

**About Us****Our Work****Workshops/Consultations****Publications/Reports****Newsletters****Training Materials/Resources****Events****Careers****Bihar****Chattisgarh****Jharkhand****Orissa****Membership****Contact****Publications>>>****Food Security Of The Homeless In Delhi: A study of the nutritional status and dietary intakes of adult homeless persons in New Delhi**

An estimate of one per cent of Delhi's population constitutes one of the most vulnerable categories of the urban poor – the homeless. The study is situated as an inquiry into the situation of food security of the homeless populations in Delhi, taking into account the alarming situation of hunger deaths of the homeless. The aim being to identify the nutritional status and dietary intake of different categories of homeless populations in Delhi.

The objectives of the study is –to estimate the nutrition status of homeless populations (men, women and children) using anthropometric measures; to describe the diet of homeless populations; to identify the source of food for homeless populations and to estimate the proportion of daily income homeless populations spend on accessing food. The attempt was take response from a sample of 100 males and 100 females. However, there were particular difficulties in getting female respondents. Therefore, most of the male respondents of the study were single men while more female respondents were women who lived along with families. The study thus had 72 female respondents and 118 male respondents which totals up as 190 respondents. Thus, primary data was collected in February 2010 through a survey of 190 homeless adults at Nizamuddin and Okhla. These two areas were specifically selected for the study, since it is also the primary field area of the Dil Se campaign work with the homeless, with whom the Centre for Equity Studies is closely associated. This would provide the opportunity for follow up and intervention.

The study pointed out revealed the state of people depending solely on charity –they had no income, similarly people depending sporadically on charity had less income then those who only purchased cooked meals. Converse to the myth of homeless being un-concerned about their health and willing to eat for free, the study found that single working male living in the MCD night shelter did not depend on charity for food, rather people who did not have any earnings the previous day also recorded spending on food (26%, i.e. 50 respondents). There were however an absolute lack of fruits and milk in the diet and the complete absence of protective food in the diet. Contrary to what was expected more than 50% of all women and all men belonged to the Normal category of BMI classification. In both the categories of BMI classification –overweight and underweight –there more women as compared to men than men. Another finding was the average income of the people – much below the prescribed minimum daily wage and in this the income of the women was substantially lower than that of the men, on computation women earn 50% less than men.

The findings of the study are aimed at establishing the need for community kitchens for the homeless in Delhi as also recommendations based on the findings for how this model should be organized.

(The complete study is available at PHRN. For copies kindly contact: info@phrindia.org)