THE
CAPITAL'S
HOMELESS

A PRELIMINARY STUDY

We dedicate this work to all the homeless people who shared their experiences, fears, and longings with us. The faith and trust they placed in all of us, made this study possible.

Talisman

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or self becomes too much with you, apply the following test.

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead *to* **swaraj** for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?"

*– **Mahatma Gandhi***

Copy of this publication can also be collected from:

ActionAid India
Delhi Regional Office
E-270, Greater Kailash, Part-II, New Delhi-110 048. INDIA.
Tel/fax: 091-011-6418885, 6418885, 6418887, 6233525

**Do send in your comments and suggestions on this publication.
Do enrich us by informing about your work with the homeless community
in your city/country. LET'S JOIN HANDS.**

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before the insolent might."

— Rabindranath Tagore

Urban poverty, even though more starkly visible to the makers of policy, has engaged governments in India far less than rural poverty, both in terms of the range of interventions and the scale of financial outlays. It remains, for the most part, an area of significant and persistent neglect in public policy, despite evidence of burgeoning urban populations, fuelled by distress migration from impoverished villages, with stubbornly high levels of both absolute and relative poverty.

The most visible manifestation of urban poverty is in the crowding of large masses of the urban poor people under the open sky, completely vulnerable to the extremes of nature, or in precarious and unsanitary slums in sub-human conditions of survival. The pervasive dirt and grime of slum or pavement settlements fuel middle class prejudices against these, as though the residents choose such a life, rarely acknowledging that their situation is the direct outcome of state policy.

The most stark and visible denial of the right to shelter is manifest in relation to urban homeless women and men, girls and boys. The Census of India defines the notion of 'houseless population' as the persons who are not living in 'census houses'. The latter refers to 'a structure with roof', hence the enumerators are instructed 'to take note of the possible places where the houseless population is likely to live, such as on the roadside, pavements, drainage pipes, under staircases, or in the open, temple-mandaps, platforms and the like'. This part of the population includes those sleeping without shelter, in constructions not meant for habitation and in welfare institutions.

The 1991 census estimated by this definition that the numbers of homeless households by this definition in India are around 2 million. This is likely to be a gross underestimate, because this is a notoriously difficult population to survey. It by definition has no stable address, no ration card (which in many parts of India is much more than an instrument to access subsidised food; it has become a de facto identity card), it usually does not appear on any voting lists. And because this population has been rendered illegal by the law, it would tend to avoid any contact with representatives of the state.

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, Nairobi in its Report (1999) points out that there may be less visible types of homelessness.

People sleeping rough, which means in the street, in public places or in any other place not meant for human habitation, are those forming the core population of the 'homeless'. Those sleeping in shelters provided by welfare or other institutions will be considered as a part of this population. Persons or households living under these circumstances will furthermore be defined as houseless. Another, not obvious side of the problem is the concealed houselessness. Under this category fall people living with family members or friends because they cannot afford any shelter for themselves. Without this privately offered housing opportunity, they would be living in the street or be sheltered by an institution of the welfare system. Another groups living under the threat of 'houselessness' are those facing the risk of losing their shelter either by eviction or the expiry of the lease, with no other possibility of shelter in view. Prisoners or people living in other institutions, facing their release and having no place to go are considered as part of this population. The notion we propose for this category is of people facing the 'risk of houselessness'.

It is no time to cry
For tonight it is but
One more of the
numerous occasions
When we sleep in
open air.

A poem by Sam Kobia
about a pavement child
quoted by
Rudolf C. Heredia,
Legislation and Housing,
Economic and Political
Weekly,
January 16-23, 1993.

Among those who live on the streets, some of the most defenceless groups are women and the aged who are without care, people with disabilities, street sex workers, and people living with leprosy, mental illness and AIDS. There are no reliable surveys available to estimate the actual proportion of these groups in the total population. But case studies portray sub-human condition of stigma, exclusion and survival.

Of paramount vulnerability in conditions of urban poverty are children, and particularly those who are especially at risk, such as children without adult care, street and working children, and children of destitute and stigmatised parents. They are vulnerable because of poor sanitary conditions, inadequate nutrition, psycho-social stresses, exclusion from schools, erratic or unreliable adult protection or sometimes its absence and the coercion to work. For children who are forced to work, conditions are particularly fragile.

The poor are expected to ensure their own shelter in an extremely hostile legal regulatory framework, out of very low and uncertain incomes, and extremely limited access to institutional finance in relation to their needs. The gravest flaw in the entire range of state responses to the unmet right to shelter of the urban poor, is that it does not in any significant way alter the legal and regulatory regime in favour of women and men, girls and boys who are living in poverty. On the contrary, both law and its practice remains heavily weighted against the urban poor.

To begin with, homelessness itself is perceived in India to be a crime. Wandering persons (vagrants), wandering lunatics, 'illegal' squatters, pavement dwellers, are all 'guilty' of violating several penal statutes or statutes under which the entire enforcement is left to the police and the magistracy. In a moving study in1991, leading Supreme Court lawyer and civil rights activist S. Murlidhar points out:

> Criminalising the homeless is a serious problem; wandering people of a wide variety can be defined as beggars and powers are given to the police to deal with such persons. Squatting on the pavement is nuisance under the Municipal laws. Creation of nuisance can be penalised. Same is the approach of the law of trespass. Given the non-availability of space in urban centres every unauthorised dwelling would amount to trespass and be punishable as such. Housing, therefore, has law and order dimensions and there is a crying need for a human rights approach to it.

In my own experience in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, large numbers of the homeless are routinely rounded up by the police. This is done usually to fulfil targets of 'preventive detention' under Sections 109 and 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, to prove to their superiors their pro-active efforts to maintain civic peace. The said sections of the Criminal Procedure Code are dependent on the subjective satisfaction of the executive magistracy that the preventive detention of these persons is indeed in the interest of public peace and prevention of crime. The magistrates rarely actually apply either mind or conscience, and routinely concur with the position of the police, in order to maintain harmonious relation with the police. The homeless then languish for long periods in the jail, because they are too poor, assetless and without legal access or literacy, to secure bail or legal redressal.

Even apart from the houseless, the

The homeless then languish for long periods in the jail, because they are too poor, assetless and without legal access or literacy, to secure bail or legal redressal.

daily efforts of survival of most slum dwellers and urban migrants remain one of almost absolute 'illegality'. At the heart of the problem are existing laws and policies regulating urban land, which systematically exclude the poor from building or acquiring legal shelter. It is not an exaggeration to say that if you are poor in a city, there is virtually no legal recourse if you are to acquire shelter. In other words, all self-help efforts of the poor to live are condemned by law to the illegal.

An equitable urban land policy would assist the poor in their access to land for shelter. In practice, land use has largely been regulated by markets or public authorities. Both mostly exclude the poor, who caught between two stools, are condemned to the unauthorised, illegal sector of the market.

The change in the status of land into a saleable commodity due to the forces operating in a market economy has resulted in the poor being denied access to this market. The plethora of legislation on housing obliges a citizen to conform to certain concepts, standards and styles of housing. This results in costs of a significantly high magnitude which are so prohibitive that the poor simply cannot afford shelter.

Urban planning in India has to come of age and keep the poor and shelterless at its core, if homelessness and slums are to be combated. Urban planning should take into account the growing problem of distress migration, and provide for industrial development such that work places and residential areas are closer.

The utter indifference of state authorities and even the judiciary to the inhuman existence to which homeless people are condemned, is highlighted with particular irony in the plight of homeless people in the capital city of India, Delhi, 50 years after independence. Although the homeless in this city are visible daily to the country's senior most legislators, ministers, judges, bureaucrats, press people and professionals, few are moved to do more than advocate their expulsion from the city. In recent judgement of the Supreme Court which particularly reflected class biases against the poor, it held that to settle slum dwellers on land occupied by them is like rewarding a pick-pocket!

In these circumstances, the initiative of a young group of committed social workers, who came together under the banner of Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan with the initiation of ActionAid India, is particularly heartening. Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan has emerged as a concerted act of caring and justice. In less than one year of its existence, has already brought together a growing network of people, from various walks of life, including homeless people themselves, committed to changing the situation of the homeless in Delhi.

A major initial step of the Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan was to bring together a group of young volunteers for a survey, carried on over ten nights from June 5 to June 16 2000, of the homeless in Delhi. This is their preliminary report.

I hope that it contributes to helping some more people to see.

Harsh Mander, IAS
Country Director
ActionAid India

Urban planning in India has to come of age and keep the poor and shelterless at its core, if homelessness and slums are to be combated.

"True development consists in reducing ourselves to a cipher."
— *Mahatma Gandhi*

PREFACE

Delhi is no exception to what Kahlil Gibran says about cities. Or rather compared to other cities of India, Delhi fares the worst, in terms of the way the poor are treated. Amongst the poor, the homeless (which includes: children, women, elderly, destitute, disabled, mentally challenged, men etc.) i.e., the people who sleep on the pavements, rickshaws, handcarts, rehris, railway platforms, flyovers, in parks, under bridges etc., are really in a vulnerable position.

This is not to say as though the slum dwellers fare better. But rather, that from the point of view of a homeless person, the slum dwellers have a place to sleep in — good or bad, small or dingy, doesn't matter too much. And also, in contradistinction to the homeless, the slum dwellers do form a constituency for the political parties. Where as the homeless have no ration card or voting rights in the city. Which is why they are in a condition of extreme deprivation, and neglect. Facing social ostracisation. And this has given rise to the myths and misconceptions about the homeless, spawning and abounding. Little wonder, the gap between the society and the homeless has increased manifolds. We all know that lack of social interaction is what generates fear, inhibitions, prejudices, hatred and contempt. The homeless are the worst victims of this process of marginalisation (pushed out from rural economy to urban economy) leading to social apartheid.

From Rural Poor to Urban Homeless

The politicians, bureaucrats, and economists, don't tire repeating day in and day out that the glamour and privileges of metropolitan cities like Delhi pull the people from the hinterlands. Their blinkered perception is far removed from the reality.

The homeless in Delhi are migrants, mainly from UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, MP etc., who have left their homes in the village due to extreme distress situations. They are pushed out of the rural economy, as there is no work for them/ they are redundant as their skills of weaving, crafts etc. do not fetch a living/ they have no or little land holding/ recurrent droughts and floods have made agriculture impossible/ some are also socially persecuted, divested of property — by their relations or dominant castes — and other host of personal and economic reasons. Despite over five decades since independence, our villages remain starved of any tangible development. With much of investments going into scams of all kinds. Beneficiaries have been everybody, but the poor. Such is the condition in villages that even the Primary Health Centres, have inoperational Operation Theatres (see photos on the facing page, p. ix). Education situation is bleak.

So, much of the homeless are basically rural poor. Who are pushed out and reach the nearest city in order to address their poverty. The homeless are not a monolithic category. They have their unique problems and in order to solve some of those, they are compelled to lead varied existences, be they children, women, men, aged, disabled or destitute.

Informal economy

Many men are engaged as labourers: hand cart pullers/ pushers, loaders, rickshaw pullers, casual workers etc. They are paid below the minimum wages. While they contribute to the growth of Delhi and subsidise our costs of living (by providing cheap labour), they get nothing in return, except insults and indignities heaped on them day in and day out. Quite a few are able to save and send money back home.

Children are engaged in rag picking, hand cart pushing, street eating joints, party work etc.

Women, disabled and elderly are destitute, with no one to take care of them. They have been thrown out by their kindred, while others have grown old living on the pavement all through. Dhanetri of Bihar was thrown out by her sons, after the death of her husband. And at 70 years, she is left with no option except to beg at the stations. Women and children are the most vulnerable of the entire homeless people. While men do sleep anywhere they are able to, women have to watch out. They either sleep on the busy pavements of Paharganj or railway platforms. Most children and women are open to sexual abuse. Which is very common.

The Rubicon of addiction

Drug addiction, especially to smack, is at its peak on the streets of Delhi. Be it children, men or women, most of them, mainly men, are into it. It has to be seen to be believed. Hordes and hordes of people will be found huddled together chasing smack, at Shankar market, Meena bazaar, Asaf Ali Road, Yamuna Bazaar, Majnu ka Tila etc. Talk to addicts and they will tell you that police are involved in helping the drug peddlers/ pushers. And we ourselves countered PCR van with this information and they did agree that they had black sheep amongst them, as well.

Sharif is one such person addicted to smack. It was in 1982 that he first got the taste of it, introduced to it by one of his friends. And once into it, he continued his habits at his village also, when he used to visit. Because of which his children and his wife have disowned him. And he agrees that they were right, for he did cause them whole lot of problem due to his addiction. He wants to quit now. There are many like him who want to give up, but there aren't many de-addiction centres. And they do require community support after they have undergone de-addiction.

The Community

The community, amongst the vulnerable groups, except children, is missing on the pavements. The groups of drug addicts that we see on certain streets, are just a chimera. For sharing the costs of drug brings them together, and the attendant problems disperses them. Nonetheless, they do guide us to the ones who require hospitalisation. They are not without concern for each other.

But the community does exist amongst the ones who are not into addiction and who have migrated from the same village; and carry home remittances of others as well, when they go back for short durations. Community also exists amongst the families who have migrated from same villages, block and district (like the ones sleeping in Nehru Place, who hail from Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan).

The homeless children do share and help each other in need. They also develop strong bonds between them.

Sleeping under the sky

There is not a single night shelter for women in Delhi. Not even one for a homeless family. Of the 22 Night Shelters planned, there were 19 night shelters run by MCD, of which now only 14 are operational. Of that also, one at the Old Delhi Railway Station (with a capacity to house 525 people) has been closed for the homeless men and children, and turned into a detention centre, for 'Bangladeshi migrants' – housing merely 17 people. While a home exists at Lampur for the foreign nationals who have over stayed their visa period, or are illegal entrants. Put together these 14 night shelters can cater to a maximum

This PHC is in Bairadh, Shivpuri District, MP. The foundation stone says that this PHC was inaugurated by the former Union Minister Madhorao Scindia.

From outside, this OT looks perfectly in order.

This is how the operation theatre looks from inside. This is the government's commitment to the people of India. Aren't people pushed to urban centres because of all this?

of 2937 people. One has to pay Rs. 6 for a night. As this report will show we counted 52,765 people during our Rapid Assessment Survey. This is the bare minimum number of homeless on the streets of Delhi.

THE MENTALLY ILL

This segment of the homeless, which includes women and men are the most neglected. While many can be treated for mild illnesses, serious one's (one's who are referred to as 'wandering lunatics' in psychiatric textbooks) require long stay in a psychiatric care hospital. The resources are limited for long stay. The challenge is to establish mid-way homes and institute community mental health care. Medical institutions create problems in admitting such people.

GOVERNMENT'S LARGESSE

The significance that the government attaches to the issue of homelessness is borne by the budgetary allocation for night shelters in the country. The Union Budget has apportioned Rs.1 crore for the said purpose, for the entire country.

Delhi government's Department of Social Welfare runs 43 homes (see Appendix VII) for beggars, children, aged, mentally challenged and women. But there's none for the homeless. People referred by the civil society organisations (CSOs) cannot be admitted in these homes. They have to be referred by the Board constituted by the government for this purpose. When spoken to, one very high official of the Department dispelled our understanding of the homes (quite like our homes). He said these actually are not homes, they are **Jails**. The plight of the inmates of such homes is anybody's guess, whose top officials meant to take care of the vulnerable sections, feel just the converse.

And after seeing the pitiable and grossly inhuman conditions prevailing

in the Women's Beggar Home in Nirmal Chaya (Tihar Jail) complex, one wonders if the Supreme Court is here or some where else. The situation prevailing in the Men's Beggar Home at Lampur is frightening. Most of the inmates, who were robust built, healthy were languishing when we went there. They were picked up wrongly. Many were picked up while sleeping on the pavements, under the Beggary Prevention Act. Treacherous are the ways of our enforcement authorities. The inmates can't represent, once committed anywhere from one to three years. And to top it, they even are not told about the period they have been booked for in the 'home'. The inmates had not contacted their families, for one they were far, and two what would their family feel that they had come to Delhi for begging, and not earning. A real ignominious situation. One of the inmates told us that "I have been booked wrongly for a crime which I didn't do. Once I'm out, I will murder people and let's see how the police catches me. For I know how to escape the dragnet." What are we doing to our people? What right do we have to put innocent people in *Jail like homes*, for a crime, which they have not committed?

POLICE BRUTALITY

Amongst the myriad problems encountered by the homeless, the most brutal is regular police beatings. This we ourselves have seen and challenged the police when they did so. Govind, a seven- year-old child, in one of the night shelters, is nursing the dream (or nightmare?) of growing up to be a Hitler (he said so when asked what did he want to be, when he grows up). When further asked why did he want to be a Hitler, he remarked angrily, "**I was beaten by belts and boots by a Delhi Police constable. I couldn't walk and**

speak for over a week. I want to be a Hitler and kill all the policemen . They beat us every now and then." One fails to understand what is our police trying to do? And who has given them the authority to beat children and other homeless people, mercilessly? Are the police above law or is there a law which governs them as well?

The Myth of Criminality

If Govind grows up to be what he wants to be now that would justify the myth spread by the police that criminals live on pavements. But what an unfortunate happening. Nobody is born as a criminal. Who will punish the constable, who has ruptured the sensibility of a seven-year-old child? No one knows how many more children might become victims of this cop's brutality and nurse similar ambitions (?) like Govind.

Whatever the police might say, we have a different reality to highlight. During the Rapid Assessment Survey (this report is an outcome of this survey) we along with 38 volunteers were on Delhi's streets from 7 pm to 6 am We also had women volunteers and colleagues with us. And we went to all the so called crime pockets of Delhi, be it, Dholak Walon ki Basti, Majnu ka Tila, Yamuna Bazaar, Anand Parbat, Inderpuri etc. We didn't have any untoward incident. While Delhi tops in the entire country in criminality, definitely the criminals are not the one's on the pavements of Delhi. Delhi police should go beyond its most comfortable paradigm of solving crimes, by arresting the homeless. For they neither have an identity card, nor any guarantors nor any advocates who can represent them.

The World of a Homeless Child

In this strange city of Delhi, the homeless child finds herself / himself beleaguered, by :

❖ The adult world

❖ Brutal police force

❖ Exploitative employers

❖ Limited shelters, especially for girls

❖ No learning/ negligible learning opportunities and capacity building

❖ Sexual victimisation (both boys and girls)

❖ Rampant addiction to tobacco (including pan masalas), correction fluid, smack etc

❖ Closed future options.

While all children encounter the above mentioned situations, the worst affected are girls, and physically and mentally challenged children.

One physically challenged child (about 10 years old), who has had polio affect his legs, in one of the night shelters told of his predicament, "other children call me 'langada', they jump on my feet, sit on it and have broken it now, it pains. They pull me by my leg, tease and run away. I can't get after them for how can I run and catch them? Since I can do nothing else, I beg for alms. But I don't steal. Rather the money that I'm able to collect is stolen. That's why I'm not able to send money to my mother (my father passed away) in Dharbhanga (Bihar). She used to work earlier but both her hands got amputated during threshing in the village. That's why I went to Calcutta. And from there I was able to send money. I have been in Delhi for past two months. I can't go back home, I have my other three younger brother and sisters. I have no addiction, rather I have broken the bidis of some of my friends." And his friends did vouch for it.

