

A Study on Violence Against Pavement Dwellers In Chennai City

RISHINATH R

¹ Department of Criminology and Forensic Science, Dr. MGR Educational and Research Institute Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Corresponding Author: PRIYADHARSHINI JAYABALAN

Assistant Professor, Center of Excellence in Digital Forensics, Perungudi, Chennai - 600089

ABSTRACT: This Study delves into the phenomenon of violence against pavement dwellers, exploring the root causes, manifestations, and impacts of such violence. It seeks to uncover the socio-economic factors that contribute to their victimization and marginalization. The pull factors of these people toward city are job opportunities, rural poverty, urban way of living, family problems, and medical and hospitalization are the major reasons of pavement dwelling. The study attempts to understand how pavement dwellers live their lives and who are the main violators of violence through qualitative and quantitative methods such as interviews, surveys. The findings will feed into the solution of reducing pavement dwellers and policy recommendations aimed at protecting this population from violence and improving their safety and well-being.

KEYWORDS: pavement dwellers, violence, socio economic condition, violator

Date of Submission: 13-04-2025

Date of acceptance: 28-04-2025

I. INTRODUCTION

On the other hand, house is an integral part of any man's life. So that stable housing is a deterrent to positive impacts on the child and youth and development of the country. The International declaration of Excitation Rights (UDHR) 25 (1) which stated all humans should enjoy their best regular for health and their prosperity, which also brings essentials like food materials, cloth, home, etc. The right to social security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other loss of the means of livelihood in circumstances beyond one's control. Fortunately, the number of homeless people is increasing because the economy did not have an adequate housing. Homeless means living on open space such as pavements, railway stations, hum pipes, under flyover and open areas near temples. However, the 100 million of people nearly one-quarter of the world's population are living without shelter or in unhealthy and unacceptable conditions in India. The recently Hindustan times revealed that in India 1.77 million of people are living homeless.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

The study explains about the violence against pavement dwellers and perpetrators of violence and measure to reduce the pavement dwelling

Causes for pavement dwelling in India:

Homelessness happens mostly due to poorness in India. According to a National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) report, approximately 32% of India's households are below the poverty line. It means that they do not have enough money to cover basic necessities — food, clothing, shelter and health care. Many of these families reside in slums or on the streets because they can't afford rent or don't have secure tenure.

Help the Cause to End Homelessness in India:

- This would be a good opportunity for you to donate money to organisations like Noble non-profit which is working towards the abolishment of homelessness in India.
- Donate your time to help raise funds or awareness for organisations ending homelessness in India.
- This can help you and others understand the issue of homelessness in India and how to help.
- Work to change the policies (local, state, national level), which cause homelessness in India. The part that government politics plays entry homelessness. All levels of government must acknowledge the

seriousness of the problem of homelessness and the urgency for all of us to do whatever we can to help solve the problem.

- Share details of organisations working to end homelessness in India and how one can contribute to their work.
- Help people experiencing homelessness in your community by providing them with basic necessities like food, shelter, and clothing.

Causes of Pavement dwelling:

1. Low Income/ Poverty:

"Low income" is a relative word that describes those who make less money than other individuals in the community. A significant portion of the population in India lives below the poverty line and struggles to earn a livelihood. According to the most recent official poverty figures released by the Government of India, which were based on the 2011–12 consumption expenditure survey, 21.9% of Indians were living below the poverty level. At that time, this means that about 269.7 million people in India were living below the poverty line. In all the above sayers, it has been found that a good part of the people who are involved in the informal sector such as street vendors, rag pickers, scavenging, rickshaw puller, labourers, and so on, with not only very low income, the many of this society her population are below the poverty line. The exact number of homeless people in India due to poverty is not known, but it is likely to be a significant proportion of the total homeless population.

2. Unemployment:

Through the COVID 19 effect, many people became unemployed, and the surge in homelessness is post-COVID 19 effects. Without a steady stream of income, individuals, families and households may have difficulty meeting basic costs of living, like rent and electricity. As a consequence, they might find themselves without a safe home. About 18 million jobs in India were lost between April and July 2020 during the pandemic, the Centre for Monitoring Indian economy.

