

Regarding first the rural/urban differentiation of the employment structure, what should be underlined is not the expected higher share of the primary sector in rural Delhi (19 per cent as against 1.3 per cent in urban Delhi)⁵, but the fact that, by Indian standards, this share remains remarkably low. In 1991, the primary sector occupied 83 per cent of the all-India rural population, and still 15 per cent of the urban population. Hence, the areas in Delhi Union Territory still qualified as rural exhibit a sectorial employment structure which resembles more to that of urban areas. This again reveals a process of metropolisation around the capital, already noticed in terms of population growth, and now corroborated in terms of economic characteristics.

To analyse the intra-urban differentiation of the employment structure, the focus will be on the major three economic functions of the capital, administrative, commercial and industrial. A first look at the maps showing the respective percentages of workers in 'community, social and personal services' (here after: 'services'; Map 4), 'trade and commerce' (Map 5) and 'non-household manufacturing and processing industries' (here after: 'manufacturing industries'; Map 6) reveals very distinctive patterns.

Residential location of workers employed in community, social and personal services

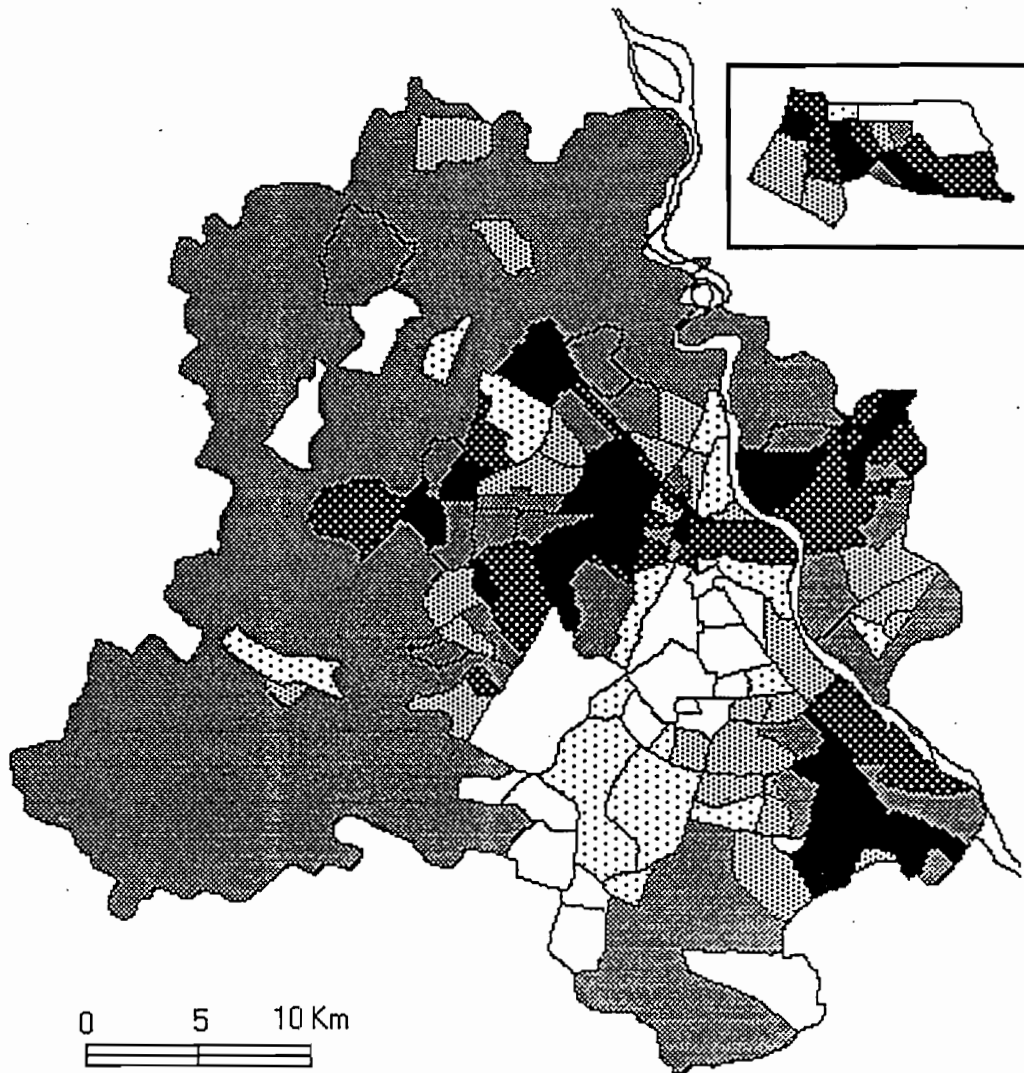
The census divisions with higher proportions of workers in services are mostly concentrated in the southern half of the agglomeration (south-east excluded) - (Map 4). In particular, the proportions range between 58 per cent and 77 per cent in New Delhi, and reach a maximum of 84 per cent in Delhi Cantonment (which comprises army quarters). Many colonies were constructed in the southern part of the town to provide housing for the very large numbers of government employees; they have engendered a pattern of residential segregation, not only between the latter and the other workers, but also among the government employees themselves since they were supplied with different categories of housing according to their official status and range of income. This specific feature of the urban landscape, and its consequences in terms of segregation along socio-economic lines, has been already underlined in studies on Delhi (SUNDARAM, 1978: 121; NAGPAUL, 1988: 188), and even qualified as "salaried apartheid" by Mitra (1970, also quoted by NAGPAUL, 1988: 188).