One girl, about 12 years, who stays with her hearing impaired mother and younger siblings on the street, is being

One fails to understand what is our police trying to do? And who has given them the authority to beat children and other homeless people, mercilessly? Are the police above law or is there a law which governs them as well?

sexually exploited by the local youth and men. Other boy who left his family in UP, after being sodomised, had similar experiences in Delhi as well. According to him quite a few children, be it boys or girls on the streets, have been sexually exploited. And it is a daily living condition for survival. In the 'adult' homeless world. Under full police patronage.

Most of the children are engaged in rag picking. A few in roadside eating (tea/ snacks) joints/ rehris, marriage party work etc. Only a few are able to save. But the most heartening feature in contrast to the adult world is that some of them do help other children, when they have not been able to earn in the day. Monsoon is the most difficult month, for rag picking gets cumbersome.

These children do not call for pity or compassion. They are the bright sparks of the city. The problems that they encounter have not weighed them with depression and dejection. They have their little fun and joy as well. They are the brave citizens of this country who have left their homes (poverty stricken/ abusive teachers/ intrusive parents and relatives or orphaned) to address their need. When the government, both Central and State, couldn't address it, then as well as now. They seek no charity. They rather will rebuff any such attempts. They want it, as their right. Their dignity has withstood all their tribulations.

When asked what they would like to be when they grow up, one child said that he wanted to join Police earlier. But having seen them taking bribe and troubling people, young and old, he no longer cherishes this dream. What if this world comprised of just children? Then there would be no distrust nor any inequality. Everybody would be happy without any exploitation.

THE PROBLEM WITH PROBLEM RESOLUTION

❖ My children and your children syndrome: this mentality amongst GOs and VOs (or CSOs – civil society organisations) and within CSOs, breeds contempt for other experiments /innovations and creates lot of distrust and needless competition.

This leads to isolated attempts at addressing the issue of homeless children/ street children. Instead of a coordinated, collaborative and supportive effort.

❖ Poor capacity building: the focus has to shift from vocationalisation to capacity building as health workers/ para legal workers/community workers, backed by schooling support. To finally choose a career of their choice. If our children can be the future decision makers, what restricts these children from becoming the same.

We need to do a soul-searching exercise. And move beyond tokenisms, to doing concrete things for the homeless children.

❖ Inadequate shelters: the shelters need to provide for a holistic care of these children: cultural, educational, social, economic, health etc.

❖ Centralised operations: the activities for the children needs to be not just involving them. But allowing them the opportunity to participate in its decisions and its operationalisation.

ADDRESSING THE ISSUES

Identifying and addressing the problems faced by the homeless people, is what, we at **Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan** (**AAA**) are doing. **AAA** emerged from the planning commission meeting held on 19.9.1999, with the initiative of ActionAid India (AAI). **AAA** was a

desideratum. For while VOs were there in Delhi, quite a few were working on slum issues, there was not a single one working with the homeless people, per se (initiatives have been there by the VOs to address the issue of street children). **AAA** was thus conceived as a citizen's initiative. AAI is funding **AAA**. **AAA** operational from March 2000, came in full action from May, 2000 after we got our team in place.

Much of what we have stated emerges from our working with the homeless people, our interactions, the feedback of our Volunteers and the Rapid Assessment Survey conducted in June, 2000.

Our vision is to empower and mobilise the homeless, to form a body of their own in order to assert their rights and take up their issues at all levels. The rights that we talk about are the one's provided to we the CITIzens of India, by our Constitution (**Articles 14, 15, 19, 21, 243W** etc.) and various UN conventions and covenants to which India is a signatory. The homeless, are citizens of our country, to the same extent as we are. What a travesty of our democracy, that we have to say so. Our aim is do capacity building of the homeless so that they can this work forward, on a sustainable basis. ***Homeless, to us, is a person who has no place to call a home in a city. By home, is meant a place, which not only provides a shelter, but takes care of one's health, social, cultural and economic needs. Home provides a holistic care and security.***

Our attempt through AAA is to bridge the ever-widening gulf between Delhi's society and the homeless. We are doing this through the sensitisation programmes that we are conducting in the schools and colleges of Delhi (to build our volunteer base), as well as for Delhi Police, the corporate sector etc.

We have started health intervention in front of Meena Bazaar, Jama Masjid with firm support from World Vision, Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), Sahara, Youthreach, Narcotic Anonymous and Samadhan. Every Monday and Thursday between 6 pm to 8 pm this entire group comes together to provide their specialised care, diagnosis and medicines. Volunteers have emerged from the local area and the homeless community. The idea is to have a cadre of workers from within the homeless community. The leadership roles can be assumed by the elder street children, who as health workers, community animators, para – legal workers etc. can contribute immensely.

We have also started Night-outs, where on every Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 pm – 5 am we move on the streets. Supporting the homeless, in dire need of: clothes/blankets; shelter (for girls and boys through Childline Toll Free Tel No. 1098, even taking them to the shelters);hospital admissions; besides challenging the police clearing the pavements by beating homeless people with their sticks, even at 3 am; and also counselling people addicted to drugs etc.

Our soon to begin detailed study will throw further light on the issues we have discussed here, in greater detail. Our work involves policy research and advocacy, information dissemination and documentation, resource mobilisation and leveraging, besides various micro–actions (with onset of the winter, getting the religious institutions opened up for the homeless to take shelter; getting temporary shelters built with the support of the MCD and the corporate sector …) with total participation of the homeless community.

What can be done!

No one organisation, be it the government or the CSO can on its own

Our vision is to empower and mobilise the homeless, to form a body of their own in order to assert their rights and take up their issues at all levels.

handle this pressing issue of the homeless. It can be addressed holistically and collectively:

❋ Empowering the homeless children (besides the homeless people) to lead the interventions. And they, at least the elder ones, can be a tremendous resource for empowering the other homeless sections. They can form as the cadre of community workers.

❋ Rallying the support of society: through sensitising school and college students (child-to-child, child-to-parent, parent- to-community approach), and then involving them as volunteers for various activities

❋ Use of creative and innovative media: street theatre (street theatre groups, VO/CSO groups, volunteer groups, the homeless children groups), puppetry, music etc.

❋ Networking with the CSOs, engaged in different interventions, locally and countrywide

❋ Collaborating with the GOs

❋ Involving the corporate sector

❋ Policy research and advocacy

❋ Engaging with the multi-/bi- lateral agencies and the INGOs

❋ Seeking international support through the internet

❋ Sharing the ongoing research and documentation

Time has come for the nation to back its people, the homeless, the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable of the sections living in Delhi. Not to do the same cleansing that Hitler did many years ago, in Europe. That is what is happening today when the streets are being cleared of the homeless sleeping there, vendors selling snacks, vegetables and their little wares, roads being cleared off from rickshaws, hand carts... etc. – the tools of survival of the homeless.

In making Delhi beautiful, do we bedeck it by plastic flowers and cemented trunks – having cut/tiled the trees, bereft of the people who made Delhi. Who created Delhi from the sweat of their brow, while their stomachs were still empty. Surely the TNCs, soon to sweep Delhi, would swarm in and thrive (for whom Delhi is being cleansed of its people). But Delhi wouldn't survive. Nor would the nation.

It is people, who make governments and nations, not vice-versa. Would we allow our representatives to throttle life out of us? Or would we take charge and say enough is enough? Choice is not ours. Choice has to be ours!

We share this report of the Rapid Assessment (action-oriented study) with you all. This report forms the beginning of our understanding, which will further get enriched with other researches and actions which are underway.

We look forward to support from each one of you. The task that we have taken on, requires each one of you. You can support us in any of our interventions, through volunteers, personnel, documents, reaching your specialised services, medicines, clothes, blankets, infrastructure, funds etc. Let's join hands to make Delhi care for its citizens, and empower the homeless community to assert for their rights. Their right to adequate shelter and access to basic amenities — for a place of honour and dignity in a city to whose growth they have contributed their best. But have got nothing in return, except deprivation, squalor, poverty and indignities heaped on them, day in and day out.

Do encourage us, by joining us. Do visit us!

indu prakash singh
Director
Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan

It is people, who make governments and nations, not vice-versa. Would we allow our representatives to throttle life out of us? Or would we take charge and say enough is enough? Choice is not ours. Choice has to be ours!

*A*ashray Adhikar Abhiyan **(AAA)** is a shelter rights campaign for the homeless in Delhi – those living and sleeping in the open (pavements, flyovers, parks, bus stops…). *AAA* is the result of concerted efforts of concerned individuals – from the Government (including the Planning Commission) and civil society – who came together to address the ever-increasing problem of homelessness in Delhi. A series of meetings were held to evolve an understanding on the many dimensions of homelessness. It was felt that formation of a broad-based group would facilitate effective interventions to grapple with the problem. Thus, *AAA* came into being in March 2000 (and fully operational from May 2000).

The *AAA* team comprises of individuals having varied backgrounds – sociology, law, social work, political science, geography and lived experience. *AAA* also has a Steering Committee comprising of individuals from the Government and civil society (please see Appendix I for a list of steering committee members). The role of the steering committee is to provide overall guidance to the AAA team and facilitate advocacy at the macro level. In the first year, *AAA* has got funding support from ActionAid India. A list of *AAA* team members is given in Appendix II.

Vision

This project intervention is designed as an initial step towards mobilising and empowering the homeless for asserting their rights. The intervention strategies are designed to enable the homeless to organise themselves and assert their right to adequate shelter and access to basic amenities – for a place of honour and dignity in a city to whose growth they have contributed their best, but have got nothing except deprivation, squalor, poverty and indignities heaped on them, day in and day out, in return.

Objectives

The objectives of this project intervention are:

✳ To conduct studies to generate

KEY PLAYERS

- Homeless People
- State Agencies
- Students
- Civil Society Organisations
- Civil Society
- Religious Groups
- Professional Groups (Advocates, Doctors, etc.)
- Corporate Houses

Study
- Rapid Assessment
- Detailed Studies
  - ◆ Participatory
  - ◆ Biographical

Micro-actions
- Addressing immediate needs
- Capacity building of the homeless

Information dissemination and documentation
- Publications
- Documentation Centre
- Website
- Documentary Film

Empowerment of the Homeless

Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan
Shelter Rights Campaign

Sensitisation
- Interactive meeting
- Audio-visual media
- Print media
- Street theatre

Policy Research & Advocacy
- Networking
- Media
- Policy
- Legal
- Formation of a body of the homeless

Resource Mobilisation/ Leveraging

information and to understand the situation in which the homeless find themselves in and the problems faced by them;

✳ To intervene at the micro level to address immediate needs, e.g. shelter, health, sanitation;

✳ To facilitate creation of a cadre of community workers from amongst the homeless through capacity building;

✳ To undertake research on various policies and laws which impinge on the rights of the homeless and further contribute to their impoverishment and marginalisation;

✳ To advocate for policies which ensure the rights of the homeless;

✳ To mobilise and create a volunteer base comprising of students from schools and colleges to involve

themselves in any capacity, on this issue;

✳ To mobilise the support of civil society on this issue;

✳ To mobilise resources from the government, corporate houses, students, civil society organistions and professionals.

All the interventions will be planned and implemented with effective participation of the homeless. AAA sees it's role primarily as a facilitator.

APPROACH

Keeping in view the larger developmental issues, AAA aims to use macro and micro level strategies to address the issue of homelessness in a comprehensive manner. The macro level interventions will involve including the issue in the developmental discourse through:

✳ Advocacy and lobbying

✳ Influencing policy makers

✳ Sensitisation

✳ Networking

✳ Information creation and dissemination

The micro level interventions will primarily entail:

✳ Addressing immediate needs, e.g. health, shelter, sanitation

✳ Capacity building of the homeless

Sustainability will be a key factor in these micro actions, which will be carried out through networking with Civil Society Organisations and the Government.

Manik Khanna, IX A, Blue Bells School wrote *(after the sensitisation session on the homeless) :*

"They have everything given by God, but nothing given by man."

> *"Migration is due to the un absorbing capacities of the villages and the unemployment and poverty prevailing there. Twenty eight percent of the rural population is landless. Even those who own land cannot earn their livelihood due to lack of irrigation facilities, recurrent droughts, etc. The poor migrate to the cities in search of employment ... People leave their native places seeking employment in the cities where they live in high-density places lacking proper utility services. These conditions result in their ill health" (Mr. Jagmohan, present Union Urban Development Minister, as quoted in Delhi: A Tale of Two Cities, 1993 [ToTC])."*

Delhi has the largest migrant population of all the cities in India (ToTC). According to the 1991 Census, 95 lakh migrants are living in Delhi – 42% from U.P., 10% from Bihar, 9% from Haryana, 7% from Punjab, 5% from Rajasthan, 4% from Kerala and 3% from Tamil Nadu. It has been estimated that the influx of migrants to the city will reach 144 lakhs by 2001 (Census, 1991). Amongst these migrants a large section are in government service but the rest are largely labourers.

More and more are joining the ranks of the "urban poor" of whom the homeless are one of the most vulnerable and marginalised section. They are not isolated instances but the result of a process of "impoverishment" unleashed by State policies. They remain on the fringes of society, without even being considered relevant for political reasons as they do not form a "vote bank" (unlike slum dwellers).

There is a clear dichotomy between the consitutional and legislative regime. The right to life under the Constitution, through judicial interpretation, has been expanded to include social, economic and cultural rights. However, there is no corresonding legislation to translate these rights into reality. It has been argued that giving the right to housing the status of a Fundamental Right will enable enforceability (Muralidhar, 1991). Public Interest Litigation has, to some extent, facilitated accessibility of Fundamental Rights by socially and economically marginalised sections of people.

However, for the homeless, these constitutional guarantees are meaningless. They are subjected to a hostile legal and policy regime — laws which criminalise/illegalise their livelihood/existence. They can be beaten/picked up by the police for sleeping on the streets on an "apprehension" that they may be "criminals". Prevailing notions of the homeless being "criminals", "destitutes" and "a burden on society" and therefore, "dispensable" only aggravate their plight. Homelessness and how it needs to be addressed has to be seen in this larger context.

OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Homelessness, especially in Delhi, has been the least studied aspect of Urban Poverty. Consequently, there is a lack of any substantial information regarding their problems and there has been very little development work for them. In a study carried out in Calcutta by Jagannath and Halder in 1988, the homeless were identified as the "poorest of the urban poor". However, most other

Laws which impinge on the rights of vulnerable sections

Vagrancy & Beggary Laws — Municipal Laws — Slum Laws — Town Planning Laws — Land Laws

→ **HOMELESS**

Suffer from various forms of deprivation

→ Social — Economic — Cultural — Political — Health
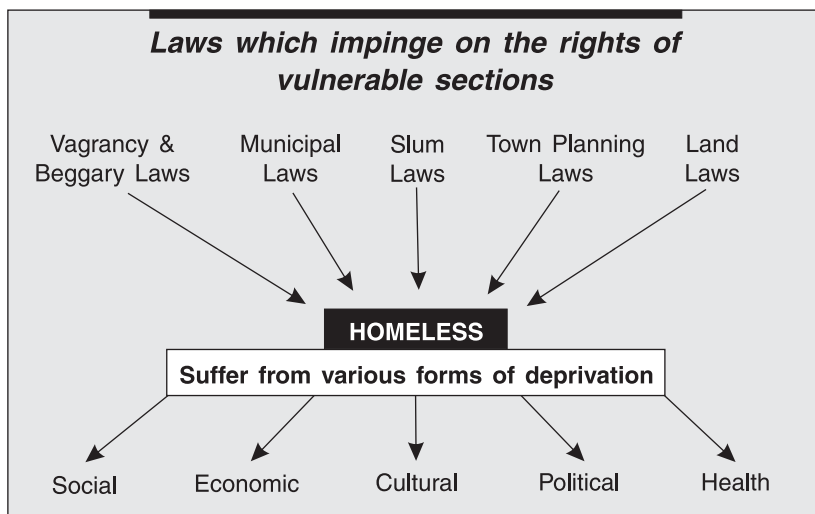
DOUBLE SPEAK!

"The migrants and squatters, like 'plague or some other rare kind of fever' will cripple and kill Shahjahanabad (Delhi's Walled City) too. Its tradition, its charm and its new pattern of living which we've envisaged, will all be swept away by the flood of migrants and squatters".

*– **Jagmohan**, Union Urban Development Minister*
(Cited in Wadhwa, 2000)

studies available on the urban poor focus on the plight of slum and squatter settlements. Only a few studies deal specifically with the homeless population and these were mainly undertaken in Bombay and Calcutta. There are a couple of unpublished reports on the pavement dwellers in Delhi. One such study is by the DDA on children in night shelters. Another more recent study is by ORSTOM on the homeless in Delhi.

However, it was very essential for the AAA team to orient itself and understand the entire gamut of issues before beginning any intervention. **Therefore, to begin with, it is essential to understand the lives of the homeless – from their perspective.** This, along with obtaining quantitative information, were the primary objectives of this survey. The survey also started the process of rapport building with the homeless, which is borne out by the emergence of two volunteers from amongst the homeless, who participated throughout the survey.

This report presents the findings of the survey, which was a preliminary exercise to get a glimpse into the lives of the homeless. Many questions have

been thrown up which will be investigated in future studies. The details of the different sections are given below.

After this section, the second section sets out the methodology that was adopted for the survey in detail. The limitations of this study have also been stated.

The third section sets out the characteristics of each of the seven zones in Delhi along with their respective maps. This description consists of primarily:

• Places under the zone

• Labour markets

• Areas of concentration of the homeless

• Night shelters.

The findings of the study have been analysed in the fourth section with the use of graphs. The collation of data has been done for the whole of Delhi, zone-wise break up of figures is not being given. Further, the findings are not representative of all sections amongst the homeless. Due to certain constraints (please see 'limitations' in the next Section), it has not been possible to gather data on the more vulnerable groups, e.g. the women, children, destitutes, elderly, physically and mentally challenged persons. This gap in information and understanding will be covered in future studies.

The final section questions certain myths regarding the homeless on the basis of the understanding gained during the survey. The future actions that will be undertaken by *Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan* are also given briefly.

Photographs, and feedback from volunteers are used throughout the report.

The Rapid Assessment was undertaken by the *AAA* team at the outset, as it was essential for the team to get a basic understanding of the issues involved from the perspective of the homeless, before commencing any other activity. The survey was carried out between June 5 – 9 and June 11 – 16, 2000. Preparation for the survey was carried out over a month.

OBJECTIVES

- To get a basic understanding of the lives of the homeless
- To find out the number of homeless people in the city of Delhi
- To acquire an understanding of the social and economic conditions of the homeless
- To know the problems faced by the homeless at the place where they live and sleep
- To understand the ways and means adopted by the homeless to deal with their different problems.

PREPARATORY STEPS

Step 1: A reconnaissance of the whole of Delhi was carried out between May 16 to 22, 2000. The purpose of this reconnaissance was to make personal contact with the homeless and for team members to familiarise themselves with the entire city of Delhi. It also enabled the team to see the manifestation of homelessness, as some of the *AAA* team members were to come in contact with the homeless for the first time. Further, it was necessary to map out the concentration areas of the homeless in various parts of the city and to ascertain the timings of their availability. This process was carried out for a period of 5 days, by walking through the city from 7pm to 6am and by interacting informally with the homeless.

Step 2: This involved networking with civil society organisations (CSOs) to mobilise volunteers for the purpose of conducting the survey. The response of the organisations that were contacted was encouraging. The team was able to mobilise 53 volunteers.

