstatesman.com/economics/2013/02/missing-dimension-poverty-stigma> (last accessed on 27-07-2013).

societies, but also suggest that to ignore stigma is potentially to overlook some of the most corrosive and detrimental effects of poverty.

A recent qualitative study conducted by Walker et al. (2013) that focused on the psychosocial dimensions of poverty in seven countries (namely, India, China, Pakistan, Uganda, South Korea, United Kingdom and Norway), tried to examine the same contention of shame lying at the 'irreducible absolutist core' of the idea of poverty. Accounts of the lived experience of poverty were found to be very similar, despite massive disparities in material circumstances associated with locally defined poverty lines, pointing to the fact that the relative notions of poverty are an appropriate basis for international comparisons. The study states thus:

“Though socially and culturally nuanced, shame was found to be associated with poverty in each location, variably leading to pretence, withdrawal, self-loathing, ‘othering’, despair, depression, thoughts of suicide and generally to reductions in personal efficacy. While internally felt, poverty-related shame was equally imposed by the attitudes and behavior of those not in poverty, framed by public discourses and influenced by the objectives and implementation of anti-poverty policy. The evidence appears to confirm the negative consequences of shame, implicates it as a factor in increasing the persistence of poverty and suggests important implications for the framing, design and delivery of anti-poverty policies.”

– (Walker et al., 2013, p. 216)

Drawing from the seminal work of Goffman, Crocker et al. (1998 cited in Reutter et al., 2009) argue that stigmatised individual possess, or are at least believed to possess, certain traits that project a social identity that is considered dishonorable or degraded in the social context s/he belongs. Goffman (1963) expounded the nature in which social identities are constructed and how normative expectations are built on the basis of attributes that are ascribed to these identities. He says:

“[...] Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories. Social settings establish categories of persons likely to be

encountered there. The routines of social intercourse in established settings allow us to deal with anticipated others without special attention or thought. When a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes, his 'social identity' - to use a term that is better than 'social status' because personal attributes such as 'honesty' are involved, as well as structural ones, like 'occupation'.

We lean on these anticipations that we have, transforming them into normative expectations, into righteously presented demands.”

– (Goffman, 1963, p. 12)

Link and Phelan (2001) preferred to use the word 'label' rather than 'attribute' in order to understand stigma because differences are socially selected for salience. According to them, “stigmatization is entirely contingent on access to social, economic, and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories, and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion, and discrimination” (Link and Phelan, 2001, p. 367; see also, Reutter et al., 2009). Identity, or the information that describes who one is, is a fundamental component of stigma. Stigma has been conceptualised as the discrepancy between virtual (social) and actual (personal) identity (Goffman, 1963; see also, Blaine, 2000; Snow and Anderson, 1987), where virtual identity is the self as perceived by others and the actual identity is the self as perceived by oneself. In case of a stigmatised individual, his/her virtual identity is more negative than actual identity, and this discrepancy between the two may result in feelings of vulnerability and tension in interactions with others that then need to be managed. Stigmatisation, thereby, refers to specific characteristics of social identities that are devalued in certain societal contexts by virtue of the nature of existent macro-level power relations and discrepancies between social and actual identities that arise as a consequence (Reutter et al., 2009).

These above discussed ideas of stigma and devalued social identity, when applied to the context of ostensible poverty, summarises the plight of the beggar. It becomes possible to transpose Goffman's concepts to say that on encountering a beggar on the street, 'evidence can arise of his/her possessing an attribute that makes him/her

different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind [ostensible poverty in this case] or in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, dangerous, or weak. He/she is thus reduced, in the minds of the ones who are better-off, from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one.’ Henceforth, such an attribute as ostensible poverty translates into what Goffman refers to as stigma, especially when its discrediting effect is very extensive; it is sometimes also referred to as a failing, a shortcoming, a handicap. It constitutes a special discrepancy between virtual and actual social identity. At this point, Goffman warns us of other types of discrepancies that exist between virtual and actual social identity. For example, there can be the kind that causes us to reclassify an individual from one socially anticipated category to a different but equally well-anticipated one, and the kind that causes us to alter our estimation of the individual upward. Moreover, it is also important to note that not all undesirable attributes are a problem but only those, which are incongruous to our stereotypical views of what a given type of individual ought to be. The term stigma then is used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it is at this point one must realise that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed.

According to Goffman, there are three grossly different types of stigma. All of these types of stigma can be associated with the state of being ostensibly poor, which only make it all the more evident, that beggars are trebly stigmatised. First, there are abominations of the body – the various physical deformities of a beggar, mendicant or a homeless individual and his/her inability to meet the standards of cleanliness, physical health, clothing and appearance, hygiene and sanitation perceived necessary by the members of the society who are better off, or who are in a position to ‘other’ them just on the basis of external appearance. Sociology has always been intrigued by the question of the body and experiences of embodiment from one time to another. In an attempt to recognise the ‘sociology of the body,’ Waskul and Vannini (2006) expound that, “The body and experience of embodiment *are* layered, nuanced, complex, and multifaceted – at the level of human subjective experience, interaction, social organization, institutional arrangements, cultural processes, society, and history” (p. 2).

Such conceptualisations are useful when one tries to understand stigma and repugnance associated with the body. This type of stigma also corresponds to recent studies, which find that there is a close nexus between disability and poverty that renders the disabled people the poorest among the poor (see, for example, Dalal, 2010). Second, there are blemishes of individual character – they are constantly perceived as weak will, lazy, dishonest, violent, immoral, etc., “these being inferred from known record of, for example mental disorder, imprisonment, addiction, alcoholism, homosexuality, unemployment, suicidal attempts and radical political behavior” (Goffman 1963, p. 14). This type of stigma is also closely related to the perceived causes of poverty (see, Weiner et al., 2011; Reutter et al., 2009).

Finally, there are tribal stigma of race, religion, and nation. In an ethological pilot study undertaken by Butovskaya et al. (2000) among urban beggars in Russia, it was found that in accordance to ethnic nepotism theory, people tend to be more altruistic in the form of almsgiving toward beggars within and between ethnic groups, and more to closely related groups than to distant groups. This indicates that stigma is greater for individuals or groups with whom one is incapable of imagining any sense of belongingness or communal ties (due to prejudices associated with factors such as race, religion, ethnicity and nationality). Though somewhat similar to the other two types, this kind of stigma can be transmitted through lineages and equally contaminate all members of a family.

Chronic poverty in nations like India not only reproduces and perpetuates poverty across generations, but also allows for large sections of the population to be incriminated and processed under anti-begging laws that worsen the stigma (see, Moore et al., 2012). With the persistence of oppressive institutions like the caste system that disrupt equal access to resources, people belonging to lower-castes and/or Denotified Tribes (DNTs) are forced to continue living with the stigma generation after generation. Besides, the same population is also continually implicated by the criminal justice system with the already discussed “broken windows” theory which goes hand in hand with concentration of poverty and minority groups in a neighborhood (see for example, Sampson and Raudenbush, 2004). In all these various instances of stigma, however, including also the conception of the term that the Greeks had in mind, the same sociological features are found; that is,

“[...] an individual who might have been received easily in ordinary social intercourse possesses a trait that can obtrude itself upon attention and turn those of us whom he meets away from him, breaking the claim that his other attributes have on us. He possesses a stigma, an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated. [...]By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often un-thinkingly, reduce his life chances. We construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences, such as those of ‘social class’ [emphasis added].”

– (Goffman, 1963, p. 14-15)

The above statement understood in the context of begging not only explains why ‘we normals’ stigmatise the ostensibly poor beggars, but also provides an insight to the function that stigma plays in conveniently ‘othering’ the section of people who have the propensity to make us uncomfortable, or make us doubt the well-being of our society, or question our fondly cherished ideas about development and progress.

Dramaturgy of begging

Another concept that could be borrowed from symbolic interactionism to understand begging is that of *dramaturgy* developed by Goffman as a theory of human behavior. In simple words, dramaturgy is the study of how human beings accomplish meaning in their lives. Dramaturgy like other sociologies of everyday life offers an interpretative rather than positivistic paradigm. However, according to Reynolds and Herman-Kinney (2003), what is distinctive about it is its insistence that meaning is not something we acquire automatically from culture, socialization, or institutional arrangements, nor is it the realization of either our psychological or biological makeup. Instead, meaning is a continually problematic, quotidian accomplishment of

human social interaction, and is established in the ongoing process of acting toward and interacting with others.⁷

While every social interaction is a performance and every person an actor, Goffman is also careful to point out that in social life people often play parts and display attributes that they conceive as true to their selves (1959, p. 19). This is something that distinguishes social actors from stage actors in a significant way. Unlike stage actors, who usually adopt roles that may be inconsistent with who they are and actively create those personas through performance to influence the audience's perception of them, social actors engage in performances that create and sustain their view of reality, including their view of self (Collett and Childs, 2009). Moreover, even though there may be some self-awareness involved while engaging in these performances, many of these actions are done unconsciously. It has been pointed out that as individuals grow accustomed to performing their roles and engaging in daily rituals, certain behaviors become habits that they engage in without conscious attention (Schlenker, 1980 cited in Collett and Childs, 2009).

Focusing on the expressive and interactive element of begging, Erskine and McIntosh (1999) point out, that no one, no matter how poor, is a passive victim, unable to create social interaction: "The supplicant initiates the interaction with the donor and thus creates an encounter...And begging is a deliberate action, which involves a conscious choice by the person seeking alms" (cited in Dean, 1999, p. 39). Of course, the authenticity of many performances does not mean they are all genuine. Goffman (1959) also talks about the motives that individuals have for manipulating and controlling the images that others have of them. This in turn has also inspired critique of dramaturgy on grounds of allusions to potential artificiality. The dramaturge or actor, in this critical response, is often alleged to be 'a self-indulgent, scheming, deceitful conniver and con man, who fashions an illusionary existence for himself by manipulating the thoughts and actions of others' (Brissett and Edgley, 1990, p. 7 cited in Collett and Childs, 2009).

⁷ Reynolds, L.T. and Herman-Kinney, N.J. (Eds.) (2003) *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism*, Oxford (UK): AltaMira Press

Begging strategies too are often dismissed and misconstrued as involving guile because they involve an interaction initiated and generated by the supplicant. While such ulterior motives may be present, it is possible to ally with Goffman (1959) in believing that people's engagement in the rituals of everyday life is largely consonant with their self-conceptions. Begging, thus understood, involves the kind of expressive communication between people that a free and democratic society should seek to protect rather than infringe. A liberal democratic society that values the rational autonomy of its members must strive to preserve norms of mutual recognition and respect for communication. Schafer (2007) emphasises that even the poorest of the poor in any society have a significant potential contribution to make to the marketplace of ideas as fellow-citizens. He says:

“If the members of the underclass, including the unemployed, the homeless, and the poorest of the poor are not recognized as having important contribution to make to the formation of public opinion, then not only are they robbed of a basic right of citizenship but everyone else in the society is robbed of the opportunity to make up their own minds based on full information and rational reflection.”

– (Schafer, 2007, p.6)

Roles, scripts, costumes, props and stages are important components or tools that help social actors to create the social world around them and ensure interaction runs smoothly. Roles are not typically strict codes of conduct and have little to do with objective characteristics and more to do with how individuals engage in role making, adopting attributes and behaviors consistent with their expectations of those positions (Collett and Childs, 2009). Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical perspective presents social life as a play in which individuals or actors conduct themselves before various audiences according to scripted roles. According to Lankenau (1999a), interactions between beggars and passersby resemble the basic structural features of a play more closely as compared to exchanges among everyday persons:

“The panhandler, who is the main actor, is like an improvisational performer who uses a repertoire of pieces or numbers to accomplish the act of panhandling. I refer to a panhandler's collection of these actions as his or her panhandling repertoire. Similarly, in reaction to the performer, pedestrians serve

as the audience and respond to the panhandling routine by selecting from a menu of responses, like engaging or ignoring the panhandler.”

– (Lankenau, 1999a, p. 184)

Lankenau, further, explains that being ignored by the passerby, which Goffman (1963) referred to as “nonperson treatment,” is a primary problem confronted by the beggar, but one that is directly addressed through a repertoire of panhandling routines⁸. These repertoires do not, however, imply that certain individuals are acting or feigning need and distress; rather, they are ways of describing the public drama between panhandler and passerby. Costumes and props aid in cultivating an identity or impression. It is through one’s physical appearance- clothes, hair, facial expression, body size and shape, and the like- that one shows others the kind of person they are, their attitude and how they intend to act (Collett and Childs, 2009). Because of the interactive nature of these performances, appearances also give clues as to what is expected from the onlookers. Additional cues come from the objects that one surrounds oneself with – the props.

During a begging encounter, many times the body of the beggar is a symbol of his distress. In various cities of India, where ostensible poverty is at large and begging is a common sight, beggars or panhandlers, not only extend their begging bowls, but also display small wounded babies, sick, disabled or relatives with prescriptions, or their own wounded or pregnant bodies as an extension of the element of prop. Further, Goffman (1959) distinguishes between the front and back stages of social life, likening them to their theatrical equivalents. It is in the backstage, away from the audience, that one is able to tell their front down. From this symbolic interactionist perspective, the sidewalks serve as stages on which beggars confront and overcome nonperson treatment. But this is exactly where one can recognize how deeply intertwined the actual and the acting or performing selves of a beggar are.

In reality, the physical site and stage of performance and the space of everyday existence for beggars coalesce to such an extent that dramaturgy gets embedded in

⁸ On the basis of ethnographic observations and interviews of panhandlers on the streets of Washington, DC, Lankenau conceptualized five primary panhandling routines: the entertainer, the greeter, the servicer, the storyteller, and the aggressor (1999a:184).

their life as unconsciously behavior- a habit, or even as the only natural way to be. As Collett and Childs (2009) describe, “The more that people act a certain way and engage in these meaning-creating interactions with others, the more real these performances become to them and those around them” (p. 690). Lankenau (1999a) emphasises on the fact that panhandling repertoires and panhandling per se are, however, responses to economic and social marginality. After years of homelessness, joblessness, or health problems, few beggars possess the resources or skills necessary to gain stable jobs and reintegrate into the formal economy. Hence, instead of relying entirely on programs designed for the poor and homeless, such as, food stamps, community kitchens, or shelters- which many also view as controlling or humiliating institutions- the individuals try to support themselves creatively, sometimes desperately, engaging the consciences of the passersby (Lankenau, 1999a, p. 204). Despite being at the receiving end of the society, the process of interaction provides beggars or panhandlers a means to enhance their sense of self-regard and status by forging meaningful relationships with givers who become a regular source of support over a period of time.

According to Lankenau (1999b), beggars combine strategies of emotional management, identity and appearance management, storytelling to endure everyday rejection and humiliations associated with panhandling, and strive toward status enhancing relationships among regular contributors (cf. Nyseth, 2008).⁹ While it may appear that beggars might have the benefits of flexible hours, many panhandlers need to maintain a consistent schedule of time and place in order to develop ongoing relationships with residents or commuters who contribute on a routine basis.¹⁰ Lankenau further says:

“Many panhandlers derive much more from their interactions with donors than money or other types of material goods. Rather, the relationships developed with regulars cause panhandlers to regard many as friends...The relationships formed between panhandlers and donors serve to emotionally stabilize an otherwise precarious existence.”

⁹ According to Nyseth (2008), “Though not explicitly stated, panhandler’s presentation of self is an important aspect of stigma management.”

¹⁰ Despite various constraints that might make begging a dissatisfying job choice, Smith (2005) points out, “The major benefits of begging are flexible hours and a high degree of autonomy.”

– (Lankenau, 1999b, p. 16)

Thus, panhandling offers an interesting space for direct and face-to-face encounters of the solicitor of alms, an individual belonging to the lower- and working-class background, with individuals of higher classes, who given different circumstances and context, probably, might never have met or engaged with each other. Lankenau (1999a) proposes that panhandlers devise a “repertoire of panhandling routines to break out of the role of stranger or to awaken pedestrians from the blasé state” (p. 185); the dramaturgy involved in this process minimize the nonperson treatment or *strangeness* that they are usually greeted with, and paves way for interaction between two sets of actors with dissimilar material resources, different interactional objectives and even contracting viewpoints. Proceeding on similar grounds in the context of modern urban China, Henry (2009) talks about how begging is much like a street theatre – performances playing upon key cultural scripts and anxieties, aimed at unsettling and disturbing potential donors, and thereby, negotiating and increasing the size of the gift- rather than a simple sign of poverty.

Begging and public space

A third aspect of symbolic interaction associated with dramaturgy and of major significance to the understanding of begging is behavior in public place. This aspect is rooted in Goffman’s idea of ‘self’ as a social product. According to Lemert and Branaman (1997), the self is a social product in two senses: First, it is a product of performances that individuals put on in social situations; rather, the sense of self arises as a result of publically validated performance. The same has been explained in the previous section through the concept of dramaturgy. Secondly, even though individuals play an active role in fashioning these self-indicating performances, they are generally constrained to present themselves in ways that can be socially supported in the context of a given status hierarchy; thereby also making the ‘self’ a social product dependent upon validation awarded and withheld in accordance with the norms of a stratified society (Lemert and Branaman, 1997, p. 47). Symbolic interactionism recognises that human being is an organism that not only responds to others on the non-symbolic level but also makes indications to others and interprets

their indications (Blumer, 1986). An individual in society has a more or less public existence in which all his/her actions are anticipated, checked, inhibited, or modified by the gestures and intentions of others.

Based on everyday public interactions and the familiar distinction between acts that are approved and those that are felt to be improper, Goffman explores the ideas of “copresence” and “inappropriate in the situation”. He distinguishes between three types of copresence. They are: (i) *gathering*, which refers to “any set of two or more individuals whose members include all and only those who are at the moment in each other’s immediate presence”; (ii) *situation*, that refers to “the full spatial environment anywhere within which an entering person becomes a member of the gathering that is/then becomes present”; and (iii) *social occasion*, which refers to “a wider social affair, undertaking, or event, bounded in regard to place and time facilitated by fixed equipment to provide the structuring social context in which many situations and their gatherings are likely to form, dissolve and reform, while a pattern of conduct tends to be recognized as the appropriate and official” (Goffman, 1963a, pp. 17-18).

Goffman is of the opinion that an act can be proper or improper only according to the judgment of a specific social group, and even within the confines of small and tightly knit groups there is likely to be some lack of consensus and doubt. The degree of dissensus or consensus in a group concerning the propriety of an act along with the boundaries of the group itself can be established only through systematic empirical research. In relation to appropriate act, Goffman defines “social order” as the ground rules of social life, the conditions and constraints placed on the *manner* in which activity is carried out and ends are sought but not on the *choice* of ends (Lemert and Branaman, 1997). He further concerns himself to “public order” and “public places”.

The former, according to him, traditionally refers more to the regulation of face-to-face interaction among members of a community who are not well acquainted rather than it does to interaction occurring in private walled-in places where only familiars meet. “Public places” traditionally refer to any regions in a community freely accessible to members of that community, as opposed to *private places*, which refer to ‘soundproof regions where only members or invitees gather’. The traditional concern for public order thereby begins only at the point where a private gathering begins to

obtrude upon the neighbors. Goffman outlines the “situational propriety” of various forms of social interaction (including access, involvement obligations, attention, and tactful leave-taking) which he believes function to “give body to the joint social life...” (1963a, p. 196) and are essential for providing the social order necessary for peaceful and secure coexistence.

Though no individual social situation is representative of the institution in which it is embedded, the behavior of individuals in social situations matter, and situational improprieties may serve to express alienation from a class, community, social establishment, or institution (1963a, p. 223). Situational propriety can be divided into two analytical parts: “unfocused interactions, concerned with what can be communicated between persons merely by virtue of their presence together in the social situation; and focused interactions, concerned with clusters of individuals who extend one another a special communication license and sustain a special type of mutual activity that can exclude others who are present in the situation (1963a, p. 83). Thus, it is possible to surmise that meanings emerge through social interactions with others and the self, and ultimately become the basis of human and collective action. Through the application of symbolic interactionist perspective to behaviour in public places, one can relate to how meanings are formed, and how individuals or “acting units” (for example, bureaucracy) interpret these meanings and act upon. Interactionists view meaning formation as a process that is ongoing, fluid, and emergent as individuals actively work to make sense of the world around them and the situations in which they find themselves (Burnier, 2005). This understanding that individuals are active interpreters of the world around them is one of the most significant dimensions that this study seeks to highlight in the context of beggars.

According to Burnier (2005), individuals are actors that is, active agents- in situations, and they act on the definitions they assign to the persons, objects, and events that comprise the situation. Situations, here, are the specific arrangements of things as noted and confronted by the individuals, and how these situations are defined often will vary from individual to individual because every individual, as an actor, will take note of or confront different aspects of the situation. Hence, a symbolic interactionist research on begging has to be grounded in the beggar’s own definitions, interpretations, and understandings of his/her situation. Finally, situations

themselves are often always embedded in and shaped by larger contexts of meaning such as culture, politics, economics, and the social. It is important to recognize that though individual and collective meanings change overtime, they also persist over time in the form of established cultural, organizational, political, and societal meanings. Studies on ostensible poverty and begging have remained somewhat stagnant due to such reliance on persistent established meanings. But for interactionists, the ongoing social (or political) dynamics of persistence and change, and of stability and emergence, also suggest a social (or political) order that is constantly “negotiated”.

Atkinson and Housley (2003) note:

“[The] emphasis of symbolic interactionism is precisely what the terms imply- on the *processes* of interaction and exchange, on the negotiation of rules and meanings, on the use of conventional modes of representation.... The outcome of such processes is not a stable social reality, but further processes: negotiation leads to negotiation, not to fixed immutable outcomes. Order may be achieved, but it is only provisional and contingent.”

- (Atkinson and Housley, 2003, p. 151 cited in Burnier, 2005, p. 503)

Understood in relation to dramaturgy, a beggar’s behavior in public places is a form of negotiation with other members and institutions of the society, more as an active agent engaged involved in reassessing and re-evaluating his/her situation rather than being a passive victim. He/she is constantly using his/her expressive liberty to communicate and convince the passersby or the onlooker to reexamine or rethink the already established meanings that the latter hold about him/her. Lankenau (1999a) explains that the nonperson treatment of panhandlers or beggars, that is, to pass by a panhandler as though he or she is did not exist, originates in a disposition characterizing many city dwellers; Simmel (1971) called it the “blasé attitude”. The blasé attitude stems from the constant stimulation found in a city and causes inhabitants to react to new situations with minimal energy or to disregard differences between things. Nonperson treatment and blasé attitude provide a sharp contrast to Goffman’s concept of “civil inattention”, by according which “the individual implies

that he has no reason to suspect the intentions of the other present and no reason to fear the others, be hostile to them, or wish to avoid them” (1963a, p. 84).

“What seems to be involved is that one gives to another enough visual notice to demonstrate that one appreciates the other is present (and that one admits openly to having seen him), while at the next moment withdrawing one’s attention from him so to express that he does not constitute a target of special curiosity or design.”

– (Goffman, 1963a on *civil inattention*, p. 84)

Thus, what a panhandler or beggar is accustomed to experiencing in any public places is the lack of civil inattention. Rather, the city commuter or resident’s blasé attitude renders any beggar as an unremarkable or meaningless figure against the backdrop of ubiquitous beggary and homelessness. According to Lankenau (1999a), such attitude on the part of the passerby commonly casts beggars into the role of “the stranger” (Simmel, 1971). The stranger is defined by a combination of nearness and remoteness- nearness because he/she resides within the confines of a group or spatial area, and remoteness because he/she is not integrated into any particular social body. Moreover, the interaction between the stranger and others is characterised by various degrees of strangeness as a consequence of this tension between the attributes of nearness and remoteness. In other words, beggars resemble the stranger as they, like other fellow human beings, stand in close proximity to pedestrians as they engage in begging along sidewalks or at subway stations, and yet remain distant from these same individuals owing to certain stigmas associated to their social situation and positioning. As mentioned earlier, it is this strangeness and nonperson treatment meted out to him/her that the beggar seeks to actively challenge through the employment of dramaturgy in course of the begging encounters with passersby.

As pointed out by Schafer (2007), a beggar or panhandler is constantly communicating to the members of the public with whom he or she contacts, about what society is like for those at the very bottom of the heap. He says, “A panhandler communicates- whether through speech or via an outstretched hand and raggedy appearance – a message of dire poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, mental illness and homelessness.” According to him, panhandling represents a “political

speech” about social inequality and disorder, both for beggar and the fellow-citizens to whom he/she appeals. It is an uncomfortable reminder of the costs of development and modernisation for urban residents (Henry, 2009). Although some scholars interpret begging as a possible form of rejection or subversion of the very norms of citizenship, something of the likes of mendicant friars of medieval times, or ‘worldly’ ascetics as well (Briggs, 1985 and Jordan, 1996 cited in Dean et al., 1999), what is more clearly implied through their continual interaction with the other members of the society, is rather an aspiration to ordinary citizenship within alternative communities.¹¹

Conclusion

In this particular chapter we have seen how researchers have often found symbolic interactionism to be a useful theoretical framework to analyse and make sense of various aspects related to begging. We have also discussed how Goffman’s work on stigma, dramaturgy, and behaviour in public space helps us appreciate how begging individuals are engaged in an endless play with other social actors through the use of begging repertoires, which allow them to present themselves, interact meaningfully, and even forge status-enhancing relationships with relatively privileged others, thereby providing an opportunity to disrupt the mundane, and interrupt the blasé attitude and “nonperson treatment” commonly meted out to them by passersby everyday. This particular approach is useful because it recognises the importance of interaction among unequal social classes as the key to inform citizens’ political philosophies and form public opinion. Hence, begging or panhandling must also be tolerated and decriminalised because, besides the absurdity and unconstitutional nature of the law as has been already demonstrated, it possesses the potential of

¹¹‘Worldly’ asceticism as opposed to ‘Inner’- or Other-Worldly Asceticism according to Max Weber’s conception as developed in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-05 [1930]) refers to people who live ascetic lives but do not withdraw from the world, and it could be used to mean both religious and secular ascetics. According to Gerth and Mills (1946), in course of writing *the Protestant Ethic*, he called ‘protestant asceticism as the foundation of modern vocational civilization- a sort of “spiritualist” construction of the modern economy.’ In contrast to the mystic, who proves himself against the world by resisting to take the temptation to take the ways of the world too seriously, and who is characterized by “a specifically broken humility, a minimization of action, a sort of religious incognito existence in the world,” the inner-worldly ascetic proves himself through action. Weber says: “To the inner-worldly asceticist the conduct of the mystic is an indolent enjoyment of self; to the mystic the conduct of the (inner-worldly active) asceticist is an entanglement in the godless ways of the world combined with complacent self-righteousness.” – (Quoted from Gerth and Mills, 1946)

bridging gaps between the 'haves' and 'havenots' within and through these panhandling encounters.

It would be an initiative with prospects that the state has failed to fulfil even with its timely implementation of multifarious laws and policies. The extension of this rhetoric also enables one to understand the extent to which contemporary capitalist economies have managed to create permanent categories of marginalised people, and offers a scope to evaluate the repercussions of transgressing or transcending these margins. Thus, it provides us, within the discourse of begging, not merely justifications of desperate survival strategies, but a view of the activity as a dogged and often passionate endeavour to create truly different experience and understanding of the phenomenon itself. Informed by this particular theoretical approach, the next chapter focuses on the methodology used for the purpose of the current study. It describes how multi-sited ethnography has been employed to arrive at a grounded theory of begging that could open up the field for further sociological inquiry.

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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

The terms “methodology” and “methods” in social science research may often appear synonymous, and there is a common tendency among researchers to use them so. However, the former is a wider term that usually includes the latter; that is, our research methods typically are a subset of our research methodology. Neuman (2014) distinguishes between the two as follows:

“Methodology means understanding the entire research process – including its social-organizational context, philosophical assumptions, ethical principles, and the political impact of the new knowledge from the research enterprise. Methods refer to the collection of specific techniques we use in a study to select cases, measure and observe social life, gather and refine data, analyze data, and report on results. The two are closely linked and interdependent.”

– (Neuman, 2014, p. 2)

This chapter discusses the overall research methodology and research design of the current study. It provides an in-depth description of the methodological and theoretical framework that guides the study and elucidates the various methods adopted to address the stated research questions, fulfil the objectives of the study, and present findings in a cogent and intelligible manner. It also deals with some of the major ethical concerns specifically pertaining to doing research with begging and homeless populations, and in general, with any vulnerable population that becomes an easy target for the law. It also describes the experience and challenges of doing fieldwork with begging populations within community and custodial settings in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai.

Qualitative research design

Research design could be understood as “procedures of inquiry” (Creswell, 2013) and it typically involves a number of processes such as, “figuring out what your study should accomplish, constructing a theoretical framework, developing research questions, deciding on your strategies and methods for data collection and analysis, and planning how to deal with potential validity threats to your conclusion” (Maxwell, 1996, p. ix). Maxwell (1996) also explains that the “design” is the logic and coherence of the research that emerges from the ways in which the various components of the study relate to one another. He distinguishes it from the “proposal”, which he refers to as a “document that communicates and justifies this design to a particular audience” (p. xi).

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), at the early stages of planning and proposal writing in research, various decisions relating to the design of the study are made, and many of these decisions could indeed be analytical, which they call “a sort of *anticipatory data reduction* – because they constrain later analysis by ruling out certain variables and relationships and attending to others” (p. 16). In fact, they quite famously proclaim, “Contrary to what you may have heard, qualitative research designs do exist” (p. 16). Maxwell (1996) proposes a qualitative research design model consisting of five components – purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methods, and validity – each characterised by the issue that it intends to tackle. This could also become a useful checklist to measure our study against, as it gradually crawls from its initial stages of confusion (rather than conception) to conclusion (or thesis writing).

The present study is broadly qualitative in nature. By “qualitative”, one primarily tries to suggest two things: first, that the research is guided by its stated objectives that relate to understanding some of the key aspects of social life; and second, by its methods, which produce narratives and words, rather than numbers, as “data” for the purpose of analysis (Patton and Cochran, 2002). According to Ellis and Ellingson (2000), the term “qualitative methods” could be employed to mean “a variety of research techniques and procedures associated with the goal of trying to understand

the complexities of the social world in which we live and how we go about thinking, acting, and making meaning in our lives” (p. 2287). They further elaborate that by making use of different techniques, – such as, participant observation, life histories, interviews, focus groups – and by embedding themselves in different conceptual or theoretical approaches – autoethnographic, phenomenological, narrative, feminist, etc. – these type of research practices choose to lay emphasis on building rapport to get better access to participants and trying to appreciate how “they (and we)” perceive the world (ibid).

Middle-ground approach to the study of begging

Further, as a methodology, qualitative research ranges from being a scientific mode of enquiry to an artistic endeavour. According to Daly (2007), “Although we uphold a tradition of keeping art and science separate...art and science are inseparable when we do qualitative research” (p. 1). Ellis and Ellingson (2000) reiterate the point thus:

“Qualitative researchers may be placed along a broad continuum ranging from an orientation akin to positivist science to one more akin to art and literature. In between is a vast middle ground where elements of both orientations are present. Moving along the qualitative continuum from science to art and literature, one finds practitioners who see social life as something out there to be discovered independently of the researcher, those who view social life as something constructed through interaction and engagement with the world, and those who focus more closely on the person describing social life and modes and practices of description.”

– (Ellis and Ellingson, 2000, p. 2287)

Thus, between the extreme poles of scientific and artistic approaches, one could tread into an expansive territory to engage in what could be referred to as “*middle-ground approaches*” to social science research (Ellis and Ellingson, 2000, p. 2289). Such an approach enables the researcher to analyse events, explore patterns, and draw models from the data collected in order to arrive at what Neuman (2014) refers to as a “middle-range theory” (p. 69).

The current study seeks to employ the aforementioned middle-ground approach in an attempt to attain an effective blend of scientific rigour and artistic eye. In terms of its purpose, the current study has the elements of both exploratory and descriptive research, because it seeks to simultaneously discover facts and describe the complexities involved in the phenomena of begging and homelessness, and consequently, to analyse, examine, and explain the implications of the same on socio-political and cultural, and thereby also, legal discourses of our society. The approach for the study undertaken could therefore be associated to Ellis and Ellingson's (2000) middle-ground approach for the following reasons:

- ❖ It seeks to analyse events, find patterns, and generate models from the data
- ❖ Rigid rules of empiricism such as random sampling, reliability, validity and the hypothetico-deductive model are abandoned in favour of purposeful sampling, semi-structured in-depth interviewing, participant observation or fieldwork and analysis of narrative (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Fontana and Frey, 1994; Mishler, 1986; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Gergen, 1992; and Riessman, 1993, respectively).
- ❖ It chooses to study and reveal knowledge about the less powerful, a characteristic typically associated with middle ground approaches, which later leads to the ethical concerns about what should be studied, how and by whom (see Lofland and Lofland, 1995).
- ❖ It also thereby notes the positionality of participants, such as race, class, caste, and gender, in order to avoid obscuring these factors. It also acknowledges their standpoint, personal background, politics, and interests in the topic (see Collins, 1991)
- ❖ As a middle-ground research it also tries to decrease the power disparity between the researcher and the people involved in the study by referring to them as “research participants” rather than “subjects”, indicating a degree of

respect for autonomy and consent of the people whose lives are being studied (DeVault, 1990; Ellingson and Buzzanell, 1999; Reinharz, 1992)

- ❖ It also studies a variety of complex issues which are impossible address with quantitative methodology such as nature and implication of stigma and disenfranchisement, the social support and kinship networks necessary for their daily sustenance, their relationship with the state and civil society actors, etc.

As such, the study concedes to the underlying rationale behind adopting a middle-ground approach, which is, “As the topics get more complex and oriented toward meanings, subjectivity, and emotionality, it becomes more difficult to invoke older, more traditional, systematic ‘scientific methods’ and apply them” (Ellis and Ellingson, 2000, p. 2291).

“Doing” sociology: Interactionism and research as intervention

The discipline of sociology is committed to the study of human groups, communities and societies. It is also a way of viewing human behaviour and pattern of relationships between individuals and groups, rather than individuals themselves, the latter being a primary focus of the discipline of psychology. According to Mills (1959), “sociological imagination” is a manner of being aware of the complex relationship between personal experience of individuals and the wider society that they are part of; or, how personal troubles are inevitably connected to and are impacted by public issues. Within this discourse, therefore, “doing” sociology refers to application of theoretical sociological insights to address, and sometimes also, to resolve social issues (see Straus, 1989; Price, Straus, and Breese, 2009). By extension, doing sociology refers to practising sociology so as to allow sociologists to look at perspectives, theories, concepts and methods within the discipline primarily as “tools” for problem solving and analysing social change. Denzin (1978) further believed that sociological enterprise was a product of three related activities; namely, theory, research, and substantive interest (p. 3). He noted that contemporary sociology suffers

from an unfortunate crisis, as it tends to separate these three components. He argues thus:

“Theory cannot be judged independently of research activity. Research methods are of little use until they are seen in the light of theoretical perspective. Substantive speciality is of little use or interest until it is firmly embedded within a theoretical framework and grounded upon sound research strategies...The separate elements of the sociological act must be reunited. Such a synthesis appears in the research act – that is, in those endeavors which take the sociologist from the vague realm of theory to substantive issues in the empirical social world.”

– (Denzin, 1978, pp. 3-4)

One of the strategies that Denzin (1978) offers to “reunite” these three elements of the sociological act is by applying “a single theoretical perspective to all phases of the research, or observational act” (p. 4), so that a common framework informs the length, breadth and depth of the research consistently. The theoretical framework that aids this study in doing a sociology of begging, informs the methodology of the research act as data is gathered and organised, and lends its vocabulary for the purpose of systematically making sense of empirical reality in this case, is symbolic interactionism (SI). Additionally, according to Bruhn and Rebach (2007), “Sociological practice is the application of sociological theory, methods, and research for direct intervention to bring about positive social change for the solution of social problems” (p. 1). Social problems could be defined as such if the issues arise from and are sustained by existing social arrangements, which are shaped by norms, customs, policies, laws, and ideologies governing any given society (Bruhn and Rebach, 2007).

Hence, if we see the crime as socially constructed, and criminalisation of begging as a social problem construed by current social arrangements, then it possible to understand begging as a symbolic act that has the potential to subvert power through its capacity to provoke interaction and self-reflexivity among onlookers. By sanctioning begging individuals access to a repertoire (consisting of symbols, words, meanings and gestures) to articulate and enact their conception of self in relation to

others, and often in contradiction to expectations of dominant order, the act of begging also uses agency to dramatise the human condition. Thus, the interactionist approach helps unpack the “deviant mystique” (Prus and Grills, 2003) associated with begging. Previous qualitative researches in the field of criminology have benefitted from employing the interactionist approaches due to a number of reasons. The interpretative model of SI allows researchers not only to uncover and understand participants’ motivations and decisions for offending, but also encourages them to revisit their own experiences and reflect and examine their own biases, and “take, to the best of his ability, the standpoint of those studied” (Denzin, 1978, p. 99). According to Prus and Grills (2003), “While the study of deviance extends much beyond the auras or intrigues that develop with respect to certain realms of activity, it is important to consider the ways in which the deviant mystique enters into people’s theaters of operation so that we might more adequately move through and beyond the various intrigues that people may experience en route to a more complete examination of the deviance-making process” (p. ix). Interactionism thus emphasises a bottom-up approach, a microsociology committed to developing a fuller understanding of the society’s underdogs.

Beggars are ostensibly one of the most marginalised sections of our society. An SI approach refuses to see them as passive hapless victims that narratives of chronic poverty regularly does. Instead, it posits a view of beggars as dynamic actors negotiating with the various structures for their daily subsistence. SI also lends itself to the understanding begging encounters/repertoires, and the interaction between various individual actors and institutions that contribute to the construction of a beggar’s identity. Further, the SI concepts of stigma, dramaturgy, and behaviour in public places are also useful for the purpose of this study. Thus following from the above discussion, it could be surmised that while the interactionist perspective in this research serves as a tool for doing sociology with begging individuals, the research act itself could be perceived as a sort of sociological intervention, that wishes to push the interpretation of begging outside of its reductive understanding as a deviant and stigmatised activity among the hapless poor, by focusing on their capacity to create meaningful interactions through begging encounters. Likewise, it also hopes through such an intervention, the findings of the study would be able to effect some changes

in public attitude towards begging and perhaps in some way assist the ongoing conversation that advocates for the demcriminalisation of begging.

Research method and procedures: Multi-sited ethnography

The qualitative research method adopted in this study is ethnography, since it attempts to understand and describe a social and cultural scene from an emic¹² or insider's perspective, and in the process, involves rigorous fieldwork and participant observation (see Given, 2008).¹³ Ethnographic research, which is also sometimes referred to as “field research” or “participant observation”, is a qualitative social science method that involves the observation of the interactions of everyday life. It is social constructionist, exploring intersubjective cultural meanings rather than positivist ‘social facts,’ or laws (Ellis and Ellingson, 2000; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography is an interdisciplinary research approach (Bohannan, 1969; Clifford, 1986) that has a strong presence in social and cultural anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, as well as in applied areas like health, education (Hammersley, 1992), and social work (see Pawluch, Shaffir and Miall, 2005).¹⁴ *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (2008) describes ethnography both as “the art and science of describing a group or culture”.

This study is an attempt at providing an interactionist approach to the study of begging in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai. It is therefore what is sometimes referred to as “multi-sited ethnography” in anthropological research (Marcus, 1995). According to Nadai and Maeder (2005), sociological ethnography in/of complex societies rarely ever deals with a clearly bounded groups in a single place like it did in the case of traditional cultural anthropology. It has to deal with what they call “fuzzy fields” without clear boundaries and multiple dimensions. Marcus (1995) refers to strategic selection of one or more such locale(s) for participant observation research

¹² It refers to the insider's view of the reality, one of the principle concepts guiding qualitative research that is fundamental to the understanding of how people perceive the world around them. Adopting an emic perspective allows for ‘multiple’ realities and acknowledges that an individual's view of the world might not conform to the ‘objective’ reality (Fetterman cited in Given, 2008).

¹³ Given, L. M., (Ed.) (2008) *Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, Vol. 1 & 2, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

¹⁴ Pawluch D., Shaffir W. and Miall, C. (Eds.) (2005) *Doing Ethnography: Studying everyday life*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

“multi-sited”. Distinguishing multi-sited ethnographies from conventional controlled comparative studies in anthropology, he says:

“...in multi-sited ethnography, comparison emerges from putting questions to an emergent object of study whose contours, sites, and relationships are not known beforehand, but are themselves a contribution of making an account that has different, complexly connected real-world sites of investigation. The object of study is ultimately mobile and multiply situated, so any ethnography of such an object will have a comparative dimension that is integral to it, in the form of juxtapositions of phenomena that conventionally have appeared to be (or conceptually have been kept) “worlds apart.” Comparison reenters the very act of ethnographic specification by a research design of juxtapositions in which the global is collapsed into and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations rather than something monolithic or external to them. This move toward comparison embedded in the multi-sited ethnography stimulated accounts of cultures composed in a landscape for which there is yet no developed theoretical conception or descriptive model.”

– (Marcus, 1995, p. 102)

Due to the very nature and composition of the population that constitutes the phenomenon of begging, multi-sited ethnography becomes an ideal methodological fit for this study. It is especially useful for developing a systematic understanding and description for a phenomenon that is still mired in stigma of poverty, criminality and middle class disdain, so much so that we have allowed mass media-generated unsubstantiated fictive imageries to percolate even the academic engagement on the subject.

Appropriateness of ethnographic methods for the subject of study

Unlike various other fundamental scientific research strategies, ethnography does not require the researcher to be a typically detached or disinterested observer; in fact, an ethnographer gains insight on a particular phenomenon of social and cultural import through firsthand engagement with the research subjects or participants. According to

Murchison (2010), the ethnographer usually conducts research by interacting with other human beings that are part of the study, and these interactions take on various forms ranging from conversation and interviews to shared ritual and emotional experiences. According to Gottlieb (see Perecman and Curran, 2006),¹⁵ ethnography as a methodology is based explicitly on the recognition of three fundamental and interrelated presuppositions, which in turn, are premised on a philosophical orientation, developed by a branch of philosophy known as *hermeneutics*.¹⁶ The presuppositions referred to are: (a) that data are not just gathered but created by human effort and the way in which information is collected affects the content of the data themselves; (b) that scholars who “produce data” are complex creatures whose perceptions and communications are shaped at every turn by the context in which they find themselves and the level of comfort or discomfort they experience in that context; and (c) that both the quality and the content of the “data” that a researcher “gathers” have much to do with the informants or the research participants.

Gaining intimate familiarity

An ethnographic research takes an individual out of the library and the laboratory into the social world around, and gives him or her, an opportunity to learn something in the real world; he or she is both the researcher and the research instrument (Murchison, 2010). Gaining an intimate familiarity with a locale often provides a better sense of how social life works, and where the most significant things to insiders are, in a more efficient manner (Puddephatt, Shaffir, Kleinknecht, 2009). Ethnographers employ a number of research techniques and methods in a complex research strategy to suit the complexity of their objects of study. Some of the most important concepts that guide fieldwork in course of conducting an ethnographic study include culture, holistic approach, an emic perspective or multiple realities, an etic¹⁷ perspective, nonjudgmental orientation, inter- and intracultural diversity, and

¹⁵ Perecman, E. and S. Curran (Eds.) (2006) *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research: essays and bibliographic sources on research design and methods*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

¹⁶ It refers to a branch of philosophy that relies on the understanding that human life is about interpretation, and that developing and working with systems of meaning constitute both the prime motive in, and the prime motive of being human (*cf.* Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Cassier, 1944; Geertz 1973; Langer, 1942 cited in Gottlieb, see Perecman and Curran, 2006)

¹⁷ It refers to the external social scientific perspective of the reality, the validity of which is based on logical scientific analysis. Etic descriptions or analyses conform to rules of science including falsifiability, logical consistency and replicability (when possible and appropriate). It involves stepping

symbols and rituals. The theoretical intent of ethnography is inductive, generating concepts and theories from the data gathered and produced keeping in mind the aforementioned concepts.

Critics of ethnography however, often level charges against ethnographers as simply being “poor journalists” who spend years working on projects that are conceptually bereft and no better than a weekly news documentary. However, countering such unfair charges Fine (2008) explains that ethnographers and journalists mostly differ because of a six-letter word: theory. At their best therefore, ethnographic researches provide concepts that extend beyond the particular case study in question and hold lasting value due to their elegance, insight, explanatory value, or broad application to the extent that these work provide even one or two lasting theoretical concepts and moves beyond the level of faddish news story and become a more durable contribution to sociology, explaining or contextualising social life in fresh, innovative and compelling ways (Puddephatt, Shaffir and Kleinknecht, 2009). At this point one may be reminded of the community activist Saul Alinsky’s (1972) view that a sociology department “is the kind of institution that spends \$100,000 on research projects to find the locations of houses of prostitution which a taxi driver could tell you for nothing.”¹⁸ What makes ethnographic work unique is that the researchers are able to generate new theoretical concepts, identify phases in a specific social process, reveal the organizational principles of social groupings, recognize explanatory mechanisms in social dynamics and link these aspects to broader theoretical frameworks.

Ethnography as an asset for the study of deviant behaviour

Ethnography has long been a preferred method by researchers for the study of deviant behaviour. Indeed, as Hobbs (2001) points out, “Ethnographies of deviant behaviour are amongst the most popular within the sociological genre, identifying studies that require a commitment to ‘personal observation, interaction, and experience [as] the

back from the insider’s or emic perspective to explain how groups are communicating or miscommunicating. An external view without an emic view is however unusual and uncharacteristic of qualitative work (Fetterman cited in Given, 2008).

¹⁸ Playboy interview: Saul Alinsky (1972).

Retrieved from <https://documents.theblackvault.com/documents/fbifiles/100-BA-30057.pdf> last accessed 02-01-2019.

only way to acquire accurate knowledge about deviant behavior' (Adler, 1985, p. 11)" (cited in Atkinson et al. 2001, p. 204). Hobbs attributes to the sociology department at the University of Chicago the merit of recognising early on the potential of ethnography as a research method that could be of service to the study of deviance, and consequently, for its enduring influence and success in the field late into the postwar period. He says, "The Chicagoan combination of ecology, formalism and journalism is at the heart of the ethnographic tradition" (Hobbs cited in Atkinson et al., 2001, p. 205). He further explains how the very milieu of rapid change that affected and/or distorted held notions of otherness, disconnectedness, and normality had set the grounds for classic ethnographies of deviance in the years that followed, like Anderson's *The Hobo* ([1923] 1975), and Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1943) to name a few.

Later, during the postwar period, with major contributions made by prominent scholars belonging to the 'second Chicago School' (see Fine, 1995), like Becker and Goffman, not only did the sociology of deviance emerge and expand as an independent repository of theoretical knowledge, but interactionism also gained considerable currency, together making for a competent alternative to conventional criminology. Becker and Goffman succeeded in laying down a body of work that has firmly established them as legendary figures within a tradition that came to further the understanding that, "Deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an offender" (Becker, 1963, p. 9). As a research method therefore ethnography is an asset to the study of begging and homeless individuals, because it has historically favoured aligning with the powerless, socially excluded, the underclass in order to give voice to their subjective experiences of marginality and otherness, and played an important role in establishing a strong tradition of micro-level theories – such as, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, labelling theory, etc. – that lend themselves beautifully to problematise and challenge conventional understandings of deviant behaviour, so much so that it earned itself the reputation of being the "sociology of the underdogs." Moreover, Goffman (1959) and Simmel (1950) also contributed greatly to the field by developing theories of everyday life that are useful in making sense of the daily lives of begging and homeless individuals. Thus, besides allowing space for an emic perspective, ethnography also coalesces with the spirit of the

research that seeks to study social and cultural phenomena in action rather than in controlled settings. The study appreciates how ethnography aims to capture the complexity of human lives and social interactions, and is guided by the awareness that the objects of study may not always be easily identifiable, and are therefore “always subject to change as a result of innovation, conflict, and many other factors” (Murchison, 2010, p. 4).

Following from the above stated propositions, it is possible to understand what distinctive value ethnography adds to the process of qualitative research such as this. The study could further benefit from using Hammersley’s (2007) practical guide that outlines some of the distinctive features of ethnography in order to substantiate how this is one:

- ❖ It tries to study people’s actions “primarily in everyday contexts” or “in the field” rather than under conditions engineered by the researcher
 - ❖ Data has been gathered from “a range of sources”, including in-depth interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation
 - ❖ Data collection is largely “unstructured” in the sense that it does not involve strict adherence to a research plan and has a research design with adequate scope for flexibility based on experiences/encounters in the field
 - ❖ Data analysis involves “interpretation of meanings and functions” of the participants’ actions and how these have implications in the local (Delhi/ Mumbai/ India) and wider contexts (like within the discourse of identity/ class/ gender/ law etc.)
- (Hammersley 2007, p. 199)

Then, pertaining to its methodological orientation based on diverse theoretical influences, ethnography, according to Hammersley, could still be assigned with certain key characteristics that have been used below to measure and calibrate the methodological soundness of the current study:

- ❖ The study acknowledges and moves forward with an understanding that behaviour and attitudes of participants “are not automatic products of either internal or external stimuli”, and that their responses to the world are

“constructed and reconstructed over time, and across space, in ways that reflect the [their] biographies and sociocultural locations”, and their subjective interpretation of situations

- ❖ It also recognises that there are diverse cultures informing and influencing participants’ behaviour, and these operate not just between societies and local communities (intercultural like between poor rural-urban migrants and working urban middle-class; or, between beggars of Delhi and beggars of Mumbai), but also within them (intra-cultural/subcultural like members within distinct begging communities in Delhi or Mumbai), and perhaps even within individual actors (such as, begging individuals who may have homes but may prefer to sleep rough; or, individuals who do not see themselves as beggars, but accept donations of food and money regularly)

- ❖ Last, but not the least, the study bases itself on the ethnographic premise that “human social life is not structured in terms of rigid, law-like patterns, but displays emergent processes of various kinds that involve high degree of contingency”. In the context of this study, that is to say, that even though begging and homelessness are dynamic phenomena that may be viewed, experienced, and practiced differently by different individuals, it is possible to use ethnography in order to identify credible broad patterns that these practices imply, without exhausting potential alternative explanations for the same.

Balancing the emic and the etic

As a characteristic attribute of ethnography, this study feels the need to present data from the emic or insider’s perspective, which is why and it attempts to explain behaviour of participants by combining their own view of why they beg or sleep rough, with that of the state or civil society actors who provide the outsider’s or the etic perspective. By balancing these two perspectives, the study hopes to holistically describe the social setting (see Fetterman, 1998; Spradley, 1979; Wilcox 1982 cited in Brown 2009). The study in a way rejects the principle of researcher’s view being

paramount by making a conscious attempt to advocate that viewpoints those who beg and experience homelessness as being equally, if not more, valuable.

However, the analytical distinction of the emic and the etic perspective should not be overdrawn as it may limit the study in terms of making note of shared experiences or the nuances of identity and group membership. Therefore, the method of participant-observation used in course of this study seeks to combine the seemingly contrasting stances of participation and observation in a balanced fashion so as to capitalise on the positives of each stance and allow the visibility of the big picture through constant comparative and analytical questioning, while also drawing on firsthand experience.. Doing so allows for exploring complexities of multiple perspectives while still retaining a balanced emic-etic outlook (Murchison, 2010; see also Neergaard and Ulhøi).¹⁹

Another aspect of this study has to do with the fact that, as a researcher with prior experience of being a social worker/interventionist working with homeless and begging individuals, I too lay closer to the “insider” label with respect to one of the categories of participants – that is, civil society organisations – whose experiences are also being studied. While this might have its benefits in terms of gaining easy access to people and resources, it is also important to be constantly aware of the impact that being an insider or an outsider could have on the various aspects of the study. Also, there have been occasions when being an insider in some way, I realised on later reflections, only made me cynical about current interventions and general state of affairs, often leaving me incapable of maintaining a necessary emotional distance from issues in the field, and thereby impeding to some levels, my own capacity to function due to experiencing spells of severe disappointment, frustration, and secondhand trauma from prolonged and repeated exposure to the hardships, neglect, deaths, and disease that homeless and begging populations were living with or fighting up against. However, these moments were, nonetheless, a constant reminder of my own relatively privileged social location and good fortune, so to speak, and the only fair thing for me to do after gaining intimate familiarity with this peculiarly

¹⁹ Johnstone B.A. (2007) Ethnographic methods in entrepreneurship research in Neergaard H. and Ulhøi, J.P. (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Entrepreneurship*, Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar

marginalised and stigmatised community and being sensitised to their lived reality, was to go back with an intention to do some justice to their subjective experiences through the medium of this research.

