

**REGULATION OF BEGGING IN MUMBAI: A CRITIQUE OF  
RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR LAWS AND NOTIONS OF POWER**

**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my Mother, Zareen Begum and Sister, Zarqa Saeed for their incessant support.

I would also like to dedicate the work to the many who beg globally.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Why research begging?

The thought of researching begging first came to me during my MPhil in History, Film and Television. It was whilst I was studying for my MPhil that I went on a family holiday to Lahore, Pakistan, after almost twenty years since my first and only visit during childhood. Lahore, is the birthplace of my Father, who passed away in 1995. The trip to Lahore in 2004 was an emotional experience and I seemed to have discovered a city that was so far away from my home back in England, yet there seemed a sense of belonging, an attachment that was there, the link being my Father. In Lahore, my family home built under the close eye of my Father is on the outskirts of the city which is almost like a developed bubble with all the amenities one could ask for anywhere in the world, away from the vibrant inner city. However, it was the inner city that I began to become inquisitive about, especially the great number of beggars.

“The vast number of beggars on the streets was something which I had never seen before. I was quite disturbed as to why so many beggars exist, in a city which is the second largest urban city and cultural hub of Pakistan. Large migration from the rural areas to find work could be one reason, but then why the need to beg? Thoughts ran through my head on general begging as to what compels a person to stretch out his hand to another and beg? Why would anybody need to beg in this day and age? Is it an act of desperateness, as that individual has no other means of earning a living, or is it simply a lack of self-morale? Can we apportion the existence of begging on our social attitudes, whereby beggars have become complacent and rely on hand-outs? Does begging exist because people have turned it into a profession, or does it exist because a particular State has neglected the poor?” (Saeed, 2007, p1)

I felt a certain empathy towards what seemed to me disenfranchised people who were begging as a last resort, which led to a desire and academic need to research the topic. As a result of my legal background the framework of the audio-visual documentary, *Beggars of Lahore*, (Saeed, 2007), revolved around three core questions, firstly, why is there so much begging in Lahore? Secondly, whether begging is justified? And lastly whether there are any solutions?

The written thesis involved academic rationales for the causes of begging and whether it is justified in Pakistani society, which led to attempting to arrive at solutions to curtail or eradicate this problem. Researching the begging phenomenon at Masters level was certainly a very insightful experience and one which highlighted the complex nature of begging, which I concluded could be attributed to a vast array of causes ranging from socio-economic to political and religious. Another important finding was that begging is a global phenomenon existing in both the developed and developing world, hence potentially opening the possibility of researching this interesting phenomenon in many global contexts.

### **Why Mumbai in India?**

Given my interest in South Asia, I felt that the logical next step at doctoral level would be to research India, of which Pakistan was formerly a part. Upon initial research of begging in India, Mumbai seemed to be highlighted more than the capital, and it was ultimately the paradox between the images of the rich and very poor that we see that urged me to research the city, given that my doctoral project has an audio-visual component. The

apparent visible stark disparity between the obscenely wealthy and the extremely poor that are in such close proximity was what I wished to illuminate audio-visually in an attempt to humanise the issue of begging which is often demonised.

The begging phenomenon in Mumbai is a complex one in nature and causes for it are multi-dimensional, ranging from socio-economic to religion, crime and politics. Likewise, the beggar does not belong to a homogenous group. The beggars are heterogenous in nature belonging to many different categories, from child beggars to adolescent beggars, the elderly and the disabled to name but a few. Further, the motivation for begging amongst this group also differs and to name again a limited number of reasons, these can range from socio-economic need and vary from sacred religious reasons to criminal ones. This diverse range of people are all answerable to a legislation enforced in many states of India which condemns and criminalises begging within a wide remit. With the exception of those who may really be misusing the status of a beggar to elicit money from donors, many who have a legitimate reason to beg also have to answer to this legislation which renders them criminal. The complexities of the phenomenon are extensive, as will be repeatedly outlined in this thesis due to the polysemic nature of the issue of begging.

In recent times India has made headlines for its increased economic growth. Although impressive, this growth has not necessarily been for the betterment of all strands of society. A resultant factor of this seems to have been rising inequality which in turn has lead to an increasing gap between the very rich and very poor. This state of play is especially visible on the streets of Mumbai. It is not uncommon to see beggars alongside

billionaires, and what is intriguing is that begging is criminalised through the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959, henceforth abbreviated to BPBA 1959. (delhi.gov.in, n.d.). However, it is not just secular law which regulates begging as we shall see unfold in this thesis. Religious laws also regulate begging.

### **Focus of Thesis**

The focus of this written thesis and documentary is the regulatory nature of the begging phenomenon in two spheres: that of religious and secular legislation. This analysis will also reveal causes of the phenomenon and explore power dynamics that emanate from these two infrastructures within society. Given the focus above, it is important to outline from the outset that the main argument which is to be highlighted in an inter-disciplinary manner through the combined audio-visual and written research, is the similarity of religious and secular laws which are concerned with begging and seek to regulate society and in doing so create complex power dynamics amongst actors involved.

Although the documentary and written thesis do not run parallel to each other they do complement each other. The written thesis critiques the regulation of begging in religious and secular contexts engaging with the literary texts and written media reports on an academic level. However, the documentary entitled *Mumbai Dreams* explores the topic of begging in Mumbai in an aesthetic form from the angle of reasons as to why people are attracted to it through the theme of Mumbai being a city of dreams. It explores why regulations for begging are in place when the city acts as a magnet luring people often from the poorer rural locations in the hope of better prospects, subsequently finding themselves in desperate situations on the

street with no other option but to beg. Through the documentary, a third segment of power emerges as I use actors and contemporary images of begging to convey my argument of the regulatory notions of begging to the audience, therefore, providing my gaze and interpretation through an edited and controlled representation of the topic.

## **Hypothesis**

With regards to a rationale for this manifestation of begging, a dichotomy of views towards begging become apparent in the Indian context. At first sight begging can be viewed as an ambivalent phenomenon and it can be viewed through one of two lenses, either legitimizing it via religion and the culture that emanates from that or criminalising it via a law that prohibits begging and therefore stigmatizes and demonizes those engaging in such activity. Begging is an activity which involves compassion and in my Indian case-study that compassion is derived from a rich, cultural ethos stemming from the diverse, eclectic religions, all of which promote charity. On the other hand, a tension arises whereby religious and secular laws seem to regulate begging, often creating negative connotations of the activity as they bring about an association of negative perspectives which seem to be established higher up in the decision-making processes, and filter down to a large proportion of the masses.

## **Aims of the documentary *Mumbai Dreams* and written critique**

The purpose of the documentary is to provide and establish a visual realism. It is, therefore, an attempt to humanise the issue of begging and bring about a sense of realism to

the complexities of the topic in order to highlight that it should not be perceived in a binary fashion belonging to either noble traditions or the criminal world. Both the documentary and the written commentary aim to go beyond these constructions by analysing the issue in greater depth, aesthetically and academically in an attempt to talk to each other and provide a piece of research explicating how it is regulated and the complexities attached to the issue of begging in Mumbai.

I will elaborate upon this and why I used the documentary format below. This will be achieved through analysing religious and secular laws regulating begging with a focus on the concept of the “Mumbai Dream”. The film will be questioning why religious or secular laws prescribe when, where and who is allowed to beg. If they have migrated to the city in the hope of prosperity and in the event they do not find it, they may find themselves begging on the street in a desperate situation because they have no other option.

I chose an audio-visual format to present a critique of begging and use film as a medium, as cinematizing the issue in a documentary form will enable me to present the vast, ambivalent and complex issue of begging in an accessible and aesthetic yet politically conscious, ideological manner with a perspective that aims to encourage human compassion.

Further, the documentary format is appealing as begging for me is a contemporary issue, which requires attention. Hence, the attraction of the documentary format for me was very much for the same reasons as Nichols (1991):

“The pleasure and appeal of documentary film lies in its ability to make us see timely issues in need of attention, literally. We see views of the world, and what they put before us are

social issues and cultural values, current problems and possible solutions, actual situations and specific ways of representing them.” (Nichols, 1991, pix).

With the above quotation in mind, begging as a social issue can also be seen as a cultural value, by some it is seen as a current problem. A dichotomy of views will unfold which I spoke of before within the written and audio-visual components of the documentary; where there is a perspective that brings forward a cultural rationale for begging and another which, in contrast, believes that the concept of begging has been exploited by people who have turned it into a profession.

The manner in which the audio-visual documentary format can be preserved as a historical feature is attractive with regards to recording the audio and visual elements to retain as a resource for future generations. In doing so, it is hoped that the documentary will:

“provoke or encourage response, shape attitudes and assumptions. When documentary films are at their best, a sense of urgency brushes aside our efforts to contemplate form or analyse rhetoric. Such films and their derivatives have a powerful, pervasive impact.” (Nichols, 1991, px).

As addressed earlier, providing the audience with a sense of realism through the documentary format is important for me, given the real nature of the begging phenomenon. This view has been shared by academics and filmmakers such as Dziga Vertov, Flaherty and those following John Grierson’s British School of documentary. These early filmmakers were very critical of the fiction film industry and advocated the social aims of documentary. (Nichols, 1991, p167).

John Grierson, leader of the British documentary movement, illuminated social betterment as one of his aims for producing documentaries, an aim with which I would like *Mumbai Dreams* to resonate. When speaking about the first principles of documentary in the essay of the same name, Grierson (1932, p145) notes that the vital distinction is the use of natural material which has an ability of ‘opening up the screen on the real world’. He notes how Flaherty, a fellow documentary film director of the time, uses the first principles as he masters his material on the spot and comes into intimacy with it by remaining with his people for over a year or so. Secondly, the material produced the distinction between description and drama. In doing so, “you photograph the natural life, but you also, by your juxtaposition of detail create an interpretation of it”. (Grierson, 1932, p148). Grierson further critiques the manner in which documentary can be produced and to some extent describes Flaherty as using an archaic individualist method, presenting a story of an individual against the environment. We see this in Flaherty’s *Nanook of the North*, (1922), for example, the tale of a male of the Inuit tribe, who is portrayed as conducting his duties as head of the house. In the same essay, Grierson compares *Nanook* which features a romanticized theme of noble savagery, with a 1920s silent film directed by Walter Ruttmann, *Berlin* (1927), and how the latter represents realism rather than romanticism. However, he again criticizes *Berlin*, for although having captured a realism of daily activities, he felt that there was a need to go beyond this to gain a process of creating a higher art, (Grierson, 1932, p150) and for this, there must therefore be a ‘sociological’ element present in the documentary (Grierson, 1932, p151). For him, ‘realist documentary’ in its truest sense brought about a sense of social responsibility (Grierson, 1932, p151), which he believed made the art one that was ‘troubled and difficult’ in nature and requiring more thought.

Although *Mumbai Dreams* has a social responsibility to represent the matter in an engaging manner, following Grierson, it departs from his rationale as it sets out to convey an argument through a gaze belonging to me, through control over the actors/interviewees in designing the argument I wish to convey to my audience, which I will elaborate upon below.

Going back to the notion of social responsibility, conveying social responsibility in a meaningful and succinct manner audio-visually via a documentary is also very important for me. With regard to aesthetics, Dziga Vertov, a Russian filmmaker of the same period as Grierson, used creative techniques that were avant-garde. *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) is a silent documentary which is renowned for its cinematic techniques breaking the mould of linear film. He was of the opinion that film was a cinematic language and at the start of *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), states this in the inter-titles.

If we look upon documentary as using a cinematic language, much in the same manner as Dziga Vertov, and one which has a social responsibility in the same way as Grierson, then we must be careful about what we portray through our own interpretations as it will become a subjective piece of work. How one forms a particular gaze is very much dependent on the filmmaker's leaning, what he or she wants to represent. Our interpretation will become a representation of our view. Bill Nichols (Nichols, 2001, p2) writes of how documentary engages with the world, through representation. Whilst on the one hand it can represent interests of others, it can also represent arguments of the filmmaker (Nichols, 2001, p5) much in the same way as a lawyer could present his or her case (Nichols, 2001, p4). This is an approach that I have used given my legal background, and I will now elaborate upon the specific aims of *Mumbai Dreams* as a production.

*Mumbai Dreams* will be using an expository mode of filmmaking. The link between the film and written thesis is the fact that I am designing an audio-visual debate about effects of the regulatory nature of begging using the theme of 'Mumbai Dreams' on a conceptual level, whereby people are attracted to a city of potential dreams but instead become caught up in a dystopia. I am therefore subverting the 'othering' of begging societies that religion and politics are creating, by critiquing the manner in which religion and politics treat the notion of begging. The documentary explores the notions as to why people beg in Mumbai and explores the regulation of begging through the voices of the interviewees, who had academic credentials within the wider remit of South Asia and also those speaking through personal experience, given that I could not go into the field. These views were teamed with contemporary images of Mumbai and begging in the Indian context, in an attempt to bring to the academic audience a very real and human yet complex issue. The film will, therefore, engage with the audience and inform them of the complexities of the issue, through information shared by the academics, often supported or juxtaposed with the images so as to provoke and encourage further debate. Often there are contentious views voiced by the interviewees. I present to the audience my interpretation of a vast topic in the space of 60 minutes. With regards to my social responsibility, I believe I fulfil that through providing the multi-faceted issues through use of the voices of the actors and the images. The documentary, therefore, takes the audience on a journey, providing them with information on the religious, legal, social and economic aspects of the topic along with introducing them to notions of power.

Hence, the documentary moves from highlighting begging as a social problem to one that is a very real political issue, which is resonated within the written text. The image itself has been regarded by scholars as a political entity, Nichols (1991) describes the documentary as the most explicit political form which again adds to its appeal. (Nichols, 1991, p1) “The term, “politics of the image” refers to the contestation and struggle over what is being represented in the media.” (Jhally,1997, p2) Hall (1997) posits that images can have many different meanings. (Jhally, 1977, p18)

The written thesis will present an academic critique of the begging phenomenon with respect to exploring religious and secular regulatory and power notions as well as highlighting the complexities of the phenomenon with supporting material from qualitative discussions with interviewees, along with their writings as well as relevant literary works in the field.

## **Methodology**

The methodology comprises of both qualitative and quantitative data, with more of the former as the bulk of the doctoral research is comprised of an audio-visual documentary made up of qualitative interviews.

My original plan for the doctoral research was one of a visual ethnography of begging in the city of Mumbai. This would have involved travelling to the field and interviewing the beggars in order to reproduce their physical appearance, which would have presented hard-hitting images along with their emic perspectives. However, I was

unable to do this as a result of a combination of factors. My efforts to enter the field in Mumbai have been thwarted by gate-keepers who could potentially have assisted me in accessing the field but have not done so, resulting in delay and a number of constant obstacles to the original intended project involving entering the field. As a result of not being able to conduct fieldwork in India I had to re-mould and re-work the thesis, which has led to the present attempt. With regard to obtaining the perspectives of the beggar population and Indian judicial perspectives, the research remains limited, however, the re-moulding aims to provide an analysis of perspectives of the experts within the field of South Asia and donors, as opposed to the perspectives of the beggars themselves, along with the Indian authorities and NGOs I planned to interview. As a result of the hindrances, I had to be resourceful and, therefore, implemented a contingency plan which comprised of interviewing academics, members of religious organisations and Ph.D. researchers within the UK and Europe with an insight into the begging phenomenon in Mumbai. I also developed and included a miscellaneous category of interviewees comprising of two people. I have used photographs and footage accessed via the internet for the purposes of examination of this educational film to compensate for location footage which I would have acquired had I been allowed to travel to the field.

I will be using film as a medium to record qualitative audio-visual interviews and their writings where relevant. The audio-visual interviews have a dual role as they can be used to support the written thesis but also stand alone as various relevant parts of them to form the documentary where the aim is to highlight the realness of the issue. This method of inquiry is necessary and relevant, as the qualitative research will demonstrate why it is happening. (Moore, 2002, p121). The qualitative interviews of academics, religious experts,

Ph.D. researchers and a miscellaneous category, in both a personal and professional capacity provide an insight into the begging phenomenon. I will therefore be presenting a visual heteroglossic text providing a diversity of voices holding different perspectives from a cross-section of society to go some way towards a “view” of the issues being discussed in relation to its regulation and notions of power. It is hoped that the academics will provide a more objective view whilst the views of donors represented by a sample of predominantly Ph.D. researchers will provide a more subjective and empathic view, but as humans I think we are prone to a range of emotions, therefore, I am expecting a mixture of both objective and subjective views from either group. Overall, the film as a whole is a product that I have edited, produced and directed with a specific gaze and a discussion runs through it revolving around why begging is regulated in Mumbai so harshly, given that it is such a complex topic and many people are in the hope of achieving something from the city. The interviews will, therefore, be edited, as I design a debate about the regulation of begging and the complexities of the issue; bringing about another layer of power at play not only between myself and the audience as illuminated by other filmmakers but between myself and the interviewees. The documentary will, therefore, pan out as a subjective piece as it will be my interpretation of the issue.

I will now introduce my four samples of interviewees. As aforementioned, as a result of being unable to enter the field because of a lack of co-operation from the Indian institute I was liaising with and further through experiencing an excessive delay in the visa processing time, I conducted audio-visual interviews comprising of the following four samples of interviewees:

- (i) A sample of academic researchers of South Asia

- (ii) Representatives of religious organisations within the Hindu religion
- (iii) Ph.D. researchers
- (iv) Miscellaneous category

*(i) A sample of academic researchers of South Asia*

This sample included academics from the West, and also those of Indian origin who were interviewed both in the UK and Europe in both their personal and professional capacities with regard to their knowledge of South Asia.

Begging is an under-researched area, and it was a challenge finding people who had academic knowledge of begging in the context of Mumbai. Although, other than Dr Julia Wardhaugh, my interviewees were not specialists within the field I have chosen, I had to be resourceful and choose available academics who were South Asianists and had insights into the geographical context I have been researching. All but Dr Julia Wardhaugh, Dr Muzammil Quraishi and Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed were of Indian origin. Dr Muzammil Quraishi and Professor Ahmed are of Pakistani origin. It was also important to complete the interviews within a time frame in order to commence the editing process and therefore, to obtain interviewees that were available and happy to participate.

The academics' disciplines, therefore, ranged from law, religion, criminology, economics to philosophy with specialisms within the different social contexts: urbanisation, religion and culture, criminal justice/legal. Below I have listed the academics, their

disciplines, institutions and the extent to which they were speaking from a personal or professional capacity. I have attached an appendix of their relevant publications in order to illuminate the rationale of these academics at the end of the thesis. I have referred to the writings of Dr Julia Wardhaugh within this written element as they were directly relevant.

Dr Julia Wardhaugh, Senior Lecturer in Criminal Justice at Bangor University was the main expert in the field. She has done extensive research in begging in the context of the UK and has also researched it in India. Her research which brings out a criminal justice stance has been drawn upon throughout the written thesis and is used to reinforce my line of argument.

Dr Muzammil Quraishi, also a Lecturer in Criminal Justice, did not have knowledge of Mumbai, per se, but had insights into Pakistan as he had done extensive research in Karachi, therefore, focusing within the Indian subcontinent. He provided a comparable personal insight into the Indian situation again from a criminal justice stance through his knowledge of deviance construction.

Dr Santanu Das, Lecturer of English Literature at the time of the interview had both personal experiences to share of his own and also offered his insights through an NGO that members of his family run involving poorer sections of Indian society. He had a particular interest in contributing as his publication deals with vulnerable and marginalized people.

Dr Priti Parikh, Research Associate at Imperial College, London is an Engineer by profession who completed her doctoral research on slum housing. Although her research

is not directly about begging, Dr Parikh provided a learned insight into the situation in Mumbai.

Dr Meena Dhanda, Lecturer of Philosophy, who has researched extensively Dalit Punjabis, a section of the Punjabi community in India who are often seen as an 'underclass', provided a personal perspective from the very many visits she had made throughout the years and gave philosophical perspectives to the situation mentioning the conflict between religious and secular laws.

Professor Soumendra Patnaik, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Delhi, again offered personal insights into the begging situation which drew upon grounded knowledge of culture and politics of the country which were most useful.

Dr Basawraj Gulshetty, Professor and Principal of Gulbarga University gave a sociological perspective of begging as he had researched it in a South Indian context. As this research had been undertaken in the 1990s, he was unable to give me his research to read and analyse but drew upon his findings from that research.

Dr Tara Chand Tikkiwal, a retired Lecturer at the University of Rajasthan again gave a sociological perspective from research he had done in the context of Rajasthan many years earlier.

As I have found through my research that begging is a highly political activity, I interviewed academics who had a background in South Asian politics and economy. Professor

Ishtiaq Ahmed, Professor Emeritus of Stockholm University, is a Political Economist specialising in South Asia, especially India and Pakistan. His personal and political insights were most useful.

Dr Jyoti Saraswati, Lecturer of Politics at the time of the interview specialises in the development of political economy of South and South East Asia and provided a politico-economic perspective of the issue.

Dr Shinder Thandi, a Development Economist provided a personal perspective of the begging situation from his experiences of being of Indian origin and his visits to India as well as drawing on the economic situation as did Dr Pritam Singh. He has been teaching the subject of development economics for over thirty years including material on poverty in South Asia and child labour. He lectures on poverty which includes the millennium development goals and has supervised many projects on poverty and poverty alleviation policies in Asia and Africa.

Dr Pritam Singh is a Lecturer in Political Economy at Oxford Brookes University. His research interests lie in the field of federalism, nationalism and development focusing on India. His recent publication deals with human rights and the complex relation with economic interests and political culture. He spoke about the impact of certain views on begging through the literature he had read about begging such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle, 2008), and *The White Tiger* (Adiga, 2008).

Professor Kunal Sen is a Professor of Development Economics and Policy at University of Manchester. His current research is on the political economy determinants of inclusive growth, social exclusion and poverty and the informal sector. He spoke about possible reasons for the begging situation using his discipline.

***(ii) Representatives of religious organisations within the Hindu religion.***

The second sample of interviewees were representatives of religious organisations within the Hindu religion. Featured in the documentary are two priests, who, although not Mumbaiites, offer interesting insights into begging within Hinduism from two differing Hindu institutions in the UK.

Acharya Dharm Dutt Vasistha, is a priest from the Shree Geeta Bhawan Mandir, a traditional Hindu place of worship. Acharya Umesh Yadav is a priest at the Arya Samaj, a Hindu organisation which upholds the primacy of the *Vedas* and moves towards a monotheism. It could be regarded by some as a progressive movement. He has a doctorate in the *Vedas* and therefore could speak about begging within the religion at an advanced level.

***(iii) Ph.D. researchers***

The third sample of interviewees comprised of predominately Ph.D. researchers commenting on the phenomenon in their personal capacity through observations of the phenomenon in India.

Vivek Nallur, Chinmay Kanchi, Vinoth Suryanarayanan were all native Indian Ph.D. students studying at Birmingham at the time of the interviews, giving their personal views. Chinmay is a Mumbaiite which made his contributions all the more relevant. Bhima Auro, again a Ph.D. researcher was born and grew up in India and gave his personal insights. Shyamal Kataria, is a British Indian Ph.D. student who gave his personal views on begging in Mumbai. Nuno Grancho, an Architect by profession of Portuguese origin was also pursuing his doctoral studies on urbanisation in the city of Mumbai and provided useful insights.

*(iv) Miscellaneous category*

Two of my interviewees were in a miscellaneous category. Sanjay Tewari is a native Indian who was working in a legal department of the government of India and provided views on the begging situation in his personal capacity. Musa Askari, son of a religious scholar Professor Syed Hasan Askari and also from South Asia, again, gave his views from a personal viewpoint with good knowledge from a religious and spiritual stance.

Apart from Dr Julia Wardhaugh, the interviewees selected were of a somewhat random selection as described above, which can be seen as a limitation for the research as they are not authorities on the subject of begging. However, my four samples of interviewees, through the knowledge they had whether, personal experience or an academic discipline within the realm of South Asia were able to enhance the argument and contributed to the vastness and complexities of the topic through their different disciplines and experiences. The film, therefore, having been completed using a contingency plan, as the original plan could

not go ahead is one which has been completed in a resourceful way. The manner in which the documentary is edited passes an authoritative voice to the director, that is, myself; as I highlight the issues of regulation of begging through religious and secular laws and the power dynamics the infrastructure brings about through a visual debate incorporating a theme of the 'Mumbai Dream'.

### **Brief literature review**

A small number of studies have been conducted on begging in different cities in India. The earliest social study of this nature is one conducted by Chatterjee (1918) entitled *Mendicancy in Calcutta*. Although it is an early study and descriptive in its form it is helpful in that it highlights the different types of mendicancy. Chatterjee divides the beggars into two classes: religious and secular.

*Our Beggar Problem* by Kumarrapa (1945) was a study which covers the typology of beggars, causes of begging followed by solutions with an emphasis on pleas for social security to prevent poverty in order to ensure social insurance against situations such as industrial disability, maternity risks or superannuation.

Gore's (1959) *The Beggar Problem in Metropolitan Delhi* conducted by the Delhi School of Social Work outlines that in 1959 the presence of beggars in large numbers in Indian cities and towns was a manifestation not of religiosity but of social and economic maladjustments of the Indian way of life. (Gore, 1959, pi-ii).

*Beggar Problem in Greater Bombay* by Moorthy (1959) was a pilot study in the typology of beggars in greater Bombay with a view to finding out the causes of beggary, types of beggars, extent of the beggar problem and possible methods of rehabilitating the beggars. (Moorthy, 1959, p1-12).

*Juvenile Vagrancy: A Socio-Ecological Study of Juvenile Vagrants in the cities of Kanpur and Lucknow* by Srivastava (1963) was a pioneer venture. Whereas previous investigations dealt mainly with court and institutional cases disregarding the pre-delinquent phase, Srivastava's study of this stage broadens the field of scientific diagnosis of social deviation.

With regards to more recent literature on street children, Banerjee Das (2001) devotes a chapter on street children and writes of the "magnitude of the problem" citing UNDP figures that street children in Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi number approximately 100,000. Not all street children are beggars, others may be street vendors or have other occupations.

Jha's (1979) study claimed to be the first attempt in Indian anthropology to view in totality people who beg. He classifies the beggars into four main types: able-bodied, physically handicapped, diseased and religious mendicants and was of the opinion that the diseased and handicapped need the attention of society and government to look after them. He argued that the able-bodied need more employment opportunities since poverty and unemployment mainly drive them to begging, hence Jha attributes the begging phenomenon

to a whole host of reasons including: poverty, disease, lack of education and juvenile delinquency.

My literature search shows that there seems to be an early body of literature that deals with the issue of begging in Mumbai and India in general and then nothing until the 2000s. Perhaps post-1979, begging was no longer of interest within the context of India and post 1979, there were other things to be writing about. One of the disadvantages of doing this topic for me as a British Pakistani and also Muslim was that I was not allowed access into the field, I may, therefore have missed out on local studies that have been conducted.

A study by Staples (2007) sets out to explore emic perspectives of those who beg. In doing so, his aim is to arrive at a deciphering of how begging is constructed both practically and symbolically by those who engage in it. (Staples, 2007, p171). The research was carried out in 1999 and 2000.

Mukherjee's article (2008) is a critical review of the BPBA and is visited in Chapter 2 as are other articles focusing on the criminalization of begging both in an international and more specifically Indian context.

Dr Julia Wardhaugh has written extensively about homelessness. One of her articles (Wardhaugh, 2009) focuses on the begging phenomenon in South Asia with a view to critiquing the regulation of social space and also engaging in an angle encompassing criminal justice. Wardhaugh (Wardhaugh, 2012a) devotes a section of her article on international

feminist perspectives on homelessness to include issues such as women in the developing world, homeless girls and the issue being exacerbated by natural disasters. In the same year, Wardhaugh (Wardhaugh, 2012b) also wrote an article dealing with policies to address homelessness and criminalization and control of public space. Her two case studies in this article focus on regulation of homelessness within England and India.

Massey, Rafique and Seeley (2010) write of begging experiences as a living strategy for the poor in Eastern India and Northern Bangladesh. It provides in depth interviews with both male and female beggars with an aim of illustrating their “resourcefulness and agency”.

Malik and Roy (2012) conducted a study with an Indian perspective on begging as a social stigma. Having interviewed a diverse range of 168 beggars from Delhi, it provides a three pronged insight into firstly, the economic status of beggars, secondly, addresses why people choose begging and lastly analyses the rehabilitation programmes designed and implemented by both government and other organisations.

