



CAUSES OF BEGGING IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract:

Begging is a long-standing social ill. It has recently gotten out of hand. Poverty and beggars have traditionally been seen as heroic deeds in India, where the concept of beggars has always existed. "Bhiksha" (alms) is a well-known term in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Despite its origins as an unconventional theological theory, "Zakat" was highly regarded among Muslims. Because it shows the individual's failure to fit into their social surroundings, it is a kind of personality disorder. A beggar on the street is a sign of societal disarray, as it quickly reminds us of a chaotic society that cannot adequately accommodate him. It's a problem for any community, but beggars are a blight and an enormous financial burden in a growing country like India. Unofficially, India is home to more than 50,00,000 beggars, and that figure rises to a few million if we include those who beg regularly. Poverty is a result of their actions. On the other hand, Beggary is a social and moral concern and an economic one. In reality, the beggars constitute a significant source of disease transmission and the spread of disgusting illnesses. It needs a swift and real response, or the beggars will spread across society. In this context, this article discusses the reasons for begging in India and provides appropriate recommendations for eradicating it from Indian culture.

Key Words: Begging, Causes, Remedies

Introduction:

At the beginning of March 2015 in parliament, the Minister of Social Justice Thaawar Chand Gehlot provided the total number of beggars in India and the total number of beggars by state. Total beggars 4,13,670 out of those 2,21,673 men and 1,91,997 females. The most beggars in West Bengal and the second-most in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. As a result, West Bengal has the highest concentration of beggars, followed by Assam. The northeast (excluding Assam), Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh have the fewest beggars.

There is a massive issue with beggars in India. Beggary is becoming a significant problem and an increasing threat. Begging is a kind of behaviour in which a person directly appeals to another person for financial assistance via words or gestures. Beggars use a variety of methods to ask for money. Some people sing to get attention, while others show off their wounds—whether they're genuine or not—and others draw attention to their limitations. Because today's beggars have made beggary their vocation, it's taken on a new shape and become a significant issue. The beggars are professionals who would otherwise have made a fair wage most of the time. Begging and a life of moral depravity is all that they do. Beggary is increasing at an alarming pace due to decreased production and general backwardness. It is a moral responsibility for many Indians, even those profoundly religious or superstitious, yet any sensible person can see that charitable giving perpetuates social and moral cancer. As a society, we can't help but conclude that beggary must be eradicated if we wish to go forward in any meaningful way. There are several civilizations where beggars play a significant role. Charitable giving to beggars is a requirement in both Hinduism and Islam. Giving to beggars is an integral part of many religions' teachings, and doing so may help the devout increase their chances of entering heaven or reincarnating in a decent body.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the causes of begging.
- To suggest suitable remedies for the eradication of begging.

Methodology:

An exploratory research approach is adopted in this study. In addition to books, journals, and online resources, secondary sources were used to gather data for this study.

Review of Literature:

Begging is an Rs.200 crore business, according to Dr. Rafiuddin (2012) in his paper "Begging an Rs.200 crore industry in India," yet on average, a beggar gets Rs.24,000/- per month in cities, which is virtually comparable to a white-collar work pay. In India, there have been examples of wealthy beggars, such as a beggar who had Rs.8,00,000/- in his rubbish bag or a beggar who had an annual insurance premium of Rs.36,000/-.

According to Khan (2013), As shown by his case study "Regional Analysis of Various Places of Begging", most of the district's beggars moved to the district's residential, commercial, and religious communities. For begging purposes, half of the district's beggars preferred to go outside their home towns or

villages, and the number of beggars from their home states and other parts of India was higher in urban regions than in rural areas, where beggars mostly travel to neighbouring towns.

When it comes to begging, there is more to it than meets the eye in India, according to (Cook 2016). Even though many people need it, begging is often done in organized gangs. Each beggar is required to provide their earnings to the gang's ring leader in exchange for the right to beg in that area, and the ring leader retains a sizable portion of those earnings. It is very uncommon for beggars to injure and disfigure themselves to get more funds intentionally. Efforts to reduce begging in India, including providing beggars with employment, have been met with mixed results. It's normal for beggars to opt not to work since they are so accustomed to begging.

Causes of Begging:

Alms-seeking has become a primary social and economic concern, which threatens to destabilize the social balance. Begging is a multifaceted social, psychological, and economic issue. In the case of beggars, it's impossible to pinpoint a specific reason or collection of causes, as is the case with a criminal. As a result, the following are some of the contributing elements to begging:

Causes of Social:

Another reason for beggars is the breakdown of the family, cultural strife, joint dysfunction, improper socialization, etc. Generally, sociological studies and investigations have focused on such causal inquiries. They have frequently proposed solutions to manage the issue of beggars within the current socio-economic system. Indian beggars have relied heavily on the joint family as a social structure to manage and govern their situation. In the case of financial or social difficulty, the person may count on the support of their family to keep them going. Many people are forced to live on the streets because they lack a robust social network to share resources and provide a helping hand during times of need.

