Spring 5-30-2012

Homelessness: An Outcome of Structural Cruelty

Bharat Rathod

SIT Graduate Institute

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones

Part of the Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Family, Life Course, and Society Commons, Inequality and Stratification Commons, Other Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, Politics and Social Change Commons, and the Social Welfare Commons

Recommended Citation

https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones/2549

This Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Graduate Institute at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.
Homelessness: An Outcome of Structural Cruelty

By: Bharat Rathod

PIM 70

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Sustainable Development at the SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

May, 2012

Advisor: Dr. Janaki Natarajan
The author hereby grants to the School for International Training permission to reproduce either electronically or in print format this document in whole or in part for library achievable purpose only.

The author hereby does grant to the School for International Training permission to electronically reproduce and transit this document to students, alumni, staff and faculty of World Learning Community.

Author’s Signature ____________________________

© Bharat Rathod, 2012. All rights reserved.
Acknowledgement

There are many individuals and organizations I would like to thank for their generosity and support during the entire period of my schoolwork. I take this opportunity to thank SIT Graduate Institute for awarding fellowship that enabled me to undertake this study.

My deepest respects and special thanks go out to my advisor and mentor Dr. Janaki Natarajan, she has been my role model and from whom I learnt enormously. She has been invaluable to my learning process at the SIT Graduate Institute. Her constant support made me comfortable to strengthen this research.

It was my pleasure and had an enriching experience to work with Annah Hardy who helped me in editing this paper. I am thankful to my friends Peder, Sheetal, Prasanna and Annah who helped me a lot throughout my study. My gratitude goes out to my friends Safik, Hakimbhai and the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center who supported me to collect information during my research. I extend my thanks to Melinda Bussino, Bill and Emily Clever for sharing their experience and knowledge to help me in my research.

A loving appreciation goes to my wife, Sadaf and daughter, Saara who always inspired me throughout the time of writing this paper. Mt special thanks to my mother, father and sister for their extended support and love from India during the period of my studies at SIT.

This research is dedicated to nonprofit and religious organizations, activists, and political leaders who will take up the cause of homelessness and work for holistic welfare to eliminate homelessness from India.
List of Tables

1. Accessibility of the Drop-In center type of agency for the homeless in India and the U. S.
2. Comparison of average time period of homelessness in India and the U.S.
3. Overview of Homeless Shelter Statistics during 2010-11
Table of Contents

Acknowledgment ........................................................................................................ iii
List of Tables ............................................................................................................... iv
Abbreviation ............................................................................................................... vi
Abstract ..................................................................................................................... viii
Introduction ................................................................................................................ 1
Purpose of Research ................................................................................................... 6
Research Questions .................................................................................................... 6
Conceptual Framework ............................................................................................... 7
Logic for Comparative Study ....................................................................................... 8
Research Methodology ............................................................................................... 9
Limitation ................................................................................................................... 10
Literature Review ...................................................................................................... 11
Results and Discussion .............................................................................................. 40
Suggestions ............................................................................................................... 47
Conclusion .................................................................................................................. 55
Reference ................................................................................................................... 56
Appendix - I .............................................................................................................. 64
Appendix - II ............................................................................................................. 65
Appendix - III ............................................................................................................ 66
Appendix - IV ............................................................................................................ 67
Appendix – V .............................................................................................................. 68
Appendix - VI ............................................................................................................. 69
Appendix - VII .......................................................................................................... 71
Abbreviation

ADM: Alcohol, Drug and Mental disorder
AFDC: Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AHAR: Annual Homeless Assessment Report
BADIC: Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center
BWI: Bretton Woods institutions
CPM: Communist Party of India (Marxist) (Abbreviated CPI (M) or CPM)
EWS: Economically Weaker Section
GA: General Allowance
GDP: Gross Domestic Product
HCH: Health Care for the Homeless
HDI: Human Development Index
HUD: Housing and Urban Development
IAY: Indira Awas Yojana
IRS: Internal Revenue Service
INC: Indian National Congress
INR: Indian Rupee
LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer
LIG: Low Income Group
MA: Massachusetts
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
NCRB: National Crime Records Bureau
NGO: Non Governmental Organization
NH: New Hampshire
OBC: Other Backward Class
OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PDS: Public Distribution System
PHC: Primary Health Center
RAY: Rajiv Awas Yojana
SAPs: Structural Adjustment Programs
SC: Scheduled Caste
SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSI: Supplemental Security Income
ST: Scheduled Tribe
TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
U.S.: United States
UC: Unemployment Compensation
UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UID: Unique Identification
UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
VT: Vermont
Abstract

In the current capitalist economic models, poverty and homelessness are an epidemic situation across the world. This research focused on the underlying causes of homelessness and poverty in India and the U.S., as well as developing suggestions to resolve the issues of homelessness in India. For this research I used literature reviews and interviews of the homeless; the interviews were conducted in Ahmedabad (India) and Brattleboro (U.S.). To analyze the data all the responses were entered into Excel format to discover patterns, themes and trends. The data was primarily qualitative in nature which led me to create three categories. According to these categories the responses were examined and results obtained. The results indicate that the Drop-In center type of agency makes a notable difference in the lives of the homeless. The interviewees in India were not at all satisfied with the government welfare programs and are not able to access it. In the case of the U.S interviewees the majority were not happy with government welfare programs pertaining to homelessness. Suggestions were stated in the last section of the paper; the government of India must implement specific programs that focus on the homeless population as well as support Drop-In center styles of organizations in all parts of the country. It is axiomatic that poverty and homelessness are the outcomes of the structural negligence of governments and societal insensitivity.
Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a set of human development foci that put reducing hunger and poverty together at the top of the list. However, these goals are not what are being focused on globally. In this paper I will present aspects of a comparative study of the poverty and homelessness levels in the two most highly populated democracies in the world, India and the United States.

Neo-liberal economic policies have widened the gap between rich and poor in India and the United States. For the past twenty years, ongoing, the outcomes of ‘Globalization’ in India and the United States have shown that poverty continues to increase in both countries. For example, the National Crime Report Bureau in India has reported that over 250,000 farmers have committed suicide due to extreme poverty. In contrast, the United States has been exporting millions of its jobs to acquire cheap labor in developing countries, which has caused hundreds of thousands of Americans to become unemployed and homeless.

In 2011 a protest had started in India regarding the passing of the “Citizen Ombudsmen Bill”, more popularly known as the ‘anti-corruption bill.’ An overwhelmingly huge number of citizens flooded the streets to support this bill. At the same time, in the United States the “Occupy Wall Street” protest had erupted due to the enormous corporate greed and economic disparities throughout the country. Both of these protests demonstrated similarities among middle class and disadvantaged people all of whom face economic deprivation, yet their governments countries do not intervene to bring equity among various sections of society.

India, is the world’s second-fastest growing major economy after China, and has had an economic boom in recent years that is transforming urban areas only, creating a new class of
extremely wealthy people. However, social problems including poverty, disease, and illiteracy remain widespread. India has over 1200 million citizens (2012), and about 455 million Indian citizens live on less than $1.25 a day (World Bank 2011). This means that more than one third of the population of India survives below the poverty line, although, the Indian economy is globally known as the ‘Tiger Economy.’ A United Nations study released in 2010 found more people living below the poverty threshold in eight of India’s states in comparison to all of sub-Saharan Africa.

The extreme poverty that currently separates beggars from the working poor is getting slimmer in a country where one in every four goes to bed hungry every night and 78 million are homeless. According to a survey conducted by the Delhi School of Social Work there has been an astonishing increase in the numbers of beggars in India. In the decade since 1991 their number has gone up significantly. The survey reveals that begging as a livelihood wins out over manual labor throughout India (Azad India Foundation).

Different definitions of homelessness are used in different contexts. Generally, homelessness is defined as persons who ‘lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence.’ However, the definition of homelessness in India is too vague; census counts don’t provide reliable figures because there is a total lack of communication between the authorities and these destitute people. In fact, the authorities are not concerned about the poor.

Overall, ‘homelessness’ is not a term used in India to describe a person who doesn’t have a permanent shelter to live. Officials consistently use the derogatory term ‘beggar’ in reference

---

1 The process of globalization started in 1991 in India by the Congress (INC) government. The Bretton Wood institutions have used covert influence and overt pressure on so-called “Third World nations” to adopt such policy reforms in favor of globalization.
to the homeless population. In spite of census figures, the actual number of homeless individuals could easily be doubled. In fact, this official definition needs to be refined; it includes more than those people living in the street. There are millions of adults and children working in restaurants, industries, shops and private homes who do not have a permanent residence or shanty\textsuperscript{2} house in which to live. Therefore, these individuals are forced by necessity to sleep outside their workplaces. These working poor are also homeless and their numbers are in the millions, yet they are not included in the official census statistics pertaining to homelessness.

Homeless people in India face horrific conditions – there are more than twenty five different programs that aim to alleviate poverty, but unfortunately homeless people have no access to these programs. The main reason for their inability to access these programs are illiteracy, ignorance about these programs, the humiliating attitude of government officials, their lack of personal documents, a lack of permanent place to live, the exhaustive bureaucratic process, and above all the pervasive corruption.

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked; poor people are frequently unable to pay for housing, food, childcare, health care, and education. Impossible choices have to be made when limited resources cover only some of these necessities. Most often it is housing that is sacrificed first because housing absorbs the highest portion of income.

In the past two decades the United States government has brought military actions against many countries, all in the name of democracy. Why, because these countries don’t follow the United States’ definition of democracy. The United States government continually represents

\textsuperscript{2} In India a large number of poor people live in uninhabitable conditions which they call home, but they don’t have even the most basic facilities: water, restrooms, electricity, sewage, adequate ventilation, living space and other basic civic amenities.
themselves as the global ‘super police’ of democracy. Yet, within in their own nation the numbers of poor exceeds the numbers within all developed countries.

In the U.S., poverty is usually defined as the state of one who lacks gainful employment and/or a ‘socially acceptable’ amount of money or material possessions. According to the United States Census Bureau data released in 2011, the nation's poverty rate rose to 15.1% (46.2 million), its highest level since 1993.

The lingering effects of the recession have pushed more and more Americans into precarious financial situations. Perhaps the most ominous indicator with respect to homelessness is the continuing rise in deep poverty which increased to a record level of 20.5 million people in 2010 (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2011).

The high level of income inequality in the United States can be explained by the lower impact of income redistribution in the United States as compared to some other post-industrial economies. The inequality of economic levels before taxes and transfers in other countries are either similar to or higher than those within the United States.