Another striking example in New Delhi of residential clusters for specific types of employees in services is Chanakyapuri with its concentration of foreign embassies. In the north, one census division is also remarkable, that corresponding to the Civil Lines, with its land-use pattern inherited from the British colonisation, and showing 50 per cent of workers in services.

⁵ This is mainly at the expenses of 'trade and commerce' (13 per cent of the rural workers), and - to a lesser extent - of 'community, social and personal services' (27 per cent of the rural workers).

Map 5

Percentage of workers in manufacturing and processing non-household industry among total main workers in different zones of Delhi Union Territory in 1991



Percentage of workers in manufacturing and processing non-household industry among total main workers in 1991



Average for Delhi Union Territory: 23.22 %

Based on 1991 Census data

IEG-ORSTOM

Residential location of workers in manufacturing industries

The pattern of spatial concentration of the workers in manufacturing industries is almost the opposite of the preceding one (Map 5): the census divisions with higher proportions of such workers are located in the northern half of the urban agglomeration, as well as in the south-east, in areas having lower proportions of workers in services; and reciprocally. Hence all divisions in New Delhi as well as Delhi cantonment have less than 10 per cent of workers in manufacturing. The coefficient of correlation further verifies the negative association between the two variables, quite evident in the case of male workers ($r = - 0.75$).

The share of manufacturing industries appears to have a very high degree of variation, from 2.5 per cent up to 47 per cent. What is more interesting here is to examine the location of the census divisions having higher proportion of workers in manufacturing industries in relation to the location of the main industrial areas, which reveals a good congruence. Thus, there are important concentrations of industrial workers in the south-east around the large planned Okhla industrial estate; in the west along Najafgarh road, in Naraina, along Rothak road, and in Wazirpur and around; in the north-west along Grand Trunk Karnal road; in the east in Shahdara. Lastly, in Old Delhi, pockets with high proportions of industrial workers correspond not only to the many small-scale industrial units set up in that area, but also to the location of some large ones like the Delhi Cloth Mills, Delhi Flour Mill and Birla Mills⁶. As rightly pointed out by Nagpaul (1986: 189), although "several attempts have been made to relocate some of the old industries functioning in congested parts of Old Delhi", "even today large industrial units (...) continue to function in the most thickly populated residential areas". In connection with this feature, it can be noted that the correlation coefficients reveal a positive association between population densities and the proportions of workers in manufacturing industries across charges (r being 0.35 and 0.3 in the case of males and females respectively).

Mention can be made here of the second component of manufacturing activities, the household industries. Though the proportion of workers in household manufacturing industries is extremely low, 1.4 per cent for the entire Delhi National Capital Territory, it has a high degree of variability⁷, indicating concentration of this type of activity mainly in certain specific pockets of the city (since by definition household industries are undertaken in the premises of the residential houses). Thus, half of the workers in household industries are concentrated in 28 census divisions accounting only for 16 per cent of the total work force. The point noteworthy is that most of the divisions recording higher proportions of workers in household industries,

⁶ At least till the recent Supreme Court order of closure of polluting and hazardous industrial units in Delhi, which came into effect on the 30th of November 1996.

⁷ The coefficients of variation of household manufacturing are 125.7 per cent and 134 per cent among male and female work force respectively.

between 5 and 10 per cent, are located in Old Delhi, therefore adding - although to a small extent - to the already underlined congestion of this area.

Residential location of workers in trade and commerce

Turning now to trade and commerce, there is again a clear-cut division between the southern and northern parts of the capital, even more distinct than for services and manufacturing. The higher proportions of workers engaged in trade and commerce are found essentially in areas located north of New Delhi and Delhi Cantonment, and in east Delhi (Map 6). The maximum shares (40 to 56 per cent of the total work force) were recorded in some census divisions of Old Delhi and neighbouring areas, where they are in accordance with the concentration of wholesale business and retail trade: in Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazar, Pahar Ganj and Karol Bagh, which are also zones of very high population densities. Laxmi Nagar in the east, and Lajpat Nagar, single cluster in the south, provide other examples of concentration of both traders' residences and commercial activities, although to a lesser degree. Otherwise, there is no systematic congruence between work site and residential area as in the case of industrial workers: some major commercial complexes, like Connaught Place in New Delhi and Nehru Place in South Delhi, are located in divisions showing lower or average percentages of workers in trade and commerce.