Hermer (1999) conducted a study based in the UK which gives an interesting insight into how compassion in the realms of giving within a begging context can be policed which will be discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

With regard to the literature on begging, what can be ascertained from the literature review of scholarly works in the field is that most of them provide reasons for begging and these seemed to have remained the same over the years. Indeed these reasons are responsible for the begging phenomenon today. According to the provisional results of

the 2011 census of India, the population of Maharashtra is 11,23,72,972. Mumbai is recorded as having a population of 93,32,481, (Census of India, 2011) making it a dense city housing a diverse and heterogeneous population comprising of a range of cultures and religions. These figures follow the Indian system of counting in crores and lakhs. Given the size of the city and its density Mumbai is still, at present times, the victim of problems appertaining to urbanisation including poverty, migration, unemployment, and high levels of illiteracy, which all contribute to the begging phenomenon. (Gray, 2008). The typology of beggars remains heterogeneous. (The Times of India Online, 2006). Journalistic works still report upon categories of beggars such as: those begging for a socio-economic need, the elderly, the physically disabled, mothers with children, religious mendicants, orphans, and professionals. (Prashar, 2008). Indeed the categories are fluid, whereby a beggar may fit two or more categories. That is, he or she may really be suffering severe financial hardship and also be recruited by a professional criminal network, bringing about a paradox juxtaposing what might be perceived as a potentially deserving beggar with a criminal organisation. Recently, there has been more emphasis on begging becoming a profession, with one article in the *Times of India* claiming that Mumbai's beggars are earning 180 crore a year (equivalent to approximately, £21,470,914.30), hence pointing the finger towards criminal networks recruiting beggars, and in particular one of the most vulnerable groups, children. (The Times of India Online, 2006). There is an increasing number of recent articles which report on child begging in cities such as, Jaipur (TNN, 03/11/12), Bhopal, (Ganguly, 05/11/12), Bodhgaya, (Qadir, 14/12/12), Gurgaon, (Dev, 03/02/13), Calangute, (TNN, 13/12/12).

This will be the first factual audio-visual representation of an academic discussion of the begging phenomenon in Mumbai. It is a pioneering project in the context of the University of Birmingham, as this audio-visual dissertation is the first audio-visual doctoral thesis in the department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham, working with a supporting department, American and Canadian Studies. It is also the first inter-disciplinary doctoral thesis bringing together these two departments, and in that respect, the first inter-disciplinary audio-visual doctoral project conducted at this University. In this regard this doctoral thesis is a pioneering project.

The significance of my study is that it will be an up-to-date, in-depth case study of begging in Mumbai, going beyond dichotomous representations and drawing out instead complexities of the situation, the difficulties with secular and religious regulation of such an activity, as well as the power notions involved with the situation as it exists and the situation as I present it.

### **Structure of the written thesis**

The thesis is comprised of a documentary and two written chapters along with an introduction and conclusion which complement it. All chapters will draw on audio-visual interviews and relevant writings of academics in the field, including those featured in the documentary, where appropriate in the absence of fieldwork directly conducted with those involved in begging.

Given the strong pluralistic cultural presence in India, the first Chapter discusses the role of religion in begging, regulation of it through religious laws and the power dynamics emanating from that infrastructure. I will commence with a critique of religious notions which may promote begging in Mumbai, focusing on Hinduism as it is the predominant religion within India, and indeed within the city of my research. The Chapter will begin with the notion of charity within religion, moving onto the transaction of giving and receiving as a point of discussion. This will involve a critique of the laws of religion in relation to begging and their regulatory nature and the power dynamics emanating from that infrastructure. A typology of beggars is presented, to include secular beggars. This is followed by an illumination of the complexity of the nature of begging whereby it is very difficult to ascertain who may be a religious mendicant, or indeed begging in the name of religion for secular socio-economic reasons, or else using the religious notions associated with charity and begging in association with criminal organised networks. A secular element is present when giving and receiving in the transaction of begging and it is this secular begging on the streets of Mumbai that is regulated via a law, the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959: this will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 examines secular legal and political structures that regulate begging, resulting in an analysis of power notions and thereby an analysis of a politicisation of poverty at street level and the control of the poor in a hierarchical structure through the power of the elite. I will then engage in a discussion of the notion of “street politics”, a term which has been used before (Mitchell, 2009; Faculty: Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria, n.d.) but I use it to analyse my research in an original manner, specifically the concept of begging illuminating a hierarchy of power relations emanating from the street at the

base of the pyramid right up to politicians using it in parliament. In doing so, the doctoral dissertation will highlight the complexity of the begging phenomenon and investigate inequalities emerging within Indian society resulting in marginalisation of the poor using power notions from the Foucauldian (Foucault, 1971, p43) school of thought. This will highlight an engaging piece of research providing an insight into a marginalised community and generally highlighting humanitarian values. In doing so I will be producing a unique piece of research which is both culturally relevant and resonant. A wider critique of begging and power notions of the Foucauldian school are used, leading to a final engagement with an analysis of a perspective of the begging phenomenon which it is hoped will encourage human compassion.

The conclusion will aim to bring together notions and themes discussed from laws of religion regulating “giving” in a charitable setting and begging, to laws of the land regulating begging right through to a politicisation of the act of begging. An attempt to summarise and critique the main debates will ensue and open a window to further discussion and research of the topic, as well as illuminate the gap that the present work has filled through bringing together a piece of research analysing both the conflicting compassionate and criminal sides of the begging phenomenon both in an engaging academic and aesthetic sense.

# CHAPTER 1: THE ROLE OF BEGGING IN HINDUISM, ITS REGULATION AND THE POWER DYNAMICS IT CREATES IN INDIAN SOCIETY IN MUMBAI

## 1. Introduction

This Chapter sets out to explore the role of begging within the Hindu religion, its regulation via religious scriptures and the laws and power dynamics created by such regulation. The religious texts I will be drawing upon will be the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Laws of Manu*. Below I include a brief introduction to these texts, with regards to what they are, in essence, and this will, therefore, provide a rationale as to why I am using them.

Hinduism is replete with many texts both primary and secondary. They fall into two categories, *Shruti* (that which is revealed) which are regarded as primary texts and *Smriti* (that which is remembered) which are regarded as secondary texts. The *Shruti* tradition is comprised of the earliest texts called the *Vedas*, literally meaning knowledge, the *Brahmanas*, which are explanatory texts for rituals, the *Aranyakas*, literally known as forest treatises and the *Upanishads* which are philosophical speculations. The *Smriti* tradition is comprised of a diverse number of texts which are categorised into the following, *Smriti*, which are codes of law, *Itihasa*, literally meaning history and the *Puranas*, which means old books. Hence, within this tradition there exist epics such as *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (*Bhagavad Gita* is a part of the *Mahabharata*), the *Puranas* and the *Laws of Manu* (*Manavadharmashastra*). (Klostermaier, 2003, p11-13)

Although, the primary scriptures are authoritative, the secondary scriptures have made a great impact on Hindus. Rambachan (2000) notes that the traditional study of the *Vedas* was restricted to just male members belonging to the first three castes. Hence, the fourth caste,

*shudras* and women could only resort to the secondary literature from the *Smriti* tradition. Rambachan mentions how these texts later legitimised their status by linking themselves to the authority of the *Vedas*. (Rambachan, (2000), p94). Eschmann (2001) observes how some texts from the *Smriti* tradition such as the *Bhagavad Gita* have gained much more importance in the actual practice of the Hindu religion than the orthodox *vedic* texts belonging to the *Shruti* tradition. (Eschmann, 2001, p114) The *Bhagavad Gita* is a widely read scripture within religious literature. It comprises a small part of the Mahabharatha. (Deutsch and Siegel, 1987, p851-852) Deutsch and Siegel even go so far as saying that it has “attained the functional status of a gospel.” (Deutsch and Siegel, 1987, p852).

In essence, the *Bhagavad Gita* brings together theological and philosophical ideas which have been formed in earlier scriptures, and it is a form of dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. (Zaehner, 1969, p5-7) Although war forms the backdrop of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna focuses on ways and means of achieving liberation. Whatever path we follow, the *Bhagavad Gita*'s recommendation is that we do it in a selfless or detached manner, that is, without expectation of a return. For example, giving has to be done without expecting any reward for it. Goodall (1996) sums up the message of the *Bhagavad Gita* well by interpreting the message as: “...people can remain active in the world and yet be detached and reap the rewards of renunciation.” Thapar (2001) elaborates on the importance of this selfless action nuanced in the *Bhagavad Gita* with a view to acting in accordance with one's dharma as a key concept, whereby, broadly speaking the religious duty was embedded within observance of rules of the caste an individual belonged to. (Thapar, 2001, p59)

*The Laws of Manu* is comprised of 2,685 verses on varied topics on “social obligations and duties” of people from different parts of society including the King. (Doniger, 1992, pxvi) Manu is believed to be the first man and King. Codes of social and moral order relating to *dharma* are attributed to him. (Rocher, 1987, p5678-5679) It covers all aspects of *dharma* (moral, religious, legal and social duties). The text is therefore in essence a code of laws/duties or *dharmic* duties that any individual should be aware of and adhere to in living a righteous way of life. (Doniger, 1992, xvii).

As demonstrated above, both the chosen texts that I will draw upon emanate from a huge collection of sacred Hindu literature and are popular secondary texts used in contemporary Hinduism relating to the concept of *dharma*. Certain aspects of these texts will therefore be used where relevant below in order to provide a critique of the regulation of begging and the power dynamics created by adhering to them.

On a general note, begging has its roots in noble traditions of austere values culminating in a withdrawal from society in order to pursue a higher goal, whether that be, Salvation in Christianity, (Brown, 2007, p240) *Moksha* in Hinduism, (Knott, 2000, preface) *Nirvana* in Jainism and Buddhism (Buddhism and Jainism- An information guide, n.d.) or *Fanaa* in Islam. (Nicholson, 1989, p18). In fact as a result of all five religions being present in India, it creates a rich religious cultural ethos which endorses charity to the underprivileged of society. Clinard and Abbott (1973) observed that a beggar making his daily rounds in the bazaars was a common sight in Indian cities. (Clinard and Abbott, 1973, p48) Indeed, according to Moorthy (1959) the day is well begun by giving alms to a beggar, and he elaborated on the two-way process this gift represents. Whilst the coin is a means of bodily

subsistence to the beggar, the donor is gifted in return with 'spiritual peace'. He further draws attention to how temples, mosques and churches provide a certain ambience of being in a neighbourhood, in the presence of God and illuminates the notion that God often appears in the shape of the poor. (Moorthy, 1959, p44-45) Chinmay Kanchi reinforced the above point as he mentioned in his interview the presence of five major religions: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism and how they all make a virtue out of giving alms and as a result people feel obliged to help those less fortunate. However, not all will give for merit, some may give unilaterally without any expectation, as I will discuss later within this Chapter. I will be discussing Hinduism given that it is the predominant religion in India and especially in Maharashtra and Mumbai, (Population in India, 2011) the locale of my research. From the outset I would like to make clear that I am taking a cultural relativist stance, and believe that societies are indeed different and not superior or inferior to another, following on from this I will not be making any judgements of the Hindu religion or any other religion. (Galliher and McCartney, 1997, p5).

I will begin firstly by introducing very briefly the content of the section on religion in the documentary. This section is a discussion about three issues, firstly, the role of begging within the Hindu religion which includes the principles of charity, incorporating notions of giving and receiving, secondly how it is regulated via the scriptures and lastly the power dynamics this creates in society. It is comprised of the edited views of two priests, Acharya Dharm Dutt Vasistha, Acharya Umesh Yadav, a number of the academics and a Ph.D. candidate, Shyamal Kataria. The dialogue is pieced together to form a segment which brings out pertinent points and provokes discussion and debate which is further elaborated upon within this written commentary.

The audio-visual debate on religion featured in the documentary is critiqued in the written thesis as I discuss issues highlighted above which will be supported by excerpts from the documentary along with relevant literature within the field and belonging to academics where appropriate.

The written chapter on religion mirrors the structure of the documentary giving greater insight to the topics discussed through exploring written literature. I therefore begin by discussing the notion of giving and receiving within the Hindu religion. This involves a discussion of a certain culture of begging within the religion which will require an understanding of duties of followers of Hinduism in connection with charitable deeds within their classes and within the aims of their different stages of life and according to their caste. I then move on to discussing the role of the giver within religion, how it is regulated, followed by the power dynamics thus created. Next, I explore the role of the recipient, and again how that is regulated and the tensions in power relations it creates. Following on from this, I draw out the complexities of how the recipient is not always affiliated to religion and illuminate a wide-ranging typology of secular beggars which provides a foundation for discussing the regulation and power dynamics of begging in a secular context in the next Chapter.

## **2. The notion of *Dana*: ‘Giving and Receiving’ and *Dharma***

Begging is a reciprocal transaction. The act of begging in both a secular and religious context can be divided into two processes or actions. One is giving and the other receiving. Within a religious context, giving is often linked and thereby regulated by a religious duty in

return for religious merit. Such charity is practised in Hinduism too and I will discuss this below.

Hinduism, like many other religions, is recognised as a way of life as well as a religion. (Menski, 2007, p2). It is a diverse and pluralistic religion. (A Pluralistic Hinduism, n.d.). Indeed, if we delve deeper, it extends beyond culture into the social life of Hindus, as well as socio-political issues of equality and ethics. (Knott, 2000, preface). There are universal duties within Hinduism, *sadharana dharma*, which are independent of the class an individual belongs to or the stage he or she has reached in life. These are: steadfastness, forgiveness, application, non-application, cleanliness, repression of sensuous appetites, wisdom, learning, veracity and restraint of anger. (Crawford, 2003, p19). The concept of *dana* (giving) is a crucial element of performing one's *dharma* (religious duty). The term *dharma* (religious duty) has many connotations which range from meaning "eternal law, duty, conduct, behaviour, morality and righteousness." (Sugirtharajah, 2011, p17). Flood explains that the actual term *dharma* does not have a direct semantic equivalent in any Western languages and is therefore untranslatable. (Flood, 1996, p52). However, the essence of *dharma* is that every individual has a religious duty in a number of spheres, which includes family and society and extending to a wider meaning encompassing the world and indeed all living things. (Sugirtharajah, 2001, p17). Flood elaborates on how the rules of *dharma* in the *Dharma Shastras*, a set of later texts than the *Manu Smriti*, merged in jurisprudence becoming vital texts within Hindu legislation and litigation during the time of the British Empire. The texts treat *dharma* "as a universal, all encompassing law, which is yet flexible and adaptable to different circumstances and a variety of situations." (Flood, 1996, p56). Flood, in fact, puts forward a stance that a Hindu could even maintain that *dharma* maintains the unity of

Hinduism as it is comprised of “the normative duties and ethical code which governs all aspects of life, a code which is regarded as sacred and eternal (*sanatana*).” (Flood, 1998, p30).

The concept of *dana* is central to understanding begging in the context of the role of the giver and recipient, and furthermore, begging can only be analysed in conjunction with other inter-linking concepts, such as *dharma*, *seva* (service), *moksha* (liberation) and *karma* (your present status is attributable to past deeds). As with any religion, one can give for religious merit or without any expectation of reward or recognition, and different types of giving which do not necessarily involve a religious aspect are further examined later in this chapter.

In order to better understand Hindu notions of giving and receiving, it is important to contextualise the Hindu concept of *dharma* appertaining to the four stages, classes, and aims of Hindu life as well as the notion of caste. I will therefore now briefly outline these four stages, classes and aims of Hindu life as well as introduce the notion of caste.

#### **(i) The four stages of life- Ashramas**

The Hindu tradition speaks of four stages of life and each stage is regulated by *dharma*. The four stages are called *Ashrama-Dharma*, representing the ethical organisation of an individual as he or she passes through each stage of life through to the final stage in his quest for liberation. *Dharma* applies to all stages (*ashramas*) of one’s life, whether the individual is in the *brahmachari* (Hindu student), *gryhastha* (householder), *vanaprastha* (forest-dweller) or *sannyasi* (Hindu renunciant) stage. (Crawford, 2003, p16).

## **(ii) The four aims of life- Purushastras**

Within the four stages, life is regulated by four aims (*purushastras*) which are *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure), *dharma* (duty) and *moksha* (liberation). Acquiring wealth is encouraged in Hinduism but what is discouraged is an unhealthy attachment to this wealth. Hence, acquiring wealth and distributing it to the needy in the form of *dana* is a good deed and culminates in the fulfillment of *dharma*. If a person does good deeds, the ultimate merit for him is *moksha*. (Crawford, 2003, p16).

## **(iii) The four classes- Varnas and Caste**

A fourfold division of society is mentioned in the Sanskrit tradition. According to tradition, there are four groups of people: *Brahmins* (priest and educators), *Kshatriya* (warrior), *Vaisya* (cultivators and trader), and *Shudras* (dasas and those of mixed Aryan-Dasa origin). These groups in Sanskrit are called *Varnas*. First appearing in the *Rigveda*, these groups are linked to parts of a mythical original man. The *Brahmins* are divided from the other three groups who are regarded as the “*upper varnas*” and referred to as the twice born as they undergo a sacred initiation. The *Dharma* texts illustrate that society was more complex than a four fold structure. However, this concept of *varna* is not to be confused with the term caste which is very different and which came about through inter-marriage between the *varnas* as there are a vast number of castes. The term ‘caste’ is by origin Portuguese, meaning ‘lineage’. It is hereditary, therefore an individual will be of the same caste as his or her parents. There is a hierarchy of castes with the *Brahmins* ranking at the top with *Brahmin* men being occupied with sacred texts, their study, teaching and performing of rituals.

(Jackson, 1988, p77). Flood explains the concept of caste. According to him and a whole host of other scholars, the four classes described above were part of a larger ‘chain of being’, fitting into a cosmical hierarchy in which various categories (*jati*) were arranged in varying degrees of subtlety and purity and associated with each other. (Flood, 1996, p58). The scale of purity and pollution comprises a hierarchy of status which mirrors a caste hierarchy with the dalits at the bottom and the *Brahmins* at the top. Hindu society is thus arranged in line with this model. (Flood, 1996, p67)

Having described the principles of *dana* and *dharma*, along with the four stages, classes, aims and caste, I will now critique the regulating structure these notions give to the religion with regard to begging. I will begin by critiquing the role of the donor in order to illustrate the religious cultural ethos of giving within Mumbai and how it is regulated, followed by an examination of the role of the recipient. The reciprocal relationship of giving and receiving between the donor and beggar, one, I would maintain, involving power, is analysed and power dynamics that emanate from that explored.

### **3.Role of the donor and recipient**

#### **(i) Role of the donor**

In the context of religion, people often give unilateral gifts also known as alms to the poor or religious practitioners. The practice is known as almsgiving. (Heim, 2005, p269) For Hindus, *Dana*, the concept of giving is an important part of one’s religious duty, *dharma*. There are different types of giving. (Sugirtharajah, 2001, p17). Bajaj and Srinivas write in

depth on one type of giving, the concept of *Anna Dana*, literally food giving, translated as food sharing which can comprise the religious duty of *dharma*. (Sugirtharajah, 2001, p17). The notion of *dharma* and *dana* begin from home and then extend into the wider community. This deals with the giving side of charity. Hindus are expected to do their duties and look after the needy especially in the stage of the householder. (Bajaj and Srinivas, 1996, p9-20).

With regards to my case study of Mumbai, Professor Soumendra Patnaik made an interesting comment about *dharma* in the context of Mumbai.

“In Maharashtra, especially Mumbai, there is a very strong feeling of *Hindutva*. Most of the people are guided by the religious idea of not disappointing a beggar at a house. Householder is obliged to perform duty of *dharma*. That could promote activities when passing by beggar on roadside, that doesn't impose the same moral injunction on you to donate something”.

The above quotation highlights strong religious affiliation to Hinduism with the city of Mumbai. The duty of *dharma* is outlined whereby one is expected to conduct certain duties as part of their religion during the householder stage.

As giving is especially important in this stage, one is not expected to beg during this period. The acquiring of wealth is not frowned upon as the rest of the three classes of society are dependent on this class to give *dana* in respect of helping the needy through their religious duty and hence working towards the ultimate goal of liberation. It is, therefore, often seen as a “spiritual investment” whereby meritorious actions during this life are rewarded in the next life. Hence, a possible motivation behind such giving could be atonement for wrongdoing in this life. (Heim, 2005, p267) The insights above support and reinforce the comments made by the interviewees. Dr Basawraj Gulshetty was of the view that begging was embedded within the culture of the Indian tradition whereby beggars used to visit households to collect alms

and it is therefore a privilege and advantage of Indian culture. Acharya Umesh Yadav, reinforced with academic rigour that the concept of begging was within the Scriptures and is noted as a very noble concept as it encourages humility and therefore helps society. Emphasis is placed in the *Laws of Manu* to support the belief that the Householder should give in order to gain merit.(3.94-9). Examples can be read in the *Laws of Manu* with regard to giving alms to a beggar, to a chaste student of the *Veda*, to a priest and to a guest. (Bajaj and Srinivas, 1996, p9-20). Dr Meena Dhanda substantiates this by stating that, “*The Laws of Manu* actually not only permits begging but prescribes begging. It tells some people that they must go and beg.”

Following on from this, Acharya Dharm Dutt Vasistha attempted to nuance the argument as he was of the view that although charity is a part of religion, charity and pity are two different things; something I would not agree with wholly.

“Charity (*Daan*) is a part of religion (*Dharam*). Charity and pity are two different things. Charity is a righteous deed, done to cleanse the soul but giving to the poor is termed pity. When one feels pity for another he or she will give to that person”.

Surely, charity is given when someone feels pity for someone, through a certain amount of compassion on a human level and not always simply because a certain scripture demands it of a member of society at a particular stage of their life. Whilst I am discussing this empathic view I would like to share Hermer’s definition of compassion:

“Compassion, a feeling or emotion that moves someone to express pity or mercy, to relieve the suffering or stress of another, provides an exceptional example of an emotion that is governed primarily by technologies of the self..... Of course, the impulse of the passers-by to give may be located in a number of feelings such as guilt, pity, embarrassment or resentment. But the important point is that the outcome of giving represents compassionate conduct, and even more significantly, giving conduct is almost always viewed by officials as

a ‘problem’ of compassion. In this sense, the control of the giving conduct of the public is the control over the expression of different modes of compassion.” (Hermer, 1999, p13).

Having discussed compassion as a possible reason for giving, I would like to question how far in practice people give in accordance with the texts? This is difficult to ascertain as general notions of empathy have been cited as reasons for giving amongst my sample. The section that follows the Religion segment in the documentary, headed, “Why do you give to beggars?” was incorporated to reveal answers to this very question. My sample mentioned that they would experience emotions such as pure empathy or compassion and sometimes guilt when seeing someone begging, for example, Chinmay Kanchi and Bhima Auro, both Ph.D. researchers at the University of Birmingham. Neither of them follow a religion and both are familiar with the begging phenomenon in India. Chinmay Kanchi, a Mumbaiite, mentioned he would give out of empathy and maybe guilt and that he often gave food to children. Bhima Auro also said that he would give to a beggar out of compassion: “It’s more out of empathy for another human being’s condition..... Somehow, you never give enough to alleviate the suffering but you give what you can of yourself at that moment.” Musa Askari, son of Syed Hasan Askari, added an interesting note on the sense of immediacy and making a difference:

“..... you are confronted either directly or indirectly and you have a choice to turn away, say there’s no point giving, the small rupees that you offer or donation that you make- what difference will it make?...well, collectively, generally it might not make any difference to the whole system that brings about such poverty- why ignore something really important about people, which is, at that moment you can make a difference.....”

As previously mentioned, I am not sure how many people would give to a beggar because they feel that they must give to a beggar on any given day, in accordance to scripture. Deconstructing the rationale for why we give would be a very complex issue to

discuss. Hermer illuminates a number of feelings which may be present when someone gives to another. I come from an Islamic tradition which endorses charity and cannot speak in general terms but often when I give, it is not simply as a result of my religious background. There may be a subconscious religious rationale present but often it is an impulsive action to a momentary interaction. On my most recent visit to Lahore last December, I had many such encounters, however there is one which I would like to recount in order to illustrate the randomness behind the rationale for giving a donation. Whilst sitting in a rickshaw at a traffic signal, a eunuch beggar approached me for some money and I gave it willingly. The beggar may not have been on my 'high priority' list; he wasn't a child, an elderly person or disabled but still from a marginalised class. My rationale for giving at that moment was simply as a result of our momentary interaction. Manshardt (1945) terms this type of giving as being out of "instantaneous pity". He provides examples such as "an emaciated baby, a mutilated body of a beggar" and the like. (Barnabas, 1945, p163)

Going back to the discussion of giving within the householder stage within Hinduism. In this particular stage, begging is looked down upon in the context of servility and the individual is expected to give as the rest of society is reliant upon him. This is illustrated in *Manusmriti* 3.77, one of the Hindu texts, the translation of which is *The Laws of Manu*. (Doniger and Smith, 1992, p50). The fact that begging is looked down upon at this stage is again highlighted by the fact that it is referred to as the 'mortal' way of life more than once. Further, begging is seen as a servile way of life at this stage and equated to a dog's way of life which should be avoided. (Doniger and Smith, 1992, p74).

However, if the householder is giving *dana* just in the short-term to fulfil his religious duty and is only working towards his or her own salvation with regards to obtaining liberation in the long-run for the after-life, then how is religion in the Hindu context helping the poor or the beggars? Is the giver donating alms as he is regulated by religion and is doing so just to fulfil his religious duty or good deed for the day and not with a view to helping the particular recipient stand on his own two feet and become independent? If this is the case then, is religion in a broad sense subjugating the poor through its power and keeping them poor in order that the rich can continue to absolve themselves from their own sins and not help to improve the lot of the poor?

During this subordination process, are these givers marginalising or excluding that section of society in a Foucauldian manner? (Michel Foucault, 1971, p43) One would at first sight assume that the donor is the person who is in control, the one with the authority to give and it is through this act of giving to the beggar that again it is assumed that the donor can subjugate the beggar and keep him in a position which is subordinate to him or her, thereby marginalising and excluding that section of society in a Foucauldian manner. (Foucault, 1967). An inequality in the beggar-donor relationship emerges as a greater power is linked to the donor. (Foucault, 1995, p222-223). This process leads to a stigmatisation of the begging community where they are perceived as being dependent on the general public for alms and unable to make a living for themselves through other means.

If donors are simply donating for reasons of religion and power dynamics, in that they engage in a pious act of *dana* for their religious duty and to gain merit for their salvation, then is there a danger that such a tradition will perpetuate and bring about conditions which will set

up a market for begging in a capitalist sense as there is an ever growing demand for the activity and a supply is present?

However, the *Bhagavad Gita* stipulates that one must give in a righteous manner:

17.20 “A gift is pure when it is given from the heart to the right person at the right time and at the right place, and when we expect nothing in return”

17.21 “But when it is given expecting something in return, or for the sake of a future reward, or when it is given unwillingly, the gift is a Rajas, impure.”

17.22 “And a gift given to the wrong person at the wrong time and the wrong place, or a gift which comes not from the heart, and is given with proud contempt, is a gift of darkness.” (Mascaro, 1970, p113-114).

Above, the emphasis is on responsible giving and giving with the right intention. However, despite the above scriptural discipline some householders will give without paying heed to this as not everyone will give to a beggar with the same rationale. However, some people may indeed give as they feel it is part of their religious duty without paying heed to whether or not the person is needy. There may be a category of people who realise they have a religious duty but are selective to whom they give. Other donors may give out of a fear of not meeting their religious duty, still others may have a secular fear, for example if a beggar curses in the event he does not receive alms. On the other hand, some people may refuse to give to a beggar and instead give to a religious or secular charitable institution, or even just out of empathy as mentioned by some of my sample earlier in this chapter.

If we step aside and delve deeper to analyse this relationship it appears that there emerges a complicated situation whereby the boundaries of who is more powerful are becoming blurred in a complex relationship of power dynamics. Is the donor always in a

superior position? If the donor has given to the beggar as a result of fear, superstition or guilt, then surely the beggar in this instance is more powerful, at least in some respects?