3. Substance Abuse:

Currently substance abuse is becoming a major problem worldwide. It has the particular of the most chronic problem, leading to bad physical and mental health, loss of job, and financial instability, deeply uglifying their life. The addiction of any intoxicating substance makes the situation worse for people who are already struggling with poverty and low income to end the cycle of homelessness.

4. Domestic violence:

Domestic violence is a growing problem in our society. Domestic violence or intimate partner violence, is the pattern of abusive behaviour used by one partner to control and dominate the other. The new normal is bringing domestic disputes in some sector of society of one sort or another, owing to the change of daily activity and absence of psychological peace. It strikes women generally, and most domestic abuse victims are forced out of their homes, adding to the numbers of homeless. These women are known to live their entire lives in temporary huts or road side pavements in many circumstances.

5. Mental Illness:

Mental illness is one of the leading contributors to homelessness. Homelessness and mental illness are inextricably connected, and each aggravates the other. As mental illness may lead to job loss, marital difficulty and, eventually, homelessness, it is also true that homelessness can cause and exacerbate mental illness. In the absence of necessary support and counselling, it becomes difficult to break this cycle. One of the most common causes of homelessness due to mental illness is the cost of therapy. India does not have recent data on the number of mentally ill persons living with the homeless. According to one report from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2016, an estimated 6-7% of the Indian population was affected by a mental illness.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter explains the various literatures regarding:

- To identify the socio- economic conditions and factors that are affecting the pavement dwellers.

Mushir Ali, (2012) Examine the homeless population's socioeconomic circumstances. According to the report, 72% of people who are homeless lack literacy. They are employed in pity trades (52%), transportation (64.3%),

and casual/daily labor (64.7%). Among the women are housemaids and restaurant employees. They reside in slums, rental homes, and outdoor spaces with less conveniences than the average person. The homeless population faced numerous challenges, including inadequate access to safe drinking water, prevalent illnesses, a shortage of adequate food, especially for women, and inadequate sanitary facilities.

Deborah K. Padgett and Prachi Priyam, (2017) The study investigates the ways in which Delhi's "pavement dwellers," or homeless people, manage to live and engage with government assistance initiatives. Researchers used theme analysis and participant observation to interview over 200 people over a 15-month period beginning in 2013, including government officials, NGO employees, and the homeless. The following were important themes: persistent illegality, reliance on others, worthiness perceptions, social isolation, erratic connections, and distrust. Decriminalization, improved access to healthcare, legal inclusion, and family financial help are all suggested by the research. Additionally, it considers homelessness worldwide in light of rising income disparity.

Roy and Chaman (2017), the primary causes of homelessness are poverty rather than a lack of shelter, and unemployment is the second significant factor that drives people into homelessness.

Elliott and Kriuo (1991), an increase in the number of homeless people living in slums, pipes, tents, caves, cars, vans, under flyovers, along roads or railway lines, and with their relatives in subpar or decaying facilities is a result of the rapid population growth in Third World countries brought on by urbanization, industrialization, and migration.

N. Periyamayan (2019) The research, which is based on interviews with 100 homeless people, investigates the socioeconomic circumstances and causes of homelessness in Madurai city. Results show that their homelessness and deprivation are caused by a variety of variables, underscoring their extreme socioeconomic disadvantage.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to analyze the violences against the pavement dwellers in Chennai city.

1. To study the socio-economic condition for the pavement dwellers.
2. To understand various violence and exploitation done against pavement dwellers.
3. To provide recommendation to reduce pavement dwelling.

IV. METHODOLOGY

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The focus of the study is on violence and causes against pavement dwellers and finding the perpetrators of the violence and helping to reduce the pavement dwelling. A total of 35 respondents were selected for the study including both male and female for the study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

Survey method and Interview method, structured questionnaires will be prepared and data collection will be collected from the pavement dwellers.

PROCEDURE:

The samples were collected from the pavement dwellers from the age limit of 18 to 50. The researcher obtained consent from each individual sample. Data was collected using questionnaire method. The collected samples the data was analyzed, coded and the SPSS software was used for data analysis and interpretation.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

Primary data: Interviews and surveys response from the pavement dwellers.

Secondary data: Through the articles, journals, books, secondary data were collected.