Step 3: Thereafter, a questionnaire (please see Appendix III) was formulated. Every question was deliberated upon and care was taken to phrase the questions keeping in mind the potential respondents, as well as, the convenience of the volunteers filling out the questionnaire.

Step 4: A handbill in Hindi was prepared and distributed amongst the homeless to provide them with an understanding of the purpose of the survey (please see Appendix IV). Distributing the handbill before filling out the questionnaire also helped the volunteers establish a rapport with the people to be interviewed.

Step 5: This step involved an Intensive Orientation Workshop for a period of three days (May 28 to 31, 2000) for the volunteers. Fifty-three people from different organisations attended the workshop. During these three days of intensive orientation, the volunteers were given some basic information about the homeless and the approach to be adopted during the survey. A manual of instructions was also made available
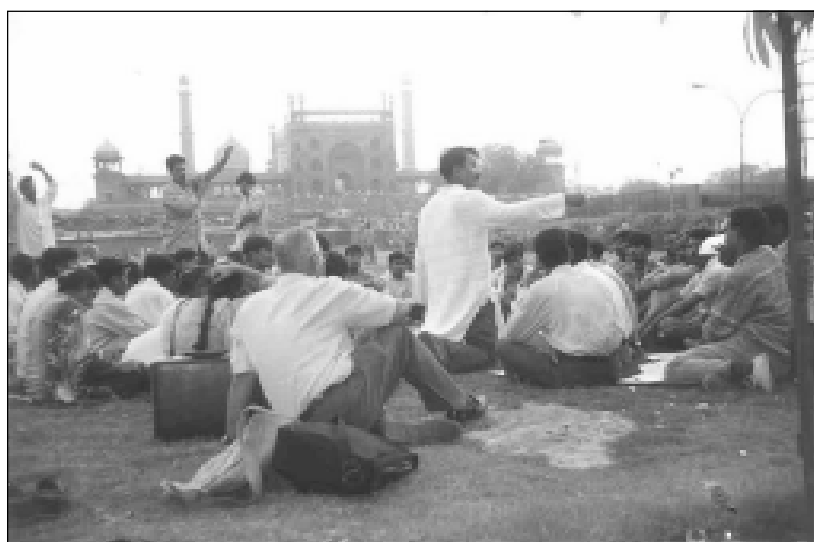
Orientation in the field, Urdu Park, Jama Masjid
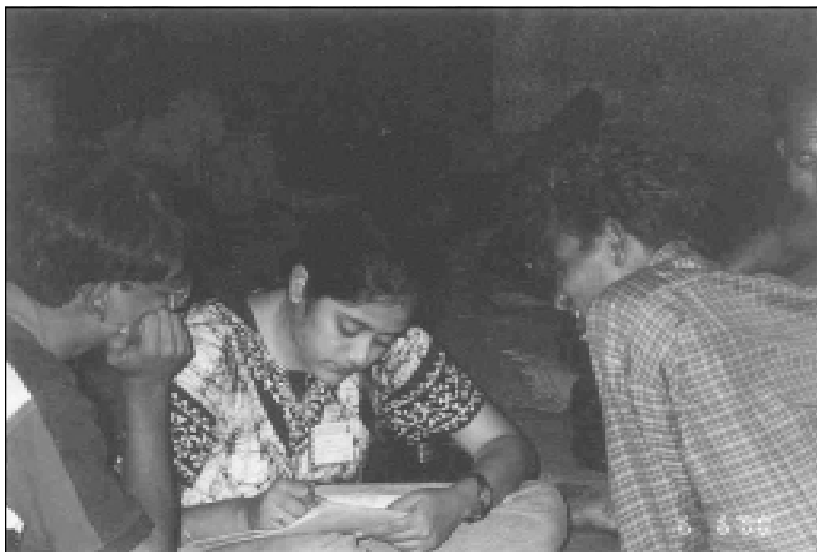
Testing the questionnaire

The debriefing in progress ...

for a better understanding of the questions contained in the questionnaire. As practical field training, the volunteers were taken to Urdu Park at Jama Masjid on the second day where they had to field test the questionnaire after interacting with some people. At the end of the workshop 38 people, mainly from CSOs/individual students volunteered for the survey. The list of volunteers can be seen in Appendix V.

Step 6: The volunteers were divided into teams, each team consisting of 4/5 volunteers, a supervisor and a co-ordinator, who was from AAA. A brief

orientation session was held for the supervisors, wherein they were informed about their role and responsibilities.

For practical reasons, the city was divided into seven zones on a geographical basis. The zones were as follows:

- Walled City
- Old Delhi
- Central Delhi
- North Delhi
- South Delhi
- East Delhi
- West Delhi

The zones were further divided into regions and areas, which were marked on micro level maps. This was to identify the concentration points of the homeless for the convenience of the teams. The survey was to be conducted between 7 pm and 6 am. Within this period the questionnaires were to be filled in between 7 pm and 12 am. From 12 am onwards, there was a head count of the number of homeless people sleeping on pavements, railway platforms, rickshaws, rehris, thelas, flyovers, underbridges, in parks, bus stops, etc.

COMPONENTS OF THE SURVEY

The three components of the Rapid Assessment Survey (RAS) were: 1) the questionnaire; 2) the head count; and 3) observation by the survey teams.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire contained eight types of questions:

a) *General Characteristics:* This is for recording the socio–demographic pattern of the homeless in the city.

b) *Migration:* This relates to the process of migration. The inquiries seek to establish the reason for coming to Delhi as well as leaving his/her native place, i.e. to study the push and pull factors of migration.

c) *Employment:* This records economic

activity, i.e. income, savings, expenditure and the frequency and duration of employment. It also assesses the ability to afford the expenses of living in the city.

d) *Living Condition:* This pertains to personal living conditions, such as the availability of drinking water, toilet and bathing facilities.

e) *Sleeping Pattern:* This indicates the sleeping pattern of the homeless over a period of one month. It also provides an understanding as to why people choose to sleep in certain places.

f) *Linkages with the Place of Origin:* Here the questions seek to discover the link between the homeless and their native place and assess the number of people who have severed or maintained relationships with their family.

g) *Political Affiliation:* This was to understand whether a political process is involved in bringing these homeless to the city and also to find out if any trade unions or political forces are operating amongst the homeless.

h) *Observation and Comments:* This is the last part of the questionnaire. This records general physical description, health condition, chronic diseases, disabilities or any other problems such as alcoholism or drug dependency. Besides, any other useful information, which is not sought for specifically in the questionnaire, is to be noted here.

It may be noted here that some questions in the questionnaire overlap and will not appear entirely in the sequence detailed above.

THE HEAD COUNT

A head count is a physical count without any interaction with the people. The definition of the 'homeless' used for the purpose of the head count is as follows:

Homeless: Any person sleeping in an open place, on the pavement, under trees, parks, verandas, railway platforms, public receptions, bus stands, hospitals, or night shelters and do not have a place of their own. In addition, any person who is without proper sleeping facilities and who is forced to carry along with them, all their meagre belongings, as they have no place to keep them.

This definition is meant to differentiate the homeless from travellers at the railway station and bus terminal. The slum dwellers and the 'precariously housed' have been kept outside the ambit of the survey. The *'Banjaras'* (Gypsies) and the *'Loharas'* (a nomadic tribe in which the entire family is involved in blacksmithing as their occupation) have also not been included in the survey.
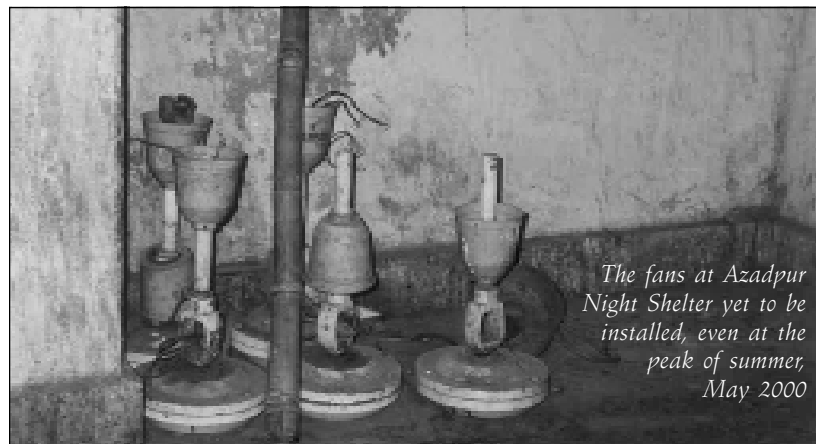

Forced to bathe in the open

OBSERVATION

Survey teams used observation as a method for assessing:

- the physical environment in which the homeless live
- their physical and mental well-being
- their living conditions relating to food, washing, sanitation etc.

The fans at Azadpur Night Shelter yet to be installed, even at the peak of summer, May 2000

The first night shelter was built in 1964 under the Third Five Year Plan (1961 – 1966). The shelter provided dormitory accommodation free of charge. However, from 1983 a nominal charge was levied, which has now risen to Rs. 6/-. The main objectives of the night shelter programme are:

- to provide accommodation to the homeless who cannot afford accommodation independently
- to protect the homeless from cold by providing blankets, jute mats and other facilities
- to develop the concept of social security and feeling of oneness among them by making them utilise the existing facilities collectively within the same complex

(DDA, 1985: 13)

The night shelters are open between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. These shelters are run and managed by the Slum Wing of the M.C.D. A study in 1998 (ORSTOM) reveals the severe shortcomings of these shelters. Most pavement dwellers surveyed considered the night shelters to be dirty, unhygienic and poorly maintained. In addition, there are no night shelters for women and many do not accommodate children (Please see Matrix 1 for further details). There were 19 night shelters in the city, but five of them have been closed down. Is this because the numbers of homeless people on Delhi's streets have come down? The visibility of homeless people on the streets, definitely does not suggest this.

Although 690 people were interviewed using the questionnaire, many more were spoken to informally by the team members. The homeless shared their life histories and the problems they faced on the streets. After the Rapid Assessment, a debriefing session was held to get feedback from the volunteers, wherein they shared their experiences during the survey and the information they had gathered during informal interaction with the homeless.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of undertaking a Rapid Assessment was to get an overview of the situation regarding the homeless in Delhi. However, this method has certain inherent limitations. The primary drawback of this method is the short span of time within which the entire exercise has to be completed. Therefore, an exhaustive coverage and indepth analysis is not possible.

Data pertaining to specific vulnerable groups within the homeless community, such as women, children, the disabled and the elderly, is insufficient. During the head count, volunteers felt it was too intrusive to lift blankets, quilts etc. to identify whether the sleeper was male or female. Therefore, it is not known what proportion of the homeless counted are men and women. In addition, a much larger number of men were interviewed than women. This is primarily due to larger number of men living on the streets. Moreover, women were more difficult to locate. Very few disabled people or elderly were spoken to and therefore, the data pertaining to these groups is inadequate. It is proposed that this gap in information and data will be collected in the forthcoming studies.

Further, the Rapid Assessment coincided with the harvest season and many migrants had returned to their villages to help their families. This means that the number of the homeless is likely to be much higher than what was counted. It must also be acknowledged that there will always be homeless people who cannot be counted, for example, those who work late into the night or those who sleep in narrow alleyways or on roof tops and verandas that cannot be seen from the street. Therefore, any figure arrived at, will only represent the *minimum* number of the homeless.

Matrix 1: Problems in Night Shelters

| Night Shelters	Cost	Facilities							Maintenance							Security		Social		Capacity		Admission			
	Cost too much	No drinking water facilities	No water cooler	No toilets/bathrooms	No coolers	No TV	No mats	Temporary roof	Toilets/bathrooms unhygienic	Exhaust fans don't function	Coolers don't function	Blankets not cleaned	Coir mats torn/dirty	No general maintenance**	Flooded in monsoon	Abusive incharge	Theft	Ragpickers not wanted	Problems with local residents	Crowded in winter	Not reaching full capacity	Women not allowed	Children not allowed	Not allowed to enter late (after 12 am)	Lack of awareness about NS
North Zone																									
Katra Maulabux	✓			✓	✓				✓												✓	✓	✓	✓	
Azadpur	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			✓			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	
Old City Zone																									
S.P. Mukherjee Market	✓									✓	✓										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Andha Mughal	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓		✓				✓			✓	✓		✓	
Boulevard Rd*	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓													✓	✓	✓	✓	
Walled City Zone																									
Old Delhi Railway St.#	✓				✓	✓															✓	✓		✓	
Lahori Gate	✓								✓				✓								✓	✓		✓	
Meena Bazaar I*	✓															✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	
Meena Bazar II	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓							✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	
Turkman Gate	✓					✓	✓	✓											✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Delhi Gate	✓																				✓	✓	✓	✓	
Central Zone																									
Gole Market*	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓										✓	✓	✓	✓
East Zone																									
Kabul Nagar	✓	✓	✓									✓		✓	✓	✓						✓		✓	
South Zone																									
Nizamuddin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓						✓		✓		✓	
Nehru Place	✓				✓				✓				✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	
West Zone																									
Karol Bagh*	✓				✓				✓				✓	✓	✓							✓		✓	
Shahzada Bagh	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓												✓			✓	✓	✓	
Raja Garden	✓				✓	✓																✓	✓	✓	
Mangolpuri	✓				✓																	✓	✓	✓	

*Night Shelter has now been closed/demolished

#Night Shelter is being used as detention centre for 'Bangladeshi migrants'

**NS not painted and cracks and leaks not mended

✓ Indicates that it applies to the night shelter

Source: Adapted from OSTROM, 1998

MAP: WALLED CITY

NORTH

✘ Night Shelter

Walled City

D E L H I

mt | 1000 | 800 | 600 | 400 | 200 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 km
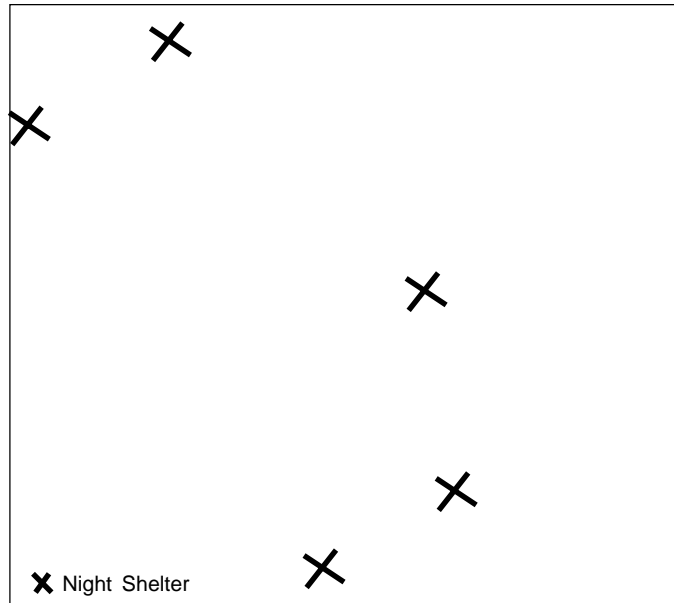
THE WALLED CITY

The Walled City (once known as Shahjahanabad) is surrounded by a wall with six gates – Kashmiri Gate, Mori gate, Lahori Gate, Ajmeri Gate, Turkman Gate and Delhi Gate. The Walled City comprises an area of about 21.5 sq. k.m. With the passage of time the Walled City has become one of the most congested areas in Delhi.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Interestingly, many of Asia's biggest markets are located here e.g. the Gold Bullion Market (Dariba Kalan), the Electronics Market (Lajpat Rai), the Spice Market (Khari Baoli) and the Market for Books and Stationary (Nai Sadak). The Old Delhi Railway Station (ODRS) built during the days of the British Raj is adjacent to these markets. The Old Delhi Railway Station has now entered the Guiness Book of Records for handling the largest number of trains anywhere in the world.

The Inter State Bus Terminus (ISBT), which also lies within this zone, was till recently a major transport node to nearly all cities and towns in Northern India. With the decentralisation of Inter State Transport, this terminus now caters to only parts of the Upper Northern Region. According to Slum Wing of the MCD, 40% of Delhi's homeless live in the Walled City (Kuruvilla, 1991). And the presence of two large transport nodes in this area may be one reason for this.

LABOUR MARKETS

The bustling economy of the Walled City provides employment opportunities to migrant labour. As a result, there are about eight labour markets in the Walled City: Fountain Chowk (Chandini Chowk), Bankhandi Temple (opposite ODRS), Fatehpuri Mosque Crossing (Chandini Chowk), Khari Baoli, Jama Masjid (Chawri Bazaar Crossing), Hauz Qazi, Lahori Gate and S.P. Mukerjee Road.

RENTING PAVEMENT SPACE

Some people have established quilt – rental businesses. The charge for renting a quilt is Rs.5/- per night. The client renting a quilt sleeps on the ground covered with a plastic sheet. In winter, they fold the quilt into two lengthwise. One folded half is placed on the ground on which the person stretches herself/himself and the other fold is used as a cover. In summer, the quilt is used as a mattress. Cots are also available for rent at Rs.15/- per night. In places controlled by quilt-renting businesses, the homeless are unable to sleep for free.

The renting of quilts and cots is carried out by local persons called *thiyawalahs*. In order to conduct business, the *thiyawalahs* pay *'hafta'* (a bribe paid on weekly basis) to the local police, the DDA and the M.C.D. Quite like the droughts/floods/cyclones in rural/coastal areas, homelessness in urban areas, offers a rich harvest to these vested sections.

"Old Delhi Railway Station transports a mind boggling 1.7 lakhs passengers everyday on 188 trains across, 1,122 train routes".

Times of India, August 4, 2000

9
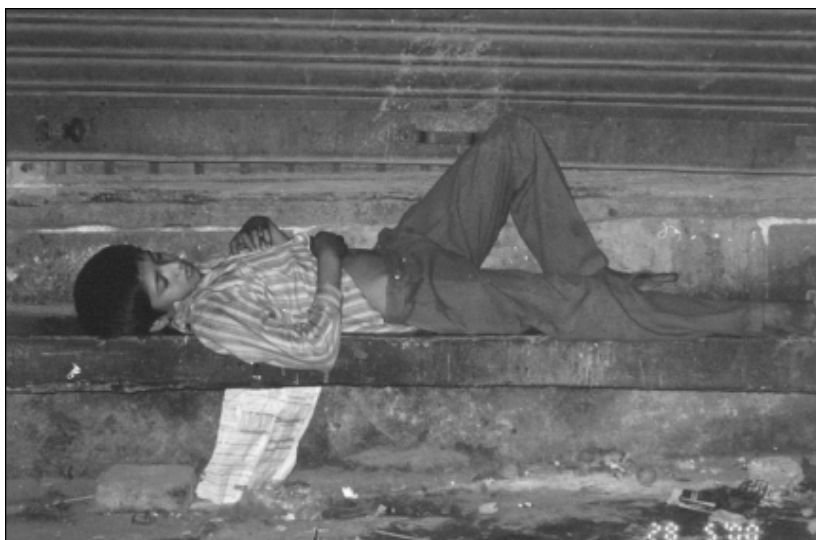
While these markets are generally considered to be unskilled labour markets, in fact a large number of skilled labourers gather here for employment. They however, do not always get employment commensurate with their skills. In addition, the working conditions are often unhealthy and unsafe and working hours longer, than

legally allowed. The wages paid are less than the minimum wages that are statutorily prescribed.