In fact, the origin of some major residential concentrations of traders and businessmen seems to be linked to the post-partition period, 1948-50, and the massive influx into Delhi of refugees from Pakistan, essentially Punjabis and Sindhis, estimated to be about half a million (RAO & DESAI, 1965). Three main refugee camps were first established in Kingsway in the north, at Tibbia College in Karol Bagh in the central area, and in Shahdara in the east across the river Yamuna; others were later constructed in the west, in Rajinder Nagar, Patel Nagar and Moti Nagar, and in the south in Lajpat Nagar (among others). All the residential areas mentioned here are conspicuous by their higher share of workers in trade and commerce; some of them also developed into flourishing shopping markets (Karol Bagh and Lajpat Nagar, as already pointed out).

One feature of the spatial distribution of workers in transport, storage and communication can be indicated here, since these activities are partially connected to trade and commerce. The division showing the highest proportion of such workers, that is 27 per cent of the total work force as compared to 8 per cent on the average for Delhi Territory, is once again located in Old Delhi, more precisely in Chandni Chowk.

Specificity of Old Delhi

The analysis of the socio-economic differentiation of the urban space has highlighted the specificity of Old Delhi with its remarkably high densities of population as well as commercial and manufacturing establishments, and the complexity of its economic structure, with sharp concentrations of workers engaged in manufacturing activities, trade and commerce, or still in transport, and residing in intermingling or neighbouring clusters, in the vicinity of their work place.

The proliferation of commercial and manufacturing activities in the Walled City, as well as related services, which provides a large number of informal job opportunities, has attracted a floating population of male migrant workers whose residential integration remains extremely precarious. Thus at night many of them are found sleeping under the verandas in the bazaar, on the pavements and other open grounds, or in the night shelters run by the Municipality for houseless people.

A range of services specifically oriented towards the needs of this houseless population have also developed. The Government itself, taking cognisance of the plight of the houseless, started constructing night shelters in the early sixties, 6 of them - out of 16 functioning today - being located in the Walled City proper. In the night shelters run by the Municipality, for a nominal rate of Rs. 3 per night, each inmate is provided with a blanket and a ground carpet, and has free access to the toilets and bathrooms usually available in the same building. Some small private entrepreneurs have figured the shelterless situation of so many people as a good business opportunity: they rent out sleeping place and bedding facilities to the pavement dwellers. Quilts on hire are available for an average rate of Rs. 5 per night, and cots with bedding for an average rate of Rs. 15 per night. Yet, a substantial proportion of the pavement dwellers do not avail bedding facilities on rent and sleep under verandas or in open spaces whose access is free - apart from harassment by the police.

Although houseless people can be found in various parts of the urban agglomeration, the heaviest and most conspicuous concentrations of pavement dwellers are found in Old Delhi: the morphological and economic characteristics of the historical core of the capital city explains the specific attraction exerted on a floating population without shelter. The last section of this paper