V. FINDINGS

This chapter interprets the acquired results for the study. SPSS software was used to determine the result.

TABLE 1: GENDER vs VIOLENCE FACED CROSSTABLE:

			Violence faced		Total
			yes	no	
gender	male	Count	15	7	22
		% within gender	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%
		% within Violence faced	60.0%	63.6%	61.1%
	female	% of Total	41.7%	19.4%	61.1%
		Count	10	4	14
		% within gender	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
Total		% within Violence faced	40.0%	36.4%	38.9%
		% of Total	27.8%	11.1%	38.9%
		Count	25	11	36
		% within gender	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%
		% within Violence faced	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%

Table 1- GENDER vs VIOLENCE FACED CROSSTABLE EXPLAINS:

Cross table 1 indicates that the number of people faced violence among the different gender. It indicates totally 61.1% of male response will be collected in that 41.7% of males say yes, so that they are faced violence.19.4% of males were said no, so that they will not face any of violence.

Totally 38.9% of female response will be collected in that 27.8% say yes, so they will face the violence and 11.1% of female says no, so they are facing a violence while in the pavement.

TABLE 2: AGE vs TYPE OF VIOLENCE FACED

			Type of violence					Total
			physical violence	verbal abuse	Sexual harassment	police harassment	others	
age	18-24	Count	1	0	1	0	3	5
		% within age	20.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	60.0%	100.0%
		% within type of violence	12.5%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	30.0%	13.9%
		% of Total	2.8%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	8.3%	13.9%
	25-40	Count	4	2	4	1	3	14
		% within age	28.6%	14.3%	28.6%	7.1%	21.4%	100.0%
		% within type of violence	50.0%	25.0%	66.7%	25.0%	30.0%	38.9%
		% of Total	11.1%	5.6%	11.1%	2.8%	8.3%	38.9%
	40-50	Count	3	6	1	3	4	17
		% within age	17.6%	35.3%	5.9%	17.6%	23.5%	100.0%
		% within type of violence	37.5%	75.0%	16.7%	75.0%	40.0%	47.2%
		% of Total	8.3%	16.7%	2.8%	8.3%	11.1%	47.2%
Total		Count	8	8	6	4	10	36
		% within age	22.2%	22.2%	16.7%	11.1%	27.8%	100.0%
		% within type of violence	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	22.2%	22.2%	16.7%	11.1%	27.8%	100.0%

Table 2 – AGE vs TYPE OF VIOLENCE FACED EXPLAINS:

This cross tabulation 2 shows that the age category of people faced different type of violence Firstly, the 18-21 age category people's response will be collected in 13.9%. In that 2.8% of young age people faced physical violence. 2.8% of young age people faced sexual harassment and 13.9% of young age people faced others that is no form of violence faced.

Totally 38.9% of response will be collected from the age category of 25- 40. In that response 11.1% of middle age people faced the physical violence. 5.6% of middle age people faced the verbal abuse .11.1% of middle age people faced the sexual harassment, 2.8% of middle age people faced harassment from the police, 8.3% of young aged people say others that is they are no form of violence.

A total of 47.2% of responses will be collected from the age category of 40- 50. In that response 8.3% of age people faced the physical violence.16.7% of age people faced the verbal abuse, 2.8% of age people faced the sexual harassment,8.3% of age people faced the police harassment and 11.1% of age people said others that is they are not faced any of violence.

TABLE 3: GENDER vs ACTIONS AGAINST EXPLOITATION

		Actions against exploitation			Total
		avoid certain area/people	report to authorities	stay silent	
gender	Count	10	6	6	22
	% within gender	45.5%	27.3%	27.3%	100.0%
	% within actions against exploitation	55.6%	50.0%	100.0%	61.1%
	% of Total	27.8%	16.7%	16.7%	61.1%
	Count	8	6	0	14
	% within gender	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within actions against exploitation	44.4%	50.0%	0.0%	38.9%
Total	% of Total	22.2%	16.7%	0.0%	38.9%
	Count	18	12	6	36
	% within gender	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	100.0%
	% within actions against exploitation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	100.0%

