

The plight of homeless destitute during COVID-19 in a selected location in Lagos State

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Abstract

Homelessness is a social problem confronting several people in the society. Anytime there are restrictions in people's movement like it was during the COVID-19 pandemic, the homeless destitute are mostly affected as they were stranded and exposed to so many diseases. The paper is focused on Lagos state. The study areas are Mushin and Bariga, because they house a large number of homeless people and destitute. Six destitute and homeless adults were purposively and conveniently selected for the study. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data. Findings show that poverty was the major reason for homelessness and destitution. They mainly do odd jobs as their major means of survival. Findings also show that the COVID-19 lockdown period was a devastating experience for the respondents as most of them stayed without food but survived with the help of good Samaritans and even a little personal savings. The paper recommends the need for social workers in Nigeria to draw the attention of the government to the vulnerability of the destitute and homeless and also proffers some possible solutions to the challenge of homelessness among the destitute in Lagos State.

Keywords: destitute, homelessness, social work, pandemic

Introduction

Nigeria is a country with an estimated population of over 200 million, with 52% of its population residing in urban areas. This is an indication that the majority of the population resides in urban areas of the country such as Lagos, Ibadan, Abuja, and Port-Harcourt among others, rendering many people vulnerable to the ills of urban life due to overpopulation and congestion. The breakout of the Coronavirus hurts all and sundry in the world, it hurts the social-economic, political, and health arrangement of societies across the world both in developed and developing countries. People of all ages and economic statuses are being affected across the globe. However, developed countries have the sophisticated and well-arranged social infrastructure and health systems which made it possible for them to mitigate the effect of the pandemic and were able to capture the less privileged or vulnerable population in the society. On the contrary, in developing countries such as Nigeria, the less privileged or vulnerable people were left to their plight, though different measures were being carried out by the government, corporate organizations, and individual philanthropists; the impact of their interventions cannot be measured because of lack of data.

Lagos State is said to be home to over 20 million people because it is the commercial centre of the country, therefore, it is considered a place to be for almost everyone in the country. Thus, it is home to all ethnic groups regardless of religious affiliations in the country. Consequently, the economic infrastructure, housing, and other social amenities are strained because of the mismatch between the massive influx of people and available public utilities. This has given rise to high poverty levels and destitution with homelessness in the state. Thus, Lagos is faced with the problem of destitution that leads to homelessness. Destitution has been defined as a condition in which an individual experiences extreme poverty, social deprivation, and marginalization as well as a lack of assets/property (Coker, 2017). The inability of the Lagos state government to meet the needs of the ever-increasing population contributes to homelessness among poor people (Aguda & Ajala, 1998; Jiboye, 2009). Studies have shown that factors responsible for urban growth include large-scale migration into urban areas especially in Lagos state in search of employment and improvement of lives, the natural increase of population, the inadequate concentration of infrastructure and investment in urban areas at the neglect of rural areas (Ajala, 2005; Jiboye & Omoniyi, 2010). The massive growth in the population of Lagos state has made it difficult for the government to provide adequate and decent housing for the population. Thus, there is a lack of provision of housing for people as well as inadequate urban housing schemes to accommodate the population (Aguda & Ajala, 1998; Jiboye, 2009). According to an online source (Pulse.ng), it was reported that the term “sleep under a bridge” surfaced in the 60s and 70s at the dawn of the industrialization of Nigeria, which was when Lagos was transforming into the commercial centre of the country. Hence, it attracted a high number of migrants from smaller, less-commercial Nigerian cities and rural areas who thought they would make it and possibly survive on a platter of gold, rather they have to struggle to survive. The majority of the population comes to Lagos to access opportunities and have access to wealth, this they have in mind without a support system or anyone to accommodate them. Therefore, some resorted to sleeping under the bridge or residing in indecent places pending when they will be financially capable of getting a befitting and more decent accommodation. This to some might not be realizable for years while few could be lucky to secure somewhere for themselves.

