

# REHABILITATION CENTRE OF BEGGARS; A CASE STUDY OF SUMANAHALLI, CENTRE, BANGALORE.

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**Abstract :** Acute poverty, steep decline of joint family system, negligence towards older parents & specially challenged people and overwhelming importance for material prosperity rather than emotional bonds are forced to increase in the number of beggars and rehabilitation centres in the country. By accommodating beggars in rehabilitation centre, we can't make them feel at home, therefore to curb the problem of beggars, every individual and family must realize the significance of emotional bond.

**Key Words :** Beggars, Comprehensive, Destitute, Dignity, Rehabilitation, Self-respect.

## INTRODUCTION

Beggary is one of the major social problems in India. Mere Money with the Reserve Bank doesn't beget money to the poor and to the Beggars. Though the percentage of Poverty in India is gradually decreasing, the Poor and the Beggars still remain in all States due to gaps in policies and implementations. Being a beggar in our country is a crime through the eyes of both the law and the people. They are shooed away by both the rich and the middle class, claiming that they are dirty, despicable and dispensable. The governments often make half - hearted attempts to rehabilitate the beggars by arresting them and taking them to rehabilitation centres, which does not solve the problem of the beggars. If the beggars confront the vagaries of nature and human contempt on streets, they face a different kind of situation at a Beggars Rehabilitation Centre where they are obligatorily subjected to inhumane conditions such as bad food, cold and wet weather, physical and mental stress etc.

There are 14 rehabilitation centres for beggars in Karnataka located in Bangalore, Belgaum, Bellary, Bijapur, Kolar, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Hubli-Dharwad, Mysore, Mangalore, Raichur and Shimoga. Hundreds of beggars have died since the centre was started in Bangalore. The erstwhile King of Mysore had granted 308 acres and 33 guntas of land to the centre but now the centre has only 161.30 acres of land. The centre was started in 1944. At one point of time, the centre had facilities to involve the inmates in agriculture and cattle rearing. The agriculture activities have gradually come down and the cows that were with the centre were donated to a *goshala* (Cattle School).

## OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the condition of inmates in rehabilitation centre.
2. To realize the facilities which are available to the inmates at the centre.

## METHODOLOGY

Present study has been carried out at the Beggars' Rehabilitation Centre near *Sumanahalli* on *Magadi* Road, outskirts of the Bangalore city. Primary data were collected with the help of personal interviews with inmates and personnel at the centre and the relevant additional data were collected from secondary sources such as articles published in journals, daily news papers and source of internet.

## RESULTS

The Central Relief Committee (CRC) and the Department of Social Welfare have sent 628 beggars to rehabilitation centre on *Magadi* road. Out of that have been caught, 433 are men and 195 are women. apparently they are being caught from worshipping places, railway station, bus terminal and market places. During the drive, on an average the Committee brings around 50 to 60 beggars to the rehabilitation centre per day. some days, the number crosses 100.

Though lacking in basic facilities, it is gratifying to see some inmates utilizing their time productively by engaging themselves in income generating activities like tailoring, agriculture, making of soap powder, carpentry, book binding, mat weaving and growing vegetables. The products produced by them are sold in bulk.

All the inmates of the centre are not beggars! the Department of Social Welfare and the police are branded them as beggars. Virtually all of them are destitute, crippled, deaf and dumb and widows however, they have been formally charged with begging by the police before being brought to the centre. According to the Karnataka Prohibition of Beggary Act, physically handicapped persons, the able - bodied, diseased and infectiously affected should be accommodated separately and mentally unbalanced should be transferred to an asylum. However there is no such provision made in the centre.

According to the information available at the centre, only 20 to 25 beggars have been successfully rehabilitated. Majority of the inmates in the centre are men, almost half are old people and about 45 per cent of them are mentally unstable. It is a pretty clear that, the centre is not a rehabilitation colony for beggars. Instead, this is a shelter for old, and often mentally unstable people who have been abandoned by their families. And unlike real beggars, they have been arrested by the police. According to the Central Relief committee 30 to 40 per cent of the beggars brought to the centre are mentally imbalanced who are treated by doctors of National Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Science (NIMHANS). The centre also has gynecologists to take care of women. Similarly other well known hospitals like Victoria, Vani Vilas, and Rajarajeshwari Charitable hospitals also offering medical services for needy patients.

Over a period of eight months 286 inmates died last three years ago under mysterious circumstances, interestingly, there are different reasons reported for the deaths. The causes for the death of inmates were diarrhea, vomiting, electrolyte imbalance, old age, cardiac arrest, severe weakness, etc. This fact came to light in August 2010, since then the Department of Social Welfare has taken few initiatives to improve the physical conditions at the Beggars Rehabilitation Centre at *Sumanahalli* on *Magadi* Road on the outskirts of the city.

The Social Welfare Department has installed 64 closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras to keep a watch on the activities of the beggars and for the wellbeing of beggars following initiatives are also being taken by the centre.

\* Aadhar cards are being provided and the department has issued bio-metric cards to mark inmates attendance.

\* The department is planning to introduce telemedicine to provide clinical health care and improve access to medical services at the centre.

\* The inmates have involved in many activities, including development of job skills and yoga.

\* Library facility is provided for the inmates and they have been trained to take various activities which can help them start life afresh.

Another concern is that, Beggars Rehabilitation Colony was identified in 1944, by the colonial administration for rehabilitating beggars. However, Bangalore Development Authority is keen to develop the area as a township, including construction of hospital, man-made lake, and city bus terminal. Instead of using the land for above mentioned facilities, the area can be utilized to accommodate beggars in fairly modest condition.

## CONCLUSION

One of the ways through which we could lessen the number of beggars is by placing the impoverished and helpless into homes where they are offered not merely food, clothing and shelter but care and concern. There are provisions for vocational training in the government run beggar centres. If each of those is offered a skill, they would feel productive. With the nation aspiring to achieve world standards in every field, socio-economic welfare measures are needed to curb the beggary problem in India. The solution calls for a comprehensive programme, reorientation of existing programmes and policies. Philanthropic approach to beggar problem should be replaced by therapeutic and social business model.

Last six years ago in Bangladesh a programme designed for the wellbeing of beggars including economic independency by the Grameen Bank under the chairmanship of 2006 Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, today out of 100 thousand beggars 25 thousand beggars completely abandoned begging, today they are personal shoppers and remaining 75 thousand beggars are part-time beggars, because some time they go for begging and sometimes go for selling of household items. Similar kind of initiatives certainly reduce the number of beggars. Poorest of the poor need not live in the mercy of rich people, on contrary civil society must provide space and hand of co-operation to get out of their beggary. Even police and other departments of the government by forcefully send poor people in to the rehabilitation centres without considering their request, in fact nobody in this planet has born to stretch their hands in front of public to survive, every individual would love to live with great self respect and dignity, in order to achieve it civil society

must provide space for poorest of the poor's aspirations and change its mindset as well.

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