Two trends are largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20-25 years in the United States: the continual increase in poverty and the growing shortage of affordable housing. Persons living in poverty who are most at risk of becoming homeless are comprised of those demographic groups who are deprived of education and employment opportunities. (The National Coalition for the Homeless, July 2009).
The United States Annual Conference of Mayors (2010 Status Report) on Hunger and Homelessness in American Cities reported a 9 percent overall increase in the number of homeless families throughout the United States in the past year. Fifty-eight percent of the cities analysis showed an increase in family homelessness.

Once homelessness was a phenomenon, but now it has become an established condition, and it continues to exacerbate. The socio-political and economic systems responsible for rectifying the widespread poverty and homelessness in the country have been defeated by the very pervasiveness of these conditions. This is not to say that homelessness has become acceptable or that people choose it, but rather that those who are stuck in such egregious circumstances have lost hope.

However, there are rays of hope: ‘Drop-In Centers,’ churches and different shelters offer a great many services to the homeless and poor across the United States. These types of agencies make a huge difference among the homeless in the United States but not in India. There are no such agencies in India. There are some night shelters in the larger Indian cities; however these are not sufficient to accommodate even the smallest number of the homeless population. There are a few religious institutions that provide food to a very limited number of destitute people. Therefore, unfortunately, millions of homeless starve³ and sleep in open or wretched shanties out in the rain and during winter.

According to the Vermont, Brattleboro Area Drop In Center (BADIC, 2011); approximately 3000 people across three states (VT, NH and MA) are registered for access to the

³ Over 200 million Indians will sleep hungry every night, and over 7000 Indians die of hunger every day (bhookh.com, 2011).
Brattleboro food-shelf. Homeless and disadvantaged people from approximately 110 towns across these three states utilize the services at the BADIC for a variety of needs: The Day shelter, Outreach, the local Overflow shelter which accommodate those who are unable to access other night time shelters, Advocacy for the poor, Free clothing and Household items including books and toys for children, as well as Case management for various housing programs. The center also provides occasional emergency services: rides, etc., in addition to advocacy for employment opportunities when available.

**Purpose of this research**

The purpose of my research is to understand the underlying causes of homelessness and poverty in India and the United States. This research will examine two facets of homelessness and public policy. I aim to analyze the economic policies adopted by the government of India and of the United States. Furthermore, my research will focus on the failed policies/programs that have negatively impacted the underprivileged in both countries. I intend to attempt to highlight the effectiveness of community supports along with those existing public support systems on behalf of the deprived and destitute people of India. I will point out recommendations and policies that will reduce/eliminate poverty and homelessness in India.

**Research Question**

In this study, I will pose the following question:

**How could we resolve the issues surrounding homelessness in India?**
Sub-questions:

- What are the underlying causes of homelessness in India and the United States
- What are the existing policies and programs for homeless people in India and the United States
- What types of programs and policies would be essential to eradicate homelessness in India
- How could the concept of a Drop-In Center significantly impact homelessness in India

Conceptual Framework

The research pertaining to the homeless has been carried out from many theoretical perspectives. Homelessness issues have been studied and still being studied from various orientation, such as sociology, psychology and anthropology, although there is no specific way to address homelessness. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate different approaches to study the issues regarding the homeless population.

The socio-economic factors (recession, unemployment, and poverty), the situation of the housing market are the fundamental source of the problem, however, can’t be considered unique causes. Homelessness is an expression of exclusion which implies both the structural factors and individual aspects (Morrell-Bellai, Goering, & Bodyell, 2000).

According to socio-economic theory, any kind of alterations in economic system impact the social values and individual behavior. The social impact of some sort of economic fluctuation, such changes might include a closing factory, market manipulation, international
trade, slow down growth process, and etc. These impacts can be wide ranging in size, anywhere from local effect on a small community to changes to an entire society. Thus, causes of socio-economic impacts include new technology, changes in law, changes in physical environment, and ecological changes. These may affect patterns of consumption, the distribution of incomes and wealth, and overall quality of life.

This research has been examined through the socio-economic lens to understand the underlying causes of homelessness and poverty in the oldest and biggest democracies in the world. As a basis of understanding the dominant factors for the cause of the poverty and homelessness, and study policies and programs to provide support to disadvantaged and the homeless. This research is set within the context of neo-liberal economic policies, and widening the gap between rich and poor in India and United States.

My personal interest in this grew when I came to know about the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center services to poor and homeless people. My curiosity led me to know more about Drop-In Center, and its significance in India. This research is moving in the direction to study economic policies that causing homelessness, and find feasible approaches to deal with it.

My logic for choosing the countries of India and the United States for this comparative study of homelessness are:

- To examine U.S. policies and programs that support underprivileged and homelessness to ascertain which aspect of programs and policies can be adapted effectively in India.
- There is very little research on various aspects of homelessness in India; conversely, many studies have been conducted regarding homelessness in the U.S. Existing research
pertaining to homelessness in the U.S clearly demonstrates that in India it is critical to conduct comprehensive detailed research at all levels.

- Both the U.S and India deal with widespread homelessness and poverty, however the U.S has diverse programs to tackle the problem of homelessness, whereas, there are relatively none in India.
- India and the U.S both have embraced neo-liberal economic policies and both follow similar capitalistic development models.
- India and the U.S are the two leading democracies in the world: the U.S is the richest developed country, whereas, India is called a “tiger economy” and is referred to as a ‘developing country.’
- The economic gap between rich and poor is widening in both the countries
- There are numerous communities within the U.S who provide initiatives towards homelessness. In India community support is scarce.
- Economic and political relations between both the countries have become much stronger in context to global politics.
- I am a citizen of India and have both experienced and studied the horrific conditions surrounding homelessness and poverty in both countries, which has been a leading reason for my interest in pursuing this research and discovering solutions.

**Research Methodology**

The methodology used primarily in this paper includes reviewing literature and interviews from the target population. My recommendations, which will appear at the end of this paper concerning the multiple issues of homelessness, will be the result of my academic
experience, a summary of responses from the interviewees, primary sources found on the internet, and especially from the information I have gleaned through diverse organizations.

Limitation

As with any study, there were few limitations to my research. My personal interest and focus for this paper, which directed me to research homelessness and the underprivileged first came to my attention when I became acquainted with the unique services of the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center. This in turn, led me to investigate the importance of other community supports (e.g. Drop-In Center, Salvation Army and Churches) that are invaluable for the homeless in the United States as compared to the lack of support in India.

While twenty interviews are a moderate number, this was in part a necessity due to the timeframe required for the completion of the paper. Homelessness is pervasive across both countries, so this sample size cannot truly capture the entire picture that affects homelessness throughout both countries. The interviews in India, conducted in the populous city of Ahmedabad, while interviews in the United States were conducted in the town of Brattleboro. Interviewing homeless individuals in India was a challenging task for me; I had the support of my colleague who himself works in the field of development. He has been an active partner with me throughout this facet of my research, primarily by conducting the interviews in India. His interviews were executed in accord with my outline. The individuals interviewed in India were very approachable, open and honest, and all of them responded without shame; in contrast the interviews conducted in the U.S required great delicacy and time due to the fact that most of the homeless in the U.S manifest pride and privacy in regards to their circumstances.
Review of Literature

The research inquiry *Homelessness: An outcome of Structural Cruelty* has divided into two sections: first, homelessness in India, and second, homelessness in United States. Both the sections are focusing on current homelessness scenario and various under laying causes of homelessness in India and United States.

**Homelessness in India**

Cornia, Jolly and Stewart (1987) study found the following:

A well-known set of studies sponsored by UNICEF of structural adjustment policies followed under BWI guidance in a number of developing countries in the 1980s, found that the majority of countries experienced reduced investment and growth rates, while many saw higher infant mortality rates, reduced rates of improvement in literacy, fall in real wages and rise in poverty. Since neo-liberal policies in India have also been expenditure deflating as regards the material productive sectors, and strongly so with respect to agriculture, it is not surprising that we see an agrarian crisis unfolding, while every indication is that absolute poverty is rising (Network ideas, 2011).

Sainath’s (1996) study found the following:

A profoundly undemocratic streak runs through India’s development process. Exclusion doesn’t end at the symposia. As the reports in this book show, peasants are excluded from land issues in real life, too. Villagers are increasingly robbed of control over eater other community resources. Tribes are being more and more cut off from the forests. Elite vision, meanwhile, holds the poor and their experiences in contempt (p. 332).
The CPM, which had expressed concern that the crisis may hit India, said the global economy was yet to recover from the 2008 crisis. It said the recent debt ceiling crisis in the US and the continuing sovereign debt problem in some of the European Union countries showed how the neoliberal policies have reached a dead end (Economic Times, 2011).

Raghavan (2001) pointed out that “for the homeless and the poor, the benefits of globalization have hardly been significant... there is a wide gap between income groups, within countries and across countries, in terms of the availability, affordability and habitability of housing and access to utilities, resulting in an increase in the number of people in inadequate and insecure housing and living conditions.”

Chaterjee (n.d) pointed out that “in India numerous kinds of beggars can be seen. Some are blind, lame or crippled, and so take to begging. Some people, who have lost their homes, become beggars. Child and orphan beggars also are very common. There are people who are physically sound but who undertake begging as their profession, for it enables them to earn their living easily.”

Chaudhry, Joseph and Singh (2010) pointed out that “the Census of India defines ‘houseless people’ as persons who are not living in ‘census houses’. The latter refers to ‘a structure with roof’. Homelessness thus refers to those who are inadequately housed—without even basic shelter over their head, not even a ‘kuccha’ (unfinished) slum or shanty house”.

As Raghavan (2001) has noted “the situation is further aggravated when urban authorities or private operators clear such settlements for commercial use or high-income housing. The increasing trends towards privatization of housing services and markets also result in land speculation, commodification of housing, application of user fees for housing resources such as
water, sanitation and electricity, and the repeal or amendment of land ceiling and rent-control legislation. This results in increased marginalization of the poor”.

In the words of Chaudhry, Joseph and Singh (2010) have noted “across urban India, land use planning is extremely inequitable and favors a development paradigm aimed at benefiting the upper classes and elite. A United Nations Development Program concept note prepared in 2003 stated that 95 per cent of legal urban space was used and kept for the benefit of the most privileged 5 per cent of the city population”.

As Chaudhry, Joseph and Singh (2010) have noted “forced evictions, accompanied by violence, are increasing across India. Women and children are the worst affected. In the absence of adequate rehabilitation, thousands are rendered homeless and forced to eke out an existence on the streets. Even in the approximately 20 per cent of cases where rehabilitation is provided, conditions in resettlement sites are abysmal”.

