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## Homelessness: A regional analysis in India

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### Abstract

India is country of 1.2 billion people who live in an area of 32, 87, 263 square Kilo meters. India is a developing country, there is 31.16 percent people live in urban area and rest of them live in rural area. Census of India has been providing the data of demographic and socio-economic characteristic of Indian population since 1981. The research in the area of homeless people in developing country is recent phenomena. The data of homeless people can be categorized in to two phases. Census of India provide homeless people date in gross figure before 2001. After 2001, it covered socio-economic data on district wise also. This paper tries to understand the homeless people distribution, growth and variation according to urbanization in the different regions of India. The growth of homeless population has been high in urban area compare to rural area during the period of 2001 to 2011.

**Keywords:** Census of India, homeless people, distribution, growth

### Introduction

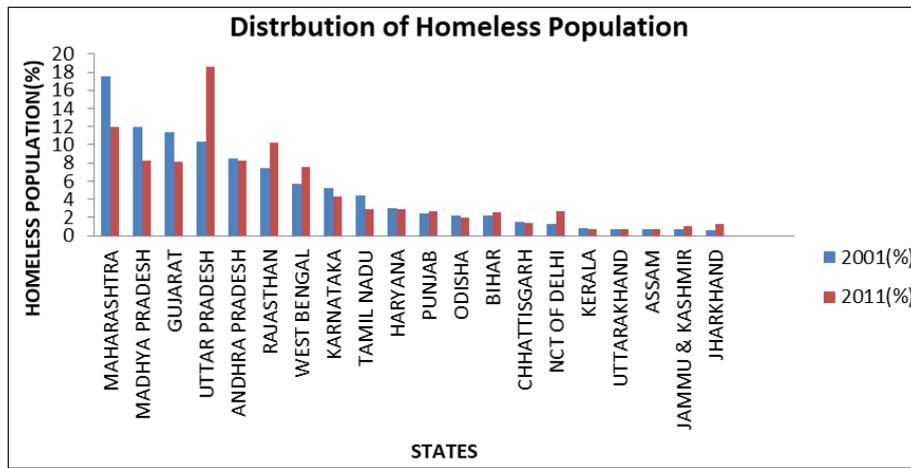
One of the major problems in research on homeless people is “data availability”, especially in developing countries (Burrows, 1997:8; Springer, 2000:476) [7, 8]. Many private NGO’s and institutes are conducting their own survey from time to time and have produced information, but most of them are based on small sample size, unauthentic measure, and malpractices. The other sources of data on homeless population are different reports and research papers but these provide very specific and concise information. First time, the Census of India started to provide data on homeless population in detail from 2001 census (Gupta, 2006) [9]. Earlier, the 2001 census provided total figure of homeless population. In 2001, it has provided data on homeless people some more aspects such as, household number, homeless population, household size and mean household size. It was for the first time that census of India had provided district level data of homeless population. The 2011 Census of India provided more detail information about homeless population at the district level. This census covers many aspects of homeless population. It provides socio-economic characteristics of homeless population also. It gives the information about total number of population (Male & Female), population under six years, SC & ST population, literacy & illiteracy, total workforce etc. Yet the censuses do not provide micro level data on homeless population, the research on this aspect still depends upon primary field survey in India.

This research paper has been organized in to three sections which are based upon census data. The objective of the study is to analyze and explain the spatial and temporal variation of urban homeless people during the period 2001 to 2011 in India.

### Homeless Population in India

The question of how many people are homeless represents one of the basic parameter that has defined homeless as a social problem (Metraux *et al.*, 2001) [4]. Homeless population was 23.42 lakhs in 1981 which has subsequently declined in the successive enumeration of the census of India. It was 17 lakhs in 2011. State wise variation of homeless population is given below.

