



LIVELIHOOD OF HOMELESS PEOPLE: A STUDY OF PATNA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, BIHAR

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Abstract:

Everyone has a right to shelter. Shelter is a basic human need, yet the statistics of census of India states that an estimated 1.77 million people live without shelter. Indian government has a vision of providing shelter to every Indian by 2022.

This research attempts to understand the living conditions of the homeless community in Patna and to identify the various vulnerabilities among them. Being the capital city of Bihar, Patna attracts a large number of people providing various job opportunities. The study highlights the sufferings and human rights violations of one of our society's most economically, socially and politically marginalized group. It highlights the everyday challenges and experiences of homeless people in their efforts to get proper food, water, and shelter. It does not attempt to provide comprehensive data on the number of homeless people. Instead, it focuses on the context and conditions of homelessness and examines strategies that have been or can be used to combat homelessness.

Key Words: Homeless, Urban, Vulnerable, Shelter, Poverty, Unemployment.

Introduction:

People without a permanent residence and roof over their heads are called homeless people. These homeless people cannot afford a house and sleep in open spaces which make them the most vulnerable group in our society. Homelessness is the worst form of poverty. Homelessness is not just a situation of lack of housing, but various socio-economic, psychological and emotional reasons are also related to it. Homelessness is a phenomenon which not only affects the people who are homeless but also affects the society as well.

Census of India defines 'houseless people' as persons who are not living in 'census houses.' Census house refers to 'a structure with roof.' As per the records from census of India (2011), India has more than 1.7 million homeless residents, of which 938,384 are located in urban areas. In India, in 2001 the total homeless population in the country was estimated to be 1.9 million. The number in 2011 was 1.77 million, which is 0.15% of the total population.

Majority of homeless population in India live in places such as roadsides, pavements, drainage pipes, under staircases, or in the open spaces, temple-mandaps, under flyovers and platforms etc. Homelessness is a phenomenon that exists in both rural and urban areas, but its magnitude and extent is much more prevalent and extensive in urban areas. These people lack a proper address and because of lacking proper address and proof of residence, they cannot access to schemes, and services provided by government just like any other citizen of India.

Study Area:

Patna is the capital city of Bihar, a state infamous for its lack of development and high crime rates. Patna is situated on Latitude 25.35° N and Longitude 85.12° E. The average altitude of the area is 53 meter at Mean Sea Level and land is plain with no hills around it. The length of the city is approximately 25 km from East to West and 10-12 km from North to South. While Bihar's rate of urbanization is below the national average, urban poverty in the state is much higher than the national average. The below poverty line population in urban areas of Bihar is 43%. Patna is the only city in the state with a population of 1,684,297 (Census of India, 2011).

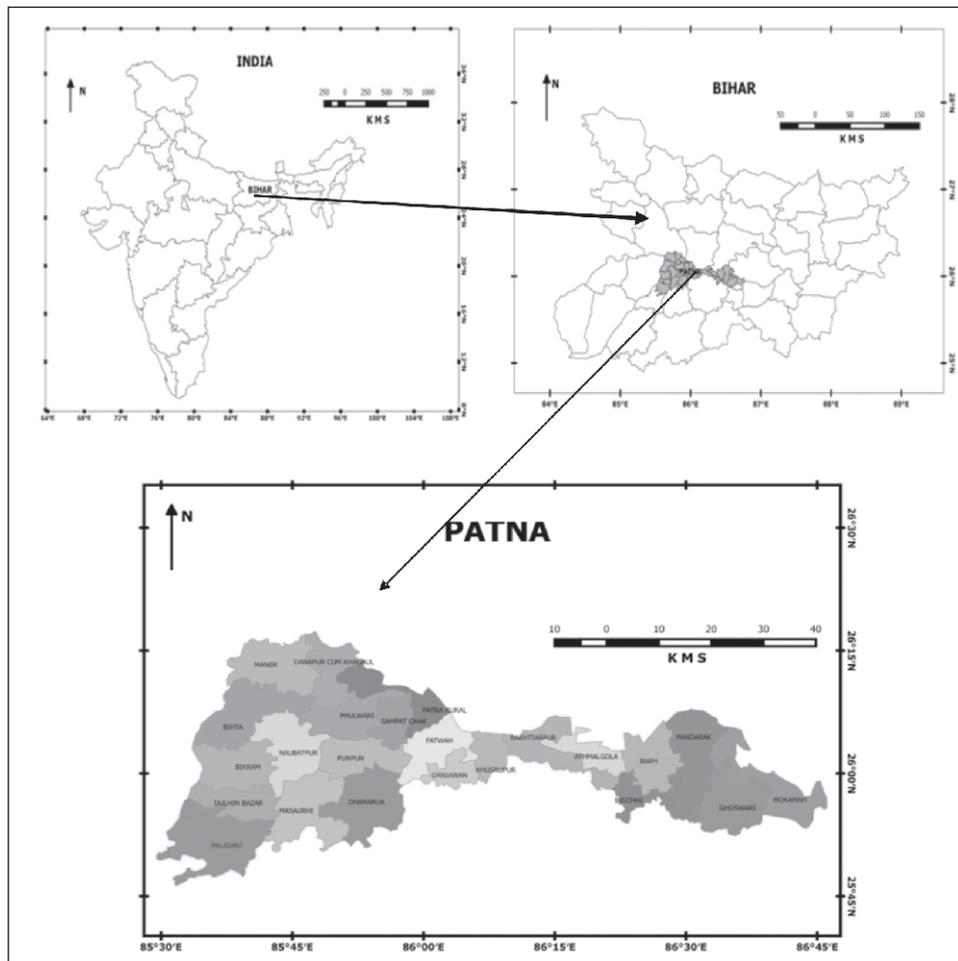
Rural poverty in Bihar is much higher than urban poverty thus the push from rural areas is expected to

