

Stakeholders in Street Begging



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ABSTRACT:

Shakespeare, the immortal poet, has sung of mercy in a tone of matchless beauty in his book written in 1597:

“The quality of mercy is not strained;

It droppeth like gentle rain from Heaven;

It is twice blessed:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

348 years later in 1945, Kumarappa mentioned the following lines in his book, *Our Beggar Problem*, “*Thus at all times in human history the sentiment of sympathy and charity has played a prominent part in the social composition of both the individual and the community alike*”. The situation has clearly not changed even today. The sentiments as expressed by Shakespeare, “*it blesseth him that gives and him that takes*”, continue to propagate that generosity makes one divine. Hence, much of the beggar problem that breathes on such convictions continues to exist and thrive.

This paper is an attempt to look at the issue through various lenses, where each stakeholder augments the problem or solves it by his actions. It works on the hypothesis that differential understanding of beggary leads to differential actions which sketches the whole picture.

INTRODUCTION:

Street-begging reflects the lack of basic capabilities in a society. This indicates, it is an area of concern because a large number of people in a developing society still lack the real freedom to utilize their resources in a way they value them. Their opportunities to earn a modest livelihood are extremely limited and the choices they have to improve their life are severely constrained.

Beggary is a voluntary exchange of alms between two parties. It is not robbery or murder or an act which harms another person’s property. This paper does not aim to treat the subject like a ‘problem’ rather it is an issue which needs to be dealt with. It has two objectives, one, to study the impact it creates on the lives of the mendicants and the society; second to formulate effective macro-economic policies to solve the underlying problems which lead to the act of street-begging.

Beggary is an issue which had always been ignored until 12th five year plan (2012-2017) in India. Today, there are State laws to deal with beggary but no central policy which applies to all the states and provides a framework to tackle the problem.

According to a survey by Delhi School of Social Work, in a population of nearly 14 million people, there are approximately 58,000 beggars. Damayanti Datta, in her article “*Beggar’s Banquet*”, reports that the head-count has gone up by a lakh since 1991 in the city; whereas, according to the un-published data of Census 2001, there were 7.03 lakh beggars as mentioned in the recent five-year plan¹ clearly shows unrealistic figures for the overall number of beggars in the country.

¹ §24.254, Twelfth Five Year Plan (volume III), GOI

Since the problem is pandemic and concerns the development leaders in a most direct way, it is necessary to identify all those individuals or groups who are affected by the activity in consideration and play a part in formation of incentives for the same.

This paper seeks to address the issue of beggary by understanding the relationship between street-beggars and three different stakeholders – *public, government* and *civil society*.

The term 'Public' constitutes of passers-by who are directly involved in alms-giving as well as small shopkeepers & vendors who represent the section of society which chose to work instead of indulging into alms-seeking behaviour.

'Government' is mainly represented by the Department of Social Welfare in the National Capital Territory of Delhi which is responsible for implementation of policies directed for street-begging and the Police Officials who are another stakeholder in the direction of implementation at the ground level.

'Civil Society' constitutes of all those groups who voluntarily channel the available energy and resources to uplift the lives of the homeless. The subject of constitutionality of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 has only been touched upon for the sake of understanding the role of Government and its stakes.

