

BEGGING AND ITS MOSAIC DIMENSIONS: SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS IN KADAPA DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to describe some of the preliminary understandings about various socio-economic dimensions of one of the most pestering issues i.e. begging, in India. The study has been conducted in three mandals of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh, by taking 70 beggars as samples. The street beggars are the subjects of the study. The social dimensions like caste groups, age groups, gender and interfamilial relations are taken in to consideration. The economic variables such as property, annual income and expenditure, economic viability of native place of beggars, form the core components of the study. Finally, the institutional arrangements of the beggars are also highlighted. It has been understood that though the economic issues are important, the intra-family relations played the protagonistic role in propelling the individuals to take up begging.

Key words: Panhandling, working population, dependent population, static begging, mobile begging, sociological aspects, intra-family relations, economic aspects, property and begging, income and expenditure, institutional arrangements.

1. INTRODUCTION

Begging technically known as “panhandling” defines a situation where in the needy asks for material benefits or money – often even basic amenities like food and clothing (Shah; 2011). Begging is one of the most endemic multifaceted social problems with great magnitude, but it is less understood in all its dimensions. Kumarappa (1945) while the begging in India has always been an object of ephemeral attention of charity, the problem of beggary as such has not become a subject for an in-depth scientific inquiry. Though there have been a few works on this poignant

problem (Kumarappa, 1945; Tirumalaiah, 2004; Azad India foundation, 2010; Sharell, 2010; Shah Nirav, 2011; Kamat, 2012) they have concentrated on specific dimensions like philosophy of begging or, the day to day temporal problems encountered by the beggars in the process of begging, etc. The studies emphasizing on the beggary pining in its socio-cultural and economic aspects, are rarely found. Highlighting this scenario, MOLSA report (1992) opines that many studies have been conducted on prostitutions, delinquency, street children, etc., but the problem of begging has never been studied with such intention.

The magnitude of the problem is very much poignant in developing countries and particularly in India. Begging as a social event is a problem for the society. The larger the chunk of population involved in begging, the heavier the burden on working population and lesser the usage of human resources for constructive human development. Begging has become the mainstay for a quite large section of the population. Delhi school of social survey (quoted form Azad Foundation ob. cited) reveals that in a decade since, 1991, the number of beggars has gone up by lakh in India. Action Aid Report 2004, (quoted form Azad foundation) divulged that “there are some 60000 beggars in Delhi, over 300000 in Mumbai”. The Council of Human Welfare report 2005 (quoted form Azad foundation) disclosed that in Hyderabad out of every 354 persons one is found begging.

Most of the studies on this pressing issue concentrated on describing the socio-economic conditions and causations of begging in urban and semi-urban areas, or on the historical and philosophical background of it. Kumarappa (1945) focused on portraying the living conditions of the beggars in Bombay. Tirumalaiah (2004) elicited the place of begging in Tamil literature and religious traditions. He depicted the causes, connotations and situations of begging from the classical Tamil literature, even in the pre-Christian era.

In urban or city environment, generally the human relations become more superficial. As Lewis (1966) posits that the shallow human relations of the individuals are treated as the adaptive mechanisms of survival. This type of human relations naturally place the dependent populations

particularly the old age parents, to their fate, which drives many destitutes to end up their life as beggars.

However, the strength of beggars' population in semi-urban areas has continuously been soaring. Even the small towns are swarmed by the ever increasing beggar population. The breeding grounds of these beggars appear to be the neighbouring villages, which were once treated as the centres of mechanical solidarity the concept developed by Durkheim (Quoted from McGhee and Richard, 2004).

Hence, the study to investigate socio-economic causes of begging in general and particularly in semi-urban areas is an imperative. The psychological, socio-economic conditions of the beggars and their institutional arrangements as the strategic devices for their survival have to be placed at the centre of the study on begging. With this outset, the present study has been undertaken to gain some insights about the problem of begging, and to provide some alternative perceptions against the widely held notions about the begging.

1.1 Aims and objectives of the study

The present study has been embarked with an aim of understanding the issues of begging and the underlying social and economical implications of begging such as family relations, role of status etc. The specific objectives of this study are:

- 1) To understand the demographic and social dimensions of begging, i.e. age, sex, caste, etc. in semi-urban areas.
- 2) To roughly assess the significance of relationship between economic aspects and the impulsion of begging.
- 3) To identify the major factors that dispose the individuals towards resorting begging.
- 4) To gain some insights regarding institutional arrangements developed by beggars as survival strategies.

1.2 .2. Methodology

1.2.1. Area of study The present study has been conducted in three *mandals*¹ i.e. Nandalur, Rajampet and Railway Kodur in Kadapa district, in the drought prone region of Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh state of India. The researcher concentrated on public places like bus stops, railway stations, markets places and the religious places such as temple, mosques and churches to locate the beggars.

1.2.2. Sampling design and fieldwork

Though finding beggars in India is very easy, getting their consent for giving interviews is quite a hard task. Further, they are hardly found fixed to a certain locality for considerable length of time. Some frequently keep on shifting their place of residence and a portion of them takes begging as a seasonal occupation. In this scenario, developing a sample frame was found to be a formidable task. Therefore, the researcher chose to employ a convenience sampling method. Apart from this, the snowball sample mechanism was also employed which helped the researcher to find the subjects with the help of the other subjects. The researcher interacted with seventy beggars, with whom he came across in the field and who expressed their willingness to provide information. The field work was conducted for one month by spending 10 days in each of the above mentioned *mandals*.

1.2.3. Research techniques and tools

The problem under study does possess the nature of the both qualitative and quantitative aspects. It demands to understand the problem from the ‘emic’ perspective – from the subjects’ point of view. The predominant view of the general public is that, the economic possessions and conditions are the protagonist factors for drawing the individuals in to the act of begging. However, it is essential to go beyond simply collecting information regarding the economic variables such as income, expenditure, housing and other property, etc, and to elicit the deep rooted perceptions of the subjects, their socioeconomic factors which drive them to resort the profession of living on the charity of others. Hence, it is the most imperative thing to understand the issue in its socio-economic context. In this regard, an attempt has been made to have an

¹ The local administrative territorial unit

intensive interaction with the subjects to understand various dimensions involved in begging. At each place a few key-informants were identified and in-depth interviews were held with them.

