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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE NEED OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN BEGGARY ELIMINATION

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Abstract

Even though beggary was considered an honorable deed in ancient India, it was still restricted to the domain of students and monks. Today, not only has beggary increased in its magnitude but also become a major concern for the society as well as the economy. Studies have shown that beggary is not an isolated phenomenon but an amalgamation of many background problems such as poverty, unemployment, family disintegration, diseases, physical disabilities etc. Moreover, the social and cultural values of the country have traditionally promoted beggary. Whether people beg due to various compulsions or have over time adapted it as a profession, what is important to note is that beggary may have been accepted and even respectable in Indian culture but today it is not. It is a vicious circle; idleness may be a cause of beggary but once it sets in, it leads to further disenchantment and lack of enthusiasm towards productive work. And naturally, crimes like theft, robbery, fraud, cheating, etc are associated with beggary. To liberate the person from this circle, it is important to make him or her independent and arrange for proper rehabilitation, eventually paving the way for such people to become a part of the mainstream production and social system. This will also pull society towards a level of equality and stability, and needless to say, this process will require the support of the entire society. To put it simply, it is noble and considered a religious act of benevolence if alms are given to a person who is helpless and unable to survive on his or her own, but if such a person is provided with stable arrangements of living and rehabilitation, it will be a greater act of charity and morality. This research paper provides a detail analysis of impact of people's participation in liberating beggars from the vicious circle of beggary.

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Introduction:-

Beggary is an age-old socio-economic evil. It has of late assumed alarming proposition (Kartika, 1994:44). In India, though 'poverty and pauperism' are age old phenomena, the concept of beggary was always considered to be a noble act. The popular term "bhiksha" in Hinduism, Jainism and in Buddhism are well known. Even having emerged as unorthodox religious philosophy, Muslim also believed in "Zakat". However, besides the fact that 'beggary' has its root in religious mendicancy, it has its socio-economic ramifications and that has made 'beggary' or 'pauperism' a

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major social problem of the 20st century (Sarkar, 2007:54). Begging is defined in Indian law as soliciting or receiving alms in public place by exposing wound, injury, deformity or disease whether of himself or of any other person or animal (Tripathi and Arora, 2010:354). It is a form of personal disorganization as it indicates the failure of the individual to adjust himself with his social milieu. We find beggars in abundance at streets, market places, traffic signals, railway stations, religious places, begging and the concerned governments are doing nothing, to curb this socio-legal disorganization. The solution calls for a comprehensive programme and reorientation of the existing programmers. Philanthropic approach to beggar problem should be replaced by therapeutic and rehabilitative work.

Beggary might be the consequence of adverse economic condition or distress. But, poverty alone cannot be held responsible because all those who live on poverty line do not take to beggary. A man begs not only when he is poor but also when he is unemployed or underemployed. Another cause of beggary is social disorders like the breakdown of joint family, anomie, cultural conflict, community disorganization, faulty socialization etc. generally sociological studies and researches have centered round such causal enquiries and often suggested measures for managing the problem of beggary within the existing socio-economic structure (Pande, 1988:261).

The natural calamities such as earthquakes, flood, tsunami, hurricane and drought compel people to leave homes, leaving everything behind them and under circumstances of immediate needs, the persons who are unable to find work feel compelled to beg to save themselves from starvation and death (Myneni, 2009:271). India's traditional method of charity which is enjoined by religion keeps him both alive and mobile (Mukherjee, 1945:27-28).

Without going into moralities or immoralities involved in begging, some states have passed legislation and declared begging is a crime (Das, 2017). The rationale behind the Prevention of Begging Act (1959) was to make uniform and better provisions for the prevention of begging; for the detention, training and employment of beggars and their dependants in certified institutions; for the custody, trial and punishment of beggar offenders. The inquiry report of the Delhi People's Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights had mentioned certain specific instances where citizens who were not beggars at all but only poor had been rounded up for "begging" and the court relying on the evidence of a single witness, the policeman who had arrested them, had summarily sentenced them to detention. Moreover, it has been seen that the nature of the beggar homes is custodial and the conditions inside the home are sometimes worse than a prison.