Lagos State, despite its level of development and economic progress, lacks the social services to cater to the less privileged and vulnerable population in the state. The breakout of the coronavirus means that the less privileged or vulnerable population especially those destitute and the homeless have no formal support from the State. Most of them do odd jobs just to be able to feed themselves but the restrictions of the COVID-19 lockdown worsened their condition since odd jobs were not available for them during the lockdown (Mpolena, 2020). Moreover, the pace of urbanization in Nigeria has been

attributed to massive rural-urban migration, and Lagos in particular receives a very large number of migrants from other states of the country. Lagos state government in recent years claimed that the population of the state increases yearly by 275,000 (Attoh & Fapetu, 2020). The movement of a large number of people to cities in the country and particularly Lagos has contributed to slum formation, traffic congestion, high unemployment rate, poverty, and other social problems. Destitution constitutes a serious problem in Urban Nigeria as it is found even in developed countries. Homelessness and destitution are global human right violation often overlooked or taken for granted by most human rights organizations when accounting for human rights abuses and it's an indication of the failure of the state (Homeless and Human Rights [OHCHR], 2021). Many of the destitute are found in slums due to their inability to cope with the demands of the cities and the socio-economic deprivation they suffer. Some of them resort to begging, depending on the public for survival. They often hang around churches, hotels, banks, markets, motor parks, and along major streets to beg from both pedestrians and commuters, sometimes together with their children (Nweze et al., 2019). Some who have no place in the slums sleep in odd places like motor parks, around markets, churches, and along the streets at night (Nweze et al., 2019).

Homelessness is a social issue of great concern to social workers all over the world because homeless people often suffer discrimination and exclusion more than other members of society (Sen et al., 2022). Social work practitioners have the responsibility to meet and identify the housing needs of the homeless destitute as well as other needs; employ legal means of intervention; advocate for the provision of housing for them; help to meet some of their underlying needs; and finally gathering data which are meant to be presented to decision-makers for intervention (Sen et al., 2022). However, Bursch-Geertsema et al. (2016), identified different kinds of homeless people as people without accommodation (Living in open places like streets, motor parks, open-roofed or roofless shelters); people in crisis or temporary shelter (like IDP Camps, homeless hostels, refugee camps or others provided by government or charity organizations); and people living in deplorable or highly substandard accommodations (like those living in squatter settlements or slums). Many people become destitute and homeless as a result of unemployment, poverty, domestic violence, high cost of housing, natural disaster, alcoholism, and substance abuse as well as mental illness and displacement by terrorist and bandit activities (Coker, 2017). Based on a survey of African countries, Mattes (2020) reported that 79% of people in Africa have no income-generating jobs, 47% lack enough food, and 53% have no access to good medical care.

This situation breeds destitution and homelessness, particularly in urban areas. Due to extreme poverty and joblessness, many of the destitute live in open spaces indicating their detachment from society and rendering them vulnerable

to many dangers (Jackman, 2017). They suffer from serious physical and psychological problems such as exposure to weather, deteriorating clothing, poor hygiene, inadequate nutrition, lack of medical care, mental illness, and hopelessness (Tsesis, 2000). However, destitution and homelessness can be a tool in the hand of politicians to foster their political interests and purposes (Woollard, 2019). To compound the problem of destitution, the government particularly in Lagos and Abuja embarked on the forced eviction of people living in slums and squatter settlements rendering thousands of destitute homeless. The report of Amnesty International in 2006 shows that about 1,200,000 (Lagos & Port Harcourt), 23,300 households, and 30 squatter settlements were forcefully evicted in different parts of the country. In the report, it was estimated that not less than 3,000 people were evicted from Makoko in Lagos. Between November 2016 and April 2017, the Lagos state government evicted about 30,000 residents of Otodo Gbame, 4,700 of the residents had nowhere to go but to remain in the community sleeping in canoes or open spaces covering themselves with plastic during rain (Ojigho, 2017).

As a result of the aforementioned; Nigeria is one of the countries with the largest homeless population in the world (Roberts, 2020). Nigeria has an estimated homeless population of 108 million people despite the building of about 100,000 houses annually (Bramlett, 2018). It was reported by Group Chief Economist Complex and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [OPHI] (2016) (2016) that 34.6% of Nigerians were experiencing destitution. The forced eviction of people in poor communities in Lagos state brings uncertainty and instability adding to the misery of the people as many of them are left completely destitute (Ojigho, 2017). According to HWCF (2021), about 70% of people in Lagos live in informal housing with a large number facing homelessness due to government activities. Homelessness and destitution are dehumanizing and pose a serious security threat and fear to people living in the urban areas of the country (Woollard, 2019).