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Source: Primary Census Abstract of India 2001 and 2011

Fig 1: Distribution of Homeless Population in the States of India (2001-2011)

India is home to 17 lakhs homeless population according to the 2011 census. However it was 19 lakhs in 2001 census. As per the state-wise distribution of homeless population in 2011, Uttar Pradesh occupies the first position followed by Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Maharashtra was at the top position in 2001 but it has declined to second position in 2011. Many factors are responsible for the concentration of homeless population. For example, possibility of employment, welfare scheme, availability of cheap accommodation, and urban renewal program (Gupta and Ghosh, 2006) [9]. North Eastern states of India are showing less than 1% of homeless population. In North Eastern states, the decadal growth rate of population is comparatively low as compared to other states of India except Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. In North East India, there is no big industrial cluster which works as a pull factor. Figure 1 shows the spatial-temporal variation of homeless population in different states. A state wise

comparison of homeless population during the years 2001 to 2011 shows that five Indian states (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh) have more than 10% homeless population in 2001. These states account for about 60 percent share of homeless population in India 2001. These states are different socially, economically, demographically and geographically from each other. Maharashtra and Gujarat are counted in developed states of India. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are BIMARU states of India. Uttar Pradesh is at the top of the total homeless population in India 2011. It has maximum number of million plus cities (Census 2011). It was at the fourth position in 2001 whereas it is showing the highest homeless population in 2011. In 2011, many states showed less than 2% population. These states are Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, NCR Delhi, and North Eastern states, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Goa and Kerala. The Table is given below.

Table 1: State-wise distribution and growth of homeless population

States	Distribution		Distribution (%)		Growth (%)
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001-2011
Jammu & Kashmir	12,751	19047	0.66	1.08	49.38
Himachal Pradesh	8,364	4098	0.43	0.23	-51.00
Punjab	46,958	46714	2.42	2.64	-0.52
Chandigarh	2,722	4139	0.14	0.23	52.06
Uttarakhand	14,703	11824	0.76	0.67	-19.58
Haryana	59,360	51871	3.06	2.93	-12.62
Nct Of Delhi	24,966	47076	1.29	2.66	88.56
Rajasthan	143,497	181544	7.39	10.25	26.51
Uttar Pradesh	201,029	329125	10.35	18.58	63.72
Bihar	42,498	45584	2.19	2.57	7.26
Sikkim	286	277	0.01	0.02	-3.15
Arunachal Pradesh	442	1556	0.02	0.09	252.04
Nagaland	2,002	876	0.10	0.05	-56.24
Manipur	2,607	3212	0.13	0.18	23.21
Mizoram	336	152	0.02	0.01	-54.76
Tripura	857	3225	0.04	0.18	276.31
Meghalaya	1,827	1241	0.09	0.07	-32.07
Assam	13,355	12919	0.69	0.73	-3.26
West Bengal	110,535	134040	5.69	7.57	21.26
Jharkhand	10,887	23391	0.56	1.32	114.85
Odisha	42,871	34061	2.21	1.92	-20.55
Chhattisgarh	28,772	24214	1.48	1.37	-15.84
Madhya Pradesh	231,246	146435	11.91	8.27	-36.68
Gujarat	220,786	144306	11.37	8.15	-34.64
Daman & Diu	1,071	737	0.06	0.04	-31.19

Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1,471	1004	0.08	0.06	-31.75
Maharashtra	340,924	210908	17.56	11.91	-38.14
Andhra Pradesh	163,938	145211	8.44	8.20	-11.42
Karnataka	102,226	76735	5.27	4.33	-24.94
Goa	5,280	3051	0.27	0.17	-42.22
Kerala	16,533	11853	0.85	0.67	-28.31
Tamil Nadu	86,472	50929	4.45	2.88	-41.10
Total	19,41,572	17,71,355	100.00	100.000	
National Average	60,674	55,355	3	3	