People's Union For Civil Liberties (Bangalore Chapter) (2011) reported that 94 beggars died in Bangalore's beggars' home in August 2010. The cause for this shocking number of deaths in one month is now ascribed to extremely poor living conditions, unacceptable quality of food and shameful hygiene for detainees, who represent the most deprived and weakest sections of our society. Media attention and public outrage combined to draw attention to issues ranging from creation of destitution and extreme poverty, to its criminalization via the legal framework of the Karnataka Prohibition of Beggary Act 1975.

Most of the people resort to beggary due to abject poverty, distress migration from rural villages and the unavailability of employment. Many beggars are begging to meet their daily needs of food and shelter regardless of whether they are satisfied with being beggars or not. 'Beggars felt very bad towards begging life and saw begging activity as an immoral conduct' (Namwata, 2012: 306). Beggars are not treated well in the society. There are many instances in which the states have shown negative attitude towards beggars and taken special drive to punish the beggars (Malyeya & Singh, 2015:43).

Beggary is a symptom of social disorganization and the widespread custom of alms-giving by individuals and institutions by which the disability, helplessness or social inadequacy of the beggars has been sought to be mitigated in India. Begging generates various reactions from people; some see it as a sign of poverty and lack of services including affordable housing for marginalized groups. Governments have not taken this problem seriously and measures taken by government are adequate and effective, although initiatives taken by some NGOs are proved successful, which show that if adequate and effective measures should be taken, then rehabilitation of beggars can be done successfully. Most of the Indians consider it a moral duty to give charity, but any intelligent man can easily appreciate the fact that giving the charity amounts to uphold the this social and moral cancer, i.e. 'beggary' in the society. Beggary cannot be uprooted from our society, unless we stop encouraging beggary (Das, 2017). Begging flourishes because the community tends to be generous to beggars (Namwata, 2012: 306). If we seriously consider the social and moral aspects of beggary, we should not offer the charity to beggars. There are many ways to assist

these most marginalized section of the society and bring them to main stream of society. Considering these facts, researchers have conducted a study to analyse the need of people's participation in eliminating beggary.

Aims And Objectives:-

The main aim of the present study is to assess the need of people's participation in eliminating beggary. Specific objectives of study are as follows :

1. To assess the prevalence of beggary and its causes.
2. To evaluate the rehabilitation schemes for beggars in Uttar Pradesh.
3. To find out the challenges and possibilities of rehabilitation of beggars.
4. To assess the impact of action plan for improving the rehabilitation of beggars.
5. To analyse the need of people's participation in eliminating beggary.

Review Of Literature:-

Thakker et al. (2007) conducted study socio-demographic variables and assessed the psychiatric morbidity and distress among the inmates of 'Beggar Home'. The Subjects were 49 inmates of Beggar Home situated in Vadodara (Gujarat), India. The study also revealed the high scores on GHQ among the beggars suffering from the psychiatric illness.

Joshi and Singh (2010) explained the Beggars Homes conditions in Uttar Pradesh and resulted that an immediate repair work needed to be done at the Beggars Home Lucknow.

People's Union For Civil Liberties, Bangalore Chapter (2011) conducted a simple Public Beggary Survey in Bangalore city during Jan-Feb 2011 to assess the public perception and to some extent build awareness on the issue of beggary. Results of the survey revealed that people strongly favoured a more responsible and humane role by the government towards beggars. Study suggested that the legal framework for dealing with the poorest in the society needs to be re-written to be more facilitative in nature, directed towards providing for their basic needs and health care, with provisions for rehabilitation and integration, and a life of dignity for all.

Bhikshavratti Mukti Abhiyan (2015), A mission engaged in Rehabilitation of beggars and Education for all, has made many successful attempts to rehabilitate and assist the beggars to start a dignitary means of earning. In June 2015, this mission has helped 205 beggars to get Ration Card and assisted to make Aadhar card for another 100 beggars further to get pension under social schemes of UP Government.