At the same time, my familiarity with the issues pertaining to begging and homelessness, and prior knowledge and experience of working with various criminal justice institutions and custodial populations aided significantly in gaining better access to people and places. Similarly, being a woman provided easy and meaningful access to the begging and homeless women and transgender participants. Without the threat of being approached by a male stranger, the women on most occasions spoke freely and at length about their experiences in the city as begging and/or homeless people. Although, I carry to no visible identity marker as a Muslim person, in those instances when the participants were Muslims and had that knowledge about me, it has probably helped the process by building a degree of trust due to a perceived sense of shared belief system.

Thus, it places me at a critical position as a researcher who may be an insider with “inside” knowledge and understanding of the community, but may not share the exact same experiences as the participants. It must be mentioned here that even when my being a cis-woman has helped me approach and interact more easily with women, it has not by default discouraged me from speaking to men or made my access to homeless and begging men any less difficult, and this, I must emphasise, was the case when my regular and most effective fieldwork hours in both the cities of Delhi and Mumbai were only after six in the evening. I am not denying the possibility that male participants would have initially been hesitant or shy of speaking at length with a woman. Indeed, in some cases I had to try harder to get many of them to give up their monosyllabic or one-liner responses, and express themselves in some detail.

However, the more important point I am trying to make is about the fact that in my experience, as a 27-28-year-old woman working in the field until late in the evenings with begging and homeless people that included men, I have never faced any threat or harassment, sexual in nature or otherwise, from any of the male or female participants of the study. There was only one stray incident that I can recall when one of the participants, a physically disabled man, tried to yell from the other side of the road

when he saw me, asking me to stop because he had something “important” to ask (“important *baat puchchni thi aapse...*”). He tried to limp across the busy street on his only leg using the stick he balance himself on, and was probably also drunk. That was the only instance that caused me to worry for a couple of minutes, but mostly because the mere thought of the disabled participant, visibly intoxicated, trying to cross a busy street to speak to me, but getting run over by a fast moving vehicle in process itself was extremely disturbing.

To present the notion of the insider-outsider only in a dualistic manner as binary concepts is therefore be too simplistic and restrictive. It may narrow our understanding of our positionality, and limit the scope of our experience as a researcher. Having found myself in both “we” and “us”, and “they” and “them” statuses I am probably exploring a position of what has been called “the space between” by Dwyer and Buckle (2009). They challenge the dichotomy of the insider versus outsider status of a researcher as follows:

“Holding a membership in a group does not denote complete sameness within that group. Likewise, not being a member of a group does not denote complete difference [...]. Perhaps, as researchers we can only ever occupy the space between. We may be closer to the insider position or closer to the outsider position, but because our perspective is shaped by our position as a researcher (which includes having read much literature on the research topic), we cannot fully occupy one or the other of those positions.”

– (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, pp. 60-61)

Thus, as a researcher care has been taken not to “go native”²⁰ and be aware of both the similarities and differences with the research participants. The distinction between the researcher and participant has “traditionally existed more strongly in theory than in practice” and “objectification of the self has occurred in the analysis rather than the fieldwork” (Adler and Adler, 1987 quoted in Dwyer, 2009). Further, as Sherry (2006) puts it: “By being reflective about the impact of being identified as an insider, and

²⁰ At the more qualitative end of the research methods spectrum, the phrase “going native” encapsulates the development of a sense of “overrapport” or “overidentification” between researcher and those “under study” (see Kanuha, V.K., 2000).

highlighting the effects that this identity had on the nature of the data collected, such connections with the field can be regarded as strength of a particular form of immersed qualitative research” (cited in Given, 2008, p. 433).

Access and gatekeeper

Since ethnography involves working with human subjects during face-to-face interviews, on-site observations, etc. it is essential to understand the importance of gaining appropriate access to the intended participants. *Access* refers to “the appropriate ethical and academic practices used to gain entry to a given community for the purposes of conducting a formal research” (Given, 2008, p. 2). The first and foremost consideration in gaining access to research participants ensure no harm is done, and that such access is ethically sound and takes adequate care to protect their psychological, physical, and/or professional well being. It is necessary that any intended qualitative research receive the appropriate formal research ethics clearance from the researcher’s home institutional review board.

For this research, the process began after procuring such clearance from an Ethics Review Committee constituting of three members including the head of the department, another faculty member, and an external faculty member from a different department. Further, access to custodial institutions (Beggar Home) was gained by writing to respective government department offices (Department of Women and Child Development for Chembur beggar home, and Department of Social Welfare for Sevakutir RCC) requesting for necessary permission, meeting appropriate government officials, and getting clearances and permission letters from authorities as per standard protocol. The process took several months in case of Mumbai, but access was gained and fieldwork conducted successfully. However, in case of Delhi, there was no response from the department. On making telephonic inquiry for permissions, it was found that some of the officials had no clear idea of the fact that the beggar homes fell under the jurisdiction of their department. Eventually, the place became accessible for a visit and some informal interviews through two civil society initiatives; namely, *Koshish* and *Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses (SPYM)*, which run within its premises to provide services to the custodial population. These

organisations thereby also functioned as “gatekeepers” to the research at its various stages.

Gatekeepers too are a means of access in qualitative research. According to Jensen (cited in Given, 2008), “Gatekeepers are individual who can be used as an entry point to a specific community. Gatekeepers will have “inside” information, and can help the researcher in determining who are the best participants to access in the given community or organization” (p. 2). They also facilitate the process of access by introducing the researcher to the community, and help in establishing rapport with potential participants, generally ensuring a congenial environment for the research process to unfold.

In this particular study access to the community was relatively less difficult, firstly, due to my familiarity with the locations, Delhi and Mumbai; and secondly, to a due to the certain ‘insider’ status that I have explained above. These reasons in turn made it possible for me to identify the gatekeepers for the study. The role of the gatekeeper has been crucial in the process of gathering data particularly from the begging and homeless community members of Nizamuddin in Delhi, and from inmates at beggar home, Chembur.

Research participants and the researcher’s accountability

Accountability refers to the obligations that the researcher has to the various stakeholders in the research process such as the research participants and the researcher’s home institution. Being accountable to the participants may include: an explanation of how they have been identified, clarification of the nature and extent of participation so that the potential participants can provide informed consent, and assurance that the study will not adversely affect them (Ballinger cited in Given, 2008). In this study accountability becomes even more significant because I am an insider to a certain extent. Unlike outsiders, who tend to have fixed plans of entry and withdrawal from the field, insiders are expected to have an ongoing connection with the research participants, and therefore be more accountable for their research and responsive to community concerns (Sherry, 2006). Moreover, it has been noticed that

as an insider, knowing the language and being familiar with the culture of the participant go a long way in building their trust. At the same time, the insider researcher is expected to be aware of community sensibilities and be sensitive to use of language. While acknowledging the similarities between the researcher and the participants in terms of place of origin, culture, or ethnicity, it has been found that it is also essential to be thoughtful about the influences of the differences such as gender, age, education, etc. that may affect the nature of data gathered.

Ethics in social science research

Ethical concerns become extremely important in social science research as one constantly deals with human subjects. There is a growing interest in research ethics in the twenty-first century due to the increasing ethical regulation of social research. While some academics argue that qualitative research poses minimal risks to participants and consider the ethical review of research by research ethics committees as both unnecessary and detrimental to social science research, there are others who like to think differently. They believe that social science research is never risk free and that researchers need to think through ethical issues and develop their ethical thinking. As pointed out by Wiles (2013), “Despite considerable critiques of regulation, systems of ethical review have become embedded in most research institutions. This has heightened researchers’ awareness of ethical issues and highlighted the need of training and resources to enhance researchers’ ‘ethical literacy’” (p. 2). Accordingly, Wiles comes up with three basic premises with respect to ethics in qualitative research; they are:

- i) Researchers need to consider ethical issues throughout the entirety of their research;
- ii) Gaining an understanding of the different philosophical approaches to research ethics and identifying an approach that fits with the moral and intellectual framework of the researchers so as to help them to engage with issues that emerge as their research unfolds; and

- iii) Despite the well-known horror stories of unethical conduct, most ethical issues with which researchers grapple are relatively mundane and everyday, but no less important for that.

Ethical considerations in line with present study

Though a number of the basic principles listed below focus on the individual, as opposed to the collective, indicating a certain Western bias toward individualism in research ethics, it is necessary to be mindful about such biased perspective and go for alternative, more collective ways of viewing research ethics whenever possible.

Respect for persons

Respect for persons at all stages of the research process is one of the fundamental ethical principles and it incorporates two essential considerations; namely, respect for autonomy, and protection of vulnerable persons in the form of abiding by the principles of: a) informed consent and voluntariness; and b) Confidentiality and privacy (see for example, Fontes, 2004; Ellsberg and Heise, 2005). For the purpose of this study, participants can be informed verbally about the intended study stage-by-stage. Also, it would be useful to brief the families and the community as a whole through community leaders about the study so as to get their support throughout the period of gathering data. The briefing may include among other concerns the following points pertaining to consent and voluntariness:

- *No overt or covert coercion*: In their attitude and demeanor, the researcher needs to ensure that they are not overly influencing participants with their authority or their convictions about how worthwhile the study is, or how the professional knows best, or how their participation won't hurt them, etc.
- *Right not to respond and to withdraw*: To ensure autonomous choice, it must be clarified at the very outset that participants have the right to choose not to respond. It is also important to inform the participants about their withdrawal options at any stage of the study. The researchers could also give the

participants certain decision points at different stages of the interview. For example, the researcher could say, “The next few questions are concerning your role and responsibility within the family. Do you wish to continue?”

- *Soliciting participation and accurate reporting:* With the help of community leaders and local authorities, it might be possible to solicit better participation from the community and accurate reporting for the questions being asked. For this to happen, it is essential to state the intended purpose of the study to the concerned authorities with a degree of caution. As pointed out by Fontes (2004), cultural issues can certainly complicate the consent process. Therefore, it is possible to solicit participation by discussing certain aspects of the study, one stage at a time, and asking them for their consent for the same before proceeding further.
- *Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality:* The researcher must ensure participants about the anonymity and confidentiality of the information provided in course of the study. Issues of confidentiality become particularly difficult in studies where multiple members of a family are interviewed and especially so if participants need to be queried about violence, substance abuse, etc. Moreover, it is also advisable to inform participants about nature of future use of the information. Participants at some point might want certain information to be deleted out or never be reproduced in any manner. In that case, it is necessary to hold their wishes with utmost regard.
- *Participants' concerns for safety:* In case participants do not want to answer certain questions or withdraw, it might or might not be possible to get their perspective on what they considered as a threat. However, in case discomfort on the part of the participant is sensed, it is advisable for the researcher to stop or change the line of inquiry. It is essential that participants do not feel threatened, perceived or actual, as a consequence of divulging any kind of information, because in many cultures information is considered as being owned collectively rather than by an individual (Fontes, 2004).

- *Respect for participants' time:* One of the most important yet often easily forgotten is the concern for the participants' time, space and convenience during the study. Researchers must take care not to infringe upon the time and convenience of their participants by coming in the way of their work or daily routine. Therefore, it is important to negotiate a time and place convenient to both parties before the process of inquiry begins.

Maximising benefits to participants and communities (Beneficence)

The principle of beneficence refers to the ethical responsibility of the researchers to maximise possible benefits to study participants and the communities to which individual participants belong. It also concerns with balancing of such benefits against the risks of participation. Hence, maximising of benefits by implication would mean minimising risk factors.

Recommendations regarding maximising benefits for participants:

- *Direct, concrete and immediate benefits if possible:* Many studies provide participants with a monetary benefit as a token of appreciation for their valuable time and active participation. However, researchers can exercise creativity in terms of designing benefits and think of items that may mean more to the participants. In the context of a rural tribal household, it may be considered respectable to gift certain food items, for instance.
- *Making information available:* Researchers can make available to participants information related to the subject of study, of course keeping in mind the need of the situation (for example, pamphlets relating to women's health services, family health education, women's shelter, crime against women services, etc.).
- *Planning benefits through resource mobilization:* Researchers can also plan in benefits to the participants' community if the researchers are willing to share their time and knowledge to meet any of community needs that become evident in course of the study. For example, in the rural tribal area, there still may be prevalence of child marriage and low rate of education among the

women. The researcher can mobilize community resources and network with grassroots-level organisation to conduct a Family Health Education programme could be organised, etc. to educate women about the risks involved in early pregnancy, and indirectly also spread some awareness about the laws in the place.

Avoid doing harm (Nonmaleficence)

The Helsinki Protocol articulates: “Research should be carried out only if the potential benefits of a study outweigh any potential harms” and “the well-being of participants takes precedence over the interests of ‘science and society’.” (cited in Fontes, 2004: p. 165).

Justice

Distribution of risks, if any, due to the research and the endeavour to mitigate the same is also an issue of ethical import. Also attempts must be made in order that benefits the research brought forward by the study may be distributed fairly among the people without biases and prejudice. It is hoped that by following these lines of action and precautions, the negative impact, in terms of ethical concerns, will be kept at a minimum or zero level.

Conclusion

This chapter elucidated the various methodological concerns associated with the study at hand. It provides a detailed description of the qualitative research design, the appropriateness of the multi-sited ethnographic method, and the middle-ground approach employed for the purpose of this study. Further, it also explains how these methodological tools and frameworks complement and justify the use of interactionism as a theoretical approach, while trying not only to analyse and make sense of the data it gathers or produces, but also to guide the process of inquiry and research design itself. This chapter also describes the personal experience of *doing* ethnography in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai, and the motivations, challenges,

setbacks, learning and ethical considerations involved in the process: both while being in the field for data collection from various stakeholders involved in the study, and also while making sense of their subjective truths and lived realities in a just and coherent manner in course of organising data and writing them out; albeit with due acknowledgement of the fact of my presence during this whole intervention, as an instrument, as it were, that is constantly re-interrogating, re-examining, and re-interpreting the material that is being presented in the light of every novel information and every piece of fresh evidence, that may sometimes even seem contrary.

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CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH SETTING

Introduction

Once ethnography has been chosen as the suitable research strategy, the next step is to identify a sampling technique to match the purpose or objects of the study in order to gather or produce relevant data from the field. This process begins by defining the *universe* or *population* for the study, selecting the *sample*, and then identifying the most effective techniques for data collection and their analysis. Moreover, as pointed out by Atkinson et al. (2001), “Whatever the range of data collection techniques...ethnographic research remains firmly rooted in the first-hand exploration of research settings. It is this sense of social exploration and protracted investigation that gives ethnography its abiding and continuing character.” (p. 5). This chapter would therefore focus on the details of ethnographic settings in which social action pertaining to this study takes place; namely, in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai. It defines the universe of the study and describes the particularities as well as connectedness of the locations in which the begging communities lived and worked. Though this chapter also acknowledges and presents some official statistics on begging and homeless populations for both the cities, the study mostly relies on original qualitative data produced through extensive fieldwork with the communities and associated institutions to come up with all major findings.

Furthermore, this chapter describes how specific data gaps within various categories that emerged in course of data collection were saturated using additional fieldwork following the theoretical sampling technique. A preliminary presentation of the data produced for both cities, along with broad classifications for each, as well as in cumulative, is also provided towards the end to aid further analyses and interpretation in the consequent discussion chapters.

Sampling

Sampling is the research exercise of first, defining the full set of possible data sources, which is generally referred to as the *universe* or *population*; and then, selecting a specific *sample* of the data sources from that population (Given, 2008).

Defining the Universe

The Universe of this study has been defined on the basis of purposive sampling that works by defining the various kinds of data sources that are of interest to the study (Given, 2008). Here, the universe consists of the begging and homeless populations, and agents of the state or civil society organisations that deal with the said populations, either in their community or custodial settings, in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai. The idea is to obtain the perspectives of various stakeholders on the primary subject under study; that is, the practice of begging. A simple review of literature on the homeless populations in different parts of the world makes it apparent that beggars are often a migrant and mobile population, and as such, it would be meaningful to compare begging populations of two of the biggest cities in India in order to avoid hasty generalisations and to begin an in-depth enquiry into begging as a distinct social phenomenon.

Selection of fieldwork sites: Delhi and Mumbai

New Delhi (or “Dilli” in Hindi) is an urban district of Delhi which serves as the capital of the Union of India, and seat of all three branches of the Government of India: legislature, executive, and judiciary. Colloquially speaking, Delhi and New Delhi are often used interchangeably to refer to the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT), even though New Delhi, with a total area of 42.7 sq. kms., is only a small part of the much larger entity referred to as the National Capital Region (NCR). Delhi’s urban area that now extends beyond the NCT to include the neighbouring cities of Faridabad, Gurgaon, Noida and Ghaziabad is referred to as Central National Capital Region (CNCR), and has a population pegged at 26 million people as of the year 2016, making it the world’s second largest according to the United Nations. The

land for building the new city of Delhi was acquired under the Land Acquisition Act 1894, after the Government of British India announced its decision to shift the capital of the Raj from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Delhi on 12 December 1911. Inaugurated on 10 February 1931 by the then Viceroy, Lord Irwin, large parts of New Delhi were planned and designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker, both leading 20th century British architects, which is also why the city continues to be referred to as “Lutyens’ Delhi” even to this day. In post-independent India, the major extension of New Delhi outside of the Lutyens’ Delhi took place in the 1950s with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) that undertook the planning and development of a vast stretch of land southwest of Lutyens’ Delhi for the construction of the diplomats’ enclave in Chanakyapuri and around Shanti Path.²¹

In terms of demographics, the Union Territory of Delhi has a registered population of 16.7 million as per the 2011 Population Census, with the Municipal Corporation of New Delhi accounting for a population of 257, 803. New Delhi has a literacy rate of 89.38%, highest in Delhi. According to the 2011 census, Hinduism is the religion of the majority population; that is 89.8%. Other communities include Muslims (4.5%), Christians (2.9%), Sikhs (2.0%), Jains (0.4%) with Parsis, Buddhists and Jews accounting for a miniscule of the overall population. As of 2011, the average sex ratio of New Delhi is 822. Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations constitute 23.4% and 0% respectively as per the last population census.

²¹ See Wikipedia entry for “New Delhi” at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Delhi last accessed on 20-11-2018.

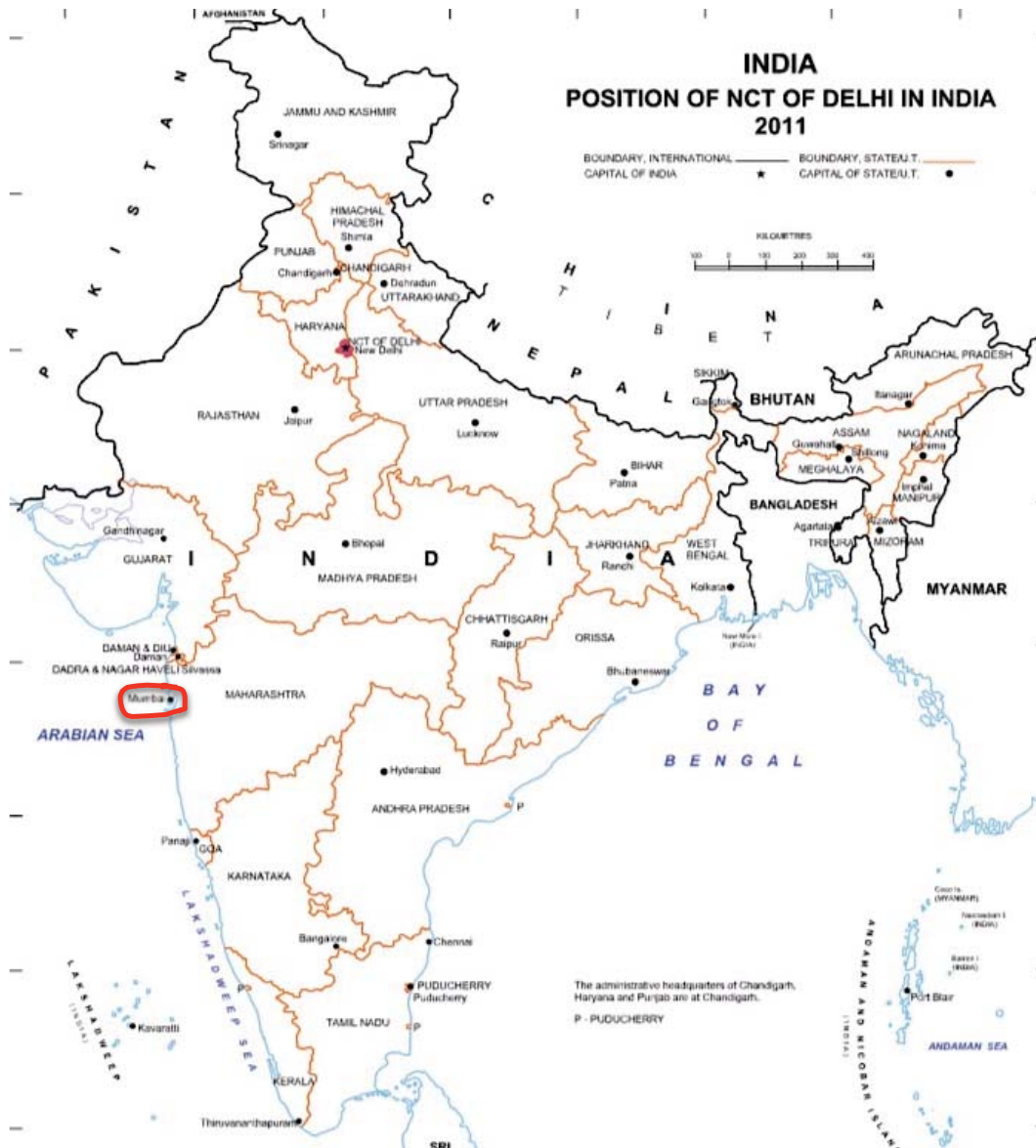


Figure 1 Position of NCT of Delhi and Mumbai in India (Image courtesy: Directorate of Census Operations Delhi/GoI Copyright, 2011)



Figure 2 Administrative Divisions of NCT of Delhi (Image courtesy: Directorate of Census Operations Delhi /GoI Copyright, 2011)



Figure 3 Density of Population in NCT of Delhi (Image courtesy: Directorate of Census Operations Delhi/GoI Copyright, 2011).

Mumbai is the capital city of the Indian state of Maharashtra. It is also commonly referred to by its older name, Bombay (or “Bambai” in Hindi). As of 2011, it was the most populous city in India with an estimated city proper population of 12.4 million people. Together with the adjoining regions of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), it is the second most populous metropolitan area in India with a population of 21.3% as of 2016 according to the United Nations. It is reportedly also the wealthiest city in the country with the highest number of millionaires and billionaires in India. Historically speaking, the seven islands of Bombay were 16th century Portugese territories that were subsequently ceded to the East India Company in 1661 as part of her dowry when Catherine of Braganza married Charles II of England.

In 1782 Governor William Hornby started one of the first major civil engineering projects, the Hornby Vellard project, under which the seven islands were united into a single island with a deep natural harbour.²² This 18th century reshaping of Bombay that began along with construction of major roads and railways was completed in 1845, transforming Bombay into a major seaport on the Arabian Sea. During the 19th century, Bombay witnessed major economic and educational development, and consequently, became a strong base for the Indian independence movement by the 20th century. At the time of independence in 1947, the city was incorporated in Bombay State, which was later dissolved in 1960 to form the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. Bombay then became the capital of the new state of Maharashtra.

Mumbai today is often viewed as the financial and entertainment capital of India. It is the third most expensive office market in the world, and was ranked among the fastest cities in the country for business startup in 2009 by the World Bank. Greater Mumbai covers an area of 603 sq. kms., comprising of the Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban districts. It extends from Colaba in the south, to Mulund and Dahisar in the north, and Mankhurd in the east, and is administered by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), also commonly referred to as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), India’s richest municipal corporation.²³ In terms of

²² See Wikipedia entry for “Hornby Vellard.”

Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornby_Vellard last accessed on 20-11-2018.

²³ See Wikipedia entry for “Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.”

Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brihanmumbai_Municipal_Corporation last accessed on 20-11-2018.

demographics, Greater Mumbai under the administration of BMC has a literacy rate of 94.7% (higher than the national average of 86.7%), and the sex ratio of 832 females per 1000 males as of 2011. The number of slum dwellers is estimated to be 9 million, accounting for 62% of all Mumbaikars. Dharavi, Asia's second largest slum located in the heart of Mumbai houses roughly one million people in 2.39 sq. kms., making it one of the most densely populated areas on this planet.



Figure 6 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) head office, Aazad Maidan (Image courtesy: Shutterstock).

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²⁴ See Wikipedia entry for "Hornby Vellard" at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornby_Vellard last accessed on 20-11-2018.

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In terms of religion, though it has a majority Hindu population (65.99%), Mumbai is more diverse as compared to Delhi, as it includes higher proportions of populations belonging to religious minorities, such as Muslims (20.65%), Buddhists (4.85%), Jains (4.10%), and Christians (3.27%) with exception to Sikhs (0.49%). It is supposedly also home to the largest – though rapidly declining – population of Parsi Zoroastrians in the world.²⁶ The percentage of SCs population was 7.1% and that of STs was 0.8%.²⁷

²⁵ See Wikipedia entry for "Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation."
Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brihanmumbai_Municipal_Corporation last accessed on 20-11-2018.

²⁶ See Wikipedia entry for "Mumbai."

Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai> last accessed on 20-11-2018.

²⁷ See *District Census Handbook – Mumbai: Village and Town Wise Primary Census Abstract* (2014) published by the Directorate of Census Operations, Maharashtra.
Retrieved from: http://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/2723_PART_B_DCHB_%20MUMBAI.pdf last accessed on 20-11-2018.

Table 1. 1 Delhi: B-13 non-workers by main activity, age and sex

Table Name	State Code	Distt. Code	Area Name	Total/		Age-group						Main activity																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																												
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B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	20-24	38642	13103	25539	7	4	4	3
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	25-29	27254	3882	23372	9	4	4	5
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	30-34	21387	1438	19949	9	5	5	4
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	35-39	18551	856	17695	16	15	15	1
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	40-49	28985	1382	27603	36	23	23	13
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	50-59	20311	2136	18175	31	22	22	9
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	60-69	18899	5917	12982	36	23	23	13
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	70-79	9700	3643	6057	9	7	7	2
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	80+	4337	1652	2685	4	4	4	0
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	Age not stated	496	214	282	0	0	0	0
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	15-59	202173	45707	156466	110	74	74	36
B1313	07	095	District - Central (06)	Total	60+	32936	11212	21724	49	34	34	15

Source: Census of India, 2011 retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>

B1413SC	07	000	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	Urban	70-79	26204	11334	14870	9	4	5
B1413SC	07	000	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	Urban	80+	10272	4013	6259	12	7	5
B1413SC	07	000	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	Urban	Age not stated	1934	828	1106	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	000	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	Urban	15-59	954322	245357	708965	169	85	84
B1413SC	07	000	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	Urban	60+	109126	41842	67284	72	49	23
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	Total	20961	8085	12876	4	2	2
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	0-4	2516	1352	1164	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	5-14	6038	3194	2844	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	15-19	3265	1677	1588	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	20-24	2632	946	1686	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	25-29	1621	311	1310	1	0	1
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	30-34	1000	100	900	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	35-39	878	37	841	1	1	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	40-49	1432	52	1380	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	50-59	712	75	637	1	0	1
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	60-69	484	200	284	1	1	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	70-79	227	85	142	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	80+	115	42	73	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	Age not stated	41	14	27	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	15-59	11540	3198	8342	3	1	2
B1413SC	07	094	District - New Delhi (05)	Urban	60+	826	327	499	1	1	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	Total	94111	32763	61348	13	7	6
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	0-4	11146	5899	5247	1	1	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	5-14	24315	12776	11539	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	15-19	12356	5878	6478	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	20-24	10283	3339	6944	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	25-29	7380	1047	6333	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	30-34	5534	391	5143	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	35-39	4741	215	4526	1	1	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	40-49	6950	337	6613	5	2	3
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	50-59	4328	577	3751	5	2	3
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	60-69	4376	1398	2978	1	1	0

B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	70-79	1886	645	1241	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	80+	692	211	481	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	Age not stated	124	50	74	0	0	0
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	15-59	51572	11784	39788	11	5	6
B1413SC	07	095	District - Central (06)	Urban	60+	6954	2254	4700	1	1	0

Census of India, 2011 retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>

Table 2. 1 Mumbai: B-13 non-workers by main activity, age and sex

Table Name	State Code	Distt. Code	Area Name	Total/		Age-group						Main activity																
				Rural/	Urban/	5	6	Non Workers			Main activity																	
								Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		
				Urban	Total	5621941	2087001	3534940	1444	905	539																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	Total	5621941	2087001	3534940	1444	905	539																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	0-4	648076	338108	309968	49	35	14																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	5-14	1427955	750770	677185	190	111	79																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	15-19	690497	351855	338642	93	62	31																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	20-24	524750	196050	328700	121	78	43																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	25-29	365327	60401	304926	106	71	35																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	30-34	293929	26667	267262	122	77	45																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	35-39	269463	18989	250474	104	68	36																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	40-49	441466	32964	408502	203	143	60																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	50-59	355602	64367	291235	172	96	76																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	60-69	342053	134227	207826	157	89	68																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	70-79	175779	77845	97934	79	44	35																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	80+	68048	27091	40957	31	18	13																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	Age not stated	18996	7667	11329	17	13	4																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	15-59	2941034	751293	2189741	921	595	326																	
B1313	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Urban	60+	585880	239163	346717	267	151	116																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	Total	1801015	663599	1137416	831	546	285																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	0-4	189193	98595	90598	20	11	9																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	5-14	424707	222153	202554	102	62	40																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	15-19	213727	108318	105409	36	26	10																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	20-24	169331	66323	103008	73	60	13																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	25-29	118070	22984	95086	82	61	21																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	30-34	94484	10915	83569	70	50	20																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	35-39	87400	8014	79386	57	37	20																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	40-49	148734	14140	134594	104	71	33																	
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	50-59	123364	24335	99029	116	72	44																	

B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	60-69	121403	44914	76489	91	56	35
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	70-79	69989	27677	42312	49	25	24
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	80+	32217	11952	20265	23	9	14
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	Age not stated	8396	3279	5117	8	6	2
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	15-59	955110	255029	700081	538	377	161
B1313	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Urban	60+	223609	84543	139066	163	90	73

Source: Census of India, 2011 retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>

Table 2. 2 Mumbai: B-13 non-workers by main activity, age and sex (scheduled castes)

Table Name	State Code	Distt. Code	Area Name	Total/		Age-group						Main activity		
				Rural/Urban/		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	Total	355359	135449	219910	69	31	38			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	0-4	44916	23622	21294	2	2	0			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	5-14	96483	50051	46432	2	1	1			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	15-19	47707	23328	24379	6	2	4			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	20-24	38205	13250	24955	3	1	2			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	25-29	24991	4531	20460	4	3	1			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	30-34	16778	1843	14935	3	3	0			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	35-39	14576	1249	13327	2	0	2			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	40-49	23984	2098	21886	9	7	2			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	50-59	18731	3840	14891	13	6	7			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	60-69	17540	7109	10431	17	3	14			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	70-79	7509	3112	4397	6	2	4			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	80+	2804	986	1818	2	1	1			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	Age not stated	1135	430	705	0	0	0			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	15-59	184972	50139	134833	40	22	18			
B1413SC	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	60+	27853	11207	16646	25	6	19			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	Total	135823	50952	84871	16	5	11			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	0-4	14130	7407	6723	1	0	1			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	5-14	32346	16547	15799	0	0	0			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	15-19	17359	8689	8670	0	0	0			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	20-24	14824	5843	8981	0	0	0			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	25-29	10401	2432	7969	2	1	1			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	30-34	7474	1139	6335	1	0	1			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	35-39	6365	701	5664	1	0	1			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	40-49	10606	1144	9462	1	0	1			
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	50-59	8209	1942	6267	2	1	1			

B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	60-69	8146	3123	5023	4	2	2
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	70-79	3904	1360	2544	4	1	3
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	80+	1526	422	1104	0	0	0
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	Age not stated	533	203	330	0	0	0
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	15-59	75238	21890	53348	7	2	5
B1413SC	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	60+	13576	4905	8671	8	3	5

Source: Census of India, 2011 retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>

Table 2. 3 Mumbai: B-13 non-workers by main activity, age and sex (scheduled tribes)

Table Name	State Code	Distt. Code	Area Name	Total/ Rural/ Urban/	Age-group	Non Workers						Main activity		
						Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Beggars, Vagrants etc.		
1	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	26	27	28			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	Total	60434	23439	36995	34	15	19			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	0-4	8001	4217	3784	1	1	0			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	5-14	17347	8949	8398	9	6	3			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	15-19	7644	3791	3853	1	0	1			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	20-24	5739	2077	3662	1	0	1			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	25-29	4157	761	3396	2	0	2			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	30-34	3063	354	2709	1	0	1			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	35-39	2610	252	2358	0	0	0			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	40-49	4089	441	3648	7	3	4			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	50-59	3139	710	2429	6	3	3			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	60-69	2753	1127	1626	4	1	3			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	70-79	1184	494	690	2	1	1			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	80+	469	167	302	0	0	0			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	Age not stated	239	99	140	0	0	0			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	15-59	30441	8386	22055	18	6	12			
B1513ST	27	518	District - Mumbai Suburban (22)	Total	60+	4406	1788	2618	6	2	4			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	Total	14360	5558	8802	19	12	7			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	0-4	1718	893	825	0	0	0			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	5-14	3761	1945	1816	5	5	0			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	15-19	1732	902	830	1	0	1			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	20-24	1478	574	904	3	2	1			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	25-29	928	200	728	2	2	0			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	30-34	736	105	631	0	0	0			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	35-39	619	61	558	1	0	1			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	40-49	1137	110	1027	2	1	1			
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	50-59	836	176	660	1	1	0			

B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	60-69	804	342	462	3	0	3
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	70-79	388	165	223	1	1	0
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	80+	168	60	108	0	0	0
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	Age not stated	55	25	30	0	0	0
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	15-59	7466	2128	5338	10	6	4
B1513ST	27	519	District - Mumbai (23)	Total	60+	1360	567	793	4	1	3

Source: Census of India, 2011 retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>

Statistics on beggars

When it comes to beggars and vagrants, they are counted under the category of “non-workers” in the Census, and as of 2011, the total number of beggars in India is estimated to be 413,670. The 2001 Census defines the category of “non-workers” as follows:

“A person who did not do any work during the reference period²⁸ was treated as non-worker. The non-workers broadly constitute students who did not participate in any economic activity paid or unpaid, household duties who were attending to daily household chores like cooking, cleaning utensils, looking after children, fetching water etc. and are not even helping in the unpaid work in the family form or cultivation or milching, dependant such as infants or very elderly people not included in the category of worker, pensioners those who are drawing pension after retirement and are not engaged in any economic activity. Beggars, vagrants, prostitutes and persons having unidentified source of income and with unspecified sources of subsistence and not engaged in any economically productive work during the reference period.²⁹ Others, this category includes all Non-workers who may not come under the above categories such as rentiers, persons living on remittances, agricultural or non-agricultural royalty, convicts in jails or inmates of penal, mental or charitable institutions doing no paid or unpaid work and persons who are seeking/available for work.”³⁰

The percentage of non-workers to total population in New Delhi, as per the 2011 Census was 58.1%; that is, a total of 82,463 persons, of which 31,002 were male and

²⁸ As per the *Census of India 2011 Meta Data*, “Reference period for determining a person as worker and non-worker is one year preceding the date of enumeration” (p. 16).

²⁹ As per Census 2011, the household schedule has been revised to count sex workers under “Others” category instead of “Beggars, vagrants, etc.”
Retrieved from: http://censusindia.gov.in/Ad_Campaign/press/census2011.pdf last accessed on 23-11-2018.

³⁰ See *Census Data 2001* entry for “Metadata / Concepts and Definitions.” Retrieved from: <http://censusindia.gov.in/Metadata/Metada.htm#2q> last accessed on 21-11-2018.

51,461 female (see Table 1 and Figs. 7 and 8).³¹ As per the state-wise breakup, NCT of Delhi had a beggars' population of 2,187 persons, of which 1,343 were male and 844 female. More specifically, the total number of beggars for NCT urban was 2,054, of which 1,258 were male and 796 female (see Table 1).³² Caste-wise, the number of beggars belonging to SC category in the NCT urban was 275 persons (151 male and 124 female) (see Table 1.1). The numbers in Mumbai city for the population of non-workers were 1,801,015 (58.37%), of which 663,599 (39.39%) were male and 1,137,416 (81.20%) female.

Additionally, the number of non-workers for Mumbai Suburban was 5,621,941, of which 2,087,001 were male and 3,534,940 female. Similarly, the population of "beggars, vagrants, etc." in Mumbai city as of 2011 were 831 (546 male and 285 female) and Mumbai Suburban district were 1,444 (905 male and 539 female) respectively, making it a sum total of 2,275 persons for Mumbai (see Table 2.1). In Mumbai Suburban, the total number of beggars belonging to SC category was 69 (31 male and 38 female), and in Mumbai city, the number was 16 (5 male and 11 female). The numbers for ST population in begging for Mumbai city and Mumbai Sururban districts were 19 (12 male and 7 female) and 34 (15 male and 19 female) respectively (see Table 2.2 and 2.3). These numbers clearly indicate that begging is largely a male dominated activity. One of the main reasons for this occurrence could be related to the generally low sex ratio in the cities. Even as migration to urban areas has increased among women in recent years, it has been observed that while men migrate to the cities in search of employment, women report marriage (60%) and relocation of household (30%) as dominant factors for migration (Bhagat, 2017).

There are exceptions to this case though when begging populations in the cities are tallied by religion, and as we can see above, also by SC/ST categories in case of Mumbai, where more SC/ST women are begging as compared to their male counterpart. More Muslim women (52,306 or 56.38%), seem to be begging as compared to Muslim men (40,454 or 43.61%) as per the 2011 census, a trend that is

³¹ Joshi, V. / GoI (2013). *Census of India 2011-Primary Census Abstract: Data Highlights NCT of Delhi*, Directorate of Census Operations: New Delhi.

³² See Shri Vijay Sampla's answer to Lok Sabha unstarred question no. 1831 on "Problem of Beggary" to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, available at <http://164.100.47.190/loksabhaquestions/annex/7/AU1831.pdf> last accessed on 21-11-2018.

contrary to that of all religious communities except for those categorised as “other.” Moreover, the percentage of Muslims in begging is unusually high; that is, nearly 25% of the begging population is Muslim, as against the percentage of their total population in India, which is 14.23%, indicative therefore of gravely unequal access to government schemes and services to certain communities, compelling them to beg.³³

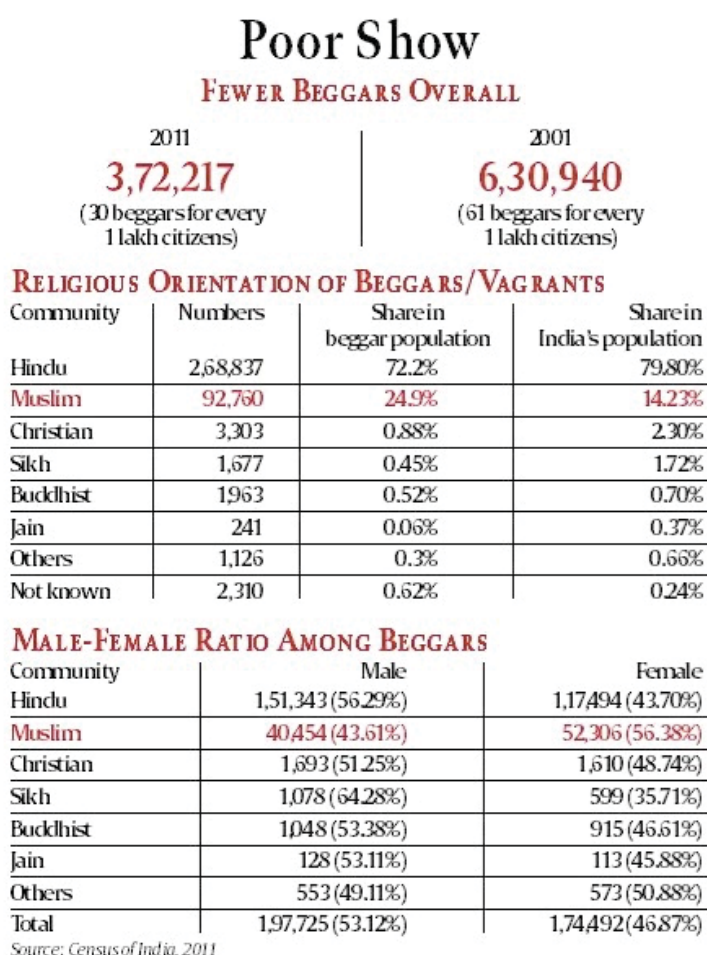


Figure 7 Population of beggars by religion and sex (Image courtesy: The Indian Express)

³³ See Shaikh, Z. “Every 4th person categorized as ‘beggar’ in India is Muslim,” *The Indian Express*, 29-07-2016. Available at <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/muslims-polpulation-in-india-muslims-beggar-unemployment-census-data-muslim-economic-survey-2941228/> last accessed on 23-11-2018.

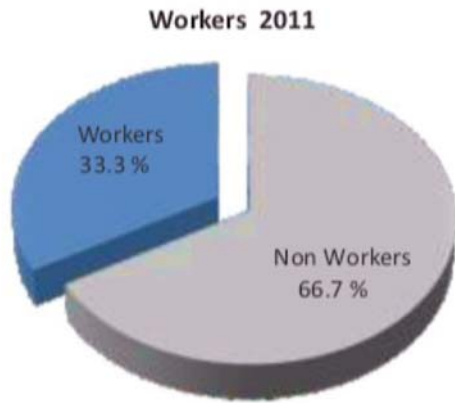


Figure 8 Non-workers population in NCT of Delhi (Image courtesy: Directorate of Census Operations Delhi /GoI Copyright, 2011)

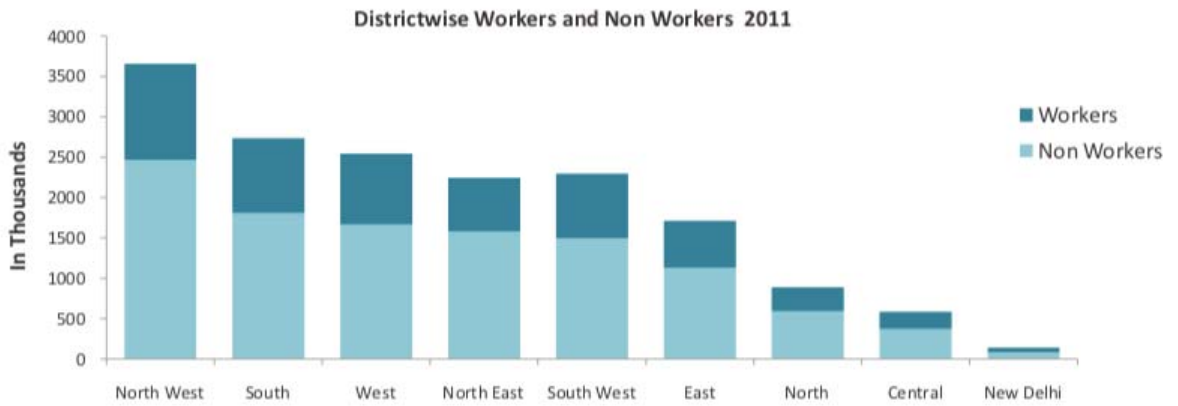


Figure 9 District-wise population of workers and non-workers for NCT of Delhi (Image courtesy: Directorate of Census Operations Delhi /GoI Copyright, 2011)

When it comes to unemployment trends among transgender individuals in India, it has been observed that the percentage of non-working persons in 28 of 36 states and Union Territories facing unemployment rates was higher than the total population. According to Venkat (2016), there also exists a rural to urban employment gap that suggested that third gender persons consistently report lower employment rates in urban areas in most states. The alternate is true, however, for the Union Territories of Delhi and Chandigarh where the rural/urban gap jumps to 26% and 38% respectively in favour of urban areas. However, the state-level 2011 Third Gender Table is demographically and spatially truncated, and as such, poses a variety of challenges when it comes to making credible estimates at city-level employment status of transgender population in India. It only examines a limited set of occupations: cultivators, agricultural labourers, household industry, and other. While cultivators and agricultural labourers dominate in most states, 41% of all employed third gender persons in India report their occupation as “other” as per Census 2011, without going into the specificities of the livelihood options available to them. As per available state-level data, therefore, the total number of persons who identified as transgenders and were enumerated under the non-workers category in 2011 in NCT urban and Maharashtra urban were 2,443 and 13,828 respectively, while the numbers for working persons were 1,677 and 13,828 respectively.

Statistics on “houseless” population

Another related category that could help us make sense of the demographics in both cities is the government statistics on “houseless” household as per the 2011 Census. This data could help ascertain the level of homelessness in the cities as accounted for by the state, albeit only approximately. Though homelessness and begging populations are not necessarily the same, and both phenomena are distinct with unique characteristics of their own, they do have certain overlaps due to their affinity to life on the streets and lived experience of marginality. The 2011 Census defines “houseless household” as follows:

“Households which do not live in buildings or Census houses but live in the open or roadside, pavements, in hume pipes, under fly-overs and staircases, or

in the open places of worship, mandaps, railway platforms, etc., are to be treated as Houseless households.”³⁴

The total number of houseless households in urban India as of 2011 was 256,896, and the total number of houseless persons was 938,348, of which 602,421 were male, and 335,927 female. The total number of houseless persons in the urban areas of NCT of Delhi was 46,724 (37,630 male and 9,094 female), with New Delhi having a houseless population of 2,044 (1,469 male and 575 female) and Central Delhi, of 8,957 (7,807 male and 1,150 female). The number of SC persons that are houseless in the NCT urban was 6,278 (4,608 male and 1,670 female) with New Delhi having 215 (133 male and 82 female) and Central Delhi having 972 (795 male and 177 female) houseless persons belonging to scheduled castes. The total number of houseless persons in Mumbai, excluding Mumbai Suburban, alone was 38,339 (30,427 male and 7,912 female). The SC and ST populations for the houseless in Mumbai city were 1,207 (765 male and 442 female) and 1,449 (808 male and 641 female), respectively. Mumbai Suburban, on the other hand, had a registered houseless population of 19,077 persons (12,674 male and 6403 female). The SC and ST populations that were houseless here were estimated to be 852 (465 male and 387 female) and 1,056 (581 male and 475 female), respectively. According to these numbers, Mumbai has a very high proportion of homeless women belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and in case of Mumbai Suburban, their numbers are almost equal to men.³⁵ The higher number of houseless persons in Mumbai is most likely also a consequence of the fact that unlike Delhi, Mumbai does not have homeless shelters.

Issues with census data on begging population

The census data, however, has not been used extensively for the purpose of this study. There are a number of reasons for not relying on the census data. First, the census data is extremely truncated and lack quality when it comes marginalised populations such as homeless and begging persons. Second, it clearly suffers from definitional

³⁴ See *Census of India 2011 Instruction Manual For Houselisting and Housing Census*, p. 9. Available at <http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-Documents/Houselisting%20English.pdf> last accessed on 21-11-2018.

³⁵ See Census 2011 “HH-2 Houseless Households by Household Size” available at <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/hh-series/hh02.html> last accessed on 23-11-2018

issues, whereby, it does not define whom it considers as “beggars” and how it distinguishes them from “vagrants” who may or may not be beggars. Third, it also does very little to explain or qualify overlaps between “houseless” and “institutional” populations, because as this particular study and available scientific literature repeatedly suggest these categories often coincide. Delhi and Mumbai have evolved overtime as two of the most important cities in the country with their own separate histories. Further, if one were to take the census data at its face value, it throws a alarming number when disability is cross-tabulated with begging population – that is, almost a third of begging population supposedly constitutes of persons with disability – which if true, signals towards major public health concerns. Moreover, we do not know if the same definitions of disability and being able-bodied also apply on beggars when they are arrested and institutionalised.

Lastly, the fieldwork for this particular study seems to indicate that the numbers of beggars in both the cities, and in general, is much higher than enumerated in the census. Besides, in the case of Delhi, the census seems to indicate that there isn’t a scheduled tribes population in the territory. So it is unclear if the nomadic, semi-nomadic and denotified tribes, that are homeless in the city are counted under the category of scheduled castes, or find a place in the census at all. These reasons stated above, and many more, make the credibility of census data a major suspect when it comes to the urban poor and extremely disenfranchised populations of our country. Therefore, this study would largely focus on first-hand ethnographic data to come to an understanding of begging (and to a certain extent of homeless) as a social phenomenon.

While Delhi is the nation’s capital, Mumbai is often referred to as the ‘economic capital’ of India. According to the *TOI-IMRB Quality of Life* survey conducted in 2011, Delhi and Mumbai scored an equal overall score of 2.95/5. While Delhi scored higher in terms of terms of sports and cultural facilities, schools, colleges, hospitals, cultural heritage, and open spaces, Mumbai scored higher on another set of indicators that include cosmopolitanism, work culture, night life, women friendliness, law and order, power and electricity, and piped water facilities. Delhi also scored higher than Mumbai in terms of housing, which may explain and fill some gaps relating to differences of homelessness and begging patterns in both cities. Although the

concept of homelessness is often conflated with begging, it is important to remember that they are two separate issues that may or may not overlap at all times. For instance, there are begging communities in Delhi that have homes within the city, and there are homeless people on the streets of Mumbai who are daily wage labourers, not beggars, but get wrongfully arrested under the vague clauses of the BPBA 1959. Hence, these sites were chosen for multi-sited ethnography with an assumption that the variation of setting for a population that shares common livelihood and survival strategies would make for an interesting comparison of their the subjective experiences of being beggars and/or homeless.

Accordingly, the sites chosen for fieldwork for the purpose of the study were these two major metropolitan cities of India – New Delhi and Mumbai. For the purpose of the study two busy locations frequented by tourists have been chosen in central and slightly south of Delhi. Henceforth, in the study the city would be referred to as “Delhi” instead of New Delhi. The specific fieldwork locations chosen in order to observe and engage with homeless and begging individuals in their natural settings were the Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah area (Nizamuddin Basti area, SPYM homeless shelters in the basti and inside Khusro Park) and Hanuman Mandir, Connaught Place in Delhi, and Aazad Maidan and some areas around Fort and Nariman Point in Mumbai.³⁶ Fieldwork was also conducted within the custodial settings of the beggar homes in Outram Lines (Delhi) and Chembur (Mumbai).

³⁶ The Amir Khusro Park community consisting of a few jhuggis and homeless shelters for women and children, where I conducted part of my fieldwork, ultimately fell prey to Delhi Development Authority’s demolition drive in the city in June 2017. The women and children were shifted to the male homeless shelter inside Nizamuddin Basti, while the homeless men had to be scattered out across shelters in nearby areas, primarily to the ones in Sarai Kale Khan. Prior to the demolition of the women and children’s shelters, the shelter in Nizamuddin Basti was only a night shelter. After the demolition and shifting of women and children there, it was converted into a 24 hours open shelter. Those that found it inconvenient to shift to other newer locations were likely to go back to rough sleeping or becoming homeless again. See more on the demolition at Khusro Park here: <https://caravanmagazine.in/vantage/dda-demolished-jhuggi-jhopri-amir-khusrau-park-rehabilitation> last accessed on 21-11-2018.