Source: Primary Census Abstract of India 2001 and 2011

According to Table 1, homeless population of India has declined during the period 2001-2011. It was 19.42 lakhs in 2001 while it was 17.71 lakhs in 2011. National average of homeless population is 3 percent in the states of India during 2001 and 2011 also. It does not show the change during the last decade but the size of population has changed. It was lower than earlier. In 2001, 10 Indian states showed more homeless population than the national average of homeless population. It became better in 2011, with only 8 Indian states above the national average of homeless population. NCT Delhi accounted for 2.66 percent homeless population in 2011. It was only 1.29 percent in 2001; thus the population has about doubled during this period. If growth is compared amongst all Indian states, it shows the second highest growth rate after Jharkhand if Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura are not considered. Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura have comparatively negligible size of homeless population. It is only 0.02 percent and 0.04 percent respectively. In 2011, population of these two states was 0.09 percent and 0.18 percent. The small change in their size of population shows high variation in growth rate. Jharkhand (0.56 percent) had also been showing less than 1 percent population since 2001. It was in the third position in the highest growth rate after Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura during this period whereas it has only 1.32 percent of homeless population in 2011. In India, ST population is a vulnerable section and lives at high risk from natural calamities. In Jharkhand, ST population has constituted 26.3% of total population of the state as per the 2011 Census. In Jharkhand, the ST population growth rate during last decade has been similar to that of the country's decadal growth rate. During the period (2001-2011), more than half

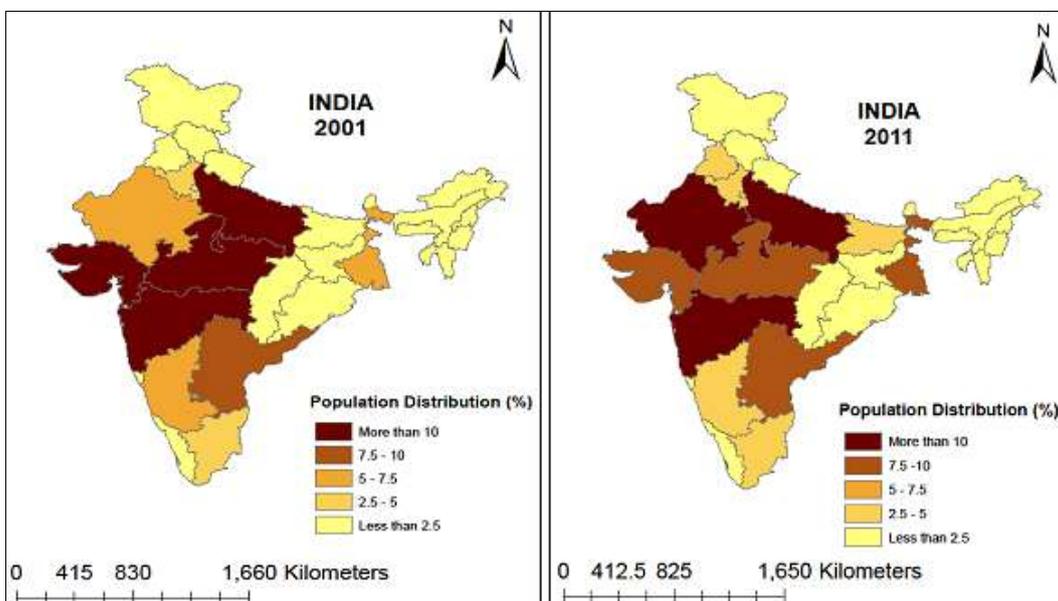
of Indian states have been showing negative growth rate except Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, NCT Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and J & K in decreasing order out of which Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Chandigarh may be left because these have less than half percent homeless population.

**Region-wise Analysis of Homeless Population**

India is the seventh largest country in the world. Geographically, India can be divided into different forward and backward regions. According to Kurian, Western and southern states come into forward group in the country. This group is separated by Rajasthan from Punjab and Haryana. The group of backward states is located in the eastern and northern parts of the country and is geographically contiguous. To show the region wise variation, Homeless population can be divided into five Categories. These categories are given below.

Category	
Less than 2.5	Low
2.5 to 5	Medium
5 to 7.5	Moderate
7.5 to 10	High
More than 10	Very high

According to Table, it may be clearly said that homeless population is found in every state of India, but the extent of homeless population varies state by state. Map 1 and 2 is given below which represent the region wise variation of homeless people in the period 2001 and 2011.