Chinmay Kanchi mentioned how beggars belonging to the third sex, also known as *hijras* (a South Asian term for eunuchs), could get very aggressive to the point that they accost donors, “There are also the eunuchs, the *hijras* who are quite aggressive and intimidatory when asking for money.” Dr Julia Wardhaugh elaborated on the point of the *hijras* who she felt do not see themselves as begging as they are dispensing blessings and thereby in a more powerful position. She raised an interesting point about how blessings from *hijras* could turn into curses if they are not given alms in return: “.....they give blessings but that’s where the fear comes in that the blessing might become a curse.” She also further elaborates on the mannerisms of *hijras* when they beg which can cause fear. The notion of fear as a reason why alms are given to beggars is also noted by Manshardt within the written literature. He too explains how many within society donate alms as a result of a fear of a curse from a beggar if he is refused alms. (Barnabas, 1945, p164)

The fact that the donor has given to the beggar is evidence that he has submitted to a plea and to some extent “given in”. Whether or not the beggar is seen as a subordinate in economic terms and social standing in society’s eyes, at the point of receiving a donation whether in a religious or secular sense, the beggar may in some cases have greater interpersonal power for having successfully extracted money or food for his own means through merely a plea, whether for a lay beggar that is through “an act” or by a religious mendicant by not even giving a plea but remaining silent. However, in this reciprocal relationship, the donor has more social and economic power as he or she has the means by

which to fulfil the demand of the beggar. I will develop this notion in a secular context in my next Chapter.

## **(ii) Role of the recipient**

Moving onto the context of receiving, there are many categories of beggars acting as recipient. With regards to begging within the Hindu tradition, there are two categories of recipients, the first were the Brahmin priests at their various stages, for example: *brahmacharis*, *vanaprasthas*, *sannyasi*. The second category according to Rolnick were those at the bottom of the social caste system, the *shudras*, (the untouchables), the deformed and diseased. (Rolnick, 1962)

With regards to the right to beg, Acharya Yadav was not so generous in giving the privilege of begging to anyone but the Brahmins.

“Some people have a right to beg. Who has a right to beg? Brahmins do. Why? Because the Brahmin gives the Kshtriya an education. The Brahmin educates society. Brahmins enlighten society, so the Brahmin looks after his needs but also takes on the responsibility for everyone else”.

Hence, when Acharya Yadav is of the opinion that only Brahmins have a right to beg, he finds support in the sacred texts analysed in the earlier section which indicate a regulation of begging. However, I am not in agreement with Acharya Yadav’s stance of only Brahmins having a right to beg. We have already established that they are not the only recipients of alms historically and in contemporary times. Rolnick (1962) nuances the argument. He notes that it was the *dharma* of this class of Brahmin priests to maintain themselves through begging for alms and they were praised for doing so. For him a second category of recipients consisted of those at the bottom of the social caste system: the untouchables and *shudras*, the deformed (a

term that Rolnick uses) and diseased. It was also the duty of untouchables and *shudras* to serve the upper classes in order that they could claim in return dependence on their patrons, for such things as cast-off clothing and food. With regards to the deformed and diseased as they could not earn a living, they were entitled to beg according to the scriptures. It was the householder's duty to give alms according to the *Laws of Manu* as he would be rewarded through the concept of *karma* whereby his good deeds in this life will bear fruit in his next life. Rolnick (1962) is, therefore, of the opinion that each person within the hierarchical class structure has accepted his position within it. He states how the socio-economic group for the next life is determined on how well the person has performed in his previous life. With regards to begging in contemporary India, Rolnick notes how giving alms is still very much a part of society in India, for example alms to needy organisations, orphans, on religious holidays and in that respect contemporary attitudes towards begging have not changed. (Rolnick, 1962, p441-442).

I will enhance the argument here as we need to distinguish the difference between almsgiving and begging and clarify in which way almsgiving differs from begging. Almsgiving, as aforementioned, is a practice where people give unilateral gifts to those that are poor, thereby not expecting anything in return. A little further in this chapter, I will speak about voluntary begging in a religious context by the recipient which is termed mendicancy where it is practiced to attain the trait of humility. Going back to the practice of almsgiving, alms can be given to a charity or an individual. It differs from begging which is a practice where people ask for alms and involves people on the receiving end of the donations, although those receiving begging can be destitute. Within the Hindu context, and with regard to the four stages of life, begging is not associated with destitution. Those begging are not

begging for a secular need but a religious duty or even desire whereby the act of begging signifies humility and is therefore perceived as a journey towards spiritual development.

Following on from this, Shyamal Kataria, a Ph.D. researcher at Royal Holloway, University of London, spoke of the different varieties of culture in Hinduism and mentioned that giving donations or charity to *Brahmins* is supposed to be one of the most auspicious or creditable things that any caste Hindu can do. However, at the bottom of the hierarchy are the untouchables who also beg. The untouchables are often seen as being formed outside the caste system, this class were and are involved in jobs which are thought of as polluting and impure according to the mainstream caste groupings. (Jackson, 1988, p77). Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed speaks of the untouchables as not being welcome as part of mainstream society and the city also lacking a support base for them. Dr Muzammil Quraishi elaborates on the illegality of such a system, but which he states continues as mobility is linked to an individual's position based on caste, and in which case has led to forms of economic hardship and segregation. My interviewees expressed sympathy towards those discriminated against as a result of the caste system and this is highlighted by Dr Santanu Das who is critical of this system and is of the opinion that there is an element of hypocrisy at play. In sum, a God given right seems to have therefore been given to *Brahmins* who can beg because they are the enlightened ones, and these *Brahmin* beggars actually get respect for their involvement in begging. There seems to be a certain polarity of social worlds. At the other extreme, we have *shudras* begging as they are considered to be the lowest of the low in the hierarchy of castes and they are not respected for such actions and indeed, as we will see, are subject to regulation, not only via the religious laws but also secular legislation.

Religion here, in this analysis, seems to be retaining a hierarchical structure of power with those at the top of the pyramid maintaining greater power over those at the bottom. Giving to a *Brahmin* within the scriptures is a virtue and results in a reciprocal blessing for the donor and recipient in this gift transaction; in the case of an untouchable, they are given donations as a result of their low status and often correspondingly low socio-economic status, but to achieve the same means of *punya* (religious merit). The untouchables are still in recent times seen as the ‘other’ and marginalised. A recent BBC news article (BBC News India, 27/06/12) reports on this issue with a case study. Dr Vinod Sonkar, a Dalit by origin, holding a Ph.D. in Law and a teaching position at a Delhi University is asked to wash his glass after drinking from it at a café as a result of the contamination/pollution which caste Hindus consider will result when placed with other glasses. India is described by Dr Sonkar as an apartheid-style state. In his thesis he argues that despite legal provisions given to Dalits in India, “15% of the population is still kept on the very margins of society because of untouchability.”

I understand that there is a broad debate surrounding the whole issue of caste in India and that it is a highly complex area in itself which is largely problematised, politicised and sensitive. Indeed the origins of the caste system are debated amongst academics whereby it is disputed whether the caste system has anything to do with religion at all. (Dirks, 2001, p5). On the other hand, aspects of caste are present in other religions, for example Sikhism which officially rejects all notions of caste. Jhutti-Johal notes how Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion was an ardent advocate of spreading the message that attaining liberation was not exclusive to any particular religion, race, caste or sex. (Jhutti-Johal, 2011, p2) The construction of the caste system is attributed to different reasons, ranging from Indo-Aryan

migration (Yunus and Parmar, 2007, p33-35) to British Empire (Dirks, 2001, p5), who many would argue brought about schisms within the social-stratification of India in order to bring greater power to themselves. The interpretation of the scriptures would take up a thesis topic on its own, which is not the aim here, however, the important point is that the scriptures may be interpreted in such a manner that many would understand them to be used in stratifying society. How far that is relevant to contemporary society is again questionable. Further, how far does any one individual interpret the scriptures on a daily basis and then allow it to influence their conduct in daily affairs? In any event, these principles would regulate the social aspects of a practising Hindu's life. The caste system does still exist as highlighted by Dr Muzammil Quraishi, however, even though it may be argued that it is not so prevalent in a city as Mumbai, emphasis on caste is still prevalent in the rural villages as well as increased illiteracy. (Yunus and Parmar, 2007, p33-35). Mumbai has been described as a city of migrants, and low-skilled migrancy could be traced back to the lower castes escaping the rural areas seeking a better life. Indeed, Dr Julia Wardhaugh (2012c) writes at length of rural poverty which is where some or arguably a great deal of the begging in Mumbai originates from. However, the relationship between caste and begging or indeed untouchability and begging is not the focus of the thesis and could be the subject of further research.

We have established that there is a complex power dynamic between the beggar and donor in a religious sense when giving, which will be elaborated upon in a secular context in my second and final chapter on street politics. There are a range of "lay beggars" who are on the street as a result of their poor socio-economic situation. I will begin by discussing how the recipient is regulated within the Hindu religion in the context of voluntary begging.

Although the notion of begging is an important feature of all the stages of life, there is greater emphasis on begging in the last stage in a voluntary context. Begging in the context of obtaining an insight into humility and divorcing oneself from worldly desires comprises one of these stages and the religious term for this is mendicancy. The etymological origin of the term mendicancy is derived from “the Latin *mendicare*, “to beg” ” (Rader, 1987, p5855). The third and fourth stages of Hindu life *vanaprastha* and *sannyasi* endorse such voluntary begging. Moorthy notes how the development of the *varnasrama* system of life brought about the notion of religious mendicancy. (Moorthy, 1945, p71) In order to attain the ultimate aim of life, liberation, one is expected to enter the final stage of *sannyasi* by renouncing the life of a householder and engaging in voluntary begging to subsist. Vasudha Narayanan (2001) phrases this stage as the individual having to create his own social death and thereby becoming an ascetic. By becoming an ascetic, the person no longer owns anything and lives off food given in alms to him and eats only once a day. The quest of this stage is to “pursue salvific knowledge and cultivate detachment from life”. (Narayanan, 2001, p186). Moorthy, also mentions how the religious mendicants would not be interested in the temporal arts and would “shun” worldly possessions. (Moorthy, 1945, p71) The rationale behind this was because “Mendicancy was not an occupation; it was a form of austerity.” (Moorthy, 1945, p74).

Bhima had an interesting anecdote (this is not featured in the documentary) to share which was of his father’s experience of becoming a *sadhu* as he walked from India to France with no money, relying instead on the compassion of the people. He also had the insight of asceticism comprising of the practice of divorcing oneself from society in order to reach a higher spiritual level and noted how that was very different to the lay beggars who beg for

money, which has become an economic activity. Asceticism is not exclusive to Hinduism. Ascetics belong to diverse backgrounds, examples of individuals who followed this route in Christianity are: Anthony, an Egyptian Christian who renounced everything and began to live in the desert in poverty in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Another example can be given of St Francis of Assisi who renounced the riches he was born into, to live a life of poverty. (Brown, 2007, p240). Ascetics in Islam, called *fakirs* (religious mendicants) divorce themselves of worldly desires, and depend on only those things that God gives them. These *fakirs* were and still are believed to be holy men. (Gibb and Kramers, 1995, p98-99). One of the Hindu textual sources, the *Bhagavad Gita*, places emphasis on detached action even during a person's normal life within society and the need therefore, to become a formal ascetic diminished in the Hindu faith. However, Sanskrit and vernacular texts on *dharma*, still emphasize the importance of becoming an ascetic. The manner in which the ascetic should go about begging is prescribed in the *Laws of Manu*, for example:

6.42. He should always go all alone, with no companion, to achieve success, realizing that success is for the man who is alone, he neither deserts nor is deserted.

6.43. The hermit should have no fire and no home, but should go to a village to get food, silent, indifferent, unwavering and deep in concentration. (Doniger and Smith, 1992, p122).

The emphasis is on remaining on the right path by begging in the righteous way, without indulging in interpreting omens or any other assistance. Greed is also discouraged as the ascetic should not be unhappy when he does not obtain alms.

6.55. He should go begging once a day and not be eager to get a great quantity, for an ascetic who is addicted to food becomes attached to sensory objects, too. (Doniger and Smith, 1992, p122).

Chatterjee (1918), notes how this class of religious mendicants are not satisfied with the small alms that are given by householders. He notes: “In receiving money they cover their hands with their garments in order to preserve their vow of not touching metal.” (Chatterjee, 1918, p2).

By the final stage of asceticism, the person has detached himself from all worldly affairs and is now just living on alms as a basic necessity. The ascetic is beginning to acquire knowledge of a salvific nature. The actual act of begging is prescribed and described in the scriptures as an act where the objective is humility and thereby the person should be engaging in a humbling experience.

Indeed the beggar is not supposed to beg for more than he needs. The notion and indeed the practice is a noble one and there is no doubt that there will be genuine ascetics in India that beg only to subsist and acquire salvific knowledge. This was substantiated by my interviewees including Acharaya Dharm Dutt Vashista (Priest at Sree Geeta Bhawan Temple) and Shyamal Kataria. The latter mentioned that the culture of Brahmins could be traced back thousands of years whereby *sadhus* would be expected to conduct spiritual work and would only beg for subsistence. Acharaya Dharm Dutt Vashista echoed this notion of austerity and simplicity by mentioning that *sannyasis* would only beg for one meal at a time. Some women also become ascetics known as *sadhavis*. They are estimated at 10% of the total of Hindu ascetics. (Dr Julia Wardhaugh, personal communication, July 25, 2013)

Hence, this type of begging (mendicancy) is clearly regulated via the scriptures and adhered to ardently if practised in the proper manner. Vasudha Narayanan (Narayanan, 2001)

observes that although texts relating to the concept of *dharma* cite that only male members of the three upper classes of Hindu society are granted the privilege of becoming ascetics, this is often contested in practice. Narayanan refers to a case where a member of the fourth class challenged the traditional set-up in order to become an ascetic. His actions brought about proceedings in a court of law, *Krishna Singh v. Mathura Ahir* (AIR 1980 SC707; 1980 All LJ 299) over an issue appertaining to the inheritance of property. The case reached the Supreme Court of India and a landmark decision was arrived at whereby contrary to the traditional view which disallowed *shudras* from becoming *sannyasis*, the Court held that a Hindu belonging to any caste could adopt the life of a renunciant in line with existing practice in India. (Narayanan, 2001, p186-187) However, even given this exception to the *dharmic* texts which is inclusive of ascetics from “lower rungs” of society, becoming an ascetic is a task which can only be undertaken by a minority of those who have the will power which will enable them to mentally and physically reach their goal. Hence, you would not expect a great number of ascetics. Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed supported this stance, “*Sadhus* go around asking for alms just anything to survive and apparently they are meditating and they have given up everything but that’s I think only a partial or very minor portion of this.....” The austerity and discipline of the ascetic was also noted by many of the other interviewees including Shyamal Kataria and Acharaya Dharm Dutt Vashista.

Alms given to the ascetics help them to subsist with regards to food consumption and the minimal necessities required for them. They do not aggravate the problem as they are a minority, “not more than half a percent of the total population”. They often inhabit remote parts of India away from worldly life. (Hartsuiker, 1993, p7). In an economic sense, these people could be regarded as helping society as they are not a burden on it or indeed a part of

it. A typical depiction of an ascetic would be such as illustrated by Dolf Hartsuiker (1993) in his collection of photographs of Indian *sadhus* also featured in the documentary. However, these images are far removed from the images of beggars we see today in Mumbai that are again featured in the documentary. However, the actual concept of asceticism which is affiliated to and regulated by religion has been manipulated and used as a means of making money in some instances and this I will discuss later in the chapter. As far back as 1918, Chatterjee wrote of an abuse of the notion of religious mendicancy.

“The utter absence of any system of registration by monastic or other authority, opens the door wide to imposters and fugitives from justice, who disregard the theological sin of unauthorised adoption of the mendicant’s robe.” (Chatterjee, 1918, p3)

Above I have described and analysed a practice of begging which is prescribed by religion and is directly and legitimately linked to it. The question of whether religion sanctions beggary was considered in 1919 when the Government of Bombay appointed a committee to both consider and formulate proposals to prevent professional begging within the Bombay Presidency. With regards to the question of religious beggars, a number of heads of religious traditions were consulted which included Hinduism, Jainism and Islam. Six leading citizens in each of the districts of the province of Bombay were also consulted. The conclusion was that from the interpretation of Hindu and Islamic sacred literature on begging, a consensus of opinion was that begging as a profession in public streets and places is not in line with “modern notions of religious sanctity”. According to a 1943 Report of the Committee for the Prevention of Beggary in Mysore, the question was asked, “Is begging in India enjoined by religion?” The committee arrived at the conclusion that only an ascetic is

allowed to beg. The results of the two committees clarify that none of the consulted religions approve of begging which encourages (not working for a living) idleness, neither do they endorse “indiscriminate charity to idlers and loafers.” (Kumarrapa, 1945, p161-162)

Almsgiving has a structure within religious Hindu laws and scriptures and is regulated within it. Such structure brings with it power. The actual institution of religion is one that is undoubtedly one based on power. The case study of Hinduism illuminates how the religious scriptures and laws prescribe when and how a person should donate and receive. Gore also maintains that giving is governed and institutionalised by religion. (Gore, 1959, p77) It would, therefore, appear that religious mendicancy inadvertently contributes to the increased levels of begging, as religion is a powerful institution in itself which without even involving coercion can place people in a position to adhere to its prescribed principles, in this context *dana* with a view to receiving *punye*.

Foucault in a section of an interview with a young hitch-hiker, Thierry Voeltzel (1978) in 1978 shared some thoughts on religion and power:

“Foucault: Historically, what exists is the church. Faith, what is that? Religion is a political force.

Voeltzel: It is a political force and that is why it has to be fought. In Latin America, in Spain, for example, where it is completely at the service of the right. The church is cash, it is power. But it can be an instrument in struggles through the trends of the left which are developing in certain parts of the church.

Foucault: Absolutely, it is a superb instrument of power for itself. Entirely woven through with elements that are imaginary, erotic, effective, corporal, sensual, and so on, it is superb!”

(Voeltzel, 1978, p107)

Although the above is a reference to power within the Western Church, and not Hinduism, religion for many is something which is unquestionable. Moorthy (1959) draws attention to the fact that the beggars are aware of the indiscriminate charity available to them:

“The beggars are aware that religion is a powerful force in drawing alms. Therefore, whenever necessary, they make an appeal in the name of religion to their respective communities.” (Moorthy, 1959, p17)

Certain traditions within a household which may emanate from religion will be conducted and people will become affiliated to a certain perspective where they will continue to do certain things which they “believe” are religious. Therefore, the power of religion will be permeated for generations to come. The application of the power concept can also be applied to the case study of Hinduism within this chapter. The tight infrastructure of the religion has been illustrated above, where a follower’s conduct should be in adherence to the scriptures in accordance to the stage, class and caste he or she belongs to. What is also of interest here in terms of a discussion on power is the hierarchy of caste that is present, with the Brahmins as the most respected and privileged at the top to the *shudras* or untouchables who are the least respected, if at all, with lesser privileges accorded to them by the scriptures.

Above, I have analysed the regulation of begging associated with religion and the power dynamics that emanate from the relationship between the beggar and donor, followed in turn by the power of religion as an institution. Whilst discussing voluntary begging within a religious context which encourages pious begging with a rationale of austere values I have also mentioned in passing secular lay begging. The two should not be confused as within the secular sphere the notion is often used and misused in the name of religion. This is not to say that secular beggars are not eligible for alms. Piety is endorsed in Hinduism as afore-

mentioned. Indeed, the householder is expected to help the poor at the *gryhastha* stage – albeit- in order to gain spiritual merit (*Laws of Manu 3.94-9*). Nichos Bros notes that in modern times, *sannyasis* appear more as wandering mendicants than true holy men, roaming India, begging for food. *Sannyasis*, he adds have a particular allegiance to *Shiva* (one of the three great Gods of the Trinity in Hinduism) who is also known as “The Great Ascetic”. (Bros, n.d.). In an article on the Madurai region, covered by the Times, it is reported that a city advocate has petitioned to ban beggary. In his affidavit he stated, “...the age old practice of giving alms to *sannyasis* has lost its significance over the years and, of late, begging has become an easy way to make money.” According to the petitioner, a Government care camp for beggars was established at Melapakkam near Chennai on March 1, 1954 and was under the Police Department until 1973 and now functions under the Social Welfare Department. (Staff Reporter, 2007). Hence, it appears the age old austere tradition of asceticism within the Hindu religion seems to have been misused by some.

Moving away from the pious rituals of *sannyasis*, there exist lay beggars that beg in the name of religion that fall into three categories:

- (i) the genuine deserving lay beggar
- (ii) the complacent undeserving lay beggar
- (iii) the lay beggar linked to an organised criminal network mafia

The word “lay”, here and hereafter is used to distinguish between a person who is begging with a view to achieving humility within a religious context and one who is begging for secular reasons divorced from religion and spirituality in that the rationale for begging emanates from a socio-economic need. The distinction, therefore, is that, whereas a religious

beggar begs with an aim of reaching a higher spiritual status, the lay beggar, on the other hand, is begging for a worldly need which is required as a result of the beggar in question being unable to earn a living and support him or herself.

Depending on what type of beggar a particular person is perceived as, beggars have historically been categorised as deserving and undeserving. I have borrowed these categories from the Elizabethan Poor laws. The poor were badged during this era as the establishment brought about the process of badging the poor according to whether they were deserving or not in order to control poverty and reduce crime. Worthy poor wore a badge and were allowed to collect alms whilst those who sought alms without a badge were punished. (Hindle, 2004, p6-7). In doing so, labels were brought about which enabled one to identify who belonged to the deserving poor. Such stratification of the poor brought about an exclusion of those who were according to the State “undeserving”. I will speak more in the next Chapter about the process of labelling a person by a particular term and the exclusionary consequences that such stigmatising measures can bring about.

British Victorian legislation in the form of the Vagrancy Act 1824 continued to rely on such a distinction between the “impotent” poor, those that were deserving and those who were undeserving. A further classification of punishable offenders to control vagrancy was provided in the Vagrancy Act 1824 which included *Idle and Disorderly Persons*, *Rogues and Vagabonds* and *Incorrigible Rogues*. The first were those who are able to look after themselves but refused to wilfully. The second were those repeating offences within the remit of an idle and disorderly person in the eyes of the law and further those who pretended or attempted to tell futures or used other means in order to beg. The last category were those

people who escaped prison before their release date. (Ribton-Turner, 1887, p236-237). The above categories were enforced in an endeavour to curb people that were begging in a fraudulent manner from benefitting from poor law relief. (Ribton-Turner, 1887, p238). This Act was inherited by India during the British Raj in the form of the BPBA 1959. The legacy of this legislation is explored by Dr Wardhaugh (2011). What I seek to focus upon in this thesis, is the rationale for such classification.

It appears that these categories are brought about to enable socio-legal control of this particular group whereby the powerful seem to be defining what constitutes a criminal act and are therefore categorising the populace in such a manner so as to construct a criminal type. This would tie in with Foucault's notions of exclusionary institutional powers through two of his works which I will elaborate on below. These analyses of creating exclusionary institutions which confine certain categories of people such as the insane, beggars, unemployed and criminal is illustrated in *Madness and Civilisation* (Foucault, 1971, p39) and exclusively criminals through the penal system in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1995). What is of greater interest in this context is that for Foucault, the establishment of the prison illuminates the institutionalisation of the power to punish (Foucault, 1995, p130). Thus categories of criminals will have been constructed and then punished in a prison through a form of a disciplining power which provides the powerful with a power to define what constitutes a criminal act, enabling them to categorise the populace in such a manner so as to construct a criminal type, yielding a greater power unto them which leaves the poor in a subjugated position.

“.....a non-reversible subordination of one group of people by another, the ‘surplus power’ that is always fixed on the same side, the inequality of position of the different ‘partners’ in relation to the common regulation”. (Foucault, 1995, p222-223)

I will now embark upon an exploration of these categories. These categories may use religion in an indirect manner. There can be a number of rationales behind such begging. It could be conducted legitimately for a real socio-economic need or illegitimately as they are using it as a pretext to earn what some would regard as an easy method of earning a living. Although the Hindu religion endorses pious actions, it does not sanction this type of begging. I will investigate below three categories of beggars who may beg in the name of religion.

#### **4. A typology of lay beggars**

##### **(i) The genuine deserving lay beggar**

One category of begging in the name of religion is that which is done by an ordinary lay person who may beg due to a number of interconnected reasons: disability, lack of support structure, lack of literacy, skills and general poor socio-economic conditions. They will beg to subsist as the only means by which they can earn a living and may genuinely think that the manner in which they are begging has been prescribed by their religion. My earlier field research in Lahore indicated that many of the beggars shared a predestinatory outlook “Allah is their Guardian and will provide for them.” This rationale can be attributed to the concept of predestination (Nicholson, 1989, p4) in Islam which as addressed above advocates that whatever happens has been pre-ordained, whereas in Hinduism the notion of *karma* comes into play. This view has been seen as fatalistic due to the theory propounding in essence that

your good deeds will promise you salvation if not in your present life then in a later life. In essence, “what you sow, you shall reap if not in this life then in another”. (Menski, 2007, p53; Mahadevan, 1999, p58).

The theory of *karma* has been criticized for making people complacent as their poverty may be considered as a result of past bad deeds, hence their situation is an eventuality which cannot be avoided. However, viewed positively, the concept of *karma* holds that as you are capable of changing your present situation, you have the free-will to change the course of destiny. You are responsible for your future through what you do in your present state. *Karma* is a complex notion, sometimes understood in very simplistic terms and can be appropriated both positively and negatively.

In any event, this category of lay voluntary begging is distinctly removed from the ascetic practice of a *sannyasi* in terms of the beggars’ reasoning behind their practice. The ascetic is begging as he has detached himself from all worldly desires and a consumerist society. He has, thus, severed all ties from society with an aim to merely subsist. The ultimate aim being of a much higher level of the quest for liberation, whereas the lay beggar is still connected to this world in that he is begging to acquire worldly goods in order to remain a part of society. Through engaging in the practice of begging, the lay individual becomes in society’s eyes marginalised.

There has been a breakdown in this particular person’s “willingness”, in the case of the true ascetic, or “ability” either mental, physical or financial whereby the person can no longer cope with living within society and earning a living through one or other livelihood.

The very route that these people have taken consisting of living on the street marginalises them in a spatial sense even before they open their mouth to beg, as they are not following a conventional lifestyle which is the norm consisting of living in a home within society. These beggars are therefore perceived as not a part of society owing to their non-conformist method of living. However, many of the beggars do not choose or wish to live on the street and do so as a result of infinite cases of hardship such as a disability, no support framework, lack of education or skills, migrants who cannot find work. This suggests that there may be a breakdown or major imbalance in the infrastructure of governance as ultimately these people are the responsibility of the State. This point relating to politics is further discussed in the next chapter of my thesis.

Is this type of beggar regulated by religion? Is this type of begging an illegal activity? This type of beggar is engaging in begging without religious conviction which renders their activity illegal for passing themselves off as an ascetic and merely providing a supply for donors and thereby activating the market. This type of beggar is subject to secular law which I will discuss in my next chapter. This category of beggar will be greater in number than the *sannyasis*. Therefore, is this category providing the donor with the supply that he is demanding and in turn producing a market and capitalising on a religious need? Or is this a humanitarian need whereby one human genuinely feels for another in an unfortunate position and is seeking to help him or her on a humanitarian level divorced of religion? Or are the two notions of religion and humanitarianism combined? In Hinduism piety is endorsed as addressed earlier whereby in the second stage of life, the Hindu is expected to become a householder and help the poor, thereby in that stage he will be the giver of donations to the poor as and when he sees fit. (Menski, 2007, p53). Hence, although the Hindu scriptures do

not make explicit the relationship between giving and humanitarianism, it appears that the concept exists in an implicit manner to serve that very purpose.

What we can take away from this above discussion is that in the case of mendicancy via the practice of asceticism by a *sannyasi* is a legitimate form of religion and although it is sanctioned by scriptures, this also means it is regulated by them. Whereas the ascetic has chosen the route of voluntary begging of his own free-will but regulated by religious laws and scriptures, the secular beggar resorts to begging through hardship whereby it is a need: the manner in which he must beg is not prescribed. We learn from the scriptures that the poor are allowed donations but on matters appertaining to how much and where, the scriptures remain ambiguous. A beggar begging out of a socio-economic need would also be eligible to alms in a general sense by way of piety. Such begging is not regulated by religion and is in fact prohibited by secular law within India.

#### **(ii) The complacent undeserving lay beggar**

The second category consisting of an undeserving lay beggar who is subject to secular law is one who can earn a living but begs due to a complacent nature. Whilst the deserving lay beggar begs unwittingly and sincerely for a genuine, socio-economic need as a result of no other avenue of subsisting, the undeserving lay beggar knowingly often begs in the name of religion as a pretext in order to extract alms to subsist. The undeserving lay beggar is fully aware of maximising his potential of earnings in and around places of worship and will hence target these places with pleas for alms, playing with sentiments of donors who want to fulfil a religious duty to give to those who are poor and needy.