Night Shelters

There are five night shelters in the Walled City – located at Delhi Gate, Turkman Gate, Meena Bazaar, Lahori Gate and S.P. Mukerji Road. These night shelters have deteriorated over time and many facilities are not available. The accommodation is insufficient for even 10% of the homeless present in the Walled City. The shelters also provide the police with a hunting ground to pick-up homeless people who are used to make up their monthly quota of arrests, as a 'crime solving measure'.

The M.C.D. handed over the Meena Bazaar Night Shelter built in 1991 to the police in the same year. The police retained this night shelter till the end of January 1995. The attitude of the M.C.D. and the police reflects the insensitivity of Governmental authorities towards the needs of the homeless. The night shelter adjacent to the Old Delhi Railway Station was taken over by the Delhi Government in July 2000 and turned into a "temporary prison" for "illegal Bangladeshi Migrants" (Mr. Manjit Singh, Additional Commisioner, Slum Wing, M.C.D.). This night shelter was one of the largest shelters for the homeless in the Walled City. It is not known how long the night shelter will be used as a temporary prison and the homeless expect to face the wrath of this winter, in the open.

Map of Delhi

NORTH

MAP: OLD CITY

X Night Shelter

Old Delhi

D E L H I

5 4 3 2 1 0   5   10   15   20 km

km
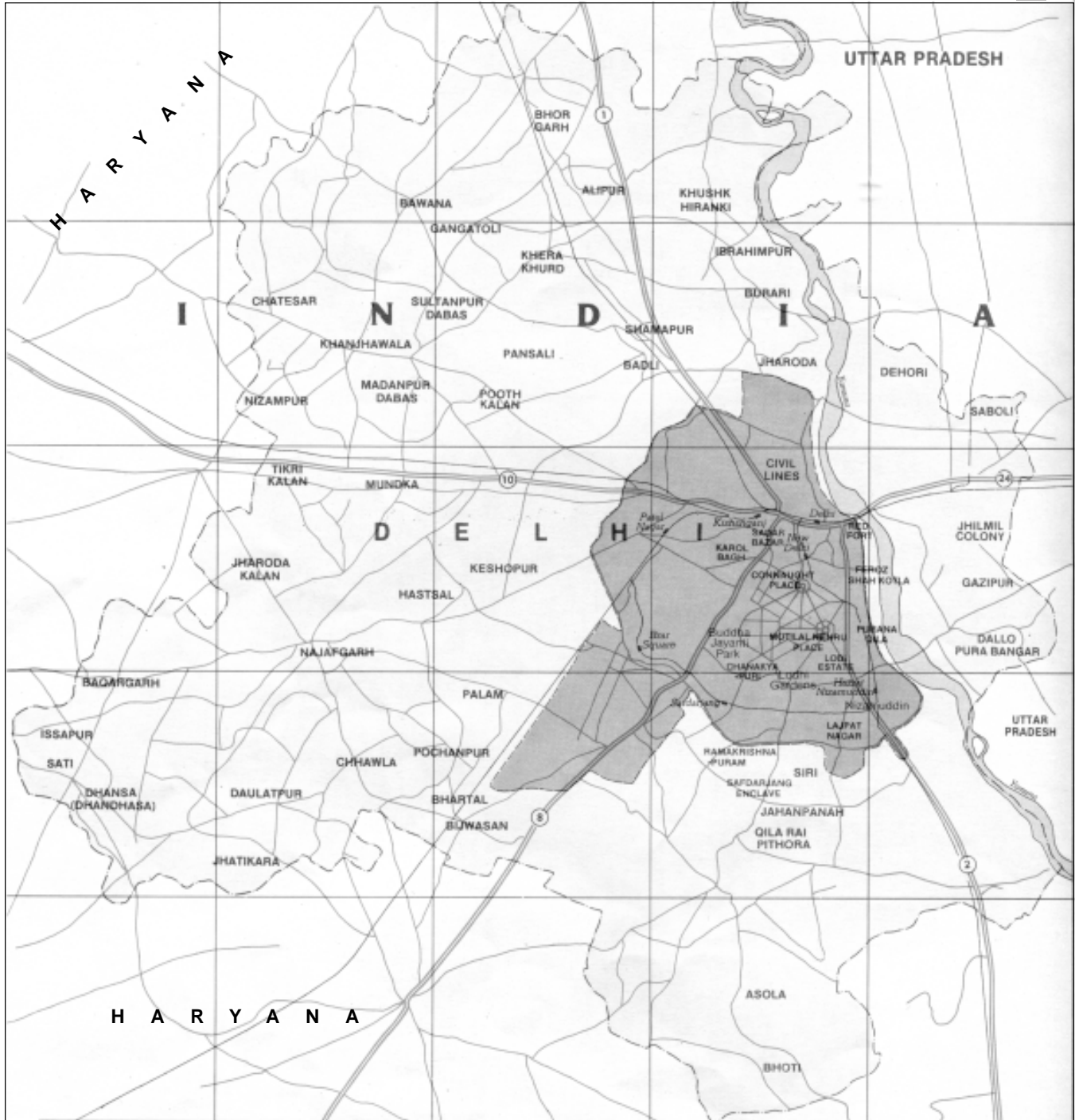
THE OLD CITY

This area comprises that part of Old Delhi which surrounds the Walled City. The boundary for this area is from south of Boulevard Road till Mori Gate and Kashmiri Gate between Rani Jhansi Road and Sarai Rohilla till Paharganj in the south. The area is extremely congested since houses are built close together and the population density is high.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

As it is adjacent to the Walled City, the general economic activity is similar. Thus, it has labour markets, which have become specialised in different occupations. The Sarai Rohilla labour market is for carpenters, the Idgah labour market for mechanics, the Sadar Bazaar Crossing market for handcart pullers/pushers and loaders/unloaders and the Paharganj labour market for house painters, construction workers and helpers. These are the main labour markets but almost every crossing acts as a small labour market. There is intensive economic activity here. The rents here are very high and the people who come here alone, cannot afford a room. This has led to people sleeping on the pavement, in open spaces and in the night shelters.

CONCENTRATION AREAS OF THE HOMELESS

As this area is near the main trading centre of the city, unskilled labour concentrates here. Many people who sleep in the open are rickshaw pullers and most of them sleep on their rickshaws along the roadside or on the pavement. The homeless in this area are also found on and under ISBT Bridge, Mori Gate, Kashmiri Gate, Rani Jhansi Road, Paharganj and Sadar Bazar.

NIGHT SHELTERS

Originally there were three night shelters in this area. However, due to the construction of the Metro Railway, the night shelter at Boulevard Road has been demolished, without any alternative arrangement being made. The remaining shelters are located in S. P. Mukherji Market and Andha Mughal, where the concentration of the homeless is high.

"I used to think that the Raen Baseras (night shelters) provided many facilities. But there was nothing like it at the Old Delhi Raen Basera. Neither, the water there was fit to drink, nor was there any cleanliness or an atmosphere conducive to sleep. While interviewing a person there, head lice started moving all over my files. Within 10-15 minutes I felt like getting away from there, I wonder how people could sleep there. They pay money to sleep there and use the toilets, even then they don't get their due."

– Sonu Khan of NAVJYOTI Delhi Police Foundation.

MAP: CENTRAL DELHI

NORTH

D E L H I

Central Delhi

mt   1000 800 600 400 200   0   1   2   3 km
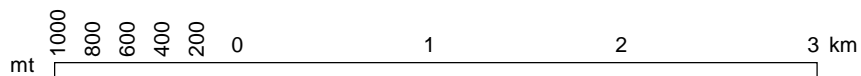
THE CENTRAL ZONE

The Central Zone boundary starts south of Basant Road and Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg till Mandir Marg and goes to Talkatora Marg in the west and then till Lodhi Road in the south going up to India Gate. The eastern boundary is marked by Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg. This area includes New Delhi wherein Parliament and the ministries of the Union Government are all located. The Presidential Estate housing the Rashtrapati Bhawan – the residence and office of the President of India, is also located in this area. The Prime Minister, many Members of Parliament, and many Government servants also reside here.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The main areas of economic activity were originally in Connaught Place and Gole Market. New areas that have now developed are the Punchkuian Road Market (known for furniture and interior decoration items); Shankar Market (originally built as a refugee market but now an assorted retail market); and Asaf Zai Market (deals with electronic print processing and D.T.P work).

CONCENTRATION AREAS OF THE HOMELESS

The number of the homeless is less in this zone, as they are not allowed to sleep in the VIP areas. The homeless are mainly found around Connaught Circus, Mandir Marg, New Delhi Railway Station, Shankar Market, Bangla Sahib, Gole Market, Minto Road and Hanuman Mandir and Sacred Heart Cathedral on Baba Kharak Singh Marg.

NIGHT SHELTERS

There were two night shelters in this area, which were managed and run by the N.D.M.C. They were located at Gole Market and opposite Lakshmi Narayan Temple. The Gole Market Shelter, however, has been demolished and the shelter opposite Lakshmi Narayan Temple has been closed for the past two years.

MAP: SOUTH DELHI

NORTH

✗ Night Shelter

D E L H I

South Delhi

mt 1000 800 600 400 200 0   1   2   3   4   5 km
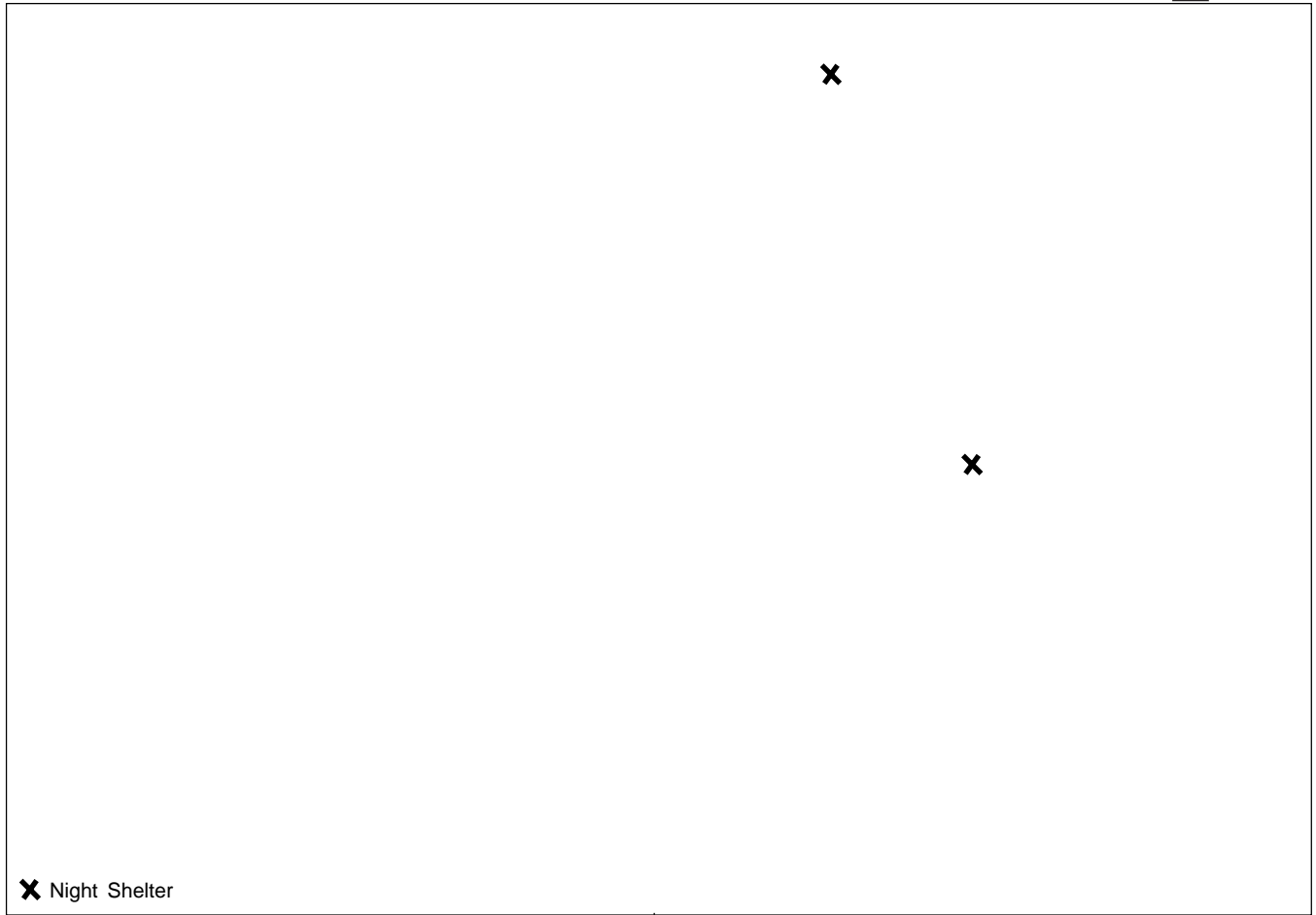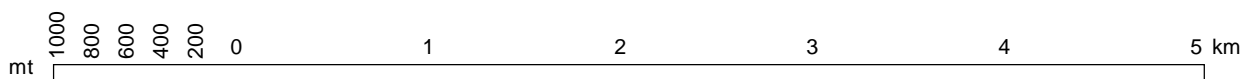
THE SOUTH ZONE

For the purpose of the survey, this zone extends from Nizamuddin (with Lodhi Road as the boundary) to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), and along the Ring Road till Dhaula Kuan (which forms the northern boundary). The Delhi-Jaipur highway forms the western boundary and the River Yamuna marks the eastern boundary. In the south, the zone extends to the Delhi-Haryana border.

In this zone most of the private residential areas are considered high income areas. The private houses are mainly in Vasant Kunj, Vasant Vihar, West End, Anand Niketan, Shanti Niketan, Green Park, Panchsheel Park, Greater Kailash Part-I and II, Lajpat Nagar, Nizamuddin and Defence Colony. Rents are very high compared to the rest of Delhi. There is a large concentration of middle and lower level government employees' residences, located primarily in R.K. Puram, Mohammadpur, Sarojini Nagar and Nauroji Nagar. Around the offices and government colonies, many squatter settlements have developed. The villages, which are in the centre of the zone, such as Hauz Khas, Munirka, Mohammadpur, Moti Bagh, Chirag Delhi, Khirkee, Savitri Nagar, Hauz Rani, Neb Sarai, Katwaria Sarai, Humayunpur and Shahpur Jat, have been completely urbanised and have become important commercial centres. The villages bordering Haryana, however, are still rural.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The economic activity here is a mix of industry and commerce. The main industrial zone is Okhla. The main commercial centres are Nehru Place, Bhikaiji Cama Place, Basant Lok and New Friends Colony. In the commercial centres economic activity is over for the day by 6.30 pm. In the industrial zone work continues for 24 hours. In this zone many squatter settlements have developed and are inhabited by the industrial workers. The main labour markets here are located in Bhogal, Okhla, Kalkaji, Ashram Chowk,

Dhaula Kuan Chowk, Malviya Nagar Chowk, Mehrauli, Nehru Place and Lajpat Nagar.

CONCENTRATION AREAS OF THE HOMELESS

The homeless in this zone are scattered but some of the main concentrations are in Nizamuddin, Lodhi Road, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, markets in Bhogal, Ashram Chowk, Nehru Place, Kalkaji, and Okhla. The homeless are not generally seen in the government colonies and in the private residential areas. One of the reasons for this could be the presence of night watchmen and patrolling police. The homeless are most visible at centres of Hindu worship, such as Kalkaji Temple in Kalkaji, Kalibari in Chittaranjan Park, Sai Baba Temple in Lodhi Road and Malai Mandir in R.K. Puram.

NIGHT SHELTERS

There are two night shelters – in Nizamuddin and Nehru Place. Neither of these night shelters are able to cater to the needs of the people sleeping here. Many people do not want to sleep in these night shelters as they find them dirty. Others consider them to be too far from their place of work and some find the attitude of the persons managing the night shelter offensive.

Many experiments have been undertaken in the Nizamuddin Night Shelter. In 1989-90, a scheme was started for giving vocational training to the homeless in the night shelter, with the help of a government organisation 'Shramik Vidyapeeth', and the Night Shelter Department of M.C.D. However, this scheme has been discontinued. A library was also established in this night shelter in the same year. It continued for two years but was then stopped.

The night shelter at Nehru Place is built on top of a Sulabh Sauchalaya (public toilet) and during the rains, the area around the night shelter and the approach area, is covered with filth floating in the accumulated water. In addition, the sanitary toilet pipe that passes through the night shelter, is cracked in many places, thus spreading a foul smell.

MAP: WEST DELHI

ENCLAVE

PALAM
COLONY   110045

TO POCHANPUR

N.R. MAIN LINE

BAGROLA

SAHIPUR

REWARI

✖ Night Shelter

D E L H I

West Delhi

1000 800 600 400 200

mt   0   1   2   3 km
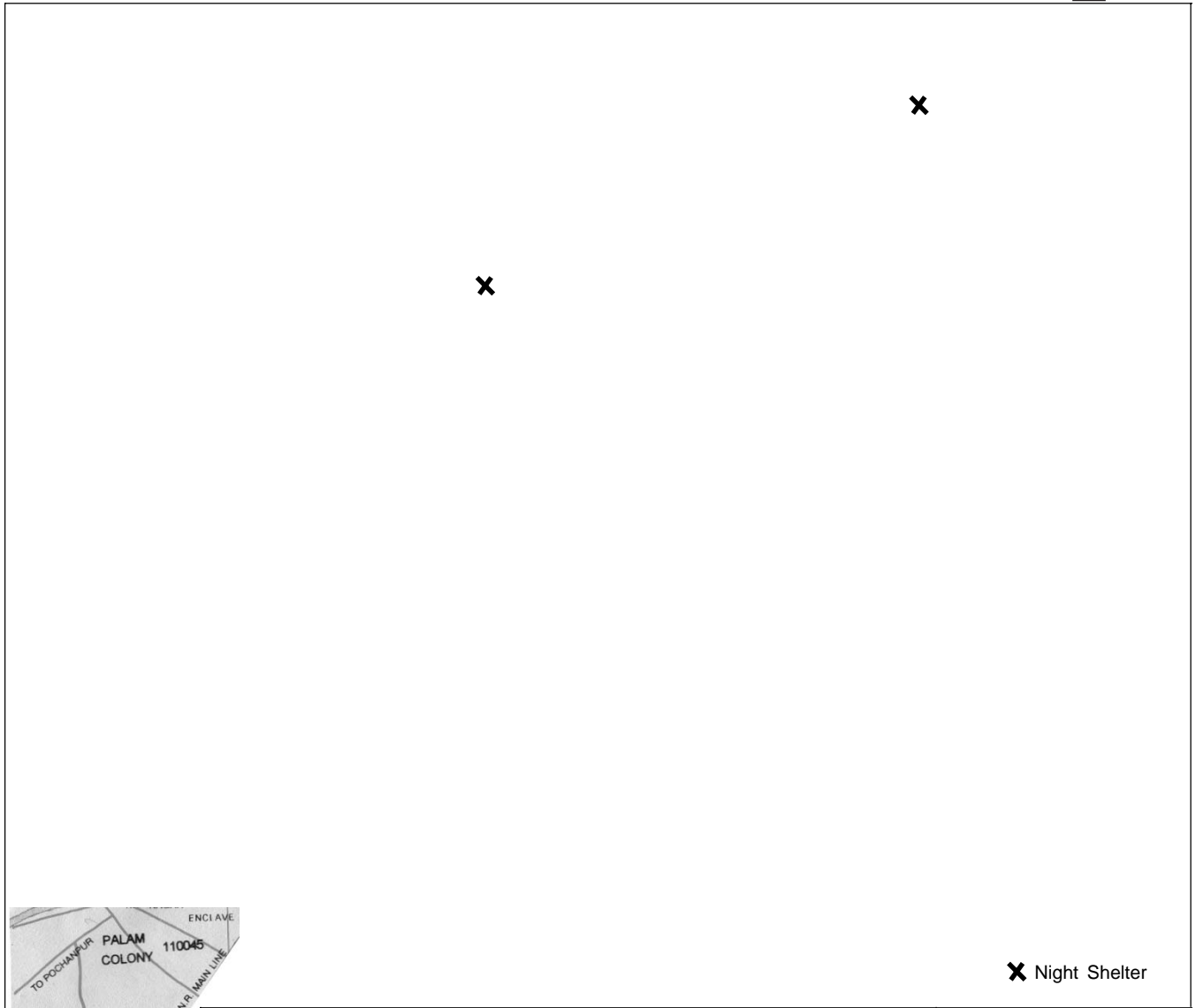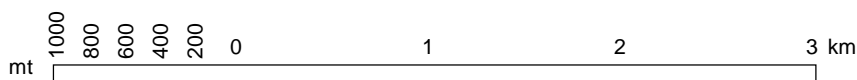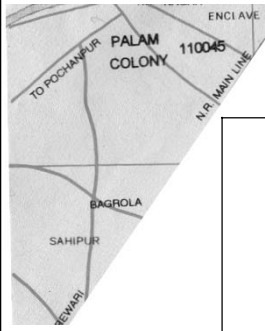
THE WEST ZONE

For the purpose of the study, this zone comprised the area bound by Chamellian Road and Faiz Road in the east, separating it from Old Delhi and Central Delhi respectively; Delhi Ridge separating it from the south; the Delhi - Haryana border in the west and in the north Guru Gobind Singh Marg. This area includes several upper middle class residential areas. It is a mixture of the old and the new with several new colonies coming up.