Map 7. Location of pavement dwelling areas and night shelters in Old Delhi

0 70 140 210 280 350 MTS

LEGEND



PAVEMENT DWELLERS



NIGHT-SHELTER

- 1 OLD DELHI RAILWAY STATION
- 2 LAHORI GATE
- 3 MEENA BAZAAR - I
- 4 MEENA BAZAAR - II
- 5 TURKMAN GATE
- 6 DELHI GATE

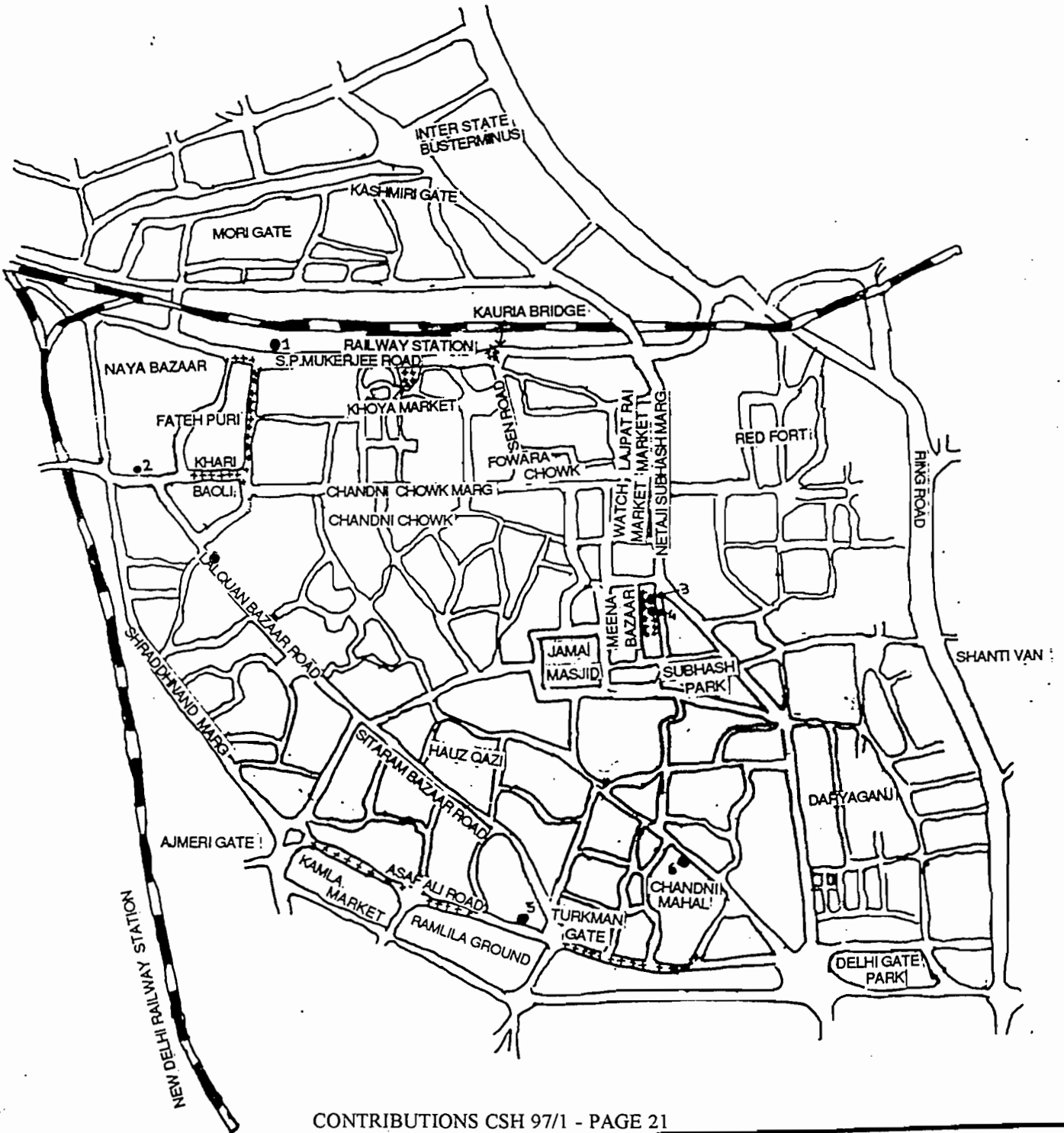


Table 4. Percentage distribution of the houseless population of Old Delhi by industrial category (1996) and comparison with the urban population of Delhi at the 1991 census

INDUSTRIAL CATEGORY	Houseless population of Old Delhi 1996	Male population of Old Delhi 1991	Male urban population of Delhi 1991
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Agriculture, livestock, mining, quarrying	0.0	0.6	1.3
Manufacturing, processing, repairs	6.2	32.0	26.4
Construction	9.0	2.8	7.9
Trade, commerce, restaurants, hotels	28.4	38.3	26.4
Transport, communication	51.9	7.9	8.8
Community, social and personal services	4.5	18.3	29.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Source: (1) Own sample survey - 1996</i>			
Sample of 243 workers classified by their main occupation (non workers = 5)			
<i>(2) & (3): Census of India 1991, Delhi, Primary Census Abstract.</i>			

loaders and unloaders, handcart pushers (helping the main puller and recruited by him), and other casual labourers ... Among the houseless working as employees, only a very small minority have secured salaried jobs. As for self-employed workers like handcart pullers and cycle rickshaw drivers, they have to hire their cart or rickshaw everyday ... without any guarantee about the number of trips - for transport of goods or passengers - they will be able to get. The situation of street vendors, roadside mechanics, and other self-employed in the informal sector, is similar from the viewpoint of precariousness and correlative irregularity in income.

In fact, the combination of several occupations and flexibility in changing work - a rather frequent practice as seen above - is a response to the risk of unemployment and irregularity of work. Although, eventually, most of the houseless surveyed in Old Delhi were not affected by unemployment during last year and, among those who were, only few reported significant unemployment periods, the insecurity of employment and hence the lack of guarantee of regular income, is a critical fact to understand the shelterless situation of these workers (as we shall elaborate in another section).

Income, savings and remittances

At the outset, the houseless workers appear to form a very heterogeneous section of the urban labour force in terms of earned money income:

- the average monthly earnings for the last twelve months preceding the 1996 survey range from Rs. 520 (case of a child rag picker) up to Rs. 4500 (case of a pavement dweller involved in illegal trade combined with other legal occupations);
- and half of the respondents earn between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2000 per month. Furthermore, intra-occupational income differentials are very large.

With a view to the discussion on urban poverty and houseless population, it is interesting to compare the average monthly earnings of the individuals surveyed with the poverty line. We refer here to the usual official definition (discussed later in this section), namely the level of expenditure required for a daily calorie intake of 2,100 per person in urban areas (as per the norm determined by the Nutrition Expert Group), and estimated at Rs. 310.50 per capita per month at 1995-96 prices¹⁶. According to this criteria, all the respondents of our sub-sample are above the poverty line¹⁷, in so far we consider that their earnings are available for their own and

¹⁶ This figure is calculated on the basis of the last published official estimate, that is Rs. 209.50 per capita per month in urban areas at 1991-92 prices, converted to present value by applying the index numbers of consumer prices for industrial workers in Delhi for the corresponding period.

¹⁷ The statistical analysis of the entire sample will allow us to determine to what extent this finding can be generalised.

single consumption and they do not have to share them with other family members not living with them in Delhi. Thus, to have a better appraisal of the economic condition of the houseless, some indications about their pattern of savings and remittances are required.