Apart from gaining qualitative information, the researcher put effort to collect quantitative information on issue such as demographic information, causes for begging, income and expenditure level of subjects, the property possessions of the informants, etc., to have reliability for the data.

In this connection the research techniques like survey method and in-depth, unstructured interviews with the selected key informants were employed. The research tools such as schedules and interview guides were used respectively.

The data are analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) packages. The qualitative data are presented in the textual format and the quantitative data have been portrayed in the forms of tables and graphs.

1.2.4. Limitations of the study

The present study is descriptive in nature. The researcher emphasized to elicit the facts about begging pertaining to sociological, demographic and economical aspects. Because of the constraints in terms of time and resources, the researcher consulted only seventy beggars located on the three adjacent *mandal* of Kadapa district. The sample size is very small against the beggar population. The area of the study is relatively in better conditions than many other *mandals* of the district in terms of agricultural and other economic aspects. It is well understood that the begging is a broad issue with varieties of dimensions and cannot be reflected in all its facets in the limited sample size and geographical area of study. Further, it is stated that the research is focused only on the street beggars but not on the traditional caste-based professional beggars like *Picchiguntla, Budabukkala, Dasari*, etc., and their views are not explored and not represented in this study. The researcher is conscious about the limitation of the study and hence does not claim that the findings are conclusive and definite. This study may be expected to provide some

preliminary insights which may provoke thoughts for further studies to investigate on this issue, to gain deeper understandings about the mosaic dimensions of the problems of begging.

2. THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BEGGING

2.1. Begging across age and sex

The subjects of the study encompasses all types of the social groups viz. different age and sex groups and all castes and religious communities. The female ratio is not equivalent with that of the males, and male beggars outnumbered their female counterparts. Of the 70 subjects covered in the study, 66 percent are the males and the remaining are females. The following table 2.1 illustrates the composition of beggars in the study area, based on age and sex.

| Table-2.1: Distribution of beggars across age and sex groups. | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Age group (years) | Male | Female | Total | Percent |
| Below 20 | 8 | - | 8 | 11.4 |
| 21 - 40 | 4 | - | 4 | 05.7 |
| 41 - 60 | 12 | 16 | 28 | 40.0 |
| 61 - 80 | 20 | 8 | 28 | 40.0 |
| 80& above | 2 | - | 2 | 02.9 |
| Total | 46 (65.7%) | 24 (34.3%) | 70 | 100.0 |

It is inferred from the table that the number of male beggars is almost two folds of that of the female beggars. This phenomenon is substantiated that rigidity, shyness, inhibition and lack of freedom to women obstruct the females to take up this profession. Generally females do not take an audacious step to desert the family and lead a life of begging. And social pressure is mounted on the family of the respective female beggars to retain them at home and provide them with basic essentials for life.

With regard to the composition of age group, a large majority (80 percent) of the beggars hail from the age group of 40 years and above. 17 percent of the sampled begging community belongs to the age group of below 40 years. Further the alarming aspect is that, almost half of the beggars (46 percent) constitute the active working population (20-60 years) who remains as beggars rather than engaged in some productive activities. This phenomenon is dangerous to the developing society. This is the most important dimension to be dealt with effectively and seriously. The dependent population group i.e. children and too old to work, constitutes the rest.

One of the important aspects to be understood is the gender composition across the age groups. Women below 40 years of age are hardly found to be beggars in the sample subjects. The obvious reason for this phenomenon is, in rural areas, the women in their productive age are not left unguarded by their folk. Either parents or the husband or even the close relative will look after them. In case of destitute, they stay with some of the distant relatives and lead a life of their own, by engaging themselves in some sort of livelihood activities. Apart from that, they do not incline to take begging out of the fear of being dragged in to women trafficking or prey to the lewd men.

The female ratio of the beggars in the middle age group outnumbers that of the males. This is perceived in terms of authority structure in the family. In the traditional family system the working males possess controlling power, and they see their say gets prevailed over that of others. Further, once the daughters-in-law come to home, naturally there will be incompatibility of views between mother-in-law and daughters-in-law. Thus, the women at the age of retirement will be entangled in perplex situation, i.e. neither willing to give-up their authority whatever they possess, nor cannot hold it. Therefore, some choose to leave the family and resort begging as occupation.

In the age groups of above 60 years, the males outweigh the female counter parts. This is due to the reconciliation attitude of females and stubborn nature of males. Whereas, women in their old age try to adjust themselves with their family circumstances, males leave the family and live independently since they do not cope up with the broken authority structure in the family.

2.2. Begging vis-a-vis social structure and sex

2.2.1 Begging based on caste groups and sex

The Indian social structure is obsessed by the endogamous caste system. The current social policy of the government classified the social structure in to four major categories namely general category or forward castes, backward castes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Apart from this, religious minorities like Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, etc., are well recognized. The general Indian social system also acknowledges this categorization. The present study adopted this typology of social stratification to elucidate the magnitude of the problem of begging across these social groups.

Generally, it is assumed that the socioeconomic factors play a dominant role in placing a person in one or another profession. Further, it is expected that the groups which fall at the lower rung of social hierarchy are more likely to opt for begging out of scarce resources. Despite this perception, the empirical evidence from this study illustrates the counter perception. There are no significant differences in the frequency of beggars across the four caste groups cited above. The scheduled castes slightly dominate the others, being the leading with 28.57 percent followed by backward castes, scheduled tribes and general castes with 25.7, 22.86, and 20 percents respectively. The following table 2.2 gives the frequency details of beggars spreading across the caste and sex.

| Table-2.2: Distribution of beggars based on type of begging, caste group and sex | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Caste group | Fulltime | | Part time | | Total | Percent |
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | | |
| General castes | 12 | 2 | - | - | 14 | 20.00 |
| Backward castes | 10 | 6 | 2 | - | 18 | 25.71 |
| Scheduled castes | 8 | 4 | - | 8 | 20 | 28.57 |
| Scheduled tribes | 12 | 2 | - | 2 | 16 | 22.86 |
| Muslims | 2 | 0 | - | - | 2 | 02.86 |
| Total | 44 | 14 | 2 | 10 | 70 | 100.00 |