Beggary and linked life patterns may also signify cultural struggle in specific cases. Beggars may be behaving by their cultural norms or have decided that begging is the only option available to them in the current scenario. Familiar ways of living in rural areas are sometimes at odds with modern methods when even necessities like pavement space for shelter must be bought for a fee. Since they are in an unfamiliar environment, rural migrants cannot distinguish between earning money via hard labour and beggary. Beggars are also a result of social disorder, exacerbated by changes in society and the industrialization of society. Several socially disadvantaged groups, such as the orphans, the elderly, lepers, lunatics, and those who have been through a divorce or a separation, are in disarray due to a lack of funding and policy ambiguity. As a result, there is an increase in the population of begging people.

People know that Indian society is quite traditional and adherent. Widows can't marry again and are typically mistreated by their in-laws; as a result; they leave their families to get away from the mental torment. If they're unfortunate, they have no other options than prostitution or beggary at their disposal. People who can't or won't work are known as "professional beggars" since they refuse to do anything except beg. In certain societies, begging is seen as a rite of passage and a way of life. They don't see this career as having any negative connotations, and they've been doing it since they were little children. Some see their children as a valuable asset, capable of eliciting sympathy from others and bringing in more money to help their parents out of poverty.

Cause of Religious:

Beggary is deeply ingrained in Indian culture and religion. Many Hindus, Muslims, and Christians tolerate religious mendicancy and instead encourage its aims to have a religious significance. Beggary is commonly misinterpreted in contemporary times, and attempts are made to justify professional beggary on religious grounds. Fake sanyasi and godmen use deception to extract large amounts of money from the god-fearing and superstitious populace, easily conned. Religious gatherings and celebrations provide a plethora of business prospects. Beggars tend to stick with their careers because of the strong potential for money they don't have access to via other kinds of employment. It is customary to offer something to beggars, orphans, and religious mendicants because of various societal norms. Almsgiving is mandatory for Hindus at Shradh observance, birth and marriage rituals, and for Muslims throughout the month of Ramzan. It's not only religious institutions that give out charitable donations; some philanthropic individuals and organisations do the same. This kind of philanthropy, whether religious or not, dramatically promotes poverty and ultimately encourage begging.

Causes Related to the Economy:

The current state of the economy may largely explain the beggary. Beggary and economic hardship are linked in two ways. Beggary may result from various factors, the most common of which is financial hardship. Beggary may also be motivated by financial gain in some instances. It is most significant in cases when beggary is organized or exploitative. First, economic reasons include:

Unemployment, Poverty, Catastrophe or famines and several other circumstances of poverty. Because of unfair land relations and an onerous wage system, many of India's people lived in constant economic distress before independence. Destitution is a significant component in people's decision to beg. Begging is a standard

option for those who lack the resources to maintain themselves and their family. Thousands of people who can't find work in the metropolis turn to beg since there aren't any jobs in the countryside, either due to smallholdings or a lack of other labour forces. There were considerably more individuals drawn to emerging metropolitan centres than there were jobs available for them. The unemployed and out of work have few options. He couldn't go back to the areas he had left in search of more significant opportunities in the cities because of a lack of jobs and rising land pressure. Only a tiny minority of workers in metropolitan areas can count on stable jobs. Other than hanging around in cities and hoping for a break, the only other option was to become a vagabond and scrape by on the streets' scraps. Because of this, the post-World War II era had a significant impact on beggar management policies and regulations. Because all persons below the poverty line do not resort to beggary, poverty cannot be held solely accountable. As a result, there is still another essential aspect of economic reason. Unemployment or underemployment is a secondary cause, rather than the fundamental cause, of the economy's current problems. When a guy is jobless or underemployed, he begs for money. This perspective shifts the focus from social and biological factors to the economy.

To make ends meet, many individuals have turned to begging as a full-time job rather than relying on the wages they get from their jobs. As a result, many people turn it into a lucrative company and take advantage of others by spending little money on it. Many young sisters are compelled to work as prostitutes by gangs operating in major cities.