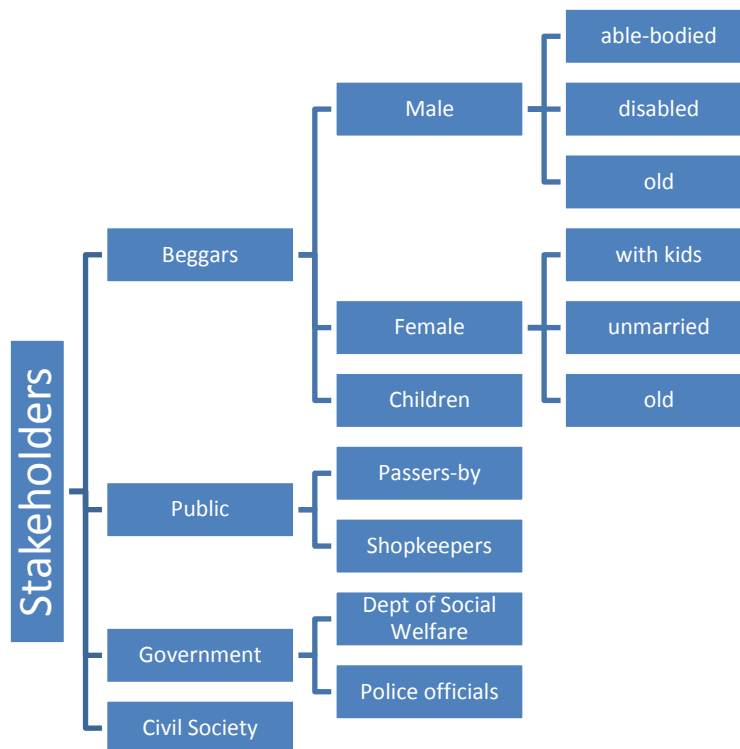
Thus, in this research it has been assumed that stakeholders, other than the parties involved in voluntary exchange of alms, play a major role in shaping or solving the issue at large. The paper has been written in the form of story-analysis in which all the interviews conducted have been summarized through the narration of few distinct case-studies.

METHODOLOGY:

This study has been conducted at Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi due to the presence of a large number of beggars in the area. Primary research was conducted by collecting data of 25 beggars who were chosen by stratified random sampling, and a random sample of 10 passers-by and 5 shopkeepers. A semi-structured questionnaire, consisting of closed and open-ended questions, was used to collect information. It was administered using one-on-one interviews in Hindi. Data for government branches has also been collected through primary research and is supported by secondary data.

It is a qualitative research aiming to find the reasons for stakeholders' behaviors in the existing scenario, analyze their economic patterns and how the policymakers can incentivize each one of them to perform in a more scientific and organized way.

Stakeholders have been divided into four categories and then into further sub-categories.



LITERATURE REVIEW:

The State Governments are often concerned with the adverse image of India being portrayed by the beggars to the overseas visitors. They wish to lock them up or shoo them away from their political boundaries in order to make their piece of land 'world class'. The middle-class population is also embarrassed by abject poverty of the indigent. They believe that all mendicants are lazy, reluctant to work & earn, and are the constituents of dangerous gangs which abduct and mangle children. They are the "undeserving poor", who must be driven away or locked up for the larger benefit of decent, law-abiding citizens. In these beliefs, law, police, courts, welfare departments and the media support them through their policies and actions. (Mander, 2009)

At a macro-economic front, the provision of an act to consolidate the law for the purpose of making uniform and better provision for the prevention of Begging in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 was extended to NCT of Delhi in 1960. In this Act,

"Begging" means-

- (a) Soliciting or receiving alms, in a public place whether or not under any pretense such as singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing or offering any article for sale;
- (b) Entering on any private premises for the purpose of soliciting or receiving alms;
- (c) Exposing or exhibiting, with the object of obtaining or extorting alms, any sore, wound injury, deformity of diseases whether of a human being or animal;
- (d) 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 exist soliciting or receiving alms;
- (e) Allowing oneself to be used as an exhibit for the purpose of soliciting or receiving alms;

But does not include soliciting or receiving money or food or given for a purpose authorized by any law, or authorized in the manner prescribed by [the Deputy Commissioner or such other officer as be specified in this behalf by the Chief Commissioner].

This Act permits the enforcement agencies to arrest without a warrant; any person who is found begging. It also enforces the detention of the guilty for not less than one year and up to ten years for second time offenders, in the certified institutions. The discriminatory enforcement mechanisms have led to various controversial arrests of citizens who were not beggars at all rather poor citizens whom the court detained by relying on the evidence of a single witness. (Rao, 1981)

These incidences raise the question of essentiality of such laws. Harsh Mander, an IAS officer turned Social Activist, has fought extensively against this law. In the current scenario most of the laws are formed on the basis of popular public opinion. The Public perceives charity as a staircase to heaven however the poor and the homeless are often exploited

The homeless are regarded as the encroachers of the public land. During an appeal by squatters against a Delhi High Court verdict, evicting them from public land, Justices Ruma Pal and Markanday Katju reported to remark, "if you are occupying public land, you have no legal right, what to talk of fundamental right, to stay there a minute longer. If encroachments are to be allowed, there will be anarchy" (Mahapatra, 2006). This has dictated how the fundamental right to livelihood; to move around and settle anywhere in the country, and to shelter and housing has been revised, and reinvented, and supplanted by one version of legality. (Ramanathan, 2006)