Kumar (2015) has conducted a study to assess the socio-economic condition of beggars in Lucknow city and also to find out solution for the problem of beggary. For this, a survey was conducted on 230 beggars and data on their socio-economic condition were gathered through interview schedule. Results of study revealed that 29% beggars were old and 5% were children. 5% beggars were having education upto 10th and 1% were graduate. 39% of beggars were staying at roadside and 32% were staying in Jhopadis. 90% of beggars were found to be addicted. 98% of respondents have asserted that they are willing to leave beggary if they get any other means of honourable earning.

Pandey (2015) termed the beggary as social stigma. While speaking at Samajik Samaveshan Sabha at Dr. Shakuntala Mishra National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow on 28 April 2015, Eminent Social activist Dr. Sandeep Pandey told that beggary is a stigma in our society. He insisted for effective and honourable measures to be adopted by government and civil societies to rehabilitate beggars.

Patel (2016) reported the peril condition Beggars' home in Lucknow city. He reported that with the annual budget of app. Rs. 50 lakh, the physical and managerial condition of the beggars' home is so pitiable that none of beggar is rehabilitated since 2010.

Badlav (2016) has initiated to provide medical help to beggars having poor health or physically handicapped. In course of action 20 beggars were taken to KGMC, Lucknow get treatment. Apart from these, 13 beggars were rehabilitated successfully by helping to start small business.

Review of literature shows that beggars are most deprived population of a region or a country having unidentified source of irregular income depending upon the sympathy of the people and are lagging behind in the accessibility of housing and household amenities and assets. The rehabilitation measures initiated by various government agencies are not adequate and effective, although, initiations by civil societies are appreciable. Therefore, it is necessary that people have to rethink their charity plan and philosophy in such a way, so as this can help to eliminate beggary rather than providing the beggars immediate and unplanned help.

Research Questions

The present study is intended to get answer of following research questions :

1. What are the causes for beggary ?
2. Does socio-economic and physical condition of a person force them to enter in beggary ?
3. Does rehabilitation measures taken by government are sufficient and effective?
4. How rehabilitation of beggars can be done effectively with maintaining human right and social justice norms ?

Research Design

The present study is mainly qualitative in nature and exploratory cum action research design is used to find out the effective ways/methods to eliminate the beggary. It 09 case studies of the beggars, who have left the begging after implementation of action plan adopted to eliminate beggary and rehabilitating them through a dignitary means of earning.

Content Analysis Of Case Studies

As soon as we hear the word "beggar", many images begin to form in our brain, e.g. they have a large gang, they are millionaires, drug addicts, malicious and unskilled clothes, they do not have to do anything, so they beg for begging, many such images begin to be created. The experiences of some of the beggars of Lucknow, interviewed during field work certainly will reconstruct prejudices against beggars.

Vijay Bahadur (44 yrs) of Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh, at the age of seven years, came to Lucknow along with his father in a bullock cart, and losy away while the playing. He narrate this incidence : “main khelate-khelate apaneer bailagaadee se door nikal gaya tha, pitajee ne mujhe dhoondha ya nahin ye mujhe nahin maalum. jab raat bahut ho gayee aur mujhe bhookh lagee, to main khojate-khojate ek mandir ke paas pahuncha vahaan bat rahe khaane ko mainne khaaya, raat mandir ke bahaar hee gujaaree. Main har subah mandir ke bahaar is ummeed se baithata ki koe mujhe lene aaega intajaar karate-karate kae maheene gujar gaye par mere gharavaale nahin aaye, chhota tha kuchh kaam kar nahin sakata tha isalie bheekh maangana majabooree ban gaya”. He has spent 35 years of his life in begging and passing the nights on footpath.

