



A STUDY OF SHELTERS FOR THE URBAN HOMELESS (SUH) IN AHMEDABAD

(FINAL REPORT)



Citizens for Shelter Alliance, Ahmedabad (CISHAA)

This report has been prepared through the joint efforts of the members of CISHAA, including

- Ajeevika Bureau
- Centre for Development
- Habitat Forum (INHAF)
- Human Development and Research Centre
- Mahila Housing Trust
- Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action
- Dr Renu Desai
- Saath Charitable Trust

Authors: Dr Renu Desai; Venugopal Agrawal; Jhanvi Shah

Research Teams:

Priti Oza, Mina Jadav, Ravindra Kapadiya, Noorjahan Shaikh, Sharif Malek, Rajni Sadhu, Iqbal Malek, Pravin Zala, Bindiya Dafda, Mahesh Gajera, Panalal Meghwal, Rajendra Salvi, Swat Saktawat, Durgaram Chouhan, Mukesh Parmar, Ranjit Kori, Bindiya Patel; Team at Habitat Forum, Ahmedabad

Cover Image: Binal Gandhi

This report is the result of collaborative effort between the organizations and individuals mentioned above. This research was completed and drafted in March 2020, but it's wider dissemination was delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. After review and inclusion of several updates, this version has been prepared for open dissemination and released in July 2021.

Published by: CISHAA (Citizens for Shelter and Housing Alliance, Ahmedabad)

For further information about CISHAA and its work, please contact:

1. Kirtee Shah, Habitat Forum (kirtee@inhaf.org)
2. Preeti Oza, Centre for Labour Research and Action (preet28@yahoo.com)
3. Venugopal Agrawal, Saath Charitable Trust (venugopal.saath@gmail.com)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	3
List of Images	5
List of Tables	6
List of Maps.....	6
List of Photographs	6
1. Introduction.....	7
2. Methodology	8
3. Survey Findings	10
3.1. Capacity of the Shelters and their Usage.....	10
3.2. Facilities provided in the Dormitories	13
3.3. Water and Sanitation	15
3.3.1. Water provision	15
3.3.2. Potable water provision	16
3.3.3. Toilets and bathrooms	16
3.3.4. Cleanliness	17
3.3.5 Electricity	18
3.5. Cooking Facilities and Practices	19
3.5.1. Cooking facilities.....	19
3.5.2. Cooking practices of the residents.....	22
3.6. Activities in Open Spaces	24
3.7. Shelter Accessibility	25
3.7.1. Are the dormitories open 24-hours ?.....	25
3.7.2. Access timings and conditions	25
3.7.3. Access by families.....	26
3.7.4. Access by the disabled.....	27
3.8. Shelter Management	28
3.8.1. Shelter staff.....	28

3.8.2. Facilities provided to the Shelter Staff	29
3.8.3. Register of shelter residents	29
3.8.4. Charges from the residents	30
3.8.5. AMC monitoring of the shelters.....	31
3.8.6. Efforts by managing organisation and challenges faced by them	31
3.8.7. Shelter Management Committee	31
3.9. Availability of Entitlements at the Shelters.....	32
3.10. Shelter Residents: Characteristics and Experiences	34
3.10.1. Household type	34
3.10.2. Occupation	35
3.10.3. Vulnerable groups.....	36
3.10.4. Migration Status	36
3.10.5. Previous places of residence of the Shelter residents	38
3.10.6. Working Practices of the Residents.....	38
3.10.7. Experiences at the Shelters	39
4. Summary of Main Findings and Recommendations	40
4.1 Recommendations for Improvements at Shelters	40
4.1.1 Better Facilities at the Shelters	40
4.1.2 Ensuring better access to the shelters.....	42
4.1.3 Shelters that meet the needs of families along with other groups.....	42
4.1.4 Shelter for vulnerable groups	42
4.1.5 Shelter Staff and facilities for them	43
4.1.6 Linkages to services and entitlements	43
4.1.7 Formation of the Shelter Management Committee (SMC)	43
4.2 Recommendations for the Overall implementation of the Scheme	44
4.2.1 Addressing the Scale of Homelessness through Shelters	44
4.2.2 Seasonal Migrants as a critical mass in the shelter	44
4.2.3 Improving the Spatial Spread of the Shelters.....	44

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1. Sleeping facilities	14
Image 2. Storage facilities	15
Image 3. Potable water provision.....	16
Image 4. Whether the toilets / bathrooms were open and available for use by residents	17
Image 5. Electricity in the shelters	19
Image 6. Kitchen provision and usage	21
Image 7. Other spaces where the shelter residents are cooking	23
Image 8. Shelters with 24-hour accessible dormitories.....	25
Image 9. Shelter Access Timings	26
Image 10. Shelter Access by the Disabled	28
Image 11. Staff at the Shelters	29
Image 12. Facilities provided to the Shelter Staff.....	29
Image 13. Details noted in the register of shelter residents	30
Image 14. Are charges taken from the shelter residents?	30
Image 15. Shelter Management Committee	32
Image 16. Availability of Entitlements at the Shelters.....	34
Image 17. Type of People Living in the Shelters.....	35
Image 18. Kind of Occupation	35
Image 19. Type of Vulnerable Groups.....	36
Image 20. Migration Status	36
Image 21. Migration Source Area	37
Image 22. Any Seasonal Migrant came back to stay in these SUH	37
Image 23. Working time.....	38
Image 24. Mode of Transportation.....	39
Image 25. Safety of the Belongings	39

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Surveyed Shelters	8
Table 2. Comparison of Total Capacity of Homeless Shelters to Total Number of Homeless Persons in Ahmedabad.....	10
Table 3. Shelter Capacity and Usage.....	11

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1. Shelter Location with AMC Schemes (Source – Authors).....	46
Map 2. Location of SHS and SUH Shelter in Ahmedabad (Source – Authors).....	46

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1. Ghar Vihona mate Ashray Gruh / Shelter for Urban Homeless	9
Photo 2. New bunk beds provided by AMC in the shelters.....	12
Photo 3. Periphery areas in the shelters being used as a storage.....	13
Photo 4. Almirahs and Functioning of Storage Spaces provided in the Shelters	14
Photo 5. Present Toilet / bathroom scenario.....	18
Photo 6. Present Electric fixtures and points provided in the Shelters	19
Photo 7. Provision and usage inside the Kitchens.....	21
Photo 8. Cooking facilities and usage near the Shelter	22
Photo 9. Compound space of the Shelters	24
Photo 10. Activities happening in the Open Space of the Shelters	24
Photo 11. Men and Women's / Women with Children's living separately in the Shelter's.....	27

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian cities are experiencing rapid growth. This growth is being filled by a number of factors, including the natural growth in the population of cities, new urban areas and also rural to urban migration. This rapid population growth is planning a strain on the housing resources of most large cities in India. This is reflected in informal settlements spread across the cities, as the poor are priced out of formal areas within the city.

As per the census 2011, the number of homeless people in Ahmedabad City was 11,293. Living conditions of the homeless are extremely poor and they face day to day challenges in accessing water, sanitation and shelter. The lack of housing also creates problems of security of belongings and safety of the individuals, particularly women and children.

In response to the crisis of homelessness and inadequate housing in Indian cities, the government has launched 2 major shelter related programmes. The first and most happiness seeking is PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana), a housing program intended to website that no Indian family is without a house by 2022. This program is being implemented in urban areas through 4 verticals, each of which is focused on constructing new opened houses for its beneficiaries, or for supporting beneficiaries to be able to purchase newly constructed houses more easily.

In order to address the needs of temporary shelter in urban areas, the government has painted the NULM-SUH - Shelters for Urban Homeless scheme under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission. This is an evolution of the earlier night shelters operated in many cities. Under this scheme, the government some to endure that every City has shelters where homeless population can be housed 24/7. The highlights of the scheme as per the implementation guidelines include:

- 24 Hour shelters as opposed to night shelters
- To be operated by social organizations
- Shelters which can act as aggregation points and access points for services
- Shelters to be provided for especially vulnerable groups
- Shelters to be designed from the point of view of families staying together
- Shelters to have facilities for basic day to day functions such as cooking space, utensils, toilets
- Shelters to have personal lockers for storage space
- Shelters to be built close to homeless work sites and concentrations based on systematic analysis of homeless populations in the city
- Each shelter to provide a minimum space of 50 sq. ft per person

Various cities have started to implement this much needed and well-intentioned scheme and the guidelines themselves have gone through multiple revisions over time. In Ahmedabad, over 25 such shelters have been implemented and more are under construction. As the scheme has made progress, both the good results and implementation gaps of the scheme have started to be seen on the ground. In this context, it was felt by members of CISHAA that the time was right to do a thorough assessment of the functioning of the shelters in the ground, in order to be able to provide on ground feedback to the relevant authorities about the situation in the ground. We hope that this report will be

able to highlight the positive points about the implementation so far in Ahmedabad as well as bring forth what more can be done to improve the implementation of the scheme.