It is observed from the data that, there is no much variation in the number of beggars across the four caste groups as such. However, there is a significant difference in case of women beggars hailing from different caste groups. No women are found from the Muslim community. Among the others, the least number of women beggars is noticed from the general caste communities and the largest number i.e. 50 percent of women beggars belong to the scheduled caste groups, followed by backward castes and scheduled tribes with 25 and 17 percent respectively. The factors found for this phenomenon are said to be:

- a) a majority of women beggars involve in the radiating movement from their native places to the begging place, which will give a chance for the public notice. Out of the fear of social insult, particularly in rural areas, the women from forward caste communities restrain themselves from choosing begging,
- b) as the scheduled tribe women are concerned, they are living in the interior rural areas. Daily commuting to the places of begging, though not impossible, it is difficult. In addition, the tribals in the area under present study, engage themselves in the activities including hunting small game, gathering forest resources, agriculture labour, patrolling the agricultural fields, cattle grazing for wages, etc.. This type of occupational diversity assures them with minimum livelihoods. Thus the tribal women generally are not engaged much in begging.
- c) It is to be well acknowledged that the socioeconomic conditions of the majority of the scheduled castes women are not on par with that of their counterparts of the other communities. The major chunk of scheduled caste women is engaged in only agriculture labour. Agriculture jobs are seasonal and require physical strength. During lean season, some of the women choose begging. Owing to their economic constraints, they suppress social prestige and take up the part-time begging in their surrounding areas. Thus, the women beggars from scheduled castes outnumber their counterparts from other communities.

2.2.2. Type of begging and caste communities

The subjects are classified in to two categories i.e. full-time beggars and part-time beggars based on their dependency on begging. Fulltime beggars are those who left their family, do not receive any support from the members of family or friends. They totally depend on begging. They visit their family, after a long period or totally shun the family. They lead their life independent of all bonds. The part-time beggars take up this profession in order to provide additional income to the household. The members of family provide all support to beggars, and they discourage the beggars to cease begging, but the latter hardly pay any head to them. Sometimes they use the income; they gained by begging, to meet their personal expenses like liquor consumption, tobacco chewing, smoking, etc. They will generally employ a radiating movement from residential place to the begging place and return home by the evening. Sometimes they engage themselves in other income generative activities like agriculture labour, domestic service and other petty works.

It is interesting to observe the correlation between caste groups of beggars and the type of begging they engage in. Table 2.2 gives the glimpse of this relation between caste and type of begging. With regarding to the full-time beggars, except the Muslim community, there is no much difference in the frequency of beggars among the other four caste groups. But the protruding phenomenon can be observed pertaining to the number of part-time beggars across the caste groups. Where as in the general caste and Muslim community, the part-time begging is totally absent but is very high scheduled castes. Out of the 20 beggars belong to Scheduled castes 2/5th (40%) are part-time beggars. The caste hierarchy in social structure is said to be the major deterring factor for absence of part-time beggars from general castes and Muslim community. Further majority of the part-time beggars are female. Owing to the social condition, women from the general caste and Muslim community do not prefer to beg, in their surrounding places.

2.3 Reasons for begging

The problem of begging cannot be explained in a mono-causal phenomenon, rather it is a multi-causal one. Anderson (1961) identified six major conditions for begging which include 1)

unemployment and seasonal work, 2) misfit of industry whether due to physical handicaps, mental deficiency, occupational diseases or lack of vocational training, 3) defects of personality as feeble mindedness, egocentrity, inferiority, etc, 4) family conflicts, misconduct and crime, 5) racial or national discrimination in employment opportunities, and 6) desire for new experiences. MOLSA report, (ob. cite) projected disability, destitution or old age, unemployment and underemployment as the major factors. Moorthy (1959) identified over population, unprofitable methods of cultivation, debt, famine, floods, family breakdown, chronic diseases, unwilling to work, etc., were the predominant causes for begging. He opined that besides the problem being more urban in character, the begging has roots in the prevailing socio-economic conditions. Kumarappa (1945) listed out the displacement of the workers from the land, physically challenged people, as the major driving factors for increasing the begging population in India. Further, he stated that the beggary is enforced on orphans and stray people, who are maimed or disfigured in order to make them beg and earn their livelihood.

By taking socio economic parameters in to consideration, the researcher has attempted to develop some concepts and relating variables to identify the major causes for begging in the area under study. The major concepts identified are: 1) No support from the family – the subject does not get any support either from the family or close kin group in terms of food and other essential economic elements. However, this concept should not tempt us, to conclude that, the family members and relatives are very poor so that, they are not extending their support to the subjects. Majority of subjects disclosed that they had sons and daughters-in-law, and they had got disparege from them. Many of the old parents had been left with no option but to resort to begging. 2) Deserted family - subjects deserting their family out of psychological frustration caused by the behaviour and treatment served by the members of family towards them, 3) Expulsion from family - some are found expelled from the family, since they caused an unhealthy atmosphere in the family by addicting to liquor consumption, and torturing the wife and children, infidel sexual behavior, etc. 4) Interest in begging- some subjects are interested in begging since, it is an easy means of livelihood, and 5) to contribute additional income to the total household income. The first three causes are more related to the intra-family relationship rather than economic in nature. The following table 2.3 illustrates the details regarding the frequency of beggars against the each causes identified.