Lay beggars are often people who claim that they are begging as a result of difficult personal circumstances and therefore use religion as a method of extracting alms from the giver. They remain a marginalised class. A difficult question arises: When begging in the name of religion, how can one distinguish whether the person is a deserving candidate, that is from a poor socio-economic position or one that is a complacent individual, not willing to work to earn a living? This is a very difficult fact to establish and it is not surprising that England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had constituted laws which categorised beggars as deserving and undeserving and punished them according to their category. (Ribton-Turner, 1887). The legal regulation of begging is discussed in greater depth in the next Chapter.

### **(iii) the lay beggar linked to an organised criminal network/mafia**

There is a third category of lay beggars that muddies the waters further, begging as part of a begging racket in a Dickensian sense (Wardhaugh, 2009) where criminal organisations have turned the practice of begging which emanates from noble traditions to one that exploits religion for financial gain feeding into a vast network creating a parallel, informal economy. Exploration of religious begging has been noted in the Indian context. Chatterjee (1918) writes of fake mendicants. (Chatterjee, 1918, p3). Cama (1945) in her typology of beggars, terms this class of beggar as “The Bogus Religious Mendicant” and describes them as donning the guise of genuine religious mendicants and comments on how it is ‘impossible’ to elicit who is a genuine beggar as a result of the indiscriminate charity that encourages this type of beggars. (Cama, 1945, p12) Moorthy (1959) notes an interesting case of a Hindu *Brahmin* beggar playing a double role:

“.....He took off his sacred thread, got his head clean shaved and begged near a Muslim Darga. When this beggar was in the Hindu neighbourhoods he wore his sacred thread and called himself a *Brahmin*.....asked if he was an imposter, he replied with manifest rapture that God is omnipresent and takes many forms.....” (Moorthy, 1959, p18)

Bhatia (1945) writes of the professional organisation among beggars, which he terms “The Beggar Organisation”, arguing that it has the aim of a joint effort of begging by pooling together resources which are gathered through either individual or group begging. (Bhatia, 1945, p53)

Many of the interviewees were also aware of an organised network and commented on this in their interview. This was one of the reasons why many were unsure as to whether the begging phenomenon on the streets of Mumbai was genuine, with regards to whether these people were really begging as a result of their poor socio-economic situation or exploiting their sentiments, which emanated from a religious or secular sphere. Shyamal Kataria spoke about the cynicism amongst Indians and Vinoth Suryanarayanan and Dr Gulshetty reinforced this view as he commented that he saw the phenomenon of begging as a profession. Many of the academics, Professor Patnaik, Vivek Nallur, Dr Priti Parikh, Bhima Auro and Acharya Umesh Yadav went onto speaking about the technicalities of these ‘mafia’ networks with regards to kidnapping and mutilating children in order to make more profit.

“A major factor is the presence of begging syndicates, essentially it’s organised crime, they kidnap kids, mutilate them and force them to beg. Obviously the economics of it works out because otherwise they wouldn’t do it. As it takes very little to feed a child and obviously the returns on having that child nagging away at people’s guilt even if they get alms twice a day over the course of a twelve hour day would still work out for them. So there’s a very systematic effort to make sure they’re begging”. Vivek Nallur

Dr Pritam Singh mentioned in his interview how the begging phenomenon is represented as a criminal organisation through popular culture/literature, such as, *The White Tiger* (Adiga, 2008) and *Slumdog Millionaire* (Boyle, 2008). I also read examples of mafia recruited beggars in the media sources. Two cases in an article published by [expressindia.com](http://expressindia.com) (I feel sad when I see my grandchildren begging, 2007) note the begging problem in relation to religion. The beggar in the first case begs outside Bangla Sahib Gurdwara in Delhi, a Sikh place of worship with *rudraksh* (religious rosary beads) around his neck like a *sannyasi*. His only method of survival is begging since he claims he lost his legs in a car accident and earns ten to fifteen rupees per day from the devotees. The second beggar begs at various traffic lights but on a Tuesday chooses to sit outside the *Hanuman Mandir* (a Hindu temple) at Connaught Place to earn some extra money from the devotees who flock the area. Her reason for begging is as a result of the removal of slums by the government in Delhi which uprooted her shack along with her *paan-supari* (betel-nut) shop. (I feel sad when I see my grandchildren begging, 2007). In the above two examples, the people concerned are begging using religious venues and presenting their plight within a religious context. This would not be a scene which would be out of context in a city such as Delhi as such situations are widespread within Indian culture and society. The fact that the person begging may not be a religious adherent and may even beg at a religious venue other than the one to which they (even nominally) belong, relates to the rationale for them begging in that context as they are resorting to beg in that manner, at that particular venue in order to subsist to survive. Whether or not either of these beggars would be perceived as deserving or not according to the authorities is difficult to elicit. What becomes apparent is that religion is being used to beg and subsist. Badgeri and Dolare provide a report on professional beggars who use Islam as a pretext to extort money from people who think they are giving alms. Within the report it is

noted that a special team monitored the “*pseudo fakirs/Babas*” translated as “false fakirs” in the colonies in the Maqbara area near Kala Talao in Kalyan. The beggars that were monitored were from young and uneducated families and from the Muslim community, yet were never seen praying although they used the religion to make money, which they claimed “unabashedly” was an easy way to earn money. The beggars were claiming to ward off evil by blowing smoke from utensils which according to a Muslim Priest, Maulana Asmat Bubere, from Kalyan is something which Islam does not support. Investigations showed that whenever they were questioned about their religion, the *Babas*, a common term for the older aged renunciant, disappeared from the scene and moreover did not beg in Muslim areas because they would not be able to given alms from the Muslim members of the public. (Badgeri and Dolare, 2003). Hence, regardless of the personal religious persuasion of the beggars, the fact that people who use religion becomes apparent. A travel website too alerts tourists of the poverty and begging problem in India. The author of the article, Cook, (Cook, n.d.) alerts prospective tourists to the begging phenomenon. Again, she notes the religious and spiritual sites as a popular site for beggars and warns the reader that although the poverty is real, begging is quite often carried out in organized gangs.

The practice of begging through criminal gangs is damaging on two fronts: it not only damages the infrastructure of society by creating an artificial or enhanced and visible poverty through an organisation regulating and recruiting people to beg under religious or socio-economic pretexts, but also hinders those who have no other source of living, such as the ascetics, and beggars perceived as deserving as a result of low socio-economic means from their practice. Sifting out a genuine beggar is problematic. However, the situation is much more complex. Within the category of mafia recruited beggars there are indeed three types

that I have arrived at: those who are genuinely deserving in that they too are needy and have no other options, those who are undeserving who beg out of a complacent nature, and those who have been forced to beg out of no choice of their own, for example in the case of kidnapping beggars and coercing them to beg on the street. Indeed, within the mafia or illegal network there can be a hierarchy which I will discuss further in Chapter 2.

The main point with regard to the exploitation of religious values via the different categories of begging is expressed in an article which shows the link between temple-goers sensitivities being exploited by beggars who regard temples as being the best places to earn a livelihood through charity. With 51% of the beggars wanting their profession to be legalised, it is noted that the cultural factor played a huge role in legitimising beggary. (Wadhwaney, 2001). Profits are maximised using a combination of two ingredients, religion and a humanist appeal whereby begging in the name of God should induce someone to part with his or her money in order to engage in a pious act as should creating an empathic appeal. Hence, donors will give to those who seem especially vulnerable, for example, children, mothers with babies, especially sickly babies, disabled beggars. A combination of the two above factors was indeed present in my research of Lahore, where I made many visits to shrines and was met with beggars seeking alms. (Saeed, 2007).

The above discussion has illustrated that begging seems to be regulated on two fronts: firstly, via religious laws and secondly, via those who regulate it in a secular sphere by using organised networks that are often illegal. The latter I will discuss in my next chapter.

## 5. Conclusion

Within the begging transaction, both giving and receiving are regulated by religious laws and scriptures which are caste, class and stage of life specific. Barnabus (1945) notes how begging and charity are related closely within the public mind in the context of religion. (Barnabas, 1945, p160). Further, the poor are eligible to alms by virtue of piety via the religion, however, there appears to be no strict regulation of this type of begging within religion. Such begging is, however, regulated by secular law and I will visit such regulation in Chapter 2.

Laws of religion indicate a functionalist class system parallel to a caste system with a regulating nature by design. I have discussed here *dana*, along with interlinking concepts of *dharma*, *seva*, *moksha*, when investigating the role of the giver and the recipient within the Hindu religion and also recipients who beg in the name of religion. These questions have been tested through questions already posed to my interviewees. Religion regulates begging in order that it is practised in a manner which is of mutual benefit to both the donor and recipient and in doing so creates a power dynamics between these two parties. In a religious context, Brahmins remain at the top of the Hindu Caste system and enjoy its privileges and continue to control the regulation of begging within a religious sphere. However, what I also illuminated was that not all almsgiving and begging is related to religion. Very often people will donate or simply give for compassionate reasons divorced of religion or there may be a combination of religion and secularity in the rationale, hence, bringing forth complexities within the arena of mendicancy. Evidence within the chapter alludes through a careful and detailed analysis of the different types of lay beggars unassociated with religion that begging is often conducted in

the context of the Hindu religion using the concept of charity. The reference to the former innocent exploitation is associated to beggars begging out of a disability, lack of literacy or skills or support network. In the scenario where a beggar with a lack of literacy or skills has only been exposed to religion, then God according to his belief may be the only entity he or she can rely on. The given beggar in that situation may genuinely be relying on a higher entity and have a fatalistic approach to life. The reference to the latter malicious manner would be criminal organised network exploiting the notion of begging. The large number of categories I arrived at, are indicative of the fact that the begging situation is indeed a very dense, complicated phenomenon. Who is a genuine religious beggar is difficult to discern as is who is a genuine lay beggar? Further, which tradition does this beggar hail from? Although the focus within this chapter has been Hinduism, in a practical sense we do not know whether a beggar posing as a Hindu outside a temple is really a Hindu. As noted above there are known to be pseudo-fakirs who are not really Muslim but exploiting the religion to extract money. Hence, with no possibility of distinguishing who is a deserving beggar in a religious sense the market for beggars is flooded by those who exploit religion and have turned the practice into a profession and one that belongs to a large industry. The issue is further complicated by the fact that there are different categories of beggars ranging from the old, disabled, orphans, uneducated, unskilled. I consider the list to be infinite. These people beg for different reasons, many as a result of a socio-economic need becoming deviant and joining a criminal network or as freelancers. The effect of individuals giving to this pool is detrimental in intensifying and perpetuating a cycle which will continue in a circular manner. Further, adequate attention does not seem to have been paid to the role of the donor and recipient, whereby the recipient seems largely to be held responsible for the problem and not the giver. What becomes apparent is that within the arena of begging there is a regulation of begging within society on

three fronts; firstly, within religious precepts; secondly, through informal or illegal organisations of begging rackets: Beggars eligible for alms are often regulated by the Mafia and indeed the matter is much more complex as there are hierarchies within a mafia; whereby often it is the beggar that is less powerful and always at the behest of the donor or its regulating authority; and lastly by the state.

Begging in a secular context is regulated by the State and its various arms which I will discuss in my next chapter as I move from a religious sphere to a secular one. I will also explore the regulation of begging through secular laws and the power dynamics this creates.

## **CHAPTER 2: STREET POLITICS: REASONS FOR SECULAR BEGGING, ITS REGULATION AND POWER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BEGGAR, DONOR AND STATE ON THE STREETS OF MUMBAI**

### **1. Introduction**

We seem to have elicited that there is a section of society that seems to be engaging in the act of begging for socio-economic reasons in a secular sense and that this activity is regulated by a secular law as well as the religious. Within the context of Mumbai, begging is perceived as an illegal activity. Begging is defined as a criminal act according to the legal definition of begging as per the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959, (delhi.gov.in, n.d.) hereafter abbreviated to BPBA 1959. However, with regards to the practice of begging, it is not criminalized only in India, a quick comparison with the UK demonstrates that the BPBA 1959 has simply been imported from the Vagrancy Act 1824 which is still in effect in the UK. (legislation.gov.uk, n.d.). Criminalisation of begging has also been cited by Foucault, one of the foremost philosophers of the twentieth century. (Foucault, 1977). In his book, *Madness and Civilisation*, Foucault notes how in France, the Hôpital Général, a “semi-judicial structure” (Foucault, 1971, p40), was established to house those living on the fringes which included the poor, the unemployed, prisoners and the insane. (Foucault, 1971, p39). What is of greater relevance to this thesis is that from the outset the Hôpital Général was established to prevent mendicancy since this was believed to be at the root of many forms of crime and disorder. This move has been noted as “the last of the great measures” being enforced since the Renaissance to eradicate unemployment or failing that at least begging. (Foucault, 1971, p47). Foucault illuminates that the creation of the Hôpital Général in the capital was “....intended above all to suppress begging....” (Foucault, 1971, p53). According to Foucault, this process of housing those living on the margins of society was one which was repressive

in nature, amounting to excluding those that were institutionalised from mainstream society. (Foucault, 1971, p51) Indeed, when we look at contemporary times and further afield in the remainder of the world, the practice of begging seems to be condemned globally. For example, in Indonesia, (Onishi, 2009) begging is illegal involving a fine and imprisonment, likewise the act is illegal in most States of Australia. (Walsh, 2004)

The intention within the remainder of the documentary and this chapter is three-fold:

- 1.to illuminate why people are engaging in begging, an act regarded as criminal, a stance which I personally disagree with;
- 2.to analyse the repressive legal infrastructure that is regulating begging in Mumbai
- 3.to discuss the hierarchy of power-relations emanating from the street

The discussion will be analysed through the dialogue from the interviewees combined with relevant literature in four parts:

## 2. Reasons for begging in Mumbai,

- (i)Poverty
- (ii)Urbanisation and the “Mumbai Dream”
- (iii) Lack of education and differential association

## 3. Regulatory nature of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959

- (i) Legal definition of begging in the context of Mumbai- The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959
- (ii) Perspectives of interviewees
- (iii) Regulatory laws
- (iv) Regulatory laws in different contexts

## 4. Notion of power in the begging context

## 5. Application of the notion of street politics to case study Mumbai

- (i) those living and working on the street: the beggars
- (ii) lay people and businesses who require access to the streets and thereby come into contact with the beggars: the donors
- (iii) racketeers controlling those living on the street
- (iv) the police regulating the beggars and “in theory” the racketeers
- (v) the lawmakers constituting street law which regulates urban spaces in the form of acts controlling those who appear as vagrants in the form of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959

Firstly, I will explore the reasons for begging in Mumbai followed by a discussion of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act. I will then discuss the nature of repressive laws (Uma, 2009) which make welfare crimes (Junger-T and Sagel-Grande, 1991) such as begging a crime, in one sense and reinforce inequality within society. I will next trace the oppressive nature of these laws as well as certain notions that arise in their differing global contexts as a background to the theoretical discussion that will follow. Following on from this I will explore the notion of power in the begging context. I will then engage in an analysis to explain the unequal nature of the socio-political structure of society and question the purpose of legal controls and whether they are just an exercise of power whereby criminal behaviour is mainly a political and cultural product created by powerful interest groups and their representatives: legislators, police and judges. (Galliher and McCartney, 1977, pix). I will, therefore, explore the notion of “street politics” and the hierarchy that emerges with the beggars at the bottom controlled by the government at the top. The question that will be investigated will be whether begging arising from the political and social structures emanates from the Indian ruling elite’s desire to leave them there out of choice. My standpoint that it is the powerful who define a criminal act, is supported by Foucault. As a notion of power emerges I will also explore a wider critique of begging and power notions of the Foucauldian school and provide a focus on notions of social exclusion and creation of “the other”. A

quotation from Aesop, a Greek slave, encapsulates the concept of power in relation to crime and the ill fate of the poor in comparison to the rich. “We hang the petty thieves and appoint the great ones to public office.” (Aesop, a Greek slave, 620 BC-560 BC, n.d.). The final section of this chapter will develop my own theory of *street politics* and the hierarchy that emerges with the beggars at the bottom controlled by the government at the top which will borrow and build upon these theories and discuss multivariate relationships between the actors belonging to this pyramid.

## **2. Reasons for begging in Mumbai**

### **(i) Poverty**

With regards to poverty, it has been noted that 37% of the population of India are living below the poverty line. (Nanda, 2010). In fact, India has been noted by the World Bank as accounting for one-third of the world’s poorest people, living on less than 1.25 USD a day, the equivalent of 65 rupees. (Nelson, 2013). Amongst other reasons, factors that cause poverty, which is not my focus within this thesis, include the large population consisting of over one billion people. Mumbai is home to almost 13 million people and houses South Asia’s largest slum, Dharavi, which has a diverse population, over half of them belonging to the poorest groups, those being Dalits from the untouchable caste and Muslims. (The Economist, 2007). In terms of urban population, India has been noted as being the second largest in the world. In the cities there is large scale homelessness comprising of pavement dwellers in Kolkata and squatter settlements in the capital and Mumbai. (Wardhaugh, 2012c, p216). Many of the inhabitants of the slums are victims of rural landlessness and hail from the villages. (Wardhaugh, 2012c, p217). With regards to beggars in particular, even as early as

1959, Moorthy writes of how his area-wise composition revealed that the majority of beggars originated from villages. With greater opportunities available in the city, the rural areas become less attractive. A further reason given for the rural-urban shift was the lack of adequate facilities available for those who required them, such as, the disabled or those who were able yet unemployed. (Moorthy, 1959, p16-17). This leads to a brief discussion of the phenomenon of urbanisation that I will explore as the second factor.

## **(ii). Urbanisation and the Mumbai Dream**

The above suggests that there is evidence of an increasing urbanisation in Mumbai whereby there is migration from rural areas to the city resulting in begging. Migration from rural areas for employment opportunities is draining resources in the cities causing disparities in society. Moorthy (1959) notes the attraction of Bombay with regards to it being a well-equipped city in the way of transport services, for example, he observes, the extremely busy and important port, airport, railways, bus service and tramways within the city. (Moorthy, 1959, p3). Further attractions are noted:

“...there are big business houses, national and international markets, banks, colleges, schools. There are at least a hundred big factories and several hundred small ones. Distributed are also quite a large number of temples and mosques, churches and fire-temples. Cinemas and hotels are an added attraction, while brothels, gambling dens and drinking cells are the sordid but sensational features of Bombay’s vast underworld.” (Moorthy, 1959, p3-4)

More recently, the city still attracts people as was noted by my interviewees. Dr Shinder Thandi observed the following:

“The city is a magnet, it keeps on attracting more and more people, year in year out and the number of people are vastly outstripping the employment opportunities that are available”.

Mumbai can be described as a “primate” city which translates as, one that is dominant, socially, economically and politically. A large number of migrants are attracted to the city hence reducing the ability of the economy to generate urban employment. A greater influx of untrained manpower therefore increases. (Clinard and Abbott, 1973, p7). Indeed as far back as the 1950s, the scenario was much the same. Moorthy (1959) commented on how a large section of migrants arriving in Bombay were in fact unskilled. (Moorthy, 1959, p34). Disillusioned migrants and the lack of education amongst them leads to an alienation which sets in amongst the poor as they become redundant due to the new complexity of the division of labour and as a result of the increased urbanisation. (Clinard and Abbott, 1973, p7).

Professor Kunal Sen, of the University of Manchester, supports this point by stating how migrants from rural areas find that work is not always available for them and as a result of this they may find themselves begging as a last resort. He provides insights into particular industries, such as textiles and construction.

The increased urbanisation causes disparities which often results in homelessness leading to begging. Although there may be at times, a blurring of boundaries between homelessness and begging, there is a clear distinction between the homeless and beggars. Those that are homeless are not necessarily beggars and those that are beggars are not always homeless.

Dr Julia Wardhaugh spoke about urbanisation and migration in her interview and mentioned that in order to analyse the urbanisation in Mumbai we have to in fact go beyond the city and look back at the root of the cause of poverty in rural areas as a result of

landlessness. Dr Julia Wardhaugh notes the “invisible nature” of rural homelessness and contrasts the visual manifestations of homelessness in urban places such as Delhi and Mumbai to the contrasting hidden homelessness in the rural parts of India. (Wardhaugh, 2012c, p216) She observes how rural-urban migration is brought about by rural poverty and landlessness leading to huge numbers of urban homeless population. In essence, therefore, she maintains that problematic issues relating to ‘rural poverty and housing shortage are ‘exported’ to the cities. (Wardhaugh, 2012c, p217) Quotations from Vivek Nallur and Dr Meena Dhanda’s interviews support the above discussion. In the view of Vivek Nallur, as India’s most vibrant city, Mumbai provides the most employment opportunities and it is associated with the Mumbai dream, the promise of riches in the city. As there is a limit to the city’s capacity for providing employment and the number of migrants arriving with the hope of a job, often many of the unskilled find themselves in menial jobs which would often include begging. However, Dharavi appears to be an example case where it is claimed nobody begs, despite widespread poverty. (Kumar, 2013) However, it may be that they do not beg in Dharavi- but may travel to central Mumbai to do so.

Moorthy (1959) wrote about the attraction of Bombay in the 1950s, “Bombay has great attraction for almost every variety of character.” (Moorthy, 1959, p3). Mumbai is a city which attracts migrants much in the same manner as people seek an “American Dream” both within and from outside the US and in this regard the case of Mumbai is comparable to the concept of the “American Dream”. Is Mumbai a city of dreams? Are people attracted to the bright lights of the city. Indeed, examples can be found in films of Mumbai depicting it as a city which has a magnetic force pulling people to it. However, if Mumbai is a city which promises a better life providing an opportunity to improve one’s socio-economic conditions,

then why are there so many people begging? Are these all disillusioned people who migrated to the city in search of a better life and ended up begging? If they are, then why is the activity criminalised?

Mumbai has been described as a city of migrants seeking the “Mumbai Dream” chasing opportunities and is noted in the documentary by many of my interviewees. Indeed, Sanjay Tewari, an official of the Government of India, went so far as describing the city as a *maya nagri*, a magic city which attracts migrants where people are searching for better options and at times when they do not manage to access better options they may have to resort to begging.

Dr Julia Wardhaugh, also mentioned the opportunities available in the city as opposed to the rural context and added the pull of Bollywood, the Hindi Film industry. Professor Kunal Sen and Dr Priti Parikh engaged in discussion of urbanisation more specifically as a cause for migrants seeking jobs often in construction.

Given the transitional or temporary nature of work in the construction field, migrants may become dismayed. On a macro-level, begging found on the streets of many of the megalopolises of India can be attributed to a certain anomie or social disorder in a Durkheimian sense where there has been a drastic change in India’s economic position whereby it has increased rapidly. However, this economic growth has not been relative to the population and has therefore created a situation where the rich are getting richer and the poor remaining at a standstill. According to Dr Jyoti Saraswati, economic growth should tally with poverty reduction and thus if we follow trickle down theory, which propounds that with rising

economic growth wealth should trickle down to the poor. (Anderson, 2012, p1). However, he adds that, in practice in India's case the economic growth within the country since the last decade has been jobless growth. What we see, therefore, is an increasingly widening gap between the rich and the poor as a specific section of the population continues to better themselves whilst those on the margins remain stagnant. (Mukherjee, 2008, p285). These people will then retreat and thereby become marginal and excluded.

With regard to begging, the very route that these people have taken consisting of living on the street marginalises them, even before they engage in the act of begging which is regarded as deviant behaviour. This perception arises as they are not following a conventional lifestyle which is perceived as the norm, consisting of living in a home within the dominant society. These beggars are therefore, perceived as not a part of society owing to their aberrant behaviour and non-conformist method of living on the street and these perceptions came to light in the responses of my interviewees. Dr Julia Wardhaugh writes at great length on the concept of homelessness and the conflict between the settled and transient communities in a British context (Wardhaugh, 1996) which exists in India too. Evidence of such conflict in an Indian context was revealed during the months preceding the Commonwealth Games in Delhi when the homeless and destitute inhabiting the street were removed en masse to highlight India's "shiny side". (Tarique and Raghavan, p1). Stark disparities are illuminated through media reports, documentaries and insights from fictional depictions in film. (Ashar, 2009; Bhandarkar, 2007; Boyle, 2008).

A certain level of determinism is present here which makes it inevitable that people living on the fringes will end up engaging in illegal activity to achieve subsistence represented

by the city. Hence, in a scenario, where we have disillusioned migrants who are caught in a situation where they cannot find a job because the city is so heavily populated and there are not enough jobs, they can often resort to deviant behaviour and begin to live on the street utilising the space in a creative and entrepreneurial sense to make money and thereby also create a subculture and often an informal economy. People are adapting to survive in Darwinian terms and a vicious cycle of taking the only choice given to them as opposed to choosing a lifestyle which would enable them to live within the conventional norms of a society.

Hence, the extent to which the urban and rural areas are inextricably linked in both social and economic terms is a pertinent point to note. Rural poverty and landlessness often triggers rural-urban migration, which in turn increases the urban homelessness in certain primate cities, such as Mumbai. Rural poverty and housing shortage seems to be ‘exported’ to the cities. (Wardhaugh, 2012c, p216-217). However, the lack of education in rural areas which I briefly explored earlier in this chapter is also exported to the cities in the form of rural migrants which I will discuss next.

### **(iii) Lack of education and differential association**

Lack of education and differential association have been drawn into the arena of the discussion as factors pushing people to the city and leading them to engage in deviant behaviour. I will discuss that lack of education leads to differential association and its application to the case of begging in Mumbai, however, I will first, briefly outline the theory of differential association.

The theory of differential association was introduced by Professor Edwin Sutherland in 1939. He later modified it himself and it has been challenged and elaborated upon by scholars since. In essence, the principle of differential association refers to associating with both criminal and anti-criminal elements and one's interaction with them. Hence, in the event that a person becomes criminal, he does so as a result of his interaction with patterns of criminality. The individual therefore, "assimilates the surrounding culture", and learns behavior that he then engages in. (Sutherland and Cressey, 1966, p83) Research conducted by Sutherland and Cressey was an attempt to explain youth subcultures with regard to its nature and development. The stance they maintained was that crime is cultural as it is behavior that one learns. Hence, people belonging to specific neighbourhoods or 'social situations' will learn behavior that is criminal in nature through their interaction with other people. With regard to crime people may begin to engage in deviant behavior as that is more favourable in that given area or situation. (White and Haines, 2000, p67)

Going back to the notion of a lack of education as a cause for begging, Moorthy (1959) in his study observed that about 76 per cent of the beggars he interviewed for his study stated they were illiterate. According to the 2011 census, India's literacy has risen to 73%, compared to 64.8% in 2001; an increase of almost 9%. This leaves a remainder of 27% as being illiterate. (Census India, 2011; Mail Online India, 2013) However, I have been unable to ascertain what proportion of the illiterate population are beggars. Going back to Moorthy's study (1959), upon further questioning he discovered that the reason for this illiteracy was a lack of schools in their places of origin or a lack of will on the part of their parents to educate them. (Moorthy, 1959, p53). It has been noted that in less-developed countries, serious asymmetries tend to appear when these migrants arrive, for example, in Mumbai. Imbalances will occur whereby there will be a social disorganisation and people with a lack of skills and

resources will look towards illegal activity to survive. The social environment is in these circumstances guilty of pushing people towards a life of crime in a disorganised society comprising anomie or social disorganisation and leading to crime by way of differential association. Dr Santanu Das and Dr Tara Chand Tikkiwal, Lecturer at the University of Rajasthan, commented on the effect of a lack of education on social mobility which can force an individual to beg and form a subculture. Dr Santanu Das stated that the effects of a lack of educational infrastructure and one layer of people not being properly educated leads to a poverty trap whereby they remain in a “particular layer of society which restricts social mobility that forces them onto begging.”

Education is important to the issue of begging, poverty alleviation and human development. It should be provided in order for there to be progress of the socio-economic position of the masses and eradicate begging. The lack of education in rural areas because of the difficulty of keeping poor children in school affects literacy levels and socio-economic development.

India has since Independence, engaged in education programmes to increase literacy rates. Currently, India is a signatory to the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) (MDG Monitor, n.d.) and there is also a programme called *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* (SSA), (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, n.d.) which is prevalent throughout the provinces. However, despite government initiatives, literacy rates are still low. Hence, in many cases, the only viable option may be that these people are pushed towards begging as a profession via differential association. In some instances the practice of begging has been seen as being run by criminal networks and is, therefore, highly organised. From early sources such as Chatterjee (1918) to

numerous current journalistic sources, there are references to networks of beggars' rings that operate in specific areas. As many beggars are associated with a network it tends to bring the begging profession into disrepute. As a result people often associate begging with crime overlooking the abject poverty that would lead these people to joining networks to beg in order to earn a living. It is very difficult to distinguish whether the people who beg are doing so purely out of choice, as we cannot overlook the poverty in the country. (The Economist, 2007). The film *Traffic Signal* (Bhandarkar, 2007) illustrates this. It highlights street activity and the use of the traffic signal to conduct it. Amongst other issues, it illuminated the struggle of migrants trying to make a living and becoming a part of informal organisations as they assimilate into the culture that is prevalent on the street. Hence, this territorial based begging could be leading to differential association.