On one hand, the existence of the profession of begging is amplified by donation of huge amounts; on the other hand, demands to curb the number of beggars are raised by applauding the Acts which restrict begging. When Thiruvananthapuram civic body banned begging in the city limits following the foot-steps of the Kochi Corporation, the public lauded the policy and called it a positive step in the right direction (The Hindu, 2006). At the same time, they expected the government to provide suitable vocational training and opportunities to rehabilitate the destitute. It is necessary to analyze if the previous examples of implementation of the same law in other parts of the country were successful or not.

In an assessment of two beggars' homes in Delhi done by a senior civil servant of the Delhi government following reports of inhuman conditions in the institutions, Gyanendra Dhar Badgaiyan wrote, in March 2001:

"Wrong people are being arrested by the anti-beggary squad. One reason for this possibly is that the squads are venal. This was established beyond doubt by an internal inquiry [conducted by Mr A K Sinha, District Officer, Social Welfare Department]. It confirmed that in the case of one Mr Gyan Chand Gupta, a retired clerk, the squad released him after snatching Rs 9,000 of the pension money that he was carrying. His only crime was that he was dressed shabbily. That this may not have been an isolated case was pointed out by the inquiry itself, which suggested that the squad regularly indulged in such malpractices. During interviews..., inmate after inmate complained that they were hauled up only because they could not pay the hundred rupees bribe demanded of them. Some of them at least, like the retired clerk referred to above, may not be beggars but may have just looked like one at the time of their arrest." (Ramanathan, 2008)

The problem aggravates when despite the inappropriate implementation of the law, the contention in the Delhi High Court seeks not reform but more comprehensive application of this law by the establishment of two new mobile beggars' courts in 2009. The Director of Social Welfare, according to Harsh Mander, complained to the court that magistrates of the beggars' court do not apply the law rigorously against the offenders. Only a few voices have contested against the existing reality, such as of Justice Sarin, who maintained that detaining beggars was "nothing short of dehumanising them and they should be let off after an admonition." (Mander, 2009)

Thus it is important to understand the reasons for soliciting alms. Justice Badar Darrez Ahmed describes four main reasons for it. Firstly, it is possible that the person is down-right lazy and doesn't want to work. Secondly, he may be addicted to drugs or alcohol and seeking finance for his drink or dose through begging. Thirdly, a ring-leader of a beggary 'gang' may be exploiting him. And, fourthly, there is also a probability that he has no control over his situation, thus he begs for his basic necessities. Justice Ahmed further adds²,

"Although, apparently, the said Act does not distinguish between the four different kinds of "beggars" mentioned above, there is enough scope in the provisions of the said Act to treat them differently as, indeed, they should be. Professional beggars who find it easier to beg than to work may be appropriately dealt with by passing orders under Section 5(5)4 of the said Act for their detention in Certified Institutions. But, what about the beggar who falls in the second category? His is not really a problem of "begging" but a problem of addiction. The solution lies in attempting to de-addict him and help in ridding himself of the malady. Then there is the third category of 'beggars' who are exploited and forced into begging by other ring leaders. A different approach is required here. The person found "begging" need not and ought not to be detained in a Certified Institution because his act of solicitation was not voluntary but under duress the result of exploitation at the hands of others. The ring leaders need to be rounded up and penalised under Section 115 of the said Act and these "beggars" need to be released from their exploitative clutches. Lastly the fourth category of "beggars" mentioned above is persons who are driven to beg for alms and food as they are starving or their families are in hunger. They beg to survive; to remain alive. For any civilized society to have persons belonging to this category is a disgrace and a failure of the State. To subject them to further ignominy and deprivation by ordering their detention in a Certified Institution is nothing short of de-humanising them."

Street Children Constitute one of the most vulnerable groups victimized by poverty. Approximately 51,000 children below 18 years of age were enumerated as street children through a census in Delhi by the Institute for Human Development and Save the Children in 2011.