This assessment is based on a primary survey of the shelters conducted by members of CISHAA. While the report used the guidelines of the SUH scheme as a baseline against which the shelters have to function, the primary survey also includes other indicators about the residents in the shelter in order to create a better understanding of the program. The emphasis is also given to understanding the physical use of the spaces within the shelter as well as the factors that may affect day to day aspects of the residents' lives, such as food and storage space.

We hope that this report can help the relevant stakeholders to improve the quality of the shelters and create a starting point for positive engagement between the stakeholders involved in the process.

2. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire survey was developed to explore the provisions and conditions at the homeless shelters, shelter management, use of the shelters, and the characteristics of the shelter residents and their experiences of living there. The survey was undertaken at 25 homeless shelters between June 2019 and September 2019 (see Table 1). At few of these shelters, the shelter staff did not allow proper access to the surveyors and therefore the survey form could not be fully completed.

Table 1. Surveyed Shelters

No.	Shelter name and address	No. of Dorms	Survey done by
1	Shelter below Jivraj bridge	4	Aajeevika Bureau
2	Shelter below Maharshi Dadichi Bridge, Shahpur	2	
3	Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, Shivananjini Crossroads	2	
4	Shelter below Ishanpur Bridge	2	
5	Shelter below Acharya Mahapragyaji Overbridge, Gridharnagar, Shahibaug	2	
6	Shelter at Madhupura, Shahibaug	2	
7	Shelter below Guruji Bridge, Khokhra	2	Centre for Development (CfD)
8	Shelter below Nathalal Jagadiya Bridge, Maninagar	2	
9	Shelter under Midco bridge, Vatva	2	
10	Shelter under Midco bridge, Vatva	2	
11	Shelter Under Memco Bridge, Saijpur	2	Human Development Research Centre (HDRC)
12	Shelter Under Memco Bridge, Saijpur	2	
13	Shelter in Saraspur near Everest Char Rasta, Near Saraspur UHC	2	Mahila Housing Trust (MHT)
14	Shelter under Gota bridge, Chandlodia	4	Prayas
15	Shelter near Sola Crossroads, Naranpura	2	

16	Shelter under Keshavnath Bridge, Road towards Sabarmati Jail, S.P Stadium	2	
17	Shelter under Chanakyapuri Bridge No.1, Gota	2	
18	Shelter next to Ghatlodiya UHC	2	
19	Shelter near India Colony	2	SAATH Charitable Trust
20	Shelter near Uday Estate, Odhav	2	
21	Shelter behind Bhikshuk Gruh, Odhav	2	
22	Shelter near Vastral Ring-Road Crossroads	2	
23	Shelter under Jashodanagar Bridge	2	
24	Shelter Below CTM Bridge, Towards Indrapuri	2	
25	Shelter below CTM Bridge, Bhaipura Hatkeshwar	2	

Besides the 25 surveyed shelters, several shelters which were open could not be surveyed because the shelter staff did not permit the surveyors. Photographs were taken at the shelters in February 2020 to capture both the positive aspects as well as shortcomings.

It should be noted that while we were analysing the data from the surveys and writing the report, the AMC was also gradually making improvements at the shelters. Therefore, the findings presented in this report will not be the status of the shelters. Important updates where major changes have been seen have been included in this report, but it is important to note that several of the broader, structural considerations have not changed and we hope that our recommendations for the both the shelters in Ahmedabad and the overall implementation of the SUH scheme will be followed up on by the relevant government departments.

Photo 1. Ghar Vihona mate Ashray Gruh / Shelter for Urban Homeless



3. SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1. CAPACITY OF THE SHELTERS AND THEIR USAGE

According to the official Homeless Survey done in Ahmedabad under the SUH scheme in 2018-2019, there are 8,095 homeless persons in the city. This figure is surprising given that according to the Census 2011, the population of houseless persons and number of houseless households in Ahmedabad was 11,293 and 3,358, respectively.

Even if we take the lowest number of 8,095 homeless persons, as against this requirement of total shelter capacity, the total capacity of all the shelters surveyed under this study was reported to be 1,272 persons. At the time of the survey, 29 shelters were reported to be operational, of which 25 have been surveyed. This means that the surveyed shelters, which are 80% of the total capacity of the city, can accommodate only 10% of the city's homeless. Furthermore, the following figures were received from sources at AMC regarding the total capacity of the shelters. At total capacity, 30 shelters across Ahmedabad can accommodate 1,648 persons, which is 20% of the homeless population counted in Ahmedabad.

Table 2. Comparison of Total Capacity of Homeless Shelters to Total Number of Homeless Persons in Ahmedabad

Total Number of All Homeless Shelters	Total Capacity of All Homeless Shelters	Total Number of Open Homeless Shelters	Total Capacity of the Open Homeless Shelters	Total Number of Homeless Persons as per official Homeless Survey
30	1648	27	1480	8,095

Data on capacity of each of the shelters was coalesced during the survey from the shelter staff. While this data does not seem to be reliable in certain cases, we have so far been unable to obtain official data about each shelter's capacity. Therefore, while Table 3 presents the data for each surveyed shelter on number of residents at the time of the survey and maximum number of residents, we are constrained in using this data to examine whether the shelters were being used close to their capacity, over-capacity or under-capacity.

However, the data in Table 3 shows that in at least several shelters the numbers of residents fluctuate considerably over the year – for example, while there were only 25 residents at the Shelter below Ishanpur bridge at the time of the survey, there are times of the year when the shelter accommodates up to 60 residents. While such shelters may seem to be used by lesser numbers of residents at times, the fact is that they are serving an important need for shelter when more seasonal migrants are in the city.

Table 3. Shelter Capacity and Usage

No	Shelter	Capacity of Shelter as reported during survey by Shelter Managers	No. of Current Residents as reported during survey	Maximum No. of Residents occupied at any time reported by the Shelter Manager
1	Shelter below Jivraj bridge	100	123	125
2	Shelter below Maharshi Dadichi Bridge, Shahpur	54	22	NA
3	Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, Shivaranjini Crossroads	40	80	80
4	Shelter below Ishanpur Bridge	40	25	60
5	Shelter below Acharya Mahapragyaji Overbridge, Gridharnagar, Shahibaug	40	25	55
6	Shelter at Madhupura, Shahibaug	40	30	More than 40
7	Shelter below Guruji Bridge, Khokhra	40	26	More than 40
8	Shelter below Nathalal Jagadiya Bridge, Maninagar	40	22	More than 40
9	Shelter under Midco bridge, Vatva	50	55	55
10	Shelter under Midco bridge, Vatva	50	55	55
11	Shelter Under Memco Bridge	50	30	NA
12	Shelter Under Memco Bridge	50	41	NA
13	Shelter in Saraspur near Everest Char Rasta, Near Saraspur UHC	80	52	80
14	Shelter under Gota bridge, Chandlodia	68	23	NA
15	Shelter near Sola Crossroads, Naranpura	45	28	More than 45

16	Shelter under Keshavnath Bridge, Road towards Sabarmati Jail	40	25	NA
17	Shelter under Chanakyapuri Bridge No.1, Gota	30	12	NA
18	Shelter near Ghatlodiya UHC	40	35 (2 Families)	NA
19	Shelter near India Colony	124	31 (15 Families)	NA
20	Shelter near Uday Estate, Odhav	50	15 (2 Families)	More than 50
21	Shelter behind Bhikshuk Gruh, Odhav	56	56	NA
22	Shelter near Vastral Ring-Road Crossroads	40	35 (10 Families)	NA
23	Shelter under Jashodanagar Bridge	50	30 (4 Families)	30-40
24	Shelter Below CTM Bridge, Towards Indrapuri	40	25	NA
25	Shelter below CTM Bridge, Bhaipura Hatkeshwar	15	NA	NA

Furthermore, during the second visit to the shelters for taking photographs in February 2020, it was noted that AMC has been implementing bunk beds in the dormitories. While this step will increase capacity, it will place a strain on other resources such as cooking facilities and open space that are already falling short of the residents' needs. Furthermore, the provision of recommended minimum space of 50 sq. ft. per person as per the SUH guidelines will also become more difficult.