It is inferred from the table 2.3 that two third of the beggars are distributed across the first three causes i.e. no support, deserted family and expelled from family.

| Table – 2.3: Causes of begging and number of beggars | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Causes | Frequency | Percent |
| No support | 16 | 23 |
| Deserted family | 22 | 31 |
| Expulsion | 6 | 9 |
| Interest | 4 | 6 |
| Supplementing household income | 22 | 31 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

This shows the trend of ebbing human relations. The Durkheim’s theory of social facts (quoted from McGee and Richard 2004) is getting diluted as it is manifested in how the individuals are flouting the social responsibilities such as respecting elders and discharging their duties towards parents. Around one third are propelled to resort to begging to add income to family. This is due to lack of sufficient income to meet the ever increasing expenses of the family. Only few (six percent) of the subjects revealed that they were interested in begging since, pitching to one place and engaging themselves in some physical labour does not fulfil their desire of emancipation from all sort of responsibilities. They are more of indolent in nature. Sharell (2010) in culture shock in India expressed that many beggars had chosen this profession out of interest. “The sad thing is that many of them prefer to beg because o it is much easier”.

3. ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF BEGGING

This section of the paper attempts to analyse the economic variables like: 1) the nature of native place of the subjects - either agriculturally rich or dry area - in order to understand the correlation between the livelihood opportunities in agriculture (as cultivators, agricultural labours, etc.) and begging, 2) the average annual income and expenditure of the beggars, 3) own property vis-a-vis begging; 4) begging and intra-family relations.

3.1 The Nature of Native Place and Begging

The wide spread public perception is that, when individuals do not have any economic opportunities for subsistence, then they choose begging. Further, if the productive nature of surrounding areas is not conducive for gaining an employment, then push factors work on the individuals to emigrate from those surroundings. In order to test this hypothesis, the researcher developed the method, that involves the classification of the native places of the subjects broadly in to two categories like rural agricultural villages and urban industrial places. The rural agricultural villages are classified in to two: a) wet land agriculture and b) dry land agriculture. The major chunks of Rayalaseema region are prone to cronical droughts and depend on rain-fed agriculture. Such parts are not potential to provide employment to the able workers all through the year, and hence, are expected to be potential of breeding beggars. However, there are certain pockets of region which are relatively rich in ground water possession and exploitation mechanism. This phenomenon is entailed with the practice of cultivation of long term crops and potential of meeting the demands of agricultural work force in the region. Logically the wet land agricultural areas are hardly expected to have more people leading their life on the charity of others, since, there is sufficient work to the working population to support and feed the dependent population. Naturally in urban areas, people find works in small industries, construction sector, automobiles, etc. Hence, the potential for creating beggars is not expected.

| Table-3.1 :Number of beggars across the nature of native place | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Nature of native place | Frequency | Percent |
| Wet land agriculture | 48 | 68.6 |
| Dry land agriculture | 14 | 20.0 |
| Urban areas | 8 | 11.4 |
| Total | 70 | 100.0 |

With this outset an attempt has been made to identify the native place of the beggars and nature of economic prosperity of that place. The results indicate that 69 percent of the beggars hail from wetland agriculture area where people get lot of agriculture works for the major part of the year.

The share of dry land agricultural region in producing beggars is only 20 percent. This trend shows social-cultural variables like family structure and intra-family relations pushed the economic nature in to pillion. Table – 3.1 shows the distribution of subjects based on the nature of their native places.

3.2. Average income and expenditure

3.2.1. Income

The subjects generally get income on every begging day and spend it daily. They do not maintain any record of their income and expenditure. In order to estimate the average income and expenditure of the subjects the recall method is employed. The researcher approached each subject and asked about their average income per one man-day of begging and calculated the average annual income based on the frequency of the days the subject involved in begging in a month and subsequently in a year. The emphasis is focused on the quantum of amount the subjects received in money. The items like food grains, clothes and some other consumer goods that are bestowed to the beggars, are not taken in to account because of their erratic nature and negligible quantity. Some beggars occasionally engage in some labour activities, which fetch them a meagre amount, and this portion of income also is not included under this head of account.

There is a great deal of variations in the annual income among beggars. The minimum and maximum quantum of annual income are Rs. 4800/- and Rs. 57600/- respectively. The annual mean income of the subjects is Rs. 25850/-. A number of variables do influence the annual income include the type of begging (i.e. part time or full time begging, static or mobile begging, frequency of begging in a week / month, the distance covered by the subject in pursuing begging, etc.

The researcher has concentrated more on the relations between variables like static and mobility of beggars and corresponding variation in the annual income. Static beggars are those who pin their begging activities within the radius of certain fixed locality. The mobile beggars cover larger areas by keep on moving from one place to another. They stay a short period (one or two

days) at one place. Mostly beggars of this type of engage themselves begging in railway compartments.

| Table – 3.2: Frequency of beggars based on income and type of begging | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Annual income (in Rs.) | Type and frequency of beggars | | | |
| | Static begging | Mobile begging | Total | Percent |
| < 5000 | 2 | - | 2 | 2.9 |
| 5001 - 10000 | 10 | - | 10 | 14.3 |
| 10001 - 15000 | 12 | - | 12 | 17.1 |
| 15001 - 20000 | 2 | - | 2 | 2.9 |
| 20001 - 25000 | 14 | - | 14 | 20.0 |
| 25001 - 30000 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5.7 |
| 30001 - 35000 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 14.3 |
| 35001 - 40000 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 8.6 |
| 40001 - 45000 | - | - | - | - |
| 45001 - 50000 | - | 8 | 8 | 1.4 |
| > 50000 | - | 2 | 2 | 2.9 |
| Total | 50 | 20 | 70 | 100.0 |

The matrix 3.2 shows the correlation between annual income and the type of begging of the subjects.

The major inferences drawn from the above table are:

- The major observation that is made is, the minimum range of annual income of the mobile beggars (railway beggars) is 25000/- (this is equivalent to the maximum limit of the majority of static beggars), and the upper limit is more than Rs.50000/-. Moreover, the income of the 80 percent of mobile beggars is located between Rs. 30000/- to Rs.50000/-. Therefore the mobile begging is said to be relatively more lucrative than the static one. The major factors contribution for this phenomenon is, their long distance coverage and accessibility to the new donors every day.

- b) The maximum range of income gained by the static beggars is located between Rs. 35000/- and Rs. 40000/- and the number of beggars really earning that amount is very less (only 4). Further the income of majority of the beggars (40 of the total 50 of the group) is confined below Rs.25000/-. On an average the monthly income of the majority of beggars hardly touches R. 2000/-.