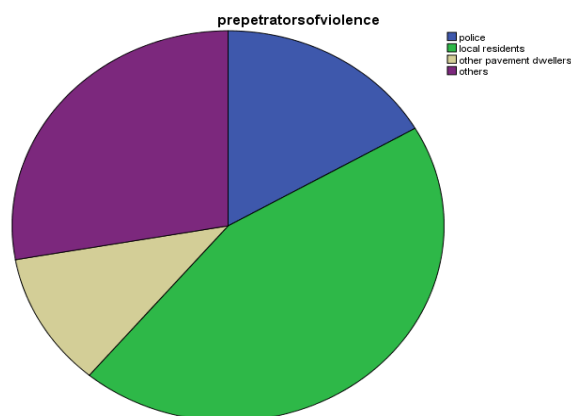
Table 3 – GENDER vs ACTIONS AGAINST EXPLOITATION EXPLAINS:

Table 3 denotes the number of male and female will respond and take the actions against the exploitation. Total 61.1% of male response will be collected among that 27.8% of male say that avoid certain people/area to protect from the crime and the offender,16.7% of male say that they report to authorities about the violence and filed a complaint,16.7% of male say that they remain silent while facing the violence to avoid any consequences.

Totally 38.9% of female response will collect from actions against exploitation from that 22.2% of female responses say that they avoid certain people/area to protect from the violence, 16.7% of female responses say that they report the authorities and no female responses will remain silent during the exploitation.

PIE CHART 1: PERPETATORS OF THE VIOLENCE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
police	6	16.7	16.7	16.7
local residents	16	44.4	44.4	61.1
other pavement dwellers	4	11.1	11.1	72.2
others	10	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	

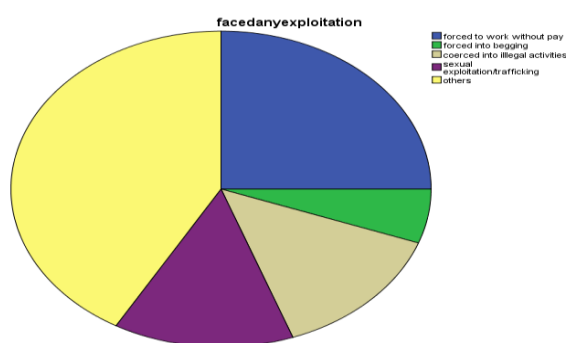


PIE CHART 1 – PERPETARTORS OF THE VIOLENCE EXPLAINS:

This chart 1 shows that, among 36 respondents, 16.7% of people's response explains that police are the perpetrators of the violence, 44.4% of people says that they are violence by the local residents and they are the perpetrators of the violence and 11.1% of people says that they are faced violence by the other pavement dwellers and 27.8% of people says to be others that they are not faced any kind of violence from the others.

PIE CHART 2: FACED ANY EXPLOITATION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
forced to work without pay	9	25.0	25.0	25.0
Forced into begging	2	5.6	5.6	30.6
coerced into Illegal activities	5	13.9	13.9	44.4
sexual exploitation/trafficking	5	13.9	13.9	58.3
others	15	41.7	41.7	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	

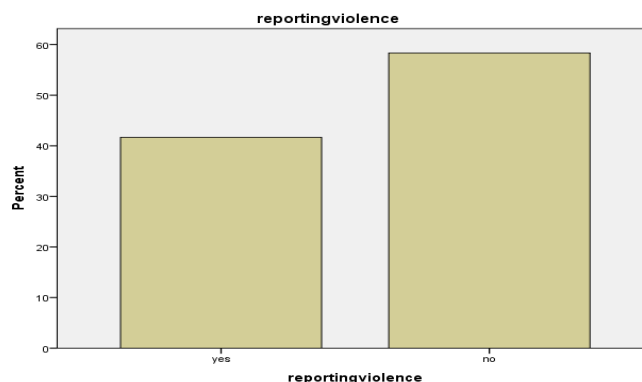


PIE CHART 2 – FACED ANY EXPLOITATION EXPLAINS:

This chart 2 shows that people response of that they forced to do any activities among 25% of people were forced to work without pay, 5.6% of people were forced to begging in the streets, 13.9% of people were forced do illegal activities, coerced into illegal activities and 13.9% of people were violence by the sexual exploitation activities and 41.7% of people from the pavement dwelling say that they have no issues and no form violence faced.