Photo 2. New bunk beds provided by AMC in the shelters



3.2. FACILITIES PROVIDED IN THE DORMITORIES

There are two dormitory halls in 23 shelters, and four dormitory halls in 2 shelters. There are no individual family rooms in any of the shelters, however, in some of the shelters, one or more of the dormitory halls were used to accommodate families (see Section 3.7.3).

The survey sought to capture the availability of sleeping facilities (beds, bunk-beds, mattresses, pillows and blankets); storage facilities (open shelves, lockers and lockable almirahs); and lights and fans in the dormitories. These facilities were captured for 23 of the 25 surveyed shelters.

The survey findings are presented in Image 1-3. The main findings are:

- Out of the 23 shelters, the dormitories in only 3 shelters had bunk-beds (Shelter near India Colony, Shelter behind Bhikshuk Gruh in Odhav, one of the shelters under Midco bridge in Vatva). None of the other shelters had beds or bunk-beds. *It should be noted that this number has increased since the survey.*
- Mattresses and pillows were provided in all the dormitories of the 23 shelters.
- Out of the 23 shelters, blankets were provided in all the dormitories in 22 shelters. In 1 shelter, there were no blankets in any of the dormitories (Shelter below Ishanpur bridge).
- In terms of secure storage facilities, lockers for storage were provided in all the dormitories in 22 shelters. In 1 shelter, there were no lockers (Shelter near Ghatlodiya UHC). While AMC had begun to provide lockable almirahs, this provision was found in only 8 of the 23 shelters – in 7 shelters, each of the dorms had one or more lockable almirahs, while in 1 shelter only one of the two dorms had a lockable almirah.

This provision has reported to have increased since the survey, and new bunk beds do have some additional storage space. However, as can be seen in the following photographs, beds and other spaces are still being used for storage, indicating an inadequacy.

Photo 3. Periphery areas in the shelters being used as a storage

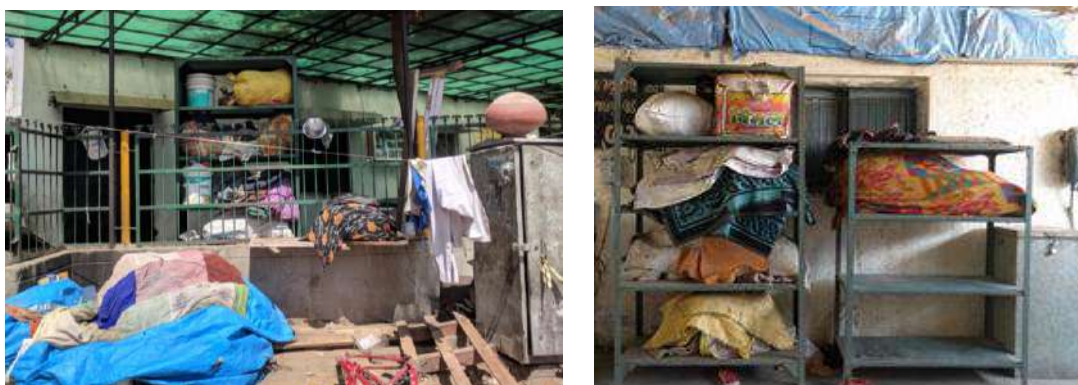


Photo 4. Almirahs and Functioning of Storage Spaces provided in the Shelters



- In 16 of the 23 shelters, there were open shelves inside all the dormitories and in 1 shelter, there were open shelves in one of the two dormitories. The remaining 6 shelters did not have open shelves, although all of them had lockers and two of them also had lockable almirahs.

Image 1. Sleeping facilities

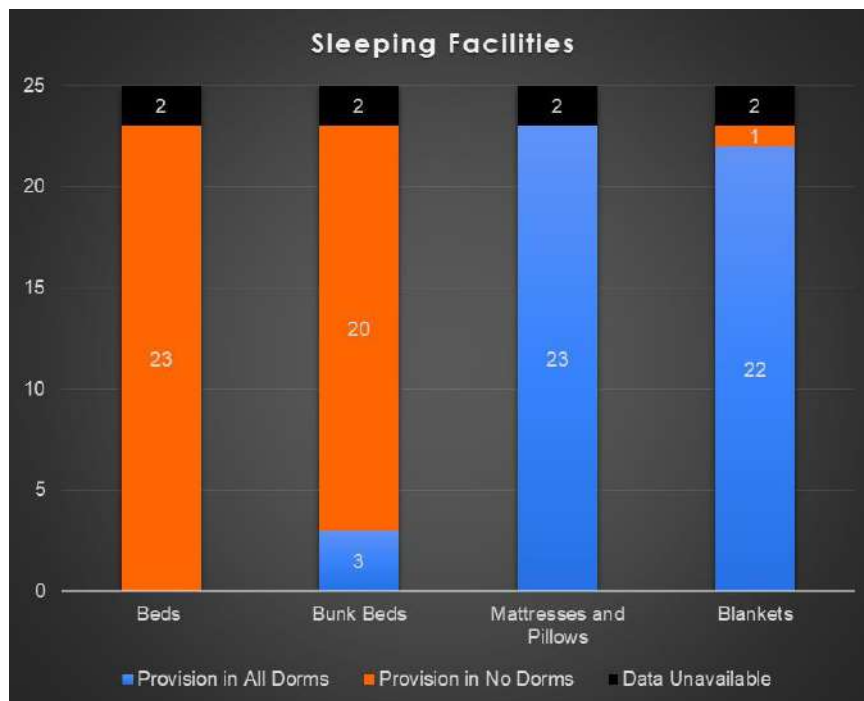
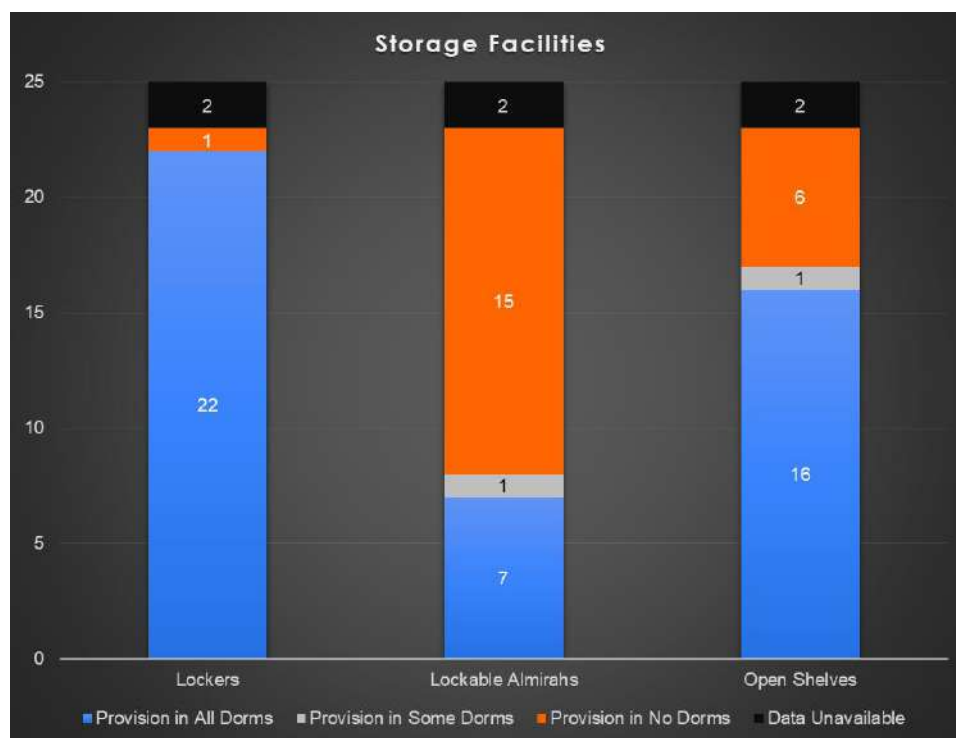


Image 2. Storage facilities



3.3. WATER AND SANITATION

3.3.1. WATER PROVISION

There is a municipal water connection in all the 25 surveyed shelters, however, at least 6 shelters also had to turn to municipal water tankers and in some cases even private water tankers:

- The Shelter under Keshavnath Bridge turns towards both municipal and private water tankers.
- The Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani was supplied with municipal tankers during the summer months in 2019.
- At the Shelter under Jivraj Bridge and the Shelter under Ishanpur Bridge, the managing organisations reported that they have sometimes called for private water tankers.
- At the Shelter behind Bhikshuk Gruh in Odhav, the managing organisation also reported calling for water tankers, especially when there were more residents in the shelter.
- At the Shelter under CTM Bridge towards Indrapuri, the managing organisation mentioned that sometimes they call a water tanker for cleaning purposes.