The significant reasons said for these phenomena are:

- 1) the confined movement of the beggars limits their proximity to only the few and familiar donors and eventually to the limited income,
 - 2) there are many part-time beggars in this group, who confine their movement within in limited radius, since many of them return to home by the evening,
 - 3) some of the subjects particularly the part-time beggars, do not engage themselves in begging everyday because majority of their begging zones are temples and mosques and these places are thronged by the pilgrims only four (special) days in a week i.e. Monday (lord Shiva's temple) Thurs day (lord Saibaba), Friday (mosque) and Saturday (Lord Vishnu). Therefore naturally their man-days per week are reduced, which affect their income consequently.
- c) Income levels of the majority portion (57 percent) of the subjects are even below the average income level of all the beggars i.e. Rs.25850/-. And only 28 and 14 percent do have their annual earnings between the ranges of Rs. 25000/- to Rs.40000/- and Rs 45000/- to Rs. 60000/- . The most important observation is even within the low income group slightly more than 1/3rd are hardly gaining Rs.15000/- per annum. Here what is to be noted is, many are scrambling between Rs.5000/- to Rs.15000/-.

3.2.2. Expenditure Phenomena of the Beggars

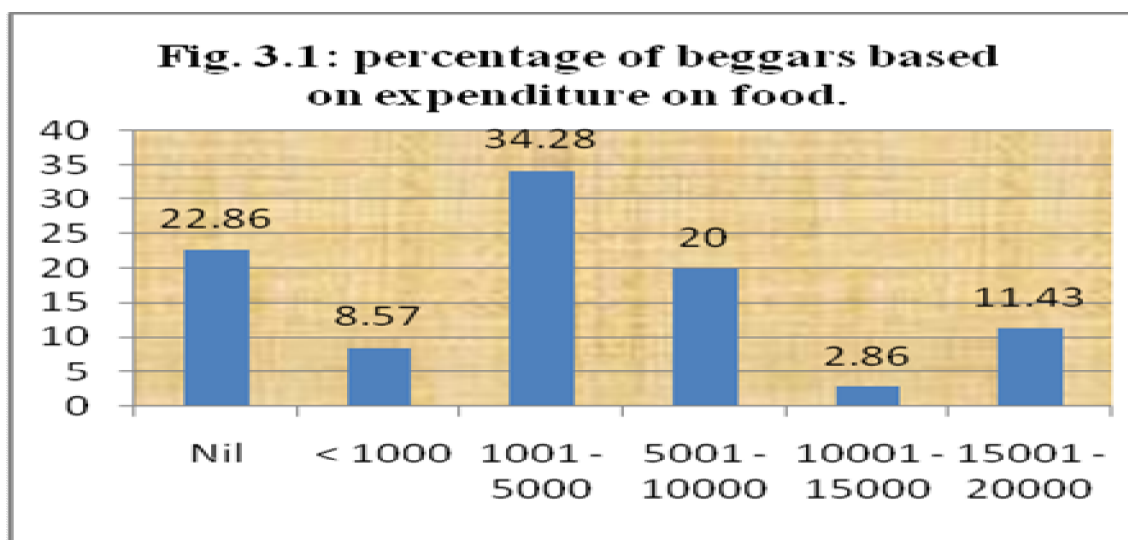
Pertaining to the annual expenditure, the researcher enlisted the types of items on which the subjects spend their earnings. These items include food, clothes, liquor, tobacco, travelling, and miscellaneous. Liquor and tobacco can be treated under the broad heading like intoxication, but it is felt more appropriate to separate them in order to estimate and emphasize the magnitude of the expenditure on each of these items. Miscellaneous items comprise medicine and petty expenses. The average expenditure of the beggars on these items is estimated by using the same recall method.

| Table – 3.3: The average expenditure of the subjects. | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Components of Expenditure | Mean (Rs.) | Percent | Min. (Rs.) | Max. (Rs.) |
| Food | 5540 | 44.2 | 100 | 19200 |
| Clothes | 234 | 1.9 | 0 | 200 |
| Liquor | 2690 | 21.4 | 0 | 14400 |
| Tobacco | 2008 | 16.0 | 0 | 4800 |
| Travel | 1035 | 8.2 | 0 | 4800 |
| Miscellaneous | 1036 | 8.3 | 200 | 2400 |
| Total | 12545 | 100.0 | | |

The general assumption is that that the average income of the beggars hardly suffices to meet the regular needs of them. However, the ground reality shows different phenomena. Many of the beggars even can save some portion of their income. This is caused due to the least expenditure on basic needs like clothes and shelter. The average, minimum and maximum expenditure of the subjects are shown in the table 2.6.

It is observed from the matrix 3.2 and 3.3 that, there is a significant variation between the average annual income and expenditure of the subjects. The average beggar is able to save even 50 percent of his or her income. As basic need, food as individual account dominates expenditure which takes 44 percent of total expenditure, and expenditure on clothes stands at the beneath with a negligible amount of around 2 percent. Expenditure on liquor stands the second largest account with 21 percent followed by expenditure on tobacco. Expenditure on both liquor and tobacco is almost equal to that of food. The major part of their income (81percent) is spent on three items viz. food, liquor and tobacco. This indicates that majority of the beggars involve in taking intoxicated items such as cheap liquor, *gutkas*, *panparag*, *hans*, *killi*² etc., and pushing the other essentials like clothes, shelter, etc., to the wall. The following section gives a brief account of their expenditure on each item.

3.2.2.1. Expenditure on food



In the above table the average expenditure on food shares 44 percent of the total expenditure of the subjects. However, it is to be understood that many of them are not incurring expenditure on food, since they beg food around their residential place and some take food at temples. And some engage themselves helping the small shop owners or housewives in order to get food. There is a big gap regarding the expenditure incurred by the beggars on food. While, some spend even

² Made of tobacco, betel leave, betel nut, lime, etc., for chewing

around rupees 17000/- per annum on food, others hardly incur any expenditure. The expenditure of the part-time beggars on food is very less since they take breakfast and dinner at home and the lunch is begged or taken from small hotel with little amount. The figure 3.1 gives the some details about the expenditure of the beggars on food.