I must point out at this stage that not all poor, unskilled, uneducated people as well as migrants end up as beggars. To think in such a concrete manner would be a very simplistic and reductionist view. Just because a person is of low socio-economic means does not necessarily correlate with the fact that he or she will engage in street begging. Many people will consider it a matter of pride to be able to earn their own means and subsist and often support their family. These are factors that could lead any individual without a support network whether skilled or educated on the street. However, there are other occupations that these people may engage in such as hawking, temporary lowest paid construction work, sex work, domestic work. With regards to migration, it is not just poor people who migrate to Mumbai, for example, the Gujarati merchants have been very successful. There is also a great deal of international migration in many sectors such as finance, retail, the Hindi film industry, also known as Bollywood.

Reasons for begging in Mumbai have been explored above. They seem to be part of a vicious cycle, one leading in turn to another unable to leave a cyclical movement. Indeed, the State by virtue of laws seems to be creating a situation which endorses retreatism, the concept whereby people reject goals that are culturally prescribed along with the institutionalised or conventional method of achieving them. (White and Haines, 2001, p66) As a consequence, the majority of people thereby create a subculture of deviancy which will breed illegal activities and give birth to characteristics within people who will turn to crime and be perceived in a negative light by the majority as they are not, on the face of it, presented with the deeper scenario of who is responsible for this infrastructure.

If the majority of beggars are begging as a result of their poor socio-economic background then surely we should be questioning why this scale of endemic poverty is being criminalised, victimised and concomitant to that why these people are being marginalised? If this is the case, then we must analyse the legal definition of begging in the context of Mumbai and question the structures that are labelling these people as “beggars”.

### **3. Regulatory nature of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959**

#### **(i) Legal Definition of Begging in the context of Mumbai- The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959**

The text of the legal definition of begging in the BPBA 1959 is included in the documentary and its effects discussed by the interviewees. (delhi.gov.in, n.d.).

According to the BPBA 1959, begging is an illegal activity and an imprisonable offence. The Bombay Prevention of Begging Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly and assented by the Governor came into force as The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1960. It was extended to the Union Territory of Delhi (National Capital Territory of Delhi) by 1960. (delhi.gov.in, n.d. p1).

Definition of Begging according to the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959:

- a. soliciting or receiving alms, in a public place whether or not under any pretence such as singing, dancing, fortune-telling, performing or offering any article for sale;
- b. entering on any private premises or the purpose of soliciting or receiving alms;
- c. exposing or exhibiting, with the object of obtaining or extorting alms, any sore, wound, injury, deformity or disease whether of a human being or animal;
- d. having no visible means of subsistence and wandering about or remaining in any public place in such condition or manner, as makes it likely that the person doing so exist soliciting or receiving alms
- e. allowing oneself to be used as an exhibit for the purpose of soliciting and receiving alms, but does not include soliciting or receiving money or food or given for a purpose authorised by any law, or authorised in the manner prescribed by the Deputy Commissioner or such other officer as specified in this behalf by the Chief Commissioner. (delhi.gov.in, n.d.).

Upon reading the above definition, it becomes apparent that the act of begging is open to being interpreted in a great number of ways. Tipple and Speak (2009) also comment on the vagueness of the definition of begging within the Act:

“Section 2(i)d of the Act defines begging very widely. It includes much more than soliciting alms; indeed, being shabbily dressed, having no visible means of subsistence, wandering about in a public place, singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing, or offering articles for sale can all be regarded as a pretence for soliciting or receiving alms, at the discretion of the police.” (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p178) They provide an example of a homeless man who having broken his leg was unable to work and also unable to go to the normal free food distribution point as if he asked for food he would fall foul of the BPBA 1959 as he was not working and could not prove that he was in gainful employment. Hence, highlighting the harshness of the Act.

Dyutimoy Mukherjee, a lawyer of Indian origin notes the legislative intention behind enacting the BPBA, 1959, as being that of controlling that segment of the population that comprises the poor. The basis of this Act, he believes is the Bengal Vagrancy Act 1945, which is in turn based on the Vagrancy Act, 1824, of England and Wales. Mukherjee criticises the Act for still being in existence without modification or development of it, since it was enacted and he therefore questions the relevance of it to the socio-economic conditions or society of present day India. He is of the opinion that the Act has failed as it is an unjust law and that all the beggary laws should be revoked and there should instead be national-level policies to rehabilitate the beggars. (Mukherjee, 2008, p286) I would to a large extent agree with Mukherjee and question the above legal stance which is criminalising beggars. If

begging in such a wide remit defines the act of begging, then should all beggars be perceived as criminals? Mukherjee writes an empathic piece arguing in favour of the beggars and questioning the validity of the laws prohibiting begging and traces the origins of the Act to the Vagrancy Act 1824, England and Wales. Taking a sociological perspective of the begging phenomenon, Mukherjee notes the increasing number of poor following the introduction of the agrarian reforms by the British. The Industrial Revolution had a further detrimental effect on the Indian economy as indigenous craftsmen were forced onto the streets and had to beg to survive. The disintegration of the extended family system was a further result of British economic policies, forcing people to migrate from their villages to the towns. A breakdown in the family led to a shift from the traditional joint family system to one where weaker members of the family: orphans, the aged, widows, the sick and the disabled, were forced to live on the streets. Mukherjee brings forward two further reasons, the first the partition of India and Pakistan resulting in people begging, again emanating from British intervention and the second, the prohibition of polygamy in the Hindu Marriage Act 1956. Prior to the Act, the system of polygamy supported many women who might otherwise have turned to begging. (Mukherjee, 2008, p280-281).

Mukherjee writes of how employment needs of the poor are overlooked which seems to be contributing to distressing the majority of the marginalized people which in turn seems to be converting them into real beggars and criminals. According to Mukherjee:

“They are the dispossessed people of India. Does our Constitution with its Articles 14, 15, 19, 21....apply to them also? Do our courts, from the lowest to the highest, exist for them? Do we realize what we are doing to our own people? There seems to be a sport- a bitter truth that remains unnoticed- a game that the entire country is playing and winning. And that is the chasing out of the poor from all their habitats: tribal; rural and urban”. (Mukherjee, 2008, p285-286).

The question arises as to whether the beggars have a right to the city? Mitchell (2009), in his book, “The Right to the City: Social justice and the fight for social space” questions who has “the right to the city and its public spaces” and delves further to establish how the right is arrived at legally and physically on the street. He links this with a discussion of social justice and how a lack of it results in social and political exclusion. He acknowledges the political nature of the street and highlights the need for public space to achieve a much higher level of democratisation. He illuminates a struggle for this right to the city, which is in turn a struggle for a right for social justice. For him, a new order is called for, one which takes into account the needs of “the poorest and most marginalised residents”, rather than being built upon “the fears of the bourgeoisie.” Civil liberties of homeless people have been encroached upon to increase “the quality of urban life- and the “security”- for housed residents and visitors.” (Mitchell, 2009, p9). Dr Julia Wardhaugh elaborates on the conflict between the settled and non-settled communities in the context of the UK. (Wardhaugh, 1996, p703). The political nature of this will be elaborated upon in the final section on street politics.

My interviewees also expressed their antipathy towards the BPBA 1959 which renders begging illegal. Dr Meena Dhanda was of the opinion that the BPBA 1959 does not and will not work as it does not have the sympathy of those it is being imposed upon. She quite rightly pointed out that not everyone finds begging abhorrent and believed it was too cruel and not the “proper” response to a problem where someone is trying to survive in the city. Dr Julia Wardhaugh believed that those who regarded beggars as criminal followed a “very critical perspective”.

It seems that people belonging to the begging section of society are without means and further without the support that they need, remaining disaffected and on the street. Surely the enforcement of a law which criminalises a dispossessed strata of society is lacking an insight into their lives? Although such legislation is regarded as social legislation, the social element does not seem to be there, at least not for the dispossessed who are trying to survive on the streets. It seems to be overlooking the human element of respecting the fact that these people on the street also have a right to live and it is the State's responsibility to look after them, instead of punishing them via a law which creates an 'othering' process whereby they are not accepted within society. I will discuss creation of the 'other' in more depth later within this chapter.

Lal (2007), an Indian journalist notes "serious lacunae" within the Begging Act. Firstly, the definition is criticised as Lal quite rightly postulates that anyone who appears poor and destitute could qualify as a beggar. In her words, "both definitions are nebulous and open to the vagaries of time and the whims of an inspector." The second problem that Lal addresses is the punitive nature of the Act which allocates criminal responsibility to the poor for their position. The situation is indeed in my view extremely harsh. As a starting point to help the child beggars that are being exploited via syndicates, she suggests implementing Section 363(A) of the Indian Penal Code which legislates on the kidnapping or maiming of minors for begging. Lal is of the opinion that the police do not use this Act, as arresting beggars under the BPBA 1959 entails less work. (Lal, 2007).

Harsh Mander, an Indian social activist and writer, also submitted a public interest petition in November 2009 for the BPBA 1959 to be changed so as to decriminalise begging.

The government was asked by the court to file its response by August 9<sup>th</sup> 2009 with regards to an amendment to the present anti-begging act. (Mander, 2009). To date, to my knowledge, the Act remains the same.

The emotions of Indian activists are therefore running high and there is a sentiment which is against the anti-beggary legislation. Although we have looked at the legal definition, there are other ways in which begging can be defined appertaining to economic and social contexts and these cannot be divorced from the legal analysis. Dr Julia Wardhaugh and Dr Jane Jones, writing in a British context, but one which can be applied globally, note that the question of defining begging is contentious. They believe that in economic terms, it could be seen simply as a subsistence form of activity which involves the public donating money. However, when entering the realms of a social context, begging becomes both a stigmatised and marginalised act. They contend that “the identity of the beggar becomes of primary importance, eclipsing any other possible identities”. (Wardhaugh and Jones, 1999, p103). It is not possible to be a person who simply does begging: rather one becomes a beggar (Goffman, 1959).” (Wardhaugh and Jones, 1999, p103). Wardhaugh and Jones are of the opinion that it is this which prevents “individuals from voluntarily embracing the spoiled identity of the beggar”. (Wardhaugh and Jones, 1999, p103).

In light of the above, it seems that in instances where people are marginalised and punished for begging on the street, the concept of labelling is taking place attaching the legal label of a beggar. This criminalises the activity and the individual without any insight into the rationale for that individual begging, such as a lack of socio-economic means in order to subsist.

Within the legal definition of begging, “labelling” someone a beggar who is in legal terms a criminal criminalises the act of begging. It is argued by labelling theorists that any given behaviour is not inherently deviant or criminal, but only becomes known as such when a label is attached to it. (Wardhaugh, 2012c, p216) Linked to this train of thought is the idea that if one is caught engaging in such a criminal act it can lead to that person becoming ‘stigmatised’ and indeed render him or her a part of a subculture associated with deviancy. (Burke, 2002, p13). This labelling separates the beggars from the rest of society, whereby they are marginalised and forced to occupy the fringes. However, I would argue that it is not just the stigma surrounding the label of a beggar that gives negative implications and criminalises the beggar, as there are a wide remit of actions that the beggar could be engaged in, ranging from looking dishevelled to fortune telling and hawking. All these activities are not necessarily equivalent to begging as begging is a plea for money in a desperate situation. However, I do understand that all these activities can be guises which end on a plea for money hence in real terms, may be defined as begging. It is important to discuss emic perspectives of beggars following on from the analysis of ‘labelling’ theory.

## **(ii) Perspectives of interviewees**

There is a certain perception of who a beggar is. Tipple and Speak (2009) devote a chapter to exploring perceptions of homeless people and how they are treated as “others” in developing countries which often leaves them “isolated or excluded” from mainstream society. (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p195). According to Tipple and Speak:

“A series of self-reinforcing perceptions serve to keep homeless people as ‘others’ in society. This increases the difficulty they face, not only in surviving on a daily basis but also in achieving a degree of legitimacy, through being housed and employed, even where both housing and jobs are relatively plentiful.” (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p197-198)

Tipple and Speak provide eight categories of general perceptions of homeless people, which provide a wide spectrum, from being perceived as the ‘villain’, the ‘beggar’, the ‘mentally ill’, the ‘immoral’, the ‘transient’, the ‘loner’, the ‘anti-citizen’ to the ‘helpless’. (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p198-203) The authors elaborate on the effect of these negative perceptions and how they are perpetuated through language and images, both negative and exclusionary in nature which is often used when discussing them. (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p203). They also illuminate discussing how this ‘othering’ process disempowers the homeless. (Tipple and Speak, 2009, p207)

Going back to the discussion of begging, the perception of beggars too is based on negative connotations and it is important to understand the widespread diversity between beggars. With regards to a typology of beggars, there is a diverse spectrum of begging which is conducted. This was explored in chapter one and can range from the *sannyasis* (Hindu renunciants) who divorce themselves from society and beg just for subsistence to secular beggars begging as a result of poverty to secular begging linked to a mafia; disabled beggars and child begging.

Within Mumbai, the locale of my research, many of the interviewees had personal experiences of visiting the city which they shared. Although their perceptions of beggars ranged in emotion from compassion and sympathy, there was also an underlying impression

that begging was a profession and furthermore some believed that these professional beggars were linked to a criminal network which is noted below through quotations from their interviews.

Dr Gulshetty Basawraj Gulbarga, Lecturer at Gulbarga College, was of the view that begging is a profession. Vinoth Suryanarayanan, a fellow Ph.D. researcher, also believed that begging had been turned into a profession and was dubious about the authenticity of beggars:

“...it’s become like a profession where they earn more than the usual income and they have much sophisticated cell phones that they can communicate with and they have associations, sometimes I think it’s a crazy phenomena, like it’s the easiest option they can opt for. Apart from a few genuine cases I feel most of the cases right now are a profession rather than a genuine case for begging.”

Acharaya Umesh Yadav echoed the views of the others but brought in a criminal element to the discussion as he was of the opinion that in recent times the concept of begging was being exploited by Mafias, whereby the begging system emanating from religion in the Hindu context is being misused.

Bhima Auro’s answer again resonated the viewpoint of begging being a profession and described the criminal element and a notion of power:

“You see if you think about what begging is, it’s a means of survival, so in that sense, yes, it’s a profession. Criminal gangs use it in order to get money, they use it to extort control and as a result become more powerful to fund their operations in other areas, perhaps. The bottom line is, it maybe a criminal business but its still a business activity nonetheless and the fundamental concept behind any business is this concept of making money, of making a profit.”

Vivek Nallur was of the opinion that “essentially it’s organised crime”. He supported Bhima’s view with regards to the economic element of begging and shed further light on a

certain situation that I have encountered in my research where children are kidnapped and coerced to beg commenting on the economics of how it works:

“it takes very little to feed a child and obviously the returns on having that child nagging away at people’s guilt even if they get alms twice a day over the course of a twelve hour day would still work out for them. So there’s a very systematic effort to make sure the begging.”

Dr Priti Parikh nuanced the situation of child begging and again substantiated reports I have read by mentioning how sometimes the informal industry can in some circumstances “be quite vicious” and hinted towards begging rings inflicting disabilities on children in order that they can earn more.

Dr Pritam Singh, Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University, highlighted how a widespread view of begging is associated with criminal networks and illustrated his point through examples of popular literature and film. However, he went on to explain that this is largely the view of a middle class who do not wish to part with their money. This view is resonated by many of the other interviewees. He again echoed Dr Priti Parikh’s observation of deliberately disabling beggars.

There seems to be a blurring of boundaries and rationales when my interviewees speak of begging as a profession and it being a criminal activity. There seems to be a greater emphasis in the interviewees observations of begging being a professional criminal activity.

Shyamal Kataria observed a certain cynicism towards beggars amongst many of those who believe that they could be potentially working in other industries and instead choose not to.

My sample show a limitation in their responses. This is as a result of the fact that they were largely from the West and more so because they were all educated, had an insight into the begging phenomenon and were knowledgeable with etiquette of norms, being aware of what to say at a given place. Therefore, views were on the whole sympathetic to the cause of a ‘deserving’ beggar. Nobody directly showed contempt towards the begging population, however, scepticism of the begging industry as a result of organized criminal networks controlling ordinary beggars came through as an issue. This leads me to critique the notion of interlinking begging being a profession and a criminal activity. Begging may well be in some or even many cases regarded as a profession by a large number of the public and also by those begging as it provides them with a livelihood. However, is it criminal in all cases just because it is a profession? The point to note here is that when organized by gangs, this type of professional beggin is more likely to be perceived as criminal. This viewpoint is substantiated by Dr Julia Wardhaugh. Having researched begging from a criminal justice viewpoint in great depth, she adds that although begging may be organized, the linking of the begging phenomenon solely to crime comes from a regulatory perspective that she does not sympathise with. Dr Julia Wardhaugh is therefore adding an element of force to the discussion where she illuminates that the beggars are not always begging out of choice but out of socio-economic hardship. Dr Muzammil Quraishi supports this view and sheds more light on a number of reasons as to why people could find themselves on the street begging ranging from deprivation, psychological, economic, fleeing oppression through political disturbances or sectarian differences, “and also as a result of pressures from the environment in terms of their livelihood and the way in which they survive”.

Not all beggars begging to earn an income would be linked necessarily to a network, illegal or legal and in any case even if a beggar is linked to a network that organizes begging

does that make him or her a criminal? Shouldn't the focus of people's attention and indeed that of the state through its legislative arm via the Indian Penal Code be on the criminal networks that organize begging which it is designed to control instead of using the BPBA 1959 which criminalises the beggars? Further, unless of course these 'networks' are harming people by mutilating them or kidnapping children or people and coercing them to beg, should they be regulated if they are simply organizing the beggars' rings by providing them with a pitch and a cut of their earnings? Although the Big Issue, in the UK context, does not encourage begging, there is a somewhat similar concept present. The Big Issue provides the homeless and deprived with the opportunity to sell magazines and provide them with a pitch and take a share of their earnings. Is this an organized method of looking after the homeless or less fortunate? On another level, what are major NGOs doing? For example, Save the Children, an international charity, run a television commercial which has lengthy footage of starving children and then asks for £2 a month. Are they not simply begging, but in an organized, systematic and legitimate manner on a much larger scale?

Going back to my sample, the general social construction of begging was perceived as a criminal problem. This cannot simply be apportioned to the fact that the State outlaws begging as many of them were not even aware of this legal measure. News reports, media discussions, and portrayals in fiction and non fiction film and literature (popular culture) seemed to have also played their part in bringing the act of begging into disrepute by associating it with negative connotations. (MSN News, 2010; NDTV, 2008). Pritam Singh's observations support this stance:

“One reads from the literature and one comes across in bollywood films mainly fiction, *White Tiger*, and also *Slumdog Millionaire*, both give an indication of some criminal networks that use begging. There is other literature that suggests that limbs are chopped off

and deliberately disabled and then they are organised by gangs to collect money during the day and picked up by night and all the collections they have made and used by gangs and they are punished if they don't make enough collection".

Above, we have established that it seems that the process of labelling is taking place. We must now go behind the labelling procedure that criminalises a beggar and discover the reasons for the rationale behind why such laws which are repressive in nature are enacted, thereby providing an infrastructure controlling the beggars.

### **(iii) Regulatory Laws**

The BPBA 1959, can be viewed as a repressive law. The definition of begging is wide and therefore includes a very large part of the population, whether it is somebody in a dishevelled state or someone who is found selling an object or singing. (delhi.gov.in, n.d.). Whereas protective laws are described with a goal of "preserving and protecting the human rights of the people," repressive laws, on the other hand, are regarded as draconian in nature as they provide the state with the power to address certain matters "in a manner that violates human rights of individuals in the "larger interests" of society". Such laws are often created to control vulnerable situations such as when there are acts of violence taking place or political dissent. Uma, an independent research consultant focussing on Indian and International law (Saumya Uma, n.d.) notes some typical characteristics which often involve using "vague and wide definition of crimes", which would encompass a great amount of people. Such laws provide those agencies of the State that were responsible for the definitions with vast powers over the people who fall within the definition. Uma further elaborates on how these powers can also be misused through a number of powers including those which allow them to conduct, "search, seizure, arrest, detention and interrogation". In further describing this

legislation, Uma explains how such laws are justified under the pretext of public interest or larger interests of society including national security, public order, preservation of democracy etc” and observes concerns raised by Human rights organisations and a sector of its civilians over such repressive laws. (Uma, 2009, p72-73).

#### **(iv) Regulatory Laws in different contexts**

Baker (2009) has traced repressive laws historically. In a European context, a multitude of laws have been enacted for the purpose of “maintaining order which was based on a social hierarchy of rulers comprised of rulers and the ruled, landowners from Athelstan and Canute down to Henry VIII”. (Baker, 2009, p214). For example, Baker purports that one of the reasons the laws of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century were written were for an economic reason whereby it would situate the labourers back to a position that would resonate with their poor conditions in earlier periods. Hence, safeguarding “economic interests of the ruling elite”. The Statute of Labourers is a result of these economic interests and echoes Marxist theory. (Baker, 2009, p215). However, the stance taken by any given government would be that they impose laws to control society. In a more contemporary period we have the notion of ‘government’. Garland’s idea of ‘government’ (Watts et al, 2008, p8) is not just about the activities of governments but refers also to institutions like the family, churches and schools as they seek to regulate or govern the lives of people by passing laws, making policies or disciplining conduct. This idea of government comes from the work of Michel Foucault (1977). Families for example, engage in ‘government’ by regulating the behaviour of children in certain activities. Governments, in a criminal context which is more relevant to my study, deploy police to control behaviour in the streets. (Watts et al, 2008, p8). What is of most significance

to my research are the laws that emanate from government which often in the case of the poor have failed them. A basic statement should be made which is when governments pass laws to make certain activities illegal, they do so supposedly because they believe that these activities are morally wrong among other reasons, for example, they are harmful to society and to individuals, for example, physical harm according to Watts et al. (Watts et al, 2008, p8). But should the regulation of begging through legal and other means be based on the rightness or wrongness of begging? Often a person is driven to begging as a result of lack of economic resources, and I would not regard that as being morally wrong. Neither would it be wrong in my view, if a person had taken an ascetic path to divorce him or herself from the world for personal, religious and cultural reasons, or secular personal reasons or a combination of both. It is a complex problem as discussed in the earlier chapter with socio-economic motivations and in the context of criminality, “a crime”, of welfare with an aesthetic law, the purpose of which is to clear the beggars cosmetically out of the sight of the public through criminalising the act of begging instead of trying to understand the vast phenomenon and helping those that are finding themselves in a vicious cycle of poverty. Unquestioningly including those who are ‘guilty’ within the wide remit of the legal begging definition, therefore, seems harsh. Dr Julia Wardhaugh in her interview distinguished between a crime of status and a crime of behaviour: “Criminalising activities associated with being homeless or with being poor sociologically we call that a crime of status rather than behaviour, criminalising the act, the existence of being poor and a homeless person”. Given this distinction by Dr Wardhaugh, it appears that the legislation which sets out to punish those who could potentially be begging as defined by the wide remit of the definition of the BPBA 1959, is one that is unjust.

Anatole France, a French literary figure who developed a keen interest in social issues in his later years, (The Nobel Prize in Literature 1921 Anatole France, n.d.) made a remark full of sarcasm: “the law, in all its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges on rainy nights, to beg on the streets and to steal bread.” (Denfeld, 1974, p285). Hence, rather than helping the poor to overcome their poor status, the law too often perpetuates and exacerbates their situation. As a result, civil disorders ensue such as riots which are a manifestation of a disrespect for law and all authorities, often from those that are on the fringes in the inner city. (Denfeld, 1974, p286). In recent times, my own city, Birmingham has witnessed riots from allegedly a disgruntled section of society. (Younge, 2011). An example of heavy handed legal action against people seen as vagrants is noted in the context of the US. Sixty persons were tried and convicted of vagrancy by a single magistrate in thirteen minutes after an article with the title “Get Bums off Streets and into Prison Cells” was published. (Denfeld, 1974, p287) Given the above example, it is no surprise therefore, that many of the poor regard criminal law as an oppressive tool, the consequence of which is to perpetuate poverty in a vicious cycle. Laws designed to regulate the vagrant population provide an “aesthetic function” doing away with the poor who the general public do not wish to see. Being poor, in essence, becomes a crime and with no support for the vagrant he or she will find themselves becoming recidivist and in prison over a number of times, (Denfeld, 1974, p287) hence, the cycle of oppression continues echoing Marxist theory of an elite. In the context of India, the process of imprisonment involves, firstly an initial punishment followed by a payment of a fine. Failure to pay the fine may (and often does) result in imprisonment. Within the political history of India, evidence of beautification was witnessed during the regime of Indira Gandhi when slums were cleared and sterilisation of the poor became a national policy. (Dhar, 2001, p264). More recently, the Commonwealth Games

2010 held in Delhi provide a fine example of using the criminal law establishment as a tool of oppression by clearing the streets of vendors in order to complete preparations for the Commonwealth Games infrastructure. This cosmetic measure comprised “evictions, and harassment of vendors, street beggars and slum dwellers in the Centre of New Delhi and near the sports grounds.” (StreetNetInternational, 2010) This is an example, in practice, of the fact that the BPBA 1959 serves a largely aesthetic function of clearing the streets and is therefore, indeed a cosmetic measure to maintain the aesthetic beauty of the city at the expense of human lives being wasted, in essence, as they are incarcerated in many cases as a result of their poverty. (Chamberlain, 2009). My interviewees substantiated this by mentioning the inadequate temporary nature of the measure.

“Provision of better housing, better welfare services for these poor people, if they have proper colonies earmarked for them, it’s unlikely that you’re gonna get rid of this problem. So unless the underlying causes are removed this playing around with the symptoms in terms of maybe enforcing the Act is not really going to have much effect in the long run”.

Dr Shinder Thandi

“But there are a couple of flaws with this legislation because they’re not solving the problem of poverty, they’re not solving the problem of services, housing, education, so it’s more of a cosmetic solution where you’re trying to just hide the slums or just take children off the street for a short while but it’s interesting how the incentive for this programme is more focussed on image rather than the root of the problem.....Everyone sees this as a short term measure, rather than a longer term solution. I think it clearly needs stronger legislation, solutions which are rooted not just for the children but also the families and solutions which influence access to services, economics, housing, health. A lot of things need to be brought into play I think”.

Dr Priti Parikh

The BPBA 1959 is an example of a repressive law which makes begging in public places a crime punishable in law. Often termed a legacy of the British colonial rule in India, the anti-beggary laws of India are criticised by individuals and groups as they criminalize begging instead of addressing the socio-economic causes of it. (Uma, 2009, p73). Activist

Harsh Mander in 2009 petitioned against these laws. (Raza, 2010). Two important cases challenging the State in the Indian context are: *Manjula Sen vs Maharashtra State (1990)*, and *Ram Lakhan vs State (2006)*. (Goel, 2010, pp23-28; Uma, 2009, p33-44). The former involved the filing of public interest litigation in the Bombay High Court by a journalist who challenged the constitutionality of the BPBA (1959). The person charged with begging was a minor and stated he was not a beggar but a shoe-polisher who was disabled. (Ramanathan, 2008, p35). The latter case, challenged a conviction which found that the person “was a beggar” under the BPBA 1959. The person who was charged with committing the act of begging was acquitted and in the judgement, it was mentioned that having people belonging to such categories was a “failure of the state.” (Ramanathan, 2008, p37).

Two other important cases involved individuals arrested for begging and they challenged the State in lengthy trials which lasted years. (Haji, 2010). Having discussed the nature of repressive laws in different global contexts as well as India, along with initial discussions on power-driven legislation, I will now discuss motives behind the BPBA 1959.