The Government's approach has been to allow housing shortages to grow exponentially, closing its eyes to the abysmal conditions in which thousands of slum dwellers and homeless citizens live, and comfortably envisaging and endorsing the vision of a beautiful city. To turn this into a reality the government mercilessly switches to the strategy of demolition and relocation. Urban poor/homeless citizens, occupy less than one-tenth of city space. But the Government authorities do not tire of saying that there is no land for EWS/LIG housing (IGSSS, n.d).

As Hazlewood (2011) has noted “in New Delhi (the capital of India), for example, there were only 14 government run night shelters with capacity of just under 3,000 for a homeless population of more than 100,000, the UNDP backed report said.”
Causes of Homelessness in India

Homelessness in India has been a problem for centuries, and two main causes, chronic poverty and caste discrimination also have been associated with homelessness since centuries. Moreover, structural forces like government insensitivity for poor, hostile laws and shameful performance of welfare programs have been decisive factors to create more and more homeless.

Chronic Poverty

Poverty indicates a condition in which a person fails to maintain a living standard adequate for his physical and mental efficiency. It is a situation people want to escape. It gives rise to a feeling of a discrepancy between what one has and what one should have (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

Kulkarni (2011) pointed out that “there is no uniform measure of poverty in India. Until recently, there was no official consensus on what percentage of the population lived below the poverty line. Nationally, there were different definitions of poverty. One of the more accepted definitions of poverty was in nutritional terms: below 2,400 calories daily in rural areas or below 2,100 calories daily in urban areas. However, out of context, these numbers are grossly misleading: in the U.S., the 2,000-calorie daily diet is touted as healthy for the average American. In caloric terms, then, a majority of Americans is poor. Using nutrition as the framework by which to define poverty is misrepresentative and does not provide insight into India’s poverty problem” (Beyond Profit, 2012).
Calorie poverty has not declined, although consumption poverty has steadily declined in India, the number of people who actually consume calories above the minimum level associated with poverty line-2400 and 2100 kilocalories per day in rural and urban areas respectively –has not risen. As of 2004 - 05 around 80 per cent of rural households were estimated to be “calorie poor” (World Bank 2011).

Since 1972 poverty has been defined on basis of the money required to buy food worth 2100 calories in urban areas and 2400 calories in rural areas. In June this year a government committee headed by N.C. Saxena committee estimated 50% Indians were poor as against Planning Commission’s 2006 figure of 28.5% (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

As Naqvi (2011) has noted “the World Bank global poverty line, at $1.25 a day or about $38 per month, is three times higher than India's urban level. Local activists say a better name for India’s standard would be "the starvation line" (Huffingtonpost, 2011)

Pasricha (2011) pointed out that “in 2011 the planning commission has told India’s supreme court that a person, who spends roughly half a dollar a day on food, education and health in rural areas, or $15 a month, will not be considered poor. The bar for the poverty line for urban areas is slightly higher - 66 cents or about $20 a month. The figures are far below the World Bank’s international poverty standard of $1.25 per day” (VOA News, 2011).

The Multidimensional Poverty Indicators developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and applied by the Human Development Index (HDI) 2010, are perhaps the most reliable measures developed so far. They include: Years of Schooling, Child enrolment, Mortality (any age), Nutrition, Electricity, Sanitation, Drinking Water, Floor, Cooking Fuel, and
Asset Ownership. Each of these indicators is given due weight. The new Inequality Index as deployed in the HDI further elaborates the nature of disparities and shocking poorness of the poor in relation to the richness of the rich (India Together, 2011).

One of the standard measures of absolute poverty employed by international agencies is the percentage of a country’s population living on less than $2 per day. For the world’s richest nations, that statistics is too small even to be reported, but elsewhere the pictures are far different. In India, four of every five resident subsists on less than $2 per day (PRB, 2006).

Poverty has many dimensions changing from place to place and across time. There are two inter-related aspects of poverty - Urban and rural poverty. The main causes of urban poverty are predominantly due to impoverishment of rural peasantry that forces them to move out of villages to seek some subsistence living in the towns and cities (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

There is no proper enumeration of beggars in the country. Moreover the number of women and children is ever increasing. The 1931 census mentioned just 16% women beggars. The figure shot up to 49% in 2001. There are 10 million street children many among who beg for livelihood (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

Inequality in earnings has doubled in India over the last two decades, making it the worst performer on this count of all emerging economies. The top 10 per cent of wage earners now make 12 times more than the bottom 10 per cent, up from a ratio of six in the 1990s (Times of India, 2011).

As professor Utsa Patnaik, India’s top economist on agriculture, has pointed out, the average poor family in 2007 has about 100 kg less food per year than it did in 1997 (Wikipedia 2011).
As Kulkarni (2011) has noted “there are several conflicting estimates by different official committees: the Lakdawala committee says 26 per cent, the Suresh Tendulkar committee says 37 per cent, the World Bank says 42 per cent, the Arjun Sengupta committee says 77 per cent and Utsa Patnaik says approximately 80 per cent” (Beyond Profit, 2012) (Appendix – III).

As Joseph (2011) has noted “the growing inequalities between urban and rural India are clearly spelt in the poverty estimates drawn up by the Suresh Tendulkar Committee, which has found a more and robust method to measure poverty. If it is accepted by the government, the below poverty line population would jump by nearly 100 million from 27.5 per cent to 37.2 per cent (DNA India, 2009).

Kumar’s (2010) study found the following:

India’s business elite likes to justify their position in society on the basis of their own personal initiative, acumen and drive. In reality, their wealth is the product of the exploitation of the country’s huge reserves of cheap labor and depends on the continued impoverishment of the rest of the population. This worsening social divide will inevitably produce a rebellion against the appalling conditions created by profit system and the ruling elites that defend and benefit from it (WSWS, 2011).

Kumar’s (2010) study found the following:

The Financial Express commented: The wealth amassed by Indian billionaires—estimated at 340.9 billion dollars by the US business magazine Forbes—is nearly 31 percent of the country’s total GDP. This gives them nearly three times more weight in the economy than their American
counterparts and over ten times of those in China. The GDP share of Indian billionaires’ wealth is more than four times of the global average (WSWS, 2011).

**Hostile Laws**

India's beggary laws are a throwback to the centuries old European vagrancy laws which instead of addressing the socio-economic issues make the poor criminally responsible for their position. The definition of beggar in law states as anyone who appears poor. The anti-beggar legislation is aimed at removing the poor from the face of the city (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

Tulsiyan’s (2008) study found the following:

Under Indian laws, homeless beggars are treated as criminals and booked under various beggary laws. The Bombay Beggary Prevention (1959) Act defines beggars as anyone soliciting alms and who have 'no visible means of subsistence', including those who sell small articles at traffic lights and other public places.

Basu (2011) pointed out that “anti-beggary laws give power to agents to pick beggars up at will; to arrest them and subject them to long periods of detention without a proper process resulting in denial of liberty, which is clearly outside the constitutional mandate. It remains only a way of managing poverty through coercive means”.

The study at a national consultation on urban poor with special focus on "Beggary and vagrancy laws-the issues of decriminalization". Conclusively, legal luminaries and social activists said that neither the police nor the courts displayed satisfactory interest in the issue and their response was at best disorganized and at worst violation of human rights (The Hindu, 2005).
Caste Discrimination

There has been increase in unemployment creating poverty like situations for many. Population is growing at an alarming rate. The size of the Indian family is relatively bigger averaging at 4.2. The other causes include dominance of caste system which forces the individual to stick to the traditional and hereditary occupations (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

Bhagwat (2011) pointed out that “the importance of this judgment lies in the recognition by the Supreme Court, that there is a breakdown of the ‘social contract’ between the government and people in these regions, as a consequence of the distorted policies of globalization implemented, pursuant to which illegal and unconstitutional measures were adopted by the State” (Counter Current, 2011).

Occupational segregation and wage differentials between Dalits (broken people) and other groups are still evident. Nearly 30 percent of Dalits are engaged in low-skill casual jobs, compared to 8 percent in the general category (non-SC/ST/OBC) Individuals (World Bank 2011).

In the words of Sanith (1996) “the PHCs (Primary Health Center) handle only nine out of every hundred patients treated in rural areas. So how does the public health system serve them? How, above all, does it serve the poorest – the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes, those with least access in every sphere?” (p. 28).

Some signs are also apparent of dynamism within caste hierarchies. But structural inequalities also remain present and visible. Caste is still potent indicators of social status (World Bank 2011).

Sainath’s (1996) study found the following:
Tribals make up just 8 per cent of India’s population. Yet, as Walter Fernandes of the Indian Social Institute points out, they account for ‘more than 40 per cent of the displaced persons of all projects. And, as the former vice-chancellor of Utkal University, Prof. L.K Mahapatra, says, there would be an equally big number of Dalits and other landless among the displaced (p. 65).

In the words of Roy (2010) “the Maoists’ guerrilla army is made up almost entirely of desperately poor tribal people living in conditions of chronic hunger we only associate with sub-Saharan Africa. They are people who, even after 60 years of India’s so-called independence, have not had access to education, healthcare or legal redress. They are people who have been mercilessly exploited for decades” (CETRI, 2011).

In 2008, an expert group appointed by the Planning Commission submitted a report called “Development Challenges in Extremist-Affected Areas”. It said:

"The Naxalite (Maoist) movement has to be recognized as a political movement with a strong base among the landless and poor peasantry and Adivasi [India’s indigenous people]. Its emergence and growth need to be contextualized in the social conditions and experience of people who form a part of it. The huge gap between state policy and performance is a feature of these conditions. Though its professed long-term ideology is capturing state power by force, in its day-to-day manifestation, it is to be looked upon as basically a fight for social justice, equality, protection, security and local development”.

**Poor implementation of welfare programs**

Since the 1970s the Indian government has made poverty reduction a priority in its development planning. Policies have focused on improving the poor standard of living by
ensuring food security, promoting self-employment through greater access to assets, increasing wage employment and improving access to basic social services (Azad India Foundation, n.d).

The actual funds that reach the beneficiaries are very little compared to the funds allocated for welfare schemes. Former Prime Minister, Rajeev Gandhi had once said that out of every 100 paisa allotted for public welfare only 14 paisa reaches the target audience (Window 2 India, 2011).

In context to twenty years of liberalization process in India, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar said that India’s GDP had grown up between 7 to 9 per cent per annum during 2005 to 2011, but poverty alleviation rate has been under 0.98 per cent per annum. This indicates that very tiny layer of population is siphoning off the wealth from economy, so economic gap is widening between different classes in India (Ndtv, 2011).