It shows almost one fourth of the beggars get their food without incurring expenditure. 43 percent of the subjects are spending less than Rs. 5000/- per annum, in the sense they spend Rs.13.50 per day on food. This shows they do not spend amount to get food for two times in a day. While they do not receive any alms in the form of food they buy it and eat. In other words, most of the time, they get food from philanthropists.

3.2.2.2 Expenditure on Liquor and tobacco.

As already mentioned above, more than one fifth and around one sixth part of the expenditure of beggars goes for liquor and tobacco respectively. Some of the subjects even do not spend money on food but never get out of liquor consumption. The percentages of the beggars involved in liquor and tobacco consumption are 40 and 88 respectively. Some of them even spend up to rupees 10000/- on liquor per year. In the sense, on average such individuals spend rupees 835 per month and rupees 28 per day. This amount could serve the average food cost of one beggar per day. Further, it is understood from the data that, it is exclusively male beggars, who are engaged in liquor consumption. The matrix 3.4 throws some light on the expenditure pattern of subjects on liquor and consumption. However, the interesting observation is that, out of the total 62 tobacco consumers, more than one third is females. The difference in amount spent on tobacco is caused due to the type of ingredient they use. Generally the locally made *killi* does not cost much. Simply it consists of the ingredients like betel leaves, dry bark of tobacco and lime that is available locally. Mostly this type of item is consumed by the women.

| Table-3.4: Frequency of subjects based on their annual expenditure on liquor and tobacco | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| Range (in Rs.) | Liquor | | | Tobacco | | |
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Nil | 18 | 24 | 42 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| < 1000 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| 1001 - 2000 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| 2001 - 3000 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 16 | 0 | 16 |
| 3001 - 4000 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 14 | 4 | 18 |
| 4001 - 5000 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| 5001- 6000 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6001- 7000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7001- 8000 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8001- 9000 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9001-10000 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 46 | 24 | 70 | 46 | 24 | 70 |

Out of the 22 females addicted to tobacco 18 spend rupees less than 2000/- on tobacco per annum. But out of the 40 male consumers, the annual expenditure of 32 members on tobacco consumption, soars more than rupees 2000/-. This is caused by the usage of company made tobacco items like *panparag gutka*, *hans*, and cigarettes, etc..

3. 3. Property vis-a-vis- begging

The subject's property at their native place formed one of the core variables of the study. An attempt is made to understand the role of paucity of property in propelling the subjects to choose the profession of begging. It has been hypothesized that, the hold of individuals on sufficient property would accentuate the individual's prestige, and to lead a life with dignity. The research method is chalked out to assess the value of property of the subjects. The property is divided in

to various components like house, house plots, agricultural land, etc., and the value of the property roughly estimated. Of the 70 sample subjects interviewed 52 (74 percent) have reported that they had one or the other kind of property mentioned above and the remaining 26 percent does not have any property of their own.

3.3.1 Own houses

All those who hold the property do have their houses, which vary in structural type spreading from thatched roof hut to tin sheet roof to cement slab terrace structures. The empirical data illustrate that even among those who have their own houses, majority 34 (49 percent) of them possess slab houses followed by tin sheet roofs and thatch huts. The following table – 3.5 illustrates the number of subjects and types of houses they own.

One of the major reasons ascribed for the phenomenon of many subjects having their own houses is, the massive housing construction scheme launched by the Government of Andhra Pradesh state, under the title of *Indiramma Griha Pathakam*³

| Table-3.5: Frequency of the subjects according to the types of own houses. | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Type of house | Frequency | Percent |
| No house | 18 | 25.7 |
| Thatched house | 10 | 14.3 |
| Tin sheet | 8 | 11.4 |
| Slab | 34 | 48.6 |
| Total | 70 | 100.0 |

The value of the houses of the individual beggar varies drastically based on the location, number and size of the houses and material used in it. The data show the most surprising fact that there are subjects who own the houses with of Rs. 4000000/- and Rs.5000000/-. The minimum and

³ Naming after the late Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Under this scheme, the state government provide a grant of Rs. 30,000/- to the poor without *pucca* houses to construct their own house.

maximum values of the house of the beggars are Rs. 15000/- and Rs 5000000/- respectively. The following table 3.6 gives the details about distribution of subjects based on house owning status and their respective values of the houses.

| Table – 3.6: Frequency of beggars based on own house and value | | |
|---|-----------|--------------|
| Value of house (in Rs.) | Frequency | Percent |
| No house | 18 | 25.71 |
| <15000 | 2 | 2.86 |
| 15001- 30000 | 12 | 17.14 |
| 30001- 45000 | 10 | 14.29 |
| 45001- 60000 | 14 | 20.00 |
| 60001-100000 | 6 | 8.57 |
| 100001-200000 | 4 | 5.71 |
| 4000000- 5000000 | 4 | 5.71 |
| Total | 70 | 100.0 |

Out of the 52 house owners among the subjects 46 percent of them possess the house worth between Rs.30000 to Rs.60000. This indicates that many of the house owners availed the facilities rendered by the government housing scheme. The four individuals whose houses are cost about Rs.4000000/- do not have much commonality with the other beggars. They have houses in the central part of the urban areas like *Jammala Madugu*, *Kadapa*, and *Railway Kodur* in Kadapa district. Though they have such valuable property, they chose begging due to family problems.

3.3.2. Land holdings at native place

Land holding and the value of the land of the subjects at their native place are also taken in to account to assess the assets of the subjects. Based on the market value, total value of the land is approximately estimated. The data reveal that, out of the 70 subjects, only 20 (29 percent) have the agricultural land, two members (3 percent) have reported that they have house plots in their

native village. Remaining 50 members (71 percent) do hold neither cultivable land nor house plots. The attributed reasons for large number of non-land holders is that : a) many of the subjects left their families out of frustration and discontent and they had bequeathed their lands to their heirs, b) around 50 percent of the subjects hail from scheduled caste and scheduled tribes, who generally do not have their own lands.