Figure 10 Pracheen Hanuman Mandir at Baba Kharak Singh Marg in Connaught Place, Delhi (Image courtesy: Chakravarty, S. /The Hindu, 2014).



Figure 11 Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, New Delhi (Image courtesy: Tripadvisor).



Figure 12 Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST), also referred to as Victoria Terminus at Fort, Mumbai (Image courtesy: Shutterstock).



Figure 13 Policemen on duty at Aazad Maidan, Mumbai (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016).



Figure 14 Inside the Seva Kutir Complex, Kingsway Camp, New Delhi (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2015).



Figure 15 Seva Kutir Complex houses the Beggar Home Retention-cum-Classification Centre at Kingsway Camp, New Delhi (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2015).

Selecting the Sample

This study selects non-probability samples once the eligible data sources are defined through purposive sampling. To say that one engages in “purposive sampling” means that one sees sampling as a series of strategic choices made over who, where, and how of conducting given research. This would imply that the way of drawing samples must be linked with the primary goals or objectives of the study. In fact, according to many scholars, purposive sampling is virtually synonymous with qualitative research, and depending on the objectives of the researchers the list of potential purposive strategies could be endless (Given, 2008).

To begin with a very simple classification for how the data for the current study has been collected, the sample could be divided into two distinct categories of data sources based on the underlying research objective, that is to come to a deeper sociological understanding of the twin phenomena of begging and homelessness in its various intricacies by gathering multiples perspectives from people engaging or associated with the practices. These are: a) the begging and the homeless populations of the cities of Delhi and Mumbai, and b) state and civil society actors who function closely with the said population in both these cities. As such, elementary units or vital data sources so defined from the mentioned categories of the sample are as follows:

- i. Begging individuals (further classified based on their setting, that is, street, shelter, beggar home, or personal residence)
- ii. Temporarily homeless individuals
- iii. Government institutions (police station and beggar homes)
- iv. Civil society organisations (SPYM and Koshish)

Sample-size

The present study based its sample-size to be determined in due course by the data collection process itself, thereby, stopping at a stage when the data started indicating

of stable patterns of responses to the point of saturation with regards to various theoretical concepts under inquiry.

Sampling technique

The sampling technique used in this study is theoretical sampling. This kind of sampling technique works effectively in studies that seek to arrive at a grounded theory by making credible and justifiable comparisons, putting into use a variety of samples of data including population, activities, fieldwork, events, or even time periods. Besides being a coherent technique to achieve data saturation, this kind of sampling helps to bring out a variety of experiences that can be compared to generate concepts, models and frameworks culminating in middle-range and micro-level theories. Through this study, an attempt is being made to insert myself into the depths of the field setting so that the potentiality of creating theoretical samples becomes more obvious.

Some of the major concepts which this study attempts to explore in the context of begging and homelessness through the application of this type of sampling are: class/caste biases, gender, overlapping experiences of multiple marginalisations, stigma from institutionalisation, carceral rehabilitation, the urban experience, politics of work, and resilience.

Materials for data collection

The most important tools used for data collection for this study were: Interview guides. Two separate interview guides consisting of a section to collect general information as well as a list of thematic open ended questions were designed for the two main categories of the sample; that is, begging population and police, custodial and civil society organisation staff (see Appendices I and II). Voice recorder and camera phone were used with consent of participants to record interviews. Camera phones were found to be far less intrusive for two important reasons. First, because they did not make participants who consented to photographed or recorded as conscious as the presence of technology such as a DSLR camera mostly used by journalists and tourists. Secondly, the fact that most participants were familiar with

cellphone with cameras, it was a relatively familiar and nonthreatening technology that helped bridge gap between researcher and participants. Notebooks and pen/pencil were used on occasions when audio recording otherwise was not possible or consented to.

In-depth interviews and other techniques of data collection

The various techniques being applied for data collection are: fieldwork, semi-structured in-depth interviews with all participants, audio-recording, field notes and memos, and observation techniques. *In-depth interviews* are interviews in which the participants are encouraged and prompted to talk in detail about the topic under investigation. In-depth interviews are suitable for data collection in a variety of methodologies including ethnographic studies like the present one. They are also referred to as *semi-structured interviews* because the researcher retains some control over the direction and content that is to be discussed, and yet the participants are free to elaborate or take the interview in new directions.

However, sole reliance on in-depth interviews might not allow a full investigation of the topic, because the participant and the researcher are limited by the ways of functioning of human memory, or the ability of the participants to recall and articulate their past and present experiences with accuracy within the timeframe of the interview. Also, this technique relies heavily on the ability of the researcher to ask the 'right' questions to prompt detailed discussions to aid analysis that may sometimes impede generation of relevant data above and beyond the categories identified by the researcher (Given 2008). Hence, to reduce these limitations during the study, data collected through in-depth interviews have often been combined with other forms of arriving at truths like observations, field notes, and additional documents that could add insight into the process of inquiry, in turn and improve the interviews as well (Schensul, 1999).

While collecting data it has been ensured that the participants are in natural setting, and the interviews are conducted according to their time and convenience, so as to achieve optimum results. Moreover, care has been taken that their responses are being audio-recorded only with their informed consent. Due to firsthand engagement with

the participants in course of various interactions and fieldwork, it has been found that they are comfortable being further contacted in course of the research, and would be interested in the findings. Being a participant observer during fieldwork also meant attending to some of the concerns expressed by community members and gatekeepers that are meaningful in establishing lasting rapport with the participants, but not directly associated with the scope of the current research. For example, getting a rape of a minor at a homeless shelter, and an alleged murder of a relative of a homeless family in the area of fieldwork reported in the press, keeping in regular touch with gatekeepers and revisiting fieldwork places to be in the know of the various issues pertaining to health and well being of research participants.

Data collection and presentation

Once access to the community is gained and the tools and techniques of data collection have been decided upon, it becomes possible to commence the process of gathering necessary data with the help of the gatekeeper. It also helps to remember that in an ethnographic study such as this one, data are not merely “collected” but “produced” (see for example Brown, 2009). This means that this method of inquiry seeks to create categories and reveal knowledge about the less known, less powerful from the perspective of the emic or insider, through sincere human endeavour; thereby not merely collecting data to fill already existing categories, but by building or generating newer domains for study.

Gathering and Producing Data

The in-depth interviews conducted with the help of the interview guides as mentioned above have been basically divided into the four categories of participants – begging individuals, temporarily homeless, government institutions, and civil society organisations – of which the first two categories presented with a considerable degree of overlap in matters pertaining both to access and analysis of their experiences due to shared circumstantial specificities that accompanied their vulnerable status. The presentation of the total number of in-depth interviews conducted for the purpose of the study as per aforementioned classification of data sources is given below:

Number of interviews in Delhi	= 29
Number of interviews in Mumbai	= 25
Total number of interviews	= 54

In Delhi, data was collected from two sites; namely, the areas around Pracheen Hanuman Mandir in Connaught Place and Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti around the dargah. In Nizamuddin, data was also collected from SPYM Homeless Shelters. A total of 29 interviews were conducted in these two locations. Participants belong to begging and homeless communities, some of whom use the shelter facilities, and from among the SPYM organisation staff running these shelters. Some of the caretaking staff is experiential, that is, they used to be begging and homeless individuals before they got employed by the organisation to look after these shelters. As such, the data presented below has been classified into four broad categories for the purpose of analysis: i) begging individuals; ii) temporarily homeless; iii) government institutions; and iv) civil society organisations (see Table 3.1). This is done in order to generate a more holistic picture of the phenomenon by bringing in viewpoints of various stakeholders associated with different dimensions of begging.

- i) **Begging individuals:** Of the 29 interviews, 20 are of individuals who begged or have begged at some point in their lives, 3 of people who did not beg but were homeless due and shared certain common experiences with the begging population. Of the 20 individuals who begged, 10 were men, 9 were cis-women, and 1 was a transgender woman. Individuals who begged are further subdivided on the basis of their housing situation, that is, whether they lived on the streets (rough sleeping), or in homeless shelters, or have homes somewhere within the city. Of the 10 men interviewed, 5 lived on the streets, 4 slept in a night shelter, and 1 had a private rented accommodation. Further, of the 9 women interviewed, 3 lived on the streets, 4 used shelters, and 2 lived in rented accommodation in the city.

Transgender women are rarely ever seen sleeping rough. The participant of this study also lived in private rented accommodation. In total, therefore, 8

of the 20 people who begged slept rough, 8 used shelters, and 4 had rented accommodations somewhere in the city. Based on the current sample, it is evident that more men rather than cis- and transgender women (50% men as compared to < 34% women and 0% transgender women) chose to live on the streets rather than in homeless shelters or rented accommodations.

- ii) Temporarily homeless:** Of the 29 participants, 3 – 2 men and 1 woman – did not beg but were temporarily homeless in the city. The woman was a nurse and lived in a homeless women’s shelter to save money to raise her children. The two men were self-employed, labour contractor and rickshaw puller, respectively. The participant who was a labour contractor eventually managed to earn enough to afford rented accommodation, while the rickshaw puller continued to sleep rough with other homeless begging individuals.

- iii) Government institutions:** The Beggar home (RCC, Seva kutir) in Delhi is empty these days since they do not make that many arrests under the BPBA 1959 any more. The rare cases that come in are usually that of sick or old people who voluntarily get arrested in order to find temporary shelter or treatment through the institution. There is a fair amount of sensitisation among cops regarding the futility of criminalising begging and homeless population. However, that is not the view of more elite sections of the police. One of the participants of the study was a Special Crime Branch officer, and he thought of begging as a racket run and controlled by a mafia, although he did not have any first hand evidence to prove the same.

- iv) Civil society organisations:** Of the 29 participants, 5 were from a civil society initiative that runs shelters for homeless people in the Nizamuddin area. One of the staff members was the gatekeeper who facilitated my entry into the Nizamuddin community, and was also a key informant for this study. Three participants in this category – 1 male and 2 female – were experiential staff, that is, they were homeless and/or begging individuals who now work in these shelters in different capacities with the homeless

community. Having shared common experiences provides them with better access and insight into the community/population they cater to. Moreover, having these jobs gave them a new life of dignity, thereby rehabilitating them. Including them in the count of people who used to beg increases the total number of participants under the first category to 23 – 11 male and 11 female.

Table 3. 1 Delhi: City-wise distribution of participants' interviews

PARTICIPANTS	BEGGING INDIVIDUALS			TEMP. HOMELESS	GOVERNMENT INSTTS.		CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS.		TOTAL	
	Street	Shelter	Home		Total	Employee	Inmate turned staff	Staff		Experiential staff
Male	5	4	1	10	2	1	-	2	1	16
Female	3	4	2	9	1	-	-	-	2	12
Transgender women	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	8	8	4	20	3	1	1	5	5	29

Source: Fieldwork

Table 3. 2 Mumbai: City-wise distribution of participants' interviews

PARTICI-PANTS	BEGGING INDIVIDUALS			TEMP. HOMELESS	GOVERNMENT INSTTS.		CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS.		TOTAL	
	Street	Beggar home	Home		Total	Employee	Inmate turned staff	Staff		Experiential staff
Male	-	4	-	4	-	2	1	2	-	9
Female	2	3	1	6	1	5	-	1	-	13
Transgender women	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
TOTAL	2	7	4	13	1	8		3		25

Source: Fieldwork

In Mumbai, data was collected both from the community end and from within the custodial institutions. Interviews were conducted with begging and homeless individuals of Aazad Maidan and Malad, custodial staff, social workers (Koshish staff) and male and female inmates at the Beggar home in Chembur, and the police at the Aazad Maidan Police Station (see Table 3.2). Of the 25 interviews, 13 were collected from the community end, and the other 12 from within various criminal justice institutional setups. As such, the data presented above has been classified into the same four categories as in the case of Delhi with slight variation in its composition. The major difference between the data gathered from both cities is the marked presence of the custodial narratives in the latter.

- i) **Begging individuals:** Of the 25 participants interviewed, 13 people begged and 1 individual had begged at some point in his life that led to his institutionalisation and conviction in 1978. But since 1992, following his voluntary commitment to the institution for life, he is considered more of an unofficial staff within the Beggar home. Of the 13 participants, 4 were men, 6 cis-women, and 3 transgender women. In terms of their housing situation, 2 lived on the streets, 7 were inside Beggar home, and 4 had rented accommodation somewhere in the city. The 2 interviews collected from the community end, both were that of women. Of the 7 participants from among the Beggar home inmates, 4 were from the male section and 3 from female section. Of the 4 begging individuals who lived in their own private accommodation, 1 was a disabled cis-woman, and 3 were transgender women with one of them still living in her parents' house. In the context of Mumbai, the sub-division of homeless shelter has been replaced by Beggar home because Mumbai doesn't have homeless shelters like Delhi, and Beggar home in many cases have to fulfil that role, even though it's highly problematic.

From the above data, therefore, it could be inferred that more men than women beggars got arrested under the BPBA 1959. Also most men either on the street or within these institutions were not necessarily beggars, but they are usually always homeless. Cis- and transgender women on the other hand were found more likely to find private accommodation, –

16.6% and 100% respectively according to current sample – a finding that echoed the choices of cis- and transgender women who begged in Delhi. Further, in Mumbai, almost all men who begged seemed to be homeless and therefore it is likely that most of them might have been arrested and institutionalised at some point of their lives (100% as compared to 50% likelihood for women who begged and/or were homeless), along with other homeless people who certainly did not beg.

- ii) Temporarily homeless:** Of the 25 participants, 1 woman was temporarily homeless along with her husband due to fights at her in-laws. She was not a beggar but was friends with members of the begging and homeless community in Aazad Maidan. She was hoping to return to her in-laws home after things calmed down, or move into rented accommodation with her spouse and children.
- iii) Government institutions:** Of the 25 participants, 7 interviews were conducted with representatives of the state’s criminal justice system including 1 with a cop from the Aazad Maidan police station, and 1 with the oldest Beggar home inmate who now was treated as a member of the staff by the authorities in the Male Section of the institution. In this category, 3 of the 8 participants were men and the other 5, women. The Beggar home authorities who participated in this study were Superintendent (Permanent), Acting Superintendents and Probation Officers of both male and female sections, Head Nurse of male section, and Caretaker (Permanent) of male section. This enriched the data by providing perspectives of the custodians of the law who were engaged in processing begging individuals at different ends and in various capacities.
- iv) Civil society organisation:** 3 of the 25 interviews were conducted to with members of a civil society initiative called Koshish that functioned from within the custodial facilities to aid the rehabilitation process of the institutionalised clients and to sensitise the custodial staff about the lived realities of population they were catering to in an attempt to humanise the current criminal justice setup that incarcerates the most marginalised

sections of the society. Of these 3 interviews, 2 were conducted with male social workers working in the male section and community end respectively, and 1 with a female social worker working with the female section. The presence of social workers within the beggar home has brought in significant changes in the attitudes of the staff towards the issue of begging and made them look at the idea of criminalising beggars more critically. As a result, the hierarchical gap between staff and inmates due to initial power imbalance inherent in the construction of their relationship as “custodians of law” versus “criminals” have reduced considerably.

Table 4. 1 Consolidated representations of data collected from Delhi and Mumbai

PARTICIPANTS	BEGGING INDIVIDUALS				TEMP. HOMELESS	GOVERNMENT INSTTS.		CIVIL SOCIETY ORGS.		TOTAL	
	Street	Shelter	Beggar home	Home		Total	Employee	Inmate turned staff	Staff		Experiential staff
Male	5	4	4	1	14	2	3	1	4	1	25
Female	5	4	3	3	15	2	5	-	1	2	25
Trans-women	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
GRAND TOTAL	10	8	7	8	33	4	9		8		54

Source: Fieldwork

Of the total 54 participants, 25 were men, 25 were women and 4 were transgender women. A total of 33 interviews were collected from people who begged of which 14 were of men, 15 of women, and 4 of transgender women (see Table 4.1). A total of 10 begging individuals lived on the streets, 8 lived in homeless shelters, 7 were institutionalised in beggar homes, and 8 lived in their own houses. From the data gathered, it is evident that Transgender women being one of the most stigmatised and vulnerable populations often do not have the option of living on the streets or in homeless shelters. Both cis- and transgender women preferred some form of shelter to living on the streets either to avoid gender-based violence or to have a safer living space for themselves and their children.

More men and women who begged were able to afford private rented accommodations in Delhi as compared to Mumbai where only the transgender population is usually found to have private accommodation, though not without great difficulty. For most male and female participants in Mumbai, begging was not their only source of generating income unlike among participants in Delhi, yet homelessness was more common in Mumbai resulting in many wrongful arrests under the BPBA 1959.

Due to the lack of homeless shelters and appropriate rehabilitative institutions in Mumbai, many people were voluntarily incriminating themselves to be able to access the basic amenities like food, shelter, and healthcare through the beggar homes, which despite being a custodial setup with inadequate resources was trying to cater to a heterogeneous population with a variety of welfare needs through networking with different governmental and non-governmental organisations, but inevitably falling short given structural limitations. Homeless and begging population of Delhi, on the other hand, had the benefit of shelters run by various civil society organisations under the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), due to which the population was better able to avoid the added vulnerability of being stigmatised as criminals. However, people's response to these shelters varied from location to location based on the organisations or staff that ran them.

Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis is a fundamental element of qualitative research and constitutes an essential stepping-stone toward both gathering data and linking one's findings with higher order concepts.

“The first difference between qualitative and quantitative data analysis is that the data to be analyzed are text, rather than numbers, at least when the analysis first begins” (Schutt, 2004, p. 321).

By “texts” in qualitative research, one ordinarily means transcripts of participants' interviews and field notes of observable patterns. But it could also mean pictures and other images related to the field of study that one might have to examine. The process of data transcription, on the other hand, involves organising data in order to begin preliminary analysis by identifying patterns, and gaps, and assigning primary codes to that emerge out of the data texts thus produced.

Techniques for making sense of the data

The methods of data analysis and interpretation employed in this study are memoing and fieldwork reports, data transcription, primary coding, thematic coding, and triangulation. Data gathered through in-depth interviews with the participants mostly as audio-recordings and fieldnotes are first transcribed in verbatim, – for all interviews for which audio-recordings were present – and in parts, that is, in paraphrased accounts –for interviews where participants did not consent to speak on record, mostly government officials and police officers – in order to identify patterns for analysis. The transcribed texts were then organised in a coherent manner based on the preliminary “preset codes” that were used at the time of undertaking the inquiry to conduct the interviews. These transcripts are then heard over and over to identify and mark words and phrases verbatim from the participants' interviews for the purpose of *primary coding* (see Glaser and Strauss, 1967). An indicative list of preset, primary, and thematic codes used for this study is provided below to illustrate the coding process (see Table 5.1).

These primary codes are later sorted, clustered, and stacked into main themes that emerge out of the data that may or may not match the preset codes. This process is called *theme coding* (see Miles and Huberman, 1994). These themes are further explored to with reference to the implications that they may have on higher concepts or theory. Codes and categories therefore emerge from the data, from the emic perspective, depending on how often they recur (Brown, 2009).

Triangulation, interpretation and writing

Data once gathered and transcribed, are then triangulated. Data was interpreted by relating emerging concepts with broader theoretical themes. At this stage, methodological validity, and reliability of the findings were tested through the different kinds of triangulation – data, theory, investigator, and methodological – in an attempt to ensure rigour in the analysis and interpretation.

“Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation. Guidance, yes. But no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when—and if—arrived at.”

– (Patton, 2002, p. 432 cited in Schutt, 2011)

Data triangulation is used in order to check the validity of the findings and also to identify, explore and understand different dimensions of the units of study, thereby strengthening the findings and enriching their interpretations. Another technique that has been used for data analysis and to add to the validity and trustworthiness of the findings is a certain amount of *investigator triangulation*. This refers to deploying or use of more than one researcher/investigator in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. This technique allows for additional insights in the process of making sense of the data as it brings different perspectives and epistemological assumptions that may inform the research results (Denzin, 1989). Investigator triangulation in course of this study has largely been made possible due to constant interaction and assistance from research guide, research advisors, and fellow researchers working on similar topics.

Table 5. 1 Coding for data analysis (indicative)

Sl. No.	Preset codes	Primary codes	Thematic codes	Data chapters
1	Personal history/background	For example: “naseeb” “majboori” “majboor” “kismet”	Rural to urban migration	A combination of “ <i>naseeb</i> ” and “ <i>majboori</i> ”: Misfortunes, migration, and entry into begging
2	Duration in the city	“pareshaani” “pareshaan” “burre waqt”	Unfortunate socioeconomic circumstances and hardships	
3	Circumstances leading to homelessness	“mushkil time” “problem”	Widowhood and abandonment	
4	Family/kinship networks		Bad luck	
5	Marriage/relationship/children		Entry into begging	
6	Employment/job history	For example: “factory mein kaam karti thi” “maine bahut se kaam kiye” “raaste pe bahut taqleef hota hai”	Other forms of employment among begging and homeless individuals	“ <i>Raaste pe bahut taqleef hota hai</i> ”: Begging as a practice of resilience
7	Friendships/peer networks		Begging as work	
8	Challenges of rough sleeping	“din ba din, samay bekaar hota jaa raha hai” “aaj kal ka muhaul akeli aurat ke liye theek nahin”	Begging as option of income generation for disabled and elderly people	
9	Substance use	“ren basera auraton ke liye sahi jagah nahin hai” “police bahut pareshaan karti hai”	Begging at religious places as “retirement”	
			Challenges of living and working	

		<p>“public hume bahut pareshaan karti hai” “kamaakar ke khaane mein khush hai” “hume koi sahaara nahin hai” “humaara koi saab bhi soonwaayi nahin kiya” “woh humaara soonwaayi kyun nahin kartein?” “Bheekh maangna mujhe pasand nahin” “dilli mein ghareeb retire ho kar kahaan jaata hai? Nizamuddin”</p>	<p>on the streets and VAW on the streets</p> <p>Stigma and discrimination faced by transwomen</p> <p>Fictive kinship and other coping mechanisms</p> <p>Begging as evidence of resilience</p>	
10	Institution/Institutionalisation history	For example: “chembur se jab log waapas aatein hain na, ekdum shareer sar jaata hai” “Begging is not a serious offense” “bheekh maangne mein kya kharaabi hai?”	Gaps between the criminal justice institutions	“ <i>Samajh nahin aata ke hum yeh kis type ka institution chala rahein hain</i> ”: The chasm between criminal justice institutions and rehabilitation
11	Challenges to rehabilitation		Failure of rehabilitation	
12	Views on begging		Neglected population	
13	Views on criminalisation of begging	“peit paalne ke liye woh sab kuch kaam karna padega” “Vocational training chaahiye”	Beggar home as shelter, and health and mental health institution	
14	Views on State/Government	“Beggar home mein staff ki zaroorat hai” “Samajh nahin aata ke hum yeh kis type ka institution chala	Changes after civil society intervention	
			Still a “jail”	

		<p>rahein hain” “Logon mein iss cheez ke baare mein awareness nahin hai” “mental health patients zyaada aatein hain” “begging mafia hai karke hum soontein hain, lekin aaj tak dekha nahin hai” “police ko arrest kame ke targets diya jaata hai” “bondage labour ke andar punishment zyaada achcha hai”</p>	<p>Begging as last resort</p>	
<p>15</p>	<p>Aspirations/Future plans</p>	<p>For example: “bachchon ko naukri” “beti ki shaadi” “room lenge” “zaroor vishwaas hai” “Ab bas sarkar hai, aur allah hai”</p>	<p>Begging as path to progress Faith in supernatural: Religious/spiritual, ironic, or convenience Begging as a non religious practice at religious spaces</p>	<p>Conclusions: Begging as a political act with potential to disrupt power; form of resistance in the margins, etc.</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Faith in divine</p>			

Source: Fieldwork

This process further enabled the writing of the data and discussion chapters for the current study by illuminating the linkages between data and theoretical concepts, and providing a clearer trajectory and a more complete and comprehensible framework to relate the raw experiences of the research participants to the larger audience.

Conclusion

This chapter describes the universe of study, manner of drawing the selection of sample, and the techniques employed to triangulate, analyse, and interpret the data collected in the form of narratives from participants in both the cities. In doing so, the chapter also takes a brief look at the official statistics available for begging and homeless populations in both the cities, albeit to explain why such data is not credible, and why the current study therefore relies on original ethnographic data to make assertions about begging. Furthermore, this chapter also provides a preliminary overview of data collected along with the categories created to populate and saturate data from the field, and how the same have been coded and quantified at a basic level through cross-tabulation of different variables for the purpose of general analysis, or to make apparent certain correlations that may exist between them. These relationships are they explored and discussed further in the following chapters.

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CHAPTER V

A COMBINATION OF “*NASEEB*” AND “*MAJBOORI*”: MISFORTUNES, MIGRATION, AND ENTRY INTO BEGGING

Introduction

In recent studies, the beggar has come to be addressed as a powerful symbol in the globalised postmodern world, and the rise of begging as a global phenomenon has been associated not with some state of stasis into which the poor descend, but with highly dynamic processes of disruption and displacement in time and space, which uproot individuals or entire communities from self-sustaining social networks (Dean, 1999). Bauman (1998) explaining this symbolism in the context of restructured time and space in the process of globalisation speaks of the schism between the two worlds: the world symbolised by the ‘tourist’, representing the cosmopolitan elite that may move freely across geographical and electronic boundaries; and the world symbolised by the ‘vagabond’ or beggar, representing the socially excluded that are bound to an immobile and monotonous street existence. According to Swanson (2007a), as seen in the context of rural indigenous women and children migrating from Andes to Ecuadorian cities, beggars are not passive victims in the face of oppressive socio-economic conditions; rather, begging represents initiatives of reworking and resilience on the part of individuals to actively engage with the forces that affect their everyday lives (see also Abebe, 2008).

Begging is also found to be a vibrant form of informal economic activity in many cities in Ghana, especially, among people with mobility difficulties who view begging as ‘work’ (Kassah, 2008). Another study that views begging as a livelihood strategy amongst Bangladeshi migrants in rural West Bengal in India, suggests that it could be precursor to another more permanent way of making a living, or it might be an enduring phenomenon (Massey et al., 2010). However, it is important to note that this

view of begging as a deliberate choice of economic activity is largely confined to the extreme case of the marginal within the marginalised, such as, women, children, aged and disable, and migrants.³⁷ This too raises doubt about begging being a ‘deliberate’ choice, and homelessness, a preferred ‘lifestyle’.

In fact, even more studies indicate that begging is not a choice in terms of alternatives to career or profession but rather a lack thereof (see Borchard, 2009; Foscarinis, 1996; Lee and Farrell, 2003). In a study conducted by Dean and Melrose (1999), it was found that, many wanted work very badly, though few were employable in their present conditions, and some of them were even engaged in entirely unassisted and self-evidently futile attempts at job search. The nature of begging as a stigmatised activity makes it an economic activity of last resort. Besides, begging confers low prestige, low income, no fringe benefits, no opportunity for advancement, and working conditions that vary with weather, which makes it all the more doubtful that beggars would personally find their job satisfying or enjoyable (Smith, 2005).

Therefore, it may be both productive and more interesting to identify and intensify the interactionist dimension of begging, and recognise the symbolic message that it embodies for the society at large. In doing so, the study begins with the important premise that begging, often perceived as deviant behaviour, is not inherently good or evil. Here, one could draw upon what Prus and Grills (2003) clearly conceptualise for the purpose of their study of “the deviant mystique” that, “the term deviance refers to any activity, actor, idea, or humanly produced situation that an audience defines as threatening, disturbing, offensive, immoral, evil, disreputable, or negative in some way...deviance is *social* in its very definition, or conversely, deviance is brought into existence only when something is so defined by an audience” (p. 3). In the following chapters, therefore, an attempt is being made to introduce symbolic interactionism as a vital perspective to understand the phenomena of begging by emphasising both on the symbolism of the act of begging and its policing, and also identifying the interactionist elements that aid the interpretation of begging as a socially constructed

³⁷ According to Coles and Craig (1999), “...a growing number of young people have become so excluded from mainstream forms of economic and social and social support, that they have had to turn to alternative- and inherently risky- sources of income...*young people* may resort to begging, rather than begging by other age groups.”

form of deviance, “fully the product of human activity,” that individuals engage in to navigate their everyday lives (see Prus and Grills, 2003).

This chapter focuses on individuals’ entry conditions into begging – how they come to beg, why they prefer begging to other forms of income generation, and above all, how migration to the major metropolitan cities is a conduit that facilitates their sustainability against odds of their state – “state” both in the sense of their constraining circumstances, as well as the inability of the State/states to provide adequate welfare – and sets the stage for a kind of dramatic and unique way of life that could only be defined as *extraordinary*. This other than ordinary mode of living, I hope to return to and build upon in subsequent sections. But first, I would like to illustrate with ethnographic data how the process of migration could be analysed in relation to begging.

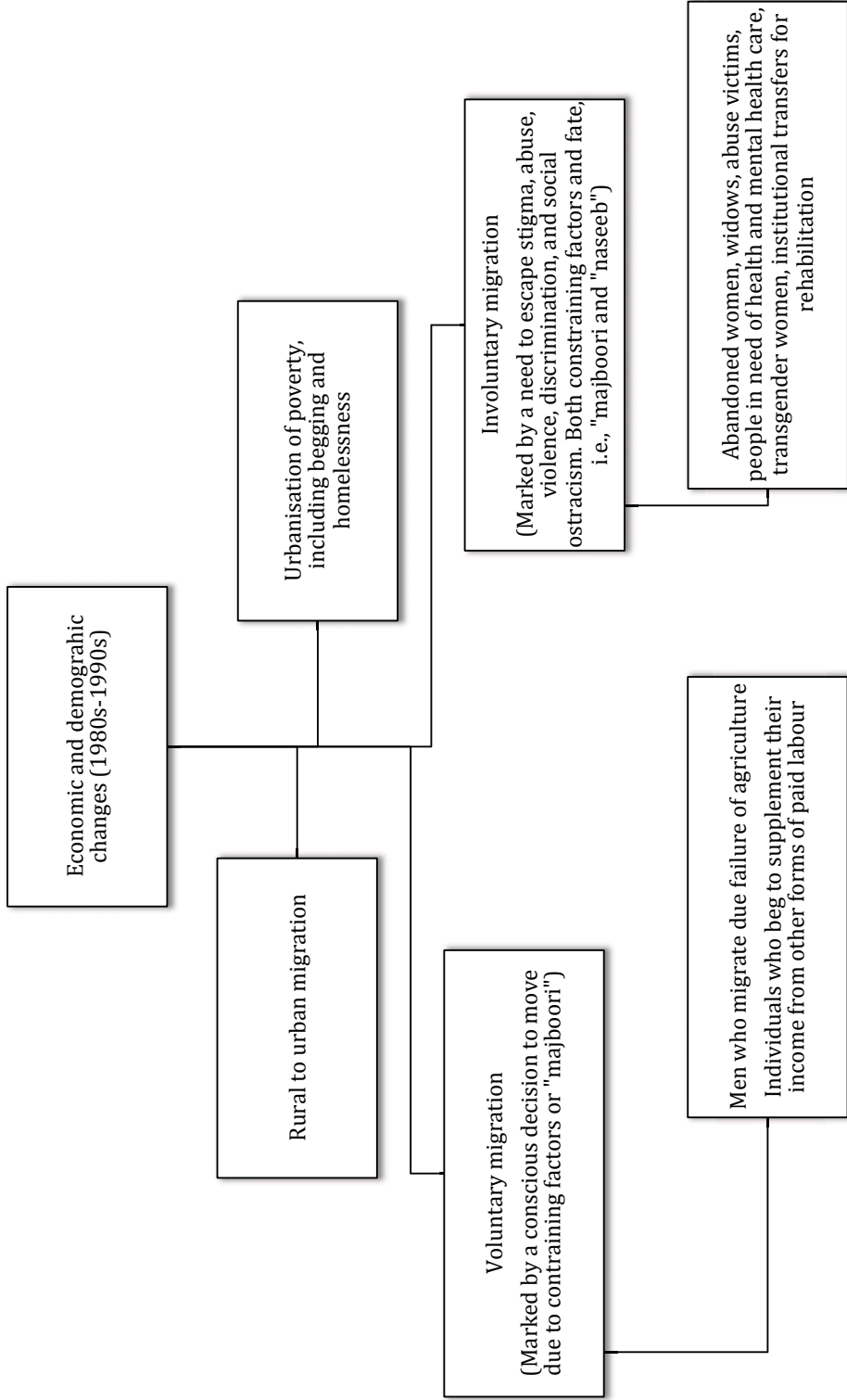


Figure 16 Conceptual categories based on migration patterns of begging and homeless participants

The linkages between migration and begging

Due to economic and demographic changes that accompanied the 1980s and the 1990s, poverty has become increasingly concentrated in urban settlements (Wratten, 1995 cf. Ravallion, 2002). Wratten reiterates Moser et al. (1994) and states that, “Economic crisis and structural adjustment policies introduced in the Third World have had a disproportionate impact on the urban poor, due to rising prices, declining real wages and redundancy in the formal labour market, and reduced public expenditure on basic services and infrastructure.” Besides, rapid urbanisation in the next two decades was to result in the urban population overtaking the rural population of the world for the first time, thus leading to a faster growth in the rates of the urban poor (Wratten, 1995). This growth in the urban population will continue to rise to an estimated number of 5 billion by 2030, of which much of the urbanisation is predicted to take place in the developing world, with Asia and Africa having largest urban populations (Baker, 2008). This urban growth is attributed to both natural population growth, and rural to urban migration.

Baker (2008) points out that the economies of scale and agglomeration in cities attracts investors and entrepreneurs, which is good for overall economic growth. Urban spaces provide opportunities for many, particularly to the poor who are attracted by greater job prospects and the availability of services; while for some others, it is an escape from constraining social and cultural traditions of their rural environment. In a way, therefore, urbanisation contributes to sustained economic growth, which is critical to poverty reduction. However, she is also quick to mention how city life nevertheless presents conditions of overcrowded living, congestion, unemployment, lack of social and community networks, stark inequalities, and crippling social problems in the form of crime and violence. Thus, while some of those who migrate to these urban areas will benefit from the opportunities they present, many others, often with low skill levels, may lag behind and find themselves constantly struggling with the challenges of city life on a daily basis. According to the World Bank’s (2011) overview of this phenomenon, urban poor live with many deprivations and their daily challenges may include: “limited access to employment

opportunities and income, inadequate and insecure housing services, violent and unhealthy environments, little or no social protection mechanisms, and limited access to adequate health and education opportunities.”

Begging and homeless populations in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai present to us further indelible evidences of the same predicament. From data collected in both cities, it is clear that migration is a common phenomenon among most people who beg. Though not everyone who migrated to these cities did so with an intention to beg, it is not entirely unusual for people from low-income groups with diminishing returns from agrarian sectors to come out to the big cities solely to beg either. Their reasons to move from their places of origin, though have a specific pattern and bear superficial resemblance, are not always the same. People migrate at different stages of their lives, depending on various factors such as failure of crops, lack of adequate facilities in hometown, lack of job opportunities, lower rates of income for labour, for better healthcare, to escape domestic violence, societal rejection and ostracism, etc. Some on the other hands did not initiate their own migration like children who were brought into the city by their parents or relatives, health and mental health patients, and old aged people who are abandoned by their families.

A number of studies on migration discuss how the decision to migrate is influenced by ‘push factors’ that force migrants to leave rural areas and ‘pull factors’ that attract them to urban centres (see for example, Lall, Selod and Shalizi, 2006). These considerations are necessary to understand migration in the context of begging as well, but they appear to be insufficient when we look at individuals’ accounts of their entry into begging that at their points of origin may be remarkably diverse. Since, as already listed above, there is a great variety in the causal factors that lead begging populations to initiate migration, it would perhaps be meaningful to divide their migration into two broad kinds – voluntary or involuntary – to analyse and distinguish migration patterns based on their specific contexts (Fig. 1).

Voluntary and involuntary migration

The term “voluntary” migration here is not used in the same sense as traditionally used in migration studies in opposition to *forced migrations*; such as, slave migration,

or migration triggered by ‘ethnic cleansing’ (see for example, King 2002). Nor does its usage indicate people’s willingness or desire to come to the cities at will, but only a conscious decision to move made by some of them based on their life circumstances or sudden change of fortune. So, they are migrants who have more or less been compelled by external factors beyond their control to migrate, but nonetheless have made a choice on their own accord. Had their lives been more privileged in their native places, it is possible that they would have chosen to stay with their families, instead of being uprooted from amidst their kith and kin. Voluntary migration is therefore is not an absolute exercise of free will, but a point in a continuum of one’s degrees of advantage in his/her ability to control their choice of migration over involuntary migration. It is often also primarily an economic migration. Here, I would like to present the accounts of some of the begging individuals to in order to make the categories of voluntary and involuntary migrations in the context of begging more lucid and comprehensible.

Rajesh Yadav, a 60 years old disabled homeless fruit-seller outside Hanuman Mandir, Connaught Place (CP) came to Delhi 25 years ago from his village in Madhubani, Bihar. Although he squatted outside a temple with other begging and homeless individuals and accepted donations of food, money, blankets etc. distributed outside the temple, he maintained that he is not a beggar but a “dukaandar” or a shopkeeper. He kept his wheelchair next to his fruit cart from which he sold bananas. Explaining his choice to migrate to Delhi owing to diminishing returns from agriculture and persistent crop failure year after year, he says:

“Madhubani district parta hai...uhi pe kheti hai; kheti, baari, bachcha, sab hai, lekin itna bura haal hai, kaise chalega? Issiliye jaise taise ihaan aa gaya. Sarkar wahaan pe kuch haq deti nahin hai. Jo kheti karta hai, kheti jo ka hai, kheti kaise hoga, kuch hai hi nahin, khichaaai kaise hoga? Aap dekho 2-3 saal se sukha par gaya...kheti jaise taise kara hai, lekin sukha par gaya toh kaise karega, guzaara kaise karega. Aur aisehi videsh aakar ke, pardesh aakar ke, do paisa kamaakar khaa rahaa hoon.”

[“It comes under Madhubani district...that’s where I’ve my land; land, home, children, everything is there, but the conditions are so bad, how could I go on? That’s why somehow I migrated here. The government doesn’t give us any rights there. Those that into agriculture...what agriculture, or how can we do

any farming? You see, there's been a drought for 2-3 years...somehow we try to farm, but if there are droughts, how will we manage a living? And that's why I'm having to come to a foreign land, an alien land, to earn a couple of bucks.”]

In the above extract from the interview, he is seen referring to his migration to the city as “*videsh aakar ke*” or coming to a *foreign* land. Even though he had family, home, and agricultural land, the ongoing agrarian crisis, poverty and lack of adequate state support to small farmers pushed him out of his village. He made a reluctant, but to his mind, a rational and deliberate choice to migrate to Delhi to earn an income to send home. Besides, he clearly saw himself as an outsider by his own account.

While begging is often perceived as an undesirable activity in contemporary societies in many parts of world, scholars repeatedly point out the need for it to be appreciated as a way of addressing economic necessity and a livelihood strategy (see Massey, Rafique & Seeley, 2010; Swanson, 2010). In their study on begging in rural India and Bangladesh, Massey et al. (2010) conceptualised begging as a “living strategy propelled by poverty, economic insecurity, ill-health, and ageing” (p. 64). Locating themselves in the rural setting from where migration takes place, they list four primary push and pull factors for such outmigration that may also be used to contextualised Yadav's account mentioned above:

“In Badalpara village, the four crucial reasons for migration were: (1) to meet daily expenses and educational costs, (2) to make more substantial purchases, for instance, of land for economic improvement, (3) to recover losses from crop damage from natural calamities, and (4) migration by young people to visit new places and earn cash.”

– (Massey et al., 2010, p. 66)

Yadav's migration and those follow from the reasons cited above, I however refer to as “voluntary” migration when it involves begging individuals, though such migration too could lead to an alienating experience similar to that of involuntary migration, as is evident from the participant's self-perception as a foreigner or alien in the city. This experience of alienation among begging individuals ought to remind us of Marx, not for clubbing beggars in the derogatory and oft-contested category of the

“lumpenproletariat”, incapable of attaining class-consciousness, but rather for pointing out quite early on, a resounding thesis that was to reverberate in a variety of works on how people came to comprehend society in relation to labour for generations to come – conditions under capitalism inevitably led to a threefold alienation of workers from other human beings, from the products of their labour, and finally, from the act of labour itself.

The last of these has been described in various literatures as the process that makes “the activity of working, which is potentially the source of self-definition and human freedom, is...degraded to a necessity for staying alive” (Schmitt, 1997 [1987], p. 116). Besides, following in the footsteps of Bakunin (1872) as it were, many mid-twentieth century scholars including Fanon (1963), rejected the inherently classist and negative assumptions that the label of the lumpenproletariat evoked, and started reclaiming the category recognising in it a revolutionary potential to challenge the offensive portrayals of the people it constitutes. According to Vincent (2016), more recently efforts have been made to reframe the term to “include anyone who voluntarily chooses to live outside the capitalist class structure as a form of political struggle” (p. 71). This study too therefore proposes to view begging individuals as lumpens only in the latter sense, if at all, and primarily borrow the understanding of them as socioeconomically marginalised and socially dislocated people from Vincent (2016) whose ethnographic study concerns organised collective action through participatory media processes (*POOR Magazine*) among homeless people in San Francisco.

The conceptualisation of involuntary migration, on the other hand, is based on individuals’ lack of agency and real choice in making their decisions to move in order to beg. Involuntary migrants migrate to escape stigma, abuse, violence, discrimination, and social ostracism. They are usually forced to migrate by others and therefore have little choice or no control over their decision. For instance, some participants of the study were forced to migrate and sever their familial and communal ties because in certain cases they had become oppressive to the point of turning toxic, and had ceased to be the sustainable networks that otherwise provided social security to individuals’ lives.

To illustrate the aforementioned point, let us look at the narrative of one of the female participants of the study. I met Jaya, a 50-year-old widow, outside Hanuman Mandir at Connaught Place (CP). She is an original inhabitant of Meerut in Uttar Pradesh (UP). She faced harassment and domestic violence in the hands of her in-laws who fought with her after the death of her husband and threw her out of their home in the jhuggi near Rajpath. They also snatched away her ration card. Thus, she was forced into homelessness with her three children without even the bare minimum benefits of subsidised food. Left with nothing, she started rag picking and begging at the Daryaganj red light to fend for herself and her children. She narrates the horrors inflicted upon her by her in-laws after her husband's death thus:

“Toh humne ration card mere nanad ko de di thi. Aur meri nanad ne hera pheri kar di, ration card mujhe waapas di nahin. Woh haq bhi unhone kha gaye. Kehna lage ki’ usska admi hai hi nahin, admi toh mar gaya isska’...Mera admi toh mar hi gaya. Maine bola, ‘chalo koi baat nahin.’ Phir main bachchon ko leke, Daryaganj laal batti pe aayi...thaane ke paas. Toh main wahin pe maangti thi, wahin bachchon ko lekar”

[“So I gave our ration card to my sister-in-law. And she played me and refused to return it back to me. That one right I was entitled to, was also taken away by them. They started saying, ‘She doesn’t have a husband; her husband is dead.’ I had already lost my husband, so I said, ‘Come, it’s not a big deal.’ Then I took my kids and went to Daryaganj red light...near the police station. I started begging there along with my kids.”]

This type of involuntary migration is also very common among transgender women who beg in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai. They are easily one of the most disenfranchised and stigmatised populations in the country. Not only do they face humiliation and rejection by their own families due to their sexual identity, they also face discrimination by state institutions that do not recognise their basic human and citizenship rights making them vulnerable to endless abuse and exploitation throughout their lives without any recourse to legal remedies.

Narrating her accounts of experiencing rejection and abuse by her own parents as a child, a 45-year-old transgender woman from Hyderabad who migrated to Delhi to

escape violence and social ostracism, and start living with the kinnar community here explains the circumstances under which she left home 30 years ago as follows:

“Ek behen thi. Unke saath milke, jab kaam zyada hota tha na ghar pe, toh main kaam karti thi, papa mere gussa ho jaate. Main jaake ladkiyon ke saath khelna, ladkiyon ke jaise ghoomna, bartan dhona, jharu karna, humaari mummy ki main madad karti thi. Toh mummy rehti nahin thi jab, toh papa maarte the. Aisi meri family thi...

Toh kuch din ke baad ye kinnar log aake mujhe lekar gaye. Wo time pe zabardasti karte the ki ladke ke jaise raho, lekin abhi nahin karte.”

[“I had a sister. Whenever there was a lot of stuff to do around the house, I used to help her with the chores, but my father used to get angry with that. He didn’t like me playing with the girls, going out with them, doing dishes, brooming, helping my mom run errands. So when my mother was not around in the house, my father would hit me. That’s how my family was...

Eventually, after some days, the kinnars brought me away. Earlier they used to force me to be like a boy, but these days they don’t any more.”]

This form of migration in queer literature is referred to as “queer migration,” where people belonging to LGBTQ communities migrate to other places, usually more tolerant and progressive ones, so they could have more anonymity, avoid discrimination or family scrutiny, and have access to better rights and legislations. More specifically, in the case of transgender individuals, it is called “transgender migration” when transgender people migrate from rural to urban areas, and sometimes across borders to escape abuse and discrimination from their communities of origin, and be with other transgender communities that are more likely to be found in the cities (Jolly and Reeves, 2005).

The second form of involuntary migration occurs among begging and homeless population when state institutions move or transfer children from home to home for the purpose of rehabilitation, but failed to rehabilitate them. As a consequence, they ended up on the streets as adults without adequate support networks or training to be gainfully employed. Thus we see how the State through the very mechanisms put in place to provide welfare to its citizens most in need fails them regularly due to its inefficacy, pushing them further into the margins rather than empowering them.

One of the participants of the study, Rekha, is in her mid-30s and has been living with disability since her early childhood. Polio had affected her legs and rendered them unusable. She is originally from Gulbarga (officially known as Kalaburagi) in Karnataka, but unable to care for her condition due to lack of necessary resources, her family surrendered her as a young girl to a government institution for safe custody and rehabilitation. Here is how she describes her journey to Mumbai and consequent entry into begging:

“Apan toh bachchpan se hi viklaang hai...jab ekdum chotti si thi na, tabhi bahut bimaar ho gayi thi. Maa baap bhi bichaare ghareeb, kya karte...paal toh sakte the nahin mereko...phir sanstha mein daal diya aur chhor diya, bas. Bola, ‘humko nahin maangta’...bilkool hi bekaar sanstha tha wo bhi, Karnataka mein, bas maar peet, maar peet. Toh main boli social worker ko ‘mereko idhar rehnaich nahin hai, transfer karo’ bolke. Phir apan ko bheja Bangalore, woh bhi bekaar...phir ghoom ghoom ke main idhar ko aayi, viklaang sanstha yahaan Bombay mein. Udhar se apan ko gaadi bhi mil gayi. Phir 18 ki go hayi toh chhor diya aur apan idhar aa gaya, sarak pe!”

[“I’ve been physically disabled since childhood...when I was a little child, I got very sick. My parents were also so poor, what could they do...they could not even afford to raise me, poor things. They turned me in to be institutionalised. Said, ‘We don’t want her.’ It was a really useless institution, in Karnataka, people only fighting with each other all the time. So I said to the social worker, ‘I don’t wanna stay here. Transfer me.’ Then they sent me to Bangalore, but that place was hell too. Then after all of that I got here, to an institute for handicapped children, here in Bombay. There I got my wheelchair too. Then after turning 18, they abandoned me and I landed here, in the streets!”]

From the above extract it is clear that Rekha had little power over her migration to Mumbai as a minor in safe custody. Though in her tongue in cheek accounts of her own life, she tried to overstate her own decision making power, it was largely an institutional decision taken in the interest of her rehabilitation probably after obtaining her view on the matter following some counselling and case work. After being transferred from one institution to another, she reached Mumbai. But even in Mumbai, her rehabilitation failed and she was left to her own means after she turned

18. While living on the streets, she married and separated multiple times, and underwent multiple miscarriages. When not in her wheelchair, she uses her hands to make her way around, and to get on buses and trains to travel for her “*dhandu*” (or business) to Mahalakshmi and Dadar from Aazad Maidan. Today, her only daughter from a former partner is aged 7. She is in a Child Welfare Committee (CWC) affiliated girls’ home in Matunga in Mumbai that provides in-house education and healthcare facilities.

Finally, the data draws attention to the presence of another particularly vulnerable section among begging and homeless individuals who were involuntary migrants to the big cities, namely, health and mental health patients in need of treatment and care, who are sometimes abandoned without their awareness. This was also found to be true of people who were abandoned by their families at their old age. The evidences from doing fieldwork inside the custodial homes show that in many cases people were old and ailing, or traumatised, or both, and had to be arrested and convicted under the BPBA so that they could be sheltered at the Beggar homes for their safety and treatment. In fact, abandoned ailing and mental health patients constitute a large portion of the inmates in these institutions, signaling towards the dismal state of health and mental health care systems in our country.

It was further observed that involuntary migration was more common in the cases of cis- and transgender women who migrated to the cities. Moreover, it was not *just* an economic migration, but that too, because once left without any visible means of subsistence, individuals often took to begging, and some even came to perceive it as “work.”

Migration patterns of begging and homeless participants

From the table below (Table 6.1), it is possible to see that a total of 22 out of the 26 participants who begged and were homeless migrated to the city of Delhi from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, and Jammu & Kashmir, of which 12 were male, 10 female and 1 transgender woman. Besides these, there was also a male beggar who according to

everyone in the community had migrated to Delhi from Bangladesh, though by his own account he was from Delhi. In total therefore, 23 of the 26, that is, more than 88% of the begging or homeless participants in Delhi were migrants.

Similarly, there is a substantial presence of migrants among the homeless and begging population in the city of Mumbai too. 8 out of the 15 (53.33%) begging and homeless participants were migrants in the city, of which 5 were male, 3 female, and 1 transgender woman. Participants had migrated from the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Telangana. Since Mumbai is the capital of one of the largest states in India, Maharashtra, and has a native Marathi population, which is also the largest community in the city, it is quite common to see local people begging too. Some of them belong to the marginalised and internally displaced populations of Maharashtra like the Pardhi community, a denotified tribe (DNT) of India. Others migrate from the outskirts and suburbs of the city to the busier, more elite and touristy locations of South Mumbai or SoBo, such as Fort, Aazad Maidan, Gateway of India, Nariman Point, etc. Both CST and Churchgate stations that serve as headquarters and starting points of India's Central and Western Railway lines respectively are located here. These along with Mumbai Central are all important junctions where many people find themselves homeless and/or begging for alms. In total, slightly more than 46% of the participants from Mumbai were migrants from states other than Maharashtra. The rest were either internally displaced people within the state (<7%) or from within the city (<46%). In other words, the proportion of homeless and begging individuals who were migrants was roughly the same as the native population in Mumbai.

In total therefore 31 out of 41, that is, 75.60% of the participants who begged and were homeless were migrants, which points to the sobering reality that a very large section of the population belonging to low income strata of our society, when they migrate from small towns and villages to the big cities, have to beg and be homeless in these cities, exposing themselves to multiple hazards, either as a livelihood option or simply to sustain themselves under dire circumstances.