The report suggested that 14.69 per cent of street children were involved in begging and 15.18 per cent indulged in street vending: selling flowers, newspapers, fruits and other items at traffic signals (which under BPB Act, 1959 are classified as Begging). Other 20.33 per cent worked as rag-pickers.

The study also analyzed the reasons for solicitation of alms by boys and girls separately. It was observed that migrant boys largely in the 15-18 years age group, remit money for household needs such as food security, agriculture activities and other social functions at home; whereas the financial requirements of a girl not only revolve around food security, but the money is also used to maintain basic personal hygiene such as expenditure on toilet facilities and sanitary napkins.

In his book, *Our Beggar Problem*, J. M. Kumarappa talks about the desirability of making such large numbers of people depend for their living on public charity. He questions, if we have to maintain them, is there no other way less demoralizing and more scientific than unorganized alms-giving? He further adds,

"In the West the growth of cities, rapid industrialization, spread of democratic ideals and changes in social and religious life have all brought about new conceptions of charity and new techniques of dispensing it. We too must introduce modern methods, re-orient our charities and vitalize our social services. Dr. Mehta makes out a case for the rationalization of our beggar relief. Charity, he declares, needs to be guided along scientific lines. For this purpose proper agencies should be set up to guide the giver and the receiver alike. A well-organized system of scientific philanthropy will help greatly to reclaim thousands from a life of dependence, and make them self-supporting and self-respecting members of society."

² Justice Badar Darrez Ahmed. 2006. *Ram Lakhan vs State*. [Case] 5 December.

CASE-STUDIES:

Beggars:

It is not difficult to find a beggar at Hazrat Nizammudin because as you enter the premises, a beggar will find you. When I visited the place for the first time, I was surrounded by kids and followed by an old woman. Following are the stories of the people who 'need' alms to survive. I aim to explore this validity.

1. Female beggars (age group 18+):

- *A female beggar, in her late 50s, travels all the way from Naangloi by bus to seek alms only on Thursday, Friday and Sunday at the Dargah. She has 2 sons – both married and a daughter who earns by stitching clothes back at home.*
- *Meena, a 25 years old widow with a 2.5 years old son has come from Guwahati, Assam and has been living at Nizammudin for the last 8 years. She used to work as a maid but faced a lot of difficulty in finding employment after her son was born.*
- *Jannat belongs to Kolkata and lives in Noida. She has been begging at Nizammudin for the last seven years. She worked as a maid as long as her husband complemented her earnings with his own duties of a watchman. Gradually, as her husband became an alcoholic, she resorted to begging. Since she has no identity proof, people are reluctant to give her a job. Also, she prefers to beg than wash dishes or mop the floor during winters.*

2. Male beggars (age group 18+):

- *Mushiar, a physically disabled beggar, is in his late 60s. He belongs to a village from UP and stays at Nizammudin. He was once caught by a Sewa Kutir³ and detained for 3 months. He hasn't returned to his village due to lack of employment opportunities and scarce resources back there.*
- *Miya Mammu, a young and able-bodied man travels from Badarpur to Nizammudin every day. He was also caught by a Sewa Kutir and got a detention for 3 years. During his entire stay at the beggar home, he was not given any vocational training. He does not beg during the marriage season because a man named Zuber provides him the job of putting up lights for Rs 250 per marriage.*
- *Saleem Bhai, a physically disabled man in his mid-40s, reflects how willing some of the beggars are for earning a dignified living but are not given the right to do the same. He once invested Rs 600 on key rings and small road-side objects but due to the MCD intervention, resumed to begging.*

3. Children (age-group 1 to 18):

- *Rimpy, a 12 year old, somehow takes it to be her responsibility to manage the needs of her Grandmother, her 1 year old brother and 2 younger sisters. Even though she realizes the gravity of her actions, she is not equipped enough to change her situation much.*
- *A 7 year old begs for fun. She, along with her friends and an elder sister, visits the Dargah only on Sundays without letting her parents know of the true intentions of her visit to the religious place. She goes to a school but loves the freedom and free food she gets on the streets.*

³ Sewa Kutir is an approved government organization in North Delhi and looks after remand and rehabilitation of beggars since 1960

Public:

Rimpy (the 12 year old kid) was decent enough to ask for alms from a distance without irritating the person in concern, however there were several ladies who ran behind people with a kid in their arms begging for money. I caught the opportunity to talk to one such person, whose two daughters were scared of the old woman following them for 30 odd seconds, as well as many other passers-by who donated money to the poor.