In the context of India, are the motives behind the BPBA 1959 an Indian elite’s attempts to control the poor by keeping them poor through criminalising begging? Subjugating a certain section of society from progressing, by incarcerating them for their lack of socio-economic means, instead of providing them with a means of improving their lot, seems an elitist measure by those in a position to exert this control. According to elite theory, social groupings resemble the shape of a pyramid whereby there are a few people at the top controlling much less powerful groups or individuals at the bottom. It is this hierarchy and the relations between those at the top and bottom comprising the powerful and powerless upon

which elite theory is based. (Judge et al, 1997, p35). There is an assertion that governments belonging to an urban setting, which would include my case study India, are controlled and ruled by a minority comprising like-minded targets, usually business-related which highlights how heterogeneous elite theory is. The increased amount of wealth is noted by Dr Pritam Singh and he gives examples of how top industrial houses such as Reliance and TATA which are situated in Mumbai are attracting migrants. Given the increased wealth, we can deduce that this would result in greater disparities and lead to an elite group forming that would have an increased amount of power. What we take away from elite theory is the power notion belonging to the elite and it is that which I will discuss next in a criminal context applied to begging. (Presdee, 2000, p17).

#### **4. Notion of Power in the begging context**

The criminalisation process can be perceived as including a cultural process whereby the powerful define and design the main parts of social life and allocate particular meanings to them. Furthermore, this process also illuminates the way in which the powerful are able to define what we see and how we see it, and at the same time observes how we in turn note the social behaviour of other people. Hence, they will deem what is an abnormal or deviant act and what can be classed as criminal. “The powerful also define through culture what music is criminal and what is not; where and when it is played and where not; where we should paint and what; where we should walk and when; what is erotic and not.” (Presdee, 2000, p17). The very act of criminalising culture politicises culture. Likewise, criminalising poverty, politicises poverty and following on from that criminalising begging, politicises begging. (Presdee, 2000, p19). It almost seems therefore that in a general context whether we are

speaking about the United States, United Kingdom or India, that the criminal justice system is designed to fail the fight against crime as it produces and nurtures a cycle of crime producing recidivists. Reiman (1984), author of “The Rich get Richer and the Poor get Prison” investigates why US society tolerates a criminal justice system “designed to fail” in the fight against crime. (Reiman, 1984, p1). Taking a Marxist view he explains why the criminal justice system possesses prejudices against the poor. This is evident at every stage from arrest to conviction. At the early stage, when crimes are defined in law, the system focuses on the acts of the poor which are perceived as rapacious and either do not include or de-emphasize acts of the wealthy that are usually perceived as dangerous. There is an image that portrays that the real danger to regular law-abiding Americans comes from a section of society belonging to a lower rung of the economic ladder rather than from above serving the interests of the wealthy and powerful in America and rendering the poor criminal. (Reiman, 1984, p2).

Likewise, in India, outlawing the begging phenomenon has rendered it illegitimate. The illegitimate nature of begging, in turn, renders the beggar a criminal who is punished via the powerful who criminalise the act of begging. What is relevant to us is that the criminalisation process excludes the individual through its punishment and brings about the notion of the other in Foucauldian terms and here I quote a section from Michel Foucault, the 21<sup>st</sup> century philosopher, *Discipline and Punish (1977)*: (Michel Foucault, n.d.; Foucault, 1977, p221).

“The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects; the existence of a whole set of techniques and institutions for measuring, supervising and correcting the abnormal brings into play the disciplinary mechanisms to which the fear of the plague gave rise. All the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him and to

alter him are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive.” (Foucault, 1977, p199-200).

Foucault uses Bentham’s notion of the Panopticon. (Foucault, 1977, p200). Jeremy Bentham had a keen interest “in moral and political philosophy and legislation” and the concept of the ‘panopticon’ became more widely known through Foucault’s work, *Discipline and Punish* (1977). (Bozovic, 1995, p1) The Panopticon was an idea of a disciplinary building which comprised “an all-transparent, panoptic inspection-house.” (Bozovic, 1995, p2). The building comprised a tower which in turn embodied principles of power by means of overlooking and supervising the separate cells. (Foucault, 1977, p221). The power to punish is conducted through a regular extension of panoptic techniques. (Foucault, 1977, p224). In the contemporary Indian context Julia Wardhaugh mentioned the use of the biometric measures in cities such as Delhi and how this has been used to supervise undesirable suspicious elements of the itinerant population who it was believed could or would feed into terrorist intelligence networks, comparing this to the panoptic idea of camera surveillance and the notion of Big Brother watching you. Foucault writes of the penal measures for delinquency and how this penalty is recidivist in nature- a concept I have discussed earlier in this chapter. He elaborates further by stating that this measure could be advantageous to the State. A 19<sup>th</sup> century prostitution network is given as an example where fines for prostitution are collected by the state and the organisation is seen as “administering and exploiting illegalities.” (Foucault, 1977, p279). An investment is therefore made by the penal apparatus (Foucault, 1977, p285) and Foucault states that the criminal justice system benefits from recidivist crimes in an economic sense, not just a political one through the criminalisation process which is one of a marginalising, stigmatising and exclusionary nature. (Foucault, 1971, p35). This concept of exclusion is explored by Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* where a correctional house, the

17<sup>th</sup> century House of Confinement is investigated. From the outset, by royal edict of April 27, 1656, the Hôpital Général, had the aim of preventing “mendicancy and idleness as the source of all disorders.” It eradicated unemployment or at least begging. (Foucault, 1971, p36). This is where the insane along with the poor, the unemployed and prisoners were housed. The responsibility for these groups was allocated to directors who had a lifetime appointment, exercising their powers of authority not only within the building of the Hopital but throughout Paris, over whoever came under their jurisdiction whereby the entire poor population of Paris within and outside the Hôpital Général would be controlled. (Foucault, 1971, p37). Foucault asserts that it was almost a “semi-judicial structure”, which had the power to decide, judge, and execute. He describes the Hôpital Général as “a strange power” established by the courts and the police, and was, therefore, repressive in nature. The Hôpital Général was not a medical institution. Rather, it highlighted “the monarchical and bourgeois order being organized in France during the period”. Hence, an example of power by the ruling elite over the proletariat in an exclusionary manner. (Foucault, 1971, p43). Beggars Homes were also established by virtue of the BPBA 1959. They too have been perceived in a Dickensian, repressive light. For the small proportion that are admitted in Beggars Homes, the period that a beggar must stay here varies from months to years. (Wardhaugh, 2009, p213).

Dr Julia Wardhaugh elaborates on this exclusionary nature of begging within the context of the UK and refers to begging as a highly marginal and stigmatised activity. (Wardhaugh, 1996, p103). In the context of the UK, she notes the exclusion of homeless people through legal means from public spaces, increased during the early part of the 1990s. (Wardhaugh, 1996, p4). Dr Julia Wardhaugh describes a visibility of which occupations appertaining to street homelessness and a lifestyle encompassing the marginal street has

become associated with dangerousness and a threat to the security of those comprising the settled population. Her analysis, therefore is that the visible manifestation and presence of people living on the fringes “within prime space represents a threat to a sense of public order and orderliness”. (Wardhaugh, 1996, p706). She elaborates further on the regulation of space in the South Asian context and notes whether by means of social exclusion or inclusion, both secular and religious systems seek to contain, and therefore regulate, the phenomenon of begging. Post-colonial Delhi is a megacity much like Mumbai, housing a population in excess of ten million people, and the controlling of public space and the urban poor inhabiting or using it through the BPBA 1959 incarcerating beggars in Beggars’ homes resonates with 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, as critically analysed by Foucault. (Wardhaugh, 2009, p333). Although the law regulates the beggars in a secular sense, this regulation was also observed in a religious sense via exclusionary responses which discourage beggars in a religious context, as begging is excluded inside certain temples therefore regulating marginal people. Even though an inclusionary response was observed comprising of providing for the poor at religious institutions, this was at stipulated times, thereby regulating “begging in spatial and temporal terms.” (Wardhaugh, 2009, p336).

The criminalisation process according to the BPBA 1959 itself is enough to stigmatise this section of society as people become aware that the actions of these people are perceived as morally wrong, according to the law by which they are regulated.

## **5. Application of notion of Street Politics to case study Mumbai**

This section will investigate the notion of street politics. I will discuss the concept which I have termed “street politics”.

The secular or lay begging that I have discussed thus far, takes place on the street. The notion of space on the street is linked to power. Power in society is termed political in that “social relations involving authority or power” is defined as politics. (Definition: politics, n.d.). The street thereby becomes a political entity where there is a stratified conflict of powers vying for an interest in it and begging therefore also becomes a political activity. Power on the street in the context of begging is split between “legal activity” and “illegal activity”.

The street scene comprises a regulated, hierarchical infrastructure which controls urban spaces, where the largest group at the base of the pyramid are controlled by a small minority of elite at the top. The deep-rootedness of the begging phenomenon and a hint towards the hierarchy was made by Professor Patnaik who was of the view that those who control the entire process of begging are well connected to those higher up in the local hierarchies.

However, there are a number of political actors within this infrastructure who interact in multivariate relationships and they are as follows:

(i) those living and working on the street: the beggars

(ii) lay people and businesses who require access to the streets and thereby come into contact with the beggars: the donors

(iii) racketeers controlling those living on the street

(iv) the police regulating the beggars and “in theory” the racketeers

(v) the lawmakers constituting street law which regulates urban spaces in the form of acts controlling those who appear as vagrants in the form of the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959

I will now provide an analysis of these multivariate power relationships.

(i) those living and working on the street (beggars) and (ii) lay people and businesses who require access to the streets and thereby come into contact with the beggars (donors)

The first category of actors in this scenario are the lay beggars pitching on a spot on the street, living and working there. We must note that not all beggars are homeless and living on the streets. At the base of our pyramid, the beggars are reliant on donations from the general public.

As addressed in Chapter 1, India has a rich and cultural ethos which emanates from the diverse number of religions within the country. The city of Mumbai, my research area, can be described as a city whose predominant religion is that of Hinduism, 80% of the total population. (Census of India, 2011) The notion of giving is very much part of the culture.

Giving and receiving between the donor and beggar is a reciprocal relationship, one I would maintain, involving power, as illustrated in Chapter 1.

Even on a secular level, one would at first sight assume that the donor is the person who is in control, the one with the authority to give and it is through this act of giving to the beggar that again it is assumed that the donor can subjugate the beggar and keep him in a position which is subordinate to him or her, thereby marginalising and excluding that section of society in a Foucauldian manner. But as earlier addressed, this interaction is much more complex within society.

Hermer (1999), Professor of Sociology and Criminology at the University of Toronto, has written at length on the concept of begging and its positioning within society. He is of the opinion that .... “there are a range of emotions you feel when you encounter a beggar, including embarrassment and feeling uncomfortable at this symbol of poverty, but someone just sitting asking for money is not a threat”. (Benjamin, 2003, p1). He does not believe that beggars should be locked up in any circumstances and suggests that, “If someone is engaged in intimidating or threatening behaviour, we should focus on this conduct, not on categorising them as an "aggressive" beggar. That turns a social issue into one of crime control and policing”. (Benjamin, 2003, p1). In his doctoral thesis (Hermer, 1999), Hermer questions the notion of policing compassion, and observes a paradox that the presence of those begging brings into question not just the moral character of the beggar, but that of the importuned passer-by and notes a number of pertinent questions revolving around the sentiment of compassion:

- “1. How is the compassion of the passer-by policed through the constitution and regulation of begging encounters?
2. How is the hand to hand, the face to face exchange of money between the beggar and the passer-by policed?
3. What does this governance tell us about the ways in which compassion and mercy have become central objects and resources of political power?” (Hermer, 1999, p13).

What we can extract from these questions is that there exists a process of regulating a compassionate act of giving to the beggar which is linked to notions of power.

There are certain categories of beggars that can be regarded as having power or even being more powerful than the donor. Through my analysis, I regard certain religious mendicants, eunuchs and secular lay beggars in certain situations to be more powerful than others and will discuss each of them in turn. With regards to religious mendicancy, religion is a powerful institution in itself, as addressed in chapter one, which without even involving coercion can place people in a position to adhere to its prescribed principles. In the context of this research, the majority of people would be engaging in charity *dana* (Sugirtharajah, 2001, p17-20) with a view to receiving *punye*. (Sugirtharajah, 2001, p17-20). Hence, in some cases there is a power reversal with certain beggars where the beggar is actually more powerful than the donor

However, often one may come across a beggar who may be perceived as aggressive in character due to certain methods he or she may be using to extract a donation. The potential donor may find the beggar acting in a threatening manner in order to obtain alms/charity. The beggar could be behaving in such a manner in a secular sense drawing attention to their poor socio-economic status or disability or doing so in the name of religion. Earlier, within this

thesis, in the chapter on the role of religion in begging; both Dr Julia Wardhaugh and Chinmay Kanchi commented on how often *hijras* (eunuchs) could be found begging in an aggressive manner which may intimidate a donor.

One such incident that I can remember occurred in Lahore, during my MPhil research. I was in a car with my family when a man selling prayer books approached my Mother in an attempt to sell to her. We had not set out to purchase prayer books and the prayer book my Mother chose was not necessarily a desired object but could come to use. Her actions were more in response to the coercive nature of the beggar. When my Mother chose a particular prayer book and attempted to pay him the beggar changed the price stating that she should give some extra in exchange for prayers for her children. When I interjected and said that he should sell them at the price initially requested the beggar became aggressive and we ended up leaving him with the money without purchasing anything. This is an example of conflict between the begging strata of society and the general public.

The above analysis and personal account encompass notions of power and draw attention to the fact that there seems to be a reversal of roles in relation to power whereby the marginalised as discussed earlier using Foucauldian notions are not always less powerful. The begging situation is far more complex than appears.

We have established that there is a complex power dynamic between the beggar and donor. There are a range of “lay beggars” who are on the street as a result of their poor socio-economic situation. Two groups come into conflict, the beggars and the lay donors and notions of conflict come into play as a subculture is brought into potential conflict with the

dominant culture and street rules are used. (Lilly et al, 1995, p50) The next category I will discuss in the “street politics” hierarchy is the racketeers.

(iii) racketeers controlling those living on the street

Bhima Auro provided an insight into rackets controlling beggars:

“If you think about what begging is, it’s a means of survival, it’s a profession. Criminal gangs use it in order to get money, to extort control and become more powerful to find their operations in other areas perhaps. It’s almost a business. It maybe a criminal business but it is still a business and the drive behind any business is this concept of making money”.

The fictional film, *Slumdog Millionaire*, (Boyle, 2008) sensationalises the begging mafia in a glossy manner complete with a Bollywoodesque love story underpinning it. Scenes of blinding a child and then coercing him to sing religious hymns are included. *Traffic Signal* (Bhandarkar, 2007) again highlights a mafia and includes a typology of beggars (which includes the elderly, eunuchs, young girls amongst others) who beg at the traffic intersection. The film illuminates how the mafia or criminal organisation itself has a hierarchy within it. The protagonist in the film is the manager at street level of the mafia and has to collect the earnings which he in turn gives to his higher ups who forward the earnings to those who are still higher up to “*the Bhais*” (*Bhai* means older brother in a literal sense but in this context relates to those higher up in the mafia hierarchy) and then to corrupt police officials and corrupt officials of the State. However, I will explore the role of the latter two in more depth later within this chapter. The film’s title is indicative of the social space that is shared by the beggar and the donor and indeed one of the promotional videos contains a narration of the activity that transpires during a red light at a traffic signal. Dr Julia Wardhaugh (Wardhaugh,

2009, p336) writes of regulation of space in two South Asian cities and nuances this notion of space by observing that this is not just social space which is in question here but also temporal. Beggars will beg whenever the traffic light is red as demonstrated in the film *Traffic Signal* and likewise begging at the shrines is often conducted at certain times. I, myself, have experienced this during my MPhil research in Lahore, where beggars were very often found at traffic light intersections, shopping malls and shrines at particular busy times.

A certain panopticism in a Foucauldian sense is becoming apparent in relation to indoor malls, whereby beggars can be controlled and excluded whereas religious places of worship and the street at first sight cannot be. With regard to indoor shopping malls, security is ever present which would prohibit informal begging activity being conducted at any time. However, in the case of places of worship, people that engage in begging will be welcomed at given times in order to use facilities such as for, washing, prayers along with the general public, sometimes as a refuge where they can sleep and most definitely the provision of food.

(iv) the police regulating the beggars and “in theory” the racketeers and (v) the lawmakers constituting street law in the form of acts controlling those who appear as vagrants in the form of the BPBA 1959

Although we can say that there is some blurring of power boundaries if we go higher up in this hierarchy we meet the police who can arrest a beggar and lawyers who conduct contested cases and consider human rights.

There is some debate as to whether the police, the enforcement agency of the legislative arm, are in fact arresting the beggars or whether there is a level of corruption which stops them from arresting beggars in certain spaces. (Lal, 2007).

One point to note is the rationale behind the Act. An elite group write legal statutes. The BPBA 1959 which is our main concern here for criminalising beggars is one which has its roots in colonial times. The British Raj comprised of importing a whole system of political and legal values to a country which already had its own systems in place which had to accommodate alien imported policies. It therefore, seems that the British seemed to have influenced the ruling elite of the time to create “Brown Sahibs” (Sardar, 2007) (an elite group of people who are according to the texts brown in colour but retain in terms of racial or ethnic identity, the white colonial mind set and attitudes) through a system of acculturation. However, it could be argued that it is now more than sixty years since the British left India and it became independent and, therefore, question what successive governments since then have done to alleviate the problem.

One of Nehru’s aims was economic development. (Sen, 2006, p19). Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed in his interview, commented on how some progress was made under Nehru by taking a stance for the poor. However, he pointed out that although this did work to a point, poverty remained as a result of the dominant classes comprising of the industrial bourgeoisie and landowners as Congress could not win elections if the landowners did not vote for it, so measures against poverty had to be taken slowly. Later, Indira Gandhi wanted to see a beautification of India which I will discuss below. (Dhar, 2001, p264). This leads us onto the role of the politicians.

(v) the politicians who are in a desperate bid to 'clean' the streets.

A drastic version of a beautification project can be seen during the regime of Indira Gandhi, when slum settlements were obliterated. However, Indira did not stop at that, forced vasectomies were also on her agenda in a bid to control the population. (Dhar, 2001, p264). A recent example of beautification can be witnessed through the clearing of the homeless just before the Commonwealth Games held in Delhi in 2010, mentioned earlier in Chapter One. This proved to be a cosmetic measure, temporary in nature and has been noted also by my interviewees, including Dr Priti Parikh and Professor Dr Shinder Thandi of Coventry University. Given that the streets of Delhi are again brimming with beggars of all ages, this informs us that what is required is a measure whereby the street dwellers are accommodated and trained in skills that will help them to earn a sustainable living in the long term.

We have, therefore a pyramid or hierarchy starting from the largest groups at street level with the inhabitants of the street and the public acting as donors, ranging to the State politicians, the smallest group, that are involved with power on the street. According to the above hierarchy there appears to be an elite group (Judge et al, 1997, p35) in a sociological sense controlling the city. An elite theory could be used to explain the hierarchical conception of society and concerns itself with relations between the rulers and ruled, the powerful and the powerless, in this case the beggars and the State.

It seems that the ruling class, in this case, the State is using legislation via the BPBA 1959 as a means of controlling the disadvantaged beggars by means of criminalization.

Writing in an American context, Professor Don Mitchell is critical of the controlling nature of the State and is of the view that a constricted public sphere is created as homeless people are removed from public spaces. For him, this produces “a highly sanitized city and a fully deracinated politics”, one which elevates an aesthetic need over that of those people attempting to survive. (Mitchell, 2009, p9) Given that there are restrictions for people who need to utilise the street in terms of how they behave and use the space, I would share Professor Mitchell’s deduction of the State’s intention of control and criminalising the homeless people which in turn jeopardises the notion of survival. David Smith, a legal scholar remarks, “...the supposed public interest that criminalization is purported to serve...is dubious at best” as this strategy does not address root causes of the phenomenon. (Mitchell, 2009, p9). What seems to be happening is that as people are not allowed to beg legally, the whole operation becomes illegal and clandestine. Dr Pritam Singh too suggests that if begging is outlawed it will just go underground. Gallaher and Mc Cartney argue that if the interests of powerful groups are at heart when laws are written and implemented then powerless groups will obviously end up on the wrong side of the law. (Galliher and McCartney, 1977, px).

Given such a scenario where the State to some extent is also responsible with regard to not being able to offer a social welfare system, is the State justified in criminalising those it cannot look after through the power it has at the top of the pyramid? Why does the State not attempt to control rampant white collar crime? S.V.Rao, an Indian criminologist, is of the opinion that the phenomenon of white collar crime is so ingeniously cloaked in the respectable mantle of business philosophy that it has to be considered primarily in the political perspective. (Rao, 1984, p48). He provides a brief insight into types of white collar crime such as tax evasion amongst the huge industrialists of India (Rao, 1984, p52) and

violation of election laws as well as irregularities within the Indian film industry based in Mumbai. (Rao, 1984, p54). In the case of Mumbai, the Indian film industry houses some of the richest people of India where you will find the extremely affluent alongside the poorest of the poor as was stated by one of my interviewees, Chinmay Kanchi:

“You have a massive disparity of incomes and both the very rich and the very poor share the same space and also because of the population density it means that a beggar with a very low success rate can still get alms from a substantial number of people in raw numbers”.

Often this is as a result of the poor wanting to be where they can find riches, for example, Dr Jyoti Saraswati said in his interview: “...If I were a beggar, I’d want to be in London...”

A recent article, “Capitalism: A Ghost Story,” by Arundhati Roy (2012), a well-known Human Rights activist and novelist, provides in her own words a “harsh critique” of this concept in the Indian context. Beginning with the example of ‘Antilla’, “the most expensive dwelling ever built”, belonging to Mukesh Ambani, Director of Reliance and currently the richest man in India. Roy highlights how “Trickledown has not worked”. This reinforces the stance taken in the thesis, which highlights through both the written academic and visual elements the huge disparities between the rich and the poor. The lure of Mumbai would no doubt attract migrants as, for example, “Antilla” illuminates an extreme form of wealth which many migrants often hailing from villages would not have access to in their rural spaces. As noted by Dr Julia Wardhaugh, in her interview, migrants believe that anything would be better in the city as opposed to their current situation which, often linked to caste, they are bound to their fixed social positions. In their view, any type of work in the city would be more agreeable. The fixed social positions, themselves are often criminalised. One example would

be the Adivasi tribe, why is it criminal to be born into a particular tribe? This is something which is questioned by Roy in her article and illustrated with examples of recent cases. (Roy, 2012, p3). As mentioned earlier, would not an amended version of section 363A of the Indian Penal Code, extending to protect adults who are also exploited, be a better measure? It was noted that the BPBA 1959 is an easier Act to enforce. However, on arriving at the end of the thesis, I wonder whether this is enforced because those controlling the beggars as mentioned by Professor Soumendra Mohann Patnaik “are linked to those higher up in the hierarchy?”

It appears that being poor is a crime and this is going to be further regulated soon through biometric measures, when everybody in India will have a Unique Identification number, henceforth abbreviated to UID. Arundhati Roy finds the new UID system nonsensical and satirically writes how every Indian citizen will have a UID number but “People don’t have clean drinking water, or toilets, or food, or money, but they will have election cards *and* UID numbers.” She brings forward a capitalist argument involving power and the vested interests of the rich:

“The gathering of information to control people they rule is fundamental to any ruling power... to digitize a country with such a large population of the illegitimate and ‘illegible’—people who are for the most part slum dwellers, hawkers, adivasis without land records—will criminalize them, turning them from illegitimate to illegal. The idea is to pull off a digital version of the Enclosure of the Commons and put huge powers into the hands of an increasingly hardening police state.” (Roy, 2012, p8-9).

It seems therefore that legislation against the professions of the poorest strata is not enough to criminalise them; the UID is further required to label and regulate already marginalised people more effectively. The State seems to be pushing these people further into poverty instead of helping them to progress.

Despite India being the world's largest democracy, people's freedom has been restricted through repressive legislation. Is incarcerating people as a result of their poor status a democratic progressive stance? Don't these people have a right to the city? Elaborating on the use of the biometric measures, Dr Julia Wardhaugh mentioned in her interview how this was justified in order to keep an eye on suspicious elements of the itinerant population who, it was argued could or would feed into terrorist intelligence networks. She observed how this was comparable to the State engaging with the panoptic idea of camera surveillance and the notion of Big Brother watching you.

Furthermore, is this inequality gap compounded by caste segregations? (Ashar, 2009). Lalit Khandare (2008), author of "People's voices in democratizing cities: A case of Mumbai", observes that urbanization in India although also linked positively with development, is also riddled with inequalities whereby there are areas that are very urbanized and developed whilst others are very regressive. Such imbalanced urbanisation seems to have failed in promoting regional development in India. Hierarchies based upon caste, divisions amongst communities and interests arising out of political gains have also led to disparities. (Khandare, 2008, p4).

## **6. Conclusion**

I sought to explore at the outset of this chapter the reasons for begging in Mumbai as well as to conduct an analysis and answer why it is regulated? The answer to this question is a complex one and centres on the debate as to who is responsible for the chaos. Who truly

benefits from having a section of society criminalised and living on the fringes? Is it the beggars themselves? Society at large for allowing it to take place? The racketeers? The State and its legislative and enforcement arms? Or the government? The analysis has revealed that an intricate web of power dynamics is in play where by the street is an urban space wherein everyone struggles for power and access to resources. Given the complexities of the phenomenon, as it is attributable to a myriad of reasons with a power dynamics where the actual beggars living on and off the streets are at the bottom of a hierarchical pyramid, I have gone some way towards explaining power notions which seek to explain why the poor are criminalised and stigmatised as a result of capitalist economies and the consequent inequalities of a distribution of power, resulting in huge gaps between the rich and poor which could arguably be compounded through the caste system.

One important thing we can take away from this analysis is the stigmatisation of the beggar which adds an exclusionary tag whereby he or she is seen as “the other” through a vicious cycle of power dynamics. This popular perception of criminals as the other is often compounded by representations in the mass media. Quinney (Burke, 2002, p149), laid a lot of emphasis on the role of the mass media in manipulating people’s perceptions of crime. His observation was that the media has the ability to spread both “crime and non-crime definitions”. The extensive permeating effect of the media leads to a construction of a view which is commonly held and it is through these “constructed views” that certain conduct is seen as a crime and others as not. (Burke, 2002, p149). The purpose of the written thesis and documentary is to move behind these exclusionary tags and understand the begging phenomenon from a humanist perspective and thereby recognizing and maybe even empathising with the complex begging phenomenon.

## CONCLUSION

Begging is a complex, ambivalent phenomenon. People are often divided on their views on begging creating a dichotomy of standpoints; those who empathise with the issue and those who are critical of it. One point to note is that the phenomenon is one that cannot be understood in such a simple binary fashion.

With regard to complexities of the begging phenomenon, I have discussed regulation of it through religious and secular laws and touched on causes of it when shifting from the religious to secular arena. I have, as a result, entered into various debates. In sum, the harmful effects of capitalism and therefore the politicisation of begging and on a wider level, poverty, seems to be reinforced the more I study this phenomenon.

Both the written thesis and the audio-visual component move from a stance where begging is associated with being a socio-cultural issue to one that is actually much more complex and very political in nature. Within the written thesis, this move towards highlighting complexity and a veering towards a political stance is argued through theoretical reasonings and analysis, whilst in the audio-visual component, it is illustrated via images and responses of the interviewees in an educational academic documentary.

The globality of the problem is evident as we witness begging here in the UK too. My earlier research has revealed that it is prevalent throughout the world on different scales. (Saeed, 2007, p39). This research has moved from illuminating the regulation of begging within a religious arena to a secular sphere and goes behind the rationales for this regulation

by examining Hindu sacred scriptures such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Laws of Manu*, moving onto the BPBA 1959 and an inclusion of Foucault's works and discussions surrounding power. In doing so, the thesis also highlights, in passing, the causes and in turn reveals the complexity of the issue. The academic applications have allowed me to understand, explore and explicate, a hierarchical structure in both religious and secular laws which has brought greater depth and dimensions to this already complex and vast phenomenon.

As described in my introduction by means of a quotation from my MPhil written thesis, I was "shocked" and "disturbed" by the vast scale of begging. It was initially these emotions that led me to a desire to research the begging phenomenon in Lahore. As a solicitor by profession, a filmmaker, aspiring academic and generally as a fellow human being, the aim for both documentary and written thesis was to go beyond the dichotomous views of begging where, on the one hand, it is highlighted in a positive manner, linked to religion and piety and on the other hand, the circulation of negative connotations associated with secular lay begging where one begs for socio-economic reasons. It was an attempt to establish a piece of research to restore humanity to the de-humanising effect of the regulation of begging via religious and secular laws as well as elucidate the complexities of the issue. Although a great deal of passion for my chosen topic has been invested into this research, the goal in the thesis has always been to go beyond the emotion and inject a degree of objectivity that is required in good research. Although initially, this research was going to be conducted using a visual ethnography and would have provided different perspectives, the present effort is one which integrates an audio-visual documentary and academic critique with a complementary written thesis which explores rationales for regulating the activity of begging in an analytical fashion.