Map 1 & 2: Distribution of Homeless Population in Indian States 2001 & 2011

**2001**

More than half of the Indian states were showing less than 2.5% homeless population in 2001, for example, North Eastern states, Assam (0.69 percent), Manipur (0.18 percent), Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya (0.9 percent), Nagaland (0.05 percent) and Mizoram (0.01 percent). These states are having less than 1 percent of homeless population. The Eastern very such as Bihar (2.19 percent), Orissa (2.19 percent), Chhattisgarh (1.48 percent), Jharkhand (0.56 percent), Sikkim (0.01 percent) and North Indian states J&K (0.66 percent), Himachal Pradesh (0.43 percent), Punjab (2.42 percent) and Uttarakhand (0.76 percent). In south India, Kerala and Goa comprised of 0.85 percent and 0.27 percent respectively. All these states are having homeless population below the national average (3 percent) and all are also showing less than 1 percent population except Orissa, Bihar, Punjab and Chhattisgarh.

In the second category, Tamil Nadu (4.45 percent) and Haryana (3.06 percent) were less than five%. Haryana and Tamil Nadu both are highly urbanized states, where Haryana is northern and Tamil Nadu is southern state.

In the third category Rajasthan (7.39 percent), West Bengal (5.69 percent) and Karnataka (5.27 percent) were less than 7.5%. In fourth category Andhra Pradesh (8.44 percent) was the only state, and the last category, which is showing more than 10 percent of homeless population. These states are Maharashtra (17.56 percent) followed by Madhya Pradesh (11.97 percent), Gujarat (11.37 percent) and Uttar Pradesh (10.35percent). Maharashtra and Gujarat are developed states of India. It is one of the reasons for high concentration of homeless population. Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are opposite in nature of Maharashtra and Gujarat. These are BIMARU states of India. These states are poor states.

**2011**

According to Map 2, North-Eastern states, i.e., Assam (0.73 percent) is followed by Manipur (0.18 percent), Tripura (0.18 percent), Arunachal Pradesh (0.09 percent), Meghalaya (.07 percent), Nagaland (.05 percent) and Mizoram (.01 percent). All North Eastern states are having less than 1 percent homeless population. Eastern states are Chhattisgarh (1.37percent), Jharkhand (1.32 percent) and Orissa (1.92percent) and Sikkim (0.02 percent). North West Himalayan states are J & K (1.08 percent), Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (0.23) and Southern states Goa (0.17) and Kerala (0.67percent). In this groups all the states except Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh belt, are less than 1% of homeless population. In this group all the states are backward and developing states except Kerala and Goa.

The second group includes, Western Gangetic plain states such as Haryana (2.93 percent), Punjab (2.64 percent) and Delhi (2.66 percent) and Lower Gangetic plain states, Bihar (2.57 percent) and in south Indian states Karnataka (4.33 percent) and Tamil Nadu (2.88percent). North western part of India is developed region. That's why Punjab, Haryana and Delhi attract the homeless people. They migrate for better livelihood (Dupont and Tingal, 1997). Delhi is one of

