



punjab geographer



A JOURNAL OF THE APG, INDIA AND ISPER INDIA, PANCHKULA

VOLUME 11

OCTOBER 2015



HOUSELESS POPULATION IN KANPUR CITY: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

Doctoral Dissertation Abstract (2014)

Author: **Shamshad**

Supervisor: **Dr. Jabir Hasan Khan**

Professor

Department of Geography, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh

By going through the Kaleidoscope of human history, it may be very easily traced out that the man has faced the problem of shelter since his advent on the Earth. At present, with the emergence of many cities in the world as major regional or global commercial centres, shrinking man-land ratio caused by exponential population growth, unplanned urbanisation, lopsided developmental policies of the government, and, the widening gap between the 'haves and have not's have made the problem of houselessness very grim, especially, in the large and metropolitan cities of the developing countries. This problem is being aggravated, day by day, with the new arrival of rural poor who come in the cities in search of jobs to earn the means for their livelihood. These rural poor, when reach to the cities, generally, spend their nights in the open sky on the pavements along the roads, road-dividers, public places, under the bridges, etc., and some of them may luckily get accessibility in the tainted spaces like slums and squatters settlements, wherein, they have even no pure air to inhale, pure water to drink, not to talk about their basic needs of food, clothing and lodging. In fact, millions of people in the contemporary world are born on the footpaths; they spend their whole lives on the pavements and ultimately pass away from this world with a dream of house in their eyes.

After centuries of denying, rejecting and assisting the needs of the houseless people, there is still a search for solutions to the problem of houselessness. The first United Nations (1948) document explicitly refers to the right to housing in 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights', which, at the beginning of Article 25 (1), states that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control”. Further, the meaning of houselessness is too much flexible and it has been continuously changing over time and space. The Census of India (1991, p.64) has defined houseless population as “the persons who are not living in 'census house', a 'census house' being referred to a 'structure with roof'. The enumerators are instructed to mark out the possible places where the houseless population is likely to live such as on the roadside, pavements, in hump pipes, under staircases or in the open, temples, mandaps, platforms etc”. However, in the present study, the houseless population is defined as persons who do not live

in a house, having few possessions with them and used to sleep and live in the informal places, not meant for human habitation, excluding the slums dwellers, nomadic tribal people (gypsies) and Hindu saints, while, a house is taken as a physical structure of dwelling with roof and walls as a separate unit having the separate main entrance into it from the public way'.

Objectives

The specific major objectives of the present research work are:

- To examine the social attributes of the houseless population.
- To analyse the economic dimensions of houselessness.
- To identify the determinants of out-migration of houseless population operating in their places of origin and the repulsive forces of their in-migration in Kanpur city.
- To explore the socio-economic causes of houselessness that forces the people to become shelter less.
- To assess the problems faced by houseless population in the city.
- To inspect the availability and accessibility of infrastructural facilities and modern household amenities and assets for the houseless population in Kanpur city.

Study Area

The Kanpur city of Uttar Pradesh has been selected for this study. The geographical location of Kanpur city lies between the parallels of $26^{\circ} 10'$ and $26^{\circ} 36'$ north and longitudes of $79^{\circ} 30'$ and $80^{\circ} 35'$ east. It has been the first largest as well as most populous metropolitan city of the State of Uttar Pradesh till the Indian Census 2001. But after 2011 Indian Census, it slipped down to the second position after Lucknow (capital city) in Uttar

Pradesh and stands at twelfth position in the country. As far as the population of Kanpur urban agglomeration (UA) is concerned, it is still maintaining its first position in the state having the population 2,920,067 against the population of Lucknow urban agglomeration (UA) 2,901,474. Out of total population of Kanpur city (27,67,031), 54.30 per cent is male while 45.70 per cent is females.

Methodology

The study is based on primary data generated through a comprehensive field survey carried out in the Kanpur city during 2012. Having identified the houseless households in prior visits in each ward, the individual slips were used to ease the task of survey in the city. Among the total 110 wards of the Kanpur city, the houseless population was found only in the 96 wards and Cantonment area. The ward in Kanpur city is the smallest administrative unit and houseless household has been taken as the smallest unit for data collection. The 25 per cent samples of houseless households from each ward of city were randomly selected for the survey. Thus, the survey consisted of 1384 houseless households of the Kanpur city. In the end, the sampled houseless households of all the wards lying in a zone were summed up zone-wise for spatial data analysis and cartographic presentation.

Results and Discussion

The present study containing 120 valuable tables, 58 well drawn maps and diagrams, and 94 plates, has been set into nine chapters. The first chapter deals with the theoretical framework of houselessness, its types and various socio-economic causes and consequences. The second chapter contains a critical appraisal of brief resume of the published research work related to the houselessness. The third chapter deals with

aims and objectives of the study, sample and survey design, contents of the survey and methodology. The practical difficulties and problems faced during field work and limitations of data have also been categorically pointed out under this chapter. The chapter also embodies a brief account of the physical and human geography of the Kanpur city.