The residential areas of this zone can be divided into two separate areas of east and west, with the Ring Road forming the division. The eastern side has residential areas mixed with economic areas. The main colonies here are Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar, Trinagar, Inderpuri, Gulabi Bagh and Anand Parbat. On the western side, which is new in comparison to the east, there is a clear-cut demarcation of residential and industrial zones. The residential colonies here are Janakpuri, Vikaspuri, parts of Rohini, Paschim Vihar, Punjabi Bagh, Raja Garden, Saraswati Vihar, Uttam Nagar and Tilak Nagar. The colonies here are occupied by the upper middle income class.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

This zone is also important economically, with activities ranging from retail trade to manufacturing. The main place of retail trade is Karol Bagh. There is also a wholesale market of garments and next to this, on the Jail Road, is the main market for furniture. From Naraina to Mayapuri is a big tile market. In the old section, there are many small industries of packaging material, along with printing presses. Anand Parbat and Zakhira are major

areas for transport. Lawrence Road area has big industries such as the electronic giants, Philips and Sylvania Laxman, and a bottling plant for soft drinks. West of the Ring Road, the main industrial areas are Mayapuri, Nangloi, Pira Garhi and Wazirpur. In these areas the industries are medium scale units, producing paints, chemicals and dyes. The requirement for labour in this zone is very high as most of the industries hire labour on daily wages.

The main source of such labour is from the labour markets located in Karol Bagh, Trinagar Crossing, Anand Parbhat, Zakhira Crossing, Mayapuri Crossing, Wazirpur Crossing, Nangloi, Pira Garhi, Janakpuri District Centre, Punjabi Bagh Crossing, Raja Garden Crossing and Lawrence Road. This zone has a fewer number of slums, but it has got many urban villages.

CONCENTRATION AREAS OF HOMELESS

The homeless in this zone are scattered. The maximum number that could be found in one particular location was not more than 80. The main areas where homeless people are found are Karol Bagh, Trinagar, Dev Nagar, Zakhira Bridge, Daya Basti, Ram Nagar, Hari Nagar Ghanta Ghar, Mayapuri Chowk, Raja Garden Chowk, Ramesh Nagar, Lawrence Road, Inderpuri and Anand Parbat.

NIGHT SHELTERS

There were three night shelters in this zone. However, the night shelter at Karol Bagh has been demolished and a musical fountain constructed in its place. The remaining two night shelters are at Raja Garden Chowk and Shahzada Bagh.

MAP: NORTH DELHI

X Night Shelter

North Delhi

D E L H I

1000 800 600 400 200
mt   0   1   2   3   4   5 km
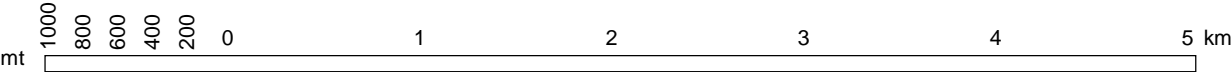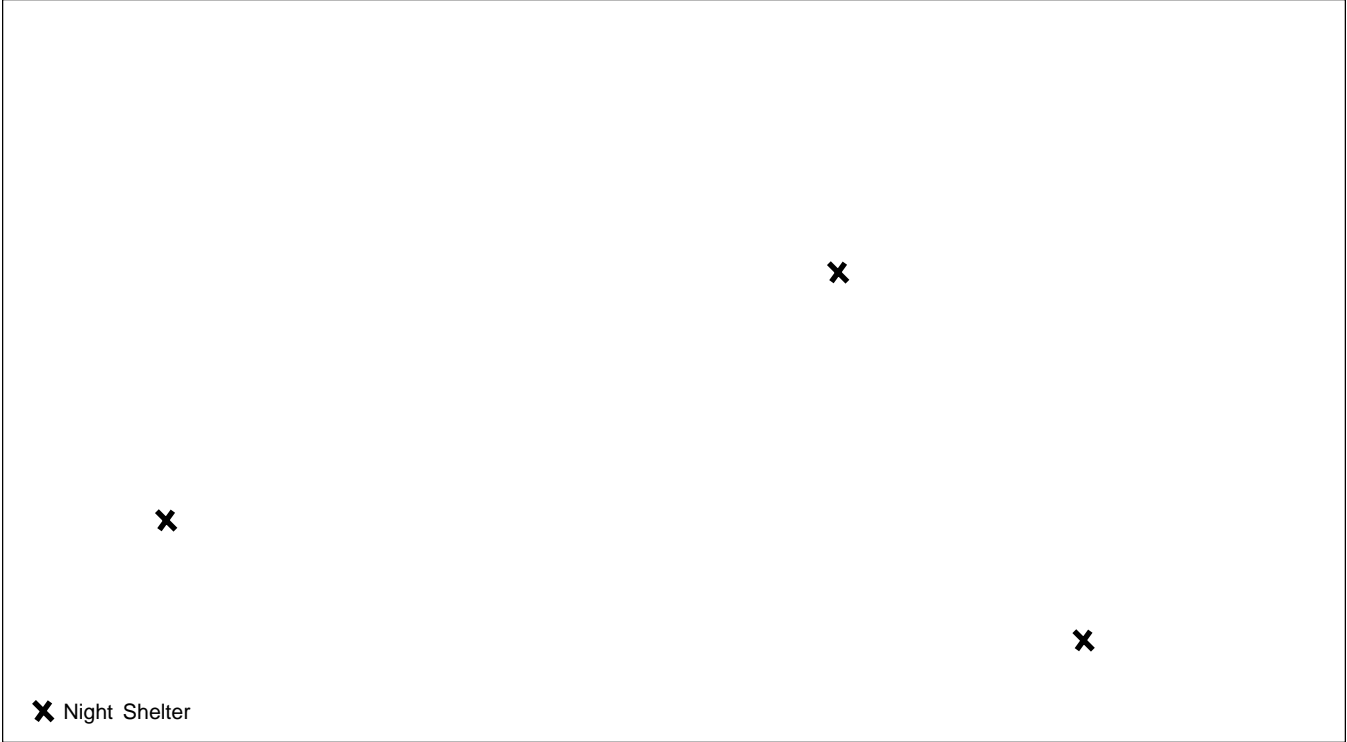
THE NORTH ZONE

For the purpose of the survey, this zone comrpises the area north of the Inter State Bus Terminus. The southern boundary is Boulevard Road and Subzi Mandi, the western boundary is Punjabi Bagh and the eastern boundary is the River Yamuna. Civil Lines where several senior officials of Delhi Government live, forms a part of this zone. Model Town, Mukherji Nagar, Ashok Vihar and Punjabi Bagh are upper and middle class residential areas. Jahangirpuri is a resettlement colony and a big squatter settlement. The University of Delhi is also in the Civil Lines area.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Subzi Mandi and Kamla Nagar are the old commercial centres, which are still important places of trading, Roshanara Road is an important area for surface transportation and Azadpur is Asia's biggest market for vegetables and fruits.

CONCENTRATION AREAS OF THE HOMELESS

The homeless are found in Roshanara Park, Ghanta Ghar, Shakti Nagar Roundabout, Azadpur Market, Azadpur Vegetable and Fruit Market and Kamla Nagar. The main junctions of the markets act as labour markets, such as Ghanta Ghar Crossing near Roshanara Park, Shakti Nagar Crossing, Model Town/Azadpur Crossing, Rani Jhansi Road, Roshanara Road Crossing and the Azadpur Fruit and Vegetable Market.

NIGHT SHELTERS

The three night shelters are situated at Katra Maulabux on Roshanara Road, R. Block Mangolpuri and Sarai Pipal Thala near Azadpur Market. They have been located in the main concentration area of homeless people. However, they fall short and only serve the needs of about 10 –15% of the homeless.

The notice at the Azadpur Night Shelter toilet says, "Washing of Clothes and Bathing Prohibited".

"At Azadpur Raen Basera, people complained about the unavailability of water and their difficulty in using the toilets. Toilets are sometimes locked up and cannot be used. They were actually frightened to speak out, saying that the Basera incharges would beat them up later, throw them out and not let them sleep there again. Then where would they go? They were very frightened of sleeping outside, saying their purses are snatched away while sleeping on footpaths or in parks, in fact even their clothes are taken away"

– Santosh Kumar Sharma from PRAYAS Childline, Jahangirpuri.

MAP: EAST DELHI

NORTH

D   E   L   H   I
East Delhi

✖ Night Shelter

1000 800 600 400 200 0   1   2   3   4   5 km
mt
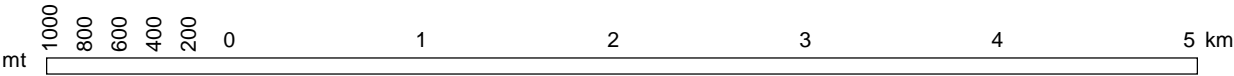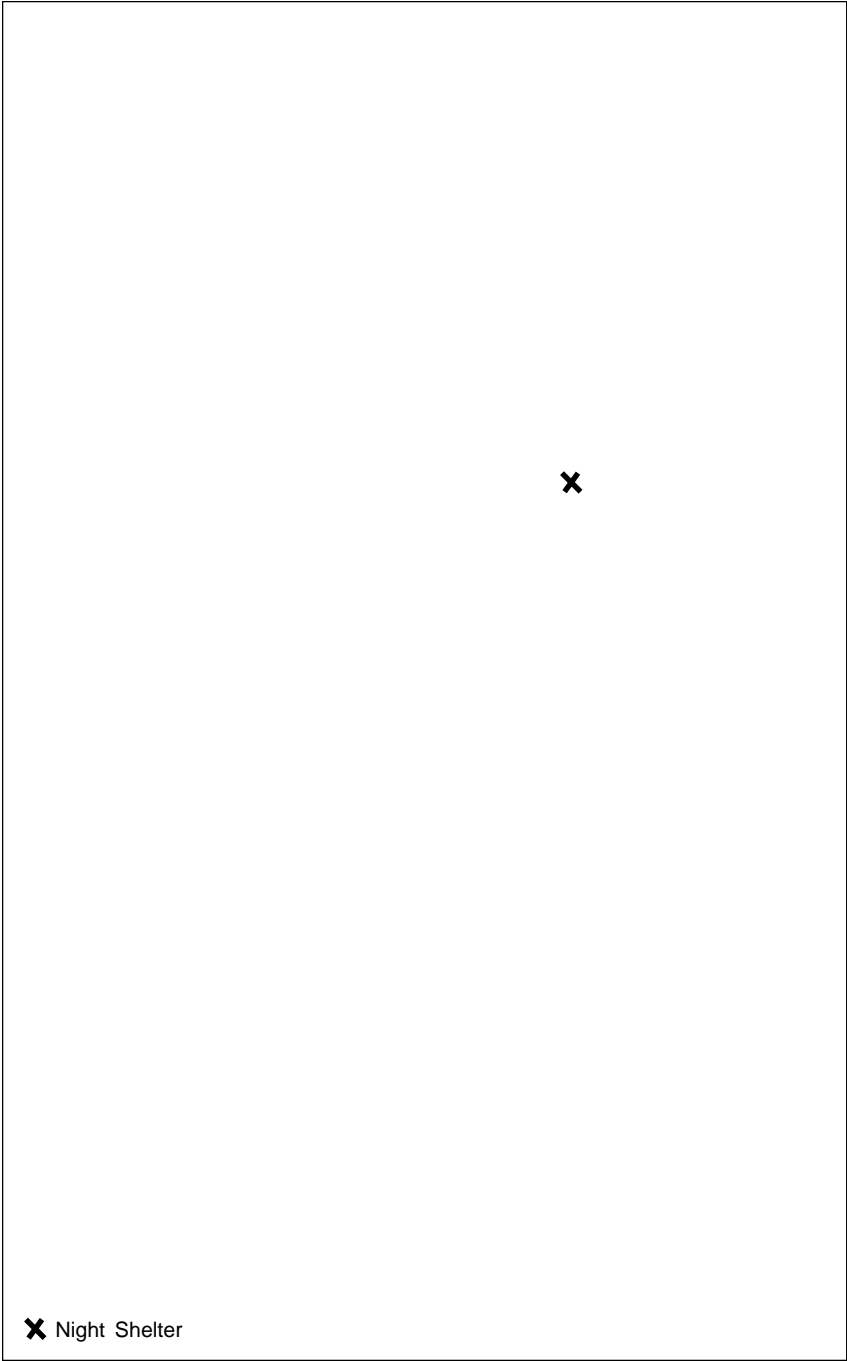
THE EAST ZONE

This area is across the River Yamuna and is also referred to as Trans-Yamuna. The Trans-Yamuna region is still developing. Before 1985 the migrants who came to settle in Delhi settled in this area. At present, the north-eastern area is less developed than the south-eastern and eastern area. These two areas are divided by a railway line. In the southeast, new colonies have developed and high-income earners live here. The northeast has big slums and many unauthorised colonies with problems of sanitation, drainage and drinking water.

AREAS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

This area's economic activity is amidst residential zones. Most of the economic activity involves trading. The manufacturing activity comprises small scale or cottage industries. Apart from the trading and manufacturing, which are not very labour intensive, many people are involved in the informal sector such as repairing electrical household items for their main source of income.

CONCENTRATION AREAS OF THE HOMELESS

The homeless here are very scattered and their number is also fewer than in other zones. This might be due to the economic conditions as the demand for casual labourers is low. It could also be that since the number of slums is high, people are able to construct huts and do not have to live on the pavement. There were no more than 150 homeless people in one place. In other areas 5-10 people could be seen sleeping on the side of the road inside colonies. Thus, on all the roads of one colony only between 50-100 persons were found. The homeless people who were counted were mainly found sleeping on and under the G.T. Road Flyover, Kabul Nagar, Shahdara, Sant Nagar, Yamuna Pushta, Vikas Marg and Yamuna Bridge. Apart from these areas people were scattered all over.

NIGHT SHELTER

The night shelter in East Delhi is one of the oldest night shelters in Delhi. It is situated in Kabul Nagar near the slum and squatter settlements. The condition of this night shelter is very bad.

HEAD COUNT RESULTS

Matrix 2 below gives the final results of the head count. It should be noted here that a large number of people at many places were occupied in loading/ unloading work even at 3 am, and were not counted. In addition to this, with the best effort of all the teams we were only able to penetrate into those areas and places that were approachable and safe for the volunteers. The homeless who sleep in secluded places and venture deep into alleys were normally not approached.

Matrix 2: Number of Homeless Counted During the Rapid Assessment		
Dates	**Zones**	**Number of Homeless Counted**
5th & 6th June	Walled City	15,595
7th June	Old City	4,943
8th June	Central Delhi	5,388
9th June	South Delhi	5,616
12th June'	West Delhi	7,196
13th June	North Delhi	8,391
14th June	East Delhi	5,636
15th & 16th June	Remaining areas	Incorporated in the figures above in respective zones
Total		**52,765***

* This data does not include people sleeping in the night shelters.
The concentration areas of the homeless and the capacity of night shelters is summarised in Matrix 3.

Matrix 3: Concentration Areas of the Homeless and Capacity of Night Shelters in Delhi

Zones and Characteristics	Main Concentration Areas of Homeless	No. of Homeless	Location of Night Shelters	Night Shelters Capacity
Walled City Zone Mixture of residential, commercial and industry. The whole area has been labelled a 'slum'. The railway and bus station are located here.	- Khoya Mandi - S.P. Mukherji Rd - Church Mission Rd - Khari Baoli - Kauria Bridge - Meena Bazaar - Netaji Subhash Marg Park - Asaf Ali Rd	15,595	- Lahori Gate - Meena Bazaar - Turkman Gate - Delhi Gate	1,313
Old City Zone Mixture of residential and commercial. Densely populated. Rents are high.	- ISBT Bridge - Yamuna Bazaar - Mori Gate - Kashmiri Gate - Rani Jhansi Rd - Paharganj - Sadar Bazaar	4,943	- S.P. Mukherji - Andha Mughal	161 Market
Central Zone This zone contains Parliament and many associated government buildings and residential areas. There are a few market areas but no industries.	- Connaught Place - Mandir Marg - New Delhi Railway Station - Shankar Market - Bangla Sahib - Gole Market - Minto Road - Hanuman Mandir	5,388	None	0
South Zone Upper class residential area/ service sector. Okhla main industrial zone with a high concentration of slums.	- Nizamuddin - Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium - Bhogal - Ashram Chowk - Nehru Place - Kalkaji - Okhla	5,616	- Nizamuddin - Nehru Place	541
West Zone This area includes upper/ middle class residential areas. It is a mixture of the old town and new colonies. This zone also has economic activities ranging from retail trade to manufacturing. Homeless scattered.	- Karol Bagh - Trinagar - Dev Nagar - Zakhira Bridge - Daya Basti - Hari Nagar - Mayapuri Chowk - Raja Garden Chowk - Lawrence Rd - Inderpuri - Anand Parbat	7,196	- Shahzada Bagh - Raja Garden	457
North Zone Predominantly upper/middle class residential. Contains Civil Lines area where the senior officials of Delhi Government reside.	- Roshanara Park - Ghanta Ghar - Shakti Nagar Roundabout - Azadpur Market - Kamla Nagar	8,391	- Katra Maulabux - Azadpur - Mangolpuri	415
East Zone New colonies have developed in the southeast but there are many slums and unauthorised colonies in the northeast.	- G.T. Road Flyover - Kabul Nagar - Shahdara - Sant Nagar - Yamuna Pushta - Vikas Marg - Yamuna Bridge	5,636	- Kabul Nagar	50
Total		52,765		2,937* (5.6% of homeless) *Source: Orstom, 1998

The findings that emerge from the the data collected are presented in this section. A total of 690 respondents were interviewed. These people were chosen at random from all parts of Delhi. 96.1% of the respondents were men and 3.9% were women. This disproportionate number of female respondents is a reflection of the greater number of males living on the streets. With such a small number of women surveyed, an analysis of women's experience of living on the streets has not been undertaken.

