

Homeless Women in Telangana State, Southern Part of India: A Cross - Sectional Study

Dr. Kampasati Veeraiah

Department of Political science, Osmania University Hyderabad, 500007, India

Abstract: *Addressing the needs of homeless women, considered as twice disadvantaged forms an important component of integrated poverty alleviation. Many internal and extraneous factors drive women to homelessness and the right support rendered from their identification to disengagement from support paves way for their mainstreaming into life and society. The planning of support on individual basis as also on basis of patterns will properly enable the remedial activities. In addition they will give crucial insights into the preventive, mitigative and palliative measures that can be used at the societal level. The Central Government Missions on Urban and rural Livelihoods devotes significant efforts to address the issue of Homeless women through intensive focus on the component devoted to them. A multipronged approach that looks to address the psycho - social aspects of homelessness is employed but gaps in the same would lead to relapse into homelessness. This needs to be studied. Many international indices point out to sustainable home environment, poverty alleviation and safety of its citizens which need to be built into ongoing government initiatives so that at the larger level many issues that could be directly or indirectly related to homelessness can be positively addressed. The report will deal with all of these issues in a comprehensive manner.*

Keywords: Homeless Women, Telangana State, And Southern part, India, A Cross - Sectional.

1. Introduction

The introduction should clearly state the research problem to be investigated in the light of its theoretical and/or empirical context in the relevant area (in about 400 words).

There are many dimensions to poverty. In India too, there have been changing definitions of poverty and its dimensions and these have given shape to initiatives. In line with the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, the inclusion of citizens living in the areas especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged has increasingly become important in the overall design of the programs and their implementation. The overall paradigm has also undergone considerable change imparting different levels of role to the community. With the advent of Reforms under various Missions, the role of the poor and vulnerable in and as the target group has got fine - tuned.

The latest perspective under poverty alleviation defines poverty as having three types of vulnerability, namely, Occupational, Residential and Social. This paradigm has revealed the multifaceted nature of vulnerability and brought to light the gap in the programs so far. This recognized more categories of individuals under poverty and also, need for a multipronged approach to address the different dimensions of vulnerability.

Under residential vulnerability, rural and urban homeless started gaining more and more prominence as an intervention - worthy category.

Homelessness is symptomatic of many other problems. With reference to women, homelessness throws open the spectrum that includes victims of domestic violence, trafficking, forced sex work, harassment, abandonment in old age, mental imbalance etc. The etiology of homelessness is thus wide and has to be identified in proper perspective that is the

only way in which it can be addressed in a manner that brings real remedy to the individual.

Homelessness, along with all its concomitant problems constitute sub - items of many international measurement systems like Sustainable Development Goals and the Safe City Index. Inclusion of these indices into the ongoing initiatives and the initiation of newer ones will pave the way for fine - tuning and design of these initiatives to meet the twin challenge of a globally accepted and locally relevant strategy to address vulnerability among women.

Telangana, the newest State of India has a history of being under foreign and monarchic rule for centuries, later merged with the Telugu speaking State of Andhra, to form Andhra Pradesh. The State of Telangana was formed after decades of struggle for autonomy and focused development and better provision of services.

The State Government has focused on the implementation of various Missions, augmenting them with its own innovations to step up their implementation. In the implementation of Shelter Homes for Urban Homeless, a component under the DAY NULM, dedicated work by NGOs duly encouraged by State Government through partnership, collaboration with line and related departments like Police, Women & Child Welfare, etc.

The journey of the Homeless Woman from the Identification stage to Repatriation, is focused on effective address of their predispositions and manifest problems through planned stages till their ultimate integration with families. This, while done in a scientific manner, is still ridden with lot of gaps that need to be identified and filled, for a comprehensive and integrated system of support.

2. Major Research Works Reviewed

- 1) Homelessness is a manifestation of myriad psychological/emotional, social and familial factors. Lack of resilience in dealing with life's crises and challenges necessitates psycho-behavioral inputs for their rehabilitation. (*Social conditions of becoming homelessness: qualitative analysis of life stories of homeless peoples Mzwandile A. Mabhala et al – International Journal for Equity I Health - 2017*)
- 2) According to Sanjukta Sattar, Homelessness includes rooflessness; loss of roots, identity and belonging and emotional well-being. It results out of domestic violence, erosion of family and social support, social and political turmoil, repatriation of longstanding mental patients from hospital, etc. (*SHELTER Vol 15 No.1 April 2014*)
- 3) In 'Signposting invisibles: A study of the homeless population in India.' *Chinese Sociological Dialogue, March 2018*, Nishikanth Singh et al state that the routes of homelessness are complex, multiple and interlinked and need for sensitizing the Government and other stakeholders in order to move away from general welfare response to context-specific policies.
- 4) Dr D Kumuda, in her article in the *Global Journal for Research Analyses (Volume - 3, Issue - 8, August - 2014)*, brings to light the lack of formal address of the homeless who are rendered anonymous, lacking the formal markers of citizenship thus their estimates are gross underestimates.
- 5) The proceedings of the *Workshop on Homelessness, SDG 1, and Sustainable Recovery from COVID - 19 held by UN Habitat – August 5 2021* concluded that lack of standardized data collection Methodologies on Homelessness hampers reporting process for all SDGs especially SDG 1 on ending poverty. Highlighting the enormous gap between existing and used data in the context of Covid 19 management, the need for producing data on homelessness was very important in calibrating the problem extent and building mitigation measures and suggested among other things, better mechanisms for identifying homelessness and its complexity needs to be worked out.