The emergence of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, and its spread to the nooks and crannies of the world affected political, economic, social, and religious activities in all countries of the world. The economic effect was much more felt by most countries including Nigeria as most people could not go to their places of work and businesses where they earn a living for survival and maintenance of themselves and their families. The economic effect was severe because of the imposition of lockdown by the government to restrict the movement of people to curtail the spread of the virus (FoodClique, 2020). The economic hardship created by the lockdown necessitated the provision of palliative to citizens especially low-income earners to aid their survival. While the government at both federal and state levels acknowledged the fact that the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown would be devastating for the most vulnerable people in the country, Human Right Watch (2020) advised the

government to ensure that food, shelter, and clothing which are the basic necessity for survival are provided for those who were liable to lose jobs and income during the lockdown. But it was so disappointing that the government failed in its responsibilities. Nevertheless, several philanthropists, NGOs, and corporate organizations such as Pepsico, TGI Group, Food Clique, and Novella Foundation supported the government with several items to help in meeting the basic need for survival of the most vulnerable citizens (FoodClique, 2020). Given this support, the most vulnerable people could not be reached in the distribution of those materials due to the problem of identifying the so-called “most vulnerable”. Even though low-income earners and poor communities are vulnerable, the homeless destitute who are the most vulnerable were overlooked. Though the government claimed to have distributed palliatives to the vulnerable people, it is a glaring fact that the real vulnerable people were not reached and particularly the homeless destitute. The fact that the government pays lip service to the plight of vulnerable people in society is a reflection of the OXFAM report (2019) which ranked Nigeria among the other 45 countries in Africa as the least country making effort to fight poverty and inequality. Given the failure of the government, Jegede (2020) raised the alarm about feeding and sheltering the homeless destitute who were worst it by the lockdown. Describing the pathetic condition of the homeless destitute during the COVID-19 lockdown, Jegede (2020) said;

Under the bridge, in street corners, on doorways, in free public spaces than to waking up before dawn to use cheap public bathrooms or opt for open defecation – this is what shelter means to the homeless. At nightfall, the homeless are the direct receivers of moonlight, they know the rhythm of the night, sometimes they are comforted by stargazing which ends in ecstatic sleep, they shiver through cold nights, juggle through shattered umbrellas and blankets, they camp in uncompleted buildings and hide under thin bushels on rainy days, while some have no choice but to be drenched. Since the lockdown, public toilets are hardly functional, public spaces are rarely open and the most important aspect, Survival. How do they survive with no money, no job, and no loads to carry? The streets of Lagos are empty, no hustling and bustling, no one to beg from; they just sit and watch with hands akimbo. How are they handling hunger, how many of them will be reached by the palliative measures of the government? (para.1,3,4 & 5) .

The population of the homeless destitute is made up of people from different demographic cohorts in the country. But the most vulnerable among them were children and the elderly who are more likely to be infected with the coronavirus disease as the World Health Organisation asserted due to their fragile immunity. The children in particular posed a security threat to residents of Lagos during the lockdown, releasing the venom of hunger and depravity on people. Most of the one million boys who threatened Lagos and some parts of Ogun state were

homeless children who survived on odd jobs and begging before the lockdown (Nnadozie, 2020). Given the fact that their means of survival were cut off during the lockdown, they assembled themselves in large numbers to invade people in their homes to forcefully obtain money, food items, and other things in a terrifying manner.

The population of poor people is very high in Africa and Nigeria in particular but differences exist among the poor. The homeless destitute is a category of poor people who suffer deprivation and social exclusion in the society. Scholars have identified varying factors like economic situation, individual behaviour as well as government policies depending on the perspective from which they are writing. Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (2002 cited in Haralambos & Holborn, 2008) in their integrated theoretical framework argue that these factors play an important role but none of them can stand in isolation. Their integrated approach examines both past and present opportunities available to individuals and the outcome of their relations with the factors identified. They claim that past events affect the amount of capital they can acquire which in turn determines the opportunities open to them. The capital includes human capital (referring to genetic inheritance, childhood condition encompassing family background, health issues, poverty, housing, social environment, and so on), education and training; physical capital (ownership of landed property); and financial capital. These capitals are interrelated but most poor people especially the homeless destitute lack them. The inability of the homeless destitute to acquire these capitals coupled with the aforementioned prevailing factors, family circumstances, and other deprivations constrained them to a perpetual state of poverty with no glimpse of hope. Given this situation, the homeless destitute tend to suffer more pain and hunger as well as vulnerability amidst COVID-19 lockdown than any category of people in the country. In light of this, the study set out to ask the questions: what are the reasons for destitution and homelessness in Lagos? How did the homeless destitute survive before the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown? How did the homeless destitute survive during the lockdown? And what could be done to reduce homelessness and destitution in the country?