BAR CHART 1: REPORTING THE VIOLENCE

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	15	41.7	41.7	41.7
No	21	58.3	58.3	100.0
total	36	100.0	100.0	

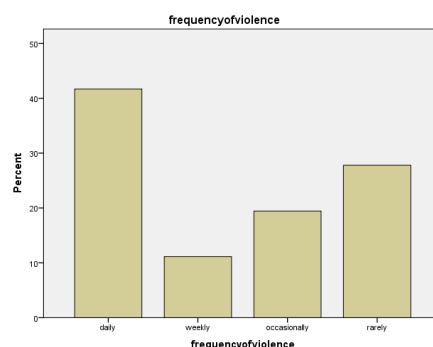


Bar Chart 1 – REPORTING OF VIOLENCE EXPLAINS:

This bar chart 1 explains the among the people response of reporting violence 41.7% of people from the pavement dwelling are reported the violence that they are faced in the daily life and 58.3% of people pavement dwelling are not reported the violence and they have the fear to report the violence and avoid the consequences.

BAR CHART 2: FREQUENCY OF VIOLENCE FACED

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Daily	15	41.7	41.7	41.7
Weekly	4	11.1	11.1	52.8
Occasionally	7	19.4	19.4	72.2
Rarely	10	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	36	100.0	100.0	



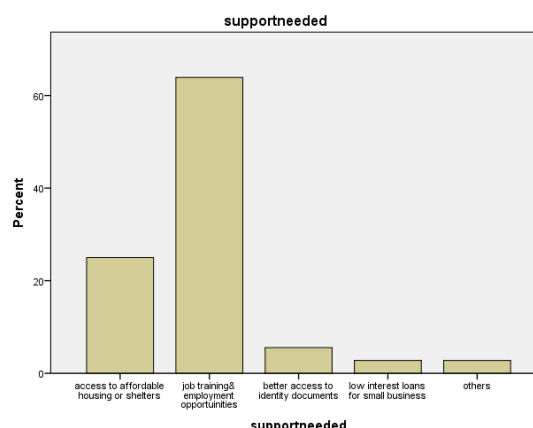
Bar Chart 2 – FREQUENCY OF VIOLENCE FACED EXPLAINS:

This bar chart 2 explains that frequency of violence faced by the pavement dwellers and duration of the violence faced by them.41% of people from the pavement dwelling faced the daily violence against them,11.1% of people are faced the violence by weekly, 19.4% of people are faced the violence occasionally and the violence rate to them are low comparing others,27.8% of people are facing a violence against them are rarely they are facing low rate violence.

BAR CHART 3: SUPPORT NEED FOR MOVE OFF FROM PAVEMENT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Access to affordable housing or shelters	9	25.0	25.0	25.0
Job training &employment opportunities	23	63.9	63.9	88.9
Better access to identity documents	2	5.6	5.6	94.4
Low interest loans for small business	1	2.8	2.8	97.2
others	1	2.8	2.8	100.0

Total	36	100.0	100.0
-------	----	-------	-------



Bar Chart 3 – SUPPORT NEED FOR MOVE OFF FROM PAVEMENT EXPLAINS:

This bar chart 3 explains that pavement dwellers need a support to move off from pavement and they need some of the help from the government to improve their life. 25% of people from the pavement need affordable housing or shelters to get off from the pavement. 63.9% of people needs a valid job training and employment opportunities to maintain their daily needs. 5.6% of people need a better access to identity documents, most of them didn't have a proper ID's so they need access to identity documents. 2.8% of people needs a low- interest loans for small business from the government and 2.8% of people needs other kind of support to move off from the pavement.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study title “A STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST PAVEMENT DWELLERS IN CHENNAI CITY”. This study aims to find the main reason for the factors that affects pavement dwellers while living on the streets and to identity the perpetrators of the violence. And most the pavement dwellers faced violence by the other pavement dwellers and some of them police and most of pavement dwellers avoid certain people and places for their own safety and avoid consequences. Some of the pavement dwellers did not report the violence they faced. And they faced a daily violence from the perpetrators and struggle to run their life of being pavement dwellers, Women are facing a sexual harassment and forced to do illegal activities like sexual exploitation and forced to work without pay. Pavement dwellers need supports from the government for housing assistance to move off from the pavement. Most of the people from pavement dwelling needs a proper job assistance or guaranteed daily wages to improving their life. Government needs to take care of pavement dwellers to improve their life and implement a organization for asking their needs and reason for pavement dwelling and provide support to move off from pavement.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