During the course of my research, a loophole became apparent within the legislature which criminalised poverty whilst the real criminals, according to many, were those who in many cases were coercing the beggars to beg. The central question of my thesis set out to explore the extent to which begging is regulated in religious and secular spheres, bringing about an explanation which required critiques of the role of religion in begging, socio-economic factors for begging as well as legal factors in both the written and audio-visual components. I did not set out to find a solution to the phenomenon, given the vast nature of the topic, its complexities and the time frame. In its totality the thesis comprises of two chapters, moving from religion in the first chapter to legal and political factors in the second. The chapters could be read on their own and researched further and indeed an entire thesis could be devoted to either of the chapters given the vastness of these topics, however, they are inter-linked in providing a commonality of regulating the begging phenomenon and therefore there is a thread which stitches this thesis together, with each chapter making discoveries and fluidly leading to the next. In my opinion, on a secular level people would probably only resort to begging in the event that there is a desperate situation where a person lacks certain skills as a result of not having the opportunity to be educated and therefore cannot earn a living, or is disabled and cannot work or even just someone who has fallen on hard times- what else can people who find themselves in this situation do? Issues analysed in the second chapter of the thesis, therefore, led to a critique of why the act of begging is illegal, when there are a myriad of reasons as to why any given person may beg. In doing so perceptions of begging regarded as immoral emerged in both the written and audio-visual components. A sense of “othering” seemed to be at play whereby people engaging in begging seemed to be marginalised possibly as a result of those responsible for rendering begging illegitimate due to

insufficient knowledge of this very vast topic or a deliberate attempt not to acknowledge the depth of the issue. What I have discovered is that there are many layers to this polysemic issue which in turn have many grey areas. For example, very early on in this thesis (in the introduction), I outlined the heterogenous nature of the beggars, and how there are very many different categories, such as children, the elderly and the disabled. However, even these categories cannot always stand on their own as they can be differentiated further through their fluidity of running into another category, for example, a beggar could be both elderly and disabled. Later in this conclusion I will speak of my discoveries through a typology which provided some complex categories of why people may resort to begging.

The thesis began with a chapter seeking to investigate the role of religion in begging, with an analysis of the religious and cultural set up of Mumbai, India, examining the laws of religion and investigating the transaction of giving and receiving between the beggar and donor. Using Hinduism as a case-study, given that it is the predominant religion of India and Mumbai, the locale of my research, it became apparent that there exists a great emphasis on charity and helping the poor which could unwittingly promote begging. Contributions from my interviewees supported this cultural ethos as observations were made by Dr Meena Dhanda. Chinmay Kanchi elaborated further by illuminating the presence of all five religions exacerbating this pious ambience. However, what has also now become visible is that the very laws of religion in religious scriptures, such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Laws of Manu* maintain a hierarchy of social groups where begging is associated with those at the top and bottom ends of the social infrastructure, possibly subjugating those at the lower end. This point provided me with an audio-visual debate within the documentary as there appeared to be two camps. At the top, the Brahmins by virtue of the scriptures can beg as a blessing and this

was expounded by Acharya Umesh Yadav. At the bottom end, the untouchables outside the caste system, beg as a result of their poor socio-economic status which leads to a deduction that the caste system, a highly sensitive and problematic area, consists of a stratification of four social classes of people. The majority of the interviewees were against this structure and observations were made by the interviewees noted within the Chapter which veered towards a stance against the illegality of such an infrastructure. The interviewees, therefore, were supportive in their answers as they contributed both their learned views and personal observations. It became apparent, however, that the views were biased whereby interviewees themselves found themselves either for or against the structures within religion. As a Hindu priest, Acharya Umesh Yadav endorsed and spoke of the benefits of the structure that Hinduism provided. Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed and Dr Santanu Das amongst others were against the hierarchical structure. The focus within the written thesis was to elicit that a regulating infrastructure within the religion existed and this was also demonstrated within the audio-visual thesis. It is arguably a hierarchical interdependent socio-religious system encompassing political economic values. People of the untouchable caste, and therefore outside the system, are often distinguished by being generally poor and of very low status. However, a debate endorsing the idea that Untouchables are beggars would be very controversial and would require further research to prove or disprove it. Historically at least, some sub-castes were designated as beggars by profession, such as nomadic tribes, the *Banjara* and *Lambani*. Sometimes, this continues to the present day. (Unattributed, 2010). Low caste *Bavari* peoples, also nomadic, have been cited as earning a living traditionally by begging. (Unattributed, 2000). Linked to religion, some may resort to begging out of a very real need to divorce themselves from society in order to attain a particular level of salvification. Observations on *sadhus* were made by the interviewees. Others may beg as they

believe it is ordained by God, but not practice asceticism in its truest sense. Still others may use religion as a pretext to beg in order to survive and therefore use their religion to aid their begging activity. Criminal organisations may also be perceived as exploiting this strand of beggars.

I provided a typology of beggars, starting with the ascetic, in the Hindu context, the *sannyasi*. According to the scriptures, a *sannyasi* is an individual who divorces himself from society seeking a higher salvific salvation. A *sannyasi* would beg in order to simply subsist. However, there would be very few *sannyasis* and not many, if at all, within the city of Mumbai. The question then arose that there are many different types of beggars and not all these beggars beg for such austere values. Secular reasons were brought forward, and in this context the typology continued as did the complexities. People could be begging simply in the name of religion and I termed this beggar, the genuine deserving lay beggar, but it is difficult to distinguish who is deserving or not, and often beggars are perceived in a negative light, often thought of as being “lazy”, not wanting to engage in other means of work. This led me to discussing the complacent undeserving lay beggar who may or may not be linked to a mafia. Being linked to a mafia, in the eye of the lay public immediately makes the act of begging illegitimate, but does being part of such an enterprise bring about negative connotations and criminalise the act of begging in its entirety and, therefore, call for a harsh regulation of such activity? As earlier elucidated, not all people want to be part of a criminal enterprise but may have no choice and therefore be drawn to it. The operation of begging may be organised and those in charge of these operations may be perceived as exploiting the poor as well as religious sentiments, and indeed I would agree that in cases where people are mutilated these ‘patrons’ seem to have gone too far. However, if these people are organising a

group of poor people to earn a living and are giving them a commission, then are they really committing a crime? I discovered that in many cases they may not be. As aforementioned, the 'Big Issue' organisation in the UK is divided both into a charity and a company. The aim of the company element is to make money. Recruiting those of poor socio-economic means to sell a certain number of magazines at a certain pitch in the city and its suburbs and then giving a share out of each magazine seems to resonate the organised begging rings of Mumbai bar the coercion and violent elements. Whether the Big Issue sellers are vending or begging is debateable, the organisation says it is not begging; a product is offered for sale; and dignity and legitimacy of enterprise is emphasised, not pity or coercion. Following on from this, an important issue arises which I must consider here which revolves around the concept of coercion and whether people involved have a choice. By bringing the concept of coercion into the area of discussion my initial thoughts on comparison of the Big Issue and the Mafia rings does not work as well. Firstly, people joining the Big Issue have a choice. Second, the Big Issue involves selling/working not begging. Third, the Big Issue is a legal/legitimate organisation.

Going back to the locale of my research, Mumbai, in the event that the State is not looking after its poor, I suggested that it may not be wrong for these people to send out people to beg in the absence of the State. I, however, drew the line where those organising the beggars engaged in abuse of the beggars through recruiting the vulnerable and inflicting harm on them through mutilation.

It was concluded that religion contained various laws which regulated begging and it could wittingly or unwittingly contribute to the begging phenomenon through the notion of

charity demonstrated through all the major religions present in India with a focus on Hinduism. However, there was also an element of exploitation present, which was observed by all my interviewees and was present within the literary works, whereby people involved in organised or even disorganised networks have used religion as a pretext to exploit people's sentiments to make money, therefore muddying the waters and providing grey areas to dwell upon.

I then set aside religion as upon delving into why people give to beggars in the Indian context, it became apparent that although there seems to be a cultural ethos emanating from religion to give to those less fortunate which to some extent encourages almsgiving, not all donors always give as a result of any religious or spiritual inclination but often for secular reasons. Likewise, not all beggars beg as a result of religious beliefs but as a consequence of their poor socio-economic position which leads them to beg as a last resort. What becomes apparent in the predominantly Hindu society that I am researching is that there is a distinction between *dhaan* (charity) within a religious context and *dhaya* (pity) on a human or secular level, a nuanced observation of Acharya Dharm Dutt Vasistha. There is also a stark contrast between indigenous or voluntary begging and secular begging. On a visual level too, the distinctions between these two types of begging are vast and this has been drawn out in the documentary. Given that there could be a number of secular reasons for begging, and despite this, the fact that there is a law which renders begging illegal led me to analysing regulation of begging through secular law and the power dynamics that emanate from that. In order to contain and control begging there seems to be an exclusionary response by the State in the form of the BPBA 1959. However, begging is criminalised and one only has to read sections a-e of the definition of begging within this Act to learn that the definition is vast and can

encompass a wide range of people of a poor socio-economic status. This Act, a sixty year old piece of legislation, controls the poor through legal regulation which criminalises and excludes those that are poor and homeless by giving them the status of a beggar. I, therefore, analysed this Act to critique the extent to which begging is regulated under secular law.

The fact that people can be labelled beggars and therefore be perceived as criminal was the first theory I analysed. Labelling beggars as such through legislation is enough to criminalise people and not the “intrinsic act” itself. Hence, the notion of “othering” comes into play which stigmatises those linked to begging and marginalises them. The negative connotations seem to filter into people’s perceptions as was apparent in the comments of the interviewees. All of them were aware of a professional organised network of begging rings. The notion that begging per se is illegal and often considered to be immoral is nuanced as the argument clarifies that not all begging is perceived as a wrong thing to do. Some people resort to begging as they have no other means of survival.

Given the locale and the vast scale of rural-urban migrancy into Mumbai, it seemed people were pursuing a dream. Mumbai seemed to be luring migrants from the rural to a *Maya Nagri* (city of magic), (a term mentioned by Sanjay Tewari), in order to better themselves. Dr Wardhaugh also commented on the ‘Mumbai Dream’. Dr Saraswati extended this notion on a national scale and spoke of how middle class Indians are now being sold the ‘Indian Dream’. When trying to elicit why people were migrating to Mumbai, certain factors were arrived at: poverty arising out of rural economic conditions and landlessness leading to migration and urbanisation of cities such as Mumbai. The interviewees supported the idea that overcrowding and lack of jobs for this growing urban population, as well as a lack of suitable

jobs for those who are unskilled or not educated in the conventional sense, leads to people taking up menial tasks and sometimes even engaging in activities such as begging which is regarded as deviant behaviour, in order to attempt to realise the high aspirations they set out to achieve in the city. Having outlined factors arising out of low socio-economic means, I concluded that it seemed unjust to be criminalising behaviour that emanated from desperately poor conditions. The next logical question which arose was why such legislation is endorsed and implemented in the present day, given the social problems surrounding such an activity. I, therefore, decided to question the structures leading to labelling and controlling of beggars through notions of power.

I went on to investigate the politics that are present on the streets and notions of power emanating from those higher up in the street politics hierarchy. 'Street politics' in the context of begging drew out yet more complexities between the different actors within the begging pyramid, with those of the lowest socio-economic stratum at the bottom. One surprising finding was how in some cases a beggar can intimidate a donor and this was noted and supported by both Chinmay Kanchi and Dr Wardhaugh. Ultimately, however, it was those at the top of the pyramid that controlled those in the descending layers, illustrating a power politics at play. Criminalising those that are poor through labelling them seems unfair and many of the interviewees shared this stance. Those responsible for creating 'crimes of status' are those in high legal positions dictated by those in even higher posts within governance. The concluding points, therefore, revolved around the fact that legislation criminalising beggary was enforced in order to control the masses, in line with Foucault who argued that marginalisation created a notion of 'othering' and further stigmatised and socially excluded those living on the fringes. Although legislation that is enforced produces these negative

consequences, in my judgement the media also plays a part in influencing people's views of beggary being a negative activity.

In this concluding chapter my thoughts on begging in the context of Mumbai seemed to have come together in establishing the very complex nature of the regulation of begging through religion and the State. There are shortcomings of this study. The first is the fact that I was unable to go into the field to conduct an ethnographic study as I was not allowed to do so by the Indian authorities. The current research is therefore dependent on data and observations from previous begging studies of other scholars. However, in its absence, I have through the help of a number of academics, diverse in their disciplines, and through the use of religious and legal perspectives arrived at a conclusion that highlights the regulation of begging as being highly political and a deliberate attempt by those higher up to maintain a stance whereby the beggars are criminalised and retained in a subordinate position to maintain a hierarchical society.

The second shortcoming is that an absolute figure for the begging population would be difficult to ascertain as this demographic is in a constant state of flux, given that many are thought to be migrants, many of whom are thought to be engaged in other types of labour when they are not begging.

Another limitation of the study is my limited range of sample of interviewees. I have collated the views of a number of interviewees which substantiate my viewpoint. The relationship between the interviewees and the issue is complex as is the phenomenon itself, emanating from both their personal experiences and academic research maintaining certain

standpoints providing fuel for debate within both the written thesis and documentary. A limitation of using the sample I did was that as a result of them all being educated up to and beyond degree level, the answers were very well informed even where the interviewee was not an expert. Had I been able to go into the field and been able to obtain interviews from people involved in the activity of begging or even regular lay people with not as great an insight into the begging issue, I may have been able to access a wider range of views. However, the sample did belong to four different categories; academics, religious experts, Ph.D. researchers and a miscellaneous category, which in itself provided a heteroglossic text of voices that I had envisaged bringing a diversity of views from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

A careful consideration and analysis of the regulation of begging from religious through to secular laws seems to ultimately point towards a politicisation of begging by those in high posts of governance and even within the realms of religion. Whilst in the written thesis, the politicisation of begging has been explored in an analytical manner, this became even more explicit in the documentary, again with an analytical manner through the images of begging and the responses of the interviewees, many of whom seemed to have been influenced by what was reported and represented by the media. The interviewees' responses combined with the visual images of contemporary religious and secular begging provided the complexity which I wanted to draw out, which brought about the sense of realism I set out to provide. Hence, I attain the initial aim of presenting the real nature of the begging phenomenon and fulfil my social responsibility as a filmmaker. However, with *Mumbai Dreams*, my role as a filmmaker was not just observational, but also one which involved intervening and shifting the position of the beggars with regard to moving away from the

regular negative light in which they are portrayed. I, therefore, translate the academic study where I write of the regulation of begging via religious and secular laws into an engaging audio-visual documentary which provides me with a power over the audience, where I provide my gaze which alters the dynamics of how the beggar is perceived. Although the documentary, *Mumbai Dreams*, sets out to explore the causes of begging and the special nature of the audio-visual presentation complemented the written thesis as it too moved from a social arena through using the theme of the 'Mumbai Dream', greater emphasis is placed in the documentary on many of these migrants in search of a dream.

There is an audio-visual debate about effects of the regulatory nature of begging using the theme of *Mumbai Dreams* on a conceptual level, whereby people are attracted to a city of potential dreams but instead become caught up in a dystopia. Within the sphere of religion a debate ensues as to the effects of the hierarchical caste system. I, therefore, subvert the 'othering' of begging societies that religion and politics are creating by critiquing the manner in which religion and politics treat the notion of begging. In doing so, I create a case for the beggars and question the need to regulate begging.

The topic for the written thesis comprising regulation of begging through religious and secular laws and power notions emanating from them was clear and the argument flowed from a religious to a secular sphere using an analysis of both religious and secular laws, literary and film works as well as responses of interviewees (which despite the limitation discussed of the random sample belonged to a diverse range of disciplines which enhanced the discussion through supporting evidence which was engaging, and also in some cases such as Dr Wardhaugh, where she has been involved with research within the domain of work on

people living on the margins, the contribution has been one of authority within the field) and supporting images which provided evidence. An interpretation of these rich resources assisted me in providing an engaging critique of my chosen topic.

Although it was interesting to learn the commonality between religious and secular laws in their controlling and exclusionary impact on begging, whether the scriptures are followed so closely in contemporary times would be questionable. Religion in a broader sense is comprised of laws in order to provide an infrastructure to any given believer's life. The laws in any religion are there to be followed by believers and in that sense will only ever be changed by 'heretics' finding other sects within the same common belief or through reform within the religion. In any event, how closely anybody adheres to a religion in accordance to scriptures is debateable? The secular law controlling begging in Mumbai and many parts of India is much more amenable to the possibility of it being reformed. The BPBA 1959 is a piece of legislation which has been inherited from the British Raj and one that is, *prima facie*, ignorant of the very complex nature of begging as an activity, as it sweeps a criminalising blanket over a diverse range of people occupying the street. Although laws are supposed to be enacted in order to provide justice to any given society, the BPBA 1959 seems to be stigmatising the activity of begging and incarcerating people of low socio-economic means within a wide remit. It seems the BPBA 1959 itself needs to be re-drafted or abolished. Labelling poor and destitute people as criminals and punishing them does not solve the issue of begging. Further, the whole question of religious mendicancy does not seem to be addressed within this Act at the outset and it is hoped that the austerity of wandering mendicants may be maintained without being criminalised. Indeed, there are a myriad of categories of people begging for various reasons such as socio-economic, religious, through to

differential association. Apart from the ascetic begging voluntarily seeking salvification, the underlying reason for people begging on a secular level appears to be as a result of a lack of socio-economic means for which they are regulated through a piece of legislation which is passed by those at the top of a hierarchy. I argue that the begging phenomenon on this secular level is criminalised, politicised and in the end, caused by the political elite. Surely, the political system and infrastructure is failing many of the destitute people and pushing them towards a deviant lifestyle, leading them to a life on the streets at the bottom of the pyramid, whilst those at the top are in a position which enables them to continue to control the masses. Given this scenario, legislators need to review the BPBA 1959 and they need to understand the multivariate causes of the phenomenon of begging. However, in my opinion the situation that we are dealing with may not be about the fact that they do not ‘understand’, but that they ‘don’t want to understand’ and hence in such a situation, the future seems bleak for those on the street. It therefore appears that the political will is not there to help these individuals that comprise communities that inhabit the street. The wide remit of the definition of begging under the legislation seems to be carefully constructed by those drafting it as it is often an effort to clean and beautify the streets in a cosmetic fashion, removing any evidence of informal street activity. In that respect the BPBA 1959 never set out to prevent begging and therefore it does not do so. By locking up people for singing on the street, or punishing someone for vending, just two examples of a whole host that I could provide, begging is not prevented and indeed is not meant to be prevented. Within the thesis there have been pointers towards recommending that instead of concentrating on the BPBA 1959, maybe the legislative arm should nuance the IPC, section 363A, by extending and expanding the focus from children to protecting adults too. Actually implementing it would be a first step towards providing justice for the disenfranchised demographic amongst Indian society and hence

saving people from becoming trapped into what seems an intergenerational vicious cycle of begging. Further, integrating current rehabilitative programs engaging those unskilled street dwellers on a wider scale could also be a way forward for the State.

## GLOSSARY

*Acharaya*- A Hindu term for Priest

*Anna Dana*- The Hindu concept of sharing food

*Aranyakas*- Hindu forest treatises

*Artha*- Wealth, one of the four aims within Hinduism

*Ashramas*- Stages of Life within Hinduism

*Ashrama-Dharma*- The ethical organisation of the four stages of life, *brahmachari* (Hindu student), *gryhastha* (householder), *vanaprastha* (forest-dweller) and *sannyasi* (Hindu renunciant) which a Hindu is expected to go through in order to reach the final stage of *moksha* (liberation)

*Babas*- Common term/slang for an older aged renunciant

*Bhagavad Gita* or *Bhagavadgita*- Hindu sacred textual source

*Bhai(s)*- A term for older brother(s) in Hindi, but in the context of this thesis it is used as a term for those who are higher up in the mafia hierarchy

*Brahmachari*- A Hindu Student at the first stage of life within Hinduism

*Brahmanas*- Explanatory Hindu texts for rituals

*Chatram*- A centre of hospitality along the road to pilgrim centres

*Dana*- The concept of giving, the term is used both in the Buddhist and Hindu tradition

*Dharma*- Religious duty within the Hindu tradition

*Dharma Shastras*- Hindu sacred textual source

*Dharmic duty*- Religious duty. The obligation/duty of doing that which is noted as righteous (dharma) within the Hindu tradition.

*Fakir*- A *Fakir* is a Muslim religious mendicant

*Fanaa*- Self-abandonment in Sufi Islam, a mystical sect of Islam which endorses an ascetic lifestyle

*Gryhastha*- Householder

*Guru*- Term given to Master in Hinduism

*Guru Nanak*- Founder of the Sikh religion

*Hijra*- South Asian term given to a eunuch or a member of the third sex

*Itihasa*- Hindu term for history

*Karma*- A theory in Hinduism and Buddhism that advocates, what you sow, you shall reap, if not in this life then in another. Mahadevan notes the three kinds of karma:

“Hindu thinkers distinguish three kinds of *karma*; *sancita*, *prarabdha* and *agami*. *Sancita* is all the accumulated karma of the past. Part of it is seen in the character of the individual, his tendencies and aptitudes, inclinations and desires, etc. *Prarabdha* is that portion of the past *karma* which is responsible for the present body. *Agami* is the coming *karma* which includes also the *karma* that is being gathered at present.”

*Karmic Law*- The use of the theory of Karma

*The Laws of Manu*- Also known as *Manusmriti*. A Hindu sacred textual source, written by Manu, the Lawgiver

*Mahabharata*- Traditional Hindu epic

*Manu*- Author of the *Manusmriti*, also known as *The Laws of Manu*

*Manusmriti* or *Manu Smriti* or *Manavadharmashastra*- Also known as *The Laws of Manu*. A Hindu sacred textual source, written by Manu, the Lawgiver

*Maya Nagri*- A Hindu term for “magic city”

*Moksha*- Liberation, the ultimate aim within Hinduism

*Paan-Supari shop*- Shop specialising in the sale of betel nut

*Pseudo-Fakirs*- False *Fakirs* (for meaning of *Fakir*- see above)

*Punye*- Term used for religious merit in Hinduism

*Puranas*- Hindu sacred scriptures, literally old books

*Purushasthras*- The four aims within Hinduism: *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (pleasure), *Dharma* (duty), *Moksha* (liberation)

*Ramana*- Traditional Hindu epic

*Rig Veda*- Hindu sacred textual source

*Rudraksh- Rudraksha* means the eye of *Rudra* (*Shiva*- A Hindu God) considered to be the most potent manifestation of the Cosmic Force. Hence, *Rudraksha* is the object of veneration and also the source to reach the higher self. *Rudraksh* beads are therefore, a religious Hindu symbol.

*Sadharana Dharma*- There are universal duties within Hinduism, *Sadharana Dharma*, which are independent of the class an individual belongs to or the stage he or she has reached in life. These are: steadfastness, forgiveness, application, non-application, cleanliness, repression of sensuous appetites, wisdom, learning, veracity and restraint of anger.

*Sadhu*- Male ascetic, term for a Hindu renunciant who severs ties with society in order to find Moksha (liberation); the equivalent to *Bhikhus* in Buddhism, *Fakirs* in Islam.

*Sadhvis*- Female ascetics.

*Sannyasi*- Term used for Hindu renunciant who severs ties with society in order to find Moksha (liberation); the equivalent to *Bhikhus* in Buddhism, *Fakirs* in Islam.

*Seva*- Concept of providing support for the needy; Selfless service

*Shiva*- A revered Hindu God

*Shruti*- Hindu primary sacred texts (That which is revealed)

*Smriti*- Hindu secondary sacred texts (That which is remembered)

*Smriti*- Also a Hindu term for codes of law

*Usher*- a religious tax on agricultural produce at the rate of 5% of one's produce from the irrigated land holding subject to an initial exemption limit of 948kg of wheat or its equivalent

*Vanaprastha*- Forest-Dweller

*Veda*- Hindu sacred textual source

*Zakat*- A levy on specific forms of private wealth as authorised by Islam.

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## APPENDIX 1

### PUBLICATIONS WRITTEN BY ACADEMICS FEATURED IN *MUMBAI DREAMS*

Only Dr Julia Wardhaugh's publications were directly relevant to my thesis and I have referred to these throughout the written element of my research. Certain broadly relevant publications by academics I interviewed have been included here to provide an insight into the rationale of the academics.

#### 1. DR. JULIA WARDHAUGH

##### Books

Wardhaugh, J, and Jones, J. (1999). Begging in time and space: 'shadow work' and the rural context. In Dean, H. (ed.) **Begging Questions: Street-level economic activity and social policy failure**. Place: Publishers

Wardhaugh, J. (2000). **Sub-city: Young People, Homelessness and Crime**. Ashgate: Aldergate

##### Journals

Wardhaugh, J. (1996). Homelessness in Chinatown. Deviance and social control in Cardboard City. **Sociology: The Journal of the British Sociological Association**. Vol.30 No.4. p701-716

Wardhaugh, J. (1999). The unaccommodated woman: home, homelessness and identity in **The sociological review**: Vol 47 No1

Wardhaugh, J. (2009). Regulating social space: Begging in two South Asian cities. **Crime, Media, Culture**. <http://cmc.sagepub.com/content/5/3/333>

Wardhaugh, J. (2011). Beyond the Workhouse: regulating vagrancy in Goa, India. **Asian Journal of Criminology**. pp1-19. <http://www.springerlink.com/content/7h626r3458053723>

Wardhaugh, J. (2012a). "Feminist Perspectives on Homelessness" in **International Encyclopaedia of Housing and Home**, Vol.2, pp163-171. Elsevier

Wardhaugh, J. (2012b). "Policies to address Homelessness: Criminalisation and Control of Public Space". In S.J. Smith (ed.) **International Encyclopaedia of Housing and Home**, Vol.5, pp215-229. Elsevier

Wardhaugh, J. (2012c). Rural Homelessness in India. In S.J. Smith (ed.) **International Encyclopaedia of Housing and Home**, Vol.6, pp216-225. Elsevier

**2. DR MUZAMMIL QURAIISHI**

Quraishi, M. (2005). **Muslims and Crime: A Comparative study**. Aldershot: Ashgate

**3. DR SANTANU DAS**

Das, S. (2011). **Race, Empire and First World War Writing**. UK: Cambridge University Press

**4. DR MEENA DHANDA**

Dhanda, M. (2008). **Reservations for Women**. New Delhi: Kali Press/Women Unltd

**5. PROFESSOR ISHTIAQ AHMED**

Ahmed, I. (2011). **The Politics of religion in South and Southeast Asia**. London: Routledge

**6. DR JYOTI SARASWATI**

Saraswati, J. (2012). **Dot.compradors: Power and Policy in the Development of the Indian Software Industry (IIPPE)**. Pluto Press

**7. DR PRITAM SINGH**

Singh, P. (2010). **Economy, Culture and Human Rights: Turbulence in Punjab, India and Beyond**. New Delhi: Three Essays Collective

**8. DR KUNAL SEN**

Sen, K. (2006). "Did agricultural growth trickle down in India? What do we really know" in **India Macroeconomics Annual**. pp126-167

**9. DR PRITI PARIKH**

Parikh, P, Chaturvedi, S, and George, G, (2012). Empowering change: The effects of energy provision on individual aspirations in slum communities. **Energy Policy**, Volume 50, November 2012, Pages 477–485. Special Section: Past and Prospective Energy Transitions - Insights from History. Elsevier

Dr Shinder Thandi's writings deal with mostly diaspora and therefore have not been included here.

Prof Soumendra Patnaik is an Anthropologist and most of his writings are on Indian tribes which were not relevant for this thesis.

I was unable to access relevant publications of the three Indian academics, Dr Tara Chand Tikkiwal who has retired and Dr Basawraj Gulshetty.