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be strong and urban growth rates could be higher than estimated. Being the capital city of Bihar, Patna provides lots of opportunities of earning & hence, many workers from small villages and towns of Bihar migrate to Patna and it leads to increase in number of homeless population. As per the records from census of India (2011), out of the total homeless population of 17, 73, 040 urban homeless population is 9, 38, 348. Census of India (2011) reported the number of total homeless population in Patna is 8,102 out of which urban homeless population is 5,078. It means urban homeless population is 62% of total homeless population in Patna.

Currently, it is estimated that Patna receives a floating population of about 2 lakhs everyday (Mander, 2008).

LOCATION MAP OF THE STUDY AREA



Objectives:

- To understand demographic profile of homeless population in Patna.

- To analyze social conditions of homeless people in Patna.
- To identify source of their income including their economic practices and involvement in Patna.

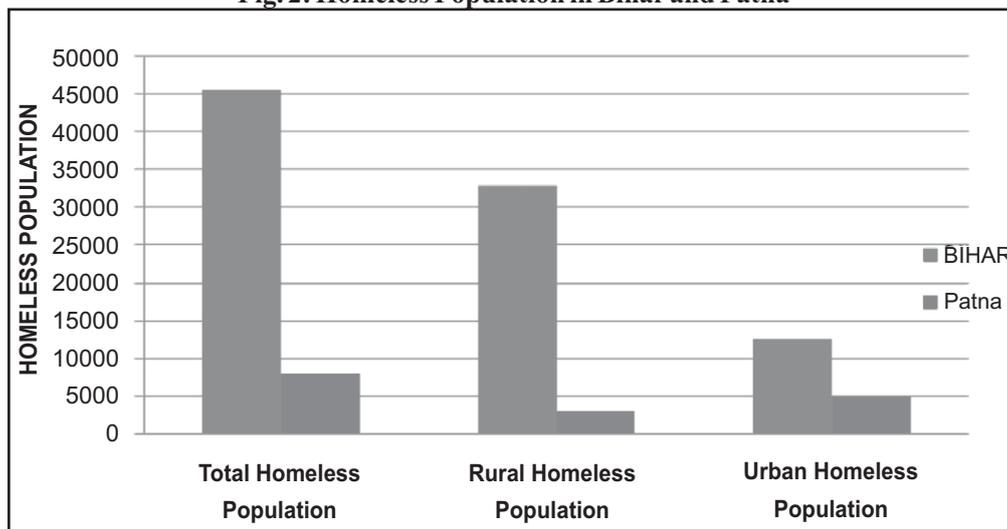
Methodology:

Present study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature and based on primary source of data generated through comprehensive field survey in Patna city carried out during 2015 and 2016. Mixed type of methodology was used to conduct the study. Quantitative approach was used to estimate the total homeless population and Qualitative aspect of study was used to explore and record the experience and life style of homeless people. Two periods of time in a day i.e. early morning (6 A.M. – 9 A.M.) and late night (9 P.M – 12 A.M.) were taken to record homeless population. According to the nature of the homeless population both close and open ended questionnaires, interviews and focused group discussion were used for data collection. For this study 598 homeless people were interviewed from 4 circles and 73 wards of Patna Municipal Corporation. For the interview, homeless people were considered who are not living in census house for at least past one month. During data collection, it was found that majority of respondents (homeless people) live in the vicinity of Gandhi Maidan, near Hanuman Mandir, under the flyovers near railway station, around PMCH area and near Rajendra nagar flyover. In order to collect the data regarding homeless population in Patna, above mentioned areas were undertaken as per the convenience. QGIS technique was used for map preparation cartographic techniques were used for data presentation.

Results and Discussion:

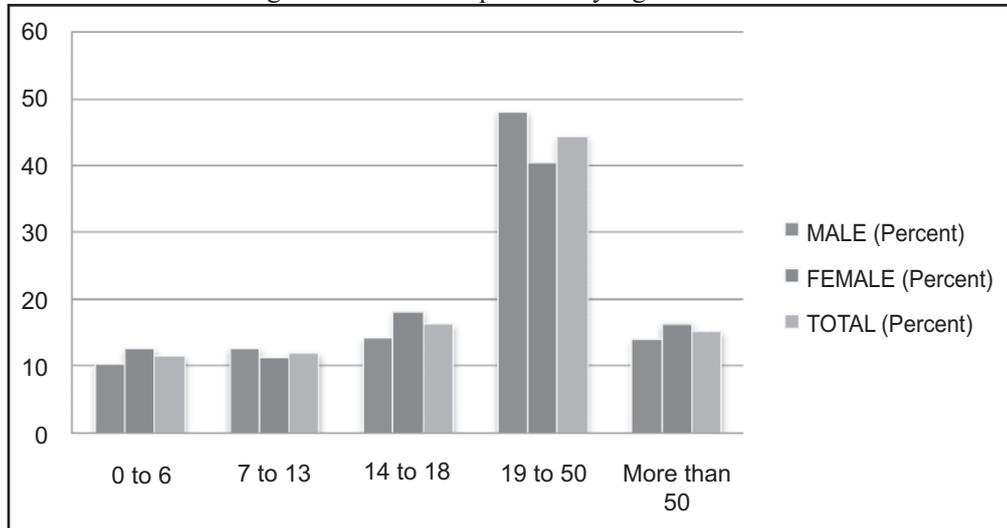
It was found that majority of homeless people live in the vicinity of Gandhi Maidan, near Hanuman Mandir, under the flyovers, near railway station around PMCH area and near Rajendra Nagar flyover. The present study shows that most of the homeless people are migrants. The major reason of migration among homeless was search for employment and poverty followed by other reasons such as family disputes, failure of crops, domestic violence, abuse, displacement, etc. Nearly 95% came from rural areas. Occupation of migrant's family was mainly agricultural laboring or manual/construction laboring. There is a huge difference in sex-ratio among all the homeless people, around 85% populations belongs to the male and rest 15% is female population.

Fig. 2: Homeless Population in Bihar and Patna



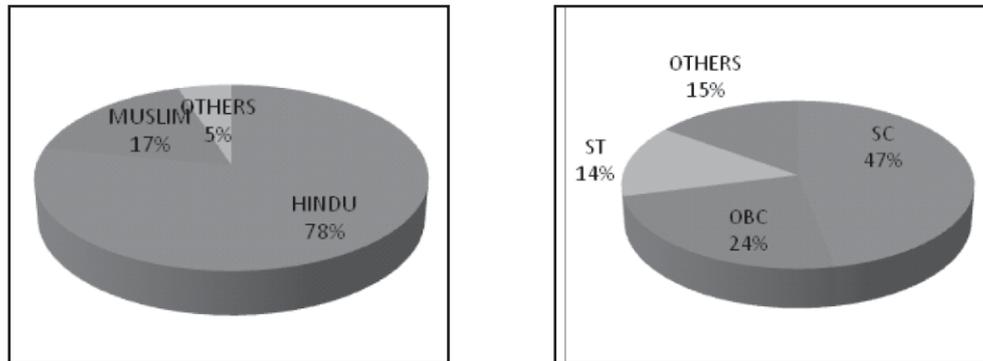
(Source: Census of India, 2011)