Timmons’s (2011) study found the following:

One of the primary problems, the World Bank said, was “leakages” — an often-used term in development circles that refers to government administrators and middle men stealing money, food and benefits. The bank said that 59 percent of the grain allotted for public distribution to the poor does not reach those households. (New York Times, 2011)

Dreze and Sen (2011) pointed out that “India’s poverty line is abysmally low, so that even if all the BPL cards were correctly and infallibly allocated to poor households, large numbers of people who are in dire need of social support would remain excluded from the system” (Outlook India, 2011).
National Advisory Council member Aruna Roy said it reflected the government's lack of empathy for the poor. “This extremely low estimated expenditure is aimed at artificially reducing the number of persons Below the Poverty Line and thus reduce government expenditure on the poor,” she alleged (Asian Tribune, 2011).

Sainath’s (1996) study found the following:
As the government further cuts health spending, public services are collapsing even in urban areas. Meanwhile, the burgeoning private sector gets ever more expensive, ever less accountable. Growing dependence on that sector means bankruptcy for some poor families, and the severity of government cuts has hastened the process (p. 28).
Homelessness in the United States

One of the most common misconceptions is the assumption that if someone is hungry, that means they do not have a job and are living on the streets. What most people don’t understand is that anyone can experience hunger. It is a silent epidemic that affects 49 million Americans (Feeding America, 2012).

Burt stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “definitions are absolutely critical to policy decisions about homelessness. Different problems arise and different potential solutions pertain depending on whether policy is being developed for the literally homeless or also for those at imminent risk. The size of the population will increase tremendously if the at-risk people are included.” (p. 20)

The homeless do not voluntarily choose life on the rough. They are not out in cold because they reject offers of assistance, or because the homeless have peculiar predilection for hypothermia. No, the homeless poor live and die on our city streets for reasons less related to personal pathology than to societal failure. (p. 2)

The U.S. poverty rate, according to the new Supplemental Poverty Measure, is estimated at 16.0 percent. The official poverty rate stands at 15.1 percent. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that 14.5 percent of all households were "food insecure" in 2010 (Stanford center, 2012) (Appendix – II).

Since the start of the recession, six million jobs have been lost. In May 2009, the official unemployment rate was 9.4%. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that 40 percent of families facing eviction due to foreclosure are renters and 7 million households living on very low incomes (31 - 50 percent of Area Median Income) are at risk of foreclosure (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).
According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD, there were 643,067 sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons nationwide as of January 2009. Additionally, about 1.56 million people used an emergency shelter or a transitional housing program during the 12-month period between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009.

Many people will not be counted because they are not in places researchers can easily find. This group of people, often referred to as "the unsheltered" or "hidden" homeless frequently stay in automobiles, camp grounds, or other places that researchers cannot effectively search (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Homeownership declined for the third year in a row, to 65.9 percent, after hitting a peak of 67.3 percent in 2006. Residents in crowded housing held steady at 1 percent, the highest since 2004, a sign that people continued to "double up" to save money (Huffington Post, 2012).

Many advocates for the homeless contend that a key difficulty is the social stigma surrounding homelessness. There is anecdotal evidence that many Americans complain about the presence of homeless people, blame them for their situation, and feel that their requests for money or support (usually via begging) are unjustified (Wikipedia 2011).

Simon stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “a poll by Parade magazine in July 1993 found that 82% of respondents opposed barring homeless people from libraries, parks mass transit, and other public places. Nevertheless, the public’s growing frustration with disorder associated with homelessness is undeniable.” (p. 151)
Causes of homelessness

A survey conducted in 2008 by the U.S. Conference of Mayors have reported that the three main causes of hunger in their city, 83 percent of cities cited poverty, 74 percent cited unemployment and 57 percent cited the high cost of housing (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

According to a 2008 U.S. Conference of Mayors study:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poverty
- Unemployment

For singles, the three most commonly cited causes of homelessness are:

- Substance abuse
- Lack of affordable housing
- Mental illness

Poverty

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. Poor people are frequently unable to pay for housing, food, childcare, health care, and education. Difficult choices must be made when limited resources cover only some of these necessities. Often it is housing, which absorbs a high proportion of income that must be dropped (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Hombs abd Snyder’s (1986) study found the following:
The underlying causes of homelessness structural unemployment, inadequate community based psychiatric care, housing scarcity, and social services cutbacks – show every sign of continuing unabated, if not, indeed, intensifying. Newly initiated review procedures are returning disabled recipients of federal entitlements to the ranks of the merely poor. (p. 68)

Baumohl, Burnam and Koegel stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “the American occupational structure was transformed by intensification of an older process called “deindustrialization”.

Deindustrialization refers to a shift from a predominance of relatively high paying, often unionized manufacturing jobs to lower-paying often part time or temporary service jobs that lack the same level of benefits and security. Ultimately, deindustrialization created a growing pool of young workers, particularly poorly educated women and people of minority status who became mired in chronic unemployment or in jobs that kept them below the poverty line.” (p. 28)

Hombs abd Snyder’s (1986) study found the following:

The face of homelessness has changed because the forces responsible for it have done so as well. In times past, homelessness was typically confined to migratory laboring men and women. It took the dislocations of war, famine, plague or civil strife to deprive people of their homes on a massive scale. Today we have the scale of deprivation without the antecedent catastrophes. The former sources of displacement have been succeeded by the less obtrusive one: unemployment, the depopulation of mental hospitals, the dramatic shrinkage of the low income housing market, let us look at each in turn. (p. 64)

For families and individuals struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for care, and eventual eviction (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).
The poverty rate for children under age 18 increased to 22% in 2010, meaning more than 1 in 5 children in America are living in poverty. Meanwhile, the poverty rate for adults’ ages 18 to 64 rose to 13.7% (CNN Money, 2012).

**Paucity of affordable housing**

As many as 3.5 million people experience homelessness in a given year (1% of the entire U.S. population or 10% of its poor), and about 842,000 people in any given week. Most were homeless temporarily (Wikipedia 2011).

And according to national studies, even more Americans are at risk of homelessness. Millions of low-income American households pay more that 50 percent of their income on rent when estimates say the figure should be no more than 30 percent (NLCHP, 2012).

The lack of affordable housing has lead to high rent burdens (rents which absorb a high proportion of income), overcrowding, and substandard housing. These phenomena, in turn, have not only forced many people to become homeless; they have put a large and growing number of people at risk of becoming homeless (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

According to HUD, in recent years the shortages of affordable housing are most severe for units affordable to renters with extremely low incomes. Federal support for low-income housing has fallen 49% from 1980 to 2003 (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2005).

In 2003, the federal government spent almost twice as much in housing-related tax expenditures and direct housing assistance for households in the top income quintile than on housing subsidies for the lowest-income households (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2005). Thus, federal housing policy has not responded to the needs of low-income households, while
disproportionately benefiting the wealthiest Americans (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Baumohl’s (1996) study found the following:

America’s largest housing program consists of tax benefits for homeowners. Such benefits represent 80% of federal housing expenditures, and in 1994 almost 80% of such benefits accrued to the top 20% of households—those with annual incomes over $60,600. Only 20% of lowest quintile households (those with incomes under $13,100) got any housing support, whether in the form of tax benefits or housing assistance. (p. xviii)

Foscarinis stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “while some of the amendments to the McKinney Act have enabled longer term solutions, the statue still fosters primarily emergency relief. Because emergency relief does not address the causes of homelessness—but instead merely ameliorates its symptoms—it cannot solve it. The predictable result is that homelessness continues to grow across the country.” (p. 171)

An advocacy group claims that Congress halved the budget for public housing and Section 8 (the government’s housing voucher subsidization program) and that between the years of 1980 and 1989 HUD’s budget authority was reduced from $74 billion to $19 billion (Wikipedia 2011).

Baumohl and Greenburg (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “even sufficiently impoverished people in favored categories face daunting procedural barriers to assistance, and these are particularly discouraging to homeless people, whose lives are constantly at loose ends and whose daily priorities may crowd out full compliance with bureaucratic expectations.” (p. 77)
Rich friendly economic policies

The past quarter century of Republican economics has proven that the trickledown theory is just a convenient excuse to justify and economic policy favoring the rich, with the benefits trickling up to make the very wealthy even wealthier (Curry Democrats, 2012).

A 1991 study examined homelessness "rates" (the number of shelter beds in a city divided by the city's population) in 182 U.S. cities with populations over 100,000. The study found that homelessness rates tripled between 1981 and 1989 for the 182 cities as a group (Burt, 1997).

Another cause for income inequality is the rate at which income is taxed coupled with the progressivity of the tax system. A progressive tax is a tax by which the tax rate increases as the taxable base amount increases. In a progressive tax system, the level of the top tax rate will have a direct impact on the level of inequality within a society, either increasing it or decreasing it (Wikipedia. 2011).

Today the top 1 percent of Americans control 43 percent of the financial wealth (see the pie chart below) while the bottom 80 percent control only 7 percent of the wealth. Incredibly, the wealthiest 400 Americans have the same combined wealth as the poorest half of Americans -- over 150 million people (Curry Democrats, 2012).

The gap between the wealthiest Americans and the poorest is bigger than at any time since the 1920s -- just before the Depression. According to an analysis this year by Edward Wolff of New York University, the top 20 percent of wealthy individuals own about 85 percent of the wealth, while the bottom 40 percent own very near 0 percent. Many in that bottom 40 percent not only have no assets, they have negative net wealth (Post Gazette, 2012).
The rhetoric from Republicans that half of Americans are not paying income taxes, at the state level the poor are paying more than twice as much of their income toward taxes than the super rich. At the same time poverty levels have risen to highs not seen since 1993, with 15.1 percent of Americans (Huffington Post, 2012).

But those in the bottom 20 percent pay closer to 12 or 13 percent of their income in state and local taxes on average. The top 1 percent of income earners only pays 7 to 8 percent, according to the Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy (Huffington Post, 2012) (Appendix – I).

The U.S. ranks third among all the advanced economies in the amount of income inequality. The top 1% of Americans control nearly a quarter of all the country’s income, the highest share controlled by the top 1% since 1928 (Stanford center, 2012).

By employing a plethora of tax-dodging techniques, 30 multi-million dollar American corporations expended more money lobbying Congress than they paid in federal income taxes between 2008 and 2010, ultimately spending approximately $400,000 every day -- including weekends -- during that three-year period to lobby lawmakers and influence political elections (International Business Times, 2012).