1. Passers-by:

- In a small survey conducted on 10 passers-by at Nizammudin, it was seen that most of them give alms to the able-bodied only if the beggar keeps following them for a long time, which sometimes becomes threatening and annoying.
- All of them hold a pre-conception that beggars indulge in thefts but only a few recounted the incidence of beggars stealing their property ever.
- They are not aware of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act but when told, they disagree to criminalise the voluntary exchange too.
- It is a moral obligation they seek to fulfil by donating a meagre amount to the helpless and needy.

2. Shopkeepers:

- Most of the shopkeepers of various food-joints mint money out of the situation by asking the visitors to purchase the food coupons for beggars by emotional persuasion.
- Rest of them feel that the fake religious mendicants are lazy and detest working. When asked how difficult is it, in terms of institutional procedures, to start a small vending stall at the market place near Dargah, shopkeepers said that apart from the initial investment and MCD regulations there is no forceful authority which prohibits them from earning a respectful living. It is the limited space which deters people from putting up a new stall.
- According to them, none of the beggars are involved in thefts but irritate the customers by poking them continuously.

Government:

1. Police:

According to the BPB Act, 1959, police officials of the districts of Delhi have the right and the responsibility to catch the people involved in 'begging'. After the legal procedure has been completed, transfer them to the nearest Beggar Homes. But the reality is something very different.

- The Duty Officer at Hazrat Nizammudin refuted the hypothesis of beggars being the nuisance-makers. They let them be on their own and prefer to keep a check on their behaviour.

2. Department of Social Welfare:

The Department of Social Welfare provides welfare programmes and services to the handicapped, social security for the aged & destitute through a network of residential care homes and non-institutional services. The Department extends its services to the welfare of beggars in the form of functions which revolve around the management aspects i.e., Treatment, Prevention and Rehabilitation through the implementation of the social Legislation – Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.

At present, there are 3 Courts notified under the Act i.e. One Court at the Sewa Kutir, Kingsway Camp and Two Mobile Courts (functional since 2009). Further at the level of Department of Social Welfare,

13 Anti begging squad teams have been made i.e. 10 squads under the District Social Welfare Officers, 2 squads attached with 2 Mobile Courts, and one squad with RCC (Reception-cum-Classification Centre), Kingsway Camp. These squads *regularly* conduct raids at various places in the NCT of Delhi and round up the beggars who are found begging. During the pendency of inquiry or trial, the beggars stay at RCC where lodging and medical facilities are provided. Currently the Department is running eleven certified custodial residential institutions for beggars in Delhi with a *total capacity* of housing 2180 inmates. At these institutions various facilities are provided free-of-cost, boarding, lodging, food, medical care, recreation, health, vocational training, counselling etc. to wean them away from the habit of begging.

As per the official website of Delhi Government, a number of Vocational Training Programmes like Candle making; gardening; cutting and tailoring; weaving; drawing & arts are being run in the Institutions for enabling the Beggar inmates to seek gainful employment in the society after they are released from Certified Institutions.

- The field visits to Sewa Kutir in a gap of one month revealed that the resources at RCC and Home for Male Beggars (diseased) are being under-utilized.

Inmates capacity	RCC	HMBD
On records	120	60
First field visit	8	22
Second field visit	6	21

- Even though there are so many beggars in Delhi, raids are not conducted regularly.
- At HMBD vocational training is not provided to the detained beggars. During the interview, the welfare officer seemed to assume that begging has become their habit. According to the Welfare Officer, “to embrace the habit of cleanliness and not become lazy, beggars are asked to sweep the floor and run errands. They have lost all shame and have no self-respect, which is why no vocational training is provided to them during their stay of 1-3 years.” The same point was made by Miya Mammu during his interview.
- On a visit to the Certified Institutions (RCC and HMBD) it was found that the place was relatively clean and inmates were satisfied with the food quality and quantity as opposed to the Literature read by the researcher and beggar-interviews conducted. Yet because of the jail like environment and regressive approach the place was not congenial for a healthy development.
- An inspection report on the audit of the Poor House, Home for male beggar, Department of Social welfare, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Sewa Kutir, Kingsway Camp, Delhi, for the period 01-04-03 to 31-03-08 mentioned the wasteful/unfruitful/unjustified expenditures of huge amounts:

Expenditure on	Period	Amount of <i>wasteful</i> expenditure
Salary of employees	2002-2009	Rs 442.58 lakhs
Security Services	2003-2008	Rs 40.53 lakhs
Purchase of invertors	2002	Rs 1,28,800

As per the document, “All the inmates (beggars) of Poor House were transferred to other homes in the month of Nov. 2001, and no inmate is staying here since then. While scrutiny of

record it has been found that 05 no. of invertors were purchased in the month of Feb. 2002 and an amount of Rs. 128,800/- was paid. The superintendent was asked to explain for whom these invertors were purchased, as no inmate was staying in the home.”

Civil Society:

Civil Society plays a very important role in addressing the problems of the society. Various Trusts and Non-profit Organizations work individually and in collaboration with the Government of Delhi to uplift the indigent. But due to the limited support by the government and lack of incentives, they fail to work to the best of their capacity. Two such organizations I visited personally were:

1. Ashray Adhikar Abhiyan (AAA):

AAA is a campaign to address the problems of Homeless people of Delhi. It provides education to children, free medicine and emergency care via two Mobile Clinics, political advocacy, vocational training to the homeless. Some of the services as mentioned in their website (www.homelesspeople.in) are:

- Its Law Research & Advocacy Unit extends Legal Aid to homeless people of Delhi apprehended under the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959.
- On the basis of experience gained through Legal Aid and on the basis of primary and secondary research, the unit has tried to challenge the constitutionality of the BPB Act, 1959, which treats beggary/vagrancy within the criminal/punitive framework.
- It has also provided AAA's identity to 2000 homeless people. Through these cards they access other rights towards full citizenship and get saved from undue police harassment. With the intervention at various government levels, AAA has been able to sensitize the Election Commission and Voter ID cards have been issued to the homeless.

2. Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT):

SBT provides support for street and working children in inner cities of New Delhi, this includes providing education, basic literacy and schooling, full care facilities for the young (up to 12 years), drop-in shelters for older children, health care and counselling in HIV/AIDS and TB awareness.

Today SBT runs, five 24-hour full care shelters for children, with one devoted to girl children (Arushi), in Mumbai, Delhi and Bhubaneswar; five outreach contact points mostly near railway stations and a 24-hour toll-free helpline service, catering to children in distress all over India, in all looking after 5,000 children every year. Its success stories are astonishing!

BRIEF ANALYSIS:

Beggars:

Various other stories with slight twist and turns reflected the same state of incentive issues. In the aforementioned stories, a woman in her late 50s perceives begging as an escape from her loneliness and a way to earn easy money. She doesn't even beg every day. It is not her profession. She willingly solicits alms on crowded days at the Dargah and survives on her daughter's earnings.

Next story depicts the challenges faced by a single mother who finds it difficult to get a job based on her skill sets and educational qualifications. Three times meal at the Dargah, free residential space and an earning of Rs 250-400 per day make life easier.

Jannat describes the problem of lack of motivation despite having no survival 'needs' in females of her like. They would rather beg than wash dishes during winters. Monthly earnings of Rs 4500 to Rs 15000 without much work definitely seem like a lucrative option.

On the other hand, all the interviews of male beggars depicted lack of employment opportunities as a major reason to beg. If cases like Mushiar's represent the 'needs' of a person to beg; the cases like Miya Mammu reflect the need for a transformation in the existing institutional framework. The interviews with Miya Mammu, Zuber and Saleem Bhai clearly showed the willingness of some mendicants to earn a dignified living if the opportunity cost (Rs 250 to Rs 500 per day) is not too high and enforcement of law is just and equal.

Thus, in the case-studies mentioned above it was observed that females face a slightly different kind of problem as compared to males. Different physical capabilities and restrictive social environment reduces the number of choices a woman has for employment. After marriage, mostly at a young age, the responsibilities of a child impose more number of restrictions to her physical and mental strength while the preferences of the employers also shift towards the male community. Hence, targeted policy actions must be initiated to deal with the issue effectively.