A large majority of the respondents report a saving practice, with a varied range of situations. The saving capacity depends first on the income level, although there is no simple linear relation between the percentage of income saved and the income level. The percentage of income effectively saved depends also on the way of living in Delhi and on the relations maintained with their families.

One strong motivation to save is remittance, and the houseless migrants who contribute financially to the expenses of their families in their native place usually send the entire amount of their savings or most of it. However, all the persons who save more or less regularly do not remit money to their families. In this matter, the circumstances of the migration and the nature of the relations maintained with the family in the place of origin also intervene.

Returning to the question of poverty line, we can consider now the average monthly income available after remittances, which makes the comparison with the level of per capita expenditure corresponding to the poverty line more relevant in order to appraise the economic condition of the houseless population in Old Delhi. This net income shows a range of variation wider than the gross income, from a minimum of Rs. 350 per month (case of a beggar sending more than 50 per cent of his income to his family), to the same maximum of Rs. 4500. The majority of the respondents have a net monthly income ranging between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1500 (as against half between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 2000 as per their gross income). Yet, all the respondents in our sub-sample, including those engaged in marginal economic activities like rag picking and begging, remain above the poverty line of Rs. 310.50 per capita per month, considered as the expenditure required for a daily calorie intake of 2,100 per person in urban areas. Thus, the incomes generated by the houseless interviewed in Old Delhi place them in a position to meet their minimum nutritional requirements. But other basic needs, especially shelter and clothing, which should be also considered in a comprehensive approach of urban poverty, are not necessarily covered. The deprivation of shelter is obvious in the case of the pavement dwellers; as for clothing, the sartorial condition of some of them testifies by itself to the non fulfilled needs. Thus, several respondents acknowledged that they had only one set of clothes, to be worn until the clothes are completely torn and have to be replaced by a new set. Nonetheless, the lack of purchasing power is not the only explanatory factor; the lack of safe place to keep one's belongings is another major problem faced by many houseless people¹⁸.

¹⁸ Some houseless people manage to keep their belongings (and savings) at their work place; others confide them to a shop-keeper or a tea-stall owner's care; or resort to the safekeeping of another acquaintance settled in Delhi under better housing conditions; a few pavement dwellers mentioned the washerman for storing their spare sets of clothes; as for savings only a few respondents keep them in a bank account; while other houseless

The official definition of the poverty line, based on a nominal level of calories, has already attracted criticism (NIUA, 1986: 11-12). And our finding that the houseless people surveyed in Old Delhi stay above the poverty line can be considered as another evidence of the limitation of this official definition. A subsequent question arises here: if the pavement dwellers in Delhi - at least a section of them - are above the poverty line, who and where are the "poor" of Delhi, namely the 17 per cent of the population of the capital estimated to be under the poverty line¹⁹ ? Assuming that most of the urban poor are likely to be concentrated in the city slums (NIUA, 1989), it would mean that the houseless people living alone on the pavements in Old Delhi are in a better position to meet their minimum nutritional requirements than many slum dwellers living with their families and having housing accommodations, precarious though they may be. This calls for a better scrutiny of the survival strategy of the pavement dwellers (as it will be developed in the next section).

Investment projects

Projecting now the houseless people into the future, among the migrants who wish to return to their native place, future plans of investments there are frequent, in particular to open a general store or another type of shop in the village, to buy more agricultural land or more generally to invest in agriculture. Some of these investment projects may not be realised, yet some seem viable given the saving capacity of the concerned workers. This shows a definite degree of economic dynamism among certain houseless persons, and conveys an image which is not that of abject poverty, but more of an economic calculation entailing a temporary sacrifice in terms of housing conditions in the city, in order to improve the economic conditions in the native place.

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This first investigation of the economic profile of the houseless people in Old Delhi allows us to highlight some significant features. At the outset, this shelterless population proves to be an integral part of the normal metropolitan labour force, which is in accordance with previous studies on pavement dwellers and night shelters' inmates in Delhi (see ARORA & CHHIBBER, 1985: 5). Furthermore, the incomes generated by the houseless workers surveyed place them in the low-income group but above the poverty line, even after taking into account the remittances sent to the family outside Delhi. In proportion to their income level, the saving capacity of the majority of the houseless is also far from being marginal. Remittances to the family and future

people have no alternative solution but to keep the very few things they possess with themor have no belonging nor saving to look after.

¹⁹ This percentage corresponds to the 1987-88 estimate given in the *Report of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and number of Poor*, Planning Commission, Government of India, July 1993.

plans of investment after returning to the native place are other encouraging indicators of the economic potential of a good number of them. In this respect, the findings of our survey corroborate the conclusions of other studies on the urban poor, as underlined by Kundu (1993: 23): "the thesis regarding economic marginality of the people in urban informal sectors, slum dwellers, pavement dwellers and other is an exaggeration"²⁰. Yet, insecurity of employment or uncertainty in getting sufficient work, and hence the lack of guaranteed and regular income, constitute a widespread concern. A last striking fact regarding the economic condition of the houseless people in Old Delhi is the large variety of situations encountered, including very contrasting cases. Thus, qualifying the pavement dwellers as the "poorest of the urban poor" without further distinction appears as a simplistic statement.