The federal government loses individual and corporate income tax revenue when multinational firms shift profits and income to low-tax countries. Companies like Microsoft and Google, for example, can lower their effective tax rates by moving certain operations overseas to countries like Ireland, which has a nearly zero rate on royalty income and a 12.5 percent corporate tax rate, the lowest among OECD countries. The average tax rate on multinational corporations among OECD countries is about 27 percent, compared to 39 percent in the United States (CFR, 2012).
Congress passed a landmark budget agreement to raise the debt ceiling and reduce the deficit by at least $2.1 trillion over 10 years. The Budget Control Act of 2011 prevents the United States from defaulting on its debts, which would have been devastating to poor and hungry people (Bread for the world, 2011).

“The IRS has spent the past few months trying to make the rules as liberal as possible,” says Robert Willens, an accounting and tax expert in New York. "They have been decreasing corporate taxes pretty consistently" (Time, 2012).

The $700 billion bailout has been the focus of attention and scrutiny, the Internal Revenue Service and lawmakers have been quietly making changes to the tax code and how it is followed in an effort to further boost the financial strength of ailing companies. At the same time, though, the changes drain billions of dollars of badly needed tax revenue when the federal deficit is mushrooming (Time, 2012).

An automatic cut known as “sequester” will kick in for the fiscal year 2013, cutting about $1.2 trillion from the budget in 10 years. The sequester would reduce annual spending by $109 billion, starting Jan. 2, 2013. The cuts are divided equally between the Defense Department and social programs (Abc News, 2012).

**Marginalization of Proletarians**

Hardin stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “scholars agree that four factors are most significant in exerting downward pressure on wages and the demand for labor. First is the decline in economic growth rates, a development that typically depresses employment and wage levels. Second is growing integration of the global economy and corporations’ incessant drive and increasing
capacity to obtain the lowest prices for all of their inputs, including labor. Third are technological changes that have eliminated entire categories of unskilled and semiskilled jobs in many industries and have accelerated the demand for more skilled workers. “Institutional factors” represent the fourth major proximate cause of recent changes. Most important are the declining value of the minimum wage and significant erosions of the social wages.” (p. 54)

Hardin stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “since the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the long post-World War II economic boom ended, labor market transformations in the United States and other major industrialized nations have significantly reduced the opportunities available to large segments of the workforce.” (p. 47)

Declining wages have put housing out of reach for many workers: in every state, more than the minimum wage is required to afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2001).

Baumohl and Greenburg (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “the low benefits levels of AFDC, GA, and in some places, SSI and UC, do not allow recipients to pay anything close to fair market rents, even when combined with FS to offset the cost of food. This is a principal reason why even the receipt of assistance often fails to ameliorate or prevent homelessness.” (p.77)

Baumohl and Greenburg (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “unemployment Compensation (UC) makes it possible for many people to avoid welfare during times of unemployment. However, UC is often unavailable to homeless persons, even those with a recent work history. Indeed, restrictions on the availability of UC do not affect just homeless; in recent years, less than 40% if the unemployed have received UC benefits each month.” (p. 72)
Racial Discrimination

Hopper and Milburn stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “African American males have long paid a higher toll in unemployment and underemployment than their White counterparts. What is extraordinary about the past quarter century is that a bad situations has gotten worse. Joblessness has increased relative earning declined and the return on schooling has slipped in value.” (p. 126)

Hardin stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “in the face of eroding employment opportunities and wage levels, Black workers are more likely than Whites to have withdrawn from workforce. And Black and Latinos of all educational levels are more likely to be unemployed and to receive lower wage than their White counterparts.” (p. 58)

Minorities were hit hardest. Blacks experienced the highest poverty rate, at 27 percent, up from 25 percent in 2009, and Hispanics rose to 26 percent from 25 percent. For whites, 9.9 percent lived in poverty, up from 9.4 percent in 2009 (New York Times, 2011).

According to US Conference of Mayors, 2006 ethnic distribution of homeless population as below:

- 39% are non-Hispanic whites (compared to 76% of the general population)
- 42% are African-Americans (compared to 11% of the general population)
- 13% are Hispanic (compared to 9% of the general population)
- 4% are Native-American (compared to 1% of the general population)
- 2% were Asian

Change, Frisman, Lam, Leda and Rosenheck stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “data from studies summarized previously indicate that 47% of homeless men are Black, as compared to
only 11% of all adult U. S. males. These data suggest as well that the relative risk for homelessness among Blacks is 7.3 times that for Whites. Much of this difference, it is reasonable to assume, is due to the greater rate of poverty among Blacks and their concentration in urban centers where homelessness is most prevalent.” (p. 104)

Shinn and Weitzman stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “HUD documented ongoing racial discrimination against African American and Latino renters in its 1989 study of 25 metropolitan areas. When African American and White testers with comparable personal characteristics asked about the same apartments, African Americans received no information 15% of the time, received less information 39% of the time, and were offered less favorable terms and conditions 41% of the time.” (p. 116)

Baker stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “the housing that is available to poor Latinos and African Americans is often physically substandard, and African Americans are more likely than either Latinos or non-Hispanic Whites to live in housing of inadequate quality.” (p. 137)

**Hostile laws**

"Practices that criminalize homelessness do nothing to address the underlying causes of homelessness. Instead, they exacerbate the problem." Measures passed "prohibit activities such as sleeping/camping, eating, sitting, and begging in public spaces, usually including criminal penalties for violation of these laws" (Wikipedia 2011).

Simon stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “in attacking, anti-camping and anti-sleeping ordinances, critics note that in many Americans cities, the number of people who are homeless at any given time far exceeds the number of available shelter beds. When shelters turn away
homeless people for lack of space, arresting the homeless for sleeping in public punishes them for conduct they are often helpless to avoid.” (p. 151)

Baumohl and Greenburg (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “in December 1995, Congress passed H.R.4, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1995. Legislation of this type could result in expanded homelessness, simply by reducing the availability of cash assistance to poor individuals and families.” (p. 75)

Anderson, Cress, Quist and Snow stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “variation from city to city in the number of shelters, soup kitchens, and other street facilities will also yield different adaptive repertoires, as will local ordinances that, for example, and panhandling or require padlocks on dumpsters to make scavenging more difficult. Such policies not only exacerbate the plight of the homeless by narrowing their survival options, but may unwittingly push them toward more-criminal activities like theft and prostitution.” (p. 88)

Various studies and surveys indicate that homeless people have a much higher criminal victimization rate than the non-homeless, but that most incidents never get reported to authorities. A 2007 study found that the number of violent crimes against the homeless is increasing (Wikipedia 2011).

Simon stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “advocates for the homeless argue that as a practical matter, municipal anti-camping laws are futile. At its most effective, critics argue, the enforcement of such laws simply shifts problems of homelessness to surrounding community.” (p. 152)
Homeless people are not willing or able to pursue such a defense because the costs of pleading guilty are so low and the risks and challenges of pleading innocent are substantial (Wikipedia 2011).

Anderson, Cress, Quist and Snow stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “besides being unofficial, unremunerated work outside the wage economy, shadow work is highly opportunistic and innovative. It involves, at minimum the recognition and exploitation of whatever resources and unofficial markets happen to be available whenever a few dollars are needed.” (p. 92)

**Privatization of Health Services**

Homelessness and health care are intimately interwoven. Poor health is both a cause and a result of homelessness. The National Health Care for the Homeless Council (2008) estimates that 70% of Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) clients does not have health insurance.

Approximately 16% of the single adult homeless population suffers from some form of severe and persistent mental illness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). Despite the disproportionate number of severely mentally ill people among the homeless population, increases in homelessness are not attributable to the release of severely mentally ill people from institutions (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

The relationship between addiction and homelessness is complex and controversial. While rates of alcohol and drug abuse are disproportionately high among the homeless population, the increase in homelessness over the past two decades cannot be explained by addiction alone (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).
Although obtaining an accurate, recent count is difficult, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2003) estimates, 38% of homeless people were dependent on alcohol and 26% abused other drugs. Alcohol abuse is more common in older generations, while drug abuse is more common in homeless youth and young adults (Didenko and Pankratz, 2007).

The 1980s also saw a continuing trend of deinstitutionalizing mental-health hospitals. It is believed that a large percentage of these released patients ended up in the homeless system (Wikipedia 2011).

Oakley and Dennis stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “homeless people with alcohol, drug, and or mental disorders (ADM disorders) are particularly disfranchised. They are often excluded from programs that assist homeless people because of their mental illness or substance use and from mental health and substance abuse treatment programs because of their homelessness.” (p. 179)

**Social Issues**

The number of homeless families with children has increased significantly over the past decade. Families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. In its 2007 survey of 23 American cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors found that families with children comprised 23% of the homeless population (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2007).

Foster home children are not given job training in school or at home. Without a means to make money, nearly half of foster children in the United States become homeless when they are released from foster care at age 18 (Wikipedia 2011).
Adult partner abuse, foster care, and childhood sexual abuse are all more likely to have been experienced by homeless women than by their male counterparts. Domestic violence is the direct cause of homelessness for over half of all homeless women in the United States (Wikipedia 2011).

The Ali Forney Center, New York provides both emergency and transitional housing for queer homeless youth, whose numbers account for anywhere between 20-40% of the 2.1 million homeless youth in America. The percentage of LGBTQ homeless youth is much higher than that of the general population, which runs between 5-10% (Wikipedia 2011).

In the last decades of the 20th century, the number of women in the homeless population had increased dramatically and grown faster than the number of men. In the early 21st century, the numbers of homeless women continued to grow (Wikipedia, 2011).

Battered women who live in poverty are often forced to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness. In addition, 50% of the cities surveyed and identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005).

**Neglected Veterans and Rural population**

In 2005, the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ survey of 24 American cities found that 11% of the homeless populations were veterans – however, this does not take gender into account (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans estimates that on any given night, 271,000 veterans are homeless (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, 1994).
Change, Frisman, Lam, Leda and Rosenheck stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “a more systematic synthesis indicated that 40% of homeless men report past military service, as compared with 34% in the general adult male veterans was 1.4 times more likely than nonveteran men to be homeless.” (p. 98)

Change, Frisman, Lam, Leda and Rosenheck stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “data from the Epidemiological Catchment Area Study, a five city study of psychiatric illness in the United States, show striking differences in rates of mental illness between veterans of the post-Vietnam era and non-veterans. It thus appears that in the cohort of veterans at great risk for homelessness.” (p. 102),

Aron and Fitchen stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “rural areas also have some distinctive-if not unique-populations susceptible to homelessness; groups with which urban researchers and service providers have relatively little experience. The largest Native American populations are in rural areas, as are most migrant farm workers.” (p. 83)

Moreover, there are few or no shelters in rural areas of the United States, despite significant levels of homelessness (Brown, 2002). The Council for Affordable and Rural Housing estimates that about nine percent of the nation’s homeless are in rural areas (The Council for Affordable and Rural Housing).