## APPENDIX 2

### TRANSCRIPT: MUMBAI DREAMS

#### Visuals

Location shot of marine drive

Shot of celebrities

Shot of workers in the city

**Dr Santanu Das:**

Shot of celebrities

**Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed:**

Shot of marine drive

**Dr Muzammil Quraishi:**

Shot of marine drive

**Dr Priti Parikh:**

Shot of beggars

Shot of marine drive

#### Sound

soundtrack Behene de (running under entire introductory clip)

soundtrack Galvanise

soundtrack Behene de

I think middle class Indians or upper class Indians should feel absolutely ashamed that on the one hand we hear the slogan Golden India or India shining and yet a significant section of the population still don't have enough food or clothes let alone privileges of education. So, there is a way of thinking that these people are lazy but I don't think people are lazy enough to go starving

soundtrack Galvanise

In Mumbai you find this stark difference between the rich and the well-to-do and the poor and so the beggars in Mumbai are to be found in very large numbers, wherever you go they come.

soundtrack Behene de

The causes are multiple. There are multiple causes I believe for begging in the same way that there are multiple causes for crime, one can't put this in one box.

There's a full string of reasons as to why begging is such a serious issue in Bombay

soundtrack Behene de

**Dr Meena Dhandra:**

We have a religious ethos in which it is accepted as a part of life that some people are going to beg in order to make a living

News report NDTV

Mumbai's streets are a beggar's paradise. There are more than 10,000 beggars in the city and at least 50% of them are children. Many are rescued but find their way back on the streets.

Shots of beggars

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

This is controversial but I do believe there are, you can call them gang masters. Often, I call them beggars pimps in the same sense that we talk about prostitution and they organise people to beg and live off the earnings. Some people say that's a myth but I have actually observed that.

**Professor Soumendra Mohann Patnaik:**

See, if you look at the whole phenomenon of begging one might immediately include the economic reasons but in addition to that I'd also like the loss of social support mechanism often leads a person to beg

Shot of marine drive

**Dr Santanu Das:**

Lack of educational infrastructure and one layer of people that are not properly educated and if they're almost trapped in a particular layer of society which restricts social mobility and as a result that forces them onto begging

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

I believe that in Mumbai, more than half the city are living in squatter settlements. Few people can trace their family background a couple of generations even. It's almost entirely a city of migrants and people coming in from the neighbouring states from all over the country

Shot of marine drive

**Dr Jyoti Saraswati:**

So the idea that you're born into a family of extreme poverty, there's very little chance of you rising out of that system

**Bhima Auro:**

Begging is just a function of a broken system in my opinion

**Vivek Nallur:**

You're living the privileged life where there are these little kids who should not have to beg for food and you feel so clearly at some level that this is just demeaning, this is not how life should be.

Clip of beggar approaching car

Fade to black

**Title:**

**Mumbai Dreams**

Text

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

It's the Indian dream, it's the "Bollywood Dream", especially Mumbai because it's the home of Bollywood, movies and that kind of myth, the dream of riches and so on, it's particularly that. Generally cities, will represent that dream, that promise, that hope of social mobility of escaping not only poverty but very fixed social positions in a village, where you have traditional expectations, where you have a place prescribed to you by birth....people feel they can move beyond that.....they can become anybody.....it's often a myth, it may become a nightmare just as much as a dream.....

**Visuals and sound for Narration**

Location shots of Mumbai

Often seen as a *Maya Nagri*, roughly translated as a city of Magic, Mumbai is represented as a city which can provide opportunities

shots from Bollywood premieres

and it is in search of this luck that people are lured to this hub.....  
which is home to many of the

shots from Bollywood premieres

rich and famous, housing the glamorous people of Bollywood and financial executives

more shots of premieres....launches of Bollywood films

However, amidst this glitz and glamour we also witness a less fortunate section of society

series of shots of streets with

which seems to be living in contrast on

dispossessed, slum shots

the margins of society. These people seem to be begging within the very city that on the face of it seems to ooze wealth.

shots of dispossessed

15 secs of just visuals

shots of city

If Mumbai is a *maya nagri* where people expect to find opportunities,

split screen shot. Rich/poor

why do we witness this disparity between the super rich and poor?

## **Text**

## **RELIGION**

### **Image of Temple**

### **Visuals**

footage from a prayer session

### **Sound**

Prayer by Priest

### **Dr Meena Dhanda:**

There could be a number of cultural religious factors responsible for the acceptance of begging in the city.....

*The Laws of Manu* actually not only permits begging but prescribes begging. It tells some people that they must go and beg

### **Dr Basawraj Gulshetty:**

The culture of the Indian tradition. The religious problem- there was the beggar used to visit door to collect the information- it was the tradition of the beggars when we go back to the history of beggary. It is a privilege, advantage of Indian culture.

### **Acharaya Umesh Yadav:**

Begging in our Scriptures is noted as a very noble concept. Begging encourages humility. Begging therefore helps society.

### **Acharaya Dharm Dutt Vasistha:**

Charity (*Daan*) is a part of religion (*Dharam*). Charity and pity are two different things. Charity is a righteous deed, done to cleanse the soul but giving to the poor is termed pity. When one feels pity for another he or she will give to that person.

**Acharaya Umesh Yadav:**

There was a good system of begging in the vedic era and there were then Gurukul place to place and all people used to send their children whether they're poor, they're rich, they're kings, they're public of the nation. All used to send their children to the same Gurukul and so in a Gurukul there are similar facilities for all student/disciples and there was a good system of begging of food, clothes and other things all together, all children/disciples and students from Gurukul used to go door to door to beg for food. "O Mai Mateh bhiksham de" = "Oh Mother, give us alms"

**Dr Tara Chand Tikkiwal:**

In religion there is an institution for charity but to encourage beggary is actually not – charity is something different- being charitable means if you can spare a little of your earnings in either in cash or in kind it's better to share it with those who are not so well off. To give something either in cash or in kind to a beggar. I don't think you are following any religious tradition

**Acharaya Umesh Yadav:**

Some people have a right to beg. Who has a right to beg? Brahmins do. Why? Because the Brahmin gives the Kshtriya an education. The Brahmin educates society. Brahmins enlighten society, so the Brahmin looks after his needs but also takes on the responsibility for everyone else.

**Shyamal Kataria:**

In terms of in the Hindu culture, there are different varieties of culture in Hinduism. Generally speaking Brahmins are – or giving donations or charity to Brahmins is supposed to be one of the most auspicious or credible things that any Caste Hindu can do.....the culture of Brahmins 1000s of years of culture they're supposed to be immersed in spiritual work especially Sadhus not supposed to be involved in material work and only beg for subsistence on donation rather than engaging in formal work.....

**Acharaya Dharm Dutt Vasistha:**

Sannyasis only beg for food. He will beg for money, just food, for example two chappatis....enough for one meal and not for the

next meal. His dharma is to just take enough for his hunger at that time.....

**Professor Soumendra Mohann Patnaik:** The space is very important in Delhi whether you are donating alms or giving the alms on the railway station or you are donating alms in front of temples, because by giving the beggar in a religious place or sacred space the person feels it will give him a lot of bank balance, punye, to reach heaven. As if God will be pleased. As if God's reason is only limited to this kind of sacred territory.

**Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed:** Sadhus go around asking for alms just anything to survive and apparently they are meditating and they have given up everything but that's I think only a partial or very minor portion of this, most of these people are from the deprived castes, the so called untouchables and so on- who wherever they go will be shunned away and they are not welcome as part of mainstream society....And so in a large city how else they could become part of a city that are denied and deprived so I think that reinforces the economic disadvantages/the historical disadvantage and the fact of a large city where there is no support base for them. The traditional structures are not there so I think the caste system is a great evil which continues to plague society in India.

**Dr Santanu Das:** I wonder whether there is a relationship between the caste system and the religious associations or attitudes towards begging because often the upper caste people are the people who dwell out to preside over these villages rituals and they are the people who then will be giving money to their so called lower caste people who in the first place have been discriminated. So I think there is a structure of hypocrisy also going on.

**Dr Muzammil Quraishi:** In India, of course, we have the Caste system and the caste system of course is illegal in terms of – to discriminate upon caste is illegal- under India's democratic laws it is illegal but we know there is a social reality whereby mobility is linked to your position based on caste, so culturally you have restrictions on the types of professions that individuals can in fact be

enrolled and engaged with. So, immediately we are talking about religion there has in fact led to forms of segregation and economic hardship. But it's a controversial area because people are .....it's a taboo subject also and I'm not sure that people will openly speak about this.....

**Dr Santanu Das:**

In India, even pre-colonial India had been a very feudal and very hierarchical society bound by strict rules of caste and class, so if the lowest caste didn't have adequate resources of money they would be looking towards the upper castes to help them, so I think the socio-culture, though even if we have gone beyond the caste system especially in the urban centres some of the structures still permeate the way empathy is manipulated.

**Narration**

There is a contentious debate surrounding the idea of whether begging is associated with caste and a discussion whether most beggars are untouchable would be a very sensitive subject. However, the point to be taken at this stage is that there is a strong cultural ethos largely emanating from religion that promotes begging.

**Professor Soumendra Mohann Patnaik:**

In Maharashtra, especially Mumbai, there is a very strong feeling of Hindutva. Most of the people are guided by the religious idea of not disappointing a beggar at a house. Householder is obliged to perform duty of Dharma. That could promote activities when passing by beggar on roadside, that doesn't impose the same moral injunction on you to donate something.

**Narration**

However, people will not always give as a result of a religious duty. Many will give simply out of a sense of compassion.

**Question: Why do you give to beggars?**

Text

**Chinmay Kanchi:**

It's usually just empathy or pity if you see a starving child it's very hard to just look away.....

**Vivek Nallur:**

As you grow up, you tend to be a little more cynical and you understand that its not solving anything because the moment you give alms or food or money it just goes back to a syndicate. I mean you would help people if you think it actually helped them but once you realise it's not actually going into their pockets you stop doing it. Once in a while, there's a twinge of conscience and you see someone really suffering and then you still do it anyway.

**Musa Askari:**

There is a sense of immediacy and you are confronted either directly or indirectly and you have a choice to turn away, say there's no point giving, the small rupees that you offer or donation that you make- what difference will it make?...well, collectively, generally it might not make any difference to the whole system that brings about such poverty- why ignore something really important about people- which is at that moment you can make a difference.....

**Vinoth Suryanarayanan:**

Whenever, I feel there is a genuine case and if I don't give I feel guilty about that so, there are some genuine people out there.

**Bhima Auro:**

It's out of empathy for another human being's condition. Somehow, you never give enough to alleviate their suffering but you give enough of what you can of yourself at that moment. You give what you can at that moment. I guess that's the best we can do as an individual at that moment.

**Mafia Text**

Text

**Vinoth Suryanarayanan:**

Apart from a few genuine reasons I feel many of the causes right now I see it as a profession rather than a genuine case for begging.

**Shyamal Kataria:**

Many Indians are slightly more cynical in that regard in that they regard many beggars though not all as being career beggars in that they could be potentially working in other things but they choose not to

**Vivek Nallur:**

A major factor is the presence of begging syndicates, essentially it's organised crime, they

kidnap kids, mutilate them and force them to beg. Obviously the economics of it works out because otherwise they wouldn't do it. As in it takes very little to feed a child and obviously the returns on having that child nagging away at people's guilt even if they get alms twice a day over the course of a twelve hour day would still work out for them. So there's a very systematic effort to make sure the begging.

**Acharaya Umesh Yadav:**

Mafia groups kidnap poor children and mutilate them. This happens a lot in Bombay as you asked about this city. That's because it is a big city and the whole world goes there as they believe they will earn riches but there are also illegal businesses there, such as mafia groups kidnapping and mutilating children leaving them on the roadside to beg or at the temple. They give them a little to eat and clothe them but keep the rest of the money.

**Dr Basawaraj Gulshetty:**

In Bombay it is a profession, as I am an academic, there are certain institutions that encourage begging.

**Acharaya Umesh Yadav:**

In present times, the concept of begging has been exploited and used by Mafias. ....some people are misusing the begging system and I think these people who are begging and who are not use the begging money in the right way are no doubt cheating and deceiving and misusing the begging system.

**Dr Basawaraj Gulshetty:**

In Bombay it is a profession, there are certain institutions, as I'm an academician, there are certain institutions that encourage beggary through- It's a profession. As far as the knowledge comes, it is there.

**Bhima Auro:**

You see if you think about what begging is, it's a means of survival, so in that sense, yes, it's a profession. Criminal gangs use it in order to get money, they use it to extort control and as a result become more powerful to fund their operations in other areas, perhaps. The bottom line is, it maybe a criminal business but its still a business activity nonetheless and the

fundamental concept behind any business is this concept of making money, of making a profit.

**Dr Priti Parikh:**

In India there is an informal industry sometimes where you'd have the so called leaders who would recruit children for begging.....it can be quite vicious.

as the theory goes, for example, if a child beggar has more disabilities then he is given more donations.....An organised network and leaders recruit when the children beg, they take money from the children, only a proportion goes to children, which is a shame as people don't know that most of it goes to the mafia.

**Professor Soumendra Mohann Patnaik:**

Many times young children are lured into the practice of begging and sometimes they are not only hired, they are also forcefully inducted. If you look into the whole linkages, how the begging unfolds, you will find that there is a person who controls the whole economy of begging and the people are given different colours to invoke the sympathy of the donors, of the common citizens deforming their limbs, creating some injuries and projecting these injuries in front of the common people and they're all done in a very organised way, so if you look into the system of begging then sometimes you'll find how deep-rooted the problem is and if you want to thwart the whole institution, if you want to challenge the whole institution you need to be a very powerful person because those who control the whole process of begging they are well connected to the high ups in the local hierarchies.

**Narration**

What the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act does is place criminality of begging into a legal code which is in stark contrast to the religious take on begging and the compassion that can very often emanate from it.

Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959

No sound.....text scroll

According to the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959 begging is an illegal activity and an imprisonable offence.

Definition of Begging according to the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959:

- a. soliciting or receiving alms, in a public place whether or not under any pretence such as singing, dancing, fortune-telling, performing or offering any article for sale;
- b. entering on any private premises or the purpose of soliciting or receiving alms;
- c. exposing or exhibiting, with the object of obtaining or extorting alms, any sore, wound injury, deformity of diseases whether of a human being or animal;
- d. having no visible means of subsistence and wandering about or remaining in any public place in such condition or manner, as makes it likely that the person doing so exist soliciting or receiving alms  
But does not include soliciting or receiving money or food or given for a purpose authorised by any law, or authorised in the manner prescribed by the Deputy Commissioner or such other officer as specified in this behalf by the Chief Commissioner.
- e. allowing oneself to be used as an exhibit for the purpose of soliciting or receiving alms;

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

From my point of view, I find that very interesting because it virtually is the British Vagrancy Acts exported from a very specific social, economic cultural context to a very different one and they're using very similar measures. I find that extraordinary in a way, it was developed and designed if you like for a Victorian Britain, the 1824 Vagrancy Act for example, and then suddenly virtually the same legislation in very many respects becomes a 1959 Bombay Act for completely different socio-cultural contexts, still with the same name of controlling, criminalising, designating some people as worthy (the deserving poor) who could receive alms and then keeping the others separate and saying they're disreputable people, they're idle, they're not willing to work and probably criminally inclined.

**Vivek Nallur:**

According to the law, begging is illegal and in some sense if you're a beggar, you could be arrested, but that doesn't harm the giver of alms, it only harms the person who actually begs.

**Dr Priti Parikh:**

But there are a couple of flaws with this legislation because they're not solving the problem of poverty, they're not solving the problem of services, housing, education, so it's more of a cosmetic solution where you're trying to just hide the slums or just take children off the street for a short while but it's interesting how the incentive for this programme is more focussed on image rather than the root of the problem.

**Dr Shinder Thandi:**

Maybe it's to do with the fact that it's not an attractive sight for international tourists or whatever the reason, they want to beautify the city and hide the problem, so in that case they may have various drives.

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

Criminalising activities associated with being homeless or with being poor sociologically we call that a crime of status rather than behaviour, criminalising the act, the existence of being poor and a homeless person.

**Dr Meena Dhanda:**

There is this legislation against begging which was put in place in 1959 and it's pretty much in the lettering of the law, it disallows begging of all kinds anywhere. It even disallows singing in order to beg but clearly one has seen in all the years that one has been to Bombay on many occasions that this doesn't seem to have made any difference at all to begging as an activity. I'm not surprised. I think that a legislation which doesn't have very many clear means of enforcement which doesn't have the sympathy of people on whom it is being imposed is not going to work. I can see that a lot of people on whom it is being imposed is not going to work. I can see that a lot of people in the city do not find the idea of begging necessarily abhorrent, and even if they did they're not gonna take recourse to the law to have so whose begging punished. It seems too cruel and doesn't seem to be the proper response to the problem of someone begging in order to find sustenance in the city. You would want to think that there must be some other way to stop someone having to beg and I say having to beg as it wouldn't be the first choice of

somebody if they had any other way of making a living in the city.

**Dr Shinder Thandi:**

I think it's very difficult to say that any anti-begging campaign has been successful because if you look at large cities, if you look at a city like Mumbai, begging is still a major issue, in Delhi it's a major issue. Yes, the location might have changed a little bit but unless there is effective implementation, unless also there are alternatives after all, you're not removing the underlying causes so until the underlying causes of the begging problem are eradicated you're not going to eradicate begging just by legislation.

**Narration**

Despite the religious and legal elements of begging the media presents us with, largely, a negative approach which has filtered through to the masses whereby in recent years the representation of the mafia controlling beggars has flooded the media whether its news reports or popular culture

**Dr Pritam Singh:**

One reads from the literature and one comes across in bollywood films mainly fiction:

Audio-visual clip of book

*White Tiger,*

Audio-visual clip of

and also *SlumDog Millionaire,*

both give an indication of some criminal networks that use begging.

There is other literature that suggests that limbs are chopped off and deliberately disabled and then they are organised by gangs to collect money during the day and picked up by night and all the collections they have made and used by gangs and they are punished if they don't make enough collection.

**Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed:**

There are organisations that exploit these people and so it's a crime against humanity that goes on, it's a heinous crime I would say, but it's quite common to find such illegal, immoral groups exploiting such people.

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

Certainly it's organised in many respects. People may not want to be organised but they find themselves drawn into it, for example, gangs or individuals might control an area and only allow them to beg if they're given a portion of the money they earn- they're drawn into that shady activity

**Dr Muzammil Quraishi:**

I think it's a misunderstanding to think that beggars as somehow a career beggar. I think that people are deprived. I think people are deprived for a number of reasons, be they psychological, be they economic, be they people who are fleeing oppression either through political disturbances, sectarian differences and also pressures from the environment in terms of their livelihood and the way in which they survive.

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

...Sometimes that comes from a very critical perspective. People say they're not really poor, in fact they're lazy but they find this is an easier way to make a living and I don't have much sympathy with that perspective. I find that's often a way of rejecting the individual...denying the poverty.

**Dr Shinder Thandi:**

Certain criminal gangs are using these vulnerable groups, these disempowered people in order to maximise their income. There is evidence of these criminal, the criminal mafia in Mumbai. In Mumbai, there's an awful lot of activity.

**Dr Pritam Singh:**

This is a very widespread view of the Indian middle class and that section of the middle class which actually does not want to give to the beggars and sometimes its used as an excuse not to give any money. I'm not very sure whether the entire begging can be attributed to criminal networks, there may be .....you can't deny, in a poor country, anything of this kind is possible....where people will try to make money out of any desperate situation.

**Dr Shinder Thandi:**

Provision of better housing, better welfare services for these poor people, if they have proper colonies earmarked for them, it's unlikely that

you're gonna get rid of this problem. So unless the underlying causes are removed this playing around with the symptoms in terms of maybe enforcing the Act is not really going to have much effect in the long run.

**Dr Priti Parikh:**

Everyone sees this as a short term measure, rather than a longer term solution. I think it clearly needs stronger legislation, solutions which are rooted not just for the children but also the families and solutions which influence access to services, economics, housing, health. A lot of things need to be brought into play I think.

**Dr Tara Chand Tikkiwal:**

In vast measures when we look at beggary as a social problem then begging is a profession. When those who are begging as a profession, the scenario changes radically. Begging becomes for them a subculture and it goes without saying that it is poverty, illiteracy and other such factors that are responsible for begging.

**Narration**

Is this popular perception of begging being an illegitimate activity just that, a popular perception? Are we dismissing the fact that the begging problem is a structural problem brought about through a lack of infrastructure bringing about a section of people who are socially and economically deprived. Shouldn't the begging problem be resolved by the government whose responsibility these people on the margins are in the first place?

Many resort to begging as they are pursuing a dream: the "Mumbai Dream"

**Mumbai Dream**

Text

**Dr Jyothi Saraswati:**

The Indian middle classes are now being sold the "Indian Dream" where you can be anything you want, you just need to try hard, work hard, persevere.

**Vivek Nallur:**

Bombay is India's most vibrant city at least claims to be. It provides by far the most employment opportunities and there is always the "Mumbai Dream", that is, be rich in Bombay and there's obviously a limit to the city's capacity to check into employment and the

number of people who come into Bombay thinking they would get a job are far more than the city can offer and most of these people who are migrating from villages to the city are not skilled people, not in the conventional sense at least, they're not educated so the only sorts of jobs that are available to them are menial jobs which rapidly deteriorate to begging and things like that which is why we see a lot of beggars in Bombay

**Dr Pritam Singh:**

Mumbai acts as a kind of hub to attract people from a large number of rural areas, it's not only within Maharashtra, people from the rural areas can become landless, even in some industrial towns who have lost jobs and they look upon Mumbai that they will be able to eek out a living. People from other states of India move to Mumbai, so there is a whole slum culture and people live in very sub-human conditions and so they are driven into this.

**Dr Shinder Thandi:**

The city is a magnate, it keeps on attracting more and more people, year in year out and the number of people are vastly outstripping the employment opportunities that are available.

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

It's a city of migrants really, people believe that no matter however difficult it is in the city it's got to be better than the extreme rural poverty of living on a few rupees a day and not having land. At least having the belief in some kind of mobility that you can start off in a small way but you can build it up- a little more freedom, a little more mobility. So, that's what's bringing people back, a huge magnate drawing people. Even if they're poor, once they're there, they're staying and bringing up a new generation. I think it's Mumbai more than any other city, although I couldn't speak for them all. It's the ultimate in the migrant city.

**Nuno Grancho:**

A lot of people try to find an opportunity and came from the hinterland to the Greater Mumbai because perhaps there was an idyllic vision of Mumbai as a city of changes, of opportunities, of happiness that people saw on T.V. or saw on newspapers or knew someone that knew

someone that had accomplished and they migrated.

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

Sometimes, in very busy places, that would be the most obvious thing to do, to beg in a very shopping commercial districts and so on, there's no point being in the suburb somewhere where your neighbours are just as much poor as yourself. You need to be in the central area of business and commerce where people might spend money and so on.

**Dr Pritam Singh:**

Bombay does attract a very large number of migrants because people think somehow or another they will be able to earn something in Mumbai and also because there is a lot of wealth partly associated with Bollywood and also the houses of the top industrialised like Reliance they are situated in Mumbai, TATA is another big business house, it's known to originate from Mumbai, so wealth is associated with Mumbai and it is the financial capital of India- so people think there is wealth and they'll be able to get something – so that attracts a large number of migrants- so some kind of employment shift is taking place.

**Professor Kunal Sen:**

One important factor behind begging and problem of begging in the city itself, is that we have a lot of people coming in from rural areas, where they have very little to grow, very little to survive with in farming. They come in from Maharashtra and other states looking for work and often it is the case that they do not find work that is suitable for them at all and often in that situation begging becomes the last option through which they can find ways to survive.

**Dr Priti Parikh:**

There is an increasing rate of urbanisation so there's rural to urban migration and the reasons for that range from a declining agriculture to a sense that there are more opportunities in Mumbai. Whether that is true or not is a different story but with the increasing rates of urbanisation the population density is increased in Mumbai and there are more people fighting for less resources and I think currently 60% of Mumbai actually lives in slums.

**Dr Meena Dhanda:**

There are problems of living in a big city like Mumbai (Bombay as I'm more used to calling it) a lot of them arise from the fact that there is a daily influx of a number of migrants into the city and many of them come with the expectation of finding a job, a livelihood. They had to leave the place wherever they were living before and they come with the hope of finding a livelihood in the city- The city is not always able to provide them with that livelihood.

**Professor Kunal Sen:**

A lot of labour intensive manufacture textiles, for example, have over time become less important. There has been a boom in construction in Mumbai. That draws a lot of workers but again that is very seasonal and often very cyclical. There are times when there is no housing, construction projections going on and often that leads to a situation where you have these workers tend to find other ways to survive- Begging might be one of them.

**Chinmay Kanchi:**

There have been, for example, farmer suicides where farmers have been unable to support themselves and their families because of drought or lack of irrigation or any number of things. There's, for example, a major land fragmentation problem in India where people have lots of children and they keep divvying up their land to all their children, where in the end, you end up with a little pocket of arable land which isn't enough to support your own family. So, there are a lot of serious problems with the working population in India especially the rural working population in Mumbai.

**Dr Julia Wardhaugh:**

We have to go beyond any city like Mumbai or any of the large Indian cities to look at the root of the problem in rural poverty and landlessness because that for me, where are the poor people coming from? Yes, of course it's there within the cities but in many cases there would be work and employment and enough for people but the massive influx coming in believing they're gonna have a better life in the cities- Not all but for many people that are begging they've come from that situation of rural poverty, so unless

you can tackle that and keep people in the country, keep them employed and not in such extreme circumstances that they desperately move to the cities I think that is really the root cause of it. Of course it's always been there in the cities but the massive rise we've had in recent years. I think that's down to the urbanisation, the huge shift of population into the cities.

**Chinmay Kanchi:**

The fact that you have a massive disparity of incomes and both the very rich and the very poor share the same space and also because of the population density it means that a beggar with a very low success rate can still get alms from a substantial number of people in raw numbers, and therefore, it's a potential viable profession.

**Dr Jyoti Saraswati:**

Well, I guess if I was a beggar anywhere in the world I would rather be a beggar amongst the super rich rather than amongst people who are just a little better off than me. It just makes economic sense that the super rich are probably going to have just a little more disposable income to put it lightly and hence more likely to give me a little bit.

For example, in the UK most begging at Piccadilly, Victoria or Waterloo stations trying to attack the Southbank literati wallets- And just like that in India, you'd see them in Marine Drive in Mumbai as opposed to an impoverished part of Lucknow for example.

**Chinmay Kanchi:**

In Bombay because pretty much all the richest people in the country live there and because of that and also you have people who have Ferraris or Rolls Royces or whatever sharing roads and public infrastructure with people who have nothing, so once again it is or can be much easier to find someone capable of and willing to give alms in Bombay rather than in the city where that isn't the case.

**Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed:**

.....so despite enormous economic growth the incidence of poverty remains the same- no major breakthrough there, and it must be because of those who sit in Parliament and elsewhere

belong to classes whose interests are not objectively related to the people at the bottom

**Dr Muzammil Quraishi:**

India has an increasing gross domestic product and of course they have many companies which are expanding in telecommunications, in particular, for example. So, the country is now a large consumer and also more affluent than previous decades, however, if you distribute the GDP in accordance with the population size, then you'll see that people are not actually that affluent as their Western counterparts, so there's a long way to go for individual economic affluence to in fact be comparable to anything in the West.

**Dr Jyoti Saraswati:**

Economic growth does not necessarily translate to poverty reduction. There's an entrenched myth that if a country is growing rapidly, economically, then its poverty levels must be decreasing equally, growth- poverty reduction go hand in hand. That is not necessarily the case. It depends on how the growth is being generated, how the proceeds of growth are being distributed and how the state is tackling poverty directly as well as what we see in India is that growth is primarily jobless growth, growth is being powered by high-end technology services sector and the only form of benefit the masses are getting is trickle down economic theory of sorts.....

**Professor Ishtiaq Ahmed:**

They think this will happen.....it's called the trickle down affair, that as the economy grows some benefits will accrue at the bottom and in the long run poverty will go away. Now that may take another 50 years, it may never happen.....

**Sanjay Tewari:**

As people are luring towards the urban centres and Mumbai being in terms as a *Maya Nagri* as a city of magic. People try to go over there in search of better options and at times they do not get those better options and thereafter they go down all these things.

**Dr Jyoti Saraswati:**

Most definitely it has an allure not only for the underprivileged masses but also the middle

classes.....it's where your dreams could come true, probably only for one in a million people that is.

## **Narration**

Text:

Everyday thousands of people buy into the "Mumbai Dream" and leave their rural set up in search of a better life. The majority never witness better prospects during their lifetime. A greater number of people will find themselves on the street engaging in street activity which goes beyond begging and into other domains, for example, hawking, and more worryingly sex work, areas that I haven't covered here.

Life on the street is not easy and neither is the act of begging. People engaging in begging anywhere in the world are confronted with a large number of dilemmas everyday of their lives. Contrary to popular belief, many do not choose such a life but have no other option.

## **Credits**