After the counseling, Vijay has convinced to leave the beggary and started running Rickshaw, which was provided to him on researchers' guaranty. Now he earns Rs. 150-200 per day. He says, "Apaneer mehanat kee kamaee se jo khaata hoon usame sukoon milata hai, pahale khaane ke lie ghanton line mein khade hokar dhakke khaana padata tha. Log kahate the javaan hai, phir bhee bheekh maangata hai, sunakar bura lagata tha. Ab apaneer kamaee ka khaate hain man ko bahut santosh milata hai". Vijay sleeps on his rickshaw in winter, summer and rainy season for the last one year at the Parivartan Chowk, Lucknow. He says, "Saat saal kee umar se achchha khaana nahin mila, jo rukha-sookha milata tha, usee se pet bhar lete the. Isaliye ab shareer mein riksha chalaane kee taakat nahin bachee hai, lekin bheekh maangane se achchha hai. Utanee mehanat kar leta hoon, jisase do vakt ka khaana mil jaata hai".

A victim of Zahar Khurani, Bhanu Pratap, begged for two years but could not afford to reach home. Now he has left begging with researchers' efforts and presently working in a Dhabaa, where he gets Rs. 200 /- per day. He shared his experience in these words, "Kahane ko to raajadhaanee hai par yahaan raajadhaanee jaisa kuchh bhee nahin hai, jab mera saara saamaan choree ho gaya mere paas ek bhee rupee nahin the. ek aadamee ne mujhase kaha kabatak yahaan baithe rahoge hanumaan mandir par chale jao vahaan khaana mil jaega. apaneer jindagee mein pahalee baar haath phailaaya tha, ye pet jo na karae vo kam hai, mujhe us din laga tha ye maangakar khaane ka raajadhaanee mein hamaara pahala aur aakhiree din hoga, par aisa hua nahin. har tarah ke vyanjan banaane aate hain par phir bhee kaam nahin mila".

Rohit Saxena, who was owner of a business, has become a debtor due to heavy expenditure on her daughter's treatment. He lost everything in the treatment of daughter and could not save his daughter too. He came to Lucknow in search of job and when he could not find any work, started begging due to compulsion, but never accepted it as

permanent way of earning. With the efforts of researchers, now he is working in the summer season Pyau. Rohit Saxena's face always reveals the pain of losing daughter and getting away from the family. He says, "Betee kee ilaaj mein ham karjadaar bane aur sabakuchh hamane ganva diya. kaam na milane kee wajah se kharcha chalaana mushkil hone laga. paaravaarik kalah badhane lagee. doosare shahar jaakar achchhee kamaee karoonga dheere-dheere sab theek ho jaega ye sochakar lakhanoo aa gaye. jab kae din kaam nahin mila to mandir par baithakar khaana khaane lage".

Narendra (56), when became ill with leprosy, his family members drove him out of the house. He wanted to do some work for Roji-Roti, but he could,nt do anything, but to start begging. He says, "agar mujhe koe kaam karane ko mil jaaye to mai abhee se bheekh maangana chhod doon, shareer saath nahin deta hai ki har din majadooree kar paoon, bheekh maangakar paise ikattha nahin karata hoon ab to sirph pet bharane ke lie hee maangata hoon".

One of the begger tells his predecessors, "Bheekh maangane ka kisee ko shauk nahin hai par ye pet jo na karavaye vo kam hai, das saal kee umar se paradesh aur footpaath jindagee ban gaye hain, gareeb kee wajah se is duniya mein koe apana saathee nahin hai. pichhale saal majadooree karate samay jab beemaar pad gaye to kisee ne sudh nahin lee, paise nahin the jisase ilaaj karaen". He was suffering with TB when researcher met him, and took him to the hospital. Due to prompt action taken by medical authority, he has been fully cured. Now he left the begging and working as daily wage worker. He has become an active member of 'Bhikshavatri Mukti Abhiyan' and inspires the beggars to leave begging.

Conclusion:-

Content analysis of case studies reveals that most of the beggars want to leave beggary and they can be rehabilitated in main stream of society with combined and dedicated efforts of each individual of society. The government can enact a law to prevent organised beggary, NGOs and interested groups can rehabilitate the persons already engaged in beggary, but if common men do not stop unplanned charity by offering money and goods to beggars, new entrance in beggary will not stop and this vicious cycle will continue. Thus, peoples participation is must to achieve the object of beggary free India.

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