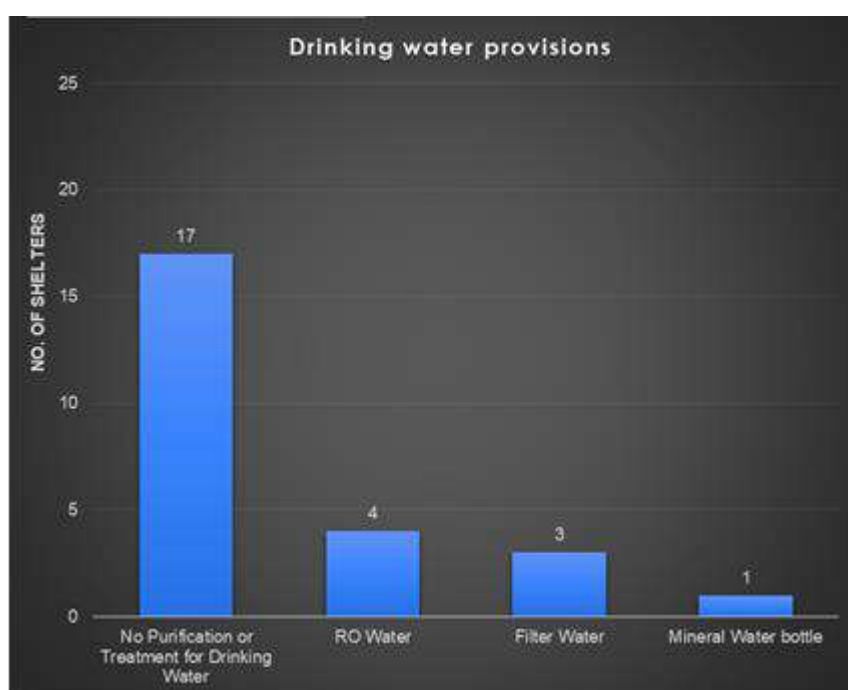
In terms of adequacy of water for toilet use, bathing and washing clothes, all the 25 surveyed shelters reported having 24-hour water supply in the toilets and bathrooms. However, residents at the Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani reported that sometimes they had to go outside the shelter for toilet use, bathing and washing clothes due to inadequacy of water inside the shelter. At some of the shelters where it was reported that water tankers were sometimes called when municipal water is inadequate, the residents suffered for a day or more before the tankers come.

3.3.2. POTABLE WATER PROVISION

As per the SUH Guidelines section 4.1, facilities/amenities to be provided at the shelters for dignified living include “*water arrangements (potable drinking water and other needs).*” However, very few of the shelters were found to have proper potable water (Image 3). The survey findings are as follows:

- Potable water was provided at only 8 of the 25 shelters (RO water at 4 shelters, filtered water at 3 shelters and mineral water bottles at 1 shelter).
- At the remaining 11 shelters, the water was not purified or treated for drinking, even though at several of these shelters, the water for drinking purpose was stored separately.
- At few shelters, it was reported that 5-10 litre mineral water bottles are provided, however, the amount is often inadequate, so residents then fill drinking water from other taps in the shelter.

Image 3. Potable water provision



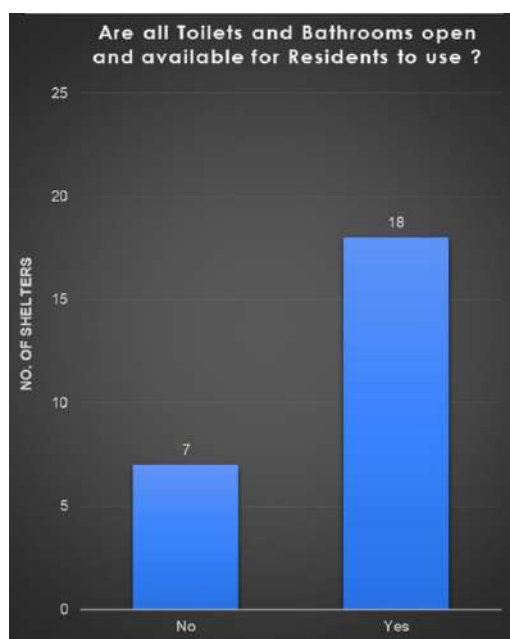
3.3.3. TOILETS AND BATHROOMS

The survey findings are as follows:

- In 18 shelters, all the toilets and bathrooms were open and available for use by the shelter residents, while in the remaining 7 shelters, some of the toilets and bathrooms were locked or used for other purposes (Image 4). For example, at the Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, one toilet/bathroom was locked for sole use by the shelter staff and one bathroom was used by residents to store their cooking materials. In the Shelter under Jivraj bridge, one toilet was closed because it was non-functional and one bathroom was kept locked for sole use of the female caretaker.

- There are no separate spaces for washing clothes and utensils, and it was observed that the shelter residents either washed clothes in the bathrooms or in the open spaces of the shelter premises. This also meant that the bathrooms were not adequate as they doubled up as spaces to wash clothes. Utensils were washed in the open spaces of the shelter premises, creating puddles of water. There was also no provision for drying washed clothes, and residents had put up clothesline in and around the shelter, which created difficulties in the monsoon.

Image 4. Whether the toilets / bathrooms were open and available for use by residents



3.3.4. CLEANLINESS

The survey findings are as follows:

- The toilets/bathrooms as well as the remaining areas of the shelter were found to be in largely good or satisfactory condition of cleanliness in all the 25 shelters.
- In all the 25 shelters, the cleaning of toilets/bathrooms as well as other areas was reported to be done by a person appointed by the managing organization or AMC. At 24 shelters, the frequency of cleaning was reported to be on daily basis for all these areas of the shelter. Whereas at 1 shelter, the frequency of cleaning was reported to be daily for the toilets/bathrooms but only once a month for the remaining areas (Shelter near India Colony).
- In 13 shelters, it was reported that residents also contributed to the cleaning of toilets and bathrooms. In 9 shelters, residents did some cleaning daily while in 3 shelters, they did the cleaning once a week or once in a fortnight. In 1 shelter, a Swachhata committee had been made with residents contributing to cleaning the toilets / bathrooms (Shelter near India Colony).
- In one shelter, it was reported that while residents never had to clean the toilets/bathrooms, they did contribute to cleaning of the remaining areas of the shelter.

Photo 5. Present Toilet / bathroom scenario



3.3.5 ELECTRICITY

The survey findings are as follows (Image 5):

- At all the 25 shelters, it was reported that there was 24-hour electricity provision in the dormitories. However, in one shelter the light / fan fixtures were not working properly (Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani), in one shelter there were no lights in the dormitories (Shelter under Memco Bridge, Saijpur), and in two shelters there were no fans in the dormitories (Below Guruji Bridge and Shelter under Memco Bridge, Saijpur).
- In all the 25 shelters, there were electric light points and fixtures in the toilets. However, in 5 shelters, some or all of these fixtures were not working (Shelter near Sola cross-roads, Shelter under Memco bridge, Shelter under Keshavnath bridge, Shelter near Ghatlodiya UHC, and Shelter under Gota bridge).
- In the shelters which had common areas like corridors, there was 24-hour electricity provision in these common areas, however, in a couple of these shelters the light fixtures were not working properly.