Aron and Fitchen stated (as cited in Baumohl, 1996) “the stock of low rent housing in rural America has shrunk dramatically. Although housing costs are generally lower in rural areas than cities, rural incomes are lower, resulting in a “shelter burden” nearly as high.” (p. 83)
Results and Discussion

The questions used in my interviews were designed to identify trends, themes, and patterns as well as to examine the similarities and differences found among the homeless populations in both India and the United States. The comparative analysis of qualitative and quantitative results demonstrated a comprehensive picture composed of specific issues which are central to homelessness in these two countries.

The compilation of the data from the interviews contained both objective and subjective information with sufficient facts and perspectives to formulate a clear analysis. The focus of this research was aimed towards discovering viable solutions pertaining to the causes of homelessness in India. To reinforce my objectives in this study I placed special emphasis on three of the ten questions used in my questionnaire. The resulting data was then entered into Excel format to methodically present the patterns and themes for this qualitative approach. The following categories were drawn primarily from those three key questions:

- The significance of the Drop-In Center concept
- Primary Causes of homelessness
- Perceptions surrounding government programs aimed at homelessness

The interviews were carried out in Ahmedabad in India and Brattleboro in the U.S. The size of the target group for this research is pertinent to the homeless populations in both countries. Furthermore, on the basis of literature reviews and the questionnaire used for the interviews, I believe that the summary of the data validates the core question of my research.
The significance of the Drop-In Center concept:

The data illustrates that all ten Indian interviewees don’t have access to any Drop-In center type of agency which provides such basic needs as, food, shower, clothing, laundry, restroom and day shelter. The stark reality is that the homeless in India are completely neglected: without any of the essential needs required to survive. Therefore, the homeless in India are subjected to complete marginalization and humiliation, even invisibility. All ten interviewees became confused when questioned about the whole concept of a Drop-In center type of facility. There are no agencies established of any kind focused on helping the homeless (Appendix – V).

In contrast, there are many places in the U.S where homeless individuals have access to a Drop-In center and other agencies that offer a number of services in order to survive. All ten interviewees in the U.S stated that they have access to or utilize such services as the Drop-In center and other agencies that assist the homeless population. Overall, the homeless are able to benefit from services such as, food, showers, free clothing, laundry, and advocacy for other types of services, such as referrals to over-night shelters, and day shelters (Appendix – VI).

The responses from the interviewees indicated that homeless persons visit the Drop-In center, in Brattleboro, Vermont (U.S.) on an average of three times a week. Each also commented that the Drop-In center serves as a vital setting in enabling them to better their circumstances. It plays a crucial role as a relatively safe meeting place during the day as well as providing basic needs.
Accessibility of the Drop-In center type of agency for the homeless in India and the U. S.:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Location of Interviews</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
<th>Homeless who have access to a Drop-In center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ahmedabad, India</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brattleboro, U.S</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Causes of Homelessness:**

Causes of homelessness in India, according to the perceptions of interviewees revealed a diverse number of reasons that create homelessness. They are primarily poverty, unemployment, family, economic recession, generational homelessness, corrupt politicians; it is also a common belief that homelessness is God’s wish.

Causes of homelessness in the U.S as conveyed by the interviewees revealed more diverse primary causes for homelessness. They include poverty, lack of employment, broken families, recession, budget cuts in the welfare system, drug & alcohol use, mental illness, pro-rich government policies, and insensitivity of government and society towards the homeless population within the country.

These responses and my own experiences among the homeless communities have clearly indicated that homeless persons in the U.S have a far better understanding of the underlying causes that create homelessness in their own country. Comparisons of the responses from both countries have greatly enhanced my understanding of the common roots of homelessness that continue to persist in India and the U.S.: especially predominate are poverty, unemployment, and family circumstances.
Perceptions surrounding government programs aimed at homelessness:

Out of the ten respondents nine stated that the government did not provide any attention to the homeless in India and one implied that he didn’t have any perception or knowledge about government programs. These responses clearly verify that neither the states nor the central government have any programs to support the homeless.

This feedback leaves no doubt that the homeless in India are not recognized by the government or for any programs that attempt to alleviate poverty, let alone homelessness. There are a number of welfare programs that accommodate millions of individuals who qualify as living below the poverty line. The homeless have no documents, no housing and therefore cannot access even this minimal help; in fact, this inaccessibility is what continues to perpetuate homelessness.

In the U.S. those who were interviewed spoke at length and presented interesting information regarding the many programs for the homeless. Seven interviewees were not satisfied with the government’s welfare programs and two respondents said they are satisfied by the government programs for the homeless in their country.

Furthermore, the U.S interviewees shared their perspectives regarding the government programs as well as their thoughts pertaining to homelessness. In summary, due to the large homeless population, there are too many demands on existing shelter homes and other services to accommodate everyone; this is the reason that many of the homeless choose to stay on the streets. Budget cuts in social sectors (i.e., Social Security Disability, Social Security Insurance, Health Care, Meals on Wheels, etc.) and particularly in federal housing programs (HUD) result in many families and individuals becoming homelessness. An exhausting bureaucratic procedure
denies the right of the homeless to access welfare programs. In many cases the homeless choose to use whatever minimal government aid they receive for drugs and alcohol. It is increasingly clear therefore, that the government take the necessary steps to create changes throughout all the programs and make them more accessible to everyone.

I recognized by the comments that many of the homeless in the U.S are able to access welfare programs, however, the majority of the homeless population is not satisfied with government support or its welfare programs. There are number of public and private nonprofit agencies which receive federal funding or grant monies such as the Department of Social Services with its Welfare Programs which provides different types of services and subsidies for the disadvantaged. Agencies that deal specifically with the needs and problems of the homeless such as Over-night Shelters, Food-shelves, Community Soup Kitchens, and Drop-In centers (which are day-shelters), services are far more amenable to homeless person and provide benefits; these are the type of services that are respondents commented most positively about.

One striking difference among the homeless in India and the U.S is the total length of homelessness. Out of ten interviewees four said they have always been homeless. They have no concept of how long they have been homeless. In fact, a considerable number of homeless persons in India have been facing homelessness for generations in comparison to their counterpart in the U.S.
Comparison of average time period of homelessness:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
<th>Location of Interviews</th>
<th>Average time period of homelessness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ahmedabad, India</td>
<td>Approximately 22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Brattleboro, U.S</td>
<td>Approximately 5.5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homeless Shelter Services in Vermont:

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless (2011), the population of Vermont State is 625,741 and homeless population in the state is approximately 1214. It is a boon for the homeless that Brattleboro has two homeless shelters: Morningside Shelter and the Overflow Shelter. During my interaction and interviews with the homeless, I discovered that Brattleboro serves indispensable services to the destitute which are critical for an individual to survive. The community of Brattleboro is generous and they make certain every day that as many disadvantaged as possible acquires a meal. Therefore, the town of Brattleboro is to be commended as a caring place for the homeless community. It is for this reason that many homeless come from nearby states to benefit from the services and kindness of the community.

The Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center provides an invaluable service to the homeless during the winter at the ‘Overflow Shelter’. The Overflow Shelter opens annually on 25\textsuperscript{th} November and closes on the 1\textsuperscript{st} of April and is located at the First Baptist Church on Main Street in Brattleboro. The shelter is open for as many individuals as possible who don’t have overnight shelter. According to the Overflow Shelter report (2012), during the winter of 2010 - 2011 the Overflow Shelter provided 114 separate people for 2,517 nights. So far, during 2011-2012 the
Overflow Shelter has registered a 49% increase in the number of people who accessed the shelter.

The Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity conducts an annual survey of Vermont’s homeless shelters and homeless service providers. Also known as one-night shelter count, the survey provides a snapshot into shelter utilization and the demographics of persons who are homeless in Vermont. Data are reported by all emergency shelters, transitional living programs, and homelessness prevention or essential services programs receiving funding through the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program (Source: 2011 Emergency Shelter One Night Census Count).

**Overview of Homeless Shelter Statistics during 2010-11:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Shelter beds for the homeless</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overflow Shelter</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(run by Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center)</td>
<td>Brattleboro, VT</td>
<td>2517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Shelters</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(under the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) program)</td>
<td>Across Vermont</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions to address the homelessness in India

When the government establishes budgeting priorities they ensure that the top priority is to protect those most vulnerable. This means shoring up programs that provide a safety net for extremely poor, including poverty alleviation, housing, health care, employment and training, and temporary assistance to needy families, and supplemental security income for at risk families, as well as people with disabilities.

In this section suggestions are cited to enable the deprived to avoid homelessness in India. These suggestions are inspired by the programs and policies utilized to assist the homeless and poor in the United States.

Adequate financing for housing programs:

To address the problem of homelessness, housing assistance must become far more accessible to those at the bottom of the income pyramid. For example, create secondary mortgage market institutions, develop private capital, expand state and local housing trusts, and low income housing tax credits.

It is vital to combine various housing programs and it is necessary to develop comprehensive networks including, funding streams in housing, health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment.

Financial support to individuals and families to prevent homelessness:

It is pertinent to develop a new model program of transition assistance, early intervention, and particularly to establish a foundation for recently homeless and at-risk families that extends
beyond basic shelter. This would include coordinating government and community based resources to provide employment opportunities, training, and advocacy, as well as food staples.

Another essential priority is to establish free legal assistance and representation focused on the prevention of homelessness. A Berkeley study, for example, determined that tenants in eviction proceedings won less than 6% of the time when they did not have legal representation, but won 58% of the time when they had it.

Social services, such as emergency financial assistance is imperative for the multiple needs of those who have experienced a sudden loss of income, illness, disability, and need funds for temporary rental assistance, utility bills, food coupons, etc.: all of which have potential to prevent homelessness.

**Enforce poor friendly taxation structure:**

Current tax expenditures provide substantial government housing subsidies to wealthy and middle class Indians: while completely neglecting the millions of disadvantaged. Such government subsidies have must turn their attention to embracing the poor. True welfare reform entails prioritizing the needs of individuals and families who live in or on the edge of poverty.

Taxation is a powerful tool that the government uses; in the case of income tax, the government taxes those earning higher incomes at higher rates. A ‘Wealth Tax’ is also levied on riches that are above a specific threshold. Additional taxes are enforced on items that are predominantly consumed by the wealthy. By changing the government's expenditure policy these taxes could develop programs that would improve the welfare of the neglected.
Another government policy, ‘Tax bailout’ that is used to benefit only corporations must be eradicated; these corporations already generate huge profits. Utilize this tax bailout revenue strictly for the social sectors, and specifically towards the welfare of the impoverished and homeless.