Method

Study Area

The study areas are Mushin and Bariga. Mushin and Bariga were chosen because they house a large number of homeless people and destitute and are characterized by incessant violence and serious criminal activities. Mushin is a city that houses industrial estates like Ilupeju Industrial Estate and very important government institutions like NAFDAC, FIIRO, Water Corporation, Town Planning, LASEMA, etc. Mushin is also a commercial area housing many important markets including Ladipo Automobile Market (among others in the area), Ojuwoye Market (purely a market for provisions), Chemical

Market at Ilasa, Leather market, Daleko Market (Rice Market), etc. The concentration of industrial and commercial activities attracted so many people of different ethnic and nationalities to the area creating a high demand for housing with slums and decaying parts of the inner city accommodating a large number of people. Around these places are a large number of homeless people and destitute. Bariga, on the other hand, is mainly commercial and residential and bounded by Oworonshoki, Shomolu, Gbagada, and Akoka. The nearness to the Lagoon contributed to the emergence of poor settlements with shanties that are over congested.

Participants

Six destitute and homeless adults from Mushin and Bariga were purposively and conveniently selected for the study. The criteria for selection were that the person must have been living in the two mentioned areas for the past 10 years or more and the person is willing to participate in the interview. The rationale behind the use of destitute and homeless was because they have significant experience of living in dilapidated buildings and infrastructures. In terms of relevance and representation, this exhibits solid practice in qualitative sample research. (Robinson, 2014).

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Semi-structured interviews enable participants to express their thoughts more freely while also allowing researchers to get fully detailed responses from participants. The study was conducted between September and October 2021. The interviews were recorded, and the consent of the respondents was obtained before the recording began. Respondents were assured that their identities will be protected. The interview lasted between 40 to 50 minutes and was conducted at the convenience of the respondents. The responders had the right to leave the conversation whenever they choose and ask that their information be deleted.

Data Analysis

The interviews were audio-taped, and the researcher facilitated the IDI. The data generated were transcribed into the English language by an expert in the Department of Linguistics of the university. The researcher read and reread the transcript to familiarize herself with the data as the researcher was going through the transcription, some recurrent and common themes were identified.

Results

Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

A total of six destitute and homeless adults participated in the study. Five of the participants were from Mushin, while the remaining one was from Bariga. Their age ranged from 25 to 56 years. Four of the respondents have lived in the study areas for 20 years and above while the remaining two have lived in the areas for 10 to 20 years. Three of the respondents were married, while the remaining

three were single. Five of the respondents were Muslims, while the remaining one was a Christian

Reasons for Homelessness and Destitution

From the findings of this study, most homeless destitute are not indigenes of Lagos. They came to Lagos to seek greener pasture with the hope of making it but were left jobless because they do not have the requisite education and opportunity to get a job while some experienced job loss after doing low-paid jobs for some years. Consequently, they remain extremely poor that they could not afford the least cost accommodations and therefore lay their heads where they find a space. These facts were echoed in the expression of one of the respondents.

It is a lack of money; we are just managing. Nothing else apart from lack of money. We came to Lagos to hustle maybe things will be better for us but it gets worse, God knows everything. We are just in God's hands, he is the one who can do all things (Respondent 1, Married).

Another respondent said,

The issue is poverty, everybody knows the situation of things in Nigeria. I left home for Lagos because I believed I was old enough to survive on my own, and settle down to have my own home. Since it is not possible for one to continue to depend on parents I had to move down to the city. After struggling I could not make a headway and I've even lost hope. Only prayer can do it, we are just at the mercy of God (Respondent 2, Single).