The Biological Cause:

Biological reasons for beggary include illness or sickness, physical handicap or deformity, mental incapacity, and old age. Discussions on the many beggars abundantly demonstrate how most beggars suffer from some physical handicap that renders them subpar. Biological impairment may be considered a cause, but only individuals who cannot earn a living due to their condition turn to beg. A considerable portion of our population cannot get medical care because of the scarcity of affordable or accessible options. Most of the time, they're forced to endure their illness for an extended period as they starve and beg for food. Blind, deaf, disabled people in India are not adequately cared for and rehabilitated. These people feel driven to beg because they have no other option. When people are afflicted with a long-term and debilitating illness, family members are treated with disdain. Even his/her own family has abandoned him/her on occasion. He/she decides to flee to an unknown location since he/she is losing what to do and do begging for their livelihood.

Loss of Employment in Agriculture:

Beggary in India is also caused by a decrease in agricultural work in rural areas. There has been a steady rise in the number of landless persons who cannot earn a living through farming. All landless people cannot be employed in the industry. As a result of being evicted from their homes and forced into the cities and towns, some people find employment as earth diggers, road builders, or market workers. Others choose to beg for food and money than to put in long hours at a low-paying job. For an Indian, no matter how high or low one rises on the social ladder, there is always an inchoate social structure that protects the new beggars, whether healthy, physically disabled, or afflicted with sickness. Beggars in India's large cities and towns live in gangs, making moving from a self-sufficient but insecure existence to pauperism quite simple. To garner pity from bystanders, the team teaches its members how and where to beg, serves as a foster parent to youngsters who have been intentionally injured, and generally watches out for their well-being. For decades, India has had this mysterious structure with its capitalists and a vast number of intermediates, whose economic ramifications reach faraway towns and hamlets. It is common to practice for beggar families to live in the slums or tenements of the city, where their wage employees bring home each night their hard-earned alms from the various places.

Unexpected Natural Events:

Many people are forced to flee their homes because of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, and droughts, and those who cannot find jobs feel driven to beg to rescue themselves from famine and death. Years of drought or earthquakes increase the number of people who hunger and beg for food, initially in the villages or nearby towns, and subsequently in the farther away cities. Migrant beggars abound in the Indian cities of Kolkata and Bombay. Because of this, the beggar often receives free transportation by rail. Affected individuals have no other option except to ask for relief. As a result of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, and hurricanes, they often encounter individuals appealing for help and displaying documents attesting to their plight.

Beggar's Laws and their Impact:

Beggary is a societal issue of immense extent and significant concern in developing nations, where poverty and unemployment are prevalent. Having a considerable number of beggars suggests that society's resources are not being correctly used and are being dragged down as a result. Beggars may often be seen in public places such as garbage dumps, roadside ditches, stop signs, and beneath overpasses.

What's more troubling is the shift in public perception of beggars. Former vice-chancellor Upendra Baxi claims that begging has long been considered socially acceptable in India. The practice of almsgiving was ingrained in the culture. The state of a beggar was a crime in colonial times. Poverty has become a part of the culture of the newly sovereign country. Anyone who looks to be in need is defined as a beggar by law. As a

result of anti-begging laws, the impoverished are being removed from the city's public face. They find it challenging to adapt to living in a small place after spending years on the street. Beggar houses operated by the government provide vocational training. India, as a country, must consider the plight of its starving citizens. Socioeconomic measures are required to reduce the begging issue in India as the nation strives to reach world-class standards in all areas. Despite the many laws established by state legislatures, the begging problem remains unaddressed.

The abduction or maiming for begging is punishable under Section 363A of the IPC, 1860. Convicted beggars will be imprisoned under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013. Act of 1941 outlaws begging on railway premises and vehicles in India. Despite this, there is a minimal indication that law enforcement agencies are taking action against those who injure or pressure children dependent on their wages to beg. Today's beggars are either too sick or idealistic to work, so they beg for food rather than labour. They've taken up beggary as a full-time career. Beggars may still be seen in large numbers on the streets, in markets, at traffic signals, at train stations, and in places of worship, and the governments responsible are doing little to stop this social and legal disorder known as begging. Programmers need to be reoriented to come up with a holistic solution. The government need to focus on the healing and rehabilitation of beggars.

Solutions to the Problem of Begging:

- There should be stringent enforcement of laws against beggary.
- The government should prepare well for unemployment and poverty alleviation.
- To help orphans, they should be offered both general and technical education.
- Educating and inspiring individuals to make a living through working.
- Don't encourage begging in any way.
- Provide details about financial instruments and their uses.

Conclusion:

In India, beggars are becoming more commonplace. The number of beggars in India is believed to be half a million. In this way, both the government and various organisations and initiatives that have been undertaken to eradicate beggarly behaviour. However, the practice of begging is still widespread. Our moral duty as residents of this nation is to end this scourge. If many individuals go out and declare that they will not give a single coin to a beggar, regardless of their circumstances, this will have a significant impact. Let the government need to continue its efforts to alleviate poverty and improve the quality of life in India.

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