It would be highly advantageous to bring tax benefits to promote donations by individuals and groups to community organizations (e.g. ‘Drop In Center’ and ‘Salvation Army’) that bring assistance to all indigent.

**Funding and endorsement of community support agencies:**

In the United States Drop-In Centers, Food Shelves, Churches, the Salvation Army, NGOs, and Homeless Shelters offer indispensable services to homeless and at risk individuals across the country. In stark contrast India’s huge population of homeless and underprivileged continue to suffer a dearth of supports or services. It is vital therefore, that according to the Indian context organizations of similar nature can and must be adapted for these people.

Also pertinent to the government and states of India would be to use a holistic approach; for example, throughout the nation of India the government heads must take into account implementing networking and support from the countless religious organizations and peoples, because these have a tremendous impact on the masses.

As the lack of housing is at the core of poverty and homelessness it is mandatory to pursue substantial “social ownership” of housing units. Social ownership (e.g. housing authorities) must also be accessible to ownership by nonprofit organizations or by private individuals who abide by strict resale provisions.
Provide appropriate pension to the aged:

The government of India provides a pension scheme called the ‘Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme’ to every qualified individual. According to this scheme, the center (federal) government issues a monthly pension of Indian National Rupees (INR) 200 (approximately $ 4.00) to each beneficiary to which each state is expected to contribute an equal amount. The total pension of INR 400 (approximately $ 8.00) is not enough to survive, nor fulfill the most basic needs of an individual. It is urgent, therefore, to at least double the amount of pensions to avoid marginalization of the elderly.

Provision of ‘Identity Cards’ to all Homeless Individuals:

Most homeless and underprivileged persons don’t have official identification documents which are necessary to access welfare programs or other benefits. In point of fact, government administrative processes require personal documents in order to obtain benefits. It is essential to bring about administrative reforms for all programs pertaining to homelessness and poverty. It is vital to provide Voter ID Cards, Postal Services, Ration Cards, and NGO cards to all individuals. There have been literally generations of children born into homelessness throughout India; these millions of people among the populous are not even recognized which makes it impossible for any of them to access benefits or programs. Every citizen, therefore, must have official birth records, particularly all who are born into homeless circumstances.

The ‘Unique Identification’ (UID) card or ‘Aadhaar,’ provides access to all official records of an individual as are stored in a single card simplifying the process of obtaining access to any government or non-government programs. The administrators of ‘Aadhaar’ must ensure that every citizen of the country, specifically the homeless, underprivileged, and all other marginalized peoples, are reached in order to acquire this card.
Simplify administrative process and eradicate corruption:

To prevent homelessness more directly and powerfully existing programs must change their eligibility criteria and begin to help poorer, more disadvantaged households, including those consisting of single persons. Because of the pervasive corruption within the government dispossessed people cannot receive the benefits of their programs. The distribution procedures for these programs are also weak and make it more difficult for the people to avail.

New laws must be created to ensure and enforce government accountability via constitutional commissions. It is mandatory that to develop a strong system of incentives and penalties to be meted out to those who fail in their responsibilities.

Implement a detailed study on various aspects of homelessness in India:

The government needs to direct diverse institutions and organizations to carry out in depth research, and collate a wealth of data that comprises homelessness and poverty across the country. In the course of my research it became evident that there was a quantity of information and research available pertaining to homelessness in the U.S. In India however, there are no primary resources or research that has been conducted; at best, there is nothing reliable to assess such an inherent and predominant core issue such as that of homelessness and poverty.

It is the responsibility of the government to instigate a systematic and comprehensive method in addition to the census that would comprise every individual including the homeless. This could be further enhanced by the government making a conscious effort to network with academic institutions, public agencies, non-profits, and private organizations situated within all communities.
Endorse slum up-gradating projects to enhance the living standards of the impoverished:

In general the term ‘slum’ refers to urban shanty-house areas; there are millions of Indians, however, who live in the same slum-like conditions in rural areas across the country. According to Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, India (2011), the slum population in India was over 93 million (Appendix – IV). According to Dr. Arjun Sengupta 77 per cent population of India is below poverty line or vulnerable; these figures depict that a majority of Individuals are living in deplorable conditions. Clearly, the national and state governments of India attempt to present a picture of prosperity to the world. Without question therefore, there is an urgent need to immediately initiate slum up-gradation and low cost housing projects in the country.

The administration must coordinate funds with other agencies to invest in affordable housing, obtainable, low interest rate housing loans for slum dwellers, as well as incentives to private stakeholders to develop an increasing number of housing units in rural and urban India.

Accommodate all homeless under over-night shelter programs:

Adequate housing is not merely a desired goal; it is a basic human right of all human beings. This has been stipulated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, which recognizes the right to adequate housing as an integral part of human rights towards a suitable standard of living.

The Supreme Court of India decreed in 2011, that all Indian states establish permanent homeless shelters in all major cities. According to the court mandate, shelters have to handle sufficient numbers of city homeless populations, and be equipped with clean water, adequate sanitation, nutritious food sources, and health services. Further, according to the Constitution of
India, Article 21, ‘the right to life,’ encompasses the right to Shelter, which forced the central (federal) and state governments to provide shelters to each homeless individual including the above criteria.

**Additional suggestions to assist the homeless and marginalized population:**

There are no single solutions to the problem of homelessness. Effective policy responses must at a minimum address both the vulnerabilities that leave certain individuals at risk for homelessness and the structural conditions that exacerbate such vulnerability.

Most homeless persons with mental illness do not need to be institutionalized, but can live in the community with the appropriate supportive housing options. The mental health support services most needed include case management, housing, and treatment.

Establish ‘Social Medicine’ throughout the country; most importantly there is a need to focus on mental health treatment. Central (federal) and state governments must set up a health system under which each citizen can get free quality health services. One type of assistance can be understood as institutionalized labor, in that it is provided by organizations such as shelters, soup kitchens, and drug and alcohol “rehab” programs that occasionally pay homeless clients for work related to operation of the facility.

Since India started economic reforms (neo-liberal policies), and implemented the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the government of India continually cuts the social sector budget. Furthermore, privatization of social services has made the lives of indigents even more vulnerable which has amplified poverty and homelessness in India. Again, it is critical to
increase budget allocations within the social sector availing all disadvantaged improved access to services that provide basic needs.

More than half of the population in India is struggling to acquire sufficient food; in this situation ‘Universal PDS’ (Public Distribution System: subsidized rations to all) is one the best ways in furthering the fight against hunger and poverty. This is not only feasible within the available fiscal space of the central (federal) government, but must be a priority policy rooting out the cause of incessant inflation.

India administrates two housing programs: Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) for rural areas and Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) for urban areas. However, ineffective implementation of schemes as well as pervasive corruption within the delivery system deprives the rights of the underprivileged and homeless. It is imperative that this system be directly, honestly, user friendly to all beneficiaries regardless of documentations, officials and politicians.

Many proponents of “welfare reform,” advance economic policies that foster employment at livable wages; this feature has the most potential to make significant inroads towards resolving the crises of homelessness and poverty. Any job initiatives must prioritize the most vulnerable people; those with disabilities and long-term unemployment histories.

The homeless are called publically and privately ‘Beggars;’ this is a derogatory and demeaning term. The government, NGOs and media must work together to create a new and positive identity of homelessness, an identity that respects human dignity for all individuals.
Conclusion

Evidence clearly demonstrates that homelessness is the foremost outcome of economic and social injustice in India and the U.S. My research and experience proves that while the world may perceive that the U.S is a land of prosperity and opportunities; however, the economic gap between the rich and poor is at its highest level than at any point of time in history. In the past decade alone homelessness has become rampant. It is in fact surprising then that the U.S., the wealthiest nation in the world has approximately one per cent of its population living in homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless. Therefore, as a result of my research I discovered that the Drop-In center concept is a type of organization that would absolutely provide indispensable services to the homeless and disadvantaged population of India. Chronic poverty and homelessness has been a generational and insidious situation of disregard across India. In India those existing on less than $2 per day comprise more than the entire population of Europe. To emphasize: the lives of millions of human beings in India are shockingly devalued when compared to millions of European cattle, each of which receives a subsidy of $2.7 per day. More than 900 million Indian citizens struggling to survive; ironically, the minute percent of the elite consistently grasps to accumulate enormous wealth in a country that is overwhelmingly drowning in poverty and cruelty. To address such ongoing and pervasive conditions throughout India demands drastic steps focusing on humane and holistic strategies. It is critical to enforce core changes within all social, political, economic, and developmental systems that must embrace consciousness. Ultimately, there must be an increase to budgeting for social sectors, an expansion of the safety net targeting those most neglected, and an implementation of specific welfare programs designated for these issues. In this way millions of at-risk Indians will be seen and treated as human beings not less than European cattle.
Reference

http://www.igssss.org/urban-poverty-homelessness-india.php

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl4irc25rHk&feature=fvsr

http://currydemocrats.org/in_perspective/american_pie.html


Beggary in India (n.d.). In AZAD INDIA FOUNDATION. Retrieved October 11, 2011, from


http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/4226


Percentage change in average federal tax rate in United States

**Note:** relative to 2013 current policy

© URBAN INSTITUTE
Poverty rate rises in America (1980 – 2010)

Appendix – II
Appendix – III

Various Estimates of the Number Living Below Poverty in India, 2009 (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number (in millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Official</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC Saxena Committee (Rural only)</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed official</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank ($&lt;1.25 PPP per day)</td>
<td>488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Survey 2008-2009 (India Budget)</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank ($&lt;2.00 PPP per day)</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arjun Sengupta Commission</td>
<td>903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Population Reference Bureau (2010)
Growth of Slum Population in India (in millions)