One of the common things among most of the beggars is that they have migrated from other states due to lack of resources and unfavourable environment at home. They don't have any identity card and have never participated in voting procedures. Thus, an important tool to catch politicians' attention is missing.

The reasons for begging in kids' lives are determined through a different perspective. An interview with the guides of Salaam Balak Trust, who themselves used to live in streets, and the kids at Nizammudin revealed that even when kids would love to go to a school they would not want to sacrifice the freedom they get while begging on their own. Maximum case-studies with the children in this age-group indicated the lack of control they face to change their situation. At a very early age they come across many responsibilities and thus, see education as a hindrance to the time they can utilize making money.

Public:

Public mostly donates Rs 2 to Rs 5 at a time but it really surprised me when I coupled this fact with the minimum daily earnings of a beggar, that being Rs. 150 – Rs. 500. Apart from that, the realization that a part of the taxed income of the interviewees goes to welfare development and hence they contribute in a scientific way to uplift the needy never really dawned upon them.

Even though street-vendors' regulation is a completely different issue of debate, (especially when, orders by the Supreme Court, National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, NCT of Delhi Law, 2009 say that vendors must not be evicted from footpaths and markets; instead, cities should demarcate specific zones where hawkers can do business legally⁴) in reality it does affect the argument of opportunities being limited for beggars. In the previous case study like Saleem Bhai's, the bribes to MCD, the NDMC and the Delhi Development Authority sometimes amount to more than the goods worth.

⁴ §1.9, National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009

Government:

The police officials at Nizammudin were not only found to be supportive of voluntary means of exchange but walked an extra mile to help the distressed. During the conversation, Meena (the female beggar), recalled how a lady inspector had provided her shelter, food and clothes when she had migrated from Assam in 2004. In fact, the shopkeepers also reported that police never sought bribe from them.

When asked why they not arrested beggars, they replied that among all other responsibilities it is a burden to catch hold of the never-ending number of mendicants and take them through the legal procedure before they end up in the official beggar homes. Besides, they find it ethically wrong to arrest someone if they are not involved in any involuntary exchange. According to them, it is the society and the policy-makers who can make a difference.

This brings the discussion to a very important stakeholder, Department of Social Welfare. The observations above made during the visits in the official beggar homes and during the study of the audit report, reflect the issues of governance. The point that crores of funds are diverted to these Government Institutions annually and they are not used properly requires some serious deliberation.

The whole purpose of these institutions should be to motivate and train the individuals to channel their energy productively. Instead, beggars resume to their profession as soon as they complete their detention period.

Hence, to understand the reasons for each stakeholders' behaviour, they may be categorized into three broad heads – Individual, State and Society.

In the context of this problem, each category has some incentives which motivate them to move forward with a solution-oriented approach. However, the actions taken by the two major stakeholders in this issue – alms-seeker and the alms-giver incentivize each other to aggravate the problem.

At an individual level, indiscriminate donation of alms creates the supply side of the market and makes the problem difficult to solve. Lack of awareness, propagation of unknown beliefs and blind approach towards salvation lead an individual to take irrational decisions. Also, in lieu of seeking alms, mendicants take unimaginable steps. They damage their own kid's limbs or sell the equipment necessary for their physical support.

The State works inefficiently at each level and fails to bring a change despite the large amount of money it devotes to the cause. It has no incentive to improve its services unless public questions its working or the Departments are asked to raise the funds independently with no/slight support from taxed incomes.

The Civil Society has brought a major change in shaping the lives of the indigent but the lack of incentives and resources still curtail it from achieving its full potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Before contemplating about the solutions, it is necessary to identify the problem(s). Is beggary - a voluntary means to exchange resources or the reasons which lead to beggary - the real problem?

After looking at the case studies and various evidences, it can be stated that beggary was never the problem. It is just a symptom of many diseases. And the real diseases are:

1. Lack of awareness.
2. Absence of right incentives.

3. No vocational training.
4. Lack of employment opportunities.
5. Corruption which hinders the freedom to earn livelihood.
6. Inefficiency in the usage of funds at the government level.