Fig. 3 : Homeless Population by Age and Sex



(Source: Based on primary survey by the researcher)

Fig. 4: Homeless population by Religion and Caste



(Source: Based on primary survey by the researcher)

Sr. No.	Income per day (Rs.)	Homeless Population (Percent)
1.	1 - 50	38.6
2.	51 - 100	50.1
3.	101 - 200	9.1
4.	More than 200	2.2
5.	Total (%)	100
6.	Total (N)	598

(Source: Based on primary survey by the researcher)

Table 1: Income of Homeless People in Patna

Table 2: Duration of stay in Patna

Sr. No.	Duration of Stay in Patna	Population (Percent)
1.	Since Birth	33.9
2.	Up to 2 years	43.8
3.	Above 2 to 5 years	11.9
4.	Above 5 to 10 years	8.4
5.	Above 10 years	2
6.	Total	100

Table 3 : Reason for Migration

Sr. No.	Reason for migration	Male (Percent)	Female (Percent)	Total(Percent)
1.	In search of income/ employment	88	79	83.5
2.	Poverty/Hunger/Did not have money	10	5	7.5
3.	Domestic violence/ Physical or Mental Abuse	1	10	5.5
4.	Others	1	6	3.5
5.	TOTAL (Percent)	100	100	100

Table 4: Level of Education among Homeless

Sr. No.	Education Level	Male (Percent)	Female (percent)	Total (Percent)
1.	Nil	50.7	57.6	54.1
2.	1 -4 std.	10.5	9.4	10
3.	5 -7 std.	14	16.2	15.1
4.	8 -10 std.	13.3	11.1	12.2
5.	10+ std.	11.5	5.7	8.6
6.	Total (Percent)	100	100	100

Table 5: Disability among Homeless

Sr. No.	Type of Disability	Male (Percent)	Female (Percent)	Total (Percent)
1.	Physical	4.7	2.3	3.5
2.	Mental	3.2	3.5	3.35
3.	Others	6.8	6.2	6.5

(Source: Based on primary survey by the researcher)

Majority of the homeless migrants live on pavement, often in daily danger to their lives from rash and drunken drivers, under ledges of shops and homes and in market corridors. Next come bus stands and railway stations, and then courtyards of places of worship; open spaces and under over bridges, without adequate facility and unhygienic condition. Further, it reflects on their health status as more than sixty percent of them are suffering from some health problem. Over half (54%) of the respondents have been sleeping in the same location for many years. Present study depicts that more than 50% of homeless are illiterate and indulged in casual or informal, unprotected, uncertain and hard labor, in a range of occupations like daily wage work, construction labor, pulling rickshaws, carrying and pushing loads, domestic work and street vending. 59% people reported that work was not available on a regular basis.

More than 50% of the population lies between 25-50 age groups. More people belong to rural areas of Bihar followed by inter-state migrants and from neighboring countries like Nepal. Majority of the population belongs to Hindu (78%) followed by Muslim (17%) and others (5%). Nearly 50% population belongs to scheduled caste followed OBC (24%) and ST (14%). Most of the homeless population is illiterate and only few have attended primary school. Nearly 75% of the homeless population is married. Half of homeless population earns less than 60 rupees a day. Nearly more than half of the population is suffering from any health problems.

Around two-third of homeless people send remittances to their family staying in villages for supporting them or for other reasons like education of their children etc. Almost none of them have the access to the public distribution system (PDS), therefore they purchase the ration from market. Most of homeless used to cook by their own and a large amount of their income they spend on food. The situation leads them to live in a very tough live which makes their situation susceptible to work on unsafe work and life threatening diseases.

Conclusion:

The problem of homelessness is an ongoing and critical one, and measures need to be continuously taken to protect and guarantee the human rights of the homeless, especially their legal and constitutional rights to adequate housing, food, livelihood/work, security of the person, and freedom to move and reside anywhere within the territory of India. In order to address the needs of homeless and protect and guarantee their human rights, it is important to have a clear understanding of the reasons for them becoming homeless as well as their problems in finding employment and safety concerns.

The efforts made by government are not enough to resolve the issues of homeless. There should be specific programs and policies focusing on the issues of homeless people.

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