The Gambhir Committee NULM Inspection Report of 2017 on Shelter Homes for Urban Homeless for 2017 in their section on status of Telangana and Hyderabad city, has pointed out among many other things, that systematic survey for identification of urban homeless has not been done, as is the mapping of the homeless spots for location of shelters, the large gap between the shelter requirement and availability, and the lack of an institutional mechanism in almost all the Urban Local Bodies in Telangana.

Identification of Research Gaps

Recent inspections conducted by the Gambhir Committee have resulted in stepping up the implementation of shelter homes for Homeless in a technically sound manner. This includes systematic identification using biometric registration of Homeless, maintenance of individual Case Sheets, detailed recording of services (medical, legal, counselling, etc.) rendered while at the Shelter Home,

Adherence to admission, stay and repatriation protocols and follow-up for a pre-determined time after repatriation.

One of the major gaps in the entire process originates from the operationalization of the term Homeless which includes homelessness out of necessity (attending on in-patients, job related need for overnight stay), abandoned and victims of domestic abuse, mentally unstable and other categories that need relatively longer periods of stay with specific supportive and palliative inputs during stay period. Another category of homeless are those who visit the Homes to carry out anti-social activities like alcohol consumption, substance abuse, etc.

The researcher has been in charge of shelter homes and involved in monitoring the functioning of the Shelter Homes. And found differential levels of maintenance, operation, facilities, as well as level of services offered to the Homeless.

Acceptance of the idea of shelter by the immediate neighborhood, which is more pronounced in the case of Shelters for women where fears of nuisance and doubts on the activities seriously limit the setting up of the Homes and their continuance, once set up.

Availability and accessibility of professional services is another gap that is perceived in the management of Homes for the Homeless women in Telangana. While some have regular services of Technical Specialists like Counsellors, Doctors, Case Workers, etc., in the overall scenario this is a gap which needs to be addressed.

Similar is the case with the steps to be followed from the time of admission into the Shelter Home, to repatriation and post repatriation follow-up.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study has designed to study the following objectives,

- To study the etiology of homelessness among women in study area.
- To find out the adverse experiences among the women including, physical abuse, verbal abuse and sexual assault and health problems.
- To study intervention activities for homeless women and work towards a comprehensive set of initiatives that will better impact the homelessness within the State
- To find out the informal solutions for betterment of present policies that will focus, apart from the mitigative measures, on the preventive aspects that will touch many issues related to women equity and participation in development as per the SDGs

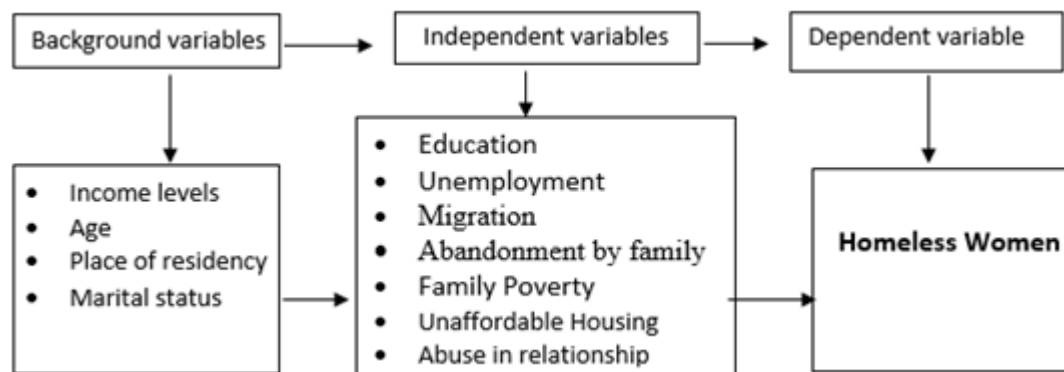
Research Questions or Hypotheses

The conceptual framework gives clear description about the relationship between independent and dependent variables. While the homeless women are the dependent variable against which 6 independent variables including age, education, unemployment, migration, Abandonment by family, Poverty and History of Abuse will be compared

While the Age, Education, Employment Status and Migration are related more to the profile of the Homeless women, the latter variables of Family Abandonment, Poverty and history of Abuse along with other psychosocial factors weigh more heavily on homelessness as a phenomenon and makes it necessary for services to be more specialized than with those who are homeless for other reasons like attending on inpatient relative, coming for overnight stay, etc. at the same time the method of

registration, recording of personal information will have to be different.