Image 5. Electricity in the shelters

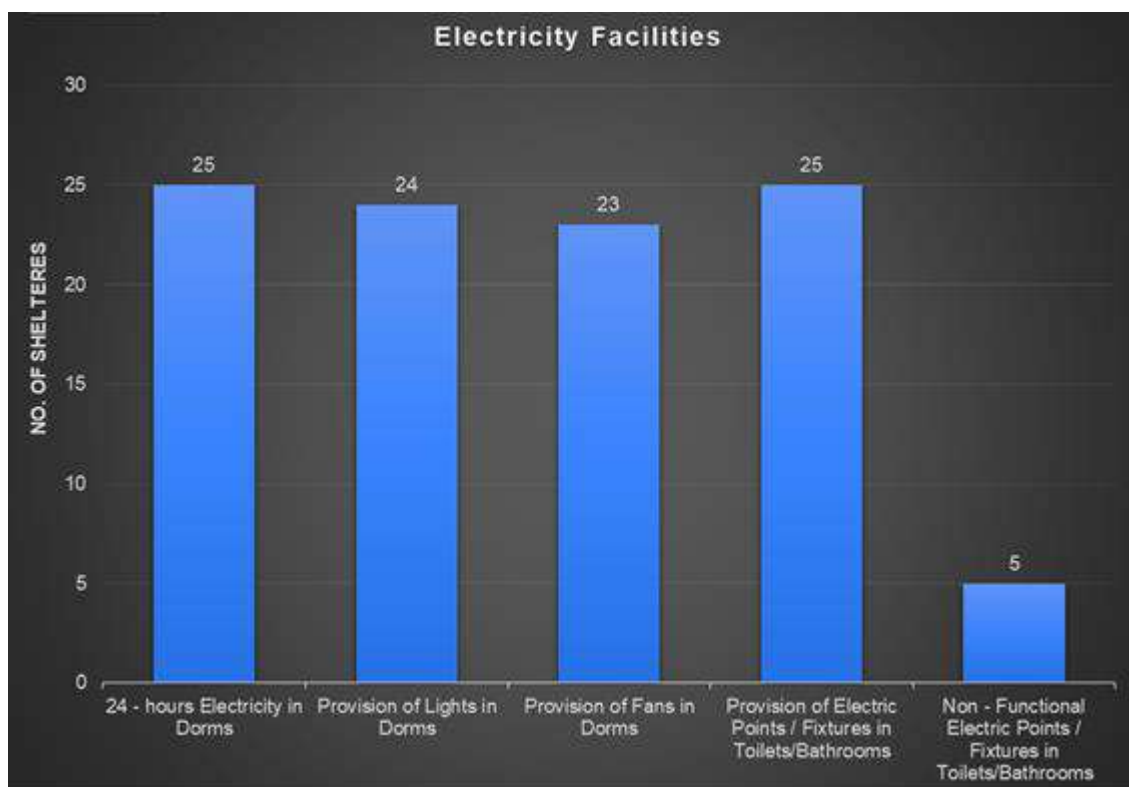


Photo 6. Present Electric fixtures and points provided in the Shelters



3.5. COOKING FACILITIES AND PRACTICES

3.5.1. COOKING FACILITIES

Data on cooking facilities was collected for 24 of the 25 surveyed shelters. As per the SUH Guidelines, facilities/amenities to be provided at the shelters for dignified living include “*common kitchen/cooking space, necessary utensils for cooking and serving, and cooking gas connections*”. However, while utensils have been provided at almost all the shelters, the results of our survey show that only 9 of the 24 shelters have a separate room for kitchen, and the kitchens in only 3 shelters had a gas connection (Image 6). *This number is reported to have increased since the survey.*

In number of the other shelters the AMC has, however, constructed a kitchen platform, often with washbasins, in the yard of the shelter compound (see Section 3.5.2).

In the 3 shelters which had a gas connection, how were the kitchens being used? It was found that in only one shelter, residents were allowed to use the kitchen, while in the other two shelters only the managing organisation was permitted to use the kitchen.

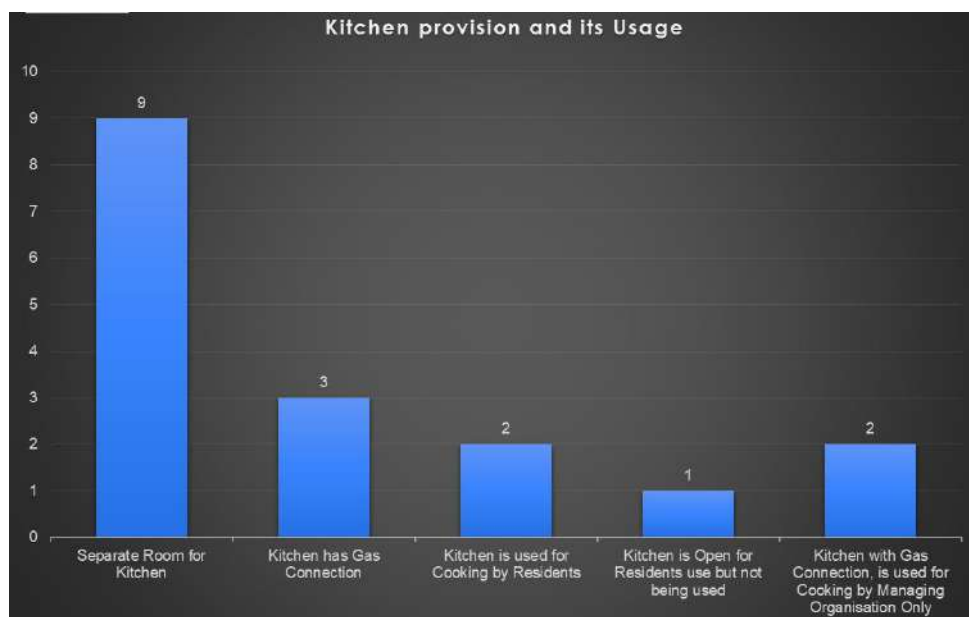
- Shelter in Girdhamagar, Shahibaug – This shelter has a capacity of 50 beds but has only one gas burner. Moreover, residents are not permitted to use the kitchen. Only the managing organisation uses the kitchen and provides food. In this shelter, the residents – who were all single men and mainly seasonal migrants at the time of the survey – were not permitted to cook anywhere in the shelter premises and specifically mentioned that they appreciated the provision of cooked food.
- Shelter in Madhupura, Shahibaug – This shelter has a capacity of 67 beds but has only one gas burner. Moreover, residents are not permitted to use the kitchen. Only the managing organisation uses the kitchen and provides food. In this shelter, the residents – who, at the time of the survey, were a mix of families, single women and women with children, and also a mix of permanent migrants, seasonal migrants and those who had come to the city for medical treatment – were either eating the food provided by the organisation or cooking nearby, outside the shelter premises.
- Shelter in Saraspur – This shelter has a capacity of 66 beds but has only two gas burners. Some residents are using this kitchen while others cook in and around the shelter compound. Some residents mentioned the need for more gas burners in the kitchen; other residents mentioned that if a shed was erected in the shelter compound, they could cook in the monsoon.

When seen along with the shelter capacity above, it is also clear that the kitchens are not provided with adequate gas burner facilities so that all the shelter residents can cook.

From the 9 shelters which had a separate room for a kitchen, 6 shelters did not have a gas connection. How were these kitchens being used? In 2 of these shelters, residents were using the kitchen (Shelter below CTM Bridge in Bhaipura Hatkeshwar and Shelter in Saraspur near Everest Char Rasta). In 1 other shelter, the residents were permitted to use the kitchen, but they were not doing so, and were instead cooking in the open on chullahs (Shelter near India Colony). In 1 shelter, the residents were not permitted to use the kitchen, which was reported to be not ready to use yet (Shelter under Maharshi Dadichi Bridge in Shahpur). In 3 other shelters, the room meant for kitchen was being used by the staff, in some cases for other purposes (Shelter near Bhikshuk Gruh in Odhav, Shelter near Ghatlodiya UHC, and Shelter near Vastral Ring-Road Crossroads). Some of the kitchens are also too small in size for all the shelter residents to use.

Overall, residents were using the kitchen in only 2 shelters, one is the Shelter in Saraspur (with gas connection) and the other is the Shelter below CTM bridge, Bhaipura Hatkeshwar (without gas connection).

Image 6. Kitchen provision and usage



When asked what facilities could be improved at the shelters, residents at the below four shelters which had no kitchen specifically expressed the need for a separate room for a kitchen.

- Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani
- Shelter below Ishanpur bridge
- Shelter under Keshavnath bridge, Road towards Sabarmati Jail
- Shelter below Guruji bridge, Khokhra

Residents at 1 shelter which had a separate room for kitchen but which they were not permitted to use (since it was not ready for use) specifically expressed that they were waiting for the gas connection and gas burners to come so they could use the kitchen (one of the shelters under Midco bridge, Vatva). Data on provision of utensils was collected in 21 of the 25 surveyed shelters. All these shelters were found to have utensils. Note that in most of these shelters, there is no separate room for kitchen, there is no separate room for kitchen but utensils have still been provided. In some cases, residents were still using the utensils to cook / eat elsewhere in the shelter, generally in / around the shelter compound. Observations revealed that besides the plates, the cooking utensils themselves are large and therefore not appropriate for families / small groups to use.