LOCATION STRATEGIES

In this last sub-section, we shall attempt to appraise the elements of constraint and the elements of choice explaining the present shelterless situation of the pavement dwellers surveyed, with an underlying question: is the shelterless situation merely the consequence of a process of exclusion from access to the urban housing system? or does it correspond also to a residential strategy aimed at improving individual or familial economic conditions? Another question pertains to the perennial versus temporary nature of the shelterless situation: is it a transitory stage preceding a better integration in the urban housing system? or does it correspond to a permanent way of life or at least a long lasting one for the duration of the stay in Delhi?

Financial constraints

Financial constraints are put forward by the large majority of the houseless people interviewed to explain the origin of their shelterless situation. However, the significance of this factor has to be appraised in relation with other contributing factors and to be considered in a long term perspective. The financial constraints are likely to be more stringent at the initial stage of pavement dwelling in particular when it corresponds to the arrival in Delhi, and that the migrant has to get absorbed into the labour market. Then the financial constraints may result not as much from the average level of income than from the lack of guarantee of regular income. This element of uncertainty restrains many casual workers staying on the pavement or in a night shelter to envisage an accommodation on rent even if they have the financial potential for it, because this would entail regular and fixed expenses which cannot be adjusted to the actual

²⁰ Quoted from: LEE (M.), 1986. "The mobilisation of informal sector savings: the USAID experience", paper presented at the International Workshop on Mobilisation of Informal Sector Savings, 8-12 December, Society for

earnings. On the other hand expenses for hiring a quilt or a cot outside or for entrance to a night shelter (for those availing these facilities) are incurred on a daily basis and hence can be easily adjusted to the daily earnings. Even for the houseless with a sufficient saving capacity to rent a room (alone or by sharing it with one or two other workers), priority may be given to remittances to the family or to long term savings for future investment in the native place. In other words, preference may be given to the family's living conditions in the native place over the migrant's living conditions in Delhi, and to future over present. In that case, it cannot be said that there are absolute financial constraints preventing the houseless migrant from renting a room, but rather relative ones resulting from his own choice and priorities. The priority given by the houseless migrants to remittances over their present housing conditions in town does not mean however that they do not fulfil first their own basic needs in terms of food requirements, in order to insure the reproduction of their own work force. This may explain why the houseless workers living alone in Old Delhi are able to stay above the poverty line (as per the definition given above), while it may not be the case for many slum dwellers living with their families.

Proximity to the workplace

Another major factor to understand the shelterless situation of many workers in Old Delhi and the choice of their sleeping place, is the location of their workplace. Better proximity to the place of work or the source of employment opportunities is one of the reasons reported explicitly by certain respondents for staying initially on the pavement or in a night shelter, and more frequently to explain the choice of a specific place to sleep. The actual 'residential' location of the houseless is more revealing than these explicit answers. Thus, most of the respondents interviewed in Old Delhi work in the Walled City itself or in adjoining areas, within a walking distance from their place of sleep, often within 10 minutes walk or less (see Maps 7 & 8). The cost of transportation to commute to the workplace is consequently reduced to nil for them. Even among the respondents who said they exercised preference in their location's choice for the sleeping environment, especially the presence of acquaintances and the facilities available, most of them stay also *de facto* in a walking distance from their place of work or labour market.

The importance of staying close to the source of employment opportunities depends on the type of occupation. For the casual workers having to go daily to a labour market to get recruited, like workers for catering services and construction labourers, this proximity factor appears primordial. In order to get more job offers, and to be in a better position to bargain with the contractors, it is necessary to reach the labour market early morning, and hence not to have to spend time on commuting.

For handcart pullers or pushers and loaders working in market areas, transportation activities do not start very early in the morning (usually at 10) but they often continue till late in the night, which makes it more convenient to sleep in the market itself, and more profitable to get assignments. Since the nature of the work requires intense physical strength, the transportation workers are usually exhausted after long working hours, hence sleeping at the same place (or nearby) enables them to avoid the additional tiredness of commuting. In addition, in the market they can sleep on their handcarts or under the verandas of the buildings, and do not face harassment by the police since they are known to work there.

The position of the cycle rickshaw drivers (whose nature of work is also physically demanding) is mixed. Those keeping their rickshaw at night can sleep on it and have more flexibility in their location's choice within the zone where they ply, providing they can park their rickshaw safely. But for the drivers having to take their rickshaw every morning from the owner's garage, staying in proximity to the garage is also important, as explained by one respondent: "*If you stay far, you have to start early in the morning and do not get proper rest. And if you start late, your work suffers and your income becomes less*".

Even for the houseless workers whose nature of occupation and mode of recruitment do not require necessarily to stay near the source of employment opportunities, proximity between sleeping place and workplace is sought-after in order to reduce - or cut entirely - transportation expenses for commuting.

Residential mobility and duration of stay in Delhi

Examining the residential mobility in Delhi of the houseless people allows us to highlight some revealing facets of their living conditions. Change of residential location during the year is a frequent practice among the pavement dwellers surveyed in Old Delhi, according to two main reasons.