The conceptual framework below tries to explain the association between the dependent variable and independent variables, where the horizontal arrows indicate the direction of influence of the variables as indicated in the figure below:



Conceptual framework for the Homeless Women in Telangana State, Southern Part of India

The study will also focus on a deeper analysis of the psychosocial factors encapsulated in the second set of variables and across different areas in order to identify trends and also preventive measures that can be incorporated into the related Missions and involving other departments like Police, Women Development & Child Welfare, etc. for an integrated set of mitigative services. Framework and methods proposed for research:

Method of Data collection

Data collection method is a procedure of collecting specific information intended at refuting some facts (Kombo and Tromp 2006). The researcher will develop a structured questionnaire with closed ended questions as a tool for primary data collection and documentary review for secondary data. Interviews will be conducted with respondents. The researcher conducts pre - testing before collection of data from the participants for the purpose of avoidance of weakness and ambiguity in the questionnaire. 20 respondents will involve in the testing process of questionnaires to prove its validity and reliability.

Data Analysis

Data including descriptive statistics and logistic regression analysis will be analysed by using SPSS Software 21 version. Respondents adverse life experiences including physical abuse and sexual assault as a homeless women and demographics are analysed and causes of homelessness among women by descriptive statics. And logistic regression analysis (adjusted 95%) provide insight on relationship between homeless among women and demographic characteristics (Categorical variables). Odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidential intervals also measured. All statistical tests performed by using two - tailed tests at the 0.05 level of significance or significant at $p < 0.05$.

Sampling Procedure and size

There are about 65 shelters available for homeless women in Telangana state which accommodates 694 women (ref). The researcher will select the sample ($n=150$) from the population ($N=694$) by using simple random sampling method where equal opportunity to select each of the subject. The eligibility criteria of selection of the participants is they have been homeless for at least six months or more than 4 times in the last 24 months.

Innovation / path breaking aspect of the research:

The research is equipped to be very relevant to the present times where homelessness as an issue by itself and also as one that is related to a range of issues particularly, the aspect of women's safety, trafficking among women, their independence as also the single homeless person running the risk of the current pandemic, gains super importance.

In the background of the country moving to improve its scores in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, with the SDG 1 (Indicators 1.1.4.1 and 1.5.1), SDG 8 (Indicators 8.5.2), SDG 10 (Indicators 10.10.2.1, 10.3.1, and 10.4.1) and SDG 11 (Indicator 11.1.1) a systematic address of the issue of Homelessness will be one of the crucial steps in the process.

Similarly, with reference to the implementation of NULM tenets under which the integrated view of vulnerability is featured in the paradigm, considerable breakthrough will be achieved with reference to tackling residential vulnerable especially among the vulnerable section of community, namely women.

Another innovation which will accrue impact will be in the area of women security. This will have a bearing on the achievement of indicators related to Safe Cities, where indicators like number of cases of missing persons etc., are taken into account.

Proposed outcomes of the Study:

- 1) Information of the ULB - wise load of homelessness, especially of women and the measures taken for their rehabilitation / mainstreaming
- 2) Patterns if any of factors responsible for and also those leading to homelessness in urban and rural areas, and the type of homelessness in terms of incidence

Familial and societal causes for the incidence of homelessness among women and the preventive measures to be taken for building safer and more unified homes with due status given to women

New data to be generated:

Reliable and continuous data on the poorest of the poor, living without safe secure homes

Possible data on population without formal identity in the ULB for arranging the same. This will enable the ULB to track any potential untoward instances within its boundaries.

Relevance of the proposed study for policy - making:

The Study is expected to yield valuable insights on the inclusive nature of housing, where issues of tenural security, quality of accommodation, privacy would be given due credibility for a robust policy.

Lack of availability of proper housing has bearing on many SDGs impacting them adversely, for example, poverty and hunger, poor health access to basic amenities and services and education and health that are state responsibilities and prompts decisive action to secure these as fundamental rights

Relevance of the proposed study for society:

The findings of the study will give considerable insights into the hitherto unacknowledged dimension of poverty and vulnerability, namely, residential vulnerability. Applied to the status of women, the study results would indicate the issues of domestic violence, trafficking, instances of missing individuals especially women. This would suitably recommend the revamping and tightening of surveillance systems, tracing of missing persons, highway security, etc. All these go into the building up of Safe Cities that would put the country and the State on the global constellation. The researcher has the ambitious hope that the findings of the study would give valuable suggestions to the State to innovate the related Missions currently in implementation to incorporate the indices to impact them to pave way for sustainable change in areas like security for women, etc.

Milestone set for the study for Quarterly Timelines:

Sl.	Quarter	Activity
1.	Q 1	Literature review & Secondary data collection
2.	Q 2	Sharing of a brief study design and finalisation on the sample, Data Collection Tool etc. for finalization
3.	Q 3	Field Data collection
4.	Q 4	Data analysis compilation and preparation of the final Document for Submission

Additional Notes:

- 1) The reports and documents will be submitted to the ICSSR based on requirement

- 2) Further requirements as communicated will be furnished on being informed
- 3) The design of Field investigation Tool as well as the Field Data collection will take due care to address the current COVID - 19 situation and precautions will be taken and impact on the study topic will also be touched upon

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