Table 6. 1 List of places of origin of begging individuals before migration to the cities of Delhi and Mumbai

Sl. No.	Migration to Delhi From			Migration to Mumbai From		
	MALE	FEMALE	TRANSWOMEN	MALE	FEMALE	TRANSWOMEN
1	Kolkata (WB)	Lucknow (UP)	Hyderabad (Telangana)	Yamunanagar (MP)	Lucknow (UP)	Hyderabad (Telangana)
2	Dhanbad (Jharkhand)	(Jharkhand)		Jhansi (UP)	Solapur (Maharashtra)	
3	Unknown (Bangladesh)	Gwalior (MP)		Hyderabad (Telangana)	Gulbarga (Karnataka)	
4	Madhubani (Bihar)	Unknown (UP)		Baroda (Gujarat)		
5	Kashmir (J&K)	Badaun (UP)		Mangalore (Karnataka)		
6	Madhubani (Bihar)	Bareilly (UP)				
7	Kanpur (UP)	Darbhanga (Bihar)				
8	Unknown (MP)	Jabalpur (MP)				
9	Tilwara (Uttarakhand)	Meerut (UP)				
10	Shahjahan-pur (UP)	Dhanbad (Jharkhand)				
11	Madhubani (Bihar)					
12	Unknown (UP)					
	12	10	1	5	3	1

Manifestations of gender dynamics in migration associated with begging

Despite the fact that homeless and begging women make up for a considerable portion of the urban landscape, a closer look at the migration patterns with special reference to gender indicates that begging is largely a male-dominated activity as previous studies have pointed out (see for example Massey et al., 2010). There are two important aspects in the current data that when analysed in tandem make this trend more apparent. That is, one might be misled into assuming that in general – and in the Indian context, in particular – women beg more than men, if one does not take into account its association with the fact of migration. First, based on the data, men seemed far more mobile than women in both cities. They also migrated farther distances as compared to women who did migrate. There is nothing new or surprising about the finding that men have greater mobility advantages over women even when it comes to begging.

As pointed out by Jolly and Reeves (2005), “Gender discrimination and norms in the household and society push particular groups to migrate in particular ways, and push others to stay put” (p. 11). The advantage of mobility automatically makes men the more powerful or dominant players in comparison to women, for whom movements and access to mobility are already typically restricted within the larger framework of patriarchy and expected gender roles, and belonging to the poorer socio-economic sections only further aggravates these constraints. This is however not true for transgender people who are usually found to be a highly mobile population.

Second, more men seem to migrate voluntarily as compared to women who beg. It is something one can gather from the fact that the begging and homeless individuals who were locals or non-migrants in both cities were always only female or transgender women. This not only confirms the fact that access to mobility is harder for women, but also the fact that women are often abandoned and forced out of family settings due to abuse, and therefore have very little or no control over their decisions to beg and be homeless. Leaving home and choosing to be a homeless beggar to earn

a living were rarely the kinds of decisions women, even from the lower socio-economic sections, made actively based on push and pull factors of migration alone. This was a more visible pattern among men who begged, including the ones who lived with locomotor disabilities. Most women who begged migrated due to reasons other than economic ones, and more often than not, were responding to some form of societal pressure.

Impact of intersection of multiple marginalities on mobility and begging

From the aforementioned description is it possible to surmise that mobility advantages that men enjoy enable them to become dominant players in the field, as is the norm in many other income-generating activities. Even so, there may exist certain exceptions to this rule, but not without a cost. There are unique ways in which the experience of multiple marginalities and misfortunes (or, “*naseeb*” as participants refer to it) may impact women’s mobility options, and their consequent decisions. Mobility may increase among women who are at the intersection of marginalised identities and extreme deprivation. Among cis-women who voluntarily migrated to the cities were the widows, wives whose husbands could no longer provide for their families due to disease or disability, separated women, women belonging to de-notified tribes (DNT) and lower castes, women with histories of institutionalisation, and transgender women. In other words, women whose identities already carried stigma of some kind, and could therefore no longer match up to the archetype of the flawless “ideal woman” in a patriarchal society, had more access to mobility in their states of deprivation.

In religious and conservative societies like ours, people have a tendency to blame the victim, and judge women more harshly than men. It is therefore also not uncommon to find that a woman’s suffering too in some cases was seen as a reflection of her personal failure caused by her inability to be “good” or “virtuous” either due her own doings or her fate (based on her actions in previous births) etc. In general, widows are considered inauspicious and therefore cosmically responsible for their husbands’ death, women who go out to earn due to unemployment of their husbands may be

portrayed as “loose” women, separated women are seen as “bad mothers” or “incompetent wives,” women belonging to DNT community carry the stigma of being classified as a criminal tribe, lower caste women suffer caste prejudices, women with a history of being closed institutions are also somehow suspected of having committed crimes in the past, identifying as a transgender is treated as something immensely shameful, and so on and so forth.

Transgender women were usually always pushed out of their homes by their own families to avoid social embarrassment and loss of family honour, and they moved with fellow-*kinnars* or with their gurus to relatively more tolerant places to avoid humiliation and social ostracism, hoping to be better accepted in a more cosmopolitan environment. While some lost touch with their families after being adopted by the kinnar community, some stayed in touch with their families, and others continued to hope that their families would some day accept them for what they are and stop imposing a male identity on them. Unlike in the case of men, therefore, an increase in mobility for women does not necessarily imply an expansion of their freedoms or autonomy to make choices regarding migration during times of need; and hence, may not be an indicator of their empowerment; in fact, quite the contrary. Not only do they have to struggle with their stigmatised identities while renegotiating societal expectations of performing gender by transgressing the domestic realm of fulfilling household responsibilities, but they also have to be seen striving to achieve the ideals of the virtuous woman and dutiful wife alongside providing for themselves and their families while also dealing with the consequences of their acts of transgression at the same time.

However, there were some causes of involuntary migration among begging and homeless participants that were found to be common for both men and women, such as old age, domestic violence and abuse, health and mental health issues, and institutional transfers for rehabilitation. The data gathered from custodial institutions and civil society organisations further reveals that in an appalling oversight of the criminal justice system and a tragic blow to individuals’ rights, it is usually this category of involuntary migrants who get frequently arrested and incarcerated under the anti-begging law.

“Majboori” and “naseeb”: The language and framing of entry into begging

The other pattern that emerged from the data was what according to most participants were the factors that marked people’s (and their own) entry into a life of begging and/or homelessness – “*majboori*” and “*naseeb*.” *Majboori* refers to pressing circumstances or compulsions that forced people to leave their homes and/or to start begging. Some participants refer to themselves as “*majboor*” to indicate that they are hard-pressed by their circumstances, or “*besahaara*” to refer to their state of helplessness for lack of adequate support. *Naseeb* refers to destiny or fate, and how people on most occasions felt that they were destined to a life of hardship and beggary, that it was their “*kismet*” or [rotten/bad] luck that was responsible for bringing them to their current state of indigence. While men were more prone to use the term *majboori* to describe the difficulties and give a practical account of the circumstances that led them into begging, women had the tendency to use both the words *majboori* and *naseeb* in their narratives signaling towards a point of view that swung between practical and fatalistic in varying degrees.

Repertoires of constraints

One of the participants of the study named Sulaiman, who is now over 60 years old and belongs to Madhubani in Bihar, migrated to Delhi to beg for a living. When asked about his decision to beg in the city and his plans to return home, he replies thus:

“Apna ghar zameen hai lekin kam hai... do bhai mein batkar abhi iss karma ke barabar, wahin chotte chotte do ghar hai [...]. Haanji, Nizamuddin mein maangta hoon, dargah pe... Mahine Rs 2000/- ghar bhejta hoon. Ihaan aane ka faida aur kya hoga? Aur paise milta hai... [old age] pension do jaan ka milake teen mahine ka Rs. 2400/- milta hai.

Ghar jaane ka? Nahin, abhi nahin socha...abhi kahin jaane ka koi mann nahin karta. Kya karenge? Matti mein jaayenge ab, haan. Jab tak zindangi hai tab tak kamaayi karenge, issliye ke hum majboor hain.”

[“I have my own house and piece of land but very small...after dividing between the two brothers, my plot is as big as this room with two small huts on

the premise [...]. Yeah, I beg at Nizamuddin, at the Dargah. I send home Rs. 2000/- monthly. What other benefit could I have migrating here? I do get some old age pension, a sum total of around Rs. 2400/- together with my wife's.

To go home? No, I haven't thought of that...I don't feel like going anywhere any more. What's the point? Next I'll only go back to the earth, yeah. As long as I have life in my body, I'll earn my living, because I'm compelled to.”]

In the above extract, the participant explains that he voluntarily migrated to Delhi to beg at the Nizamuddin Dargah because he did not have enough land or income from it to support his family. According to him, he was constrained by his circumstances, and would beg until his last days because he was “*majboor*.” Another participant of the study, a 45-year-old disabled man from Uttarakhand who then begged at the Nizamuddin Dargah, explains how he was compelled to beg against his will because he was left without other alternatives to support himself or “*besahaara*”:

“Beta, problem toh bas yahi hai ki, koi thikaana ho toh ek hi jagah baithe rahein. Maangne ki kya zaroorat hai humein? Nahin maangenge. Agar aisi suvidha kari jaye kahin, humare liye, bataao? Hum toh kar ke khaane ke khush hai, agar hume koi sahaara mil jaaye. Yeh baat hai.

Humaare ko nahin sahaara hai, hum besahaara, toh hum aapko kaise ye keh de ki hum maangna chhor de. Ye Baba ka ghar hai. Yahaan bade bade aatein hain, bete, bheekh maangne! Koi matlab kissi prakaar ka maangta hai, koi kissi prakaar ka maangta hai. Koi aisa aah leke maangta hai. Sabka mukadamma wo karte hain, sabhi sar jhukka kar aatein hain, sabko milta hain wahaan se.”

[“Kid, the only problem is this, that I don't have an address for me to sit at the same place everyday. Where is the need for me to beg? I'd stop begging. Say, if they made such arrangements for me somewhere...? I'm perfectly happy to do some work to earn my living, if someone was willing to support me. That's the thing.

I don't have any support. I'm helpless. So how could I possibly say that I'd stop begging. This is the home of the Saint. The rich and powerful also come here, kid, to beg! Some beg in one way, others beg another way. Some beg with this hope, or that...All stand in trial in front of him. Everyone comes here with a bowed head. Everyone receives.”]

In the above extract, the participant describes that he would have been happy to find employment and earn a living, but unfortunately such opportunities were hard to come by, especially for poor disabled people like him who did not get adequate support or welfare benefits from the State to become gainfully employed. He was “*besahaara*” and therefore could not promise that he would stop begging anytime soon. Interestingly, he also reasoned that the dargah was after all the holy shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin, and people from all walks of life came to it with bowed heads *to beg* for one thing or another, and all their prayers were answered there. He was merely one of them who hoped the dead saint would respond to his pleas for help in some disguise.

He thereby framed begging in a broader almost philosophical way – with very pragmatic considerations, nevertheless – to imply that the label conferred upon him was a misnomer, in that, everyone who visited the site, the holy shrine of Nizamuddin, was essentially a beggar of some sort, and the only thing that separates him (or people like him who beg) from the others is that they beg differently, and possibly, for different things. The worshippers and temple-goer have access to God directly – that is, because they are more privileged members of the society, they must be blessed in some way by the God/gods they worship, and therefore, closer to the entity than the beggars themselves. But for those who beg outside these places of worship, shunned and perhaps even discouraged from entering the premises – due not only to their low socio-economic status, but also how it could be interpreted as a consequence of bad karma or sin within the religious and socio-cultural framework that the space inherently provides – are removed from direct access to the deity and therefore seek relatively minor alms from those that are closer and favoured in the eyes of the Benefactor. The beggar thus removed from direct access to divine is hoping to be recovered from his urgent quandary indirectly through a godsent donor.

Focusing on the expressive and interactive elements of begging, Erskine and McIntosh (1999) point out, that no individual, no matter how poor, ought to be treated as a passive victim incapable of creating social interaction: “The supplicant initiates the interaction with the donor and thus creates an encounter...And begging is a deliberate action, which involves a conscious choice by the person seeking alms” (cited in Dean, 1999, p. 39). By framing the act of begging in such rhetoric as seen

above, the beggar strives not only to challenge the unwarranted stigma attached to his/her social identity, but also uses his/her voice to regulate and manage the impression he/she gives to the audience who he/she chooses to engage with in course of these begging encounters. Here, the begging individual is seen pushing the limits of the language he/she has access to as a rhetorical device to counter the languages that frame him/her as an outlier, a deviant, or a criminal by appealing to the morality of all human beings on grounds that we are all predisposed to solicit help from each other and the divine, at one point or another.

Mobilising 'destiny' as a coping strategy against risk

Women, on the other hand, were found using the term “*naseeb*” in their narratives to explain their entry into begging. As already mentioned in earlier sections, most women who beg have common stories of broken homes, domestic violence, abuse and abandonment, and/or sudden changes in their household’s financial situation due to death, disease or disability of their husbands. Many of them had migrated to the cities from more remote parts of the country – in search of better opportunities? Yes, but also to be unfettered from some sort of oppressive ties, and to escape violence, abuse or societal rejection in the absence of necessary support structures. Many also flocked to the cities when they learned from other migrants that begging in the big cities, though undignified and humiliating, offered a promising income that could help sustain themselves and their children as more than living in the village, where job opportunities for women are limited, especially so for uneducated landless women. Thus for women, articulation of their experiences as begging and homeless individuals involved to a certain degree what Das (2007) figures as “engaging everyday life while holding the poisonous knowledge of violation, betrayal, and the wounded self from seeping into the sociality of everyday life” (p. 102).

Vijaya is a widow in her early 50s from Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. At the time of this interview, she was found rough sleeping outside the Hanuman Mandir in Delhi in CP where she helped with various chores. The temple authorities allowed her a space to safely keep her things in return for her services, and provided her with a sense of support and belongingness in the big city that is now her home. She also begged though she didn’t explicitly call it that; instead, she mentioned that accepted donations

and offerings made by temple-goers and passersby as she squats at the entrance of the temple next to flower and incense sellers. She narrates her story as follows:

“Naseeb tha... bhatakte bhatakte chalte chalte pahoonch gayi Gwalior se Dilli, aur Dilli ke nayi station pe rahti thi. Koi bola ki, ‘chalo mandir pe,’ toh mandir pe aane lagi...Nayi Dilli station pe 1-2 saal rahi. Dheere dheere yahaan jaan pehchan ho gayi sabse, phir yahaan rehne lagi. Tab se nahin gayi.”

[“It’s my destiny... Lost and wandering, I reached Delhi all the way from Gwalior, and started living on the platforms of New Delhi railway station. Someone told me, ‘let’s go to the temple,’ so I started coming here. I lived at the station for 1-2 years. As time went by, I started to get to know people around here, so I came to live here. Didn’t go back to the station since.”]

Similarly, 40-year-old Manno at CST in Mumbai too refers to the constraining circumstances that compel individuals to beg, and how some were predestined to beg for their living because of their “naseeb”:

“Main bhi gayi thi bheekh maangne, merese nahin hua...Arre haalaat laake majboor kar deta hai, insaan ko ke, ‘ye tum karam karo, ye tumhe karna hai,’ aur woh karte hi jaata hai...Wahi toh samajh mein nahin aata, insaan ka kya kamjori hai [...]. Naseeb mein jo likha rehata hai, wahi hota hai.”

[“I too went to beg. I couldn’t do it... Man, circumstances in life compel us humans, as if it were speaking to you: ‘You’re going to perform these actions. This, you must do,’ and we keep at it. That’s the thing I never get. What is this human weakness [...]? You go where your fate takes you.”]

As already discussed in earlier sections, women’s migration is usually an involuntary process, and leaving home to beg as a homeless beggar is often prompted by situations beyond their control. It is perhaps due to these reasons that women’s narratives constitute not only mentions of hardships and constraints, but often also references to the influence of external unforeseen factors, which is a further indication of their relative distance from agency and decision making powers as compared to men, and a sign of tacit acceptance of their current vulnerabilities as “bad fate” – a coping strategy.

Another word that participants frequently used to refer to stressful circumstances or trauma caused by difficult times was “pareshaani.” *Pareshaani* was sometimes used interchangeably with *majboori* and at times it was used to connote a state of deep mental stress including anxiety. It was most commonly used to denote distress and difficulties. Both men and women were found using the term equally to describe their condition. In certain cases *pareshaani* that escalated into something akin to confusion and madness pushed them into a life of homelessness and begging, just like *majboori* (constraints) did. But in certain other cases, *pareshaani* continued even when initial *majboori* might have more or less ended after individuals started begging.

For instance, in the extract below, a 43-year-old homeless participant from India occupied Kashmir, who migrated to Delhi in order to escape ongoing political unrest in his State, refers to the impending threat to his life and security if he continued to stay there as “pareshaani.” Surrounded by death and the highly militarised conflict in Kashmir, he wished to escape the war zone in search of *life* itself:

“Main chotta tha, padhaai kar raha tha. Haalaat kuch aise ho gayein the ghar pe, jung bhi chal raha tha...terrorism wagera jo wahaan pe the...pitaji aur mataji chal basse. Phir main akela reh gaya [...]. Maine socha...tab problems bhi bahut tha...main bhi agar wahaan mein akela rahunga toh mera bhi kuch pareshaani ho jayegi...rozgaar bhi nahin tha, kuch bhi nahin tha, kuch life hi nahin tha...”

[“I was quite young then, was in school. The circumstances at home were such, the war was on too...terrorism, etc. My parents passed away. I was left alone. I started thinking that if I stayed there on my own amidst all this conflict, I’d get into trouble too. There was no employment opportunity, there was nothing there, no life at all...”]

But here 31-year-old Dharmendra from Madhubani in Bihar, uses “pareshaani” to mean fear and anxiety triggered by his approaching examinations that caused him to run away from home even though clarifies that he was good at his studies:

“Sabse pehle jab main yahaan aya tha, toh bahut pareshaani thi, saatvi ki pariksha thi, 8th class mein jaane wala tha...pareshaani mein kho gaya... tab ka date aur time kuch fix yaad nahin tha... Haan padhaai toh hain, woh pariksha

jo di thi, mujhe bahut pareshaan kar diya... mein padhaai mein bahut aage tha...”

[“Around the first time when I came here, I was in great distress... I was going to get into 8th standard. I got lost in my stressful thoughts. Now, I can’t remember clearly the exact time or year of when this happened. So I’ve studied, yes, but that examination was very stressful for me. I used to be pretty good at school.”]

The story of his journey into begging is also an indication of the relationship between neglected mental health issues and homelessness. Further, *pareshaani* may continue to be a persistent trait among homeless and begging populations in its various manifestations even when income from begging helped many in the margins to sustain themselves on a daily basis. For instance, Radha, a 45-year-old disabled woman who migrated from Darbhanga to Delhi, was still worried about her children’s future. Even though she was working hard as a beggar to educate them well so they could have a life different from hers, she did not know for certain if her children would ever find a decent government job. She describes her continued “pareshaani” with a corrupt system that asks for bribes that she could not possibly afford:

“Aaj main apne bachcho ke liye pareshaan hoon...abhi bhi chatpata raha hoon ki koi ek bhi bachche ko mera, koi achchi jagaah nowkri lag jaaye...Phir main soonti hoon ke ay baba, 4 lakh rupaiya ghos, 5 lakh rupaiya ghos, 10 lakh rupaiya ghos! Toh na woh nowkri ke liye kya mere paas 10 lakh rupaiya hoga, na hi mere bachche koi nowkri karenge...”

[“Today I’m sick with worry for my children...I’m always hoping and praying that someone might just provide a respectable job to any of my sons. Then I hear, my goodness, they want bribes of four or five lakhs of rupees! So neither am I ever gonna have those ten lakhs, nor will my children ever get any government job.]

Similarly, Manno mentioned earlier talks about her distress and difficulties that she kept to herself and wept silently inside because she did not want to appear vulnerable as a single woman on the street:

“Main har tarah se pareshaan rehti hoon, lekin main kissiko bhi ghoomke nahin bataati hoon. Andar hi andar rohti hoon...”

[“I’m all kinds of distressed, but I never turn around and tell anyone about what I’m going through. I keep to myself and cry inside...”]

Priti, a 28-year-old transgender women from Mumbai refers to sexual harassment and derogatory comments by “public” being a constant source of concern for when she or her friends would step out for work; that is, begging on the trains (some were also engaged in sex work). They often suffered similar violations and regular street harassment as cis-het women do, perhaps, even worse. Priti here was often left “pareshaan” or distressed and fearsome of going out of her house late at night:

“Hum kahin niklenge toh public humko bahut pareshaan karti hai. Jo bhi dress up hoke nikloon, kya logon ka dekhna, aur ussme kya logon ka comments... Achche kam aayenge, bure comments toh bahut aatein hain. Raat ko ek baje ghar se nikalne ke liye humko bahut darr lagta hain, madam...”

[“When I go out, the public really disturbs me. No matter what I wear, the way they stare, and make comments...there would be a very few compliments really, mostly just indignities. If we need to be out post midnight, we don’t feel safe going out of our homes; we’re really scared, madam...”]

Thus, from the above extracts, it is possible to surmise that “*pareshaani*” is a much more durable and everyday phenomenon in the lives on begging and homeless individuals, and how entry into begging is not an evidence of wanting “easy money” or an “easy life.” For most people who beg, life on the streets is filled with various challenges – such as theft, violence, police and municipal raids, exposure to harsh weather conditions, and inadequate access to basic healthcare facilities to name a few – none of which makes begging remotely an easy or enjoyable experience for people who engage in it. Women in particular are further exposed to the threat of sexual violence, and sometimes even staying in homeless shelters does not provide enough safety from such abuse.

Furthermore, despite the richness of their life experiences, it appeared that begging individuals had come to internalise much of the societal neglect, blasé attitude, and exclusion that they are routinely subjected to, which became evident from the limited vocabulary and syntactical devices that they employed to cope by way of thus articulating their predicament. It is as if they had come to accept in a sort of gesture of

unspoken solidarity, their own “poorness” and the shame and guilt associated with that diminished status. However, such an acceptance is not without a tinge of derision and cynicism towards those who care to ask questions of them rather than make assumptions – which by the way is the norm they are made to get used to – that a sizeable diction, much like all else, is not for them to inherit at this end of the socioeconomic spectrum because it also deprives them of their stories and personal histories. What they seem to be saying then when they use the linguistic tropes available to them is that their constraints are largely unspeakable or unsolvable, and their circumstances, not worthy of retelling or deliberation amid the privileged sections of the society that chose to label them and leave them to their own devices.

Sociologically, the narratives of uncertainties, lack of security – and thereby, the idea of fate that begging and homeless individuals associate with their everyday lives while experiencing urban life from its fringes, could perhaps also be meaningfully analysed under the conceptual category of *risk*. Begging and homeless populations are one of the most vulnerable populations constantly exposed to various threats to their live and well-being. Lupton (1999) identifies three major theoretical approaches to the study of risk; namely, the ‘risk society’, ‘cultural/symbolic’, and ‘governmentality’, of which the risk society perspective developed by Ulrich Beck garnered considerable attention. Beck’s (1992), and to a certain degree, Giddens’s (1990, 1991) works foreground the dangers that are hazards of late modern period that have proliferated due to industrialisation, urbanisation, and globalisation. Explaining the central tenets of this perspective Lupton (1999) writes:

“The prevention and minimization of ‘bads’ have therefore become a central problem for contemporary societies. Both individual personal lives and the political area are dominated by concerns and debates about risk. [...] As Beck and Giddens argue, such risks often require expert identification and calculation, so that lay people must rely on expert advice in many cases about what risks are prevalent and how to deal with them. They are no longer so easily able to rely on such structuring phenomena as traditions, local knowledge(s), religious beliefs or habits to shape their decisions about risks.”

– (Lupton, 1999, p. 12)

However, this extreme reliance on experts also means people become more conscious of the difference of opinion among specialists, and there is a growing awareness of how experts knowledge is often incoherent, varied, and unreliable, and without adequate and timely intervention by governments, the products and technologies of science themselves generate unforeseeable risks. As a consequence, lay people become suspicious and overwhelmed by persistent uncertainties regarding credible information to tackle risks and precarity thus produced and proliferated. Thus, according to Beck (1992), risk in contemporary societies transforms into a highly political concept with the capacity to instigate grassroots level action. Begging could therefore also be construed as a form of action in response – a resistance, if you may – to the risks and uncertainties that people at the periphery of the urban experience continually face as they lead their rather extraordinary lives. The gradual slide from constraining and unstable life circumstances into begging, and then coming to accept and innovate begging as a survival strategy is both an evidence of resilience and such low tempo resistance against the backdrop of fast-moving world class cities.

While begging as an income-generating activity is a choice among various other undesirable options available to individuals, it often comes at a huge cost to their physical and mental well-being, and is too fraught with risks and difficulties for it to generally be a desirable “lifestyle choice” for people as is otherwise popularly believed by large sections of the middle class public including policy makers. As mentioned above, Murdoch (1994) also reiterates that the nature of begging as a stigmatised activity makes it all the more unenticing to people, who only fall back on it as an economic activity of last resort. In another study conducted by Dean and Melrose (1999), it was found that even when many people were enthusiastic about finding work, very few were employable in their existing conditions, and some of them were even engaged in entirely unassisted and self-evidently futile attempts at job search. This was found to be true of the begging individuals of Delhi and Mumbai as well. Most of the participants had already tried their hands in various odd jobs in the informal sector before starting to beg for a living, while some others continued to engage in some form of daily wage labour or other street-level economic activities alongside begging and sleeping rough.

The next chapter focuses on the lives of begging individuals to further elaborate the various challenges they face and shed light on the kind of activity that begging is away from the state and layman's understanding of the phenomenon that shuns it as a crime. It tries to posit the potential of begging as "work" based on the subjective experiences of those who beg and prefer it to other forms of informal economic activities of the street. It also seeks to illustrate further with some conceptual flourish to ethnographic data as to how everyday experiences of begging individuals are far from ordinary or mundane.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we observed that the factors that marked people's entry into begging include rural to urban migration and repertoires of misfortunes and constraints. We also observed how these differed from one individual to another based on their position in the social structure and gradation of marginalisation determined by their social locations. It also dealt with how begging, even as it offers an answer to some misfortunes and constraining circumstances, doesn't necessarily eliminate all miseries and hardships associated with belonging to the most socio-economically deprived and stigmatised sections of our society. Many of their difficulties continue to persist as they struggle to sustain themselves on a day-to-day basis. Further, it tries to understand contextualise mobility choices as a gendered act even among begging communities where not all migration could be deemed economic migration, especially in the case of both cis- and transgender women who many a times migrate to escape violence and abuse. Here the narratives of uncertainty and destiny furnished by begging individuals as their reason for entry into begging has been interpreted both as a form of cope against precarity and risk, as well as a grassroots level resistance against the structure that produces and imposes such enduring vulnerability on sections of its population.

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CHAPTER VI

HAZARDS OF STREET LIFE: BEGGING AS A PRACTICE OF RESILIENCE

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a small but growing interest in the study of begging in many parts of the world. Begging has been found to be a vibrant form of informal economic activity in many cities in Ghana, especially, among people with mobility difficulties who view begging as ‘work’ (Kassah, 2008). Another study that views begging as a livelihood strategy amongst Bangladeshi migrants in rural West Bengal in India, suggests that it could be precursor to another more permanent way of making a living, or it might be an enduring phenomenon (Massey, Rafique and Seeley, 2010). Some other studies emphasise on begging encounters and how these help individuals to support themselves creatively by forging meaningful relationships with their donors or engaging the consciences of the public (Lankenau, 1999a). These studies are not only sensitive to the complexities involved with the practice of begging, but also challenge the usual negative portrayal of begging individuals in terms of criminality, child exploitation, manipulation of public sympathies, laziness, etc., to postulate an alternative understanding of begging (see Swanson, 2010).

Swanson (2010), for instance, describes how indigenous women and children migrate to Ecuadorian cities to take up begging as “work”, viewing it “a path to progress”. According to Swanson, begging tactics they use are “instances of reworking and resilience” that suggest “indigenous women and children [beggars] are not passive victims in the face of oppressive socio-economic conditions; rather, they actively engage with and rework the forces that affect their everyday lives” (p. 75). Such a view of begging is both urgent and necessary to develop a systematic understanding of a phenomenon that is mired in stigma of poverty, criminality and middle class disdain, so much so that we have allowed mass media-generated unsubstantiated

imageries to permeate even academic engagement on the subject. This research ought to be seen as a stepping-stone towards recognising begging as a kind of economic activity or a dynamic form of street-work, as opposed to the statist view of the activity being “nonwork.” As such, the current chapter focuses on the experiences of homeless and begging individuals, who by way of engaging in this activity allow begging to be interpreted as a political act of exercising agency. In doing so, it advances a view of these individuals not as passive victims but rather as agents of change constantly renegotiating power structures, and embodying resilience in the face of statist, caste, class, and gender- based oppressions. The interviews with participants were collected from within homeless shelters and custodial institutions, as well as from the streets, which for many of them doubled up as a place of residence and of “work,” depending on what hour of the day one encounters them, but were nonetheless a site of their daily resistance against the might of the state and its more privileged citizens.

Innovating begging as ‘work’

There is already an available repository of knowledge within the discipline of sociology that deals with work and labour, which is a vibrant field of scholarship as old as the discipline itself. Sociology of work traces its origin to the writings of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber, who had all acknowledged work to be of central significance to the modern society. Cornfield and Hodson (2002) in attempting to summarise the fundamental contributions of these stalwarts to the sociology of work state thus:

“Durkheim highlighted the anomic and dysfunctional consequences of the unregulated division of labor typical of industrialization. Marx highlighted the differential power of the capitalist class, its exploitation of workers, and the role of class conflict in moving society ahead. Weber highlighted the alienating aspects of large modern bureaucracies and the difficulties of escaping from these.”

– (Cornfield and Hodson, 2002, p. 8).

Theorists of sociology of work in our contemporary times typically rely on the classical intellectual contributions made by one or more of these traditions, but they have also not refrained from developing and extending their wisdom to capture the ever-changing nature of the workplace and dynamics of work at large. According to Smith (2013), “All three social theorists were concerned about the ways in which industrialization reconfigured economic institutions and relationships. All three also believed that the troubling dynamics of markets and industrial organizations spread far beyond the confined of the factory walls or of bureaucracies” (p. xxx). Indeed, the sociology of work also constitutes within itself the systematic study of the “end of work” also known as the “abolition of work.” The “end of work” thesis in the larger body of the sociology of work, situates itself within the tradition of Critical Theory, which emerged out of the Frankfurt School, and includes works of several theorists such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Leo Lowenthal, and Herbert Marcuse, of which Marcuse is believed to have delivered the most extensive and explicit analysis for the irrationality of work, thereby, advocating for its abolition (Granter, 2009).

Embedded in the Marxist tradition – wherein, Marx himself was the first to suggest the abolition of capitalist labour – the very essence of theories that prioritise the end of work is the firm belief that “people should decide for themselves how to work, produce, and live, and that there is no objective necessity for present conditions to endure” (Granter, 2009, p. 3). Given the important role that work and productivity plays in defining the identity of human beings as indispensable parts of the current transnational, globalised economies, and as citizens of modern democracies, the sociology of work in general, but particularly in the Indian context, must at least begin to absorb the fact that begging is often construed as work by individuals who engaged in this practice. One of the vital roles assumed by the sociology of work is also as an advocate for exploited and oppressed groups that do not have equal access to the economic life stipulated as “standard” in any given society.

According to Cornfield and Hudson (2002), such a role emerges from recognising the adverse impact of exploitation, exclusion, and injustice for certain identifiable groups and communities in society – such as, workers, gender minorities, racial and ethnic minorities, refugees, and immigrants – and feeling the need to voice their grievances. So much so that, in certain situations sociologists come to identify with the role of

being principal advocates, and “speaking out for the disenfranchised and for economic reforms has resulted in sociologists being labeled as subversive and sometimes suffering repression themselves” (Cornfield and Hudson, 2002, pp. 9-10). Thus, the onus largely rests on the discipline to lend one of its many credible frameworks to enhance the understanding of begging as a unique social phenomenon, more exclusively so in its urban manifestation.

Begging and the caste question

Running parallel to any discussion on oppression, exclusion, discrimination, and stigma in the Indian context is the question of caste. Caste, as we all know, is one of the most important frameworks of understanding Indian society. While the government statistics on begging populations in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai underestimate their numbers and do not reflect the actual situation on ground, it is possible to observe a difference in the overall trend based on gender when it comes to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes as compared to the general begging population. The census data indicates that though begging is largely a male dominated activity in both cities, the percentage of women belonging to SCs, STs, and Muslims that were engaged in the activity were higher than their male counterparts for these communities (see Tables 1.2, 2.2, and 2.3). During data collection for this study too it was found that begging communities in both cities did distinguish between themselves on the basis of caste and tribal identities, sometimes even more than religious identities, thereby indicating that caste-based mode of social stratification not just manifests itself but also sharpens among the most marginalised sections of the society, which most observers have a tendency to clump together as a homogenous category of urban poor. Moreover, there were some interesting and even contradictory ways in which caste was experienced and mobilised by individuals living in these margins that would require more targetted data collection and further investigation and analysis.

For instance, there was a tendency among certain groups of begging individuals who squatted outside the Hanuman temple in Delhi, or Aazad Maidan in Mumbai, to refer to themselves as belonging to a “good” caste (meaning, more honourable), as opposed

to the begging and homeless individuals who belonged to one of the denotified tribes (DNTs). The homeless DNT families, with their visibly tattooed bodies, continue to carry the colonial stigma of being viewed as “criminal” tribes by other communities who identified with their caste location as assigned by the varna system. Certainly, here was noticeable spatial segregation between DNTs and the others who squatted on the square outside the Hanuman temple. The DNTs families positioned themselves away from the temple and closer to the roadside on either sides of the street. These visible forms of social distancing, if not clear cases of literal “untouchability,” further establishes the deeply entrenched nature of caste even amongst the most marginalised sections of our society, and its ability to fracture solidarities and forms of resistance among the poorest of our poor, thereby infusing caste oppression into lifeworlds of those with who they shared a common predicament, and the pavements.

There were however others factors that contributed to such discriminatory attitudes towards the DNTs though these hardly supplied a reasonable justification for the same. In course of the study it was found that DNTs were often more united as a community in both cities, owned some land back in their villages, were eligible for housing under government rehabilitation schemes, sometimes had handicraft and other performance skills, and were in many cases could only be considered as seasonal beggars. All of these aforementioned reasons are probably why they became eyesores to other beggars who thought of themselves as more deserving of public sympathy based on the “fact” of their caste. Many DNT families were also involved in other forms of street-level work including buying and selling of substances, that made them relatively more affluent as compared to the rest, who distanced them further by labelling them as drug peddlers, addicts, and criminals bringing unwarranted scrutiny over the “honest” beggars. This is not to call the poor casteist, but rather to demonstrate how caste in our society functions to create a very unique kind of false consciousness that rob individuals and groups, who themselves are products of caste oppression nonetheless, of their capacity to extend empathy and forge collective solidarities.

Another aspect related to caste that needs further empirical evidence in order for it to be able to make a credible claim is the possibility that Dalits rarely ever engaged in begging alone. Part of why this is a reasonable hypothesis is because people

belonging to the scheduled castes often held government “reserved” jobs of the most gruesome kind. So “reservation” at this level actually just becomes a metaphor for extension of religio-casteist practices through the mechanism of the state that freezes caste identities, but may provide a modicum of social mobility for the lower castes. However, by deeming them fit only for menial and “caste-losing” or caste polluting jobs, as manual scavengers, sweepers and janitors, that are still considered extremely undesirable, humiliating, and even more beneath one’s status than begging by caste-Hindus, the Indian state is not doing Dalits and Adivasis a huge favour. Moreover, speaking of caste in the urban labour market, Mosse (2018) leaves no ambiguity in assessing the scope and limitation of such social mobility by stating thus:

“In the industrial workforce, rural migrants experience mobility, mixed-caste working/living spaces and friendship groups. Individual experiences of casteless mobility are a reality, but at the scale of national data sets, as Deshpande (2017) concludes, the diversification brought by post-reform development has not broken the association, across states, of upper castes with higher-status professions and Dalits with manual and casual labor. National survey data expose glass walls against Dalit occupational mobility out of caste-typed roles or low-end service trades (such as masonry or carpentry) into more profitable ones or self-employment (Das, 2013). Under conditions of overall increased mobility between generations (especially in urban areas) studies find intergenerational persistence (especially occupational) greatest among Dalits (and Adivasis, the ‘Scheduled Tribes’), and their occupational ascents are more fragile (subject to downward mobility, especially in rural areas)...”

– (Mosse, 2018, p. 427)

Coming back to the data, it was observed that the only times that individuals brought up the subject of caste of their own volition were to assert the fact that they were indeed not lowly born despite being beggars in present day; that is, even if they were poor, they still had claims to a better social status in the caste hierarchy than those they saw as “untouchables” and/or the DNTs. However, the very fact that they invoke their relation to, and position in, the caste hierarchy to make sense of their present reality is deeply symptomatic of the enduring psychosocial implications of caste, and indeed, of its exclusionary potential, which must be subject to further inquiry.

Additionally, Kumar (2018) rightly points out with respect to discussions around gender and sexual minorities, that there is a tendency within academic discourse to be heteronormative about caste. The lived realities and subjectivities of dalit non-heterosexual individuals who routinely face additional oppression, violence and persecution do not find space within the discourses either of caste or sexuality/gender. Such intricacies of caste, and how it shapes the lived experiences of individuals involved in the practice of begging in the Indian context too require a much deeper and independent scientific engagement, which was outside the scope of current study.

In the previous chapter, I discussed some of the main factors and broader patterns that marked people's entry into begging in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai. The following sections in this chapter describe the daily lives of individuals who beg or choose begging over other forms of paid labour, the impact of the activity on their quality of life, and how viewing begging as "work" – as opposed to the statist view of it as a crime – provides a useful alternative framework to interpret the active role played by them in the act of begging as a *practice of resilience*. The chapter has been thematised and roughly divided into sections based on participants' subjective experiences of their life on the street and their association with begging – people who tried to find jobs and means of generating income, or were engaged in other forms of employment *before begging*, people who tried to find other forms of employment *after or while still begging*, and the everyday *hazards of street life* while trying to live and work off them – all of which provide rich narratives of people reworking their oppressive circumstances and using begging as a survival strategy to not only face but also challenge a system that constantly tries to undermine their needs and invisibilise them (see Figure 18).

Choosing begging over paid labour

From the data gathered, it was found that most people who begged have worked multiple jobs before their entry into begging. This was true in the cases of both men and women, and for both able-bodied and disabled individuals. In fact, even transgender women who face severe social ostracism and have limited livelihood opportunities in general have also attempted to find jobs in the formal economy.

Some still engaged in daily wage labour from time to time to supplement their income from begging. These instances of individuals' failed attempts at finding employment despite their clear disadvantages to fit in to the job market are glaring examples of how badly people wished they could work with dignity and avoid being portrayed as lazy "freeloaders". When the data related to employment history of participants was tabulated, it was found that a clear majority of individuals who begged and were homeless in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai engaged in several forms of economic activity after migrating from their places of origin. Rag picking, which includes urban waste sorting, recycling and reselling, is one of the most common economic activities that homeless and begging individuals, both men and women, were associated with in these cities. There are various levels to the waste disposal and management system with rag-picking being the least profitable or desirable end of the spectrum. But since many of the individuals had little or no education, and rag-picking does not require special skills, this was one of the most popular job options among this group.

There were also some participants who worked at other levels of this waste management system, such as owning shops that collect and sort waste to be sold and recycled. Other common forms of economic activity included domestic help, housekeeping, and private caregiver roles for women, and catering services for men. Rickshaw pulling and daily wage construction labour were also common among men in Delhi. A full list of the various forms of street work and economic activities that begging and homeless individuals interviewed for the purpose of this study did is provided in the table below (Table 8.1). There were also instances of trained professionals and skilled workers who now relied on begging because they can no longer work due to old age or disability. In Delhi, 19 out of 26 people (that is, 73.07%) who were begging and homeless also engaged in other forms of labour or economic activity (see Table 7.1). In Mumbai, 10 out of 15 participants (that is, 66.66%) who were begging and homeless also engaged in income generating activities other than begging (see Table 7.2). In total therefore in both the cities, 29 out of 41, that is, more than 70% of begging and homeless participants of the study had engaged in other forms of work and contributed to the formal and/or informal economy. Thus going by the data, it can be observed that more than half the people who begged and/or were homeless have performed some type of labour or economic activity besides begging at least once in their lives.



Figure 17 Men watching television at the DUSIB and SPYM run permanent homeless shelter (Rain Basera) in Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, Delhi. (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2015).



Figure 18 Women coming back from work to rest at the homeless shelter at Khusro Park, Nizamuddin (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2015)

Table 7.1 Delhi: Number of participants formerly employed in forms of labour other than begging

Total number of begging and homeless participants from Delhi and Mumbai = 41
 Total number of participants in Delhi who were employed in forms of labour other than begging = 19
 Total number of participants in Mumbai who were employed in forms of labour other than begging = 10
Total number of participants who were employed in forms of labour other than begging = 29

PARTICIPANTS	PLACE OF RESIDENCE			TOTAL	EMPLOYED BEFORE/AFTER BEGGING
	Street	Shelter	Home Temp. Homeless		
Male	5	5	1	13	10
Female	3	6	2	12	9
Transgender women	-	-	1	1	-
GRAND TOTAL	8	11	4	26	19

Table 7. 2 Mumbai: Number of participants formerly employed in forms of labour other than begging

PARTICIPANTS	PLACE OF RESIDENCE			TOTAL	EMPLOYED BEFORE/AFTER BEGGING
	Street	Beggar home	Home		
Male	-	5	-	5	4
Female	2	3	1	7	4
Transgender women	-	-	3	3	2
GRAND TOTAL	2	8	4	15	10

Table 8. 1 List of other economic activities begging and homeless individuals engaged in

SEX	MALE		FEMALE		TRANSGENDER WOMEN	
	Delhi	Mumbai	Delhi	Mumbai	Delhi	Mumbai
Other economic activities	Rickshaw puller Construction work Fruit seller Shoe shiner Rug designing Auto-mechanic Factory work Painting Rag picking Catering Shop assistant Housekeeping Restaurant help Driver Watchman	Catering staff Fruit seller Restaurant help Rag picking Waste sorting Train sweeper Cleaner Cattle feeding Gardener	School teacher Domestic help Tailoring Housekeeping Factory worker Rag picking Waste sorting Waste recycling Sex work/Dancer Hospital attendant	Flower seller Handicrafts vendor Stationery vendor Street-food vendor Domestic help Housekeeping Private caregiver Rag picking Waste sorting	Dancer	Private office job TG rights activism Sex work

Disability and absence of supported employment

This particular research also opens up the discussion on begging in relation to disability. Disability among the lower socio-economic sections of our society is one of the most overlooked issues in both policy and research, and as such poor persons with disability face additional challenges to access basic minimum rights. As official statistics seem to indicate, this ultimately results in persons with disability constituting an alarmingly large proportion of the begging population among “non-workers” in India, even if census data were to be taken at its face value (see Table 9.1). For instance, the 2011 Census estimated the begging population of NCT of Delhi urban to be at 2,054, while the number of persons with disability classified as beggars was estimated to be 583; that is, a shocking 28.38% of the total begging population in the urban areas of the state of Delhi. Given common understanding that government data usually understates a problem, the real numbers of disabled population in need of welfare would therefore be much higher. If such preliminary cross tabulation of official statistics itself reveals that close to one-third of the begging population could comprise of persons with disability, then disability and related issues of access to education, employment, and healthcare ought to be issues of serious concern for policy makers.

However, the widespread sentiment evidently is quite the opposite. Studies have indicated that the employment rate of disabled people declined dramatically from 42.7% in 1991 to 37.6% in 2002, and the gap between employment rate of people with and without disabilities have continued to widen for lack of government funded structured supported employment schemes (DEOC Report, 2009). Moreover, when it comes to begging, not only does the state criminalise begging even by individuals experiencing acute mental and physical distress and exclusion, but even the public at large treats the sight of disability among the poorest of the poor as further evidence of their criminality by association with a begging mafia. It is unfortunately extremely common for the middle-class urban public to express views that stigmatise poor disabled individuals by holding them responsible for their own disability based on superstitious beliefs about sins committed in past lives, or worse still, by indicating that they deliberately cause self-harm in order to gain public sympathy and riches.

The evidence from the field suggests that nothing could be further from the truth. In the absence of adequate welfare, begging in fact becomes a vibrant form of income generation among people with disabilities, and thereby, a path to progress. Radha, mentioned in the previous chapter, in spite of her disability had gone job searching and worked at various factories around Delhi including footwear factory, switch factory, pharmaceutical manufacturing and packaging factory. At some of these workplaces, she faced threats of sexual harassment (where the employer wanted to hire her for his “manoranjana” or entertainment), and discrimination based on her region (by being referred to as a “Bihari”), while at another she realised that she could not be as productive as she wanted to be because of her educational disadvantage. She narrates her terrible experiences of job hunting and working in factories thus:

“Main udhar jaati thi... Moti Nagar ke paas, tab main woh chappal ke factory mein kaam karti thi. Tab woh chappal ke factory mein kya hua, jab woh bagal walla aya na – auratein sab yeh haha hee hee karti thi, mujhe ye cheez pasand nahin ayi – tab woh dusre ladke ne kaha ke, ‘Bhai, ek doh ladies jo abhi ayi thi, mere mein bhi kaam lagwa de.’ ussne bola, ‘thik hai’. Phir woh bola, ‘mere mein kaam nahin milta bas time pass hain,’ jisme hum kaam kartein the na, ussne bola ki, ‘bhaiya time pass karne se kya farak parega ussko, ussko toh kaam se matlab hai, woh time pass kya karegi?’ Toh ussne bola jo tha dusra factory walla ke, ‘aurat ke saath has bolke timepass hota hai, manoranjana hota hai.’ Toh maine bola, ‘aag lage tere factory ko! Bhai, achcha bura mera, bhala bura mera pati hai. Tere saath, ek durse admi ke saath aurat kyun karega manoranjana?’ Toh woh ghalat hoga...toh woh achcha nahin laga. Phir kaam chhor diya chappal ke factory mein. Usske baad ghoomte rahin ki kiraye ka makaan hai gujara kaise chalega... yeh toh ghalat factory hai, ghalat waale ko dhoond rahe hai...yeh sab toh pair tootne ke baad ka kahani hai... Kuch hi din kiya tha.”

[“I used to go there... near Moti Nagar. Then I used to work for a factory that manufactured slippers. So what happened in that factory was that, a guy came from the neighbouring workshop. These women in my factory used to chit-chat and giggle a lot and I used to not like this about them. So this other guy who came says, ‘Brother, send a couple of these ladies looking for work over to ours as well...’ The guy at our factory replies, ‘Okay!’ Then the other guy says,

‘Over here though we don’t work with women; we only have women around to pass time.’ So this guy tries to reason with him saying, ‘Brother, she has no interest in passing time; she is only interested in doing her job.’ The other guy kept insiting however saying, ‘Women are around for us to have fun with; they are for our entertainment...’ Finally I said, ‘To hell with your factory! Good, bad, whatever he may be, I have my husband. Why would I entertain you, some random guy!’ That would be wrong. I didn’t like the atmosphere there. I left that job in the slippers factory. After that I kept wandering looking for another job because I had to pay my rent. I was at the wrong place, I thought. They were looking for the wrong type of people. This is all after I broke my leg. I worked there only for a few days.”]

The threat of gender-based violence for working women belonging to the largely unorganised, lower socioeconomic section of our society hardly garners any attention in much of the Indian media or social science research. While it is well known that female factory workers routinely face sexual violence of the worst kind (Siddiqi, 2003), besides being physically assaulted and exploited economically by employers and contractors, it is quite unlikely for a layperson to factor in these realities when he/she alleges that begging and homeless individuals are simply lazy people who are incapable of appreciating the virtues of being gainfully employed. Below, Radha describes another one of her unsuccessful attempts at finding suitable employment:

“Usske baad mein switch ki factory mein gayi, Rama road. Toh rama road mein teri se bhi kaali dhondor thi woh ladki, lipstick laga rakha tha yahan yahan yahan [being animated], handbag, ghadi, sandal, meri se bhi kharab, main bhi gayi kaam dhoondne, woh bhi ayi truck pe. Sheeshe ka gate tha. Supervisor ne dekh liya toh poocha ki, ‘yahaan ye ladies kis liye baithe hai?’ Humne bola, ‘Kaam ke liye...’ Toh keh raha, ‘haan ji, kya baat hai?’ Maine bola, ‘kaam dhoondne aya hoon...iss mein, board mein likha hua hai kaam ke liye, toh main pata karne ayi hoon, mujhe kaam chahiye.’ Toh dusra walla keh raha hai, ‘arre yaar, yeh bihari hai, yeh nahin chalne wala...’ Toh mera toh hata diya ussne, bola ki kaam nahin hai, aur woh handbag wali ko rakh liya.”

[“Then I went to a switch factory, Rama road. There was this other woman, dark and ugly, wearing lipstick all over her face, here, here, everywhere, with a handbag, watch, her slippers, worse than mine! She too came along on the same

truck as me to look for work. There at the factory office, they had this glass door. The supervisor sees us waiting and asks, ‘Why are these ladies sitting here?’ I say, ‘For work...’ So he turns to me and says, ‘Yes miss, so what’s the fuss about?’ I explain, ‘I came looking for work. This board here says you’re looking to hire. So I came to inquire because I need a job.’ Then the other guy in the office remarks, ‘Oh man, she is a *bihari*; this one is not gonna work!’ So they got rid of me and gave the job to that other handbag woman.”]

Even after facing gender- and ethnic discrimination, she went ahead and worked at a pharmaceutical manufacturing and packaging factory for sometime. However, being illiterate proved to be a major hurdle for her upward mobility though she was extremely hardworking. She could not match drugs with their respective labels during packaging without help from others, and she had to eventually give up that job knowing the potential risks of making errors during packaging of medicines. Being a disabled woman, she also spent years outside various government offices looking for state welfare in order to become gainfully employed before resorting to begging.

“Mera certificate tha...ration card, pehchaan patra, aadhar card sub kuch tha... Phir koi koi bola ki, ‘viklang [certificate] le ke aa, tujhe nowkri mil jayegi, ya phir dukaan mil jayega...wahaan se tere bachche pal jayenge.’ Toh main gayi A-ji (name of authority couldn’t be verified) ke paas, Gole Dak khana (BJP office?), wahaan ek saal-dedh saal dora lagaayi, woh nahin soonwaayi kiya. Phir main gayi Ajay Maken ke paas. Woh office mein baitha rehta tha, aur milne nahin deta tha Ajay Maken se, usska chamcha kehta tha, ‘nahin hai, nahin hai... chalo chalo, baahar ja baahar ja!’ Wahaan bhi dhakka khaali maine. Wahaan se soonwaayi nahin hua.

Toh India Gate gayi main, Selja Kumari ke paas, wahaan bhi soonwaayi nahin hua. Toh gayi Sheila Dikshit ke paas, wahaan bhi soonwaayi nahin hua. Phir Sonia Gandhi ke paas gayi wahaan bhi soonwaayi nahin hua. Saat saal maine dora lagaayi. Phir Mukul Wasnik ke paas gayi main, Tughlaq road, 6 number kothi pe... kothi ka number bhi mujhe sabka yaad hai, saari mantri ka kothi ka number mere yaad hai...kun kun kothi mein kun kun mantri rehta hai... Wahaan bhi dhakka kha liya. Koi mantri ne mera na soonwaayi kiya, na nowkri diya na mera dukaan diya.”

["I had a certificate...ration card, voter ID, aadhaar card, all of it... Then some people told me, 'Get disability certificate, you will get service then, or they might allow you to run a shop...that way you can raise your children.' So I went to A-ji (name of authority couldn't be verified), Gole Dak khana (BJP office?), where I sat outside waiting for my case to be heard for a year, year and a half, but they didn't call me for a hearing. Then I went to Ajay Maken. He'd be there in his office but his subordinate wouldn't let me meet him. He'd say, 'No, no...get out of the way, go out!' There too I got pushed around. There I couldn't get a hearing.