Regarding the value of the land of beggars, it ranges from minimum Rs.50000/- to the maximum or Rs.1500000/- depending up on the extent and productivity of the land.

3.3.3 Property and Causes of begging

| Table - 3.7: The number of subjects based on their property possession and reasons for begging. | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Reasons | Yes | No | Total | Percent |
| No support | 12 | 2 | 16 | 22.86 |
| Deserted family | 18 | 6 | 24 | 34.29 |
| Expelled from family | 02 | 4 | 6 | 8.57 |
| Interest in begging | 4 | - | 4 | 5.71 |
| To supplement house hold income | 16 | 4 | 20 | 28.57 |
| Total | 52 | 18 | 70 | 100.00 |

In order to test the validity of the above cited hypothesis, one of the methods adopted is analyzing the correlation between the property possession and causes of begging. The identified reasons for begging are classified in to four broad categories including as mentioned in section 2.3. The matrix 3.7 shows the empirical relationship between property and the causes of begging.

The major observations made from the above table are:

- a) out of the five reasons mentioned except one (expelled from family), in all the other cases, the number of property holders outnumbered the non-property holders, and in some cases this goes even from three to four folds,
- b) 74 percent of beggars possesses the one or the other forms of property. This is an indication that the possession or paucity of property does not form a protagonistic factor either for escalation or decline of begging,
- c) with regarding to the supplementary income to the household as a cause, though property holders outnumbered the non-property holders, it is understood that their property is negligible. Further, it is informed that most of the subjects involved in this phenomenon are the part-time beggars,
- d) out of the total 52 property holders, 32 members (62 percent), whose begging profession is caused by either no support, or desertion or expulsion from family, are psychologically frustrated. Though they have property, they are devoid of the benefits from it. They became despondent due to one or the other problems with the members of the family or close kin members,
- e) 65 percent of the beggars are caused by the first three reasons. This reveals that it is the psychological temperament of the individual which is playing more predominant role than the simple possession of property or economic benefits to push the individuals in to the begging profession.

3.4 Intra-family relationships vis-à-vis- begging

Interpersonal relationships among the members of family and even among the close kin group members place the individual at safe place. In some tribal societies in Asia and Africa, the lineage⁴ as a corporate body will take responsibility of managing social order among the lineage members. Reddy (2012) holds the view the people belonging to same lineages will help others in the time of needs like disputes with other lineage, economic crisis, health ailments, etc. The individual livelihood activities are shaped and developed by the kinship relations. For instance, the *Chenchus* in India, the! Kung Bushmen in Africa, shares their food with the other kin

⁴ Lineage is a set of exogamous kin-group which traces its descendancy from the common, known ancestor.

member of the tribe during the food scarcity (Reddy, ob.cit). Further it is said that the Inuit of North America believe that breaching social and ethical norms will cause for wrath of ancestral spirits and bring danger to whole community. For instance, if an Inuit does not follow the norms of sharing food, community will confiscate his / her property and share among its members. Such primitive societies have developed both positive and negative sanctions to encourage its members to adhere to the social norms and discourage the norm breakers.

| Table -3.8: Subjects based on the reasons vis-a-vis common residential locality with their married children. | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Reasons | Yes | No | Not applicable | Total |
| No support | 10 | 0 | 6 | 16 |
| Deserted family | 12 | 2 | 10 | 24 |
| Expelled from family | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Interest in begging | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| To supplement house hold income | 12 | 0 | 8 | 20 |
| Total | 38 | 4 | 28 | 70 |

But once these types of small or traditional or village communities are integrated in to the urban based social systems like preferring nuclear families to the extended families, leaving the old ones for their own fate, depending more on the statutory agencies for justice, brought to collapses the traditional based social setup, and interpersonal relationships are attenuated. With this outset, the present study has taken an errand into the interpersonal relationships of the subjects with their married children particularly with in-laws. The researcher tried to identify whether the married children are taking care of their old parents or leaving them for their own fate, in searching for their livelihood. The information was collected on whether the subjects had children living in their native place, and they provide them with food and other basic things. An attempt has been made to analyse the relationship between the reasons of begging and the

married children's residence in the native locality of the beggars before they left that locality. As cited above the first three causes are the manifestations of the melancholic intra-family relations and the last two do not overtly demonstrate that relations, rather they reflect the individual's wish. In this attempt it is focused on how the married children are taking care of their parents and hence it is concentrated on the beggars who have their married children. The table 3.8 illustrates the intra-family relationships of the beggars.

The inferences drawn from the table are:

- a) out of the 70 beggars 38 (54 percent) have their children living their locality and for 28 (40 percent) of the rest this variable is not applicable, because some of them are either unmarried, or do not have children or unmarried.
- b) of the 38 beggars who have their married children in their native place, the lion's share 24 (63 percent), are begging out of dissension with the family members. They accused their relatives of not treating them appropriately, and of quipping them frequently which made them offended and left the family in search of their source of livelihood.

The above phenomenon indicates that the family system in rural India is heading to create a kind of un-conducive socio cultural environment to the old age dependents.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Kamat (2012) revealed that "the beggars are fairly well organized although they are not unionised. They view new beggars with suspicion and try to find out his/ her depth by typical questionnaires". Like any other occupational group such as labour unions, merchants unions, employees unions, etc., the beggars also form an organized body consisting of relatively 'permanent' beggars of a certain locality. The body decides the roles of beggars, place the rules for sharing the income, determines the squatting place for begging, etc.. The new members are always treated with suspicion and they cannot become an embodiment of the group without having a significant length of period of association and trust. Sharell (2010) discussed the organization among beggars and opined that "beggars will invariably belong to a gang, whereby they are vigorously trained to be tenacious and keep harassing a person until they receive some thing. New beggars learn from seniors in the hierarchy".

The present study focused on the organization and leadership issues of the beggars. It is found that the beggars formed in to a unified body under the leadership of one or two senior beggars. Whatever the beggar gains on a given day, should be contributed to the group's common pool and the leaders will redistribute it equally among all the members of the group. In the studied area six groups are found. Depending up on the place of begging, the leadership position will change. At one place one or two members who acted as leaders, will become common beggars and follow the directions of the other leaders at other places. Even the seating position will be kept on changing across the places. Leaders generally sit at the vantage place - generally at the front edge of the row of beggars – and the followers sit little bit away from the leaders' place. See the case 4.1 in the box given below.