Seasonal pattern can be first of all observed, with various possible combinations. For example, in summers preference is given to sleeping on open grounds, non covered pavements, road dividers, or in parks; during the rainy season, verandas, night shelters, cots or mattresses on hire in sleeping areas protected with ground and overhead plastic sheets, are more in demand; and in winter preference goes to quilts on hire, night shelters and verandas. For the pavement dwellers who never avail bedding facilities on rent and never go to night shelters, the change of sleeping place may be limited to crossing the road, from a veranda in winter and during the rains to a nearby park in summer, or even to the divider of the same road. Some pavement dwellers have been repeating the same seasonal pattern with the same combination of locations for years.

This flexibility in sleeping places also helps us understand how the pavement dwellers who can afford to spend Rs. 3 per night for access to a night shelter, or Rs. 5 to hire a quilt, up to Rs. 15 for cot and bedding, are not necessarily ready to spend the equivalent monthly amount to rent a room. Whereas taking a room on rent entails regular and fixed expenses throughout the year, resorting to a night shelter or bedding on hire involves daily expenses which can be entirely cut during certain periods of the year.

The second main reason for residential mobility in Delhi is directly related to occupational mobility. The houseless people also adjust the location of their sleeping place according to employment opportunities, to the location of a particular labour market, or to the possibilities of sleeping at the workplace. The rationale behind these changes of residential location is the search for a better proximity to the place of work or the source of potential employment.

On the other hand, there is also a category of houseless people staying in the same night shelter or on the same section of pavement throughout the year (when in Delhi) and for several years, with duration of stay extending in a few remarkable cases up to ten years or more.

Considering now the entire duration of stay in Delhi as houseless, there is a notable proportion of houseless people who have been living under this condition for ten or more than ten years²¹ - which does not exclude however regular stays in the native place. For this category of pavement dwellers, and especially for those staying in the same night shelter or sleeping place for many years, or repeating exactly the same seasonal pattern sometimes for the last ten or even fifteen years, their houseless condition seems to be a permanent way of life in Delhi, or for the duration of their working life before the definite return to their native place.

Willingness to move and to pay for a dwelling

Investigating the future plans of the houseless people, in particular their willingness to move and to pay for a dwelling, can bring further elements of answer to the question of the perennial versus transitory nature of the shelterless situation in Delhi.

Among the respondents of our sub-sample, the capacity and willingness to pay for a dwelling varies from zero to Rs. 500 per month²², and in terms of percentage of income, from 0 to 35 per cent maximum. However, the willingness to move as expressed through the answers of the

²¹ In the sub-sample of 36 respondents selected for in-depth interviews, one third have been living in Delhi as houseless since 1985 or before. The actual proportion will have to be confirmed by the statistical analysis of the entire sample.

²² Barring one exceptional case of Rs. 1400 per month, corresponding again to the government employee already mentioned, who earns a monthly salary of Rs. 4 820.

respondents may remain in a good number of cases abstract wishes, subject to several conditions. The constraints are sometimes so stringent that they make the possibility to move very unlikely. Here we find again the factors whose importance has been already underlined to understand the shelterless situation, namely: financial constraints, regular incomes or even getting a permanent job as a prerequisite to move, dwelling in proximity to the place of work. Among the houseless who have already attempted to move to a proper dwelling (a minority group), the reasons for eventually returning to the pavement or a night shelter are also interesting to point out. Some mentioned difficulties to adjust with other persons with whom they shared the same room, a common way to reduce housing expenses. Others realised that their work and income were suffering from the fact of staying too far from their place of work. Hence, wishes and even actual attempts to move are not sufficient indicators to foresee the shelterless situation of the concerned individuals as a transitory stage preceding a better integration in the urban housing system.

The arguments of the houseless persons who stated that they had no willingness nor intention to move to a better accommodation, and who form an appreciable group, are also revealing in order to appraise the transitory versus perennial nature of the shelterless situation. Interestingly, those reporting a 'zero' willingness to pay for a dwelling are not necessarily those who have no saving capacity and hence no financial potential. In that case, two types of reasons are put forward to explain the lack of willingness to pay for a dwelling. Some pavement dwellers do not intend to stay in Delhi for a long period, and hence would find it irrelevant to take a room on rent. Others give a clear priority to the maximisation of their savings, especially in order to send remittances to their families, and hence try to minimise expenses for housing and transportation, or even to reduce them to zero. Being alone, without their family in Delhi, some of the houseless migrants do not perceive a proper accommodation as a need for them. As a matter of fact, most of the houseless interviewed do not plan to settle in Delhi permanently, but to return one day to their native place or to migrate to another city. Hence they perceive their stay in Delhi as limited in time, even if this transitory situation may eventually last for the duration of their working life²³, and consequently a dwelling is not perceived as a priority need.