Laws should be adopted and enforced to cover vulnerable groups, such as pavement dwellers, from all forms of violence, such as physical assaults, theft, and abuse by authorities.

Yes, get the people off the streets and that means affordable and dignified housing alternatives such as low-cost rental schemes, temporary shelters or housing-first programs.

Provide greater access to mental health services, health care, addiction treatment and employment. Together, these social support systems can help to improve living conditions and decrease the risk of violence.

Not giving financial support to those in need, especially by means of unemployment benefits, child benefits or direct cash transfers, can lead to homelessness and more people relying on public spaces as shelter.

Support volunteer organizations for pavement dwellers to provide assistance, education, and mediation to deter violence. A direct outreach approach helps to disentangle isolation barriers.

Establish an independent authority which shall regulate police behaviour, especially in Kesavan or high-concentration areas. Hold accountable those who engage in abuse or unlawful violence.

Most pavement dwellers have a history of trauma due to violence or challenging life circumstances. Access to mental health care and rehabilitation services would help to rehabilitate and guard against future exploitation and abuse.

VII. DISCUSSION

A research study that would examine the social conditions of pavement dweller can analyze the living conditions of pavement dweller and the economic activities and social dynamics and problems of individuals or communities that live on pavements in urban area. Here is a brief outline of some key goals and areas that the study could review, as well as appropriate methods and approaches that could be used to help the research.

Study on violence and exploitation against pavement dwellers, it will mean that you will analyse the different meanings, markers, and experiences as to how people living on the streets or in informal settlements experience harm, abuse, and discrimination.

It will seek to investigate the both causes and effects of these injustices, with the intention informing trends for intervention, protection and sustainable social change.

The findings will demonstrate that pavement dwellers are frequently abused, and that they encounter many difficulties in their daily lives, and that some of them do not trust in the implementation of the police and do not have hope for their intervention.

They deserve a housing hand-up to take them off the streets and a job guarantee to help them re-enter our economy.

Limitations such as, some of the respondents were not ready to cooperate with this survey and some respondents did not feel comfortable of providing genuine answers due to fear and to avoid consequences

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ali Mushir., "Socio-Economic Analysis of Homeless Population in Urban Areas a Case Study of Northern Ethiopia", International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Vol.2(8), 2012, pp.1-8.
<http://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0812.php?rp=P0747>
- [2]. Kumutha. D, "Homeless Population in India: A Study", Global Journal of Research, Vol.1 (3), 2014, pp. 54-55.
- [3]. Roy Sanjoy, Chaman Chandan, "Homelessness in Delhi: roots, rhetoric and realities", International Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Journal, Vol.1(1), 2017, p.1-6.
1.10.15406/ipmrj.2017.01.00001.
10.15406/ipmrj.2017.01.00001
- [4]. Periyamayan, N. "An Analysis of Socio-Economic Conditions of Homeless People's in Madurai City, Tamil Nadu." Shanlax International Journal of Economics, vol. 7, no. 2, 2019, pp. 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2591113>
- [5]. Elliott, J. and Kriuo, T. (1991): Characteristics of Transitional Housing for Homeless Families, Washington DC: Final Report, Urban Institute.
- [6]. Ali, Nazim & Ahmed, Nisar & Ahmad, Nadeem. (2019). ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE OF PAVEMENT DWELLERS OF MORADABAD CITY OF INDIA. International Journal of New Economics and Social Sciences. 9. 183-203.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350041259>
- [7]. Padgett, D. K., & Priyam, P. (2017). Pavement dwelling in Delhi, India: An ethnographic account of survival on the margins. *Human Organization*, 76(1), 73-81.
<https://doi.org/10.17730/0018-7259.76.1.73>