Case - 4.1: Leaders and their seating arrangement

Ramaiah and Yesaiah are the leaders at the *Darga* – the tomb of a Muslim saint at Mantapampalli village of Nandalur *mandal*. Both they used to sit on front edge of the line of beggars on each side of the main door. The donors soon after come out of mosque will give their alms to these leaders first. They have got such privilege. Further, If the donors do not have small notes of currency, then they give say for example, single note of Rs.100/- or Rs.50/- to either Ramaiah or Yesiah and ask them to distribute among all the members. The leader distributes it among the members of their respective line and not to the members in other line lead by the other man.

If some new beggars appear, then the leaders will decide, whether to allow them to sit on the line or not. If not accepted, new beggars will choose some other place, away from the line of 'permanent' beggars of the group. The leader is not expected to distribute the money to the new beggars. And if the new and unacceptable beggars have considerable strength, they would start one counter group away from the former.

In some cases the beggar has to pay a membership entrance fee to the beggars' group to become a member in their group. For instance, at Lord Shiva temple in Rajampet town, the beggars formed a body, and income gained by any beggar should be put in the common bowl which is shared at the end of the day. This beggars' group set a mandate for the new beggars to pay Rs.100/- in order to get permanent membership in the group and to claim share from the

common pool of income of the group on the said day. If any new beggar refuses to pay the membership fee, he/she will be forced by the beggars' group leader, to sit away from the group and beg on his / her own. In this case he /she need not give his / her income to the group and does not get share from the group's common pool.

It has been found that, often the group leaders dupe the members of the group and swindle some portion of amount from the common pool. They do not display the amount genuinely. Whenever they find an opportunity, they hide some amount by lying to others. These types of incidents generally occur at heavy crowded places, and the days on which beggars are busy in begging and unable to concentrate on the activities of the leaders. See the case 4.2 in the box given below.

Case-4.2: Begging and Cheating

Balakrishnaiah was the leader on one line of beggars at the main door of Lord Sowmyanadh Temple in Nandalur town. One devotee of the lord gave him Rs.100/- and asked him to share equally with the other members. But Balakrishna told his fellow men that, the donor had given him only Rs. 50/- and he distributed only Rs.50/- among others.

It is also found that there were some incidents when beggars do defy the directions of the leaders, and rebelled against the leaders and defected the groups to join another group or form a new counter group. Some squabbles have been noticed among the leaders and members with regarding the sharing of money. The infidel leaders are deposed and new leaders are elected. Some beggars, who lost their belief in leader, start a counter group at the same place. See the case 4.3 in the box, about these incidents.

The beggars' group leaders inculcate some influential relationships with the management personnel of the temple, or other sacred places by discharging some tasks at the instance of the latter. When they gain familiarity with, and good will of the management of the sacred places, they will have an advantage of being a leader, and using the vantage places for begging to gain more income than the any other beggars.

Case-4.3: Conflict in group

Ramaiah was the group leader to the some of the beggars at *Darga* in Nandalur *mandal*. He used to dominate and enforce his ideas on the group members without their will. He even was cheating the other beggars by not disclosing the right figure of amount gained at the end of the day. If someone asks he got habit of abusing them in obscene words. One day Subramanyam from the same group quarrelled with him and gave a severe blow with his begging bowl. Ramaiah was injured and did not show his face for one month. Subramanyam established a new group and became the leader to it. Having returned after a month, Ramaiah started complaining to *Darga* management and shop owners about the activities of Subramanyam's group. He made false allegation that, Subramanyam's group had been causing inconvenience to the devotees by harassing them to pay alms. He was successful in convincing the management of *Darga*, which forced the new group to leave the place. The latter's group left that mosque because, it did not want to continue the tussle with Ramaiah anymore, and it chose other temple for begging, where Ramaiah was afraid to go and beg.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study has been conducted in the three *mandals* of Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh. The fieldwork has been conducted for 30 days in August 2012, and 70 beggars of various kinds have been interviewed. The research tools like schedules and interview guide were employed. Based on the empirical data, it is understood that, the problem of begging has various dimensions.

- a) Begging as a profession does encompass people from all the sections, including all age groups, sex, and caste groups. There is no significant difference across the caste groups in terms of number of beggars. But, males' share is almost two folds of the females'. The alarming fact is that around half of the beggars belong to active working population.
- b) Majority of the beggars have resorted to this profession not because of lack of economic resources, but due to some intra-family issues. Around 70 percent of the beggars hail from agriculturally potential areas.
- c) There is a wide gulf between the beggars in terms of income. The minimum and maximum range of annual income of the beggars is Rs.4800/- and Rs.57600/-. Mobile beggars earn more than the static ones. The annual income of many beggars falls between Rs. 5000/- to Rs.15000/-.

- d) The major part of beggars income is spent predominantly on three items like food, liquor, and tobacco. However, it is to be understood that almost 1/4th of the beggars do not incur any expenditure on food. For a considerable portion of beggars, expenditure on liquor and tobacco is more than that of food.
- e) Regarding property possession, 74 percent of them have one or the other type of own property, and the value of such property shows a wide variation among them. Some have exceptional value of Rs.4000000/- to 5000000/-.
- f) Of the total 70 beggars, property holders are more than the non-property holders. 62 percent of the property holders, are frustrated and do not have healthy intra-family relations.

It is concluded that the phenomenon of begging involves more of the socio-psychological aspects, than the economic ones. Begging is the result of attenuated human relations. This phenomenon has been rapidly increasing on par with the pace of adopting materialistic way of life. The remedy lays in revamping on the traditional value systems in the society by embedding them in the current educational systems. The government has to take measures to make family members accountable for the conditions of beggars. Further the state has to chalk out the comprehensive programme to curb the ever-increasing begging population. The constructive, rehabilitative view on beggars should replace the short term sympathetic view.

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