- 2011: 93 million
- 2001: 61 million
- 1991: 44 million
- 1981: 23 million

(Source: National Commission of Population, India)
Appendix – V

Interview questionnaire for the homeless

Interviewee ID : _________________________ Date: ________________

1. How long have you been homeless?

2. Why you are homeless?

3. Do you receive any assistance from a Drop-In Center?

4. If yes, what type of assistance do you receive?

5. How many days in a week do you visit a Drop-In Center?

6. How do you explain a contribution of Drop-In Center in your current life?

7. What is the attitude of society towards you/homeless?

8. Do you have any kind of livelihood?

9. What are underlying causes of increasing homelessness/poverty?

10. What is your opinion regarding the federal and state support to homeless?
## Interview with the homeless in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents ID</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long have you been homeless?</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>I was born as a homeless and till this moment.</td>
<td>Since last 20 years</td>
<td>8 to 9 years</td>
<td>Since 15 years</td>
<td>No, I don’t have house like you have, but I called house to this pedestrian because its give me a shelter.</td>
<td>Since childhood I'm homeless and I don't have family or relatives</td>
<td>I have been homeless since long time, I don’t remember the year. Actually, when I was young I sold my house and became homeless.</td>
<td>I don’t know exactly the year, but since childhood.</td>
<td>I have been homeless since long time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why you are homeless?</td>
<td>Family expelled me out of my house; one of my brother borrowed money from me and he never returned so my family was angry on me and they kicked me out.</td>
<td>I didn't see my parents because they passed away before I achieve awareness about the world.</td>
<td>I left my home, because people were fighting all the time in the house, and I want to live with freedom.</td>
<td>My son and daughter-in-law pushed me out of my house. I had a family, but after death of my wife I was unable to work so my son pushed me out of the house.</td>
<td>I already said I don’t know why I am homeless. My parents were homeless that’s why I am too.</td>
<td>Because my parents didn't have house so I'm raised as a homeless</td>
<td>I don't have my family or any relatives that’s why I don’t need house; because one day everybody has to die and nobody would carry land or house with them.</td>
<td>I don’t have money to buy house, therefore, I'm homeless.</td>
<td>I am poor since my childhood and don’t have money to buy house. Price of houses touching to the sky, but one day I will buy house for my family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you receive any assistance from Drop In Center?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No and even I don’t want it</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No such agency exist here</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, what type of assistance do you receive?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many days in a week you visit Drop In Center?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you explain a contribution of Drop In Center in your current life?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the attitude of society towards you?</strong></td>
<td>Some people are good and shows kindness. And some don't treat us respectfully because we are beggars.</td>
<td>I'm not familiar with this term 'Society', because since childhood nobody is bother about me. I don't see any role of society in my life.</td>
<td>Society is kind and always help to homeless, but police is very rude with us. Police beat us so we have negative impression about them. I think we need to change police officers for better friendly relation with society.</td>
<td>Society is so selfish now everybody is concerned about others. If someone wants to do charity or religious rituals they come to us and gives charity so finally they are doing charity not by choice but have fear of God.</td>
<td>Society? Hmmm., my society is my street dogs, cats, beggars and sometimes police officer who force us to leave this place. I don't know about society which you are talking about because I have no connection toward them, but I would say that they are busy in their life and I am too.</td>
<td>Society hates me and I also do the same. Since childhood I found that people hate me they see me like an evil.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you have any kind of livelihood?</strong></td>
<td>No, because I'm disable one of limb is not functional.</td>
<td>Yes, I do labor work nearby railway station</td>
<td>Yes, begging is my livelihood and I ask money proudly without shame to do so. Society gives money for blessings and it is part of their faith to donate money to beggars.</td>
<td>Yes, I do casual labor work when I need money otherwise I eat free from hotel</td>
<td>Yes, I sell illegal railway tickets, I earn enough money to drink (liquor) and food. But sometimes I have when time is bad.</td>
<td>Yes, I do masonry work but when I need liquor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are underlying causes of increasing homelessness/poverty?</strong></td>
<td>I don't know about the causes of homelessness in the society. But in my case relatives are the main cause of homelessness.</td>
<td>God who made be beggar</td>
<td>I'm not bother about others and actually I don't know causes of homelessness or poverty. I believe in enjoying life.</td>
<td>Price rise and inflation are the main reason of poverty and homelessness</td>
<td>No idea. Who cares about others, and I'm concerned about myself only.</td>
<td>Government is responsible because they are failed to provide livelihood to the poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is your opinion regarding the federal and state support to homeless?</strong></td>
<td>Government doesn't provide any support</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remarks</strong></td>
<td>Police officers takes our money sometimes. They are evil on the earth.</td>
<td>I am happy with my situation, because now I have no debt and have freedom to live life.</td>
<td>People are working hard to earn money, and that is why common man is under pressure to earn enough for his family.</td>
<td>What the hell you are asking me this type of question? Are you teasing me? Because I don't have house, why you are asking me? Are you blind? You are watching me seating on the platform no roof, no wall and no family and still you are asking me about my house.</td>
<td>I have 4 children and one wife total 6 people are in the family.</td>
<td>I have 4 children and one wife total 6 people are in the family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix – VII

## Interviews with the homeless in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents ID</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questionnaire</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How long have you been homeless?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First time I moved to cave and second time I chose to be homeless. Total six years I have been homeless</td>
<td>Six months</td>
<td>More than three months and now I'm living in a tent on the mountain other side of river</td>
<td>More than two years</td>
<td>More than three years</td>
<td>On and off seven years</td>
<td>More than ten years</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>More than twenty years</td>
<td>On and off five years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why you are homeless?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was ex-drug addict and alcohol addit, and I don't want to work in drunk condition so I gave up everything. Family and friends wouldn't help me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our house flooded in storm, and we didn't have insurance for home so we live in hotel and other places with help of welfare department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of personal reason, my family ditch me for property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family reason: My husband abandon me due to my illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reason: Due to divorce with my wife I had to give up my house to my wife and children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with landlord made me homeless.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was raised in a foster care home, my parents died very early so now I'm a homeless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lost everything because of my drug addiction so I and my child became homeless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you receive any assistance from Drop In Center?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If yes, what type of assistance do you receive?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used to visit DIC for services, but now they don't allow me there</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>If yes, what type of assistance do you receive?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used to visit DIC for taking shower and laundry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We get food assistance once in a two week, because I and my wife have Social Security so we get assistance from welfare department. DIC is intertwined with programs to get in apartment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I visit DIC for taking shower and laundry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get clothes and food. Milinda Boussio was my friend and she helped me a lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to DIC for food, clothes and other things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used to access shower, kitchen, clothes and food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use DIC to get food, clothes, kitchen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I go to DIC for food, laundry and clothes and see some friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I used to go to DIC in other town, but not here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I come here for food, clothes and see friends. I'm a volunteer here.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many days in a week you visit Drop In Center?</strong></td>
<td>Five days a week</td>
<td>Once in a week for clothes and volunteering</td>
<td>Almost everyday</td>
<td>Once in a week and sometimes I go there to see some friends</td>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>Once or twice in a day</td>
<td>Five days in a week</td>
<td>Almost everyday</td>
<td>According to my need</td>
<td>Twice or thrice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do you explain a contribution of Drop In Center in your current life?</strong></td>
<td>I'm volunteer here, and I'm trying to giving back to center because they helped me</td>
<td>They provide good services to homeless people, but I don't use many services from DIC</td>
<td>DIC helped me to access federal programs for homeless and benefits. Milinda personally came forward and provided a great support when I was in trouble.</td>
<td>DIC provides basic services to homeless and that helps us to obtain basic facilities to live</td>
<td>Without DIC it would be very difficult to get basic services to maintain normal life</td>
<td>It was useful</td>
<td>It has been very useful for a homeless person to hang around with friends and clean up</td>
<td>It provides a useful services to sustain a day to day life</td>
<td>It is a great place for homeless. I have great respect for Milinda who started this Drop-In for us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the attitude of society towards you?</td>
<td>My personal experience has been great. Brattleboro is a great place to survive because there are places where people can eat and get shelter. There is space to get education or job skill training.</td>
<td>Society sees us as a useless people, but not all. Sometimes they discriminate homeless after knowing their homelessness status.</td>
<td>Society looks down on you, and sometimes children tease you because of your look and physical status. Twice children pelted stones at me and once I seriously got injured and landed at hospital.</td>
<td>Being a black, homeless and man people don’t give respect. Who cares about us, every one is busy in their life. Some people are generous and some look down on us. People don’t hire because we are homeless.</td>
<td>Some people are generous and I’m a Vietnam war veteran. Twice I had been there but now I’m a homeless.</td>
<td>I don’t want to comment on it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any kind of livelihood?</td>
<td>I don’t have job. Some temporary labor job.</td>
<td>I do some odd jobs; driving car, labor job and collect canes.</td>
<td>I’m trying to find a job which I can do. I try to learn English translation and sign language interpreter.</td>
<td>Yes, I write stories for children, but it doesn’t generate enough money.</td>
<td>No, people don’t hire us. No, I collects canes to get money. No. No. No.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are underlying causes of increasing homelessness/poverty?</td>
<td>Economic recession in US. US government not addressing root causes of poverty or homelessness. Outsourcing is one of the main reason for high unemployment rate, and this way corporations makes lot of money because they don’t pay enough and not following other laws in third world country.</td>
<td>Economic recession is one of the main reason, people are addicted to drugs and that makes a person homeless. The main reason is budget cut in social spending so people don’t get housing assistance programs and other benefits which they are entitled. Government policies are favorable to rich so they becoming super rich.</td>
<td>Lack of employment and poverty. I think drugs, alcohol, mental illness and broken family are the main reasons.</td>
<td>Lack of employment, no body hires for even odd jobs. Unemployment, budget cuts on social programs and economic recession.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your opinion regarding the federal and state support to homeless?</td>
<td>There are programs for homeless people and due to large number of homeless people not every can get benefit of it.</td>
<td>According to me state and federal government provides enough programs to support homeless, but most of homeless misuse it and use this money to buy drugs and liquor. There should be change in delivery system of programs, so homeless can’t misuse the tax payers money.</td>
<td>No, federal and state both cutting housing program budget. One side inflation is rising and cost of living is goes up, but assistance money remains same.</td>
<td>No, support programs are mainly for mentally ill and disabled so homeless people just get food stamps and Medicare. No, There is no enough space in shelter homes. Shelter homes are over crowded and not suitable to stay.</td>
<td>No, government don’t care of people who put their life in danger for the country. Yes, there are couple of programs which provides good benefit to homeless and disabled. No comment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
<td>33% black American are unemployed because of system. Government system is set up in such a way that white becomes prosperous. Racism is deeply rooted in US society.</td>
<td>I believe that God wants me to live like this being a homeless. It’s a God plan to have experience being a homeless, and who knows tomorrow I might have a home. Not all homeless are mentally ill or addict. Government should provide a good vocational training programs so people can work and become independent.</td>
<td>Not all homeless are mentally ill or addict. Government doesn’t have enough resources to help homeless properly. Church provides good support to me to sustain my life. DIC doesn’t have enough resources to help homeless properly. Church provides good support to me to sustain my life. He is alcoholic addict.</td>
<td>Homeless gets good food in Brattleboro compare to other big cities. Overflow shelter provides shelter from September to March only, and other time of year we sleep anywhere in the town. Homeless get shelter from September to April, but what about other time. It is chilling cold and we have to sleep outside on the street, isn’t it horrible?</td>
<td>He is alcoholic addict. I found she wasn’t mentally calm during the conversation. He is very friendly and humble person. I found he has good knowledge about socio-economic situation in US.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>