Another respondent claimed,

I was previously a security man working in one house somewhere in Somolu. I became homeless when I lost my job due to old age and I've not been able to get another one. Not too long after losing my job, my wife died of an unknown ailment. I have nowhere to go after losing my job and that is why I have been sleeping on the street (Respondent 5, Married).

Another respondent added, "I'm a farmer, I came from my father's village to this place and I need a job and help_ (Respondent 4, Single).

Means of survival

Despite their joblessness and homelessness, respondents still look for means of survival while hoping that one day fortune will come their way. Most of them do odd jobs like bus conductor and washing vehicles whenever the opportunity comes except for the elderly one who resorted to begging. This is revealed in the words of the respondents. One respondent said,

What I do to survive is car wash, I help people to wash their cars any time I see the opportunity, even if it is in the evening. If you can get something else for me to do I will also do it (Respondent 4, Single).

Another respondent revealed,

We just have to survive, we can't just sit down doing nothing, and we have to look for how to get food to eat. I use to do conductor and that is what most of us here are doing to get stipends to feed ourselves and if God helps us to get something more reasonable, we'll use it for other things (Respondents 1, Married)

The above shows that the respondents were not lazy, they were ready to work whenever the opportunity arises but when they could not get any job they remain helpless.

Means of survival during COVID-19 lockdown

Given the inability of respondents to earn reasonable income that would have taken them out of the streets, one wonders what their conditions would be during the COVID-19 lockdown when people with consistent and reasonable incomes and homes found it difficult to survive. From the findings of this study, the COVID-19 lockdown period was a devastating experience for respondents as most of them stayed without food but survived with the help of good Samaritans and even a little personal savings. However, the experience of the respondents differs from one another and some of them shared their experiences as follows. One of them narrated,

It is because of this situation that they normally say that a man should not spend every money he sees on food, he should try to save something. We expected the Nigeria government to help us because other countries helped their citizens but our government did nothing. So, I survived on the little money I've saved painfully and the help from people around. That is how I survived. After all, one is used to fasting I know it will end one day (Respondent 2, Single).

Another respondent explained,

You see, at that time they said people should not go out we didn't go anywhere and we suffered. We were just here, only those who think they have power and people that will say they wanted to go out to do any work and violate the order. I as a person I was here and I didn't go anywhere because I don't have any power to violate government order and I'm still looking for a solution now (Respondent 3, Single).

Another respondent said,

That time of COVID-19 you just talked about, I hardly get vehicles to wash, I was not getting money like I used to get. During that period

people hardly wash their vehicles and if any eventually wash his vehicle he might prefer to take it to where they will wash it for him instead of just dusting it because they know we wouldn't be able to collect up to the amount we used to collect before. That's what helped me to survive during that period (Respondent 4, Single).

Yet another respondent added,

For those of us who have wives and children, it was just God who helped us to survive that period. When they said that nobody should go out we have no option but to obey the order and do what they wanted. For those of us with wives and children we suffered so much at that time but God will never leave his own without sending help. We endured everything till it ended (Respondent 1, Married).

Since these set of people do not have houses to live in during the lockdown, they could pose a security threat at odd hours to get something for survival and they were more vulnerable to COVID-19 infection because they clustered around street corners in numbers. They use also to be a victim of police brutality and human rights abuse. The findings from this study justified the concerns of Jegede (2020) in the literature.

Discussion

The hustle and bustle of Lagos require that one leaves home as early as possible to get to work to avoid being trapped in traffic congestion and returning home in the evening is often greeted by hours of traffic jams characteristic of Lagos on daily basis. Many people spend most of their time at work and return just to rest in preparation for the next day's work. Nevertheless, a significant number of people are jobless and at the same time homeless. Some of these individuals live on the street or street corners or in front of shops after the owners have gone home. So, they are found roaming and hanging around the streets aimlessly. According to the findings of this study, most destitution and homelessness in Nigeria are mainly caused by unemployment and attendant poverty, especially for those who migrate to the cities in search of greener pastures. This corroborates the assertion of Coker (2017) about the causes of homelessness and destitution in the literature that poverty and unemployment are majors causes among other factors and the inability of the government to provide jobs and affordable housing facilities for the ever-increasing urban population as claimed by (Aguda & Ajala, 1998; Jiboye, 2009; Mattes, 2020; Jackman, 2017).