Photo 7. Provision and usage inside the Kitchens



3.5.2. COOKING PRACTICES OF THE RESIDENTS

As mentioned earlier, a separate room for a kitchen is not provided in majority of shelters, and even where there is a kitchen, residents are permitted to cook inside it in rare cases. The survey therefore also examined whether residents were permitted to cook in any other area of the shelter (i.e. areas that are not designed for cooking), and collected details about these cooking practices. Image 7 presents these findings.

In 13 shelters, residents were permitted to cook in some area within the shelter premises: In 2 shelters residents were cooking inside the dormitory or on the roof of the shelter. In 12 shelters, residents were permitted to cook in the yard of the shelter compound (this includes the shelter where residents were permitted to cook inside the dormitory). In number of these shelters the AMC has constructed a kitchen platform in the yard of the shelter compound (as seen in Photograph 7 above).

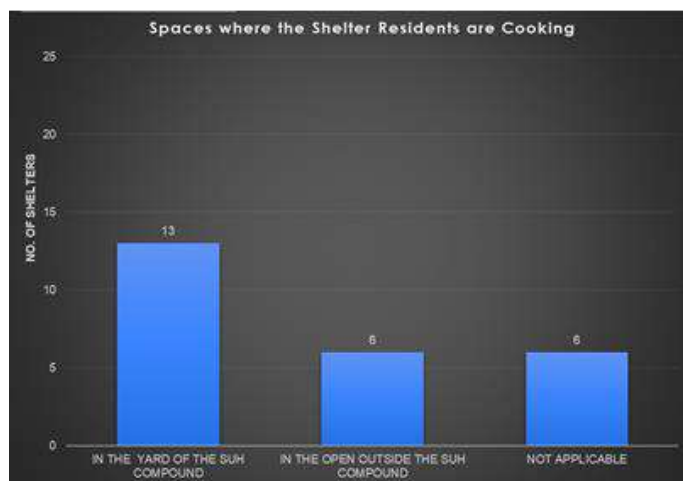
In some of these cases, some residents were also cooking in the open outside the shelter premises. In only a few shelters the AMC had built a shed in the open space of the shelter compound so residents could conveniently cook in the monsoon (Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani and Shelter below Maharshi Dadichi Bridge in Shahpur). As already mentioned earlier, at the Shelter in Saraspur, some residents specifically mentioned that they could cook in the monsoon if a shed was erected in the shelter compound. In 6 shelters, residents were cooking nearby, outside the shelter premises – in 3 cases, this was the practice even where there was some open space within the shelter premises:

- Shelter at Madhupura, Shahibaug – there is a kitchen that is used only by the managing organisation which provides food.
- Shelter near India Colony – there is a kitchen but nobody uses it.
- Shelter below Jivraj bridge – which has no kitchen.
- Shelter Below CTM Bridge, Towards Indrapuri – which has no kitchen. (No open space in the shelter premises)
- Shelter near Vastral Ring-Road Cross Roads – where the kitchen space has been converted into an office. (No open space in the shelter premises)
- Shelter under Keshavnath Bridge, Road towards Sabarmati Jail – which has no kitchen. (No open space in the shelter premises)

Photo 8. Cooking facilities and usage near the Shelter



Image 7. Other spaces where the shelter residents are cooking



Majority of residents who were cooking in these other spaces were using wood as cooking fuel.

In 5 shelters, residents were not cooking in any other area in or around the shelter. In one of these shelters, the managing organization provided food. In the remaining 4 shelters, the residents ate outside or obtained food through donation. In one of these shelters it was reported that they did so because they were not permitted to cook in or around the shelter premises, but in the other 3 shelters, it was not clear if the residents were not cooking because they were not permitted to do so or because they preferred not to cook.

- Shelter below Acharya Mahapragyaji Overbridge, Gridhamagar, Shahibaug – there is a kitchen that is used only by the managing organisation which provides food
- Shelter below Nathalal Jagadiya Bridge, Maninagar – which has no kitchen. Residents were not cooking in or around the shelter premises (there is no open space in the shelter premises) because they were not permitted to do so. They ate outside or obtained food through donation. The shelter had single men and single women.
- Shelter below Ishanpur bridge – which has no kitchen. Residents were not cooking in or around the shelter premises (there is no open space in the shelter premises). They ate outside.
- Shelter under Jashodanagar Bridge – which has no kitchen. Residents were not cooking in or outside the shelter premises (there is no open space in the shelter premises). They ate outside or obtained food through donation. The shelter had single men, single women and families (married couples).
- Shelter near Uday Estate – which has no kitchen. Residents were not cooking in or outside the shelter premises although it was reported that they were permitted to cook in the open space of the shelter premises. They ate outside. The shelter had only single men.

Since the survey, it has been reported that 2 major developments have taken place –

1. The AMC regularly provides a night time meal to the shelter residents, which is served to the residents by shelter staff. This is an important development which is much appreciated particularly by the single migrants who are living in the shelters
2. In shelters with operational kitchens, migrants are allowed to cook their lunch meals in the morning before they leave for work. Groups of migrants cook their meals in batches and take it with them when they leave for work.

Photo 9. Compound space of the Shelters



3.6. ACTIVITIES IN OPEN SPACES

Approximately 15 of the 25 surveyed shelters have a shelter compound with some kind of open space within this compound while a few of these shelters also have an accessible roof. Among the remaining 10 shelters, a couple of shelters have an accessible roof.

Photo 10. Activities happening in the Open Space of the Shelters



Shelters designed underneath flyovers have no open spaces attached to them. Cooking food is the most common activity for which the open spaces, specially the ones on the ground floor, are being used. In 11 out of 25 shelters, the space was used for cooking at some or the other point in the year. Several families use the open spaces available to sit during the leisure time. Seasonal changes in the use of the space were reported in several shelters. In the summer, other than cooking of food, following uses were reported:

- Shelter near India Colony and Shelter under Keshav Nath Bridge – Sleeping on the terrace
- Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, Shelter below Nathalal Jagadiya Bridge, Maninagar, Shelter near Vastral Ring-Road Cross, Shelter Below CTM Bridge – Sleeping in the yard
- Shelter near Sola Cross Roads – Drying of clothes

In the monsoon, the use of the open spaces gets reduced. However, during winters, these spaces are used extensively by the people to make bonfires for providing heat:

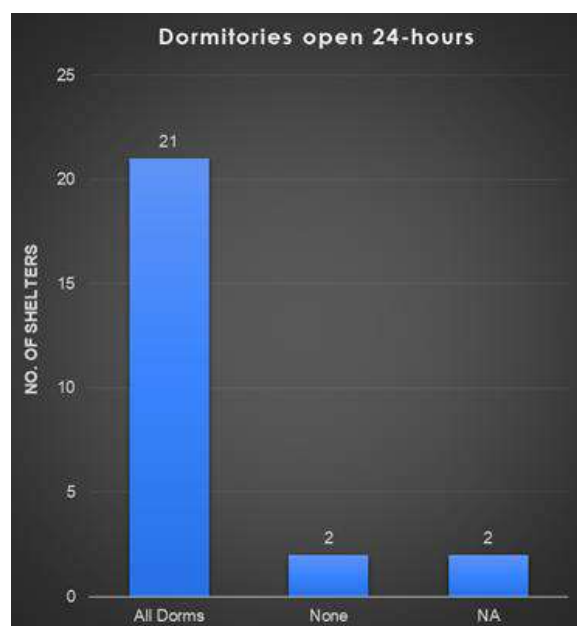
- Shelter below Acharya Mahapragyaji Overbridge, Shahibaug
- Shelter at Madhupura
- Shelter near India Colony
- Shelter under Jashodanagar Bridge
- Shelter behind Bhikshuk Gruh, Odhav
- Shelter below CTM Bridge, Bhaipura Hatkeshwar
- Shelter near Uday Estate, Odhav
- Shelter near Vastral Ring-Road Cross Roads
- Shelter Below CTM Bridge, Towards Indrapuri

3.7. SHELTER ACCESSIBILITY

3.7.1. ARE THE DORMITORIES OPEN 24-HOURS ?

Data on whether the dormitories were open 24-hours was collected in 23 of the 25 surveyed shelters. In 21 of these 23 shelters, all the dormitories were found to be open 24-hours, whereas in 2 shelters, none of the dormitories were open 24-hours and were open only during the night-time (Shelter in Saraspur near Everest Char-Rasta and Shelter below Guruji Bridge).

