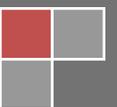


2012

Second joint inspection of homeless shelters in twenty cities of Bihar



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All homeless shelters-50, including temporary 14 shelters were inspected by a team comprising concerned officials and representatives of State Advisor between 1st Feb to 7th Feb following the order of the Supreme Court.

All homeless shelters were functioning. However, 25 more permanent shelters are required in Bihar as per the population.

It is to be noted that not a single homeless shelter in Bihar is according to the directions of the Supreme Court. The Government also acknowledges this fact as it is reflected in three meetings with Principal Secretary and Municipal Commissioners/ Executive Officers. But, at the same time they are reluctant to speed-up works in upgradation of old structure and construction of new shelters.

Occupancy of Shelters



During the survey average occupancy at the time of inspection was 10 persons (total 400 persons in all shelters) while capacity of each shelter is between 20-30 persons (total 1200 persons in all shelters).

The occupancy is very low due to non-publicity. Advertisement is given in local news papers which homeless cannot read. Hoardings and other visuals are not displayed at railway station, bus stands etc. Information campaign about shelters in the areas where homeless live is needed.

Infrastructure and maintenance

Most of the shelters are built in 1990s on the footpath by the road side. For example, permanent shelters in Patna are on footpath. They are covered from three sides with an opening for entrance except in Ara the shelter is still open from all sides. It looks to be a bus stop. The Ara commissioner has





said that tender process is going on for two permanent shelters. Entrance is covered with plastic sheet. In general, permanent shelters structures are very old, plasters are peeling off, floors and roofs are broken. Most of the temporary shelters (1 in Danapur, 1 Patna City, 1 Kankarbagh and 1 in Gaya) are housed in community hall.

Shelters in community hall have facilities like toilets and washrooms.

Amenities and facilities at the shelter

10% of shelters have toilets in their compound and persons in other shelters use paid toilets of Sulabh-Sauchalaya. 20% of shelters have hand pump or tap water source for drinking water while in rest of the shelters homeless people use water from nearby municipality tap- water. In R-Block shelter of Patna there is no source of potable



water. One hand pump is in the nearby Mandir compound. Homeless living in the shelter told us that locals object them taking water from the hand pump. All shelters lack kitchen facilities. Homeless takes food at dhaba.

Though care takers are appointed by the corporation or council according to the officials, they were not available at the time of inspection. Registers are not maintained.

All shelters except Danapur temporary shelter which has 2 beds, have dhurries spread on straws. There is no separate locker, bank account/ saving facilities, First

aid kit etc. In most of the shelters, persons living there fix wire with nearby electric pole for electricity.

Transparency and outreach

Some shelters have sign boards and some have their locations and address written on the wall. Services and caretakers name are written on paper and pasted on wall of 9 shelters of Patna.

During discussion with homeless living on pavements, we found that many of them did not get space in shelters because spaces have been occupied by persons for many years.

Rescue services for the homeless

We have found no rescue services for critically ill, abandoned, destitute being provided by any NGO or Government.

Shelters for homeless persons with special needs- mentally ill, addicts, destitute, old age women and children: There is no separate shelter for women, children and destitute.

Note: *The Principal Secretary of Urban Development and Housing Department of Bihar verbally committed to provide basic facilities in all permanent shelters and construct 11 more permanent shelters as a model in all corporation towns as per the guidelines of the Supreme Court in a meeting with us and Commissioners and Executive Officials of 20 cities held on 10th Feb. 2012. He said that simple repair works in shelters will be carried out before the hearing on 23rd Feb. He ordered his officials to appoint permanent caretaker in all shelters, to fix gates in shelters, change broken pans in toilets and provide hand pumps where they are required within three months. All 11 shelters shall be constructed before the onset of winter season.*

Recommendation

- Our observation is that the Supreme Court direct the State Government to construct all 61 new homeless shelters as per the rules laid down by the Honb'le Court.
- Construct the shelter within close proximity of population of homeless persons.

- Ensure separate shelter for old, women, children, destitute, beggars and other mentally ill persons.
- Ensure adequate information campaign of shelters through Hoardings, direct counseling with homeless persons, spread information about facilities, amenities, purpose by employing rickshaw pullers, auto drivers and other common people.
- Ensure that all basic facilities and amenities such as adequate space for each person, beds, blankets, mattresses, lockers, electricity and lighting, adequate ventilation, heating and arrangements, adequate number of toilets and bathrooms, and free food for destitute, space recreation, health referral services, identity cards, PDS coverage and security.
- Ensure that homeless persons are not require to present any proof of identity to enter and use such shelters and are not charged any fee for staying there and using toilets.
- Sensitization program of officials and to build capacities of representative of urban local bodies, municipal authorities, local police and railway police personal and representative of other concerned department.
- To start rescue services for destitute mentally ill persons, old, women, girls and children.
- Set up an institutional arrangement under aegis of Urban Development Department to implement and manage the shelter.

Annexure of the district report in format forms are attached with the report.