Next I went to India Gate, to Shelja Kumari. I didn't get a hearing from there either. Then I went to Sheila Dixit, where they didn't see me. Then I went to Sonia Gandhi. Same story. I did this for seven long years. Then I went to Mukul Wasnik, Tughlaq road, House no. 6 – I even remember the house number. I remember all the ministers' addresses, which one lives where – there too I got thrown out. Not a single minister gave me a hearing; neither did they give me a job, nor a shop to earn my livelihood."]

Most women who beg complain of the callousness and indifference of the government authorities to their plight that pushes them deeper into the vicious cycle of vulnerability and protracted impoverishment: "*Mera koi saab bhi soonwaayi nahin kiya...*" ["Not a single official gave me a hearing"]. They complain of the unfair treatment meted out to them by the various ministers and government officials, who don't hear their pleas for support and fall short of providing adequate welfare in order for them to find a respectable means of livelihood – a fundamental right, no less – and not have resort to begging. Many also complain about the casual apathy of the police that doesn't take their cases seriously, thereby removing their access to safety and justice, leaving them perpetually vulnerable in more than one way. As mentioned in the previous chapter, for most of these participants, begging was not a desirable option as it is widely portrayed or commonly believed. But once they were in it, they came to see begging as viable means of earning a livelihood given their circumstances and a way to improve their own or their families' living conditions, including meeting educational needs and providing better opportunities for their children.

Radha explains how she finally got tired of her futile attempts at job search and expecting for state welfare, and started making her living by begging even though neither her children nor she found begging a desirable option:

“Jab mera yahaan se guzaara hone laga toh main mantri ko maar dharoon, aag lage! Main toh mantri ka kothi jaana choddiya...mera aaj bhi itna paper hai mere paas, jahaan jahaan main form bhari hoon, Balband Rai, yeh DMC ka daftar...mere koi saab bhi soonwaayi nahin kiya...Nahin toh mujhe bheekh maangna pasand nahin hai...aaj bhi agar mera kahin koi stall koi naukri mil jaayein...toh main bheekh maangna chhod doon.”

[“When I started making my living from this place, then all the ministers can go to hell, burn! I stopped going to their houses...I still have this huge pile of papers, from filling all those forms, including Balband Rai, here at DMC office. None of them gave me a fair hearing. Otherwise I don’t like to beg. Even today if someone offers me to run a stall somewhere, I’d stop begging.”]

Another disabled man from Uttarakhand complains about the lack government support in his home state for poor people like himself who live with disability since childhood, due to which he doesn’t have any other option but to beg even though he would have been happy to find some form of employment:

“Kuch bhi nahin, kisi ne bhi kuch nahin diya aaj tak ke hume, na toh rickshaw mili, jo viklaang ki gaadi hoti hai...certificate bhi hai.

Dilli mein try nahin ki humne, jhooth nahin bolenge, lekin Uttarakhand mein nahin mila. Bachpan se perr kharaab hai ji, dekho, sahin baat hai, bete, jhooth thode hi bolenge aap se. Kuch bhi nahin diya. Aur toh kya viklaang ko jo pension milti hai, wo bhi bandh par gaya. Matlab Rs. 1000-2000 jo hum ko bhi pheeka pare, woh toh woh bhi khaa ke baith jaate hai log wahaan pe, bataao kya karein?”

[“Nothing at all...nobody ever gave me a thing till this day. Nor they gave me that rickshaw, that vehicle for the handicapped...I’ve the certificate too.

I didn’t try in Delhi, won’t lie about that. But I didn’t get it in Uttarakhand. My legs are bad since I was a child...It’s the truth, kid. Could I ever lie to you? They gave me nothing! And to make things worse, they also stopped the disability pension that we used to get. Those 1000-2000 rupees that were too

little even for us, they would gobble that up too. Now you tell me what can one do?"]

Here, one can see how he could not make sense of what he seems to be referring to as corruption of the pension scheme meant for persons with disability. According to state government's website, the pension amount is a total of Rs. 1000/- per month only.³⁸ Besides already being a meager amount, it is appalling that our ill-audited structural mechanisms allows for resources to be squandered and pilfered even when it comes to the most deprived and vulnerable citizens. The agony of the injustice multiplies when one also takes into account the fact that despite little or no literacy, these individuals manage to tackle and fulfil the exhausting bureaucratic requirements to become official beneficiaries of the scheme, and yet fail to avail its benefits. Thus, begging becomes a means to navigate through the number of impediments that the state and the society create for the doubly marginalised disabled poor. Kassah (2008) in his work on begging among people experiencing mobility difficulties in the context of Ghana – where too the practice of begging is outlawed – explains how by considering begging as a legitimate form of work, individuals are able to minimise their experiences of shame and embarrassment that they are made to feel, perhaps from an early age, owing to their disabilities, and cope with the stigma attached to being ill, diseased, or disabled by finding acceptance among equals in the community. In other words, for people experiencing mobility difficulties, begging comes to be perceived as a means of social mobility.

As already state above, people living with disability are one of the most overlooked sections of the population in any society, which usually tends to base all its inferences and policies on able-bodied subjects. Begging as a social phenomenon is particularly common among disabled poor who do not receive adequate welfare or infrastructure to be able to compete with the able-bodied population. The state attempt to rehabilitate and reintegrate people living with disability in India is

³⁸ According to information provided on the Social Welfare Department website of the current Uttarakhand government, under the "Divyang Pension Scheme," members of families that are residents of the state and deemed BPL, aged 18-59 years, either with 80 per cent disability or with multiple disabilities, are eligible and entitled to receive pension of a sum of Rs. 1000/- per month. This is fusion of state as well as Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS). State contribution is Rs. 700/- and IGNDPS contribution is Rs 300/- per month. (<http://socialwelfare.uk.gov.in/pages/display/96-disability-pension> last accessed on 05-11-2018)

extremely insufficient, which is further compounded by the fact that disability is also highly stigmatised in the country. According to a World Bank Report (2007), people with disability comprise 4-8% (around 40 to 80 million individuals) of the Indian population. Moreover, most people with disabilities in India and their families strive to sustain themselves in the face of extreme poverty. It is not surprising therefore to find that a number of individuals belonging to the lower socio-economic strata of our society who experience mobility difficulties take to begging as a survival strategy due to lack of adequate vocational training and employment opportunities. By viewing begging as a justifiable means of income generation, disabled individuals are able to navigate the stigma and shame attached to their identities.

According to Kassah (2008), “Using begging as work to justify it makes it, for example, easier for disabled people who hitherto have been socialized to see begging solely in socially undesirable terms to develop positive attitudes to it. Feelings of devaluation, helplessness and powerlessness also seem to be reduced as they earn their own money, which they disburse according to their wishes” (p. 169). Thus, it allows individuals to enhance their self-conception by challenging their devalued image and have a new equation with the rest of society that inherently values work. In this way people who are excluded from finding regular forms of employment in an otherwise ableist and neurotypical culture governed by rules of a capitalist market economy learn to see themselves as “working,” capable of forming meaningful associations and networks, and more importantly, of generating income. This was found to be true for the participants in the current study. The evidence from the field suggest that many individuals with disability not only perceive begging as a legitimate and honest form of income generation, but also as a means of progress and being socially and economically “mobile” by forging ties with regular donors and those with whom they shared a common predicament.

Pressing concerns of mental health among begging and homeless individuals further compound the intersection of begging and disability. Evidence from the field as well as previous research on rough sleeping has indicated that there is an unambiguous relationship between mental illnesses, substance use, and the phenomenon of homelessness (see for example Fawole, Ogunkan, and Omoruan, 2011; Lee and Farrell, 2003), though it is not always clear if the former is more a cause or a

consequence of the later. But these interlinkages of health, mental health and disability with work with special attention to specificities of social location, class, caste, gender, etc. need to be explored further in order for us to understand how individuals at the intersection of multiple marginalisations are able to make sense of their reality through a social constructivist view of the act of begging. More empirical research in this specific intersection of disability and socioeconomic marginalisation is also required because the populist and negative portrayal of begging associating it with organised criminal mafia, or conflating it with child trafficking and human smuggling, also emerge out of widespread ignorance and lack of credible information regarding the life circumstances of this extremely disadvantaged and neglected group.

Old age and begging as 'retirement'

Besides allowing disabled people to earn a livelihood, begging also becomes a survival strategy for skilled and unskilled people who can no longer work or engage in other forms of productive labour due to old age. This group of the population too needs care and welfare in order to be able to sustain themselves, as they may often become physically and mentally debilitated at an advanced age. But they are rarely the focus of administrators and policy makers, and especially so if they already belong to socioeconomically marginalised sections of society. As such, they are a population at risk and lack adequate social security. As per the 2011 Census, there were 104 million elderly (60+) in India; and in fact, researchers have estimated that between the years 2000 to 2050, population of the elderly would increase by 360% as compared to the total population that is expected to increase by 60% (Kulkarni, Raju and Bammini, n.d.).

Table 9. 1 Disabled non-workers by type of disability and sex / India and states (NCT of Delhi and Maharashtra)

Table Name	State Code	Area Name	T/U/R	Activity of Non-worker	Total disabled non-worker - Persons	Total disabled non-worker - Male	Total disabled non-worker - Female	Type of disability - In movement - Persons	Type of disability - In movement - Male	Type of disability - In movement - Female	Type of disability - Mental Retardation - Persons	Type of disability - Mental Retardation - Male	Type of disability - Mental Retardation - Female	Type of disability - Mental Illness - Persons	Type of disability - Mental Illness - Male	Type of disability - Mental Illness - Female
C2324	00	INDIA	T	Total	17070608	7915768	9154840	3401950	1769366	1632584	1183679	638600	545079	568346	303885	264461
C2324	00	INDIA	U	Total	5438370	2417221	3021149	901459	450179	451280	402900	218343	184557	194198	105949	88249
C2324	00	INDIA	U	Beggar, Vagrants, etc.	27126	16926	10200	10389	6658	3731	1840	1169	671	1902	1206	696
C2324	07	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	T	Total	169309	81361	87948	45765	21646	24119	14607	8861	5746	8841	5225	3616
C2324	07	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	U	Total	164838	79117	85721	44500	20994	23506	14294	8649	5645	8630	5088	3542
C2324	07	State - NCT OF DELHI (07)	U	Beggar, Vagrants, etc.	583	404	179	351	240	111	27	16	11	29	19	10
C2324	27	State - MAHARASHTRA (27)	T	Total	1715055	809369	905686	308347	169675	138672	128882	69360	59522	44411	23360	21051
C2324	27	State - MAHARASHTRA (27)	U	Total	806941	355970	450971	113560	59741	53819	57168	30872	26296	20974	11294	9680
C2324	27	State - MAHARASHTRA (27)	U	Beggar, Vagrants, etc.	2347	1461	886	787	513	274	110	56	54	187	115	72

Source: Census of India, 2011 retrieved from <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>

During the course of this study, there have been several instances where it was found that people who left home for good quite early on in their lives, and never went back or got in touch with their relatives even in their old age. There were also instances of people who left friends and support networks behind when relationships soured for one reason or another. Some old people were abandoned because they had become a burden to their families who could not afford their health or mental health needs. Some others were abandoned as children. Begging, for these individuals who fell into utter neglect, became a way to sustain themselves through the winter of their lives. Few of the elderly participants who begged were fairly educated and trained professionals in their youth who had a lot of work experience in various fields of expertise.

An 80-year-old Baba Hussein was one of them. He left his home as a young boy due to family problems. He trained himself in auto engineering and worked in various cities in India and abroad. He remained a bachelor all his life and lost all contact with his family members. Owing to his increasing fragility and ill health (hernia), frail memory, as well as poor hearing and eyesight at his old age, he had now retired from all forms of hard labour and confined himself to a life of rest. Being a single man with no familial responsibilities, he did not bother with saving money or accumulating assets by owning a place of his own. He lived at a homeless shelter in Nizamuddin, surviving on bare minimums as a “*faqir*”.³⁹ He described that he had worked and travelled a lot, having lived a very fulfilling and eventful life as a truly self-made man. He relates his experiences of working in different cities using his various artistic and professional competencies as follows:

“Maine auto engineering company mein kaam kiya, auto engineering mein, boring, polishing, crank turning, rod turning, smelting, English word hai... aur phir main auto engineering se auto mechanic mein gaya...maine pure India mein crank saw, connecting rod, yeh sab kaam maine seekha hi nahin karne wala admi main apke saamne baitha hoon...yeh sab Kanpur ki baat hai,

³⁹ In course of completing my study, almost a year or so after his interview with me, Baba Hussein left for his heavenly abode. He was liked and respected by the shelter authorities. Though he did not seem to want to maintain any ties with kin members, according to the caretaker of the Nizamuddin shelter, a sister of his was intimated about his death.

1958... Kanpur ke hain, main city ke, Begamganj, Meharban, Kanpur ka central area hai woh...

Dilli mein ake, cycle painting ka kaam kiya. Wahaan se phir 2 saal ke baad kaam chhodke, main Ajmere Gate aaya. Wahaan maine spray painting seekhi, colour mixing seekhi... cycle painting mein ek hi color chalta hai, black, uss zamaane mein, 50-60 saal pehle ki baat hai ye! Aaj toh multicoloured cycle aa gayin hain, bahut designing hai... uss time yeh kaam kar aake, phir yahaan maine 5 saal factory main kaam kiya, Hari Nagar, Ashram mein... aapko maaloom hai? Aapko kaise maaloom hoga aap toh abhi bachchi hain waali baat ho gayi.”

[“I used to work at an auto engineering company; in auto engineering, I did boring, polishing, crank turning, rod turning, smelting, these are all English words...then I went into mechanical. I’m not just someone who learned how to work the crank saw, connecting rod, etc. all over India, but I’m sitting here before you as someone who has also worked everywhere. It all started in Kanpur in 1958. I’m from Kanpur, main city, Begamganj, Meharban, these are central locations of Kanpur.

[...]Then I came to Delhi and worked in bicycle painting. I left that job after two years and came to Ajmere Gate. There I learned spray painting and colour mixing. Those days in cycle painting, we only used just one colour, black...I’m talking 50-60 years ago! These days they have multicoloured bikes with much designing. Thereafter, I came to Hari Nagar at Ashram and worked for 5 years in the factory...Would you know? How would you know since you’re still a child...”]

He laughs benignly before explaining further:

“Hari Nagar Ashram hai, wahaan New Light Engineering Corporation thi, aur woh scientific equipment ki supplier aur manufacturer hua karti thi. Scientific equipment ussme painting bhi chalti hai, ussme stands waagera bante hain, petrol ke lamp bante hain, peetal ki, aur magnets aate hain. Moraji Desai ya kisika koi rishtedaar hai, Maharashtra mein permanent magnet banaata hai, 3 inch ka magnet, ya toh ½ inch ka, usska painting karta tha, bahut hard hai usska painting kyunki magnet ya toh bhaag jaayega ya toh chipak jayegaa, north-south pole hota hai na magnet ka... toh yahaan kaam kiya tha ek saal.

Phir Dilli se dil bhara...iss beech main Bombay do baar aa jaa chuka tha. Bombay mein main, C(?) company ka motor oil aata tha, ab toh sab badal gayein hain companiyaan, yeh group khatam ho gaya hai, aapko maloom hona chahiye...toh wahaan maine spray painting ka kaam kiya, bahut se kaam kiyein, flat painting ka kaam kiya, emulsion plastic samajhte hai? Painting mein total A-Z sab kiya...main artist hoon, main tasveerein banaata tha, picture, aur main stenciler hoon, main gulaab ka phool kaatke aapke haath mein chaap ke de doon, woh bhi kiya...aur main geometrical art ka bhi admi hoon, maine poori geometry aur angles waagera woh sab kaam kiya...kaam bahut se kiye maine...”

[“Hari Nagar is at Ashram...there used to be a New Light Engineering Corporation, a supplier and manufacturer of scientific equipments. So they also need painting for scientific equipments, they used to make stands etc., petrol lamps, made of brass and magnets...it was some relative of Moraji Desai who was a permanent magnet manufacturer in Maharashtra...3 inch or ½ inch magnets that I used to paint. It’s very hard to paint magnets, because as you know they either repel or get stuck to each other; they have north-south poles, remember? So I worked here for a year. Then I got tired of Delhi. Meanwhile, I had already been to Bombay a couple of times. There I used to work at C(?) motor oil company. Now these companies have changed. You must know this group has folded. So there I did spray painting...I’ve done all kinds of work. I’ve painted flats, emulsion plastic, do you understand what that is? In painting, A-Z, I’ve done it all. I’m an artist, I used to make pictures, and I was a stenciler; I could do a cut out and make a rose if you wished on your hand. I also used to do geometrical art; I’m familiar with a whole lot of geometry and measurement of angles etc. because of that...So, I’ve worked a lot in my life...”]

Relatively, his was sort of a “success story” in terms people who set out to make it on their own. But the fact that similar stories became harder to come by for people belonging to later generations, despite them having certain levels of education in some cases, also indicates larger structural changes under neoliberalism that are effectively throwing increasing number of individuals off the socioeconomic grid, systematically disenfranchising them and rendering them invisible in the eyes of the

state. Hussein here however had a different life experience, and hence, was happy to retire from all worldly and materialistic activities to spend the rest of his years quietly in and around Nizamuddin.

“Ab samajhiye, 10 saal ho gaye, main bekaar ho gaya hoon...ear problem hai thoda sa eye problem hai, soonai kam deta hai, pehchaanna kam hota hai...”

[“Now, let’s see, it’s been like 10 years probably, that I’ve become redundant...I got ear problem, some eye-sight problem; I’m hard of hearing, find it hard to recognise people.”]

Interview with Hussein was one of the most eyeopening and humbling encounters in the field. He sometimes spoke in English, but largely in beautiful Urdu. He talked about the classics that he had read as a younger man, and the way he used to love going to the cinema to watch movies. Reading books and watching English films were two things he was deeply passionate about. More recently during his time in Nizamuddin, he used to spend time reading at the Ghalib Academy there, but now that his eyesight was getting poorer by the day, he had retired from frequenting the academy, and left his friends there to themselves. His account and descriptions of his life as a young man were nothing short of Dickensian, as they painted a vivid picture of what life was like for people at the margins from a bygone era that most of us are too young to be familiar with except through stories told by our grandparents and from things we come across in books or films. According to Hussein, he never does not beg for alms, but he receives whatever gifts people willingly offer him out of love and respect for his age.

Another participant when asked why he chose to beg at Nizamuddin Dargah, replies thus:

“Dilli chhod ke sab gareeb admi retire ho ke kahaan jata hai...? Nizamuddin!”

[“Where do all the poor in Delhi go when they retire...? Nizamuddin!”]

According to him Nizamuddin was the place where all the poor people who beg went after their “retirement” or when they could no longer beg at railway stations, traffic signals or other busy places in the city that had become off limits or harder to beg at either due to age of begging individual or due to policing. Another 55-year-old lady from Jabalpur, who was illusive about the kind of work she did in the past, but at the

time of the study begged at the dargah, also seemed to view the place as a sort of place for lonely people like herself to commit to when the fun and friendships of their youth had passed:

*“Mera koi nahin hai. Bol rahin hoon na. lekin apni zindagi aish mein kho di... Toh jo hua so hua, aage ka sochon ki ab kya hoga. Kyunki na idhar meri na idhar meri na idhar meri. Khaali main tanha akeli hoon. [...]*Aish karke rehna, naachna gaana, bona chaalna... arre aise hi yaar doston mein. Ab sab chhod chhaar di ab toh dil yahaan lag gaya, dargah mein. Sarkar pe, usspe, Allah pe dil lag gaya! Humesha ek saa toh nahin rehta jawaani hain na?”

“I got none to call my own. I’m telling you...but I’ve spent my entire life having fun and getting wasted. Whatever happened, happened in the past. Now it’s time to think what lies ahead. Neither the here is mine, nor there...I’m all alone, a solitary soul.

[...]I lived life to the fullest, dancing and singing, talking and sharing...just like that with all my pals. Now I have left everything behind because this place has grown on me. My heart now belongs to the Almighty, He, Allah! It’s not always the same, and I can’t be young and green forever, right?”]

Dargah, or other such religious place, is an easier and safer place to beg for women, children, elderly, and disabled persons because donations of cash or kind outside these places were likely to happen in a more frequent and routinised manner, and did not require people to work harder than they already did. It was also a place where donors are willing to pay or provide alms, as if in a suspension of disbelief – the disbelief oddly having to do with the predicament of those that are ostensibly in need. These places of worship demanded that the rich and powerful be humble in their piety, because the underlying assumption is that everyone is equal before God. Moreover, the performance of piety requires also a performance of “goodness.” Therefore, on the part of donors, being in the presence of the divine makes it even more obligatory for them to play the role of a generous and compassionate benefactor, capable of empathising with the plight of the hapless and needy.

A donor must thereby also feel obliged to give freely as an act of gratitude and good will, either to escape cosmic role reversal in the future with a display of casual

apathy, or to wash away bad karma or sins committed in the past. Donating here becomes a way of making spiritual amends with God as witness. For the begging individuals too, these religious spaces offered an equal stage to them to perform piety, irrespective of their socioeconomic status. Indeed, before God they were equal even to those whose riches they could not begin to fathom. Therefore, it was also morally less perplexing for those aged begging individuals who used to be gainfully employed in their youth, or has a better life before they faced familiar or societal rejection. Begging individuals here play the part of being pious but poor, and hence “deserving poor,” rightfully demanding their due from the rich and more privileged believers. Within the framework of religiosity that these sites were embedded in, beggars find the safety and legitimacy to beg, as opposed to any other place in the city where indigent subjects of the state are dismissed as mere nuisance or portrayed as potential threats to public safety.

This was also a situation that placed people like Hussein mentioned above, who fashioned their identities not see as beggars, but rather as “*faqirs*,” an Arabic term that refers to mostly a Sufi Muslim (sometimes Hindu) acetic who renounces worldly life to devote to a life of bare minimums and wait on God to be merciful upon arrival of the day of judgement. The Persian equivalent of the same is *dervish*. The word itself is derived from the Arabic word “*faqr*” that literally translates to poverty, destitution and pauperism. According to Nicholson (1914), a faqir is s/he who does not beg unless s/he is starving, and when compelled to beg does not take more than that s/he needs. In fact, the tenet of being a true faqir also prohibits the poor from making God an excuse to solicit alms. However, it does allow the faqir to receive what is voluntarily offered to them: “it is the daily bread which God sends to you: do not refuse God’s gifts” (Nicholson, 1914, p. 27). This is a position that many elderly men and women participants espoused, especially those who lived around the Nizamuddin dargah. Many such individuals had regular donors, with whom they shared a relationship that they did not merely perceive as transactional, but rather a transcendental one, involving friendship, kindness and goodwill in the name of all that was divine.

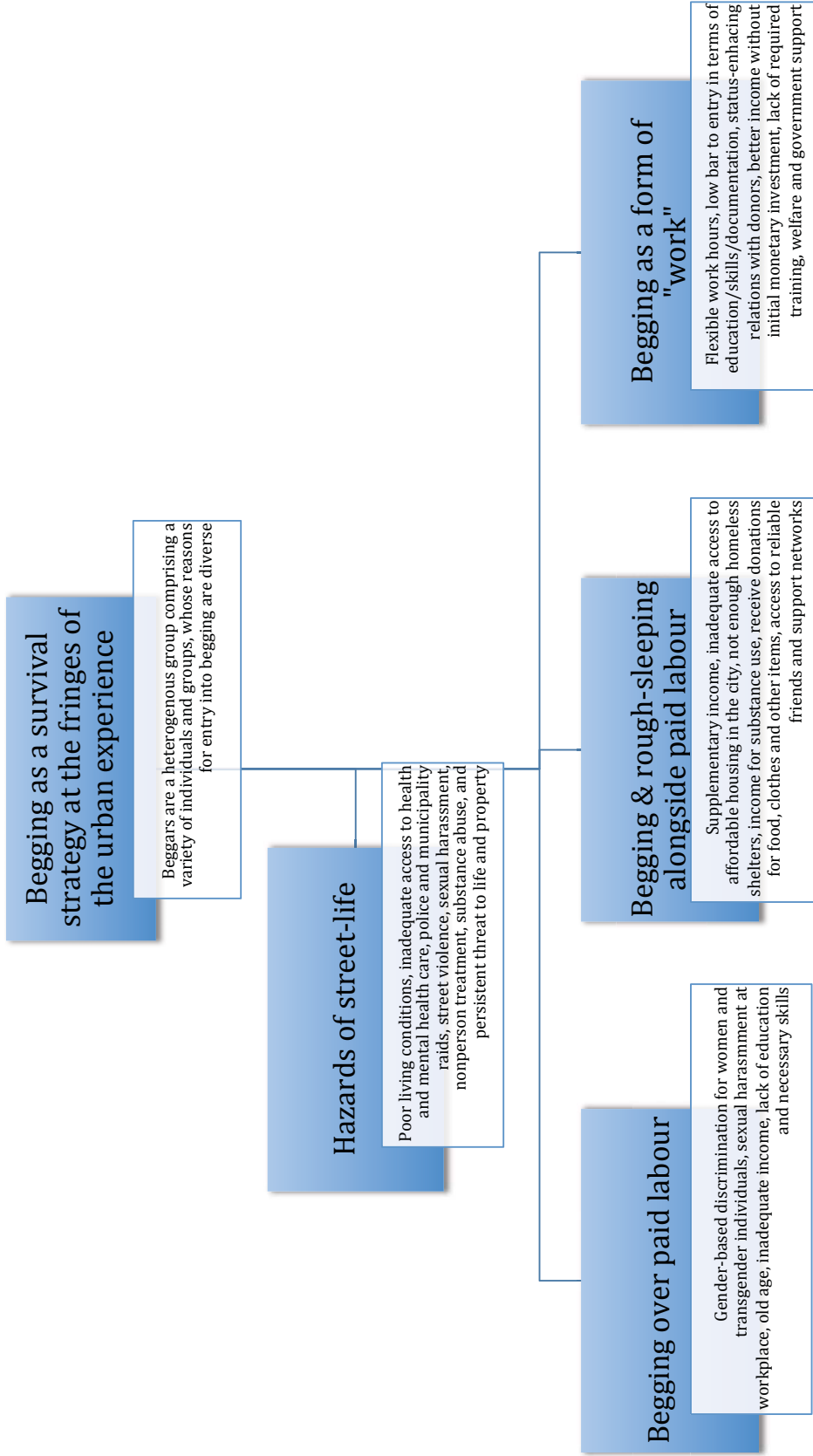


Figure 19 Interpreting begging as a "practice of resilience"

Navigating everyday hazards of street life

Many studies point out that while homelessness may overlap and seem similar to begging, it is not the same thing (Fitzpatrick and Kennedy 2001, for example). The same was found in my fieldwork in Delhi and Mumbai. While rough sleeping is common in both urban centres, and rough sleepers often get mistaken for beggars, many are actually homeless daily wage labourers. Women along with their small children may be seen engaging in different kinds of street work and small businesses like selling garlands, handicraft items, cheap stationery goods, etc. instead of directly asking for alms, or they may be found minding children while their husbands are at work. The other scenario is that of beggars who have homes. These women return to their rented accommodations located at a different part of the city after squatting in busy places like temples or dargahs to beg. They speak of these locations as ‘workplaces’, and their daily visit to them as “*kaam pe jaana*” or “*dhande ke liye baithna*” – that is, to go to work or sit for business.

All women participants warn of impending danger begging on the streets and in local trains, or sleeping rough in case they are homeless too. The most common threats are abuse and violence at the hands of lurking male sexual predators, “*ek akeli aurat ke liye, ye muhau theek nahin hai.*” Some women resort to staying in shelters but others prefer not to because in their opinion these are not any safer for women due to violence against women and drug related activities: “*yeh rain basera auraton ke liye theek jagah nahin*”. Some think some of open shelters as worse than being on the streets with people whom they know and trust. However, the negative view regarding shelters varies based on people’s perception of the organisation and caretaking staff running them.

Furthermore, for homeless women there is the fear of being robbed of hard earnings of several days’ work by fellow rough sleeping substance users, and losing belongings to municipal authorities during raids and sanitation drives conducted by the police. It is important to mention here that women’s experiences with cops vary markedly between Delhi and Mumbai. In Mumbai, sanitisation of public spaces and BMC raids are a regular phenomenon, especially in touristy commercial places like Gateway to

India, Aazad Maidan and Nariman Point, which are all important places for homeless daily wage labourers, street vendors and begging individuals. A homeless woman lives in constant fear of these municipality raids that pick up whatever little belongings that she has, including those of her children and hard earned government documents and proofs of identity, with little or no hopes of getting them back.

Suman, a 40-year-old homeless women belonging to the Pardhi community (DNT) of Solapur, Maharashtra, lives on the street with her husband and five small children. She describes her plight and recurrent ordeal against the brutality unleashed during BMC raids as thus:

“Haan, yahaan raaste par toh taqleef hota hai, didi. Yahaan samaan rakhne nahin deta hai. Kuch bhi nahin...bachche logon ka samaan gaadi mein daal deta hai. Maangne bhi jaayega na, haath perr bhi dharega na, kabhi samaan [waapas] dete nahin, wahaan rakhte hain apne paas.”

[“Yeah, there is a lot of suffering here on the streets, sister. They won’t let us keep our things here. They won’t have any of it...they even take away our kids’ things in their vehicles. If we go there to plead with them, even if we fall at their feet, they never return our possessions. They keep it there with them.”]

These raids do not spare even those individuals who try to engage in other forms of modest economic activities like initiating small businesses as street-food vendors or hawking cheap articles of everyday use. With her then partner’s help, Rekha (mentioned in the previous chapter) also tried running a *paani-puri* (popular street food) business on her old wheelchair at Aazad Maidan. She was primarily financier of this initiative who was giving part of her earnings to her husband to start the business in order to supplement their household income. However, if her partner were to run the business in her absence, his cart and goods used to get raided and picked during municipal raids. Sometimes her presence on site as a disabled woman prevented her business from getting run over, but at other times neither poverty nor her disability was enough to earn her sympathy in the eyes of the callous authorities. Since they had to buy all the necessary items from the formal economy, these raids often stripped them of their investments even before the business could bring them any returns. Hence, she reasoned that even when one tries to engage in forms of street work other

than begging, the state did not make it easy. Rather than fetching her additional income, starting a business only ate away from her savings from begging.

So instead of incurring repeated losses during these raids, or having to pay fines in order to be able to run her business, she said she would rather beg because in case of begging, she had to work hard but did not have to make an initial monetary investment in order to generate a steady income. That way, whatever she earned from begging could be for her to use or save to run her family and educate her daughter.

“Business toh paisewalon ke liye hota hai...apan toh maang ke apne bachchi ko paal lega...paani-puri ka dhanda lagaane ke waaste itna samaan leke ayi main... sab utha ke le gayein woh BMC waale... bazaar se samaan khareedne ka paisa kaun dega apan ko baar baar?”

[“Business is for the monied folks. I’mma beg and bring up my daughter. I spent so much to set up that street food business...they picked all my stuff and took everything away, them, BMC people. Who’s gonna pay me to go buy the goods from the market over and over?”]

It is clear that the middle- and elite classes in the cities or the state institutions that largely represent and reiterates the sentiment and values of these same classes do not see the endeavours of begging individuals to engage in other forms of economic activities as reworking of the oppressive socio-economic structures, or as an evidence of their resilience. They are often still seen as beggars in disguise who are not selling goods or services but capitalising on their poverty (Swanson, 2010). There is a constant attempt to criminalise or at least demonise their every attempt at resisting the fate that the neoliberal system has superimposed upon them. Not only are they expected to suffer in silent and passive acceptance of their condition, they are also berated for trying to subvert such expectation in any manner, and viewed with suspicion by the middle- and elite classes for being ostensible or cacophonous in their state of deprivation. On most occasions it is this middle-class-guilt that is masqueraded as an ethical foundation behind the continued existence of an anti-begging law that makes it a legal obligation for the most marginalised populations to be productive and honest but without challenging the consciences of the privileged passersby.

When asked about the challenges of living on the streets, participants unanimously agree that substance users and drug peddlers are a regular problems as they need more money to satisfy their addictions, and are therefore willing to engage in violence and other criminal activities like theft to procure money for substances, jeopardising the lives and livelihoods of other homeless people in the process by inviting unnecessary police attention upon innocent indigents. In Delhi, the police seemed to have adopted a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of homeless and begging populations in recent times, unless there are complaints of theft and violence. Recalling a time when cops were not so lenient, Vijaya explains:

“Pehle bolte the, ‘chal uth, yahaan mat baithna, yahaan mat sona.’ Sone nahin dete the. Lekin abhi koi kuch nahin bolta. Jahaan marzi baitho, khaao...tabhi toh bahut diqqatein uthane pade the... Waise woh pareshan nahin karte, zyaada hi ho jata hai naya haan par kabhi. Kangle log kissika jeb kaatliya toh kissika phone chheen liya, toh complaint jaata hai. Tab who aatein hain, unko koi shaukh nahin hai zabarzasti kar neka.”

[“Earlier they used to say, ‘Hey you, get up! You can’t sit here! You can’t sleep here!’ They used to not let us sleep here. But these days nobody says anything. Squat wherever you please, eat... Those days I had to go through a lot of trouble. Otherwise they don’t bother us much now. Sometimes things just get out of hand out here. These dicts would pick someone’s pocket, or snatch somebody’s phone, and then the complaint goes to the cops. Then they come. They don’t enjoy being coercive with folks here otherwise.”]

This selective intervention of the cops doesn’t escape the notice of some women like Jaya, who previously had bitter experiences of dealing with police for refusing her help when she was robbed and assaulted by drug peddlers. She clarifies:

“Police wolice koi pareshaan nahin karta, bas yahin jo nasheri log chori chipaati karte rehte hai, gaali guloz gaali guloz...Yeh mandir mein kya kya hota hai police waale ko sab pata hai, kuch karta nahin.”

[“Police wolice don’t disturb us much. It’s just those druggies who rob and steal, keep bickering and fighting. The cops know all about what goes on around this temple square, but they don’t do nothing.”]

Besides losing money and goods, women also live in danger of losing their children. Small children living on the streets are one of the most vulnerable populations. Even though there are threats of losing children to potential traffickers or sexual predators lurking the streets, the more real danger for children being found momentarily unmonitored or wandering are the cops. The police in the big cities are notorious among the homeless people for routinely picking up children without the knowledge and consent of their parents to be institutionalised on grounds of parental negligence or under the garb of being rescued from child labour. This is a prominent cause of distress among begging and homeless mothers. During fieldwork I also noticed that some mothers would tie their small babies to the cots to prevent them from getting lost or trotting into the busy city streets. Suman, mentioned above, used to be a flower seller, but she stopped working because she had to stay home to oversee her children.



Figure 20 Homeless families belonging to a denotified tribe squatting outside Aazad Maidan in Mumbai (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016).

Transgender women at the intersection of marginalities

Transgender women are perhaps the most stigmatised in our society and vulnerable before the criminal justice system. In India, the popular terms used for transgender women are *hijra*, *kinnar*, and TG (short for transgender). These are also the terms they prefer to use for themselves instead of the word “eunuch” that many older government/legal documents use including the *BPBA, 1959*. Not only do they face daily societal rejection and humiliation for their gender identity, the discriminatory attitude towards transgender women infiltrates the justice system that deprives them of basic human and citizenship rights like registering FIRs on complaints brought by them: “*Aap ‘special’ ho bol ke hume pending mein daal dete hain.*” [“They would refer to as ‘special’ case and keep us on pending.”]

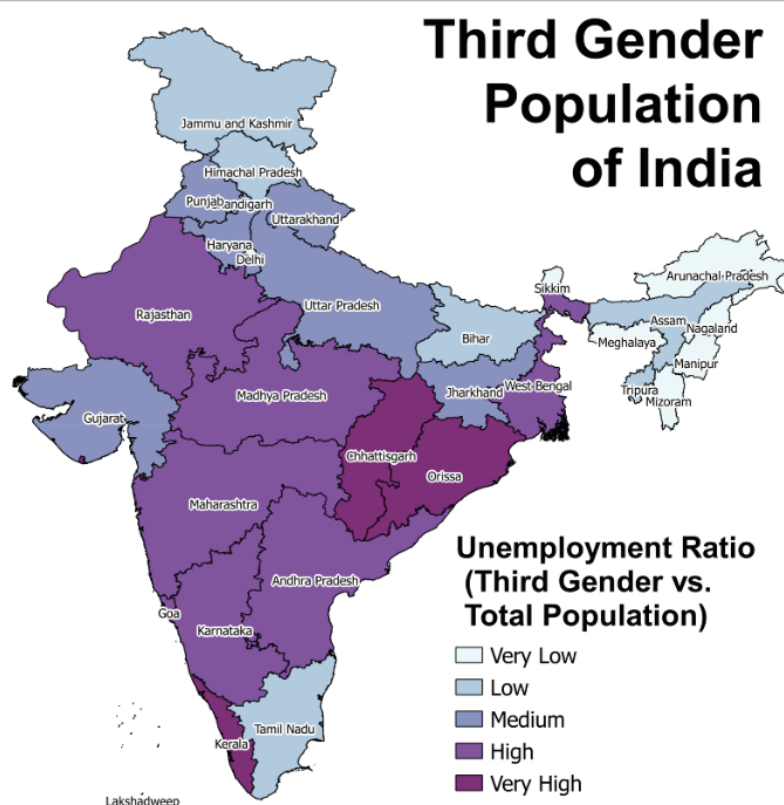


Figure 21 Unemployment ratio of third gender versus total population (Image courtesy: Venkat, A. /Medium, 2016)

Due to discriminatory transphobic attitudes that prevail in all facets of societal life even in the cities, transgender women, often fail to get appropriate jobs despite being educated and having necessary job qualifications. One of the participants, Suzie, a 22-year-old *kinnar* from Mumbai, held office jobs twice but had to quit on both occasions because she felt unwelcome and outcasted by her colleagues' nonperson treatment. She relates her frustrating experience as follows:

“Now, I’m 12th pass, main educated hoon, phir bhi main train mein maangne jaa rahin hoon...Main bahut jagah interview dekar aayi hoon, job bhi ki ya lekin wahaan pe acceptance nahin hain. Dekhtein hai log, muh teda karna logon ka, bahut dukh hota hai. Aur phir mann hat gaya mera uss job se. Main jis jis jagah mein job ki thi, do baar, chodh diya lekin salary lekar nahin aayi, acceptance nahin ha, aur ekdum ajeeb si feeling hoti thi ki main ek akeli hoon, aur baaki sab apne apne mazze mein hain. Mujhe aisa lagta tha kabhi kabhi yaar ke main kyun hoon iss office mein...Kabhi kabhi lagta hai humaare laayak job hai hi nahin shaayad...”

[“Now, I’m 12th pass, and I’m educated. Yet I too have to go begging on the trains. I sat for interviews at various places. I’ve worked some jobs too. But there is no acceptance. People would give me the looks, make faces at me... It’s all very heartbreaking. Then I just lose interest in that job. Whichever places I worked at, twice, I left these jobs and didn’t even collect my pay. There was no acceptance and I’d get this weird feeling inside like I’m alone and everyone else is together in their own world having fun. Sometimes I used to think to myself, ‘Man, what am I doing in this office...?’ Other times I get a feeling that perhaps, there aren’t any jobs meant for us.”]

All transgender women who participated in this study complain of sexual harassment and unwanted advances from men when they are on the streets to beg. While they enjoy a harmless comment or two from the opposite sex praising them for their looks, dancing, etc. that highlight their femininity, this could be read as a sign of an extreme state of disenfranchisement that they have internalised for being stigmatised into the very margins of all marginalised. In fact, they all fear being abused and agree that they must tread with care because men often are only interested in them to exploit them sexually and economically. Once wronged, they only have each other, as the

criminal justice system is extremely biased against them, and has no empathy for the injustice that they have to face on a daily basis. In a similar incident of being exploited by her partner, Bharati, a 28-year-old *kinnar* from Mumbai had to take extreme measures for the cops to agree to listen to her complaint:

“Yeh ab mere case mein humare ko ye bol raha hain ki 498A mein nahin aa raha hai, domestic violence mein nahin aa raha hai hum log...kinnar hone ke baad bhi, abhi bhi hume male mein hi gin raha hai, aisa kyun?”

[...]Abhi humne bahut beizzatti ki wahaan senior police waale ki. Apne kapde uttar diye, baal khol diye, purra taali baja diye usske upar, tab ussne jaake mujhe andar liya tha.”

[“In my case, they are now telling me that it wouldn’t get covered under the 498A, they wouldn’t register a domestic violence case for us...Even though we are transgender, they still count us as male under the law, why is that?”

[...] Now we all humiliated the senior inspector there. We stripped out of our clothes, let our hair loose, starting clapping at his face. Only then did he let me into his office.”]

It is evident that the law as it stands today do not provide any protection to transgender women who are extremely vulnerable to everyday street harassment and sexual violence and exploitation, especially in the hands of their male partners. As a consequence, transgender women not only lack access to basic rights and freedoms in our society, but also when violated, have little left in terms of access to formal mechanisms, or even the very principle of natural justice, that the law of any land entitles its citizens to. Not very long ago transgender women who were arrested under the anti-begging law used to get strip-searched and housed in the same barracks as male beggars in a gross violation of their basic human rights and dignity. Now though they have separate barracks, these are still inside within the premises of the male section of these homes. Irrespective of recent reforms, these homes have not been able to shed the stigma of being a correctional facility or “jail” rather than being a rehabilitative institution.

I met Rani, a *kinnar* in her late 30s, in the Male Beggar Home at Lampur, Delhi during the period leading up to the Commonwealth Games when beggars were actively incarcerated in Delhi. She expresses her shock and disappointment in being

arrested and detained for an extended period for going on a *badhaai*, which she could not believe is a crime because that is her “work”:

“Mujhe bahut dukh hota hai iss baat ka ke meri itni si galti ke liye mujhe itna lamba sazza kaatna par raha hai...badhai pe jaana, garden mein couples ko aashirwaad deke paise maangna...mere Guru ne bahut mehnatki bail pe mujhe chhurwaane kel iye...dussre ek time jugde mujhe chhorne waale the lekin phir jab mere guru ko dekha toh kehne lage, ‘darne ki koi baat nahin. Tumhari guru toh bahut paise waali lagti hai, woh tumhaare bail ke paise bhardegi.’”

[“I feel really sad that they imprisoned me for such a long time for such a minor fault of mine... for going for badhai, blessing couples in the gardens and asking for money in return... My Guru tried very hard to get me released on bail. This one time the judge was about to let me off but then he saw my Guru and started saying, ‘You have nothing to worry about. Your Guru seems to be a very rich one. She will manage to deposit your bail amount.’”]

While in recent times in Delhi arrest and incarceration of beggars under the anti-begging law as a matter of daily practice has largely stopped, that was not the case some years back. As recently as 2010, beggar homes of Delhi were full beyond capacity on the eve of Indian capital preparing for the Commonwealth Games. These days however the beggar homes in Delhi are empty, both due to sensitisation of the criminal justice system through tireless and commendable interventions of civil society initiatives like Koshish and legal advocacy, as well as the system including overworked and underpaid police realising the futility of stretching themselves by arresting poor beggars in the absence of a workable rehabilitative structure to enable people to be gainfully employed. But this might change depending on the priorities of subsequent policy makers. Mumbai, unlike Delhi, continues to incarcerate begging and homeless individuals. This might have something to do with the fact that Mumbai doesn't have shelters for the homeless like Delhi does.

Earlier, once arrested, begging and homeless women were sent to the female section of a beggar home. However, the nature of functioning inside these homes have changed to a large extent in that the staff-inmate relationship has improved, and the custodial authorities acknowledge that begging should be decriminalised, and beggar home ought to function less as a prison and more as a rehabilitative institution

empowering individuals to be gainfully employed. Most inmates in the beggar home today are women abandoned in old age, victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence who are often in need of health and mental health treatment, and women who have voluntarily sought to be committed by court order to spend the rest of their lives at this home due to lack of an alternate support system. Overall, they present a dismal picture of how our society treats its women.

As for the Mumbai Police, the *BPBA, 1959*, doesn't empower them to sanitise public spaces of beggars and squatters, which according to them is an organised crime. An interview with a PSI with Mumbai Police reveals that cops these days prefer to make arrests under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, because "*isske andar punishment zyada 'achcha' hai,*" [the penal provisions under this Act are 'much better'] meaning stricter on the offending individuals. Swanson (2010) explains that the unflattering rhetoric surrounding begging populations is a distraction from the real problems associated with a neoliberal system that fails to redistribute wealth to the poor, and shifts attention to the supposed vices of s instead. The myth of a "begging mafia" in India seems to be an extension of the same rhetoric. From the interviews with social workers and custodial staff within the home, it also became evident that most of the people who get arrested under the BPBA are not beggars at all. In fact, a good number of them were employed and homeless individuals, and contacting their employers ensured their speedy release. However, even the processes of verification and release took about two weeks or longer, which resulted in people losing their jobs to others when wrongfully arrested. Further, the stigma of having been arrested and incarcerated made their consequent search for livelihood much harder.

Begging therefore continues to be one of the most important means of generating income for the transgender communities of India, besides the other extremely exploitative and violent option of sex work. This study has found that the transgender communities in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai generally earned more than cis- men and women. It was also observed that transgender women in these cities who begged usually had higher levels of education as compared to cis- men and women who were engaged in this activity. Though begging was a shared lived experience for each of them, the journeys of men, women, and transgender women, were found to be vastly different. Studies have also found the occurrence of homelessness to be

disproportionately high among LGBTQIA+ youth in the United States (Morton, Dworsky, and Samuels, 2017). But similar data is not available for the Indian context – neither on LGBTQIA+ populations, nor on homelessness and begging – where systematic studies have not taken off to impact academic discourse, everyday practice, or policy in an adequate manner. This research tries to encapsulate and present only a slice of what life looks like to for begging individuals belonging to gender and/or sexual minorities, and how queer migration is also not unusual for those in the margins of “publics” trying to escape violence and social ostracism. But a wholly separate in-depth study is required in order to better understand what role begging plays in the lives of gender nonconforming and/or LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals. It is only very recently that Indian sociology has begun to unpack and engage with the question of gender and/or sexual minorities, LGBTQIA+ rights, and the global politics of sexual liberation outside of the heteronormative discourse, that in itself is still mired in myriad issues pertaining to gender justice for cis-het identifying women.

There are far too few systematic studies that focus on women who beg or are homeless in India, for instance. However, this is not to mean that the latter must first be resolved for the former to begin delineating its goals. Stein and Plummer (1994) critique sociology for its heterosexism, and feminist sociologists in particular, for failing to effect a “paradigm shift” unlike their counterparts in anthropology, history, and literature thus:

“Even though a few sociologists have been studying lesbian/gay life for at least 25 years...these concerns continue to inhabit the margins of the discipline.

Studies of lesbian/gay life occur almost exclusively within the areas of deviance, gender, or sexuality, and have barely made their mark on the discipline as a whole. Many sociologists tend to labor under the assumption that lesbian and gay concerns are particularistic, and have little relevance to them, even though the lesbian/gay movement is among one of the most vibrant and well-organised social movements in the United States and Europe today. Clearly, there is a story here that we are missing; not only does its absence

further marginalize ‘sexual minorities,’ but it also weakens sociological explanations as a whole.”

– (Stein and Plummer, 1994, p. 178)

Indeed, in many ways it must be considered a success of feminism(s) that queer politics is slowly but surely beginning to make its mark on the discipline. However, in the Indian context, where again the social movements involving advocacy for LGBTQIA+ rights, the Pride March, and the long drawn legal battle against yet another dehumanising colonial law – Section 377 of IPC, which among other things, criminalises gay sex, and by extension, homosexuality – have largely led the discussions, academic discourse is still quite far away from grasping the full extent of what epistemological and pedagogical import these very important moments in the history of gender and social justice could have on the discipline.⁴⁰ Borrowing from Burawoy (2006) expression of ‘private troubles and public issues,’ Kumar (2018) points out, “Turning the sufferings of diverse erotic subjectivities into public issue therefore would require acknowledging the fact that desire is *socially organised* and also regulated by state power” (p. 62).

Moreover, according to Kumar (2018), it is crucial for Indian sociology today to not only include the queer movement, but also embrace the complexity that comes from having “to interrogate sexuality movement from the viewpoint of subaltern sexual groups like hijras and kothis, lower middle class homosexually inclined persons and sometimes also heterosexually married gay persons...working class ‘lesbians’...and many transmen whose experiences are yet to be incorporated in movements for sexual freedom” (p. 74) and who may not have the caste and class privileges to participate in the urban, middle class, sexual identity assertion movements. Since, begging continues to be one of the only other ways that transgender population in urban India, including those with good educational qualifications as the current study has found, sustains itself, it is important that sociology in India delves deeper into the issues of structural and sociocultural marginalisation gender and sexual minorities face.

⁴⁰ In yet another interesting and welcome development in course of this research, the Supreme Court of India, on 6 September 2018, passed a historic judgment decriminalising consensual sex between adults regardless of their gender, thereby reading down Section 377 of IPC.

Conclusion

Thus, from the narratives of individuals cited above, we can observe that begging is a legitimate and conscious “choice” made by different sections of the marginalised and neglected population to navigate and overcome the persistence of their state of marginality. In the absence of necessary state welfare and timely intervention, these are stories of individuals who refuse to be hapless passive victims, and take to mobilising their limited resources – complementing the use of their bodies and babies with panhandling repertoires – and using their stigmatised identities to their benefit, to capitalise, as it were, on those very stereotypes that the neoliberal society slaps on them to objectify their existence. It is however not, as some very often like to fashionably view, a “lifestyle choice”. In fact, the everyday hazards and indignity associated with the act of begging makes it an activity of the last resort. This daily struggle and inversion of power at the very fringes of the nation-state by a heterogeneous population, and their persistent resistance to structural oppression to make a living and sustain themselves against all odds, make this act of begging nothing short of a highly innovative and dynamic practice of resilience.

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CHAPTER VII

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND REHABILITATION OF BEGGARS

Introduction

The first legal measure against begging and vagrancy in India was the European Vagrancy Act, 1874, which was meant to deal with vagrants of European descent (Mukherjee, 2008). Ever since there have been various legal provisions to outlaw begging in different parts of the country.⁴¹ The legal definition of a beggar in India could be traced back to the *Bombay Prevention of Begging Act (BPBA), 1959* which defines it as anyone “having no visible means of subsistence, and wandering about or remaining in any public place in such condition or manner, as makes it likely that the person doing so exists by soliciting or receiving alms”.⁴² The Act also includes “soliciting or receiving alms in a public place, whether or not under any pretence of singing, dancing, fortune-telling, performing or offering any article for sale”.⁴³ Anti-begging laws persist in Indian jurisprudence until this date despite evidence of abuse. As pointed out by Ramanathan (2008), “In the law’s rendering...it is ostensible poverty, in and of itself, that could be the crime. Ostensible poverty may require no specific, or even general, act or conduct to acquire the attributes of criminality; dire poverty that is visible, and witnessed in public spaces, could attract the exercise of the authority of law” (p. 33). These individuals who are the intended subjects of such a law, are thereby identified as “status offenders”, that is, they offend by being who they are, and not necessarily by doing what they do (Ramanathan, 2008).

⁴¹ As noted by Das (2017), a number of colonial legal provisions prior to Bombay Prevention of Begging Act [BPBA], 1959 were enacted to criminalise begging: “The Hyderabad Prevention of Beggary Act, 1941; The Bengal Vagrancy Act, 1945; The Mysore Prevention of Beggary Act, 1945; The Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act, 1945; The Madras Prevention of Beggary Act, 1945; The Cochin Vagrancy Act, 1945; The Travancore Prohibition of Begging Act, 1945; The Bhopal Prevention of Beggary Act, 1947; The Bihar Prevention of Beggary Act, 1952” (p. 162).

⁴² Section 2(i) (d) Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.

⁴³ Section 2(i) (a) Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.