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Coming back to the questions raised at the beginning of this section concerning the interpretation of the shelterless situation, we can sum up the main arguments which have emerged at several points from the in-depth interviews with houseless people in Old Delhi. Financial constraints undoubtedly prevent or limit the possibilities of access to a dwelling. Nevertheless this factor has to be considered in combination with other explanatory factors, forming a system in which choice is often present. The residential practices of the majority of

²³ ... Or may be even their entire remaining life, in so far the future plan of returning to the native place might

the houseless reveal an economic rationale that aims at maximising savings and remittances to their families in their native place, by minimising their housing and transportation expenses. Proximity between the sleeping place and the place of work provides another important clue in understanding the shelterless option and choice of location by the pavement dwellers. A location near the workplace or the labour market enables them not only to cut their transport expenses but also to avoid a tiring commute. This ensures a proper rest, which is vital for manual workers involved in occupations demanding intense physical strength. In addition, for casual labourers, proximity to the source of employment opportunities also increases the probability of getting daily work. When the logic of staying shelterless in Delhi is an integral part of familial strategies rooted in the native place, priority being given to the economic condition of the family in the village at the expense of the migrants' living conditions in Delhi, then the shelterless situation is likely to last for the duration of their stay in the capital.

The part of rational choice in the residential practices of the houseless people has been highlighted in other studies. For example, in the conclusion of his primary survey of pavement dwellers and night shelters' inmates in Delhi, Kuruvilla states: "The choice of the pavement is mainly for reduction of expenses on housing, proximity to employment opportunities, (....), availability of facilities, services, food and water and maximise savings to send back home. Thus it becomes a deliberate rational decision to live on the pavement" (1991-92: 85-86). Jagannathan and Halder, in their study of the pavement dwellers in Calcutta, also infer: "Pavement dwellers of the main stream vocations have chosen this life style to protect their access to earning opportunities. In addition (...) a substantial proportion are temporary migrants, who remit savings home to the village". Further: "The majority of pavement dwellers live without shelter as a deliberate rational decision, by which the expenditure on housing is reduced to zero" (1988: 1177).

The importance of proximity to the source of livelihood is also emphasised in the two studies quoted above. This factor is crucial not only to understand the residential practices and location choices of the houseless, but more generally of the urban poor²⁴. The failure of many attempts to relocate slum and squatter settlement dwellers far from their initial residence is thus due to inadequate consideration for easy physical access to earning opportunities.

5. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

This paper has explored the spatial pattern of residence and work of the population in Delhi, with special reference to the location strategies of the houseless people in Old Delhi.

be in some cases more mythical than realistic.

²⁴ See for example: GUPTA, KAUL, PANDEY (1993: 86), SURI (1994: 273), KUNDU (1993: 65).

The pattern of population density gradients is broadly in accordance with the classical model characterised by high densities in the urban centre, and decreasing values towards the periphery, whereas the population growth rate follows a clearly centrifugal pattern. Furthermore, population growth in rural hinterland proved to be higher than in Delhi urban agglomeration, indicating the diffusion of the urbanisation process.

The employment structure of the population in rural areas of the National Capital Territory reflects the urbanisation process at work in the city's hinterland. In the urban agglomeration, the three main economic functions of the capital, administrative, commercial and industrial, have generated very distinct residential patterns for the concerned workers with a broad division between the southern and northern parts. The workers employed in community, social and personal services are more concentrated in the south, whereas workers in trade and commerce or in manufacturing industries are represented in higher proportions in the north. The preferential location of the residences of the former is to be related to the construction in this part of the city of many housing colonies by the government for its employees, which has further engendered a high degree of residential segregation based on income and status. In Old Delhi and its close vicinity, living places and work sites of the traders intermingle, while elsewhere there is no systematic correspondence; some major residential concentrations of traders and businessmen appear to be linked to the location of the refugee camps established after the partition. On the other hand, there is a good congruence between the industrial zones and the main concentrations of industrial workers' living places.

The Old City deserves a special mention, for its extremely high population densities, notwithstanding their decreasing trend, associated with a notorious concentration of commercial and manufacturing enterprises, despite repeated attempts of the Delhi Administration to decongest this area. This proliferation of economic activities has attracted a floating population of male migrant workers, most of them unskilled, and whose residential integration is extremely precarious.

Although they live alone in Old Delhi, the majority of the houseless migrants maintain regular relationships with their families in their native place, which remains their place of reference.

The houseless population of Old Delhi forms an integral part of the metropolitan labour force, which, in terms of income, seems to be able to stay above the poverty line. Yet, the lack of guaranteed and regular income constitutes a general concern. At the same time their saving capacity, remittances and plans of future investment, all represent encouraging indicators of the economic potential of a notable share of the houseless. Finally, the large variety of individual

situations encountered indicates that the houseless are not a single category of 'urban poor', nor are they necessarily 'the poorest of the urban poor'.

Although financial constraints form the background of the shelterless situation, the residential practices of pavement dwellers and night shelter inmates should not be seen only as the consequence of a process of exclusion from access to a dwelling. One should also appreciate the economic rationales of individual migrants who try to maximise remittances to their families in the village by cutting their housing and transport expenses. Priority is therefore given by them to a location near the workplace or near the labour market. For casual labourers, in fact, proximity between the sleeping place and the source of employment opportunities often increases their probability of getting daily work. Thus the condition of the houseless has to be seen in relation to their needs and priorities. This is a prerequisite for formulating appropriate urban housing policies.

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