Image 8. Shelters with 24-hour accessible dormitories

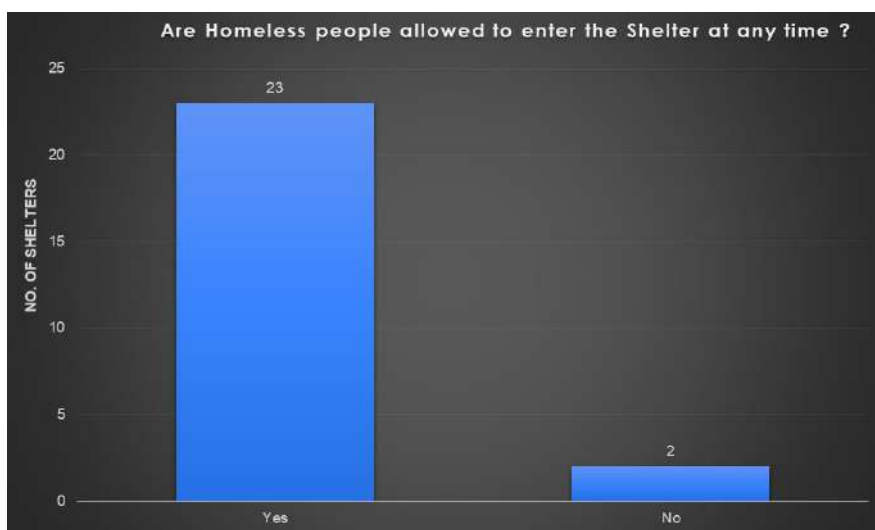


3.7.2. ACCESS TIMINGS AND CONDITIONS

In 23 of the 25 surveyed shelters, persons could come to the shelter at any time of the day or night. In 2 shelters, they could not come at any time, although it is not clear at what times they had to come (Shelter under Jashodanagar bridge and Shelter under Chanakyapuri Bridge No. 1 in Gota). In 24 of

the 25 surveyed shelters, a new homeless person had to show an ID card to gain access to the shelter. In only 1 shelter no ID card had to be furnished (Madhupura shelter).

Image 9. Shelter Access Timings



3.7.3. ACCESS BY FAMILIES

The 25 shelters have only dormitory halls and no individual family rooms. Despite this unfriendly family design, families have been able to access many of the shelters since one or more dormitory halls have been opened for family use. The survey findings are as follows:

- 9 shelters had only or predominantly single men living in both the dormitories. In some cases, it seems this is the case because only single men come to these shelters. In some cases, this is the case because there are two shelters in close proximity to each other, and the AMC has assigned one shelter for men and the other for women or families, and therefore the former shelter has only single men. However, in a couple of shelters, there is also some evidence that women do not come to the shelters because they feel unsafe and therefore there are only single men living there.
- In 2 shelters, families are living in both the dormitories (Shelter near Ghatlodiya UHC, Shelter behind Bhikshuk Gruh in Odhav). However, in some of these shelters, when AMC comes for checking the managing organisation enforces gender segregation, separating out the men and women of the families into different dormitories.
- There are several shelters which have single men, single women and families living in them. The way in which these groups are accommodated in the two dormitories of the shelter is seen that pre-dominantly men are living in the one dormitory and Single women, Single women with children and Families are living together in the second dorm.
- The shelter under Jivraj bridge is one of the two shelters with four dormitories. Here, only single men are living in one dormitory, families are living in two dormitories, and the elderly are living in one dormitory. The shelter under Gota bridge in Chandlodia is the second shelter with four dormitories. Here, only single men are living in one dormitory, families are living in the second dormitory. The other two dormitories were not being used.
- In 18 shelters, single men are living in one dormitory, while families are living in the other dormitory (e.g. Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, Shelter under Chanakyapuri Bridge in Gota, and 16 other such shelters)

As per the SUH guidelines, it is specified that the shelters should be designed as per the different needs of the residents. The guidelines specify that:

Family Shelters : "For families living on the streets, family shelters may be provided with a special design for privacy, with shared common spaces ."

The physical spaces for the shelters in Ahmedabad city have all been designed for individual male and female migrants in the form of individual dormitories. Designs for families that can "protect privacy" as per the guidelines have not been implemented. However, it was seen on the field that most operating agencies have ensured that families are able to use the shelters through flexible use of space.

In the Shelter below Jivraj bridge is one of the two shelters with four dormitories. Only single men are living in one dormitory, families are living in the other 2 dormitories and elders are living in the last dormitory.

- In the Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, Shivarajini Crossroads it is seen that the one dorm is being used by single men and the families are living in the other dormitory.
- In the Shelter near Uday Estate, Odhav it is seen that there are two dorms used by predominantly single men due to which families are not finding it convenient to live there, though there are two families living with the men in the dormitory.

While the adaptability of the operating agencies and AMC in allowing this flexibility should be commended, it should be noted that better shelter designs need to be implemented that can accommodate families directly. The SUH guidelines say that depending on the need, a shelter may cater to working men, women and family with appropriate spaces demarcated for each of the categories.

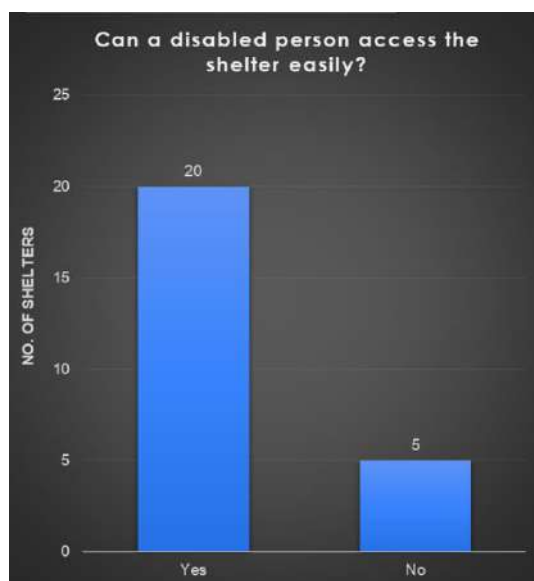
Photo 11. Men and Women's / Women with Children's living separately in the Shelter's



3.7.4. ACCESS BY THE DISABLED

In 20 of the 25 surveyed shelters, a disabled person can access the shelter easily. However, it is not clear if the shelter facilities such as the toilets and bathrooms have a barrier-free design so that the disabled can use them.

Image 10. Shelter Access by the Disabled



3.8. SHELTER MANAGEMENT

3.8.1. SHELTER STAFF

As per the SUH guidelines, each shelter is supposed to have minimum one full-time manager and three caregivers (one caregiver for one 8 hour shift) for looking after daily management, upkeep, cleanliness and discipline at the shelter. For shelters with women residents, there should be minimum one woman caregiver.

The survey captured the shelter staff, but it did not capture details about whether the shelter manager was full-time and what kind of shifts the caregivers were working on. There was a shelter manager at 22 of the 25 surveyed shelters. The following 3 shelters reported not having a shelter manager:

- Shelter in Saraspur
- Shelter below Maharshi Dadichi Bridge, Shahpur
- Shelter under Gota bridge, Chandlodia

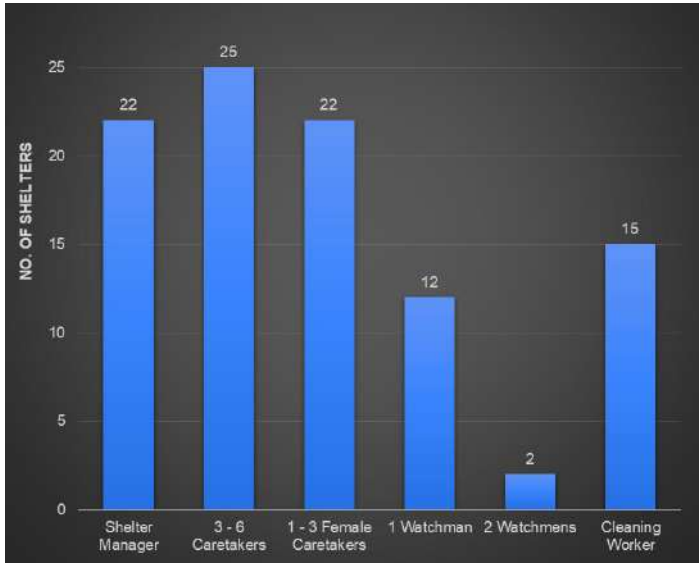
At all the 25 shelters, there were minimum three caretakers. In fact, at many shelters there were more than 3 caretakers (Image 11). At 22 shelters, there were 1-3 women caretakers. 3 shelters did not have a single female caretaker, although 2 of these shelters have families, and therefore as per SUH guidelines should have a female caretaker:

- Shelter under Chanakyapuri Bridge No.1, Gota
- Shelter near Bhikshuk Gruh, Odhav

In 18 shelters there is no staff who lives at the shelter. In 5 shelters, a caretaker lives at the shelter and at one shelter, the watchman lives at the shelter. In most of these cases, the caretaker was sleeping in the dormitory itself. At 1 shelter, it was unclear if any staff lived at the shelter. Approximately 10 of the shelters also reported not having a watchman or cleaning worker.