The problem with the law begins with the very vagueness and ambiguity of the term begging. The provisions of the BPBA 1959, invest enormous amount of power in the law enforcing agencies, as can be seen by the arrests without warrant of people found begging, detention in certified institutions (Beggar Homes) for a period of not less than one year, and detention for up to a period of ten years in case of second-time offenders. The enforcement mechanisms are arbitrary, disproportionate and discriminatory which could make poverty coupled with disability and ill-health a basis for arrest under this Act (Goel, 2010). Accordingly, there are three other categories, which the court may order detention of under the net of BPBA: the persons wholly dependent on beggars, the incurably helpless beggars (who might be detained indefinitely even after the expiry of the period of detention), and the persons found employing or causing person to beg or using them for the purposes of begging.⁴⁴

The presence and the vigorous perseverance of this Act motions towards the depleting obligations of the state where poverty persists, and the onus is cast on the person in poverty to be gainfully employed, or at least, keep their deplorable living conditions invisible to the institutions of the state. The inherently unconstitutional nature of these laws in how they violate the fundamental rights to life and of livelihood and dignity of the poor is glaring. Further, as Goel (2010) states, “such laws tend to unreasonably restrict and regulate the right to freedom of expression in the absence of any compelling state interest” (p. 25). According to Ramanathan (2008):

“This marginalization and exiling from constitutional treatment, of the ostensibly poor stands demonstrated. This can reasonably lead to only one conclusion: that the law relating to begging and ostensible poverty is insupportable as well as unconstitutional, and must be either repealed, or struck down by a court which possesses the power to test a legislation for its constitutionality.”

– (Ramanathan, 2008, p. 33)

⁴⁴ Sections 9, 10 and 11, Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.

Why and on what grounds do, then, these laws continue to survive in various parts of the world even in the twenty-first century? The next section of the chapter would attempt to understand the rationale behind the enduring existence and usage of such laws in the contemporary jurisprudence followed by a critique of the criminalisation approach to begging. It tries to describe the modus operandi of the police when implementing anti-begging laws – their manner of rationalisation or identification of the supposed problem at hand – and the ways in which their approach comes in conflict with the custodial institutions (Beggar Homes) that are expected to perform rehabilitative functions. Further, the chapter explores the perspective of civil society interventions, which have been able to reveal the paradox that lies at the heart of state attempts at rehabilitating the poorest of the poor, while still criminalising begging. It therefore argues with evidence from the field – Delhi and Mumbai – that begging and homeless persons in the big Indian cities are at the receiving end of a vision of justice that relies on *carceral rehabilitation* that is especially counter-intuitive given their reality, and that an effective notion of rehabilitation could only be conceptualised if it is a product of the complex web of interactions that continuously flows between state and civil society actors, and centres the lived experiences of those that it wishes to rehabilitate.

Contemporary justifications of maintaining anti-begging laws

The past decade has seen an upsurge in regulations relating to the public poor (Blomley, 2010). According to Baker (2009), the contemporary justifications of outlawing begging and vagrancy centre around two main perspectives. The first view proposes that begging and vagrancy are a precursor to more serious crime, which is also referred to as the “broken windows” justification. The second focuses on the general offence, disturbance or nuisance caused to the passers-by as a result of the presence of beggars and vagrants, which is also referred to as the “public nuisance/deservedness/intimidation” justification. In operation, however, these views often overlap or one logically leads to the other when considered from the angles of social control and crime prevention. According to the broken windows thesis, neighborhoods that neglect or overlook or underreport minor signs of decay and incivilities, such as begging, open the door for more grievous crimes. This theory is

followed by order-maintenance policing strategies, which aim at creating public order by aggressively enforcing laws against nuisance offences such as public drunkenness, begging, vandalism, loitering, prostitution and other minor delinquency. Thus, the focus of the police is that of public order maintenance rather than mere law enforcement.

Criminalisation and police action are justified on the basis of the assumption that inaction and complacency, sometimes even toward certain non-criminal behaviors, would ultimately lead to the proliferation of criminal activities and higher crime rates. However, a landmark study undertaken by Sampson and Raudenbush (1999 cited in Baker, 2009) challenged the broken windows theory; it found that most major crimes are linked with two other neighborhood variables – concentrated poverty or structural disadvantage and “collective efficacy”. Collective efficacy is defined as social cohesion among neighbours and their willingness to intervene on behalf of common good. Thus, the study suggests that crime is deterred by community presence, and that the broken window theory lacks credibility.

According to the second perspective, these laws are maintained due to the nuisance and umbrage caused to passers-by due to the presence of beggars and vagrants in public space. According to Ellickson (1996), the sight of idle and allegedly unproductive beggars is enough to cause annoyance and offence to so-called productive people. It is an outrage to the ‘market economy’ work ethic. He argues that the public are also offended by begging since it involved a predetermined judgment on their part regarding a high probability of fraudulence in the beggar’s soliciting, besides the commonly stated reason of passers-by being fearful of aggressive panhandling behaviour (cf. Walsh, 2004).⁴⁵ According to Erskine and McIntosh (1999), since poverty is usually understood as being a passive state, the creation of an interaction by the suppliant in a begging encounter raises a question mark over their claims to be poor. Referring to the various double binds within which beggars are trapped, they further point out: “If you make a living begging, then you may be

⁴⁵ In her study, Walsh (2004) finds that homeless people are no more likely than members of the general public to be engaging in crimes of a serious nature. In fact, they are often arrested for minor victimless offenses. Moreover, she cites a research conducted by Hanover Welfare Services in Melbourne to challenge the notion of “aggressive” begging, which was found to be extremely rare.

condemned as a professional. If you beg to supplement your income you are not really in need.”

The portrayal of beggars, at best as wealthy cheats, and at worst as free from the constraints of society is not uncommon either; and this image of the ‘merry life’ is another reason why begging offends, almost as if with an element of envy by middle-class members of the society who have to heed the imperatives of productivity and success that mark their daily lives. As noted by Smith (2005), “The more the citizens attribute poverty to personal failings, rather than to social injustices or the economic structure, the less tolerant they will be of beggars. Consequently, the more politically conservative that citizens are, the more likely they are to demand anti-begging regulations” (p. 553). Moreover, even the mere sight of homeless beggars in urban centers of various developing countries has increasingly come to be recognised as embarrassing and detrimental to the nations’ aspirations toward creating prosperous global cities. Concern over the negative monetary consequences of begging is heightened in economies relying heavily on tourism (cf. Bauman, 1998; Dean, 1999).

According to Wardhaugh and Jones (1999), street homelessness and marginal street occupations become conflated with dangerousness when they become visible, and it is this visibility that represents a threat to the security and sense of place enjoyed by settled citizens. Thus, it seems that it is not marginality per se that is dangerous; rather, it is the visible presence of marginalised people within the prime spaces that represent a threat to the sense of public safety and orderliness. The homeless must, therefore, relegate themselves to those marginal spaces where they can remain hidden and thereby forgotten. This kind of social distancing and exclusion has implications in terms of social justice. According to Hodgetts et al. (2011), “Distancing homeless people as not residing within one’s own moral universe, or as being strangers, allow for policies and practices of discrimination” (p. 1750).

Inadequacies of the criminalisation approach to begging

From the above discussion, it is apparent that a society’s response to ‘deviant’ elements is rarely linked in a direct way to any actual or credible threat; the threat is

more one of perception than reality. Such threats often originate from within the dominant culture itself, but find concrete expression in some abject, less powerful element of society. The current moral panic over begging coincides with a political process of welfare reform and an ideological realignment which though concerned with ensuring social cohesion, clearly promotes, or at least, tolerates social inequality by ‘othering’ the homeless and justifiably discriminating against them through the mechanism of law (Dean, 1999; Swanson, 2007; Blomley, 2010). According to Amster (2003), “Once domains of private property began to dominate the cultural and physical landscape, ‘vagrancy began to be seen as a threat to the order of things’; later, as urban centers began to develop and market economies took hold, ‘vagrancy was perceived as a threat to capitalism’” (p. 196). The arbitrariness of anti-begging laws has perplexed courts in developed countries such as the United States and Canada. In the U.S. these laws are conceived as “political placebos designed to placate the voting merchants and community members at the expense of the non-voting homeless” (Thomas, 1993 cited in Goel, 2010, p. 24).

Referring to the enactment of these legislations in Canadian and American cities Schafer (2007) states that criminalising of panhandling has become a kind of battleground. He says, “On this battleground, a clash is occurring between competing values of social ‘hygiene’ vs. freedom of expression; middle class discomfort vs. underclass economic need; commercial interest of downtown business owners vs. beggars’ right to plead for subsistence” (2007, p. 5). Further, as put forth by Baker (2009), “The right not to be arbitrarily criminalized or subjected to disproportionate punishment also contains a general right not to be criminalized” (p. 232). These rights are different from specific constitutional rights because they protect the autonomy of the individuals generally (see Hershkoff and Cohen, 1991).

With reference to the BPBA, 1959, in the Indian context, Ramanathan (2008) questions, “How is it that a law can lay claim to constitutionality even when its very existence can be the basis of mass action against the ostensibly poor, set off by fears and perceptions of threat, while the persons under attack get objectified and become completely ‘right-less’?” (p. 36). Hence, a run through the trajectory of discourses around begging indicates that the beggar has historically been an ambiguous figure. He or she is either an ascetic pilgrim or a lawless itinerant; a deserving object of pity

or an undeserving scrounger; an unfortunate victim of welfare retrenchment or a venal agent of an emergence modern underclass. The justifications provided for the processing of beggars through the criminal justice system in current times also capitalise on these ambiguities to the extent of denying them their basic minimum human rights. Passive begging in contemporary societies would in fact be a glaring indicator of a number of other social problems such as homelessness, poverty, drug addiction, alcoholism, mental illness, a lack of education and vocational training, etc., towards the responsibility of which governments continue to wash their hands off in the name of crime and through the use of repressive state apparatuses.

A constructive beginning would really be in realising that a genuine solution to the lack of equal access and employment opportunities cannot be found in the criminal law. In contrast, these laws only help give rise to social distancing by converting public opinion further to stigmatise the lower socio-economic sections of a society for being “the ostensibly poor” and therefore, offenders or criminals. Having been labelled thus, their identities are mired in stigma and suspicion making it all the more difficult for them to find any other source of employment in order to sustain themselves; thereby, resulting in a vicious cycle of poverty and criminalisation.

In recent studies on begging, therefore, the deficiency of the legal discourse and reductive nature of criminalising the practice have been increasingly felt. More and more studies suggest an understanding of begging as a “vibrant economic activity” in various countries, and also try to explore in begging a form of resistance or subversion to citizenship, while others look at begging as a choice and try to locate its social, political, and cultural significance in the light of symbolic interactionism. The study of inequality has largely been defined as the study of its measureable extent, degree, and consequences. However, Schwalbe et al. (2000) point out that it is no less important to understand the interactive processes through which inequalities are created and reproduced in concrete settings. They argue that it is essential to consider generic processes such as othering, subordinate adaptation, boundary maintenance and emotional management, and conceive the reproduction of inequality in terms of these. This could help in resolving the theoretical problems concerning the gap between local action and extra-local inequalities, and re-conceptualise the nature of inequality itself.

The rest of the chapter would therefore focus on how narratives pertaining to begging and homeless individuals are constructed at various levels by different agents associated with the institutions of state and governance, criminal justice, and more specifically, with the machinery behind the anti-begging laws. These views would then be corroborated with the perceptions of civil society members and criminal justice and custodial authorities in order to identify overlaps and differences of views, and the specific circumstances from which they arise. It is hoped that such collocation of data from various stakeholders in the issue at hand would enable a more holistic picture of how the anti-begging laws function on ground, and what purpose they serve in running the political economy of the state's criminal justice system as of today.

With the aforementioned purpose in mind, the chapter presents a patchwork of narratives from within the system against the backdrop of the justifications for continued incarceration of the ostensibly poor as discussed above, so as to interrogate the vitality of the rationale behind anti-begging laws and their various manifestations as they persist in our cities today. Later sections of the chapter explore the role of the civil society interventions in the area of homelessness and begging, and how they try to impact public rhetoric and the criminal justice system that is skewed against their favour. Overall, this chapter tries to conceptualise rehabilitation as a product of the complex interaction that continuously takes place between state and civil society actors (see Figure 22 below).

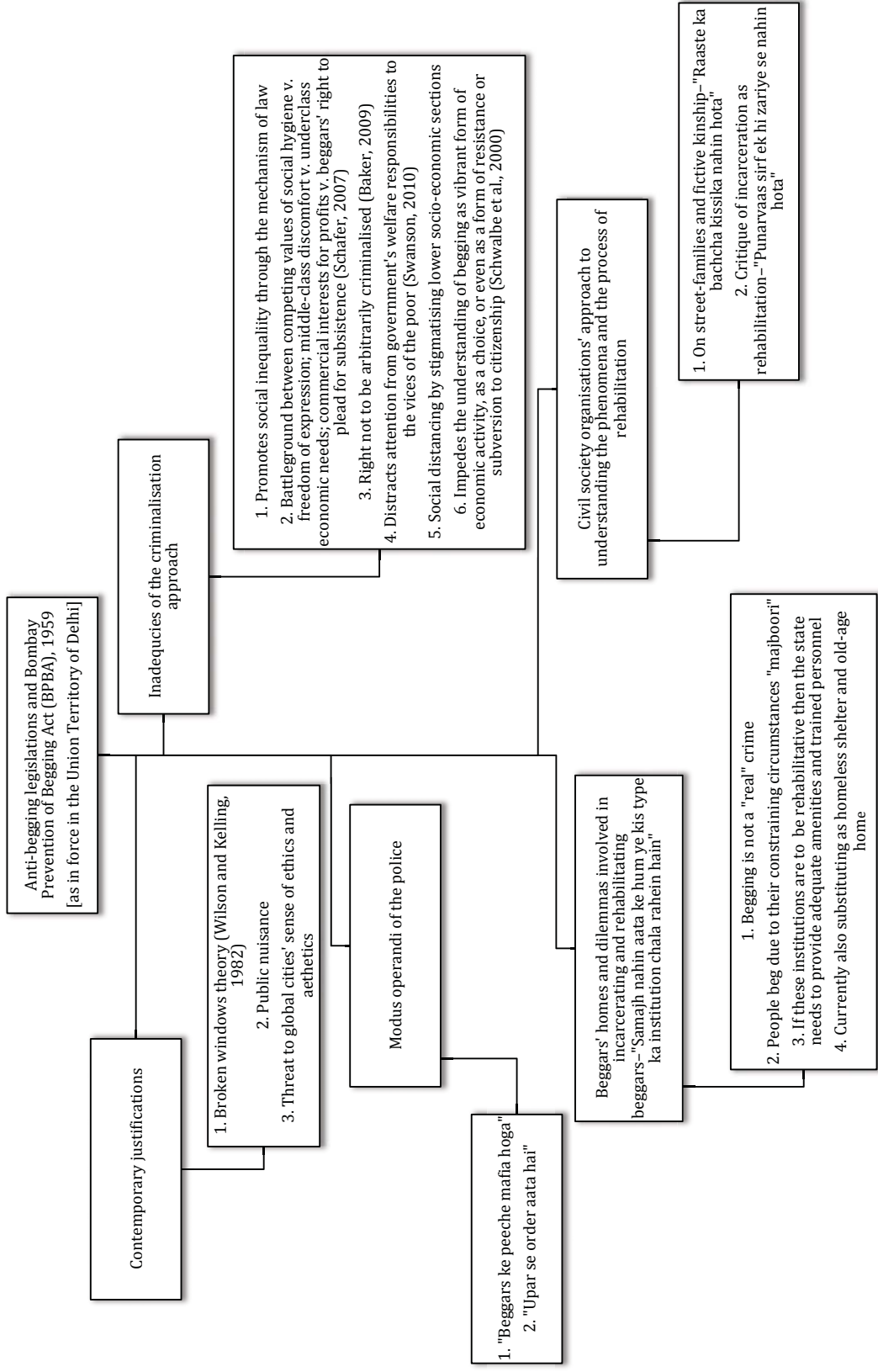


Figure 22 Rehabilitation conceptualised as an interaction between state and civil society actors

Begging and the modus operandi of the police

A large section of the police continues to believe in the widespread but unsubstantiated myth of the existence of a “begging mafia” that they provide as a rationale for arresting and incarcerating begging and homeless individuals in both the cities of Delhi and Mumbai. However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the situation in Delhi and Mumbai in terms of how the police viewed the begging populations was quite different. In course of fieldwork, it was observed that Delhi police were more divided in their opinions of whether begging was a real crime. The cops on beat duty in both fieldwork locations in Delhi seemed to generally hold sympathetic views regarding the plight of the homeless and begging individuals and blamed the phenomenon on what they saw as a “structural problem” or a “social problem”. In course of informal conversations with them however it was not very evident as to what they meant by “structural” – did they mean problems associated with a rapidly urbanising neoliberal society; or were they referring to the policy failures of the welfare state?

It is likely though that cops belonging to relatively elite branches of the police department are less tolerant of begging, and saw it as a result of beggars’ personal vices or failure; such as, lack of interest in educating and mainstreaming themselves, or being addicted to substances. During one such interview with a CBI Special Crime Branch officer in Delhi, a similar classist interpretation of the law was mobilised as an argument in favour of how anti-begging laws and the criminal justice system at large functioned for common good, and in the process, failed to distinguish between a “real” or deserving beggar, and a deceitful one often propped up by a mafia. Their narrow and exclusive definition of what constitutes a “public” in related notions of public space and public safety allow them to selectively read down the rights and legitimate concerns of lesser-privileged and marginalised citizens, and subsequently, justify the disproportionate use of law by fashioning a discourse around them as the “urban other” who contaminate city spaces with their mere presence. Attending to “the dramaturgical aspects of policing” (p. 487) as he calls it, Manning (1978) speaks of how the police manages a play of sorts, of neutrality, in their daily functioning thus:

“Policing as an organized activity occupies an organizational position mediating among elites, power groups and publics and their targets (principally the lower classes). They attempt to do this by identification with the conventional symbols of order, invocation of the law, and absolutistic morality...and the myth of the neutrality of the state... More specifically, the police subscribe in public to the view that they enforce the law, derive its legitimacy from the state, and define the state as a neutral entity. They view themselves by extension to be representatives of the state, as suppliers of appropriate levels of ‘police service’. They define their actions as that of politically neutral agents of the politically neutral state delivering a *uniform product*.”

(Manning, 1978, p. 490)

During fieldwork in Delhi, I came across at least two cases of serious crimes committed against homeless people: one of rape of a minor at a homeless shelter, and the other, an alleged murder of a young man belonging to the DNT community. While the rape incident got some attention in the press leading to arrest of the prime suspect, the death of the homeless man went unreported until it was discovered in course of my fieldwork. The family of the deceased had alleged murder, and complained that the police was refusing to take action against suspected individuals or lodge an FIR on grounds that they awaited his medical report to determine further course of action. The family of the deceased however remained unconvinced by attitude of the cops and the ensuing delay in the proceedings regarding the case. According to the family, the cops in their reports recorded the details of the dead as “lawaaris” or orphan despite being well aware of the presence of his relatives in the area. When inquiries were made at the CP police station regarding these discrepancies, the officer in charge dismissed these concerns stating that such incidences of violence and death were common among homeless people due to drugs related activities, and it is possible that the person died due to drug overdose but the family is refusing to accept it.

However, the family was in possession of pictures in which the deceased’s body was covered with bruises indicating that completely different turn of events could have transpired leading to his death. Some also reported that his mouth was gagged with cloth and his feet fastened with rope at the time when his body was first recovered

from inside a dumpster. The family alleged foul play and discrimination by the criminal justice system because they were poor and homeless unlike the suspected perpetrator, who was relatively well off and capable of subverting the justice delivery mechanism to his favour by paying the cops to get off his back and bury the case.

When I referred to this incident in the interview with the CBI officer, and asked about the inaction of the police in such serious crimes against the homeless, he replied in a manner that only reaffirmed the class-bias of the justice system, and proved the fears of the victim's family to be legitimate. In the extract from the interview with the CBI officer, he is heard reiterating the notion that there is inherent difference in how the system treats "big" and "small" people:

"Beggars logon ka kya hai, sab yahi bolta hai ki apni jagah mein raho. Police loh bhi yahi sochta hai ki koi mar gaya toh marne doh, koi baat nahin. Yeh toh roz hota hai. Kyunki ussme beggars ka mostly problem nasha hai. Nasha karne waalon ka life waise hi kam ho jaata hai...

VIP logon ka dekhiye baat alag hota hai...ab bada admi toh bada admi hota hai. Ab bade admi aur chhote admi mein farak hota hai, issliye toh woh beggar hai...waise murder ho gaya toh dekhna toh chaahiye, serious hai, murder toh murder hi hai ji, toh woh bheekhaari ho ya koi bhi ho..."

[“The thing about beggars is, everyone just says that they should stick to their position. Police also thinks that if one of them dies, it's not a problem. It's an everyday matter. Why, 'cause their problem is mostly that of addiction. In any case, addicts usually have a short life...

But VIP folks, you see, it's a different matter altogether. Well, big people are big people. There is a difference between the big guys and these small guys, and that's why they are beggars...However, if there is a murder then of course they ought to look into the matter. It's serious. Now, murder is murder, even if it be that of a beggar or whoever else...”]

Thus, according to the officer, it is as if the very existence of this marginalised begging and homeless class that by default dignifies the social status of the rich and powerful who he refers to as the “VIPs”. He then goes on to explain, or rather justify, the reasons as to why such cases are not registered by the police: first, due to lack of witnesses to give testimonies in such cases; and second, in a shocking display of

disregard for human life and echoing the reasoning of the cop at the CP police station, he declared that such individuals any way had short lifespans because they were often drug addicts. Not even pretending to conceal the traces of systemic callousness in his attitude, as if any of these reasons were sufficient grounds for abdication of responsibilities on the part of the police, he speculates thus:

“Ek bheekhari, ye hai ki usska murder ho gaya, aur usske aage peeche koi bhi nahin hai, theek? Theek hai.

[“So, there is this one beggar who gets murdered, and he has nobody that comes before or after him, right? Right.]

He answers his own question as if it were a rhetorical one, ignoring the fact that the deceased individual’s whole family was present on every occasion before and after the incident and were in this case known to the police.

“Murder ka case hua, file khuli, koi pakda gaya toh ussko saza ho gayi toh ho gayi...kyunki ussme gawaah nahin milega koi, aur gawaah nahin mila toh saza hoyegi nahin...”

[A murder case is filed, the case opens; well, if someone gets caught, then he gets convicted...but the thing is witnesses are rarely found in such cases, and if a witness is not found, then conviction won’t happen...”]

Further, it was evident from interviews with cops in both the cities that their modus operandi was based on whether their action would lead to an outcome, or a charge be upheld leading to some form of punishment and imprisonment of the people they arrest. More than delivering justice and maintaining the rule of law, the police in Delhi and Mumbai displayed a certain preoccupation with being punitive, and measured the success of their efforts in terms of quantum of punishment given to those they arrested. However, studies on police behaviour indicate that officers’ actions in general are often influenced by their conception of their roles and duties, and the views and ideologies of their supervisors and immediate seniors (see for example Engel and Worden, 2003). Prior to this, other researchers have found weak correlation between officers’ attitudes and their decision-making behaviour that were primarily based on situational pressures including those originating from police bureaucracy (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977; 1980; 2005).

Interestingly, this was found to be congruent with police behaviour towards homeless and begging individuals during fieldwork in both the cities. In Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP-led government do not support the arrest and forceful eviction of homeless people from city spaces. This might persuade the police to act in a more sensitive manner and help keep their attitudes in check. In 2016, the Crime Branch of Delhi Police tried to ready a team to investigate and crack down on begging mafia. However, after a two-month long investigation, they finally concluded that such a mafia did not exist in the national capital. During one of our informal conversations, one of the cops on beat duty in Nizamuddin Dargah area expresses his frustration at being blamed for unchecked number of begging and homeless population thus:

“Dekhiye, begging aur homeless, yeh ek samaajik samasya hai...humaari society ka ye ek structural problem hai. Hum inko arrest karenge toh isska hal nahin nikal karke aayega. Yeh log phir baahar nikalke yahin par phir se begging karna shuru kar denge. Ye badi mussibat hai...agar hum beggars ko nahin pakde toh public humko gaali deti hai ke, ‘police kuch nahin karti hai’ aur hum agar inhe pakadne jaayein toh aap human rights waale humaare peeche pad jaate ho ki, ‘ye ghalat hai...nahin pakadna chaahiye...ghareeb hain.’ Toh aap hi bataayein police kya kar sakti hai? Hume toh upar se order aata hai ji, tab hum koi action letein hain...”

[“You see, begging and homelessness, these are social issues...they are a structural problem of our society. If we arrest them, it would not solve the problem. They will come out and start begging again in the same places. This is a huge difficulty...If we don’t arrest beggars, then the public curses us saying, ‘The police doesn’t do anything’, and if we arrest them, then you, human rights folks come after us saying, ‘this is wrong...you shouldn’t arrest...they are poor.’ So you tell me what can the police do? We get orders from our superiors, ma’am, then we take some action...”]

Frustrated by the doublebind that cops like him had to constantly navigate, he explained that police could not possibly find a solution to homelessness and begging through anti-begging laws. It was up to the government to provide adequate welfare to the most marginalised sections in the form of affordable housing, open shelters, and vocational trainings, for them to be able to break out of the vicious cycle of

deprivation, risk, and stigma. In the absence of such measures and policy interventions, he believed that the poor take to begging irrespective of legal consequences as a matter of “aadat”, meaning, “habit”:

“Inka bhi maang maang kar ke free ka khaane ka aadat pad jaata hai... Waise toh sarkaar ka kaam hai ye, inko aur bhi shelters dena chaahiye, vocational training ya kuch facilities dena chaahiye ki ye log bhi kuch kaam kar sake, apna kuch guzaara kar sake. Tab jaake inka rehabilitation hoga...jail mein daalne se ye problem solve nahin hoga.”

[“For these guys too, it becomes a habit to beg for a living... To be honest, it’s the job of the government, to provide shelter, vocational training or some facilities so these people could find some work and fend for themselves. That is when their rehabilitation is possible...throwing them in jail is not going to solve this problem.”]

Similarly, in Mumbai the attitude of the policy makers was reflected by how the police functioned with respect to sanitising city spaces and removing indigents from the public eye. Many of the prime locations in South Mumbai, such as Gateway of India, and Nariman Point, once with a considerable presence of homeless individuals, street-food vendors, and hawkers, have in recent times been completely sanitised by the police following orders by local politicians.

At the time of data collection (March–May, 2016), the only people allowed to “work” at Gateway of India were professional tourist photographers with a valid licence issued by the Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT). Earlier they were considered eligible for hawker’s licence issued by the Brihamumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). In fact, one of the arguments put forward to provide them with valid licences to work in that area was that they could be the eyes and ears of the police, since their photographs helped the police on a number of occasions, such as during terror attacks at Taj and other crime scenes, as well as reporting or taking missing children to the Gateway chowky.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Photographers at Gateway of India have always played a crucial role in criminal investigations by photographing some major crime scenes including 2003 twin car bomb blast case, the 2005 murder of a Manipuri girl, and during the 2008 terror attack on Taj Hotel. A primary ground on which they demanded mobile hawking licences in 2010 was that they worked closely with the police. For more details see: <http://mumbaiirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/other//articleshow/16006750.cms>

When asked about the homeless families around Nariman Point, a traffic officer at Marine Drive explained that the police sanitised most of these spaces regularly. The police vans frequented these areas of the city as frequently as twice or thrice a week to keep homeless and begging individuals off the streets. The hawkers and vendors have also been regulated and sent to work in other locations after acquiring valid licences. In this process, many people have lost their regular sources of income since acquiring a hawker's licence is a cumbersome process because the decisions over hawking zones, the number of hawking spots and the corresponding number of licences to be distributed have always been contentious issues, facing stiff opposition from hawkers' unions and sections of the civil society alike. As a result, even after acquiring licences, people got pushed around from place to place instead of being able to set up their small businesses that their livelihoods depended on.

Many homeless women I spoke to during fieldwork were distressed because their the cops disallowed them from selling toys and other small handicraft items they made at their usual places of work. Some also had to stop working because they could not travel to work daily with their small children to these specified zones. Some others took up contractual cleaning jobs in the offices at Nariman Point, including at important government offices like the Mantralaya (Secretariat), but none got welfare of any kind that could provide stability to their vulnerable condition even though they continued to live on the pavements right beside these government buildings. It so appeared that although such cleaning jobs at offices did not pay well and the women had to work hard for long hours, they hoped that even these limited associations with government might provide them with identification documents that could help keep their families out of trouble with the cops and municipal authorities.

Therefore, when one of them got a job, they hoped that he or she might be able to pave way for others among them to get similar jobs. However, such hopes were constantly trampled upon by the fact that despite their persistent attempts to resist the odds of their circumstances, their reality was nothing but a daily experience of total

Gateway photographers have helped reporting of missing children and uniting them with their families in the busy tourist location. For more details see: <http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/police-dairy-challenge-for-police-at-gateway-of-india-kids-go-missing-as-parents-get-busy-posing/>

state neglect and violence. Not only others did not managed to secure similar jobs, but police had also picked up their children when they were found momentarily unsupervised. According to the families, the cops did it despite knowing fully well where the family lived, and this made them all the more fearful of going to work if they had to leave children behind. In the absence of reliable state support, most of these families depended on the good will of a few regular benefactors. A few politically connected, elite residents supplied regular donations of food and arranged healthcare for the women and children at times of need.

South Mumbai being the commercial and business hub of the city perhaps experiences the added pressure to conceal the ugly side of capitalism by keeping up the image of Mumbai as the “city of dreams,” and reinstate in people a sense of commitment to productivity that makes success or realising dreams possible. Overlooking regular instances of abuse of power as mentioned above, and without bothering to gather concrete evidences to base their judgements upon, the cops in South Mumbai, unlike the cops in New Delhi often arrested begging and homeless individuals and sent their children into safe custody without their consent. According to the cops themselves and from staff at Beggar Home, the police did not necessarily act of their own volition in many cases, but because they were often under pressure due to calls made by local politicians, or complaints made by societies’ residents; or in short “I was only following orders.”

However, a similar line of defence, employed in order to deflect accountability for instances of unnecessary use of force, is a common strategy among police personnel in both cities. While it is evocative of the “superior orders” or “Nuremberg defense,” it must be noted that the criminal laws in India do not recognise holding superiors – military or nonmilitary – responsible for the criminal acts or human rights violations committed by subordinates. Choudhry (2014) clarifies this point as follows:

“In the context of the use of force, or for obeying any directions of the superior, criminal laws in India, however, do not recognise the plea of superior’s orders – a plea that a subordinate should *not* [emphasis added] be held guilty for actions which were ordered by a superior officer – as an absolute defence to an otherwise criminal act. Criminal laws in India also do not explicitly recognise

the principle of command responsibility – that the superior would be responsible for the unlawful acts of his subordinates.

[...] The laws in India, however, do recognise the internationally accepted principle of criminal law that a subordinate cannot escape criminal liability taking the plea that he acted under the orders of his superior, if the act commanded was unlawful.”

– (Choudhry, 2014, pp. 195-208)

Yet for much of the police, the excuse to arbitrarily and wrongfully arrest the homeless under anti-begging laws, and take into custody their children without obtaining the consent of their parents, is conveniently to be found in “I was only following orders” or “*hume upar se order aata hai*”. Part of the police’s duty requires them to follow orders given by superiors to the best of their capacity, and the police organisation as a whole is what individual officers are allowed to rely upon to take care of matters related to accountability to a large extent. Sociological research on police culture has also indicated that police use of coercion is related to occupational stress and their need to appear efficient to their administrators (Neely and Cleveland, 2012; Terrill, Paoline III, Manning, 2003). Since police are required to fulfil targets and make these arrests any way, they also justified their actions by furthering and reiterating the same unsubstantiated mass media-generated views about begging being an organised crime controlled by mafias and criminal gangs. Moreover, they also spent time devising effective strategies to keep begging and homeless population off the streets for longer durations under more stringent laws than BPBA, such as IPC section 374 (forceful and unlawful compulsory labour), which is also mangling the facts of the matter even further.

During our interview, a PSI at the Aazad Maidan police station explained that they have started arresting people under the IPC sec 374 and taking children into custody under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act (JJA), 2015. While children are sent to children homes run under the guidelines of Child Welfare Committee (CWC), the parents are chargesheeted for negligence and exploiting their children by forcing them into begging or other forms of labour. However, the reality on ground is far more complex, and the JJ Act weaponised in this manner to separate children from

their poor parents only contradicts the very spirit of the Act. Instead, it circumvents the fundamental principles laid down by Act for government and other agencies to be guided by in matters pertaining to children in need of care and protection; such as the principles of presumption of innocence, of participation (or the child's right to be heard), of family responsibility (biological family or adoptive or foster parents as primary care givers), etc.

Most importantly, such a narrow reading of the law violates the even more fundamental principles of the Act, including the principle of non-waiver of rights whether or not the child actively exercises any of them, of institutionalisation as a measure of last resort, and the principle of repatriation and restoration that emphasises the right of every child to be reunited with his/her family at the earliest unless it is not in his/her best interest. Moreover, "best interest of the child" must be interpreted in correspondence with the principles of natural justice, and the child's right to be heard and be able to participate in decisions pertaining his/her future. However, the undemocratic manner in which the police implemented the Act in Mumbai raises serious doubts regarding motivations and intentionality behind sending homeless children to safe custody, and makes their commitment to the well being or best interest of the children appear dull. When asked about the challenges the police faced while tackling begging and homelessness, the PSI replies thus:

"These children lie in front of the magistrate. Parents always create a ruckus inside the court...we are used to them misbehaving. We try to do good for their children but the parents are not interested in the education of their children. Use of narcotic substances is a real problem among them."

In the above extract, one can observe how the sub-inspector confined herself to mere descriptions of disorderly behaviour and nuisance created by aggrieved party in courts, without making any attempts to empathise with the experiences of fear, anger, or agony of the already vulnerable families whose lives were further compromised due to police intervention, which though not unexpected were often wholly unwarranted.

"We also don't know what is best for them. Cops can't change their mindset. We can only make them pay fines and penalise them for indulging in such

behaviour [...]. Fines are important because they care more for money than other things, including their own lives.”

She further acknowledged that even the police did not know what was “best”, and therefore they did what they thought was most effective – arrest and impose fines. Her views reiterated the image of begging individuals as a lazy, greedy, and good-for-nothing lot involved in deceitful behaviour and petty crimes, and teaching their children to follow in their footsteps. In short, the police perceived begging individuals as people who had become comfortable with their conditions and were far too gone to want to change for better. But in almost all their personal accounts, the begging individuals were found constantly making efforts to improve their life circumstances, and most wished for few things as earnestly as lives for their children that were markedly different from their own. In fact, custodial institutions (Beggar Homes) and civil society organisations that work with begging and homeless individuals in a more specialised and sustained manner refute many such commonsensical notions and stereotypes associated with the practice of begging.

Beggar Homes and the dilemmas involved in rehabilitation

The following sections of the chapter deals with the ways in which the custodial institutions meant for beggars’ that function under the provisions of the BPBA understand and experience the phenomenon of begging through regular interface with begging and homeless populations. By engaging with data collected from the custodial staff, an attempt would be made to understand how the institution positions itself while meeting the felt needs of its custodial population, and navigating the various challenges towards their successful rehabilitation. It is hoped that it would enable a comparison of the treatment of the concepts of ‘crime’ and ‘the criminal’ between the different criminal justice institutions, and how it impacts the justice delivery mechanism. Such a comparison would then help in identifying those loopholes within the criminal justice system, which continually act as impediments to equal access to justice for marginalised populations, and their successful and substantive rehabilitation.

The main site for data collection from custodial setting for this study was the Beggar Home at Chembur in Mumbai. It is originally a Reception cum Classification Centre (RCC), which means that its main purpose was to house those beggars who were brought in by the police on remand, until classified, convicted and transferred to respective Beggar Homes in other parts of Maharashtra as per classification: abled-bodied, leprosy, tuberculosis, and old aged. Although Beggar Home at Chembur still classify and transfer beggars, and follow some aspects of the prison manual, the rigorous prison like atmosphere of the past has changed today, and according to some of the older staff members, it is no more the jail it once used to be. The beggar home is a closed institution functioning under the provisions of the BPBA 1959, and for all analytical purposes, it could be referred to as what Goffman (1961) calls a “total institution”:

“A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. Prisons serve as a clear example, providing we appreciate that what is prison-like about prisons is also found in institutions whose members have broken no law.”

– (Goffman, 1961, p. xiii)

Interestingly, none of the members of the staff who were interviewed for the study, including the superintendents and probation officers, knew either about the existence of such a law as the BPBA, or about the presence of custodial institutions meant solely for beggars, before their posting to these jobs. They all expressed surprise at the fact that they were totally ignorant about the criminal justice mechanism that processed beggars and convicted them; they only learned about these things after they got their respective jobs. Despite their initial hesitance regarding the nature of their job in this somewhat strange institution, most of the staff members reported they started enjoying their work, as they got accustomed to their roles and duties over a period of time. In fact, they all felt that they were part of something important that people should have more awareness about. There was a sense of being a part of something esoteric involving engagement with sections of the population whose realities had ceased to be of any consequence to the world outside.

The strangeness of the space is accentuated by the fact that unlike regular prisons whose existence and functioning are well known, beggar homes are unusually obscure institutions, unknown to the common public. Moreover, the people who are aware about these institutions usually know them from being directly associated with them through employment, intervention, or arrest. In other words, there is very little credible information regarding these institutions available in public domain for people to have informed opinions about begging or the anti-begging laws, perhaps even to the point that in a layman's imagination beggars are never arrested despite begging being a crime, and the fact of beggars continuing to be a visible presence in the cities has something to do with their insidious criminal connections with a mafia that keeps them out of the clutches of the law.

Finally, being a member of the staff is in itself a task that requires individuals to straddle a strange predicament that at once exposes them to the very draconian basis of the law and unfairness of a system that incarcerates innocent indigents, while at the same time expecting them to maintain their positions as custodians of the law with zen-like dispositions that have no ostensible symptoms of being in conflict with the demands of the job. In a way therefore they possess certain "esoteric skills" associated with gaining experience from working in this unique organisation and understanding its location vis-à-vis other criminal justice institutions.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Erving Goffman (1961) in his work *Asylums: Essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*, also uses the term "esoteric skill" but to mean something quite different. According to Goffman, in a relationship between clients and servers, that is, those persons who the clients rely upon for their expertise and competence in return of a fee, possess the "esoteric skill" to extract the payment "in spite of the loss of the object that the server was hired to save" because the clients feel the need to consider "not how well he has done with the server, but rather how much worse he might have done without him..." (p. 343). For more details see pp. 325-343.



Figure 23 Abandoned barracks that served as offices in the old Beggar Home in Chembur, Mumbai (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016)



Figure 24 Female section of Beggar Home in Chembur, Mumbai (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016)



Figure 25 Koshish Office and Activity Centre inside female section of the Beggar Home, Chembur (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016)



Figure 26 Some barracks are used to keep inmates in isolation if they have mental health illnesses that make them violent or threatening towards others (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016)



Figure 27 Beggar Home's new building currently houses only male inmates (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016)



Figure 28 Inmates at the male section of Beggar Home in Chembur, Mumbai (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2016)

However, the more they engaged with the terrains of justice and the rationale behind their own presence as an institution under current circumstances, the more complicated and odious their own position became within the criminal justice system and the larger structure pertaining to state welfare. It was ironic that unlike the police who routinely arrested beggars and brought them to these institutions, the members of the staff at this beggar home did not themselves believe that begging was a “real” or “serious” crime that should lead to arrest and incarceration. To many of them the commitment of the state to cater to the needs of its indigent subjects through existing mechanisms was inadequate and unproductive, even though at an institutional level, they have tried to humanise their approach by focusing more on being a rehabilitative rather than a correctional facility.

According to the officiating superintendent and probation officer in the male section of the Beggar Home, begging was an activity that people engage in as a last resort due to constraining circumstances or “majboori”, something that begging individuals repeatedly pointed out themselves in their narratives. Contesting the popular notion that beggars are lazy and therefore choose begging as a lifestyle choice, he stated that it was a survival strategy for people living in the margins who were left with little or no other choice. Moreover, it was hardly a desirable activity for anyone who could rest assured that he/she had enough to fill their stomachs and not lead a precarious daily existence. Explaining, rather philosophically, his views on why begging was not an easy option for just anyone as it is often made out to be, he says:

“Mujhe agar aap bolte ke, ‘nahin, aap jaaao bheekh mango...’ toh main nahin maang sakta kyunki mera ek self-respect hai. Woh kyun? Kyunki mere peit mein ab aaj khaana hai. Main woh nahin karoonga, aur tab tak nahin karoonga jab tak mera peit mujhe nahin boleگا. But jis din meri majboori aa jaayegi, phir aap kya kar sakte hain? Har woh cheez karna pad jaata hai...Toh issi kaaran log utartein hain begging mein.

[“If you were to tell me, ‘No, you go out there and beg,’ I wouldn’t be able to do it because I’ve some self-respect. Why is that? It’s because I have food in my belly today. I wouldn’t do it, and I wouldn’t do it until my belly forces me to. But the day I face those constraining circumstances, then what can you do?

Each and every thing one is compelled to do. So, this is how people get down to begging.”]

In the above extract, the probation officer of the institution explained how people are compelled to beg because they are deprived of one of their most basic needs – food. According to him, as long as one has resources to fill their bellies and not go hungry, he/she also has the capability to preserve their pride by not having to live at the mercy of others and tolerate indignities as a consequence of that. The experience of severe socio-economic deprivation therefore strips individuals of their self-respect lending a blow to their self-esteem. In indicating that begging is act of degrading one’s self-respect and involving extreme humiliation due to constraining circumstances, he seemed to be reiterating what Lankenau’s (1999b) found in his work with panhandlers. He says,

“While a common part of a panhandler’s experience is to be ignored by passersby, panhandlers are subject to a variety of humiliations upon gaining a passersby’s attention using various panhandling routines. One source of degradation is a panhandler’s homeless status, which often is revealed through a down-and-out appearance. However, panhandlers typically report feelings of humiliation connected to other factors, such as gender, race, and employment status issues. These humiliations may stem directly from external evaluative practices or may arise internally as panhandlers evaluate themselves through the eyes of passersby.”

– (Lankenau, 1999b, p. 294)

Moreover, the probation officer was of the view that the resilience of the beggars in continuing to do what they do despite the indignities and stigma that the activity entails could only be perceived as further evidence of individuals’ strength and determination to persist against all odds.

“Mujhe toh ye lagta hai ki woh bahut strong log hotein hain, ek way se ki dus log jaatein hain raaste se, lekin dus log unhe paise nahin deti. Dus logon mein se 6-7 log rejection detein hain, unko gaaliya baktein hain, ‘tu kabhi kuch kaam kar...ye kar, tu woh kar!’ Woh sab kuch sehte sehte din bhar repeatedly wahi karna padta hai. Mujhe toh ye lagta hai ki unka kaam bahut challenging hai.

Woh koi bahut bada bungla khada karne ke liye karte... Bahut saare log khud ke peit ke liye kartein hain. Utna hi karte hai.”

[“I actually feel that these people are very strong, in a way, because ten other people may pass them by in the streets, but all ten of them do not give them money. Of those ten, 6-7 people would probably offer them rejection and curse at them saying, ‘You never do any work...why can’t you do this, or do that?’ The beggars have to tolerate all this all day and still keep at it. In fact, I feel that their job is very challenging. They are not doing it to build big bungalows for themselves...most of them are begging merely to fill their empty stomachs. That’s all they are doing.”]

The aforementioned views of the officer actually offer a deeper and more empathetic view of what really goes on with the begging and the homeless population. Further, he explained that far from being lucrative and attractive to others, begging came laden with all kinds of negative reinforcements including diminishing self-respect, verbal abuse, humiliation, and rejection that makes it “challenging” for the ones who engage in it. This phenomenon exhibited by the beggars is what Lankenau (1999b) in his work also refers to as being “stronger than dirt”:

“[...] panhandlers successful at developing relationships with passersby learn to deal with harassment and to publicly present themselves in favorable ways. Collectively, I argue that most panhandlers are ‘stronger than dirt,’ given their resourcefulness in coping with the material and psychological difficulties of dealing with homelessness.”

– (Lankenau, 1999b, pp. 288-89)

Besides what has been described above, the probation officer also explained what he thought were deeper structural causes underlying the phenomenon of begging. He reasoned that begging these days is also a result of the breakdown of the traditional joint-family system that was a common trait of households in Indian society until recently. Indeed, there is some evidence in research that supports his theory. Speaking of the increasing proportion of ageing population among the urban homeless in developing countries, Tipple and Speak (2009) in their work titled *The Hidden Millions: Homelessness in Developing Countries*, also associate it to the fact of

eroding of extended family systems and traditional family values. Challenging rather naïve assumptions directly linking poverty as the cause of homelessness, they explain thus:

“It is not only poverty which is pushing older people into homelessness but also a breakdown of traditional family values and a move away from multi-generational households...in India, which now has the second largest aged population in the world, rapid economic development has given rise to a newly mobile and affluent middle class of younger people. As they migrate to the cities or to other countries for work they are less able or willing to care for their older relatives. The increase in women working outside the home, coupled with an increase in nuclear families, also erodes the support which once protected older people from homelessness.”

– (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p. 126)

Echoing similar views, the superintendent at Beggar Home also felt that the materialistic worldview of the city dwellers today coupled with rapidly increasing costs of living in Mumbai made them value their older relatives much less as compared to earlier times. He further elaborated on why criminalising begging and homelessness could not be a solution because it was largely a what he thought of as a ‘societal problem’ caused by these changing attitudes and sense of responsibility people had these days towards their older relatives; instead of respecting them and cherishing their presence within the household like people did in traditional joint-family setups, they were perceived as a liability or a burden, directly impinging upon at least if not threatening their economic prospects, and adding little value to their lives as non-earning members of the household. As a result, they adopt a very practical and “professional” approach to family life by abandoning their ageing parents or grandparents to fend for themselves instead of having to care after them and bear their health and mental health expenses, etc. In his own words:

“Nahin, criminalise nahin kiya ja sakta isse...ye ek society ka problem hai. Kya hota hai ki, family hoti hai, pehle jaise abhi joint family rehti thi, toh jo log hote the, jo kama nahin paate the, woh unko bhi family saath leke chalti thi. Jaise humaare dada-dadi log jo koi hain, nahin kamaate the, phir bhi humaari ye ek responsibility hai ke unko leke chal rahein hain. Aaj ke age mein aisa go gaya

hai ki mahengaayi badh chuki hai, log bahut professional ho gayein hain... 'hum do, humaare do' ya sirf 'hum do', iss standard mein chal rahein hain. Toh jo unwanted log hai, unko skip kar jaatein hain, discard kar dete hain..."

[“No, this must not be criminalised. This is a societal problem. What happens these days is related to the institution of the family. Earlier there used to be the joint family system, there were enough people in the family, and those that could not earn were also cared for. For instance, our grandparents, who couldn't earn any more, but our families would still take the responsibility to carry them along. In today's age, there is a lot of inflation, people have become very professional... 'We two. Our two,' or just 'We two,' such are the standards that families go by. So the unwanted members are skipped in this equation. They are discarded...”]

Furthermore, most staff members did not consider the media claims about the existence of the much talked about begging mafia worthy of any serious discussion, the primary reason for that being, “*Itne saalon mein maine aaj tak aisa kuch nahin dekha...*” or, “I have never witnessed any such thing first hand in my so many year of service”. They think such stories float around and stick to people's imagination because of films. They are of the view that general public have no real awareness on this issue, and how beggars are processed by the system, which is why they readily believe fictitious tales about beggars shown on television or films. Perhaps to a certain extent these images stick despite lack of evidence because of confirmation bias. These are the kinds of imageries that validate the middle-class' sense of moral superiority that emerges from their uncritical worldview, which allows them to overlook their inherent caste and class privileges, and situate stories of personal success and productivity erroneously on individual merit, capacity for hard work, and superior cultural beliefs and values.

The other issue that these beggar homes were facing after undergoing a change of outlook towards their custodial population was their inability to provide adequate services to the disparate population that each of them housed in accordance to the provisions of the BPBA as if for lack of a better scheme to rehabilitation under the prevailing structural model. The attitudinal changes within the nature of functioning of this specific kind of total institution notwithstanding, the label of criminality

continues to be a part of inmates' identity here, as the laws remain unchanged to this day. Even though it became increasingly clear from the profiles of individuals they ought to be viewed as different sections of neglected populations in need of care or welfare interventions of some kind, all that the beggar home authorities could do to help them was to get them further remanded and voluntarily committed by court orders to let them stay on in these homes for longer. The probation officer at the female section of the Home explains this process in this manner:

“...mostly mental health patients due to which their families abandon them. The cops take them to the court and get seven days remand period after which they are brought here. Then they are committed for a period of one year. After completion of one year, if they don't want to leave, and want to continue staying here on their own accord, then we request Aazad Maidan police station to provide remand and get further conviction for such cases from Kurla court no. 45.”

In a bizarre and rather ironic twist of fate, what many individuals ended up doing was accepting their own labelling as criminals because these institutions were the only places where they could find a safe space, basic minimum healthcare, and most importantly, shelter within the city. Even though the incidence of voluntary commitment was observed to be higher among women, it was not entirely uncommon to find men voluntarily committing themselves to such a life too. At least one male participant in this study had committed himself for life to live at the Beggar Home until his death. This paradoxical situation gives rise to something akin to Stockholm syndrome; wherein, inmates grow attachments with the custodial staff coming to gradually accept their roles as the guardians, and start to become comfortable and feel at home within the prison-like confinements of the beggar home. Though the scenario appears to be antithetical to the very idea of imprisonment, it also signals towards the deep psychological and affective vacuity, and hence, dependency – besides other more obvious social and economic challenges – that incarceration combined with acute marginalisation can create in the lives of homeless and begging individuals. The Beggar Home as a total institution in the past had a function of correction, confinement and extracting labour from its inmates when it was able to convince itself of their criminality.

But with time, and growing awareness about the rights of institutionalised populations and related human rights interventions, the old approach would not only prove itself incompatible, but also, being its uncritical practitioner would be morally reprehensible. Hence, the custodial staff at the beggar homes must at least in theory reject the idea of treating inmates as criminals, and demand better resources from the state to cater to the rehabilitative needs of their inmates. During her interview therefore the Superintendent in charge of both the male and female sections of the Beggar Home at Chembur, Mumbai, says:

“I don’t think of begging as a serious offense. In fact, I don’t think about it because it’s not my job to think or change that. I have to do my duties for the position I occupy. Most people are unwell and sickly, as you have seen...they cannot work. [...] They beg out of compulsion, to survive, to fill their bellies.”

She then narrated the challenges she experienced while working with limited resources to meet demands the institutions were expected to fulfil. In general, she was of the view that as part of the government, it was not her job to complain about lack of resources and other problems, but rather to administer the institution to the best of her abilities and come up with solutions. Yet she could not hide her disappointment and frustrations of working at an organisation that not only dealt with the most neglected populations of the state, but in that process and perhaps for that reason alone, was itself not an institution of priority in the eyes of policy makers. Referring to the ongoing administrative crisis caused by shortage of trained professionals, delays in recruitments of staff, inadequate in-house facilities, lack of proper planning and training programmes for rehabilitation of inmates, and overall state neglect of these institutions, she says:

“The objective of these beggar homes is good. But I am not sure if they are able to serve the purpose for which they exist...When you work here then you realise that the people who are most needy are the disabled, diseased, mental health patients. [...] If the government wants us to provide services to them, rehabilitate them, then they have to act accordingly or send people to specialised institutions as per their needs.