The majority of respondents were between 19 - 38 years (Please see Graph 1) reflecting that a large number fall in the category of the 'working group' and are productive. Approximately fourteen percent were children under 18 years and 4% were over 59 years.

"A girl staying at Bangla Saheb Gurdwara was born there at the same spot under the tree in front of Bangla Saheb. She is now 13 years old. The reason why she stays there is that she can get food there as langars are held at Bangla Saheb 3-4 times a day. … Last month her father killed her mother and is now in jail. Now she is alone with her two brothers".

– Junaid Khan from PRAYAS

Graph 2 shows that only 4% of the respondents were from Delhi indicating that the homeless are predominantly migrants. The results show that these migrants mainly come from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, followed by West Bengal, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Graph 3 shows that an overwhelming majority of the respondents left their native place because of the lack of employment opportunities. Approximately fifteen percent left their homes because of family problems, which included ill treatment at the hands of family members, property disputes and the death of parents.

"We had an opportunity to survey the Bus depot, Paharganj, and GB Road where the sex trade goes on without any hindrance. We saw women and children standing at the footpaths, forced to sell their bodies. These helpless women were lured here from far away villages in the name of jobs and have been forced into this trade by the touts. We talked to some of them and tried to explain our aims to them, but in return they asked, what is the use of these surveys? Would anyone accept us? Would anyone marry us? Can anyone return our lost respect? Who will speak for us? Fight for us?"

– Mr Ravi Chauhan from BACHPAN BACHAO ANDOLAN, MUKTI ASHRAM.

About eleven percent left home because of the poor economic condition prevailing in the village and 11% left their native place for other reasons such as mental sickness, a fight in the village, or were influenced by others to leave. In all 69% of the respondents (if we add unemployment and poverty) left due to extreme economic distress.

Graph 4 highlights that 74% of the respondents chose to come to Delhi in the hope of better work opportunities. Only 6% came to Delhi because they had relatives or fellow villagers living here. Five percent came to Delhi because it is the nearest big city. Other reasons for coming to Delhi included: they came to see Delhi and stayed on; they came for medical treatment and couldn't get back; and they followed their husbands.

Graphs 3 and 4 demonstrate the 'push' factors which influence people's decision to migrate from the rural areas to the city. Unemployment and the general poor economic conditions prevailing in their villages push them out and they come to Delhi because they think they will find work.

The findings in Graph 5 reveal that over half of the respondents are illiterate (56%). Approximately, one third of respondents have received education up to Class 9, but only 10% have received education past Class 9 and of these only 10 persons had passed Class 12. The category of "others" includes those who have received education at Madarsa or non-formal education. This data indicates that the literacy rate of the homeless is much lower that the overall literacy rate of the people living in Delhi which is 76% (ToTC, 1993: 25).

Graph 4: Reasons for Choosing Delhi
(Total Respondents = 690)

Number of Respondents

- Work Opportunities: 74%
- Acquaintance in Delhi: 6%
- Proximity to Native Place: 5%
- Others: 9%
- No Answer: 6%

Reasons for Choosing Delhi

F I N D I N G S

Graph 6: Employment
(Total Respondents = 690)

A bar chart titled "Graph 6: Employment" with the y-axis labeled "Number of Respondents" ranging from 0 to 200, and the x-axis labeled "Type of Work".

Type of Work	Percentage
Rickshaw Puller	29%
Casual Worker	26%
Catering Work	7%
Handcart Puller	4%
Rag Picker	3%
Others	20%
No Work	4%
No Answer	7%

As per Graph 6, approximately 90% of the respondents are employed, indicating that work opportunities in Delhi do exist. About one third of the respondents are working in the transport sector. Twenty six percent are not working in any specific job and they do whatever work they can get at the labour market. In the 'other work' category people were working as sweepers, fruits vendors, water vendors, street sex workers, beggars etc. The fact that almost all work undertaken by the homeless is unskilled is a reflection of the fact that a majority of them are illiterate as shown in Graph 5. However, about 40% do have some form of education but they are unable to get corresponding work. In fact, we came across very many respondents who were skilled in weaving and handicrafts but that was neither required in their villages nor in Delhi. Hence, they took to rickshaw pulling etc.

Graph 7 reveals that nearly 20% of the homeless earn below the United Nations accepted universal poverty line rate of $1 (about Rs.45) per day. Almost 70% of the respondents are earning below the minimum wage, which is Rs.96 per day, as fixed under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Roughly half the people surveyed earn between Rs.51 and Rs.100, and within this group about 60% of them are earning between Rs.70 - Rs.80. Those earning more than Rs.100 are mainly earning between Rs.100 and Rs.150. These wages are very low considering Delhi has the highest per capita income of any city in India (ToTC, 1993:26).

According to Graph 8, 45% of the respondents spend less than Rs.50 per day; within this group most of them spend between Rs.30 and Rs.40. Thirty three percent of the respondents spend between Rs.51 and Rs.75. Observations indicate that this money is mainly spent on food. Those who spend their entire daily earnings are usually the persons who earn very little such as beggars or rag pickers. Interaction with drug addicts revealed that they spend all their earnings on drugs.

Graph 9 results show that the majority of the respondents save money. About 11% refused to reveal whether they were saving or not and this may be for security reasons. The homeless save money by living on the streets close to where they work, thereby eliminating the cost of commuting. A large number of those who save money send it back home to their families (please see Graph 10). Lack of a safe and secure place to keep money and any other belongings emerged as a major problem, and theft is a common occurrence.

Fifty nine percent of the respondents, as shown in Graph 10, said that they were sending money home which indicates that nearly all who save money send it to their families. Most people said that they take the money home with them when they go but others said that they send it through their fellow villagers or friends. Very few send it by Money Order. Thirty seven percent said that they do not send any money back home and of those 14% said this was because they cannot save enough and 4% were from Delhi. Four percent of the respondents refused to answer.

Dead tired !

Graph 11 shows that 77% of the respondents maintain contact with their families back home. Correlation of the variables of Graphs 10 and 11 show that the people who are in touch with their family are more likely to send money home. About 22% of the respondents do not have any contact or do not want to be in touch with their families, and many of these were people who had run away from home. Just over 1% refused to answer.

Seventy percent of the respondents visit their native place (please see Graph 12). Most of them go to their native place once a year during the festival season; about 10% visit once in two years. About one third of the respondents had not visited their native place. Most of these people had run away from home, left their native place because of some dispute or had only just arrived in Delhi and hadn't been back yet. It is also possible that some of them cannot afford to visit their native place and this would explain the discrepancy between the number of those who have family contact and the

number of those who actually visit their family.

Graph 13 shows that over one third of the respondents have been sleeping on the pavements or in the open for more than 5 years. This demonstrates that sleeping in the open is by no means a short-term survival necessity, whereby people come to Delhi, earn enough money and then go back to their village. It is more likely that they will spend years on the street, indicating that there are few factors at work drawing migrants back to rural areas.

One of the reasons for undertaking a Rapid Assessment was because it was thought the homeless do not stay in one place for long and the survey team wanted to do the head count as quickly as possible to avoid recounting the same people. However, Graph 14 reveals that this assumption may have been wrong, as 55% of respondents had not changed their place of sleeping during the past month. Eleven percent change their sleeping place either more than three times a month or frequently. The reasons given for moving were primarily because of the problems faced at the sleeping place such as the weather, for example during winter they sleep either under a veranda, in night shelters or on rented cots; or due to a shift in their work area.

Correlation of data shows that the people who change their sleeping place more than twice in a month are often rickshaw pullers. A recent article on rickshaw pullers states about one rickshaw *wallah* that, "He plies the rickshaw in Chandni Chowk and Sadar Bazaar. And parks the rickshaw anywhere on the roadside when his limbs give up on him. And sleeps. If the police *wallahs* don't drive him away" (First City : 52). The nature of employment plays an important role in a person's choice of sleeping place. A large number of people who are in the transport sector have no fixed place to sleep.
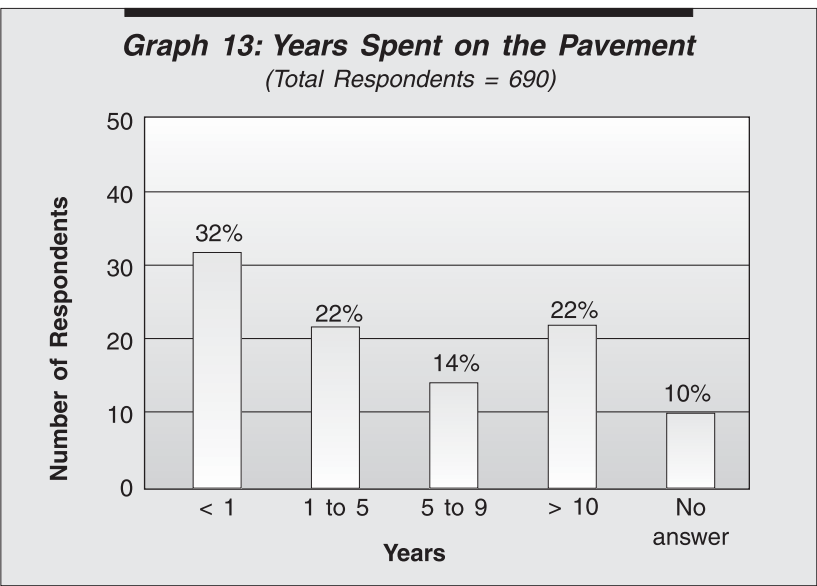
Graph 13: Years Spent on the Pavement
(Total Respondents = 690)

Years	Number of Respondents
< 1	32%
1 to 5	22%
5 to 9	14%
> 10	22%
No answer	10%
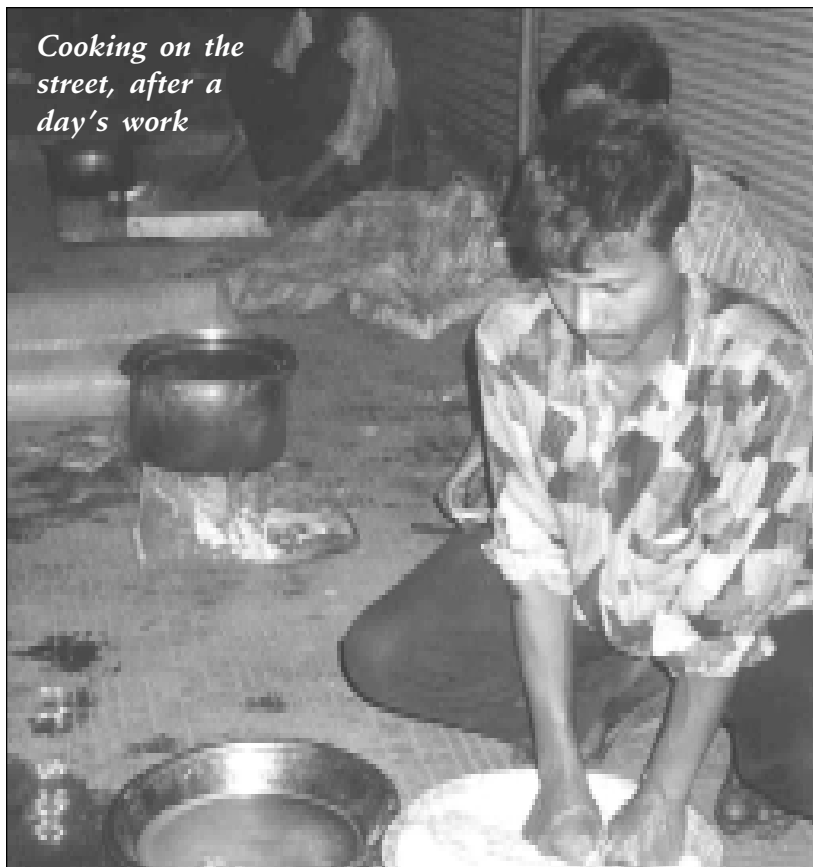
Cooking on the street, after a day's work

The most common problem, faced by 41% of the respondents, is police brutality, as shown in Graph 15. The next biggest problem stated was the weather and many spoke of problems faced during the monsoons and in winter. The local mafia was also mentioned as a problem in connection with *hafta* (please see 'Renting Pavement Space' box on page 9). Out of 690 respondents, 550 respondents gave more than one problem. Only 107 respondents did not encounter any problems at their place of sleeping and these people were either sleeping in the markets where they work or renting cots.

The volunteers observed that the difficult life led by the homeless, for example, sleeping in uncomfortable places in all kinds of weather, living with constant harassment, long working hours, harsh work conditions and being separated from family and friends can take a toll on them. Many have serious health problems including skin diseases, respiratory illnesses and viral infections but often do not go to hospital because they do not want to waste a day's wage and also do not think they will receive treatment. According to one paper bag maker, "Doctors do not bother about us in government hospitals. We are kept sitting there all day and lose one day's wage. And during an emergency, we merely get pushed around" (ToTC, 1993: 36).

It was also noted by volunteers that some of the homeless were suffering from depression and other forms of mental illness. WHO estimates that there are 1 lakh seriously mentally ill people and 6 – 10 lakh of persons with mild mental illness in Delhi (ToTC, 1993: 38). There have been no studies, however, on how many of these

...AND SHE FINALLY REACHED HOME

As a part of the Rapid Assessment Survey we surveyed around the Karampura Bus Terminal. We had with us a team of 10 volunteers from Sahara Home. It was about 3.45 in the morning when we saw a woman (name withheld for reasons of anonymity) sitting on the pavement of Pusa Road. She was in her early twenties, a very frail built, malnourished, woman. As we approached her we felt that she did not look mentally normal. As we started talking to her our fears proved to be right – she was quite incoherent. With a lot of soothing conversation and effort on our part to understand what she meant, we could fathom that:

❖ She had walked out of her home in a situation of distress

❖ She was mentally unstable

❖ She was poor (discerned from appearance)

❖ Her husband had rejected her

❖ She feared the people at her home (she kept telling us that they would beat her if she went back)

❖ She kept repeating that she had gone mad ("main pagal ho gayen hoon")

She told us that her house was near Natraj Cinema and she mentioned a locality but it made no sense to any of us. After a lot of deliberation, we decided to check out the area near Natraj cinema with her. There were some discussion about whether to drop her at a shelter home for women, but finally we decided to make a trip to the area she was referring to. She resisted in going back with us and asked to be left behind on the road but eventually we convinced her to come with us.

We got out of the car near Natraj Cinema and the woman agreed that this was the place of her home. She walked confidently in the lanes leading to the interiors of colony and it was a delight to watch an incoherent person's instinct for home. She would stop after some time and turn around and ask us politely to leave. It was as if she was ashamed of having to make a group of well-dressed people walk in filth. We approached a slum area and she walked us right into her house without stopping anywhere. It turned out to be approximately 2 kilometres walk. It_was the Basai Darapur Slum.

Her mother had gone to lodge a FIR with local police about her 'missing daughter'. We were informed that the woman had left home at around 6 p.m. the previous evening. Her husband had deserted her and married another woman. She was living in her parent's home. The neighbours told us that she had been screamed at and beaten up by her brother since she went mad. They said that she often "reacted violently" to people. However, all the original information she gave us was correct. We spoke to the family members, which included her brother and sister-in-law, and her neighbours for an hour .On our way back we met her mother who was returning from the police station in a completely dishevelled state.

Certain facts emerge very strongly from the above situation :

❖ That a distressed woman alone on the street is heading towards homelessness

❖ Escape from a stressful situation within the community can force a person into homelessness

❖ It was very fortunate that she had spent around six hours on the street without any attempts of sexual harassment.

❖ Stress within the community forces a woman into a position of absolute vulnerability

I would like to take this opportunity to accentuate upon the fact that around 99% of the women that I met on the streets had been thrown out of families and were under severe mental stress and often incoherent.

– Shalini Vatsa

"A man met me on 5th June. He told me that he was sleeping at Azad market at night when a policeman came over and hit him twice with a baton, and said, "do you know sleeping here is an illegal offence?" He replied that he did not know this. Then the policeman said that he should hand over all his money to him, or the policeman would get him jailed. The man was frightened and gave him all his money. The policeman had threatened the man to such an extent that he was not willing to give his name."

-**Tabrez of PRAYAS**
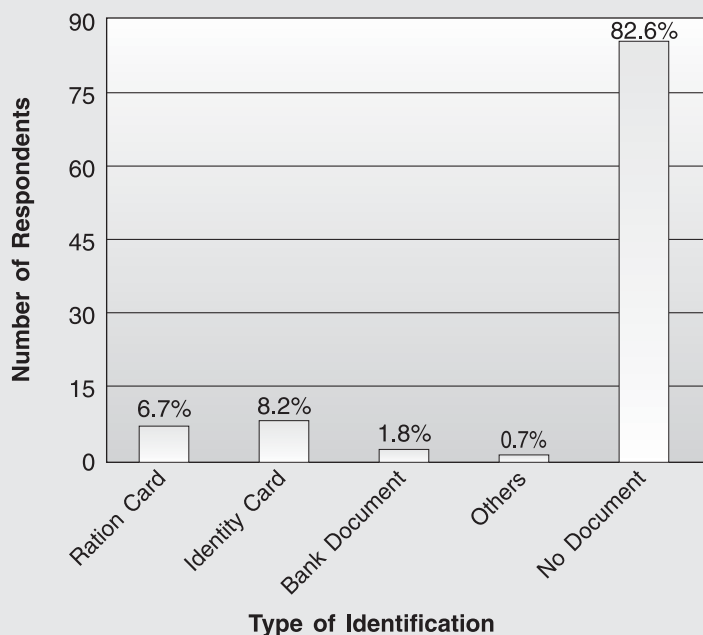
HOMELESSNESS IS A SOCIAL PROBLEM

We have come to believe, having completed the study, that homelessness is indeed primarily a social problem, but that there are also individual factors. When we look at the lives of the people in our study, we see significant failures on the social policy side to provide people with adequate food, clothing, and shelter, making it extremely difficult for anyone, let alone people with some of these vulnerabilities, to achieve a reasonable degree of residential stability.

... If you read studies in the mental health literature about homelessness, they tend to repeat that 30-50 percent of people who are homeless have a mental illness, and that mental illness must be a major causative factor of homelessness. What our findings say is that **mental illness is not a major precipitating cause of homelessness** in Metro Toronto. There is a relatively small group of people who are homeless, who need intensive mental health services (that group identified as having serious mental illness). The issue for the mental health system is to create ways to reach out and engage these people who are clearly in need of support. More fundamental issues have to do with entitlements, availability of housing, and employment opportunities, and these are the important issues for the larger number of people who are homeless.

_____

Source: Dr. Don Wasylenki. Pathways Project and Prevalence Findings. In Mental Illness and Pathways into Homelessness: Findings and Implications. November 3, 1997 Conference Proceedings. A Workshop of the Mental Health Policy Research Group (CMHA Ontario Division, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, Ontario Mental Health Foundation).