The findings also show that destitute and homeless people are willing and ready to work whenever the opportunity is available since it will help them earn some money. As reported by respondents, most of them engage themselves in odd jobs just to survive and this does not help to improve their situation as they

could not afford the cheapest accommodation how much more obtaining the basic things required for living a decent and reasonable life. Theoretically, destitute and homeless people mostly lack the requisite education for employment in the formal and informal sector and also lack vocational skills/training which would have to help them cope with the urban situation. They mainly survive on menial jobs which are not always available just to have something to eat. This has serious implications for the security of lives and property in the urban space (Woodlard, 2019).

Moreover, the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown was felt economically, socially, and psychologically by all and sundry in every part of the world but the effect varies from place to place and from individual to individual. The destitute and homeless people tend to suffer the effect the most because their condition exposed them to the pandemic more than anyone else since they have no protective mechanism like others and stood the chance of being infected by the virus and other related health conditions. According to the findings from the study, the destitute and homeless people did not enjoy any welfare provision from the government corroborating the report and lamentation of Jegede (2020) about the neglect of the homeless and destitute in the palliative arrangement of the government. Though several organizations were said to have made efforts at assisting the government to reach the most vulnerable with palliative, the destitute and homeless were not reached as discovered in this study. The findings showed that most destitute and homeless depended on people around who showed sympathy and extended good gestures towards them during the lockdown.

Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (2002) developed an integrated theoretical framework that will help in understanding the destitute and homeless people in Nigeria and Lagos State, in particular. According to them, destitute and homeless people suffer deprivation in terms of human capital, physical capital, and financial capital making them socially excluded from benefits that accrue to members of the society. So, theoretically, the lack of capital identified by Burchardt, Le Grand, and Piachaud (2002) rendered the homeless and destitute more vulnerable than any other citizens to the pains and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. One cannot fathom the ignominy of the excruciation and horror this group of people would have gone through during the lockdown where people who have some level of capital seriously lamented. No wonder the surge in criminal activities especially robbery during the lockdown period.

The findings from this study have serious implications for social work as a growing discipline in the country. Social work quest for a solution to a social problem is being challenged here as the situation of the homeless and destitute beacons for social work interventions in terms of policy recommendations to

government meant to deal with problems often confronting migrants to the cities and group case work to help deal with the problem of poverty which has rendered many people destitute and homeless in the country.

Given this situation, social workers in Nigeria have a big task on how to draw the attention of the government to the vulnerability of the destitute and homeless to negative circumstances in the country and work together with the government to establish programmes meant to change the social situation of these people. As noted by Sen, et al (2022) As this guidance makes clear, social workers have a vital role to play in helping the homeless and destitute especially in advocating on their behalf with relevant agencies and also supporting some of them in meeting their underlying needs. Aykanian and Lee (2016) are also of the view that since social work prioritizes serving the most oppressed in the society given its foundational values and ethics, therefore social workers are well positioned to promote the recognition and protection of the human rights of people experiencing homelessness. Social workers can also facilitate partnerships and collaborations among multiple sectors for the creation of facilities for people experiencing homelessness.

Though, respondents did not disclose that they usually beg from people around, observation during data collection showed that they were involved in some form of begging from people around whenever they have nothing with them. The implication for social work is that there is a huge case at hand that social workers can handle particularly how to develop social entrepreneurship schemes in collaboration with corporate organizations, government, and philanthropists to enhance the human and financial capital development of destitute and the homeless. Generally, the findings of this research challenge the very existence of social work as a discipline in Nigeria and the relevance of the discipline in tackling social problems.

Conclusion

Social, economic, political as well as personal factors are responsible for homeless destitution in Nigeria. The obvious neglect of the poor in general during the COVID-19 lockdown inflicted pain on the people and it was ignominiously excruciating for the homeless destitute who are the most vulnerable of all categories of people in the country. Therefore, it is suggested here that the government at all levels should deal vigorously with the problem of poverty in the urban areas of the country to reduce the escalation of the number of destitute in the cities. Also, the government at all levels should develop a special scheme to help the destitute to help them acquire some level of human, physical and financial capital to help them come out of the perpetual state of social exclusion. Finally, social work practitioners have a lot of work to do in terms of research that would aid policy formulation and intervention programmes for the destitute.

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