We are short of doctors, nurses, office and caretaking staff...we need a full-fledged hospital running on campus to meet the healthcare needs [...]. Now, all

complicated cases go to government hospitals, but that is not convenient as it takes time, resources, and more caretakers to accompany patients...the staff they recruit also need to be trained in working in custodial settings. The organisational structure needs a complete overhaul, and some basic arrangements are urgently needed for current staff and improvement of in-house facilities.”

She further elaborated on the practical concerns that emerged due to the ambiguity embedded in the BPBA, which presented a serious challenge to successful rehabilitation of people who got arrested. The vagueness of the term “beggar” and the broad range of profiles of people who could fall under the ambit of this act, and get wrongfully arrested is astounding. The superintendent describes the situation thus:

“Jo log kaam kar sakte hain, unke liye yahaan par aur zyaada training programmes chaahiye. Kabhi kabhi mujhe bhi samajh nahin aata ke hum ye kis type ka institution chala rahein hain... main bhi sochti hoon ke yeh kya koi jail hai? Ya phir old-age home hai? Ya rogi or apang logon ki sanstha hai? Ya mentally ill logon ke rehabilitation ka institution hai? Ya phir beggars aur beghar logon ke rehabilitation ke liye hum yahaan par baithe hain...? Ye toh clear kar dena chaahiye?”

[We need a lot more training programmes for those who are able to work. Sometimes, even for me it’s hard to tell what kind of institution it is that we are running exactly... I often wonder, is this a prison? Is it an old-age home? Or, are we running an institution for the diseased or disabled? Or, is it an institution for the rehabilitation for mental health patients? Or, it is for the rehabilitation of homeless beggars...? At least that should be clarified to us?]

As a result, beggar homes are often found scrambling for resources to deal with cases that need special attention that they are not in the position to provide. Evidently, they are unable to design a common rehabilitative model that would be useful in all cases. For instance, the rehabilitation for able-bodied people with mental health needs would have to be significantly different as compared to training for physically disabled individuals, etc. leading to further confusion and magnification of the deficits the institutions are already facing. She further adds:

“I mean as an institution we don’t have the resources to do all of these things...cater to all these groups at the same time under current circumstances. If they want us to provide these services then they have to plan accordingly and provide the adequate resources, or means to deal with the requirements of the population they are sending here.”

While their concern for rehabilitation of inmates may be laudable, the fact remains that access to such a rehabilitative facility could only make sense if it were really a choice that individuals were free to make for themselves. Instead, what we have is a top-down policy by state institutions after arbitrarily prosecuting them. Under the current arrangement rehabilitation is nothing short of paternalism on the part of the neoliberal state – that views begging as a threat to its underlying utilitarian ethic of productivity and profit – coercively imposing on its subjects its flawed conception of what makes a morally upright citizen (Amster, 2012). What the state wants, then, is to construct and perpetuate this notion of a docile subject as a model citizen, who even in the heights of his misery and marginalisation must not raise his/her voice soliciting for alms. Henceforth, it was his/her duty to conceal, with an unfaltering sense of obedience, the failure of the state’s capacity to provide equal rights and justice to all. Anyone who failed to do the same would get arrested and find themselves in these Beggar Homes where they would be trained either to become productive members of the society, or to get used to being outside of it.

In fact, the reality is even grimmer if one were to consider that for most of these individuals, their first encounter with the state and experience of citizenship is through the criminal justice system by becoming “criminal subjects” to be rehabilitated. This type of carceral rehabilitation conflates state’s responsibility to provide access to rights and social justice to all with its crime prevention strategies, thereby making the process of rehabilitation an antithesis of what it ought to look like for a population in need of basic welfare (see for example Gustafson, 2009). This is where civil society intervention becomes crucial, as they try to break these barriers that the state effectively creates between its most marginalised sections and the rest of the society: first, by ascribing unto them a status that make them appear morally dubious, if not repugnant; and then of course by labelling them as criminals by designing laws that misrepresent their vulnerability as delinquency. The following

sections, therefore, describe the role that different civil society organisations play by not only filling the moral and political vacuum that the shrinking welfare state creates over time, but also by demanding accountability for the state's illegitimate overreach.

The role of civil society in rehabilitation and reintegration

There are various civil society organisations that are actively working on the issues of homelessness and begging in both the cities. While some of them deal with the aspects of housing and shelter for the homeless and begging population in the city, some others are involved in lobbying and advocacy work to challenge the BPBA and its clones, and decriminalise begging as a concrete step forward for effective and sustainable intervention. Two different civil society organisations participated in the current study; namely, Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses, or SPYM (Delhi), and Koshish (Mumbai). These organisations not only provided their insights into the phenomena of begging and homelessness based on their years of experience of working in the field, but they also performed the role of gatekeepers by enabling entry into the communities and facilitating legitimate access into the custodial setups in the respective cities. The inclusion of civil society organisations helps the research in two ways: (i) methodologically; that is, it enables a comparison of perspectives among different stakeholders on various aspects relating to begging, thereby providing a mechanism to crosscheck information and strengthen internal validity of the research framework, and (ii) assessment of impact and contributions that these interventions have made over time to the understanding the phenomenon under study.

In Delhi, SPYM ran homeless shelters, trauma centres, and rehabilitation centres, including inside custodial facilities. Part of the fieldwork for this study was conducted in the Hajrat Nizamuddin community, where SPYM ran two separate permanent homeless shelters for men, and women and children respectively, along with some temporary and porta shelters for families under the DUSIB, Government of NCT of Delhi. Many of the homeless individuals who used these shelters begged for a living, but some of them were engaged in other forms of employment. As a community based organisation, the SPYM shelters at Nizamuddin could be seen as a knowledge base and a major contact for anyone who wished to access the homeless and other

marginalised communities that sustained itself by working, networking, and residing in this locality. They worked in close tandem with the community members and even integrated their experiences in running the organisation by employing previously homeless and begging individuals to run the shelters in various capacities, thereby rehabilitating them in the process.

Koshish, which started as a field action project of TISS, is today a full-fledged organisation providing services at community and institutional levels to homeless and begging individuals who are the targets of the BPBA, and at the same time they are engaged in advocacy work to descriminalise begging and reform existing laws in order to make sustainable and holistic rehabilitation possible. Unlike many other civil society organisations that function independently and only with minimum association with government agencies, Koshish liaisons with the various government institutions in a major way, besides networking with other civil society initiatives, to not only intervene with the homeless and begging communities in various cities across India, but also subtly impact the system from within. Their constant endeavour from the very start is not only to provide services to clients, but also maintain a delicate balance with the state that enables them space to both critique existing structures, and simultaneously facilitate the government and related criminal justice setups to take necessary steps towards better implementation of policies, and deinstitutionalisation of destitute homeless populations in need of care.

Staff members of both the above mentioned organisations have served as key informants for this study by sharing insights gathered from years of experience in the field. They have provided clarity on various aspects associated with the lived realities of begging and homeless populations, and in doing so, they attempt to restore humanity to the way in which they are often framed and portrayed by the middle- and upper class imagination. For instance, these organisations have provided valuable explanations for the causes that push people into begging and homelessness, shed light on family and kinship ties, and other informal social networks that begging and homeless people rely upon for their daily sustenance, offered a critical assessment of the state's approach toward their rehabilitation, etc. The following section would elucidate some of the major findings from the data gathered from civil society organisations that informs us of the dynamics of street life in the cities of Delhi and

Mumbai, thereby demonstrating the crucial position this sector occupies to aid our understanding of the phenomena of begging and homelessness at a deeper level.

Street families and fictive kinship

One of the most interesting aspects of how homeless and begging populations organise and sustain themselves is through their family and kinship networks of the streets that may or may not be based on consanguineal (by blood) or affinal (by marriage) ties. Some of these relationships arise from informal adoption-like practices among people sharing similar situations in life due to a sense of familiarity and dependence that builds over a period of time. In most cases, these relationships are symbiotic in nature and ensure that both parties benefit from mutually adopting each other as their “family”. In sociology (but also in other social sciences), creation of such relations has been referred to as “fictive kinship”, though there has been a long-standing debate among scholars regarding what its definition ought to constitute. Smith (2008) points to the existence of a unique social and cultural phenomenon among street youth often referred to as “street families”, which according to him reflects the significance of interpersonal relationships among otherwise typically alienated groups of homeless adolescents, and enables them to form “self-supporting networks” (p. 756).

According to Nelson (2013), the type of fictive kinship that specifically characterises family-like networks of the homeless people and street families could be termed as “convenience kin”. Nelson charts out a broad and explanatory typology of fictive kin to understand the nuances, special circumstances and specificities of context from which these ties emerge between individuals and groups. According to her, *convenience kin* is a type subtype of what she calls “situational kin”:

“*Situational kin* can broadly be defined as those kinship relations that occur when the blood or legal family is spatially or temporarily absent, or when the blood or legal family is not relevant to the relationships for at least one of the two parties involved. This type of fictive kinship can be subdivided by the particular type of circumstance in which it is found.”

– (Nelson, 2013, p. 265)

Situational kin is distinct from two other types of kinships that appear in less clearly defined circumstances –namely, “ritual kin,” or those relations that materialise as part of religious or customary practices, and “intentional kin,” or relations that emerge outside of special circumstances primarily as a result of choice with an intention for closeness and attachment (Nelson, 2013, p. 265). *Convenience kin*, on the other hand, is the kind of situational fictive kinship relations that emerge in marginal settings like that of the streets.

“*Convenience kin* emerge in situations of marginality that are similar...to the street corner men described by Liebow (1967) and the men who gathered at Jelly’s Bar as described by E. Anderson (1978). Although both of these examples are of African Americans, similar relationships have been found among those who are “down and out” regardless of race/ethnicity, age, or gender. For example, McCarthy et al. (2002) reported that “the relationships homeless youth describe as ‘street families’ resemble the fictive kin common among people who have limited resources” (p. 831). Fictive kin have also been found among women living “on the streets” (Miller, 1986) [...]”
– (Nelson, 2013, pp. 265-68)

When asked to elaborate on this peculiar aspect of street life, the caretaker of the SPYM homeless shelter in Nizamuddin explained the intricacies of these mutually benefitting family-like relations between individuals of the street who often depended on each other for both emotional and socio-economic support, and on begging to generate daily income for their households. The term often used to refer to such ties is “*muh-bola*” in Hindi, which literally translates to “mouth spoken”, similar to the term “word of mouth” in some senses, and commonly used as in “sworn brothers”. Providing an interesting alternate micronarrative to the master narrative of the State that posits itself (and fails) as the custodian of all children in need of care and protection, he narrates this mutual exchange of care and support among fictive kin members by elucidating how a street child, according to him, belonged to no one else like he/she belonged to the street:

“*Raaste pe ussko muh-bola family mil jaata hai... Agar ye bachcha abhi kama ke dene laga toh usse maa mil jaayegi, issko koi khaana de dega, aur woh*

kabaara chhun ke paise kama ke dega. Issko bhi koi pyaar dega, isse nahin toh isse ke paise se pyaar hoga. Waise hi disabled log bhi hain...”

[“In the streets he finds himself sworn family... If this child starts bringing home some earning, then he would find a sworn mother, someone would give him food, and he would rag pick and bring home money in return. Someone would give him love; if not love him, then love his money. The same is true for the disabled people on the streets...”]



Figure 29 Children of homeless street-families living at DUSIB/CWC approved SPYM homeless shelter at Khusro Park, Hazrat Nizamuddin gather to eat dinner on a winter evening (Image courtesy: Rahman, S.Y., 2015).

Shattering the myth of begging being an organised crime that involved trafficking of children for forced labour, he further explained that for street children – much like for other marginalised groups found in the streets, such as individuals with disability – involvement in street-level economic activity, far from being a gateway into gang related criminal activities, was more of a survival strategy, a pursuit to make the most of the options available and accessible to them in their immediate environments. This allowed them to become self-reliant, and in many cases empowered them to bargain the terms of maintaining relations with their street families.

“Yeh sab organised crime ke baare mein log pehle sochchte the...hum bhi sunte the. Lekin abhi tak aisa nahin dekha...Yeh log bachcha churaate nahin hai, unhe pyaar dete hain. Raaste ka bachcha kissika nahin hota. Agar aap issko pyaar doge toh ye aapko kama karke dega. Aur agar aap isse humse zyaada pyaar doge, ya mere saath kuch problem ho jaaye, ye nahin ki woh humaare saath hi rahega. Ye phir aapke paas chala jaayega...mere se nafrat ho jaaye toh woh jaake aapko kama karke dega, aur aap usski dekh bhaal karoge. Aise chalta hai yahaan.”

[“All these views about organised crimes are old-fashioned. We used to hear these things too. However, I’m yet to see such a thing... These folks do not steal children, they give them love. The street child belongs to no one. If you give him love, then he will earn for you. If you give him more love than I do, or if he has a problem with me, then it’s not like he would stay with me forever. He will then go to you. If he starts hating me then he will start bringing his earnings to you, and then you’ll have to look after him. This is how it works out here.”]

In the above extract from the interview, he further clarifies that while in some case these fictive kinships might stand the test of time and even prove to be stronger than blood ties, they are not necessarily permanent in nature. If street-children came to feel that their affective or other needs and expectations were not being sufficiently fulfilled, they drifted away from their *muh-bola* families to built new support networks and family-like ties with others who look after them better. These findings are therefore congruent to Nelson’s understanding of how convenient kin relations function by establishing ties that are symbiotic in nature. She states:

“The fictive kinships that develop among unrelated individuals separated from blood or legal kin (whethere through their own choice or the actions of others) seek out other people on whom they can rely for both socio-emotional and material support.”

– (Nelson, 2013, p. 268)

The caretakers ground perspective of how street families function is also supported by findings on fictive kinship constructions among street-level sex workers. For instance, according to Weinkauf (2010), “While many marginalized communities adopt familial terminologies as a means of creating structure, at the street-level, familiar terms are used as mechanisms to bring literal strangers to create a group that functions as a family unit consisting of a father figure, a matriarch, often multiple female members, and sometimes children” (p. 17). There also exists an element of “choosing up” in these relationships; that is, individuals who capitalise on their marginalisation(s) to generate income for his/her fictive kin may have some freedom to choose their own kin networks. This type of arrangement allows a certain degree of autonomy to rest on individual actors, though such autonomy may be accompanied by threats of violence or hostility from former fictive kin. Similarly, Farrugia (2016) addresses the fundamental need for young people to have relationships with others to form a notion of self and “morally worthwhile value-accruing subjectivities” (p. 114). He describes street-families among homeless youth as a way to deal with their profound material insecurity, social and cultural marginalisation, and lack of a sense of belonging, which are common features of the precarious day-to-day existence on the streets:

“While young people experiencing homelessness may not have been able to choose their family of origin, street life creates the conditions for young people to reflexively reinvent the meaning of family. These ties become meaningful as family-like because of the recognition and belonging that they allow. [...] intersubjective ties on the street produce a secure, valued and authentic identity. In this sense these social relationships provide a similar intersubjective context as the ideal or idealised family.

[...] They are communities of elective belonging which provide value and moral worth without reference to the normative boundaries between failure and success...and which are so central to the symbolic economy of youth homelessness.”

– (Farrugia, 2016, pp. 119-20)

Thus, one could surmise that construction of workable fictive kinships provide homeless and begging individuals with avenues to rehabilitate and reintegrate themselves to a larger culture by replicating and replacing consanguine and affinal ties at street-level with otherwise literal strangers who are united by common experiences and ways of life. Apart from fictive kin groups, they also derive support from street-level peer networks, and the civil society organisations like the SPYM homeless shelters that provide them with basic services and guidance. It was also seen that the caretakers who work in close interaction with their clients from the community over a period of time gain mentor-like status in their lives.

Rehabilitation through incarceration

According to the Koshish workers who are placed within the premises of the Beggar Home in Chembur, Mumbai, the number of people who are wrongfully incarcerated under the BPBA continues to be extraordinarily high even today even though the overall number of individuals getting arrested on a daily basis has dropped considerably. By “wrongful” what they mean is that most of their clients are homeless but working people, and not necessarily beggars. However, in practice the law is rigorously applied on all vulnerable populations who depend on street-level economic activities to earn their livelihood, and cannot afford housing in the city. This coercive practice of the state as a part of its neoliberal revanchist policies calls into question the very conception of rehabilitation that India as a democratic nation adheres to. The interviews with the Koshish social workers therefore highlighted these problems that arise out of shortsighted state welfare policies towards its populations in need. One of the social workers at the Beggar Home provides details of their custodial clients in the following manner:

“Humaare paas jo aate hain, client group, ek toh aisa hai ki 70-80% abhi bhi kaam karne waale log yahaan aate hain, daily wage pe kaam karne

waale...abhi bhi. Sirf itna hai ki unke paas ghar nahin hai Mumbai mein, homeless hain, footpath pe rehte hain, aur footpath pe rehne ke kaaran, kapde thode gande deekhte hain. Catering karne waale, ya phir bangaar chunne waale logon ke already kapde gande hote hain, aur police ko kya lagta hai ki woh begging karte hain.”

[“The client group that comes to us, one thing about them still is that 70-80% of them are working people, people who do daily wage labour...even today that’s the case. The only thing is that they don’t have homes here in Mumbai. They are homeless. They live on the footpath, and because they live on the footpath their clothes are sort of dirty. People who are into catering services, or waste sorting, their clothes are already dirty from work. And so the police assumes that they are into begging.”]

For lack of other available options such as open homeless shelters in Delhi, the Beggar home in Chembur in an act of overreach continued to house homeless individuals – whether or not they were found begging – notwithstanding the fact that being a closed custodial institution made it wholly unsuitable for regular housing purposes. However, those arrested individuals who claimed to work were released after Koshish social workers assisted in their verification process in order to establish the credibility of their accounts. Currently, it is Koshish that networks with other government and civil society organisations to provide skills training to inmates for their rehabilitation and reintegration after release. While some training and activities happen in-house, usually for the female section of the Beggar home, others take place outside of the Beggar home premises and social workers provide necessary counselling to clients selected for these vocational training programmes.

Though these interventions have worked in some cases, the issue remains that such rehabilitation is a part of a coercive and stigmatising process that invariably requires the construction of the poor into criminals through labelling. As Morris (2011) points out, “To be homeless is to be labeled a criminal. Society’s ruling class (those with power and money) have built barriers to acquisition of shelter into our socio-economic system, and imposed a label of criminality. This tactic not only provides a rationale for, but reinforces the disdain directed at those in need, perpetuating the classism that ensures the availability of low-paid workforce” (p. 3). Indeed, many

begging and homeless individuals see these Beggar homes in themselves as state sanctioned spaces for exploitative labour rather than institutions that intend to provide necessary welfare services, or personal and vocational training to meet rehabilitative needs. Consequently, the existence of this form of carceral rehabilitation, especially in the cases of begging and homelessness, far from enabling individuals to realise their right to livelihood, only ensures that they cannot perform any activity pertaining to their daily functioning without breaking the law. Extending the original understanding of Marx's (1857) "annihilation of space by time", which has also influenced much of Harvey's work on time-space compression (see for example Harvey, 1990), Mitchell (1997) calls this predicament of the homeless under anti-homeless ordinances an "annihilation of space by law". He says,

"The intent is clear: to control behavior and space such that homeless people simply cannot do what they must do in order to survive without breaking laws. Survival itself is criminalized. And as David Smith (1994:495) argues, the "supposed public interests that criminalization is purported to serve" – such as the prevention of crime – "are dubious at best." Instead, there are, as we shall see, numerous other reasons for criminalizing homelessness, reasons that revolve around insecurity in an unstable global market and a rather truncated sense of aesthetics developed to support the pursuit of capital."

– (Mitchell, 1997, p. 307)

According to another social worker with Koshish, who is placed at the community end, these homes that run under the provisions of the archaic BPBA are not helping people come out of poverty, homelessness, or begging; but rather it is only multiplying the number of begging individuals due to wrongful arrests of working but homeless daily wage earners. Having had prior experience of working with homeless youth and street-children with another civil society initiative called Saathi, he felt that Koshish too could be seen as an extension of the same intervention, and dealt with the same youth or client group who were at risk when on the streets but after they get arrested and processed under the BPBA. According to him, there is a huge gap between understanding of clients' realities and needs, and the approach the state adopts for their rehabilitation. He believes that rehabilitation of different vulnerable populations found in the streets cannot happen in this one way, but the punitive state

has not bothered to engage with the issue deeply enough so as to come up with substantive reforms to improve efficacy of its rehabilitative model.

The Koshish social worker placed at the community end therefore operated with the objective that if timely intervention (such as, personal training, skills training, de-addiction facilities, employment opportunities, healthcare, counselling and an overall network of support) was provided among destitute street-youth, then it was possible to rehabilitate them before they entered the vicious cycle of incarceration, additional stigmatisation, and further marginalisation leading to reoffending. Thus, the idea is to contain damage well before the population at risk is forced to engage in activities that allows it to be processed by the criminal justice system that adopts and maintains a coercive strategy towards vulnerable individuals, and thwarts their motivations to realise their potential by narrowing their choices and opportunities of escaping the stigma attached to street-life and poverty. During his interview, Koshish worker emphasises the need for community outreach programmes and intervention with youth in their natural settings in favour of a participatory and non-coercive approach to rehabilitation that opens up client groups' choices to the effect mentioned above. In stating that there *isn't* just one path to rehabilitation, what he seems to be asserting rather is that there “cannot” or “must not” be such poor imagination when it came to envisioning what rehabilitation could possibly constitute:

“Hum log punarvaas ka jo baat karte hain yuva ka, toh punarvaas sirf ek hi zariye se nahin hota. Jo kahin na kahin jis jis prakaar ke kanoon mein unko jail mein daala jaata hai, toh wahaan par agar aapka kaam shuruwaat hota hai toh woh ek yuva ke liye ek badhiya maadhyam ho sakta hai.”

[“When we talk about rehabilitation of the youth, we need to understand that there isn't just one path to rehabilitation. At all those junctures where a number of laws are being used to outlaw people in multiple ways and jail them, if timely interventions were put in place instead, then that could prove to an incredibly medium to engage with the youth.”]

According to the social worker, the main reason begging must be descriminalised is because it is the state that has failed to make available, and more importantly, in a manner easily accessible to people from the most marginalised sections, adequate skills development and livelihood prospects to harness the productive capacities of

individuals given which many would be perfectly employable and have a choice to earn and live with dignity. He explains this point as follows:

“Ek toh main kahunga ke begging definitely crime nahin hai. Logon ko uss prakaar ki opportunity nahin mil pa rahi hai. Agar hum beggar home ki baat karte hain, sarkaar ke taraf se woh opportunities mili nahin hai...aur opportunities bhi alag alag steps ke taraf. Ek toh jobs ke step ke taraf ki baat karo, aise jo log hain jinko koi sahaara nahin hai, jo beggars hai, unko woh cheezein kya sarkaar ke maadhyam se asaani se mil pa raha hai? Toh definitely nahin, kyunki agar ek job bhi agar milna ho toh aapke paas certificate, kuch documents hona chaahiye, tab jaake job milne ke chances ho sakta hai, lekin guarantee nahin hai ki milegi.”

[“For one thing, I’d say begging is definitely not a crime. People are not getting the kind of opportunity they need. If we were to talk about beggar home, we don’t get adequate opportunities from the government, and opportunities also to take steps in different directions. For one, to speak of steps towards jobs, for those that do not have any support, those that are beggars, are they able to access any thing from the government with ease? Definitely not, because to get even a single job, you would need certificate, some document you’d have to have. That’s when you’d have chances to even get a job, but that too isn’t a guarantee that you’d get one.”]

Working with begging and homeless clients reveals the deeper intricacies involved in their pursuit of gainful employment in the cities that protects them from arbitrary processing by the state law enforcement agencies. The standard procedures of procuring residence certificates, disability certificates, or other valid documented proofs of identification, are all complicated bureaucratic processes that are mysterious and cumbersome even for the educated middle- and elite classes of the society, let alone for begging and homeless individuals, who are typically illiterate or have low levels of education. This also makes them susceptible to being cheated of large sums of money by middlemen within the community who promise to assist them in obtaining government documents. Social workers in both Delhi and Mumbai therefore also help their clients to procure documents such as Aadhaar card, ration card, voter ID, etc. because these sometimes keeps them from being arrested. Unfortunately, even after crossing these hurdles their liberties are not always protected, and hence their

access to rehabilitation without being incarcerated continues to be provisional and uncertain.

Critiquing this inherent systemic flaw in state policy towards begging and homeless populations, or rather the gap between policy and effective implementation, the Koshish staff member maintains that in practice the government produced and proliferated criminality by neglecting its population in need and labelling them for trying to negotiate with the existing structures by engaging in begging, which for them is an act of resilience against a punitive and callous state that is indifferent to their most basic needs for food and shelter:

“Waise kehna toh nahin chaahiye, lekin bhookhe toh marenge hi...toh kuch log kahenge ki ‘isse achcha hum bheekh maanke khaayein.’ Toh kahin na kahin maangne ka matlab ki ghalati kissi aur ki, aur bhugat rahe hain dussre log. Responsibility sarkaar ki hai usske andar. Issliye main manta hoon ki sarkaar ki responsibility banti hai ki ek bhi vyakti apne desh mein kahin bhi ho, peit mein khaana hona chaahiye, bhookha nahin sona chaahiye. Policy ke upar jaayein toh bahut saari cheezein likhin hain ki ye milna chaahiye, woh milna chaahiye. Lekin finally dekha jaaye toh kuch nahin mil paata. Bilkool implementation nahin hai. Aur in logon ka kahin na kahin dekha jaaye toh neglect hi kiya ja raha hai.”

[“I probably shouldn’t be saying this, but since they are already dying of hunger, some of them would say ‘it’s better we beg to feed ourselves.’ So somewhere what it means to be begging is that the fault is someone else’s, but others are suffering for it. It is the government’s responsibility here. That’s why I believe that it’s government’s responsibility to see to it that not a single person in this country, no matter where he is, ought to have food in his/her belly, must not sleep hungry. If we go by policy, then there are a lot of things that are in place on paper, that they’re entitled to this and that. But finally we see that they are not able to avail any of it. There is no implementation at all. And if you put things in perspective, people are falling into a state of neglect.”]

Echoing similar concerns, Raghavan and Tarique (2018) examine how the state continues to penalise the poor for no fault of their own making no real distinction between “vulnerability” and “offence”. They observe:

“As of now, begging is an offence. However, in a situation where all other survival mechanisms have either collapsed or have been criminalised through legislation, it is essential to examine whether people can be blamed or held responsible for begging. [...] Detention without adequate systems for capacity-building and rehabilitation only increases vulnerability.

[...] The BPBA provides for the detention of not only those who beg but also their dependents. This is possibly the only legislation, with the exception of the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act, 1956, in which the offender’s family is punished for being dependent on their income.”

– (Raghavan and Tarique, 2018, pp. 27-28)

Swanson (2010) in her work with rural indigenous women and children of Calhuasí, who migrate to Ecuador’s largest cities to beg and sell gums on the streets for a living, talks about how the withdrawal of the state from its welfare responsibilities shapes much of the intolerant discourse that begging populations become a target of. She states, “After working and living with people from Calhuasí over the last seven years, I have come to the conclusion that begging is a rational, legitimate, and even clever choice. [...] While stigmatized, begging is an option that allows them to earn substantially more income than they could otherwise” (pp. 10-11). Furthermore, works such as hers illustrate the very intrinsic tendency of the neoliberal state to use negative portrayals of minorities and oppressed communities as threatening or contaminating to not just to the physical, but also its social, political, and moral landscapes, as a strategy to perpetuate social and spatial distancing between the rich and the poor by providing a legitimate basis for the systematic intensification of deprivation of rights and freedoms of the latter.

Moreover, like the Koshish social worker, Swanson (2010) also arrives at an understanding of the state that suggests that it over-polices and punishes the humble but creative attempts for survival and income generation by the individuals at the fringes of the society as a cop out from formulating and implementing sustainable rehabilitative and welfare policies towards them; or in the words of the social worker, “the crime is committed by someone [meaning, the state], but some one else pays the price for it [meaning, the homeless or begging individuals]”. Challenging the

construction of beggars as “lazy” and “deceptive” or begging mothers accused of being “bad” and “negligent” as a rationale behind anti-begging rhetoric, she writes, “Within this discourse, attention is drawn away from the problems associated with market economies that fail to redistribute wealth to the poor and rather focuses on the vices and alleged “laziness” of the beggars themselves. Constructing beggars in this way thus justifies attempts to remove them from the streets” (pp. 114-115). Focusing squarely on the Indian context, Raghavan and Tarique (2018) interrogate the motivation behind the state’s construction of criminality when it comes to the ostensibly poor in the following manner:

“The mechanics of the implementation of anti-begging legislation makes one wonder whether the efforts are directed towards ending begging (as the state claims) or are part of a planned strategy to hide the failure of governance by removing the poor from cities. While on one hand there is significant evidence of increase in number of people living below the poverty line in the country, state governments continue to use penal legislation to “discipline” the poor and punish poverty and homelessness.”

– (Raghavan and Tarique, 2018, p. 27)

Lastly, it is important to remember that all such anti-begging rhetoric that vilifies the already marginalised population is embedded in the broader and enduring legacy of the colonial administration – marked by racism, oppression, social exclusion, and apathy towards the welfare of indigenous subjects – in India, which has lent itself to easy cooption by the inherently anti-people neoliberal policies of modern postcolonial states of the globalised economy.

Conclusion

Thus, from the above discussion it is evident that the civil society initiatives have a major role to play in helping one understand the complexities of the phenomena of homelessness and begging – their linkages, overlaps and dissimilarities – be it within the definitions of the law, or without. Furthermore, their engagement with the population not only authenticates the data gathered from the homeless and begging

participants of the study, but it also calls into question the enabling role played by the state in pushing people deeper into the peripheries of the society; whereas, these individuals essentially use their agency in an *act of resistance* against the state for its perpetual inequitable distribution of the fruits of development that have always largely concentrated in and around just a few big urban nuclei.

Such a conceptualisation of begging [and its counterpart, homelessness] enables us to interpret it as a highly political act of self-assertion and self-determination by individuals at the margins who organise and govern themselves by codes and modalities of the street that are separate from, and sometimes in sharp conflict with, the laws designed and upheld by the more privileged members of the state in an attempt to maintain status quo. In this whole process, the police, however sensitised to the realities of this population, have only a limited capacity to act independently against prevalent middle-class and elitist sentiments that construe begging as both immoral and criminal, or one because of the other.

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CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

In a recent judgment, Justice Gita Mittal of the Delhi High Court held 25 provisions of the state's anti-begging law unconstitutional.⁴⁸ However, such laws continue to be operative in at least 20 other states and union territories in India even today. Prior to this, in an order dated 2 March 2009, a Delhi High Court bench comprising of Justices B.D. Ahmed and P.K. Bhasin observed while deciding a revision petition in *Ram Lakhan v State* (2007) that the arrest of beggars could not possibly be a just solution to the problem of beggary. Justice Ahmed heavily criticised the order of the lower court in which the Metropolitan Magistrate had described the beggar using terms that deprived him of basic human dignity: "raising his front paws" rather than hands. Although he could not rule on its constitutionality on this occasion, he remarkably noted how criminalisation of begging was contrary to the right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1), besides being a violation of the right to life as safeguarded by Article 21 of the Indian Constitution (Sekhri, 2018).

In this concluding chapter, let us review if the research by way of analysing ethnographic data and assessing conceptual models from within the interactionist approach was able to adequately answer the research questions that it sought to pose, thereby satisfying the research objectives. The first question that this study wished to address was, "Who are beggars outside of their stigmatised identities?" The second and closely related question was, "What does it mean to be a beggar, and to live by begging in urban India?" *Chapter I* tries to answer these questions and opens the inquiry into the social phenomenon of begging by addressing its commonly perceived embeddedness in all major religions of the world. This study finds that the discourse of religion may provide a readily available cultural context to describe the continued

⁴⁸ On August 8, 2018 a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court decided on a 2009 writ petition – *Harsh Mander & Anr. v. UOI & Ors.*, W.P. 10498/2009 – that challenged the constitutionality of several sections of the anti-begging laws. In a landmark judgment the Delhi High Court struck down a number of provisions that criminalises begging in Delhi. See <https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi-news/delhi-high-court-decriminalises-begging-in-national-capital/story-ZoFriBsG11RtXIOVfbJFTP.html> last accessed on 27-11-2018.

practice of begging – explaining to some extent, a certain level of tolerance towards the same among people of faith, and at the same time, also the general sense of apathy or blasé attitude of the common public in cosmopolitan urban societies at large.

However, by way of exploring the responses of state and civil society actors towards this peculiar activity along with its co-occurring phenomenon of homelessness in largely secular and modern urban cities of Delhi and Mumbai, this study problematises the direct causal relationship between religion and begging that we often find people drawing, including many of us social science researchers. This proposition has been further addressed in the light of field data in *Chapter V*. Besides stating the research problem and delineating the rationale, research questions and objectives of the study, *Chapter I* also discusses the trajectory of anti-begging ordinances in the global context and how their enduring presence may be construed as a political symbol reflecting the ethos of societies in contemporary times. From the data gathered from begging and homeless populations in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai, it is evident that most begging individuals are rural to urban– and sometimes small town or suburban to metropolitan – interstate or intrastate migrants.

Chapter II elaborates on the theoretical framework that informs the process of inquiry for the purpose of this study, and helps us construct a sociological definition of “*who*” a beggar is. The theoretical approach used for this study is symbolic interactionism (SI). Accordingly, this chapter presents a thematic review of literature that analyses begging in light of interactionist concepts: the beggar’s shame and stigma, the dramaturgy of begging, and begging and public place. Each of these themes supply a corresponding review of literature based on previous studies done on begging in other parts of the world. An equivalent of the same is absent for the Indian context, and the present study attempts to bridge that gap by weaving theoretical insights and ethnographic data to come to a grounded theory on begging through micro-level analyses of subjective experiences of people directly and/or indirectly involved with the practice. Adopting an interactionist approach enlightens the inquiry by revealing the intricacies of experiencing marginality at the intersection of class, caste, gender, and rural-urban divides. It also enriches the understanding of marginality by allowing one to closely examine how its definition could be derived from observable – and perhaps even quantifiable – distance between individuals’ daily subsistence and their

mode of livelihood. That is, the more inseparable an individual's daily subsistence from his/her work, the more structurally oppressed or marginalised becomes his/her existence. This is as true of begging as it could be of many other forms of street-work.

Chapter III focuses on the methodology used in the current study and details the qualitative research design in a comprehensive manner. By doing so it attempts to design a credible methodological framework that would help address the research problem(s) at hand, and make the study of the phenomenon of begging scientific and systematic so as to rescue it from the preconceived notions and stereotypes that it is often laden with. This chapter therefore discusses the qualitative research design and middle-ground approach employed for this study, the choice of multi-sited ethnography informed by interactionism as the research method to engage with deviance, and participant observation as a procedure to produce data based on lived experiences of being poor and homeless, in order to enable an analysis of the phenomenon of begging for what it is, in all its nuances. Towards the end, the chapter also discusses the ethical considerations with respect to the current study.

Chapter IV then describes the research setting where the social action is taking place. It provides a brief overview of Delhi and Mumbai and the specific sites where fieldwork was undertaken for the purpose of this study. It also familiarises the reader with the official statistics on begging and homeless populations in India for both the cities, while at the same time, cautioning them against the drawbacks and truncated nature of such data that render them unfeasible to make credible judgment or generalisations on begging. Further, it presents a preliminary classification of the data collected based on primary and thematic coding, and prepares the ground for further analyses and interpretation to grapple with the research questions in the subsequent discussion chapters. In recent times, scholars have tried to appreciate begging as a form of economic activity in various parts of the world among individuals living at the margins of the modern neoliberal economies. In contrast to how the begging population is defined as “nonworkers” by the Census of India 2011, this research tries to posit a view of begging as a dynamic and subversive process involving exchange of material and meaning as a result of interaction between individuals in an otherwise unequal society.

Chapter V uses ethnographic data and available literature to investigate the reasons and circumstances for people's entry into the practice of begging. So, one of the most important characteristics of begging individuals to address the "who" part of the research question is that beggars are migrants, and constitute a considerable proportion of the urban poor. The reasons of migrating could vary based on circumstances of age and gender, and specificities of their social locations. Some of the reasons for migrating, as the study found, were rural agrarian crisis and consequent search of livelihood opportunities in big cities, abandonment and ostracism, to escape violence and abuse, etc. It was also found that individuals did not necessarily migrate to beg, but resorted to begging as a rational choice given their constraining circumstances or "majboori" often after long spells of futile job searches. Others who had even lesser agency over their circumstances coped with the reality of having to end up begging by perceiving it as a fact of destiny or "naseeb." Thus, whatever the reasons of entry may be, in the vocabulary of begging, individuals seemed to have discovered a legitimate form of "work."

Chapter VI discusses begging as a practice of resilience among the poorest of the poor. When we come to the third research question: "How and why do people beg, and is there a common repertoire, a culture, or a set of practices that cut across national and geographical lines and provides an understanding of begging globally, rather than locally?" the answer is complex, and in its complexity lies the essence of the practice of begging as a political symbol. The ways people beg in both the cities of Delhi and Mumbai – and most cities around the world as the literature suggests – are essentially the same. There is a commonality in their predicament, as there is this sense of cohesiveness in the manner in which individuals learn to fashion themselves for a life on the streets, and evolve into becoming one with the urban landscape, claiming space and asserting themselves in sharp contraposition to the neoliberal state: that is, if the latter did not exist, then it is most likely that the former would not either. People begged for a variety of reasons, but the repertoires of constraints and misfortune united them all. The other, ever present, but sometimes less explicit repertoire, was that of "work." Persons with disability and those lacking support networks in their old age often took to begging as a survival strategy over paid labour. Here, besides acknowledging the precarious nature of the activity interpreting begging as work has required a deeper engagement with aspects pertaining to dramaturgy and

performativity involved in the act of begging, and reorienting the discourse to a grassroots-level up paradigm by conceptualising it as an innovative survival strategy by some of the most structurally disadvantaged sections of our society, who disrupt the discourses of passivity and criminality ascribed unto them by taking to begging as a form of resistance and adopting it as a “practice of resilience” (Swanson, 2010).

While women faced additional gender-based violence and exploitation, transgender women who begged faced the additional challenge of widespread stigma, humiliation and disenfranchisement in the hands of the state as gender minorities, who had little access to the most basic of rights accorded to citizens. Many individuals also took to begging as a supplementary source of income besides daily wage labour. However, life on the streets is one that of constant vulnerability and high risk. Besides the everyday violence and rejection begging and homeless individuals faced in the hands of passersby, there was also the law enforcement agencies comprising of the police and the municipality corporations that routinely turned experiences of ostensible marginality into criminality, adding to the stigma, and depriving individuals of their capacity to generate an income by incarcerating them. Hence, the beggar must be interpreted as a political symbol, an active agent rather than a hapless victim, who tries to navigate the oppressive structure daily through the practice of begging to eke out a living against all odds. Begging thus construed becomes a radical act of signaling towards a need for social justice and transformation, a political act of resistance against the might of the neoliberal state by its most marginalised subjects.

Chapter VII thereby deals with chasm between the criminal justice institutions of the Indian state and the conceptualisation of rehabilitation for beggars. This chapter argues that the current model of rehabilitation of begging and homeless individuals is based on a false and dangerously reductive premise of begging as a crime, thereby making the whole experience of supposed rehabilitation and reintegration carceral and unjust. Based on ethnographic data collected from the police and custodial institutions, it elaborates on the modus operandi of the police, and how it stands in sharp conflict with the view of begging from within the custodial institutions, the Beggar Homes, that today see beggars as individuals in urgent need of health and mental health care, social support and state welfare, rather than confinement. Furthermore, this chapter also discredits the popular notion of “begging mafia,” and

sees it as a product of class-based anxiety and entitlement that allows more affluent public of a neoliberal state to focus on the vices of the begging individuals rather than on the failures of state welfare (Swanson, 2010). This chapter also integrates the perspective of the various civil society initiatives in how they conceptualise the phenomena of begging and homelessness, and what according to them are possible sites of effective intervention. The enduring presence of the anti-begging laws therefore is nothing short of directing state coercion towards maintenance of status quo by inhibiting visibility and expressive liberty of individuals at the ultimate fringes of our societies.

This brings us to the last, but certainly not the least, important research question that this study wanted to investigate: “*Why* the ideas of asceticism and almsgiving that have historically been tolerated and even encouraged within various religions in the world have increasingly come to be conflated with criminality (in the nature of a begging mafia) in our own times?” From the data collected from within the criminal justice system, it is evident that the rationale behind criminalisation of begging and ostensible poverty in India is in line with the colonial legacy of exclusionary policies based on elitism and social distancing, and turning “vagrants” into productive labour without bothering to attend to structural causes that reproduce and perpetuate inequality and oppression. The smooth functioning of the neoliberal state and its repressive apparatus clearly prioritises sanitising public spaces in important urban centres of indigent subjects by weaponising archaic laws against the marginalised, rather than focusing on framing welfare policies that would enable more people to exercise their rights in a democracy in order to become full and free citizens.

To further challenge the problematic and almost ahistorical notion that is often regurgitated uncritically with regards to beggars and vagrants being identified as “lumpenproletariat,” incapable of constituting or embodying transformative potential, Raghavan and Tarique (2018) point out that individuals and communities involved in begging in the Indian cities have traditionally possessed skills that were relevant in a premodern rural world. Many individuals belonging to the denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities that flock to the cities from their natural environments in the rural hinterlands to the urban centres due to lack of adequate employment opportunities in a rapidly changing neoliberal economy, have historically been

engaged in occupations such as hunting, gathering, snake charming, street performances, fortune telling, warding off evil eye, etc. besides begging. These occupations along with the skills necessary to perform them have lost their cultural relevance and become redundant with the changing socio-economic realities in our times. Moreover, the scope of the anti-begging laws outlaws a number of these age-old practices and indigenous knowledge-based vocations without making alternate arrangements to meet the livelihood needs of affected populations or integrate them to the larger structure, thereby, rendering whole communities obsolete and “unskilled,” pushing them to the absolute pits of destitution.

These anti-begging laws that operate with an explicit intention to crack down on organised criminal activities, are essentially “anti-poor” laws, which help maintain status quo in a neoliberal system by facilitating accumulation of wealth in the hands of far and few individuals, through a process that is legitimised by an essentially devious state that actively works towards disenfranchising the rest of the population from the fruits of development. Hence, it is not that the begging individuals are criminals, as much as the state itself projecting its deviance on to its most vulnerable populations, and giving rise to a farcical discourse that puts the onus on the victims of structural oppression to prove their worth as deserving of basic human rights and dignity. But even if they were to use their agency to turn their fate around, irrespective of whatever attempts they made from these margins to resolve this quandary, they would still only veer between the tragedy of destitution and the farce of criminality. In short, the state leaves them with little choice, and begging is that choice one makes from among equally hard and unpleasant non-choices.

Addressing further the enduring and counterproductive populist views about the begging mafia that keep the anti-poor policies of the state alive in the form of anti-begging laws, Raghavan and Tarique write that other than targeting vulnerable populations, such laws contain enough inherent contradictions to be able to seriously impact those at the helm of affairs if begging indeed were an organised criminal activity:

“The hardships faced by the destitute are further affected by the widespread notions that have been built around begging. One such notion is that most

people involved in begging are part of organised gangs and criminal networks. However, in the past 50 years or so since the beggary prevention laws were legislated, there have been hardly any arrests of alleged racketeers. Instead, most arrested people have been “caught” for begging.

[...] It is often argued that beggary prevention legislation is necessary as there are gangs and syndicates who make huge sums of money through organised begging rackets and that these laws are required to check and control these rackets. This seems to be a systematic and strategic attempt at shifting the focus from the real issue to a populist view of the problem. The anti-begging law lacks bite when it comes to curbing organised begging. While it provides for detention of up to 10 years for a person caught for begging (in case of a repeat offence), it provides only for a three-year sentence for an offender who forces a person into begging. Compare this with Section 363(A) of the Indian Penal Code, which provides for 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for a similar offence.”⁴⁹

– (Raghavan and Tarique, 2018, p. 27)

Moreover, the prevalent discourse seems to function in a complete policy vacuum created by decades of inaction by state and civil society actors alike, who for the longest time accepted unquestioningly the dominant narrative based on middle- and elite classes’ stereotypical assessments and anxieties about the lower socio-economic sections. As such, it is not only the lived realities of begging individuals that do not impact policy, but also the lack of dialogue between various government institutions that contribute to unsubstantiated myths, and consequent neglect of begging populations by the state. Hence, one could surmise from the above discussion that despite its apparent linkages with religious almsgiving, begging, especially in its very urban manifestation, and as the findings of this particular study contends, is a secular

⁴⁹ IPC Section 363A states, “Kidnapping or maiming a minor for purposes of begging –

- (1) Whoever kidnaps any minor or, not being the lawful guardian of a minor, obtains the custody of the minor, in order that such minor may be employed or used for the purpose of begging shall be punishable with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.
- (2) Whoever maims any minor in order that such minor may be employed or used for the purposes of begging shall be punishable with imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.” See <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1892519/> last accessed 27-11-2018.

practice. It is a dynamic form of economic activity that involves mobilising diverse survival strategies by disparate sets of individuals living at the very fringes of the globalised urban experience. The reason begging is often conflated with religion is because begging as a social phenomenon does not find a legitimate expression in the existing secular discourse except in the reductive frameworks of chronic poverty and crime, both of which are grossly inadequate in addressing the lived experiences of individuals and groups engaged in the activity. In religion, therefore, begging finds the sort of refuge that it normally does not within the contemporary secular structure of the state that, for all its practical purposes, treats it as an organised criminal activity, though sans credible evidence.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is not so much as to ask complicated theoretical questions of begging and obscure the phenomenon into abstraction, as it is to test the scope of developing analytical tools and models that enable us to interrogate our own biases underlying the simplistic assumptions we make when we think of begging, and thereby, nuance the understanding of the phenomenon in all its complexities, in order to facilitate what Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to as “the discovery of theory from data”, or “grounded theory” (p. 1). In order to do so, the study begins at the very beginning; that is, by asking simple questions to various stakeholders associated directly or indirectly with the practice of begging and those that beg. Further, it employs and indigenises already established interactionist concepts – stigma, dramaturgy, behaviour in public places, nonperson treatment, total institution, etc. – to inform the analysis of the data gathered from the field. Hence, through this research an effort has been made to unpack the “deviant mystique of begging,” so that one could understand the many ways in which individuals and the state define, experience, and make sense of a practice that is largely deemed outside of the norm, carrying connotations that are negative, degrading, and often resistant to nuance.

Scope for future research and policy implications

This view of begging as work for individuals experiencing multiple marginalities – that of caste, gender, disability, old age, illness and substance use, etc. – also relates to the perception of begging as a highly stigmatised activity, and helps demystify why

the notion of “dignity of labour” remains inaccessible to those who make a living by soliciting and receiving alms. Begging individuals, who do not have the caste/class/gender privileges to maintain clear boundaries between their personal identities and professional lives, fall from grace in the eyes of the neoliberal state for not adhering to its middle-class sense of morality and work ethics that seeks to clearly define and demarcate the private and the public domains for its respectable citizenry. Begging and the homeless individuals, by applying their bare minimum selves, extending their bodies and babies, and using their basic expressive liberty to solicit alms, or sprawling themselves out on the pavements to sleep rough in full view of the public eye, seem to offend every sensibility that there is in the book that the state and its favourably placed moral subjects abide by.

It is clear that the attitude of the police towards begging depends upon the policy makers and city administrators. Police, no matter how sensitised to the issue of begging not being a “real” crime are still bound by orders to sanitise public spaces. However, the custodial institutions (Beggar Homes) in both the cities have become more accustomed to not treating begging individuals, who are still referred to as “inmates”, as organised criminals but more as people in need of shelter and care, or street youth in need of intervention and skills to be gainfully employed. Due to the consistent efforts of civil society organisations (like Koshish) that has a holistic community-based approach to the issue of begging and homelessness, and focuses on sensitising the criminal justice system as a whole to the realities of the begging population, the approach of the authorities in these institutions have largely changed from being punitive to becoming more rehabilitative. Yet, the fact remains that with the anti-begging law still being operational, along with a gamut of anti-poor laws that could be arbitrarily used to arrest begging and homeless individuals, the whole exercise of justice for this population continues to be carceral and adds to the stigma of being ostensibly poor, thereby impinging upon their fundamental rights and freedoms, making their day-to-day existence traumatic and precarious. It is here that the state could use some systematic research on the issue of begging to step up its welfare measures based on the felt needs and subjective experiences of the urban poor.

The current research must be seen only as a starting point in the study of the phenomenon of begging in the Indian context. It is merely a small step at trying to fill a surprisingly big gap within sociological research and literature that deals with overlapping concerns of class, poverty, urbanisation, globalisation, crime, law, and marginalisation. As discussed above, the study was able to satisfy some of the fundamental questions that it sought to address by undertaking a systematic inquiry on begging. However, as is the case with all research, this study too throws open more questions than it answers, and it is hoped that future research in sociology, but also within the various social sciences in general, would explore these related aspects further and enrich the already existing body of knowledge for the benefit of the larger scientific community. There are several aspects of begging and homelessness that have emerged in course of this study that require significant amount of independent inquiry given how under-researched begging as a phenomenon is. Some of these could only be addressed briefly or perfunctorily in the current research partly due to paucity of time and resources, but also due to structural and thematic limitations to the scope of a single research. It is hoped that future researchers would deem some of these areas worthy of further exploration especially with reference to the Indian context employing – but not limiting themselves to – available sociological insights.

Here, it is also important to reiterate that the phenomenon of homelessness, as described earlier, though often analogous and coinciding with the phenomenon of begging, is not the exactly the same. It also often constitutes a separate group of individuals who may have shared experience with those that beg from being part of similar street-life or street-work. Youth constitute a large chunk of that population, for instance, that does not overlap between homelessness and begging. Youth, especially able-bodied adolescent boys and young adult male members of the street are often not seen begging, though they may be found sleeping rough. Intuitively, of course, homelessness involves lack of housing as the census identifies. But for a more meaningful sociological inquiry the study of homelessness must take into account a holistic understanding of the growing wealth disparity in capitalist societies and how it impacts lifestyle choices of individuals and groups. In this particular research, no hard distinction is being made between begging and homeless populations in terms of analysis. Thus, the study focuses on the lived experiences of individuals undergoing both phenomena simultaneously, or it addresses the overlaps between homelessness

and begging while also being cognisant of the fact that these could be separate, and may be experienced differently. During this study it was found that homeless individuals who were engaged in forms of income generation other than begging – such as daily wage labour, catering work, service staff in small restaurants, etc. – also became disproportionate targets of the anti-begging laws in the cities, especially in Mumbai, where it is more rigorously implemented. Thus, employed but homeless individuals too are vulnerable to the draconian anti-begging laws that arrest individuals on the suspicion of being beggars.

Homeless youth are routinely picked up the anti-begging squads that sanitise public spaces of beggars and rough sleepers that push them further into vicious cycle of marginalisation, criminalisation and stigma. Encounters with the criminal justice system further narrows their job opportunities leaving them with checkered employment histories, eventually pushing them towards hazardous choices of generating an income. Moreover, life on the streets is exposes youth to all kinds of risks including physical and sexual violence, which adversely impacts their health, mental health, and capacity to be gainfully employed and realise their full potential. According to Snow and Anderson (1993), due to such roadblocks in the way of procuring normal work, most individuals turn to “shadow work,” which refers to low-skilled resource-generation outside of the formal economy by engaging in activities such as scavenging, begging, waste recycling, street-vending, prostitution, theft, or even progression to more serious criminal activities such as peddling drugs. Hence, it is hoped that this particular research would open the academic and sociological discussion on homelessness in urban India, an extremely ostensible yet under-researched social phenomenon, which deserve the attention of our social scientists and policy makers alike.