Graph 16: Proof of Residence in Delhi
(Total Responses = 690)

Bar chart — X-axis: Type of Identification; Y-axis: Number of Respondents (0–90). Values: Ration Card 6.7%, Identity Card 8.2%, Bank Document 1.8%, Others 0.7%, No Document 82.6%.

mentally ill people are living on the streets.

Sadly, a large number of the homeless have turned to substance abuse of *thaili* (alcohol), *ajim* (marijuana) and heroin to escape from the harshness of life on the streets. It was not uncommon for volunteers to come across groups of the homeless huddled together inhaling 'smack'. This occurrence was most prevalent in Yamuna Bazaar, ISBT Bridge, Connaught Place and the Jama Masjid area.

Volunteers also expressed disbelief at the precarious nature of the sleeping places chosen by the homeless, especially those sleeping on dividers in the middle of the road, on the curbside of busy roads or on the walls of bridges and flyovers. These sleeping places are not only uncomfortable and noisy but also dangerous as recently illustrated in the news where a speeding truck ploughed through 21 labourers who were sleeping by the roadside in the Burari area killing two people and injuring eight others (Times of India, 16 October, 2000). The driver of the truck did not stop, which is a shocking reflection of the callous attitude of some Delhi citizens towards the homeless, whom they view as worthless and dispensable.

Graph 16 shows that the bulk of the homeless, over 82% have no ration card or voter's identification in Delhi. Only about 15% of the respondents have a valid identification document. Some people, who have jhuggis on the pavement, for example at Mithai Pul in the Walled City, have both a ration card as well as a voter's identity card. Other people who have these documents often stay in a market where they are given these at the behest of the Market

'AT LONG... LAST, THE HOSPITAL RESPONDED'

Shraddanand Mishra, who is 45 years old, came to Delhi from Bihar to earn a living. He was working as a supervisor in a construction company. The *Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan (AAA)* Team found him on a pavement near Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital, with blood oozing out from his head. He had kept his head on a newspaper and the paper was soaked with blood. He had been lying there for the last five days without any medical help being administered to him. A very foul smell was coming from his wound and he looked ashamed as many people had pointed out to him that some kind of insects were coming out from his wounds, but nobody cared to take him to the hospital.

He told us that about a month before he had developed a fever and some kind of rash over his body. At that time he was referred to a Dr. Gautam at RML. Ten days ago, a sore developed on his head for which the doctor recommended dressing, but the staff at the hospital refused to do it and subsequently the wound become infected with maggots.

The AAA team took him to the hospital. The doctor who was on duty, said that he needed to be operated on but as the Operation Theatre had just been fumigated it could not be used for 12 hours and he referred him for dressing. When the team took him for dressing the attendants kept on sending him from one room to another room as the sight of the wound repulsed them. His Out Patient Department (OPD) Card dated 5th June showed that he was referred to a Room No. SC 12 with the diagnosis "pain, discharge of pus and bleeding in the occipital region". The subsequent day's entry just pointed out that he was made to move from one room to another. That night he was not given any dressing and was then refused admittance to the hospital. So the team left him in the care of someone with the promise of coming the next day.

The next day, when some of the team members went to the hospital and took him to the OPD, again he was referred for dressing, which again was denied. The team members then contacted Indian Express and told the reporter from there about the sorry state of the patient and the refusal by the hospital authorities, and asked him for his help. This help was sought because doctors refused to listen, even to us, saying that many organisations bring these people here and then leave them without taking care of them. They asked, "who is going to take care of him and who will pay for his expenses?". The team members reminded doctors that there is a provision made by the Government for the free treatment of these people and also as the RML hospital is government run it is their duty to do so. But these pleas fell on deaf ears.

When the reporter questioned some of the doctors, whom the patient had approached, they said that they were not authorised to speak and the reporter was asked to contact the Medical Superintendent. However, one doctor, on condition of anonymity, said that "the patient is psychologically unwell", but had no answer for not attending to the patient.

The Medical Superintendent had no knowledge of the case, but assured us he would to look into the matter. He also refused to say why the patient had not been administered a simple dressing for more than five days. He also put the blame on the patient saying that may be it was the patient's fault for not going to the right person or approaching the OPD at the wrong hour. He agreed that maggot infestation needs careful dressing.

By late evening, with intervention from the *Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan* Team and the reporter, the patient did get his dressing and was admitted to the hospital. The attending doctor then stated that if the aid had come any later, it could have developed into a serious condition.

– Dhananjay Tingal

The findings in Graph 17 clearly show that the majority of the respondents have no political affiliation. Only one person was a member of a political party and of the few that were affiliated with 'other' organisations, most of these belonged to small, local unions. Consequently, very few are involved in any political activity, for example, attending rallies or meetings. There is a common perception that many migrants are brought to Delhi to support political rallies and then end up staying in the city, but this was found to be untrue.

One of the respondents said that if politicians did something for them then they would be more politically active. However, till date no politician has been interested in their problems. This sentiment was reiterated by a rickshaw puller who when asked about his interest in politics said, *"Shaher mein koi kisi ka nahin hota. Koi aadmi ko nahin puchta, sab paise ke peeche bhaagte hain. Aur jahan mujihe daal roti milti hai, wahi mera shaher hai"* (In the city nobody is yours. No one cares for human beings, everyone is after money. Wherever I get my bread and butter is the [city to which] I belong) (First City : 53). A major reason for the disinterest in this group by politicians is that a majority of the homeless cannot exercise their voting rights, as they do not have any proof of their residence in Delhi. Therefore, politicians see no benefit in helping them as compared to slum dwellers, who form 'vote banks'.

None of the respondents were associated or involved with any civil society organisation, suggesting that this section of the urban poor have also been neglected by CSOs and social service organisations.

Association, who are often connected with specific political parties.

One of the main problems faced by the homeless is police harassment and brutality. They can be arrested at any time for being 'illegal vagrants' under the Bombay Vagrancy Act, 1959. This is compounded by the fact that a majority do not have any proof of their residence in Delhi. Often, *hafta* is sought by the police on this pretext. Lack of proof of residence is also a major reason for the homeless being refused medical treatment. This is highlighted by the recent case where a 25 year old migrant worker was told he was "ineligible" for treatment at a government hospital because he did not have any evidence to prove he lived in Delhi. Doctors at the hospital involved, said it was not an isolated case and that "a large number of patients are turned away on the ground that they cannot provide any proof of their residence in the Capital" (Hindustan Times, 17 September 2000).

The results in Graph 18 indicate that 54% of the respondents use public toilets, which include government toilets, Sulabh toilets, night shelter toilets or the toilets in markets or public buildings. Forty percent use these public facilities for bathing and washing clothes. However, the results also show that a significant proportion go in the open for these purposes.

Volunteers observed that there were very few public toilets and the existing toilets were often not maintained properly, and as a result were unhygienic and unpleasant to use. One government toilet in the Walled City was in such a state of decay and disrepair that it had been condemned. This was indicated by a large sign. However, people continued to use these toilets. This llustrates desperate measures on the part of the homeless, who have no other choice apart from going in the open. These toilets are not only degrading and violate human dignity but, are also

Graph 18: Sanitation
(Total Respondents = 690)

Legend: Toilets, In the Open, No Answer

Type of Activity — Going to the Toilet (54%, 24%, 22%), Bathing (40%, 29%, 31%), Washing Clothes (44%, 41%, 15%)

Y-axis: Number of Respondents

"As for our personal experience, people ask for toilets more than they ask for shelter. They manage somehow without a roof – with laughter or with pain. They even tolerate the batons of policemen, but the lack of toilets is a big problem for them. In the slums near our place or where they stay, or at bus terminals or near railway stations, these people do not use toilets, instead they go to the roadsides or to parks. So the parks meant for people to sit or for children to play, become dirty. So toilets are a great necessity for them and we should focus our attention on this point."

– Mukesh from SAHARA
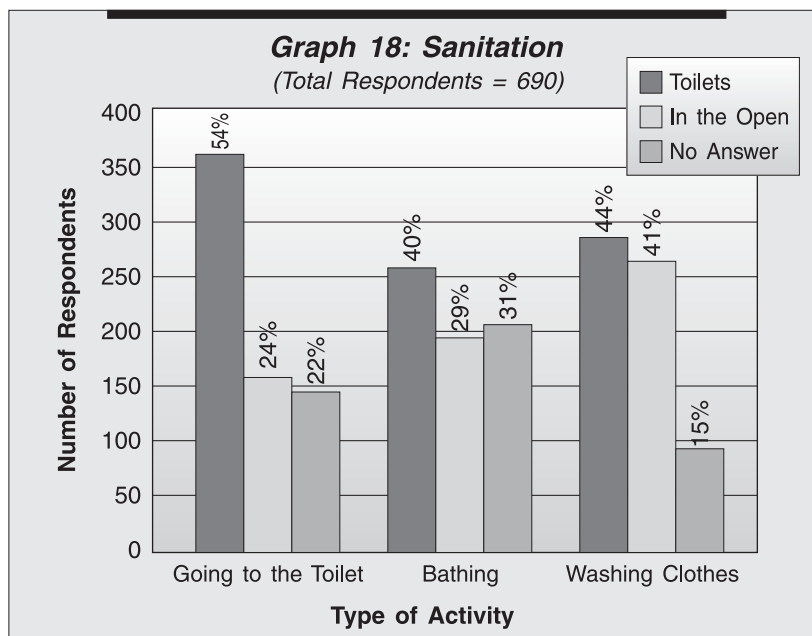
dangerous. This danger was recently highlighted when a wall built around a MCD toilet collapsed and killed three people in Trilokpuri. The MCD was planning to reconstruct the broken lavatory block and had built a temporary wall around it. Local people in the area said "the toilets were a disaster waiting to happen" and demanded that similar toilets be demolished (Indian Express, 6 October 2000).

many diseases caused by worms. Some 50 infections can be transferred from a diseased person to a healthy one via a direct or indirect excreta route (WSSCC, 2000). Lack of adequate public sanitation facilities also creates unique problems for women. Women and adolescent girls usually go out early in the morning to go to the toilet, wash and clean themselves. However, if there are no facilities available, they are often forced to wait until dark for privacy and are often unable to wash at all. As a result women are increasingly prone to urinary diseases and other health related complications (DfID, 2000).

Graph 19 shows that most of the respondents are uncertain about their future plans. Nineteen percent said they would remain permanently in Delhi but these respondents mainly consisted of those who had run away from home or have no idea about their roots. Only 4% are certain that they will return to their native place. While many hoped to go back, some of the respondents said returning home was dependent on how much money they were able to earn. As seen in Graph 3, decisions to return home are probably also affected by the economic situation in the person's native place, so that even if he was able to save a significant amount of money, he would be forced to continue working in Delhi because of the poor work prospects at home. Little wonder, that the bulk of homeless, i.e., 45% had no idea, as to how long they would continue to live in such appalling conditions in Delhi. In the shrinking spaces of Delhi. In the spaces which are being purged and cleared of people to make way for 'beautiful Delhi'. Sans the people, who made it possible for Delhi to be what it is today.

Lack of adequate sanitation can be responsible for severe health problems, such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid, paratyphoid, infectious hepatitis and

The survey findings definitely provide a basis for questioning certain popular notions regarding the homeless - that they are 'criminals', 'destitutes' and 'a burden on society'. The very fact that almost 60% of the respondents earn, save, have linkages with their families and send money back home show that the homeless lead this kind of life out of sheer economic necessity.

The homeless are a highly heterogeneous population. They could be, broadly, said to lead the following existences:

✳ Those who have been thrown out of their homes by their parents, children, or husband.

✳ Those who have left their homes due to recurrent disputes and fights

✳ Those who have migrated from their villages due to economic compulsions; they are largely employed as casual labour

Whose tomorrow ? ▼

✳ Those who have been born on the city's pavements and know no other life.

Each one adapts and adopts his/her own survival mechanism. Some of our team members came across persons who pretend to be insane. Always watchful and distrustful of strangers, they do respond to persistent and sincere efforts to communicate.

The head count gives us the minimum numbers of the homeless. The homeless sleep on the pavement, flyovers in parks, under bridges, corridors, on roofs of shops, dividers in the middle of busy roads and in night shelters provided by the M.C.D. Approximately one third of these people live in the Walled City, which, with its many commercial and manufacturing activities, provides a large number of informal job opportunities, which attracts migrant workers and unskilled labourers. The concentration areas of homeless people shown in Matrix 3 indicates that the homeless sleep close to their place of employment.

Delhi Development Authority
Laying foundations for a better tomorrow
बेहतर कल की बुनियाद

'Chasing smack' at Yamuna Bazaar

"*We can collectively tackle the police brutality, they will run for their lives. But we will be behind bars for that. Around the police stick, the support of the entire nation is there. We have none to support us.*"

— A homeless on Delhi streets

This enables them to be first in the labour markets to get work and also eliminates the cost of commuting.

Fourteen of the original 19 nights shelters provided by M.C.D are operational, but these cater to less than 6% of the homeless population and there is no provision of shelters for women, girl children and families (there are some shelters for women and girl children being run by CSOs). In addition, the survey revealed that these night shelters are hardly utilised in summer as they are badly maintained,lack basic facilities and in some cases are used by the local goondas for indulging in various vices in connivance with the chowkidar of the shelter. We ourselves witnessed one chowkidar taking drugs in a night shelter. In the other, the police constable alongwith local goondas were having a liquor session in the night shelter. We also heard allegations of harassment of inmates and theft of their belongings in the shelters.

The findings indicate that a large number of the homeless are migrants who come to Delhi to seek employment. Unless poverty in rural areas is addressed, the numbers of migrants

coming to Delhi and sleeping on the streets will only continue to increase. The findings also demonstrate that the homeless are one of the most vulnerable groups in the city. They are often deprived of civic amenities such as sanitation; denied access to medical treatment; and face daily beatings from police. **So much so that police brutality ranks highest amongst the problems faced by the homeless.** We saw quite a few policemen beating the homeless with their sticks. And unfortunately, this is the only language that the police understands to speak with the homeless.

Survey observations reveal that a large section of the homeless are prone to ill health – physical and mental – as a result of life on the streets. They are affected by general health problems such as skin diseases, respiratory illnesses and viral infections caused by poor sanitary conditions. To escape the physical and mental stress of living on the streets, some of them seek refuge in substance abuse.

The survey provides a glimpse into the gravity and magnitude of the problem of homelessness. By its very nature, the problem demands strong networking amongst all the key players – Government, civil society organisations and the civil society. Available governmental infrastructure and resources need to be utilised, effectively. Given the prevailing socio-economic conditions and liberalisation, the importance of State intervention does not need to be stated; especially within the 'Welfare' principles enshrined in our Constitution.

The survey threw up many forms of deprivation, violations and indignities faced by the homeless – police brutality,

"I met a woman at Mithai Pul who said that her daughter got lost when she was 2-3 years old during a riot, and has still not been found. The police did not help her look for her, and now she does not know where her daughter is or in what condition. The woman was very sad and it was as if she wanted to go on talking, telling everything that had happened to her. … I met an old man near Birla Mandir who himself did not have anything to eat or drink, but he had the responsibility of looking after an 18 year old boy, a victim of polio. As the boy was unable to do anything, the old man was very worried as to what would happen to the boy after him. I met another man at a Raen Basera who'd taken a loan of Rs.15-16,000 which he was unable to repay. He came to Delhi thinking that his brother would help him, but the brother did not help at all, instead he threw him out of the house, saying we do not have any place for you here … So there were a lot of people I came across who cannot look after themselves."

– Preeti Nayak
from Sociology Department,
Delhi School of Economics

DDA ! Where does he fit in your plans ?

lack of adequate shelter, poorly maintained night shelters, ill-health, poor sanitation…. "Shelter rights" need to be defined incorporating these varied needs. *AAA* is not talking about a mere roof over one's head. Different strategies may need to be adopted to address the real needs of the homeless; facilitate mobilisation; and eventual empowerment and assertion of rights. At the same time, strong macro level strategies are required to challenge the current mind-set (reflected in 'development' policies), wherein 'the poor are dispensable'; and are constantly 'impoverished' further and pushed to the fringes. It is essential to question the State's response – of 'institutionalisation' – to deal with certain marginalised sections of people, e.g. beggars, mentally challenged, destitutes etc (please see Appendix VII).

In the light of the understanding gained by the survey, *AAA* decided to take up health, which emerged as a major need, as an entry point for micro actions. The area around Jama Masjid has been chosen for this. It was decided to start some programmatic intervention in collaboration with some CSOs.

and nurses visits the Jama Masjid (Urdu Park) area twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays: 6 to 8 pm.

FUTURE ACTION

- Detailed study to understand the process of impoverishment with emphasis on the most marginalised among the homeless

- Explore the possibility of negotiating with MCD to set up temporary shelters and reopening closed shelters

- Work towards better management and effective utilisation of existing night shelters

- Capacity building of the homeless

- Research on beggary and vagrancy laws and the functioning of Social Welfare Homes (see Appendix VII)

- Sensitisation.

Need assessment will be done on an ongoing basis. The effort through these interventions will be to involve the homeless by facilitating emergence of community workers from amongst them.

We take this opportunity to call on all of you to join this shelter rights campaign. To make it a movement of the homeless, for a rightful share; if we think the Constitution of India applies to one and all, without any favour or fear.

A CSOs meeting held on August 10, 2000 brought together many organisations keen on working on this issue. Thus, a health intervention group has been formed comprising of World Vision, IHBAS, Sahara, Youthreach, Samadhan, Narcotic Anonymous and *AAA.* A mobile health van with doctors

> "One man robbing another of food,
> Can this custom last?
> One man watching another suffer,
> Can such life survive?
> Survive before our eyes,
> Survive here in our midst?"
>
> **– Subramania Bharati**

Appendix 1

Contact Particulars of
STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS
of **Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan**

Name	*Address*	*Office Phone No.*	*Residence Phone No.*
Amita V. Joseph	Regional Programme Coordinator USAID US Embassy, Chanakyapuri New Delhi - 110 021	4198706 4198550	2713984 2716992
Amod K. Kanth	Secretary, PRAYAS 59, Tughlakabad Industrial Area (Behind Batra Hospital) New Delhi - 110 062	6089544 6089505 (fax) 3312920 (telefax)	4675162
Ashraf Patel	Chief Coordinator PRAVAH 15/10, Gurudwara Road, Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110 019	6420776 (telefax)	6092114
Bharat Dogra	Social Change Papers C – 27, Raksha Kunj Paschim Vihar New Delhi - 110 063	5255303	5255303
Cherian Mathews	(**Convenor** of the Steering Committee) Regional Manager Delhi Regional Office ActionAid India E 270, Greater Kailash – II New Delhi - 110 048 Email:*mathewsc@actionaidindia.org*	6233525 6418885/6/7	6292972
Gloria Burret	C/o The Provincialate St. Columbus School Ashok Place New Delhi - 110 001	3747637 3364483 (fax)	3747637
Gyanendra Badgainyan	Former Secretary to the Chief Minister of Delhi Old Secretariat, Delhi	3950819 3933161	6224125

Contd...