Thus, some of the targeted recommendations which can be made to deal with the issue effectively are:

1. Several mendicants beg occasionally, **Constitutionality of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959** should be deliberated.
2. The **physically disabled** needs to be provided with the required equipment to ease their hunt for livelihood.
3. Children run away from their villages to Delhi due to three main reasons:
 - Physical and Verbal Abuse at home
 - Poverty and Hunger
 - In search of jobs

Thus, increased number of **boarding schools for poor children** in both rural and urban areas can prevent the migration of kids and help them with their formal education.

4. **Identity proof and Voter ID cards** should be issued to the homeless to ease their access to Government support.
5. Funds should be allocated to make **public aware** of the consequences of giving alms and to incentivize them to channel their resources more scientifically.
6. Public must **invest** their **capital in building up more schools and hospitals** instead of giving alms indiscriminately.
7. Instead of Institutions which treat beggars like criminals, **workshop-points or vocational training institutions** should be opened up in the city. Informal and value education can be imparted at the **community parks** to the homeless kids.
8. There is a need to **create employment**. It does not necessarily mean that the government should take up this responsibility. The policy-makers can provide appropriate incentives to the market by implementing **pro-business policies** and easing the **license requirements**. This will not only eliminate corruption but inefficiency and wasteful expenditure by government officials too.

CONCLUSION:

If we overlook the redundancy of BPB Act, 1959 and stop blaming the government for the entire situation; this paper suggests that there are stakeholders who can still control the issue at large. The solutions are simple once the problems are clearly identified and targeted. It is the lack of awareness amongst the donators which create the supply-side and lack of job-opportunities which create the demand-side of this market. In the absence of any one side, the market will automatically disappear.

If one goes through the case-studies of beggars, one will understand the point made by Justice Badar Darrez Ahmed that different people beg for different reasons. To put them under the same umbrella of BPB Act, 1959 is not justified. A child may be helpless and hence forced to beg due to poverty; a woman may seek alms in her old age to not be a burden on her son; whereas a physically challenged man despite his several attempts to earn a dignified living may be pushed into this profession.

Besides, the very existence of Governmental Certified Institutions is a pack of problems in itself. The differential understanding of the law which leads to the arrest of an innocent person who is shabbily dressed or the conviction of a human being for 1-3 years assuming that he/she is downright lazy when in reality, begging may not be their chosen profession, have been recognised by the officials themselves presented in audit reports or in assessment remarks. These accounts divert the attention to the issues of governance, law and liberty from the issue of livelihood.

In this paper, each stakeholder has been interviewed and some of the key distinct stories have been mentioned under categorized sub-headings for case-study. It may be readily observed that while dealing with a single problem each individual or organization take decisions to the best of its interests and therefore lack of coordination, more often than not, results in creation of a new problem altogether. For example, the Government going with the popular public opinion decided to criminalize the act of begging but zero efforts to make public aware of the same on the grounds of law, ethics or rationality has helped them achieve nothing.

The next section tries to analyse the incentives which motivates different people to take the steps they desire. It so happens that a person giving Rs 2 as charity doesn't realize he is breeding a habit in somebody who finds putting in more efforts to earn a living undesirable. The Government may make law with supreme intentions but the execution doesn't bring the required changes. Hence, an attempt to identify the small loopholes has been made. Actions like bribe-seeking, occasional-for-fun begging, irrational indiscriminate alms-giving can only be dealt when the complete picture is put into perspective.

Lastly, few practical recommendations have been made keeping in mind the problems identified. They require State intervention, individual efforts and most importantly, the support from civil society for preferred transformation.

Besides, many interviews affirmed that children on street often get involved in criminal activities such as pick-pocketing and stealing in some parts of the city. Thus, a main reason for focus of every individual on poverty issues shouldn't be for nation's development but because it directly affects them and their immediate surroundings. It is also important to note that there are many other groups under each stakeholder category which behave distinctively due to diverse circumstances. For example, one cannot forget those who are physically or mentally unfit. People, who are blind, one-armed, one-legged, total cripples, are often forced to join the ranks of beggars. Sometimes, the deaths of wage-earners in the urban nuclear family bring the wife, children and other dependants on streets and women in India are not raised to become economically independent unless a calamity befalls them. Hence, education and skill-development training should be such which promotes self-respect and economic independence and thus, in the long run helps in the eradication of these social problems.

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