The fourth chapter presents the findings of social characteristics of houseless population such as houselessness has been seen as individuals' problem rather than the problem of houseless families, because out of the total sampled houseless households, only 228 houseless households have been registered as the houseless households with families, while 1156 houseless households have been identified as individual houseless persons. The problem of houselessness is found primarily among the population of normal mental status (93 per cent) rather than among mentally ill people. The proportion of houseless male population is exceedingly much greater than the houseless female population in the city. A large mass of houseless population lies in the working age-group, while, a little fraction of houseless population is composed of the juvenile and senile population. The majority of houseless population is composed by Hindus rather than Muslims and other religious communities. The majority of houseless population is composed of other backward castes people, followed by the general category population, scheduled castes population and scheduled tribes population. The rate of illiteracy among the houseless population is very high as only 38.58 per cent houseless people are literates, in which, more than two-third literates have their education only up to the primary level.

The fifth chapter examines the economic characteristics of houseless population. Most of the houseless persons are found to be working but most of them are found

to be un-skilled. More than ninety per cent houseless workers are recorded as daily casual workers. About two-third houseless workers are engaged in rickshaw pulling, construction works and begging in the city. Mental illness, lack of jobs and poor health are observed as the main causes of unemployment for the non-working houseless population. More than fifty per cent houseless workers are getting employment regularly for the whole month. The maximum proportion of houseless working population used to work for 8 to 12 hours per day. Around half of the houseless persons availed employment opportunities for the whole year and 13.74 per cent persons have no access to any type of work all through their lives. The monthly earning of houseless people is nearly three thousand rupees. More than 60 per cent of houseless persons remitted regularly or irregularly some part of their income to their homes. More than three-fourth expenditure done by the houseless people goes to food, followed by miscellaneous expenses, clothing, medical services and education.

The sixth chapter provides the information about the reasons of migration of houseless people as well as causes of houselessness. Out of the total houseless households surveyed, more than ninety per cent houseless people have been found to be migrants. More than four-fifth of the houseless migrants were from various states of India with major share of Uttar Pradesh. Out of the total houseless migrants in the city, the 99.34 per cent have been from India, while only 0.66 per cent was from Nepal and Bangladesh. The economic reasons (92.69 per cent) predominated as push factors of houseless out-migration from their places of origin into the Kanpur city in comparison to social, biological and natural pushing factors. Likewise, more than nine-tenth of the houseless in-migrants are pulled by economic factors, and a very little proportion is being pulled by the social and

biological factors.

About three-fourth of the houseless preferred to live and sleep on the pavements, ledges of shops and houses, and streets of residential colonies. Houseless people who have shifted their places of living once or twice found to be more than fifty per cent. Whereas, the houseless people who have shifted their places of living from three times to more than ten times altogether accounted for more than one-third. Among the houseless people, about fourth-fifth has lived in the house once upon a time in their lives. While, majority of houseless people has never been in the shelter. The people who have been houseless either since birth or more than 30 years accounted one-fourth proportion of houseless, and with three-fourth proportion of houseless population having experienced the life of houselessness for less than 5 years to 30 years.

The seventh chapter highlights the various problems faced by houseless population in the Kanpur city. Out of the total sampled houseless people, 87.40 per cent reported the interruptions in their sleeping and living on the footpaths. About nine-tenth of the houseless people have bad habits like, smoking, chewing tobacco and drinking alcohol. Three-fifth of the houseless people were facing various diseases namely, asthma, skin infestation, foot problems, backaches, gastroenteritis, etc. and about one-tenth found to be physically disabled. Majority of houseless people (97.05 per cent) felt the weather inclementness, in which, the rainy season is reported to be more inclement than the winter and summer seasons. One-fifth of the houseless population is socially cut-off with their families while rest are in-touch with their siblings/wives, parents, friends, relatives, etc. A huge proportion (96.09 per cent) of houseless population needed security from various kinds of humiliation and disturbances in their lives.

About three-fourth houseless people faced ill-treatment such as police brutality, officers' torment and misbehaviors of gangs and local people.

The eighth chapter deals with the availability of infrastructure facilities and amenities. Only 84.45 per cent houseless population possesses some basic durable goods, in which, more than half of the people possess only menial bedding items and cooking pots. The ninety per cent houseless persons have only one to two pairs of wearing clothes. Three-fourth of houseless get water from public sources, whereas more than one-fifth used private sources for drinking water, established by industrialists, shop owners and people of the colonies. About 84 per cent houseless population has to bathe in the open places, whereas remaining people have access to the closed places for bathing. About 87 per cent houseless people bathed at the public places rather than private places. Majority of the houseless people defecated in the closed spaces, whereas, the 45.50 per cent people have to go in open spaces for defecation. Only one-fourth houseless persons have some basic recreational activities like seeing television and cinema, listening radio, going on picnics and playing cards. Merely fifty per cent houseless population availed some basic governmental services, in which, about half of the houseless people have voter ID cards, more than one-third have the ration cards, and rest of the persons possessed the BPL cards, UID cards and various other governmental services.

The ninth chapter, being the last, contains a brief summary of the study and conclusions drawn therefrom along with the measures recommended, and, preventions and interventions suggested to mitigate the problems faced by the houseless in the Kanpur city and to overcome the problem of houselessness.