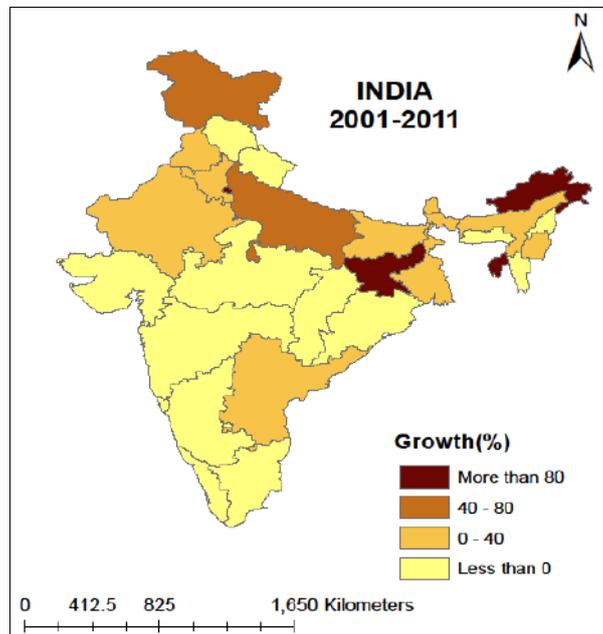
the biggest cities of the world and it is center for different economic activities in formal and informal sector. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are big and highly urbanized states of southern India. Third category does not show any states. The fourth category states are Madhya Pradesh (8.27 percent), Andhra Pradesh (8.20percent) and Gujarat (8.15 percent) and West Bengal (7.57 percent). These states are shown more or less similar size of population. Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh are the second and the fourth largest state of India. In the states of fifth category are Uttar Pradesh (18.58 percent), Meghalaya (11.91 percent) and Rajasthan (10.25 percent). Maharashtra has the highest urbanized state of India. Uttar Pradesh is the largest populated state of India and Rajasthan is the biggest state of India. Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan both are fall in BIMARU states category.

**Comparative Studies of Homeless Population in 2001 and 2011**

North-Eastern states have been showing population less than one% during the period 2001 to 2011. These states are small and belong to under-developed regions of India (Kurian, 2000) Eastern states and middle lower Ganga states also show less than national averages of homeless population except West Bengal in 2001 whereas 2011, Bihar has crossed the national average and come in to the second category. Bihar state has the higher population density in 2011 among all Indian states (Census of India, 2011) and West Bengal has gone down to second place during this period. According to the maps, homeless population has increased in the Indian Gangetic plain region during the last decade especially in Bihar and West Bengal. In 2011, Uttar Pradesh shows maximum number of homeless populations in India. However, it was in the fourth position (after Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat) in 2001. During this period Maharashtra has declined from its top position. It has decreased from 17.56 percent (2001) to 11.91 percent (2011) and is followed by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. It is assumed that the majority of homeless people are unskilled labour forces who migrated from rural areas to developed urban centers for better life for themselves and their families in the village (Gupta, 2006) <sup>[9]</sup>. Maharashtra and Gujarat are developed states of India. What are the reasons for decline in the homeless population during that period? According to the census of India 2011, a conclusion may be drawn. The number of million plus cities has increased from 35 to 53. So these unskilled labor forces now have more option of economic activities in these cities.

**Growth of Homeless Population During 2001 to 2011**

Many states of India showed negative growth rates during the period 2001 to 2011. National growth rate is -8.77 percent in the reference period. Rural and urban homeless population growth rate are entirely different from each other. In rural India, the homeless population growth rate is -28.35 percent whereas the urban growth rate is 20.52 percent.



**Source:** Primary Census Abstract of India 2001 and 2011

**Map 3:** Homeless Population Growths in India (2001-2011)

According to Map 3, more than half of the Indian states are showing negative growth rates, mainly in southern peninsular states, and North Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Manipur. As per the Map 3, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura are showing more than hundred% growth rates during this period. But Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura accounted for less than half percent of homeless population. So the size of homeless population is very small in these states, so small variations in number of homeless people show high changes in the scale of growth rate. Jharkhand was less than 1 percent in 2001 whereas 2011, it has reached 1.32% of homeless population. NCR Delhi shows the one of the highest growth rate after Jharkhand. Homeless population in Delhi has been doubled during this period. The map of homeless population is given below.

### Conclusion

Census of India is gradually increasing their coverage or dimension of homeless population data in every successive census. Availability of comprehensive data base which covers different aspect of homeless population that is prior need to make a feasible policy to combat homelessness (Springer, 2000) <sup>[8]</sup>. The census of India (2011) enumerated 17.7 lakhs homeless people in India of whom 8.34 lakhs lived in rural areas and 9.38 lakhs lived in urban areas. The Census data of 2011 shows a sharp decline in the number of homeless in the rural areas whereas there has been a steep increase in the homeless population by 21% in urban areas.

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