Concluding remarks and the hope of new beginnings

From the above discussion, one can conclusively infer that this research is a mere scratch on the surface of the various issues that begging as a social phenomenon hinges upon. As such, it is hoped that the study would help interested investigators in the field to not only interpret the beggar as a “political symbol,” but also push the case

of begging as a vantage point to look at the state and society at large. What becomes increasingly evident from an empirical study on begging is the fact that beggars cannot be type-casted into the categories created by the state and its criminal justice system. That is, one cannot learn about the phenomenon of begging going by the definitions and classifications that are superimposed on individuals by the law.

As laypersons, and mostly law abiding citizens, we all have a tendency to take for granted the clear and hard lines that the state draws between all that it considers as norm (or, legitimate), and that it considers a fact of aberration (deviance or crime). However, the state is also a reflection of our deeply internalised biases as well as aspirations as a society. Hence, it is not surprising that we continue to project our class biases with our apathy and disregard for the poor through the mechanisms of the neoliberal state, that caters to the needs of the few while disenfranchising large sections of the population that are in need of welfare, recognition, and visibility. In other words, we continue to uphold an illegitimate state machinery because somewhere we are all deeply aware of the fact that the protection and privileges that it grants us comes at the cost of others not having the access to the same. We are all thereby complicit in perpetuating these inequalities and maintaining the status quo, and even more so, when we uncritically consume views negative stereotypes of the most marginalised and the oppressed sections of our society as “social threats” rather than in need of “social protection.”

Begging as the study indicates is a choice of economic activity, but also one that of last resort. The population that engage in begging is as diverse as the population that does not, and their identities and realities as variegated as the world they occupy the margins of. A study of begging therefore is the study of state failure in providing justice and equal access to all. Similarly, the study of criminalisation of begging, therefore, is an attempt to deconstruct the workings of a neoliberal state, which derives its power not as much by its democratic functions, as it does through the use of coercion to systemically invisibilise and annihilate those that it marginalises and exploits the most. These are the people we continually pour middle-class-guilt-masqueraded-as-morality on to, by alternately labelling them “lazy,” “unproductive,” “a public nuisance,” and so on. In our elitist stupor, we find it incredible and discomfiting that the begging mafia of *Slumdog Millionaire* fame – a favourite urban

myth, turned into a dangerously monolithic portrayal of the “other” from the Global South – may not exist at all. These oft-repeated proclamations at establishing the presence of a begging mafia, in spite of evidence to the contrary, are not just ill-conceived but also indicative of the urban middle-class’s desperate need for a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It validates our middle-class morality underlying a social arrangement that allows civil inaction and victim-blaming to fester, while never having to acknowledge the real problems of structural inequality and systemic bias. Ultimately, it seems it is we, and not the beggars, who need the begging mafia to exist. The anti-begging laws therefore are a part of the rhetoric that allows class aspirations for success, development, and profit maximisation within a capitalist system to drive the underlying ethics of what constitutes the notions of citizenship, civil society, or public. The beggars manage fine on their own, even when we don’t bother with sparing them our empathy or change – provided we don’t worsen their predicament by adding our casual intolerance to the might of the state. For the begging individuals themselves, begging is an everyday rejection of the pejorative labels that the neoliberal state and its privileged citizens confer upon them.

Begging can thus be seen as emblematic of this peripheral but dynamic protest against a state that systematically disenfranchises large sections of the population from equal access to freedoms, rights, and spaces – and thereby equal access to justice – with individuals at the margins organising themselves at different capacities, with various innovative survival strategies, mobilising limited resources, and capitalising on their marginalised and stigmatised identities as a blatant act of self-commodification (see for example Davis, 2003), in what could also be envisaged as one of the most cynical displays of inversion of power by simulation and adaptation of exploitative capitalist principles by its most exploited members. The act of begging interpreted in this manner, therefore, is not only a practice of resilience among the poorest of the poor, but also a resilient political tool of resistance with a stomach for satire, lending itself to be a powerful commentary on the practices of the neoliberal state and the middle class sensibilities that govern our urban spaces in contemporary times.

It is hoped that the current study on begging is able to draw attention of the broader scientific community towards an area of research that is in serious need of deeper and more sustained empirical engagement, so as to arrive at a systematic understanding of various aspects associated not only with the practice of begging per se, but also with the kind of knowledge that we wish to produce in the future. Whose voices we want to prioritise within the pedagogical and discursive world of academic knowledge production? Whose realities do we as researchers choose to engage with in a meaningful way? Which individuals and groups have we condemned to passivity through our incapacity to recognise their agency in their everyday struggles? Who do we consciously or unconsciously humanise or criminalise through our intervention, or who benefits from our research? What kind of state/welfare policy does our research wishes to inform and impact?

Most importantly, by way of researching begging this study seeks to make a dent in those walls fortifying the ivory tower that have hitherto not allowed the light to shine on the vibrant life-worlds that thrive in the margins of the city, where against the backdrop of high-rise towers and omnipresent din of busy streets, exists a low-tempo resistance. It is a resistance led by the most marginalised and overlooked members of our society who are asserting themselves through the very act of soliciting alms; they are disrupting the monotony of cash nexus, and stirring interaction between classes with competing interests and conflicting ideologies, through their humble yet powerful begging repertoires. Here, redistribution of wealth is taking place at a micro-level, as the state fails in its responsibility to do so equitably. Thus, in probing the phenomenon in such a manner, this study hopes to pave the way towards the possibility of instigating a “sociology of begging;” that is, to look at begging as a symptom of a much larger social problem, rather than a “problem” in itself. A sociology that recognises begging as a symbol therefore qualifies the study of this phenomenon to style itself as a lens to analyse the fundamental nature of any human society and how it creates, maintains, and reproduces inequalities.

Furthermore, such sociology though it recognises the fact that inequalities are structurally produced and perpetuated ostensibly through the mechanisms of the state and law, does not however absolve the structurally privileged of how they choose to make use of their individual agency and access to the system. While it is cognisant of

human agency that allows the most disenfranchised of individuals to find viable survival strategies and meaning through innovating begging encounters, it also begs to understand the role privileged members of a society play in contributing to the construction and preservation of exclusionary practices, more crucially and indeed more enduringly, through their everyday interactions and social institutions, and the discourses that such interactions and institutions choose to privilege. This study therefore invites the scientific community, to offer its conceptual and methodological tools to get a better view of social reality from grassroots-level up, and implores it to use its privilege to ask the kind of questions that would allow each of us to renegotiate our relationship with knowledge and power in a way that interrogates our deeply held biases and preconceived notions about begging. Finally, it is my earnest desire, that this study equips interested readers within the discipline, but also outside, to actively contribute to the construction of a more just and equal society by choosing to speak truth to power.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE – I

(FOR BEGGING & HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS)

Note: Open-ended in-depth interview to be audio recorded if consented by the interviewee. Interview questions were adjusted at the time of the interview based on the direction the narratives took and questions participants were naturally drawn to elaborate upon. Photographs to be taken with participants' consent only on full disclosure regarding how the researcher intended to use, publish or disseminate the material. On occasions when consent could not be obtained to audio/video record interviews and settings, researcher would respect the participants' wishes for confidentiality and anonymity, and resort to taking handwritten notes, and/or rely on memory to reproduce and transcribe interviews and observations. Thank all participants for giving their time.

1. General Information –

- a. Age:
- b. Sex:
- c. Education:
- d. Marital Status:
- e. No. of children:
- f. Place of origin:
- g. Begging since:
- h. Institutional/Organisational affiliations:
- i. Disability:
(If possible, and participants are willing to disclose)
- j. No. of times married:
- k. Languages spoken:
- l. Daily/Monthly income:
- m. Daily/Monthly savings:

2. Tell me about your family. Do any of your family members contribute to your household income? What all do they do?
3. How long have you been begging in this locality? Where all do you go for business (*kaam* or *dhandā*)? How long have you been begging?
4. Do you have a place in the village? Land, property, home, etc? What about your own parents? What do they do? Do you go home often? When and why did you migrate?
5. Did you go to school? Did you try doing any other job before getting into begging? Do you have other skills? What else would you like to do if you weren't begging?
6. How much do you manage to earn on a regular day? What do you do during the monsoons?
7. If you needed help, monetary or otherwise, where do you usually go? Do you have friends around this area/street?
8. Does the BMC/NDMC/DDA trouble you often? What about the cops and the police vans? Did they ever take you to Chembur/Timarpur? Narrate the incident. How did you get out?
9. Is there anyone you don't like in this area? Is there a leader? Have you witnessed any fights in this area? Is it safe for your women and children?
10. What do you do in your free time? Have you used any of the drugs and de-addiction facilities around here? Do any social workers/ organisations/ hospitals provide you with healthcare facilities?
11. Do your children go to school? Have you considered putting them in CWC *īhostels* or giving them for adoption? Do they have birth certificates? Do you have identity proofs? What papers do you have?

12. Do you have any future plans for yourself and your children?

13. What do you think about religion? Do you believe in a God? Do you generally earn more during festivals?

14. What do you think about the current government? Have they said anything about housing? What about vocational training, work, aadhaar card, ration card, etc?

Thank you for talking to me.

INTERVIEW GUIDE – II

(CUSTODIAL INSTITUTIONS/ POLICE/ CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS)

Note: Open-ended in-depth interview to be audio recorded if consented by the interviewee. Interview questions were adjusted at the time of the interview based on the direction the narratives took and questions participants were naturally drawn to elaborate upon. Photographs to be taken with participants' consent only on full disclosure regarding how the researcher intended to use, publish or disseminate the material. On occasions when consent could not be obtained to audio/video record interviews and settings, researcher would respect the participants' wishes for confidentiality and anonymity, and resort to taking handwritten notes, and/or rely on memory to reproduce and transcribe interviews and observations. Thank all participants for giving their time.

1. General Information –

- a. Age:
- b. Sex:
- c. Education:
- d. Occupation:
- e. Marital status:
- f. Place of origin:
- h. Institutional/Organisational affiliations:

2. Tell me about yourself. How long have you been working in this city?

3. What are your views on begging? Who are these beggars and homeless people? Why do you think they beg?

4. Do you believe begging is a crime? Do you think beggars should be arrested? Should people give to beggars when they solicit alms? Why?

5. What is the role of the police and/the law when it comes to addressing the issue of begging?

6. What is the role of the society and/civil society organisations when it comes to responding to begging and homelessness?

7. What else can be expected of the state and the government regarding this issue? Do you have any suggestion towards a possible solution?

Thank you for talking to me.

DATA TRANSCRIPTION – SAMPLE I

(BEGGING INDIVIDUAL)

Interview #1

Location: Hanuman Mandir/Shani Mandir, CP, Delhi

Name: X

Gender: Female

Age: 55+ years approx.

Place of origin: Gwalior

Marital status: Widow

Disability/Other: None

Documents/ID proofs: Aadhaar card

Sl. No.	Area of inquiry	Question (asked in Hindi)	Reply (Verbatim in Hindi)	Translation	Primary Coding
1	Personal history/ background	How did you come to start living here?	Naseeb tha... bhatak te bhatak te chalte chalte pahoonch gayi Gwalior se dilli, aur dilli ke nayi station pe rahti thi. Koi bola ki chalo mandir pe, toh mandir pe aane lagi...nayi dilli station pe 1-2 saal rahi. Dheere dheere yahaan jaan pehchan ho gayi sabse, phir yahaan rehne lagi. Tabse nahin gayi.		
2	Household/family/	How many children do you	4 ladhke hain. 2 mere saath hai aur 2	4 boys	

	kin members	<p>have? Have they finished their studies? Where do they live? Do they come to meet you?</p>	<p>mere bhai ke paas. 2 ka toh shaadi kar diya bhai ne...abhi unka nahin hua. Chota toh abhi 9th mein hai...salaam baalak mein rehta hai. aur bada nikal ke padhai karke abhi paharganj mein reh raha hai...uski shaadi abhi nahin hui, abhi nowkri dhoond raha hai. Kamra le rakha hai Rs 3000 ka, 4-5 ladke milke reh lete hai...aata tha milne pehle abhi nahin aa raha pata nahin kya baat hai toh. Milke jata tha, phone bhi karta tha...ab kam se kam 5-6 mahine nahin aa raha, pata nahin kya baat hai, main phone karti hoon toh switch off bata deta hai. Abhi Diwali mein jaoongi paharganj mein toh pata karoongi dost logon se toh who bata denge</p>		
	What was your husband?		<p>Makaan banane ka patthar hota hain na, woh nikaalna ka kaam karte the...woh jo patthar hai jisko bomb lagake todh detein hai? Uske baad usko itna bada ya itna bada todhte the...mistiry chunai karte the... aur koi kaam nahin tha. Ye kaam karke hi bimar ho gaye the. Bachche chhote chhote the. Jahaan tak jama</p>	Quarry worker	

3	Daily sustenance	<p>Since you work here at the temple do they give you anything? On what basis? Do the temple goers give you? What did you do when you were at the RS?</p>	<p>kartein rahein... uske baad...</p> <p>Haan, paise dete hai, khana dete hai...nahin mahine ke hisaab se nahin, hafte mein Rs. 200-300. Sab milta hai. Mandir mein aanne waale log bhi detein hai. Bhookha nahin soti mein beta khake soti hoon. Nahin hoga toh mere liye hotel se mangwa denge paise deke...andar saaman rakhne dete hai ek kamere mein...koi nahin chhuta...I am the only one who lives here, the cleaning lady and janitor they come from Ghaziabad.</p> <p>Pehle jab RS pe thi, main aa jaati thi mandir pe, khana wana leke chali jati thi, bacche log kha lete the, paidle ati thi paidle jati thi. Bacche chhote chhote the, chhota wala 2-2.5 months ka tha, bada wala 10 years ka tha, ek ladki paal rakhi thi. Uske ma baap chod gaye usko station pe, woh mere peeche pakad li, tabhi 12-13 saal kit hi, 14-15 saal mein usko bhi de diya salaam baalak mein...abhi uski shaadi ho gayi, Gurgaon mein, 27-28 years ki go</p>	<p>Yes. Food, clothes, and money. Around Rs 200-300 per week. You get everything here. Temple premises inside, provides her a space to keep her belongings too.</p>	
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			<p>gayi, 2 bacche bhi hai. Main jato hoon usse milne, phone karegi na toh chali jati hoon milke ati hoon, Inhi ne shaadi karwaya, paise, bartan, sab salam balak waalon ne diye the. Padti thi. Usse kahi thi ke “acchi job karle, uske baad shaadi karle. Bhai, akeli hoon, koi nahin hai...jahan tujhe achcha lage wahin karle, hum koi zabarzasti nahin karenge...kalko koi baat ho jai toh hum pe ayega ke inhone zabarzasti karwa diya. Toh bhai teri ichcha se kar, tujhe dukh saho ya sukch saho uska zimma phir hum nahin lenge na...” abhi uski bhi chutti meri bhi chutti, uska husband kaam karta hai, mera damaad, apna wahin rakhe</p>	
4	Exposure to threats/dangers on the street	Do people out here trouble you here? Did you ever have to face any threat when you were living at the station before?	<p>Pehle bolte the, “chal uth, yahan mat baithna, yahan mat sona” Sone nahin dete the. Lekin abhi koi kuch nahin bolta. Jahan marzi baitho, khao... RS, tabhi toh bahut dikkatein uthane pade the</p>	<p>No. Not any more. Earlier they used to not let me sit or sleep where I wanted. They used to chase me (new people) away. But now I do whatever I want.</p>
5	Interface with the criminal justice system	Did cops ever arrest you for being homeless? Have you seen them troubling	<p>Nahin (loudly denies)...ek station pe jo chowki tha, wahin pe soti thi, aur ek apne Gwalior ka tha...woh kabhi</p>	<p>No.</p>

		others like you?	<p>pereshan nahin karta tha... kehte, "aap yahan so jao, apka baccha so raha hai, apko koi kuch bolta hai toh aap mere paas ana..." Haan, dusro ko toh khoob bhagate the, laathi maarte the.</p> <p>Ek din ek ladai hui ek gujarati se, wo bole, "inko kyun sulate ho aap, darwaje ke paas, inko bhi bhagao?" Toh bole, "ye mere gaon se ayi hai, chali jayegi" ...</p>		
6	Views on begging and rough sleeping	What do you think about people who beg to earn their livelihood?	<p>Jiska kamaane wala hai woh toh kamaayega, but jiska kamaane wala nahin hai, besahara, woh kahan se kamayega. Abhi aise aise time aa gaye hai, koi budhiya ho, uska bhi galat istemaal kar dete hai. Toh apna yahin aake khake par jati hoon. Yahaan thoda sahara milta hai.</p>	<p>People who have no support, how will they earn their living? Where will they go?</p>	
7	Views on criminalisation of begging	What do you think of cops arresting beggars and homeless people? Is it a useful law?	<p>Main toh kehti hoon achcha hi hain... police ka 100 no. ka gaadi yahaan khada rehta hai... tabhi toh hum kehte hain unhe ki aap le jao, toh bole ki, "mataji chalo wahan khana khana aur rehna", aur mein kehti ki khana toh yahaan bhi milta hai wahaan bhi milta hai toh main</p>	<p>In a way it's good because people here also get some help from the police. Cops don't disturb but when petty crimes are on the rise, sometimes they get complaints, so they have</p>	

			<p>kyun jaoon? Waise wo pareshan nahin karte, zyaada hi ho jata hai na yahaan par kabhi. Kisika jeb kaat liya toh kisika phone cheen liya toh complaint jata hai. Tab woh aate hain, unko koi shaukh nahin hai zabarzasti karne ka. Ab main hoon, mujhko aaj tak kabhi kuch nahin hua. Koi complain nahin kuch nahin, chourahe pe gaadi khada rehta hai, bolte hai ki is aurat ka toh koi complaint nahin hai aaj tak... bacchon ko maine footpath par pala hai lekin achchi lalat zindagi di hai, ke teri maa hai, mang kar khati hai, us se sharam mat kariyo, tum apni achche raaste par chalo. Kal koi yeh na kahe ki baap ka naam doobaoge, ke “ye hari singh ki aulad hai, bimala ke, dekho kya nasha karte hain, daru peete hain”, toh is se dur reh. Mera beta tambaku, bidi, cigarette, sab cheez se dur, sirf usko do time khana chahiye aur do time chai, uske alava aur kuch nahin...</p>	<p>to take action.</p>	
8	Faith in the Divine	Do you believe in God?	Beta, mujhko vishwaas hai...main toh kehti “bhagwaan, mere bachcho ko achchi zindagi de, achche		

			<p>rahein...is jagah pe so bachcha reh gaya, woh nasha ke alava aur kuch nahin jaante...zara zara si umar mein dekho *makes sniffing gestures* kartein rahte hai</p>		
9	Drug and substance usage	<p>Which substances do kids commonly use on the streets?</p> <p>Why people use substances? Is it to kill hunger?</p>	<p>Woh jo tyre nahin jodte? Peeli peeli hoti hai, woh daal lete hai kapde mein aur phir *makes sniffing gestures* aise kartein hai</p> <p>Pata nahin kis pareshani se kartein hai, kaam kar liya, Rs. 50-100 ho gaya, bas khareed kar le ayenge char paanch milke, khoob soongenge... bhookh ke liyein kyun? Khaana toh bat ta hai yahaan.</p>		

DATA TRANSCRIPTION – SAMPLE II

(POLICE PERSONNEL)

Interview #21

Key informant, DSP, CBI Special Crime Branch

Location: Hanuman Mandir, Connaught Place, Delhi

Name: Y

Gender: Male

Age: 52 years approx.

Place of origin: Delhi

Marital status: Married

Disability/Other: None

Documents/ID proofs: -NA-

Sl. No.	Area of inquiry	Question (asked in Hindi)	Reply (Verbatim in Hindi)	Translation	Primary Coding
1	Personal history/ background	Tell me about yourself.	Ji main pehle se hi service mein tha. Jitne bhi mere bhai behen hai, mere papa bhi government servant the, hum saare hi class I officer. Aur chalo hum sab toh hain hi, saare bhai behen toh hain hi, yahaan tak ke humarre jo sisters hain, uke husband bhi saare hi class I officers hain. Mera bhai Bombay mein, Ambernath, govt hospital hai, ussmein kaam karta hai. Brother ki wife who bhi		“hum saare hi class I officer.”

2	Views on begging policing	How do you think police deals with the beggars?	doctor hai...		
		<p>Police ka kya hai, security lagi rahti hai wahaan pe, duty lagi hui hai, toh raat ko, aapko pata hai VIP ko nialna hota hai ussme, toh kaafi ghanton pehle usko wahaan bitha diya jaata hai. Kara ho jayega wahaanpe. Thanda ho, barish ho, kuch bhi ho, kuch cheez se apne aap ko shade kar lega, lekin jayega woh wahin pe. Unki life bhi bahut zyaada hard hai.</p> <p>Toh isliye thoda derr agar beggars wagera jo hi aaj thik hai chalne doh. Ye nahin ke sirf police waale, aam admi ya aam log bhi zyaada dhyaan nahin deta. Wo issi karan se dhyaan nahin deta ki, sochta hai ki yaar, yeh toh roz ka kaam hai inka. Maanlo koi mobile chori ho gaya, yahaan tak ki kuch log jinka mobile bhi chori ho gaya hai, who log bhi “thik hai, ho gaya na chori, koi baat nahin...naya le lenge” Log ke paas itna paisa hai, koi bother hi nahin karte mobile chori ho gaya karke. Kaun sardard lega, kaun FIR likhayega, ye karega woh karega. Un cheezo ka koi kuch nahin karta...</p>			

		<p>Par aaj kal toh beggars mein kya chal gaya hai, jo chotte bachche, I think 9-10 saal ke honge, mobile chori karte hain, log pakar letein hain, police logon ke haath mein de dete hain, police kuch nahin kartein, wahin se police station le gayein, phir chor diya. Chotte bachche ko kya karenge? Maar sakte nahin. Maarna shuru kiya toh dus log khare ho jayenge, nahin maaro. Police waale haath nahin utha sakte unpe. Chalo maan lo custody mein de diya unko, kitne din rahega? 4 mahina 3 mahina, 10 mahina, saal. 3 saal se zyaada toh murder ki bhi saza nahin hai... bachche me kisine agar murder bhi kar diya, 3 saal se zyaada koi saza hai hi nahin.</p> <p>Toh bachche aaj kal itni choriyaan karne lag gayein hain, toh kya karenge bolo? Public bhi maar legi, peet legi, ke police wala kuch nahin karta. Baaki beggar ka toh yahin hai woh aapne toh dekh liya bematlab bakwaas kar raha hai. Thodi derr aur bakta toh mera bhi haath uth jaata. Maan lo police wala usse maar lenge, utha ke bandh bhi kar lenge, phir shaam ko phir chor denge phir wahaan pahuch jayega...</p>		
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3	Homeless people's access to justice via the CJS	<p>Why is it that the police seems reluctant to register cases brought to them by homeless people? Like the murder case that took place that they have been sitting on for over a year now...?</p> <p>Is that enough justification for inaction on the part of the cops?</p>	<p>Beggars logon ka kya hai, sab yahin bolta hai ki apne jagah mein raho, police log bhi sochta hai ki koi mar gaya toh marne doh koi baat nahin, Yeh toh roz hota hai. Kyunki ussme beggars ka mostly problem nasha hai.</p> <p>Nasha karne waalon ka life waise hi kam ho jaata hai...</p> <p>Nahin, justification nahin, ki uski life bekaar hai toh mar jao. Lekin ya toh wo nasha chor de... dekhniye marna toh apne aap hi marega, nasha karke marega, aur bilkul marega. Hum toh ye bhi jaante hain, nasha karke woh marega, main toh aise hi bol de raha hoon.</p> <p>VIP logon ka dekhniye baat alag hota hai... ab bada aadmi toh bada admi hota hai. Bade admi aur chote admi mein farak hota hai, isliye who beggar hai toh... waise murder ho gaya hai toh dekhna toh chahiye, serious hai, murder toh murder hi hai ji, toh toh who bheekhari ho ya koi bhi ho...</p> <p>Ek bheekhari ye hai ki usska murder ho gaya aur usska aage peeche koi bhi nahin hai, theek? Theek hai, murder ka case</p>	
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			<p>hua, file khuli, koi pakra gaya toh ussko saza ho gayi toh ho gayi, kyunki ussme gawaah nahin milega koi, aur gawaah nahin mila toh saza hoyegi nahin. Ab murder hai, aapko pata nahin shaayad pata ho ya na ho. Tihar jail ke andar murder hota hai, Tehar jail ke andar bhi murder hota hai na. Aur Tihar jail ke andar woh murder karte hain jinhe saza ho rakhi hai, life [sentence] ki, un logon mein murder kar dete hai log, paisa de kar. Woh kis liye? Ussko toh agar kisine maar bhi diya, kyunki usski toh life [sentence] hai, ke jab tak zinda hai tab tak andar hai. Woh bahar niklega jab tak, marne ke baad usski dead body bahar niklegi. Toh wo log murder kar detein hain, aate hain news mein, apne dekha hoga, aapas mein ladai hui ek ne ek ko maar diya. Ab jo aartein hain, mostly woh aise hi hotein hain, jinko life ho chuki hoti hai...sab alag alag hai ji, crime alag hai, beggar bheekhari alag hain, kam alag hai...</p>		
4	Views on begging	Why do you think people beg?	<p>Jo mehnat hi nahin karega woh kahaan se paisa kamaayega. Abhi jo bheekhari hai, apaahij hai woh theek hai, lekin aapne kya apaahij ko nowkri karte hue</p>		

		<p>Do you believe that begging is a crime? What kind of crime?</p>	<p>nahin dekha? Ek baar maine fb mein dekha hai, ke bachche ko apne peeth pe baandh rakkha hai, aur kaam kar raha hai woh jisko kaam karna hai wo karna hai. Par jisko bhi aadat par chuki hai mufat ki khaane ki unhe mufat ki khaani hai.</p> <p>Yahaan tak ke yeh nahin ki kuch achche log bhi bheekhari ho jaate hain, ke bade bade logon se paisa maangna shuru kar detein hain. Wo apne hisaab se maangtein hain, Chahe usse chanda keh lo, chahe kuch aur keh lo. Hum toh unhe bhi bheekhari kehtein hain. Yeh thoda khulke bheekhari h gaye, woh thoda VIP bheekhari</p> <p>Haan crime toh hai... dekhiye beggar ke peeche har ek ke peeche mafia hoga. Chahe woh apko nazar na ata ho ya koi na bata pao... aap kisi beggar ko maarna shuru kar doh thodi derr mein yahaan pe kuch log ana shuru ho jayenge, usse bachaane ki koshish karenge. Aur mafia issliye unke peeche rehta hai, aur koi baitha hai, aur 2 minute mobile neeche rakha hai toh utha lega. Uss beggar koi bheekhari ko mobile se kya matlab hai ji, ussne kisiko phone karna nahin, net toh usse check nahin karna, koi cheez ussko</p>		
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	<p>Why won't s/he just sell the stolen phone for money?</p>	<p>karni nahin, toh mobile kyun chori kya ussne? Wo mobile uthaake unke jo mafia hote hain jo bade bade unko pakra detein hain...isse mafia kaam karta hai</p> <p>Dekhiye ek bheekhari mobile kahaan bechne jayega batayiye? Aapko bechega, mujhe bechega? Dukaan mein bechega? Nahin bheekhari se koi mobile nahin khareedega, koi nahin khareedega... mobile mein lock hoga kuch hoga.. Bheekhari mein akkal nahin hoti ji itni. Isliye mafia koi chahiye jo sab cheez kar sakta hai...</p> <p>Nahin saare nahin, sabki baat nahin kar raha ji main...</p> <p>Unka bass wahin kaam hota hai, khaana khaana, aur paise maangna aur nasha karna. Ek toh woh paise maangte yun hai ji? Kya karega paison se? Kapde who phate pehenta hai, maangne ke liye pehenta hai, khaana usse roz milta hai, rehne ke liye ghar dhoonta nahin hai. Kisliye paise maangta hai ye? Nasha karne ke liye...</p>		
	<p>Maybe for substances, also for children's</p>	<p>Dekhiye bahut kam bheekhari hote hai ji jinke bachche padhte hain. Bahut kam</p>		

		<p>education, to send to families back in the villages, etc?</p> <p>Do you have evidence for what you are stating?</p>	<p>hote hain bheekhari log jo ghar chalaate hain...</p> <p>Nahin... Ye sab baatein kaun poochega aap batayiye... aapki baat alag hai aap research kar rahin hai, kuch kar rahin hai, yeh bhi soch rahin hai. Warna log nahin sochte. Iss cheez ke baare mein koi baat nahin karega, aapke parents baat nahin karenge. Thoda sa interest letein honge aapke parents toh thoda nahut discuss kar lenge</p>		
5	Views on the research	<p>People here seem to be very worried about me when I work in the evenings, and you have mentioned the mafia. What kind of safety issues do you think are involved that I should be wary of?</p>	<p>Koi cheez bhi zyaada poochne jaao na madam, wo aapke liya theek nahin hai... Dekhiye mafia toh mafia hota hai. Ek minute lagta hai ji kuch bhi karne ke liye. Dekhiye, kisi bhi mafia ki kisi cheez ko tum khoj karoge na, wo danger hai. Kyunki mafia ke peeche chhote chhote 20, 20-15, 15 hazaar rupay mein kaam karne waale log hotein hain, unke liye rape karna ya karana koi badi baat nahin hai. Yahaan tak ki police waalon ke upar gaadi chala dete hain. Dilli ke bahar, dilli mein toh aisa kam hai...</p> <p>Dekhiye koi bhi kaam karo, apne aap ko</p>	<p>Warning me about the mafia for my safety, or openly threatening me to discontinue the study...?</p>	<p>“Koi cheez bhi zyaada poochne jaao na madam, wo aapke liya theek nahin hai...”</p> <p>“Kyunki mafia ke peeche chhote chhote 20, 20-15, 15 hazaar rupay mein kaam karne waale log hotein hain, unke liye rape karna ya karana koi badi</p>

6	Views on minorities wrt to crime	<p>The first question you asked me after asking my last name, is if I were a “mohammadan” ...so do you think it impacts the study in any way that I am a muslim?</p> <p>Do you think it's more dangerous for me to study anything related to the mafia because I am muslim?</p>	<p>thoda sa safe rakh ke</p> <p>Nahin, isse usska koi wo nahin hai (basically couldn't find words) mohammadan ho na ho main koi wo cheez nahin maanta. Mere bahut friends hai jo mohammadans hain. Unke ghar pe main baithke khaana bhi khaata hoon, main non-veg bhi kha leta hoon, lekin maine bass unse ek cheez kahaan ke thik hain tum log job hi khaao, lekin main beef aur ye cheez khaane ke liye kabhi allowed nahin karo, aap jo marzi khaao, lekin aisa mat karna ki khaana mere saamne rakh diya aur bola ki khaao...</p> <p>Issme toh aap ke hi log hotein hain ji...aap ke bande log hi uthaate hain problem? Aap namaaz padhti hain? Aapke parents, aur jo masjid mein namaaz padhaate hai, kya bolte hain unko, maulavi? Agar woh log se problem nahin hai toh koi problem hi nahin hai.</p> <p>Dekhiye mafia har ek [community] mein hain, hindu mein bhi hai, muslim mein bhi hai. Muslims mein thoda zyaada hai, theek hai?</p>		<p>baat nahin hai.”</p> <p>“jo crimes mein hain, mohammadan log bahut zyaada hai. Usska kaaran shayad ye bhi ho sakta hai ki, ye log study kam karte hain... aur chotti si area mein rehna chahte hain, wahaan se nikalna nahin chahte.”</p>
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			<p>Kyunki jo main jaanta hoon, main survey toh nahin kahoonga ki maine survey kiya hua hai, lekin main jo logon ko jaanta hoon, jo crimes mein hain, mohammadan log bahut zyaada hai. Usska kaaran shayad ye bhi ho sakta hai ki, ye log study kam karte hain, education thoda kam letein hain, aur chotti si area mein rehna chahte hain, wahaan se nikalna nahin chahte.</p> <p>Main ek do family aisi jaanta hoon, yahin pe jama masjid ke aas paas hain. Unke bade makaan hoyenge, unke mother father, 4 bachche hue, uske baad unki shaadi kar di, unke bachche hue, toh karte karte ab aisa hai ki property chotti ho gayi, eke k kamre mein rehte hai abhi woh log. Kahin baar main kehta hoon unse, niklo wahaan se, nahin, nahin nikalte, woh nikalna hi nahin chahte wahaan se...</p> <p>Aur phir maine phir waise familyaan bhi dekhi hain aur unke bachche bhi dekhe hain, jo kuch kaam nahin karte ji, bachche ho rakhe hai, shaadi kar di, ab kya hoga usske baad? Paise toh chahiye, khaane ke liye, kuch ke liye chahiye. Toh woh admi asaan rasta khojta</p>		
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		<p>Why do you think they aren't that interested in education or the rate of education among them is low?</p>	<p>hai...koi bhi ho. Toh yahin cheezein hain. Main ye nahin keh raha ki sirf mohammadans mein hain, hinduwo mein bhi hogi, lekin maine uss pe dhyaan nahin diya. Main iss tarah ke area ke baare mein baat kar raha hoon, jama area, maine ye cheez dekhi hai.</p> <p>Abhi iska toh kuch keh nahin sakte ki padhaai me interest kam kyun hai...logon ke paas paise hota hai, unke parents ke paas paisa he lekin pata nahin kyun ghar pe kyun nahin chalti. Kuch karna chaahate hain, karte hai, jaise ki aap ho. Aur baaki bhi bahut hain. Mere police mein bhi jo 2 mohammadans hain, issi rank pe hain, mere rank pe hain, main DSP hoon...</p> <p>Ab kya pata kyun nahin karna chahte kuch log</p>		
7	Views on government	What do you make of the current government? It has now been in power for over a year.	<p>Sudhaar ek narendra modi hi karna chahta hai. Unki jo team hai woh saare nahin karna chahte. Yeh toh hota hi hai, jab maanlo, main chal raha hoon, aur mere peeche 10 rassiyaan lage huwe hain, 8 toh mujhe push kar rahein hain, aur 2 kheech rahein hai. Toh ye baat hai,</p>	Very diplomatic answers... Unsubstantiated views and contradictory answers when it comes to the pro-poor initiatives of	“paisa dekhiye unhi ke paas aata hain jo mehnat karta hai”

		<p>What about Kejriwal run Delhi govt.?</p> <p>Yes, the poor people....?</p>	<p>Narendra Modi barhiya kaam kar rahein hai, unka kaam achcha hai, sab kuch hai</p> <p>Ab dekhiye politics mein toh yahin hota hai ki koi bhi position ho, aapas mein toh kheeche taani toh hogi. Hare k yeh chahta hai ki kursi mujhe mile...</p> <p>Haan Kejriwal ka toh main support karta hoon. Kaam toh wo achcha kar rahein hain. Unko personally bhi jaanta hoon main. Lekin unme bhi wahi aadat hai ke kuch kaam karna chahte hai toh koi unki pitai karna chahte hai... wahin problem hai</p> <p>Loh kehte hai ki bijli free kar di, paani free kar diya. Free kar diya toh kya kar liya ji. Unhone bas ek limit baandh diya ji. Magar aap survey karoge toh 99 percent logon ka uss limit se zyaada hi bijli ka use utne mein hota hai. Bahut kam percentage log itna kam bijli use kartein hai..</p> <p>Haan, par aaj kal ghareeb, Hindustan mein ghareebi hain, lekin kam hai. Paisa toh logon ke paas bahut hai. Aur paisa dekhiye unhi ke paas aata hain jo mehnat karta hai.</p>	<p>delhi govt.</p>	
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8	Solutions to the “problem” of begging	What do you think could be a solution to begging?	<p>Dekhiye akela insaan koi solution nahin nikaal sakta. Aur kuch toh solutions aise hote hain na, tum nikaalne ki koshish karoge na, bahut log nikaalne hi nahin denge. Bheekhari hai, election aate hai toh inhe Rs 200 pakraao, daaru ki bottle pakraao, jahaan marzi vote karaao... toh yeh cheezein hain, kya ho sakta hai?</p> <p>Koshish har koi kar sakta hai, lekin bahut log koshish nahin kar rahe</p>		
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DATA TRANSCRIPTION – SAMPLE III

(BEGGAR HOME OFFICIAL STAFF)

Interview #49

Key Informant, Probation Officer/Acting Superintendent

Beggars' Home (Female Section)

Location: Chembur

Name: YY

Gender: Female

Age: 50 years approx.

Place of origin: Maharashtra

Marital status: Unknown

Disability/Other: None

Documents/ID proofs: -NA-

Sl. No.	Area of inquiry	Question (asked in Hindi)	Reply (Translated and paraphrased from notes)	Comments	Primary Coding
1	Personal history/ background	Tell me about yourself. How long have you been working here?	I have been here at the Beggars' Home for 3 years now. For a whole year I was on leave because I got very sick looking at the condition of the women here		“For a whole year I was on leave because I got very sick looking at the condition of the women here”
2	Professional role	What all do you have to do here?	I had to oversee the “jharti” process, full body examination and frisking when they bring people in. It's because of that I feel sick,		

			<p>because the women come in such bad and unhygienic condition and when I first joined this place I was not used to it. I didn't like it. It used to smell a lot. I found it very difficult. But now after the leave I am okay. It was the Superintendent who is now on leave for her wedding who convinced me to stay on. She is so young and understanding, so motivated. Seeing her work I got the courage and encouragement to carry on.</p>		
3	<p>Begging and institutionalisation</p>	<p>What are the profiles of women who come here? How are they processed?</p>	<p>Mostly mental health patients due to which families abandon them.</p> <p>The cops take them to the court and get 7 days remand period after which they are brought here. If they do not have a place to go, then they are committed for a period of 1 year, and they live here. If they don't want to leave after a year, and on their own accord want to continue staying here, then we request Azad Maidan PS to provide remand and get further conviction for such cases from Kurla court no. 45 so they can stay here in the home.</p> <p>Here inmates get meals twice, and breakfast and tea in the morning.</p>		<p>"If they do not have a place to go, then they are committed for a period of 1 year, and they live here."</p>

		<p>What do you think about the interventions made by Koshish?</p>	<p>Rajawadi and Sion hospital provide healthcare facilities. Thane mental hospital for psychiatric treatment. We have every Saturday regular checkup for mental health patients.</p> <p>Koshish does a lot of home tracing and skill development and training work. Thanks to their efforts many women who were languishing here for 10-20 years finally got united with their families.</p>		
4	Views on rough sleeping and begging	Why do you think women become homeless or start begging?	<p>Mental health is one of the main reasons why women come to the streets.</p> <p>Some women beggars are able-bodied. But they have to beg because they are abandoned on the streets. Their families do not take care of them and they have to fend for themselves.</p>		

DATA TRANSCRIPTION – SAMPLE IV

(CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION STAFF)

Interview #36

Key Informant, Koshish Staff

Location: Beggar Home (Male Section), Chembur, Mumbai

Name: Z

Gender: Male

Age: 36 years approx.

Place of origin: Mumbai

Marital status: Single

Disability/Other: None

Documents/ID proofs: -NA-

Sl. No.	Area of inquiry	Question (asked in Hindi)	Reply (Verbatim in Hindi)	Translation/ Comments	Primary Coding
1	Personal history/ background	Tell me about yourself. For how long have you worked here?	Koshish mein mera January (2016) se start hua, abhi kul milaake 5 mahine ho gaye abhi 6 th mahina shuru hua hai.		
2	Education/ Employment history	How much did you study?	Koshish ke baare mein jaankaari mujhe mili jab main Saathi mein kaam karta tha. Saathi, Mumbai mein Kamathipura mein usska base tha, Agripada mein. Aur wahaan se mujhe pata chala tha. Isska start karne waala founder jo hai, Mohd Tarique, wo as a colleague		

3	Views on begging	What are the profiles of the people who get arrested?	<p>mujhe pehchaanta tha wo. Aur Saathi mein main as a field placement ke liye tha, toh tabhi se mujhe pata hai, aur Koshish ka opening mujhe pata hai, aur puraana connection hai.</p> <p>Aur yeh jo mujhe lag raha hai abhi 6th mahina Koshish mein jure, main yeh cheez kar sakta hoon, kuch naya toh nahin. Jo beggary Act hai jo beggars hai, yaani ki homeless hai, toh homeless wahaan se pakde jaate wahaan se baahar se, aur yahaan unhe lekar aate hai. Toh kahin na kahin homeless ke saath hum kaam karte the baahar mein, yeh purra puraana hi connection hai. Toh kahin na kahin yahaan jo issue jo batt rahein hai, toh aaj issue ke zyadaatar ye drinker aatein hain, toh sabse imp cheez jo milti hai ke kis tarah ke log uth kar aate hain. Usske baad jo hai, kashkari jo log hai, jo kaam karne waale hai, yahaan par unko bhi pakad ke laate hai, toh bheekh maangne waale yahaan shunya ke baraabar log aatein hain yahaan.</p> <p>Toh kahin na kahin ye sab jo log hain, wo homeless log hain jinhe bheekh maangne ke aarop mein le. Ek toh main kahunga ke begging definitely crime nahin hai.</p>		<p>“Toh kahin na kahin maangke khaane ka matlab ki ghalti kissi aur ki, bhugat rahein hain dussre log.”</p> <p>“Issliye main manta hoon ki sarkaar ki responsibility banti hai ki ek bhi vyakti apne desh mein kahin bhi ho, peit mein khana hona, bhookha nahin sona chaahiye. Yeh responsibility banti hai”</p>
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		<p>Why do you think people beg?</p>	<p>Logon ko uss prakaar ki opportunity nahin mil paa rahi hai, agar hum beggars' home ki baat kartein hai, sarkaar ke taraf se wo opportunities mili nahin hain. Lekin opportunity alag step ke taraf, ek toh job ke step ke taraf bhi baat karo, aise jo log hain jinko koi sahaara nahin hai, jo beggars hain unko wo cheezein kya sarkaar ke maadhyam se asaani se mil paa raha hai? Toh definitely nahin, kyunki agar ek job bhi milna ho toh aapke paas certificate hona chaahiye ya kuch document hona chaahiye, jab jaake aapko job milne ke chances ho sakte hai, guarantee nahin hai ki milegi.</p> <p>Aur family agar dekha jaaye toh, ye jo purra group hai, wo toh definitely iss prakaar ka document unke paas nahin hai, toh unko regularly kaam milna, ya toh ek din chhor ke do din ka kaam milna wo bhi unke mussibat ka sahaara ban jaata hai. Toh kahin na kahin se agar musibat ka sahaara banna hai, aur jo source of earning hoga, ya phir jo earning laane waala hai, jo paisa laata hai, wahin agar nahin aata toh bhookhe toh mareenge hi. Waise toh kehna toh nahin chaahiye lekin bhookhe toh mareenge hi toh log kahenge ki isse achcha hum maangke khaayein. Toh kahin na kahin maangke khaane ka matlab ki ghalti kissi aur ki, bhugat rahein hain dussre log.</p>		
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		<p>Why do you think people despise beggars?</p>	<p>Responsibility sarkar ki usske andar. Issliye main manta hoon ki sarkaar ki responsibility banti hai ki ek bhi vyakti apne desh mein kahin bhi ho, peit mein khana hona, bhookha nahin sona chaahiye. Yeh responsibility banti hai.</p> <p>Policy ke upar jaaye toh bahut saari cheezein likhin hain ki ye milna chaahiye, woh milna chaahiye, lekin finally agar dekha jaaye toh kuch nahin mil paata. Bilkool implementation nahin hai. Aur inn logon ka kahin na kahin dekha jaaye toh neglect hi kiya jaa raha hai</p> <p>Dekho mentality ki agar baat ki jaaye toh, ke ab kis tarah ka zamaana chal raha hai, aap jis aarthic stithi mein rehte ho, aap ke paiso ke liye ek aisa dardi aa jaata hai ke aap ye ghalti kabhi nahin karoge.</p> <p>Kabhi mujhe lagta hai ki log kissiko yahaan baithe dekhtein hai toh kyun nahin sochtein ki ussko kuch madat ki zaroorat hai. Unki ye soch kyun nahin hai. Yeh ek prakaar se issliye hota hai kyunki logon ko knowledge nahin hai, unko nahin pata ke kahaan bheje, kisko refer karein, police ke maadhyam se, ya hospital bhejna hai, toh wo information nahin</p>		
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			<p>hain unke paas. Unko dealing karne ka tareeqa hi maaloom nahin hai.</p> <p>Secondly mujhe lag rahi hai ki do ek cheezein relationship mein log khushi se dete hain. Aaj jo hai unka ghar ka sadasya bhi raaste ke upar aa sakta hai. Realisation kab hota hai jab ek mere ghar ka admi raaste mein aata hai, tab logon ko connectivity lagti hai, tab tak bilkool nahin lagti. Humaare jaise sansthaaon ka kaam hai ki awareness necessity hai, wo laane ka koshish hona chaahiye. Abhi jis client ko maansik treatment ki zaroorat ye ussko laake aur danger mein daal rahein hain, yaane maaut ke, kabar ke aur lekar jaa rahein hai usse.</p> <p>Abhi bhi beggars pe jo stigma laga hain, jo dhabba hai, ussko mitaane mein abhi samay lagega. Logon ke jo vichaar hain wo communication aur knowledge gap ko reduce karne se badlega.</p>		
4	Beggars' Home/ Institutionalisation and rehabilitation	How is working within the CJS different from working with Saathi	<p>Main toh yeh nahin keh sakta hoon ke yeh toh jo hai kaafi takleef daayak mere khud ke liye hai, ya street children aur bachche ke saamne, main aisa toh nahin kehne wala. matlab jis tarah ke clients hai, isse pehle bhi jo hai main kaam kar chuka hoon iss prakaar ke clients ke</p>		

		<p>What are views on these beggars' home and rehabilitation of beggars?</p>	<p>saath. Main Saathi ka udhaaran doonga. Saathi jo hai raaste mein rehne waale chhote bachche jo hain, ya yuvak...youth, unke saath mein kaam kiya hai. Aur street children ke ladkein hone ke kaaran kahi aise yuva jo hai wo beggary Act ke antargat jo hai, yahaan pakde gayein aur yahaan leke aayein. Iss prakaar ye jo connection jo hai, wo jo jura hua hai, wo Saathi ke saath Beggars' Home. Aur kahin na kahin Dadar mein jo hai, Saathi ke jo trustee jo hain unko jab connect karne ki Koshish ki ke jo aapke yuva jo hain pakde jaaein hain, toh saath mein milke kyun nahin kaam karte hain unke saath.</p> <p>Hum log puunarvaas (rehabilitation) ka jo baat karte hain yuva ka, toh punarvaas sirf ek hi zariye se nahin hota. Jo kahin na kahin jis prakaar ke kanoon mein unko jail mein daala jaata hai, toh wahaan par agar aapka kaam shuruwaat hota hai toh wo ek yuva ke liye ek badhiya maadhyam ho sakta hai. Toh kahin na kahin Tarique ne uss prakaar se convince kiya Saathi ke trusteeyon ko, aur uske baad mein saathi ne bhi koshish ko saath mein lete hue kaam shuruwaat kiya tha Beggars' Home mein. Saathi ke taraf se 2 karyakarta yahaan aate the, toh kahin na kahin connected raha hai.</p>		
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		<p>What are the various interventions Koshish initiated?</p>	<p>Abhi females' section mein tailoring aur beautician ka training chal raha hai. Baahar se karyakarta aatein hain training dene, wo apna group banaate hain 20-25 jan ka, aur wo ek prashikshan unko milta hai. Aur who orashikshan ke baad wo apna job dhoondh sakte hain. Toh kahin na kahin sakhm banaane ka pura koshish hota hai, kyunki mahila ho ya yuva ho, unko kuch skills de diya haath mein... yahaan se baahar nikalne ke baad mein aisa toh na ho ke main yahaan itna saal raha aur mere paas koi skill hi nahin hai. Kyunki baahar ke duniyah mein aap jaaoge toh alag alag samay mein alag alag sangharsh karna padega. Yahaan ab male section mein abhi hum ek list bana rahein hai, aur jo hai unke saath mein baith kar baatein kiye jaayenge. Phir unko Employers' Collective, employers ka jo group hai, bhale hi wo individual hai, ya parle group hai, unke paas bhi opportunity hai bahut saare kaam ke liye, bahut saare NGOs bhi hai toh kaam ka training dena chahtein hai toh hum network karte hain.</p> <p>Yahaan par ek baat toh hum ye maante hai ki agar prashikshan dena hai, toh apki need kya hai, wo pehle dekhna zaroori hai, wo sabse imp hai, kyunki jab tak aap ki need ya aapki razamandi nahin hogi to wo karne se koi faida</p>	
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		<p>nahin hai, kyunki wo uss prakaar ki mentalty leke baithega nahin.</p> <p>Main toh yeh hi keh sakta hoon ki abhi Tarique ne jis prakaar ki muhim rakkhi hain, main usko muhim hi boloonga... Muhim samajhti ho aap? Campaign. Jo apne sanghstha ke maadhyam se jo ek chhota sa ek project ke hissab se shuru kiya tha, chhota sa nahin ye bada project hai ye, project ke maadhyam se jo gali open ki hai, unhone sabhi ko saath mein leke, iss prakaar ke custody mein jo cheepe hue rehte the, ussko ahista ahista pyaar se jo hai, jo sarkaari vyavastha hai, ussko saath mein lete hue, aisa nahin hai ki main aapse baade mein meethi meethi baat karte hue, aisa nakarke unko saath mein leke unki ghalatiyaan toh bata raha hai, lekin ek sakaratmak tareeqe se bataake andruni jo badalaav lekar aayein hai, mujhe lagta hai bahut kam log hain jo iss prakar ke sarkari vyavasthaaon mein badalaav leke aa raha hai. Unka jurrat karne ka tareeqa alag hai, unko saath mein leke kaam karna aur unki ghalatiya deekhaana. Yaane ke jahaan unko kaam karna ho toh unke saamne milke kaam karna, aur baad mein unko bataana ke iss kaam mein kya improve ho sakta hai.</p> <p>Bahut kuch badla hai. Isse pehle 2007 ke</p>		
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		<p>What are your views on new versus old infrastructure?</p>	<p>shishu sanstha aur aaj ke sishu sanstha mein bahut farak hai. Main yeh sochta hoon ke aaj hum yahaan par baithe hai, toh jo leaders log hai, superintendent hai, PO hai, ya ki jo security guard hai, ya yahaan pe jo khaana pakaane waali ladki hai, unme jo unke soch mein jo badalaav lane ka kaam kiya wo mere khayaal se Koshish aur Tarique ke mehnat se aaya. To hiss zariyein se ek tarah ye badi cheez haasil ki hai.</p> <p>Main toh yahaan pe paani ki jo vyavastha ki gayi hai, paani toh basic need hoti hai, toh pehli baat hai ki yahaan pe wo vyavastha theek se nahin hai. Toh woe k dikaat ka saamna karna par raha hai. Pehle waale mein unke liye ground bana tha, wahaan wo chehel pehel kar sakte the, yahaan uss prakaar ka ground bana nahin hai. Ek chhota sa ground hai, ground kya ek bageecha bol sakte ho, khelna ya activities ke liye toh koi jagah hi nahin.</p> <p>Aur iss area ke jo aas paros mein jo log hain yahaan pe, iss jagah pe ya toh isske paros mein rehtein hai, wahaan pe unki taqleefein bahut hain, pathhar khidkiyon pe maarta hai, kaanch ke upar kaanch tut jaatein hain. Client ko shaantipurvak rehne ko milna chaahiye wo nahin mil paa raha hai. Wo log bolta hai</p>		
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			<p>humaara zameen hai, humaaare zameen ke upar kyun aaye. Actually zameen unka bhi nahin hai, pehle wo basti mein rehte the, zameen unka nahin lekin yahaan bahut saare activities karne ki liye diya. Lekin jab builder ne zameen ke upar build up karne ko diya, usske baad mein unhone pareshaan karna shuru kar diya</p>		
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