Name	Address	Office Phone No.	Residence Phone No.
Harsh Mander	Country Director ActionAid India 71, Uday Park New Delhi - 110 017 Email: *harshm@actionaidindia.org*	6510340 6510254 6510616 6510351 6510273 (telefax)	6130023 6130590
indu prakash singh	Director Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan U-55B (2nd fl), Lane 4, Shakarpur Delhi - 110 092 Email: *indumanav@yahoo.com*	2450277	6017820 6011072 9622-167745 (Pager)
Keerti Jayaram	C 1 / 4, Safdarjung Development Area New Delhi - 110 016		6858791 6560778
Mathew Cherian	Director Charities Aid Foundation 25, Navjeevan Vihar New Delhi - 110 017	6522206 6561468	2713984 2716992
Swami Agnivesh	Bandhua Mukti Morcha 7, Jantar Mantar Road New Delhi - 110 001	3366765	3366765
Vijay Pratap	(O) Lokayan 13, Alipur Road Delhi - 110 054 (R) C/o Dr. Ritu Priya GW4, Ganga Hostel JNU New Delhi - 110 067 Email: *ritupriya@vsnl.com*	3951378 2940154 (fax)	6102638 6102752

"Injustice anywhere, is a threat to justice everywhere."

— Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Appendix II

Contact Particulars of
TEAM MEMBERS
of **Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan**

S.No.	Name	🏠	☎
1.	Bidhan Chandra Singh	C/o Ajay Mahajan, D-805, New Friends Colony, New Delhi - 110 065 Email: *deogharbiddu@hotmail.com*	6913362 6520750 (pp)
2.	Dhananjay Tingal	4, Triveni Apartment, West Enclave, Pitampura, New Delhi - 110 034 Email: *dtingal@rediffmail.com*	27943685 32302470 (M)
3.	D.V. Rao	V-96, Upadhyay Block Shakarpur, Delhi - 110 072	
4.	indu prakash singh	MANAVs, 18-A, MIG Flats Sheikh Sarai, Phase 1 New Delhi - 110 017 Email: *indumanav@yahoo.com*	26011072 31062925 (M)
5.	Jabar Singh	S-136, Soami Nagar New Delhi - 110 017	31070767 (M)
6.	Jagdish Bhardwaje	U-55A, Lane 4, Shakarpur Delhi - 110 092 Email: *jgbhardwaje@rediffmail.com*	9811839200 (M)
7.	Jaishree Suryanarayanan	26 E, Pocket 4, Mayur Vihar Phase-1, Delhi - 110 091 Email: *jaishree@ndb.vsnl.net.in*	22715297
8.	Nitesh Chandra Nirmal	E02B/360, JJ Camp Laxmi Nagar, Delhi - 110 092	2016307 (pp)
9.	Paramjeet Kaur	10-A/9, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7 Email: *paramkaur@care2.com*	27221788
10.	Pramod Kumar Das	E02B/360, JJ Camp Laxmi Nagar, Delhi - 110 092	2016307 (pp)
11.	Shalini Vatsa	193-C, East End Apartments, Mayur Vihar, Phase I Extn. Delhi - 110 096 Email: *shalinivatsa@hotmail.com*	2717936
12.	Trudy Brasell-Jones	B 432 (1st fl), New Friends Colony New Delhi - 110 065 Email: *tbjpcind@vsnl.com*	6326175 9811284180 (Mobile)

(confidential)

APPENDIX III

Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan
Questionnaire for Rapid Assessment

AREA DESCRIPTION

1. Identification number _____   2. Sex: Male/Female   3. Place of stay: Night shelter/Pavement/Park

4. Zone _____   5. Region _____   6. Area _____

A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Age	Marital status	Languages spoken	Read or Write Yes / No	Educational Level	Religion	Caste	Do you have any identification?
	1. Married 2. Unmarried 3. Divorced 4. Widowed 5. Any other				1. Hindu 2. Muslim 3. Sikh 4. Christian 5. Any other		1. Ration Card 2. I.D. card 3. Bank Passbook 4. Any other

B. LINKAGE OF ORIGIN

Place of origin	Place where family is staying presently i) Family of origin ii) Family by creation	How many family members left behind?	In touch with family?	Do you sent remittances & how?	Do you return to your village? When and why?
State Distt.	i) State _____ Distt. _____ ii) State _____ Distt. _____		Yes No		

C. MIGRATION

Place migrated to	Reason for migration from native place	Years of coming to Delhi finally	No. of visits to Delhi previously	Last place from where you came to Delhi	Why chose Delhi only?	Came alone or with some one? If yes who?	Knew any one before coming to Delhi? If yes who?	Anybody else migrated from family & where?

Contd...

D. SLEEPING PATTERN

How long have you been sleeping here?	Before this where did you sleep?	How many places you have slept in last one month?	Where do you sleep in	How much do you spend in sleeping?	Do you sleep in a group? If yes who all constitute the group?	What are the problems faced by you at sleeping place?	Are these also the reason for you shift?	How do you resolve them?	Do you prefer to sleep in	Reason	Do you think you will continue to live in Delhi in this condition? How long?
			1. Winter? 2. Summer? 3. Rains?	1. Winter? 2. Summer? 3. Rains?		• Weather • Police • Local goonda • NS I/c • Quilt owner • Peer Group • Shopkeeper • Any Other			1) Night Shelter? 2) Pavement?		

E. LIVING CONDITION AT THE SLEEPING PLACE

Where do you go to the toilet?	Where do you go to take bath?	Where do you wash your clothes?	Where do you go to drink water?	Where do you have your	Where do you keep your belongings?
Place Distance	Place Distance	Place Distance	Place Distance	Breakfast? Dinner?	Clothes Tools Money Any other

Contd...

F. EMPLOYMENT

S. No.	Nature of work done in last 1 month	Whether 1. Permanent 2. Temporary 3. Seasonal 4. Casual	How many days of work do you do in a month?	Daily income with each activity	Approx. Daily expenses	Where do you go for work? Area/Place	Did you change your place of stay with different work? Where?	Are you able to save? if yes where do you keep it? with whom?
1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								

G. POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Are you associated with any organisation? • Street Dwellers • Hawkers • Vendors • NGO • Market • Social welfare	Where do you vote? Native Place Delhi	Do you carry out political activity? If yes, for whom i) political party ii) trade union	If yes, nature of activity	Have you participated in a rally in Delhi? Yes No If yes, how many times	Did a rally bring you to Delhi?

Investigator's Name	Respondent's Name	Date & Time	Refusals	Signature

OBSERVATION AND COMMENTS with special emphasis on:

1. Physical Outlook/description
2. Health Assessment
3. Chronic Diseases known
4. Any disability
5. Any other/general factor not asked and information given by the respondent

Handbill in Hindi Distributed to Homeless
Regarding the RAS

यह अभियान ?

यह आपका अभियान है, आपके लिये है, आपके सार्वजनिक और मूल अधिकारों एवम् मानव अधिकार के हकों के लिये है – **आश्रय अधिकार अभियान।**

आश्रय अधिकार अभियान के आधारों को निर्मित करने की कोशिश में, दिल्ली सरकार, केन्द्रीय सरकार, एम.सी.डी., एन.डी.एम.सी., दिल्ली पुलिस, कई स्वयंसेवी संस्थाएं तथा बुद्धिजीवी, वकील, आम नागरिक और छात्र–छात्रायें एकत्रित हुए हैं। इस अभियान को कारगर करने के लिये, प्राथमिक वर्ष का अनुदान एक्शनऐड इंडिया से प्राप्त हुआ है।

इस एकत्रित समूह यानि **आश्रय अधिकार अभियान** का प्रयास है कि शुरुआत के तौर पर, दिल्ली की पटरियों पर रहने–सोने वाले भाइयों/बहनों (जिनकी अनुमानित संख्या एक लाख है, और इसमें से 34,000 बच्चे हैं), की संघर्षमय जिन्दगी की उन कठिनाइयों के बारे में जानकारी हासिल करें जो कि उनके सार्वजनिक और मूल अधिकारों से जुड़ी हैं।

आप से इस विषय पर ली गई एकत्रित जानकारी के आधार पर एक पर्याप्त सोच पर आगे के **अभियान** की दिशा निश्चित होगी। इस अभियान की मुख्य भूमिका आपकी है। इसके चलते आप निःसंकोच अपनी कठिनाइयों से आपसे भेंट करते वोलंटियर को अवगत करायें और उनकी प्रश्नावली को भरने में कृपया सहयोग दें।

आप अपनी परेशानी तथा किसी भी अत्याचार के बारे में सहायता के लिए हमें लिख कर या टेलिफोन द्वारा निम्न लिखित कार्यालय में सम्पर्क कर सकते हैं।

इन्दु प्रकाश सिंह/जगदीश भारद्वाज/जयश्री सूर्यनारायणन/
धनंजय टिंगल/परमजीत कौर/शालिनी वत्स/विधान चन्द्र सिंह

आश्रय अधिकार अभियान
ई–270, ग्रेटर कैलाश, पार्ट–II, नई दिल्ली-110048
दूरभाष: 6418885/6/7, पेजर: 9622-167745

◆ *आर्थिक सहायता नहीं दी जाती है* ◆

मुद्रण: प्रिंट–ओ–पैक, दूरभाष: 6421679

Rapid Assessment VOLUNTEERS

Organisation	Volunteers
PRAYAS	Abdul Rehman Anuj Karketa Arjun Sarkar Devi Shankar Dheeraj Kumar Ganesh Kumar Rajesh Kumar Ramesh Kumar Rohit Samuel Singh Sanjay Kumar Santosh Kumar Sharma Surender Pal Sushil Masih Tabrez
PRAVAH	Jayendu Sunil Kumar
Individuals	Lala Ram Preeti Nayak (from DU) Vinod

Organisation	Volunteers
MUKTI ASHRAM	Ashok Kumar Kumari Moulsri Montu Kumar Naresh Kumar Rakesh Kumar Ravi Chauhan Shail Kumari Suresh Veena Rai
SAHARA	Ajay Jadeja Dr. Deep Kr. Gupta Mohd. Harun Varsi Mukesh Kumar Narendra Das Onkar Singh Pankaj Kumar Pawan Kr. Sabarwala Prabhu Dayal Satish Kumar
NAVJYOTI	Sonu Khan

CSO Contact Details
(CSOs from where volunteers came for Rapid Assessment)

Name of the Organisation	Address	✆	Contact Person
SAHARA	E-45, Greater Kailash New Delhi - 110 048	6219147	Mukesh Kumar / Dr. Deep Kr. Gupta
NAVJYOTI	Sanjay Amar Colony Yamuna Pushta Delhi - 110 006	2969769	Suneel Singh / Suneel Vatsyayan
MUKTI ASHRAM	Near Ibrahimpur Delhi - 110 036	7202213 7202247	Suresh Kumar/ Veena Rai
PRAYAS	59,Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi - 110 062	6089544 6089505 (fax) 3312920 (telefax)	Dr Nadeem Mohsin / M. Junned Khan
PRAVAH	15/10, Gurdwara Road, Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110 019	6420776	Ashraf Patel

Appendix VI

Tables Showing Survey Findings*

Table 1: *Age*

Age	No. of Respondents (Total=690)	% of Respondents
< 18	100	14%
19 – 28	256	37%
29 – 38	173	25%
39 – 48	87	13%
49 – 58	35	5%
> 58	27	4%
No Answer	12	2%

Table 2: *Place of Origin*

Place of Origin	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Uttar Pradesh	273	40%
Bihar	198	29%
West Bengal	51	8%
Rajasthan	29	4%
Delhi	25	4%
Madhya Pradesh	23	3%
Others	81	11%
No Answer	10	1%

Table 3: *Reason for Leaving Native Place*

Reason for Leaving	No. of Respondents (Total=690)	% of Respondents
Unemployment	400	58%
Family Problems	106	15%
Poverty in Village	75	11%
Others	78	11%
No Answer	31	5%

Table 4: *Reason for Choosing Delhi*

Reason for Choosing Delhi	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Better Work	511	74%
Acquaintance in Delhi	43	6%
Proximity to Native Place	32	5%
Others	64	9%
No Answer	40	6%

*Graphs in this report are based on these tables. The Table nos. match the Graph nos.

Table 5: *Education Level*

Education Level (Class Pass)	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
No Education	386	56%
1–5	119	17%
6–9	99	14%
9 & above	67	10%
Others	6	1%
No Answer	13	2%

Table 6: *Employment Status*

Type of Work	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Rickshaw Puller	197	29%
Casual Worker	180	26%
Catering work	50	7%
Hand cart Puller	27	4%
Rag Picker	17	3%
Other Work	140	20%
No Work	30	4%
No Answer	49	7%

Table 7: *Daily Income*

Daily Income (Rs.)	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
< 50	140	20%
51–75	231	34%
76–100	121	18%
> 100	113	16%
No Answer	85	12%

Table 8: *Daily Expenditure*

Daily Expenditure (Rs.)	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
< 50	311	45%
51–75	226	33%
> 76	63	9%
No Answer	90	13%

Table 9: *Savings*

Savings	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Yes	417	60%
No	200	29%
No Answer	73	11%

Table 10: *Money Sent Home*

Response	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Yes	412	59%
No	253	37%
No Answer	25	4%

Table 11: *Family Contact*

Response	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Yes	530	77%
No	151	22%
No Answer	9	1%

Table 12: *Visit to Native Place*

Response	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Yes	486	70%
No	192	28%
No Answer	12	2%

Table 13: *Years Spent on the Pavement*

Time Spent on Pavement (in Years)	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
< 1	222	32%
1 – 5	151	22%
5 – 10	97	14%
> 10	150	22%
No Answer	70	10%

Table 14: *Changes in Sleeping Place*

Number of Changes in Sleeping Places in One Month Period	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
No Change	380	55%
1 Change	80	11%
2 Change	94	14%
> 3 Changes	41	6%
Frequent Change	35	5%
No Answer	60	9%

Table 15: *Problems Faced at Sleeping Places*

Type of Problem	No. of Responses	% of Respondents (Total = 690)
Police Brutality	386	41%
Weather	326	35%
Harassment by Mafia	66	7%
Others	21	2%
No Problem	107	11%
No Answer	40	4%

Table 16: *Proof of Residence in Delhi*

Identification Document	No. of Responses (Total = 691)	% of Respondents
Ration Card	46	6.7%
Identity Card	57	8.2%
Bank Document	12	1.8%
Others	5	0.7%
No Document	571	82.6%

Table 17: *Political Affiliations*

Political Affiliations	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
Small Unions	17	2.5%
Hawker's Association	1	0.1%
Political Affiliation	1	0.1%
Other Affiliations	8	1.2%
No Affiliation	633	91.8%
No Answer	30	4.3%

Table 18: *Sanitation*

Type of Facility	Toilet (Respondents=690)	Bathing (Respondents=690)	Washing Clothes (Respondents=690)
Public Facilities	375 (54%)	269 (40%)	304 (44%)
In the Open	164 (24%)	204 (29%)	283 (41%)
No Answer	151 (22%)	217 (31%)	103 (15%)

Table 19: *Future Plans*

Future Plans	No. of Respondents (Total = 690)	% of Respondents
No idea	309	45%
Will stay in Delhi	130	19%
Hope to go back	124	18%
Depends on work	39	5%
Will certainly go back	28	4%
No Answer	60	9%

Delhi Government Run Welfare Institutions

Type of Institution	Statutory/ Non-statutory	Total Number	Sanctioned Strength	Actual Strength
Home for Beggars	Statutory	10	2,560	799
Home for Beggars with Leprosy	Statutory	1	100	650
Home for Children	Non-statutory Statutory	10 14	1,000 1,542	577 1,190
Home for the Handicapped	Non-statutory	2	150	199
Home for the Aged	Non-statutory	2	55	62
Home for Women	Non-statutory Statutory	3 1	250 100	105 90
TOTAL		**43**	**5,757**	**3,672**

Source: Department of Social Welfare, June 1999, GNCTD.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAA   : Aashray Adhikar Abhiyan
AAI   : ActionAid India
CSOs   : Civil Society Organisations
DfID   : Department for International Development
DU   : Delhi University
GOs   : Government Organisations
GNCTD   : Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi
IHBAS   : Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences
ISBT   : Inter-State Bus Terminus
MCD   : Municipal of Corporation of Delhi
MP   : Madhya Pradesh
NDMC   : New Delhi Municipal Corporation
ODRS   : Old Delhi Railway Station
OT   : Operation Theatre
PHC   : Primary Health Centre
RAS   : Rapid Assessment Survey
Rd   : Road
ToTC   : Delhi: A Tale of Two Cities (see under Baquer, Ali on p.56)
TNCs   : Transnational Corporations
UP   : Uttar Pradesh
VOs   : Voluntary Organisations

GLOSSARY

Bazaar   : Market

Chowkidar   : Watchman

Goondas   : Anti-social Elements

Hafta   : Bribe paid on weekly basis

Marg   : Road

Raen Basera   : Night Shelter

Rehris   : Vending carts

Rickshaw wala : Person plying rickshaw

Thela   : Handcart

Thiya   : Place of business

Thiya wala   : Owner of a place of business

> *'... be careful never to hurt a human heart'.*
>
> — **Rumi**

REFERENCES

Baquer, Ali, Indu Prakash Singh and Amla Rama Rao. 1993. *Delhi: A Tale of Two Cities* **(ToTC)**. New Delhi: VHAI.

Bombay Vagrancy Act, 1959.

Census of India. 1991. New Delhi: Government of India.

Delhi Development Authority. 1985. Chilled Nights on Pavements in Delhi: A Socio-Economic Study of the Children Staying in Raen Baseras in Winter. Delhi: Socio-Economic Survey Division Slum and JJ Department.

Delhi Janwadi Adhikar Manch. 1997. *The Order that Felled a City: A Citizens Report on the Politics of Pollution and the Mass Displacement of Workers in Delhi.* Delhi

Department for International Development. 2000. *Water and Environmental Sector: Discussion of Key Issues*. New Delhi: DFID India.

Dupont, V. and Dhananjay Tingal. 1996. Residential and Economic Practices of Pavement Dwellers in Old Delhi. *ORSTOM* (now IRD – Institute of Research for Development). Delhi: Department of Geography, University of Delhi.

First City. September 2000: "A Day in the Life". New Delhi. Pp. 50-53.

Hindustan Times. 17 September, 2000. No treatment for TB patient Mantu as he is from Munger! New Delhi.

Indian Express. 6 October, 2000. After wall collapse, Trilokpuri wants toilets demolished. New Delhi.

Jagannath, N. and A. Halder. June 4, 1988. Income – Housing Linkage. A Case Study of Pavement Dwellers in Calcutta. *Economic and Political Weekly*. Vol XXIII. No. 23: 1175 - 1178. Bombay.

Kuruvilla. 1991. Pavement Dwellers in Metropolitan City: A Case Study of Delhi. Thesis. New Delhi: Department of Housing, *School of Planning and Architecture*.

Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

Muralidhar, S. 1991. Adequate Housing: From a basic need to a Fundamental Right. LLM Dissertation. Nagpur: *University of Nagpur*.

Times of India. 16 October, 2000. Truck Mows Down Two Workers. New Delhi.

Tingal, D. 1998. Report on Methodology, Distribution and Characteristic of Shelterless Population of Delhi for Project on 'City on Pavement'. *OSTROM – CSH*. Delhi: Department of Geography, *University of Delhi*.

Wadhwa, Soma. July 17, 2000. Under the Blue Ceiling. New Delhi: *Outlook*. P. 69.

Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. 2000. *Vision 21: The People's Route to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All*. Geneva.

Courtesy: The Statesman, 20.1.2000

"I am convinced that so long as the army or the police continues to be used for conducting the administration, we shall remain subservient to the British or some other foreign power, irrespective of whether the power is in the hands of the Congress or others."

— Mahatma Gandhi