Since the survey, the AMC has regularized the shelter management staff in each shelter to include a shelter manager, 3 caretakers, 1 reliever caretaker, 1 night watchman and 1 cleaner.

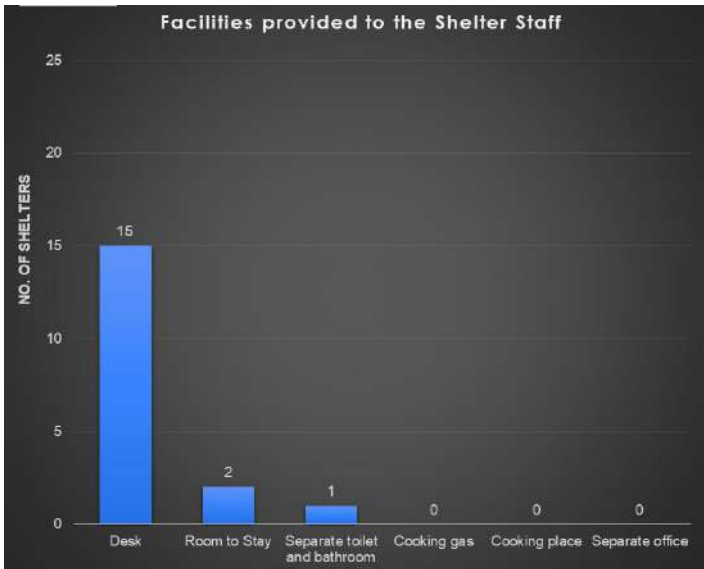
Image 11. Staff at the Shelters



3.8.2. FACILITIES PROVIDED TO THE SHELTER STAFF

Data was collected for 20 of the 25 surveyed shelters on facilities provided to the shelter staff such as desk, separate room, separate toilet/bathroom, cooking place/gas and separate office. In 4 shelters none of these facilities were provided. Desk was provided to the shelter staff in 15 shelters. A separate room was provided for a staff-person to live in only 2 shelters. A separate toilet and bathroom was reported for the shelter staff at only 1 shelter, although it seems that this toilet/bathroom might have been actually meant for all residents.

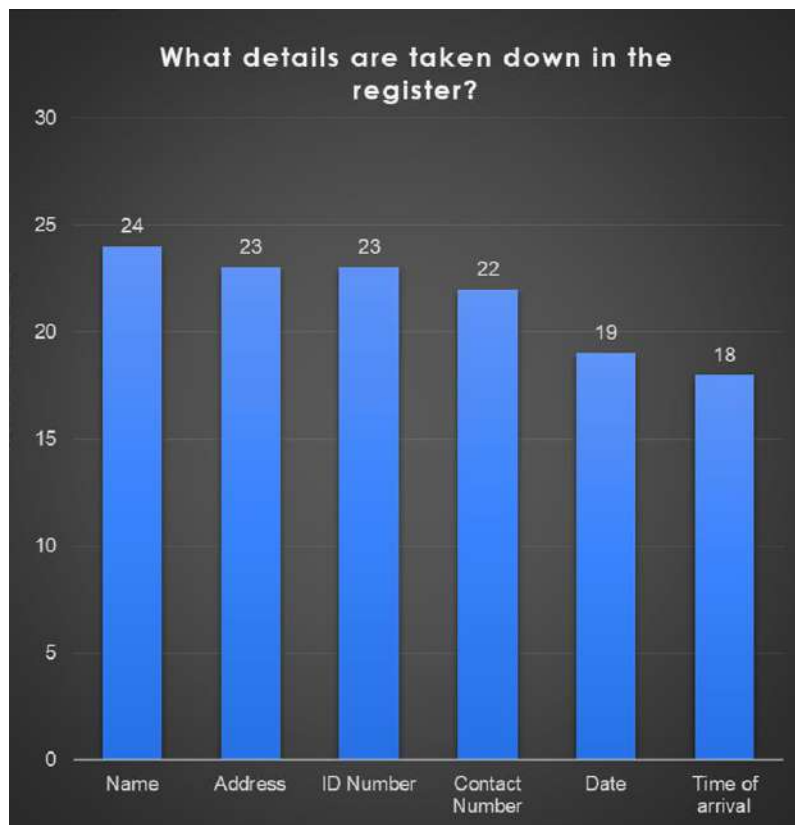
Image 12. Facilities provided to the Shelter Staff



3.8.3. REGISTER OF SHELTER RESIDENTS

The managing organisation maintained a register of shelter residents at all the 25 surveyed shelters. Image 13 shows the details recorded in the register. At a couple of shelters, other details such as age of resident and time of leaving the shelter were also recorded, and at two shelters the reason for coming to live at the shelter were recorded.

Image 13. Details noted in the register of shelter residents

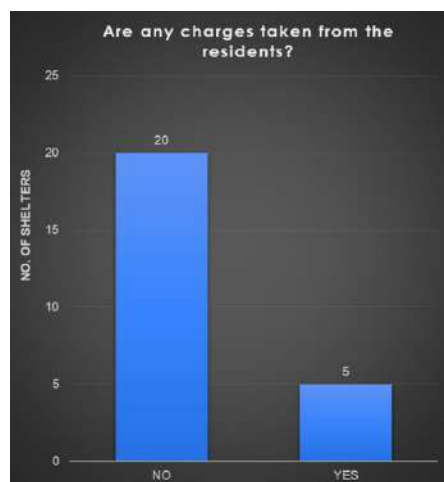


Since the survey, the AMC has implemented a check-in/check-out app, where the details of residents when they enter and leave the shelter are recorded. However, few of the operating agencies have reported bugs with the app, and maintain hard-copies of the data as well.

3.8.4. CHARGES FROM THE RESIDENTS

In 5 of the 25 surveyed shelters, residents were charged for living in the shelter. The charges varied from Rs.5-20 per day, and in some of these shelters a receipt was given for charges taken and in other shelters no receipt was given. At 9 other shelters, residents used to be charged approximately Rs.10-15 but *all charges from residents were discontinued from June 2019.*

Image 14. Are charges taken from the shelter residents?



3.8.5. AMC MONITORING OF THE SHELTERS

AMC visited all the surveyed shelters for checking once a week or more than once a week. At 24 shelters, it was reported that AMC checks the register and cleanliness. At 21 shelters, it was reported that AMC checks the staff attendance. At only few shelters, the AMC was reported to be checking electricity, plumbing maintenance, cleaning items, and other items provided at the shelter.

3.8.6. EFFORTS BY MANAGING ORGANISATION AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THEM

The survey tried to understand the efforts of the managing organisation for good shelter management, such as trainings among their staff and awareness activities among the shelter residents. At 5 shelters, the shelter staff reported that some training had been given to them, such as record-keeping and cleanliness related. At 4-5 shelters, they reported having conducted some kind of awareness activities among the shelter residents and in the surrounding area – on cleanliness, health awareness, and outreach to popularise the shelter among people in need. The provision of entitlements to shelter residents is discussed in Section 3.9.

The survey also tried to understand what the managing organisation does in case they face issues with water, electricity, choked toilet or other maintenance issues. In 15 shelters, the shelter staff present at the time of the survey reported that they inform the AMC. In some cases, they mentioned specifically informing the City Engineer, or the Community Organizer from the UCD department. A couple of these shelters, they also said that they sometimes tried to deal with the issues themselves. In 4-5 shelters, the caretakers said that they report the issues to the shelter manager or the managing organisation. In 3-4 shelters, the caretakers have a list of phone numbers of plumbers, electricians, etc, and they make the phone calls and address the issue themselves if possible.

Finally, the survey tried to capture the issues and challenges faced by the shelter staff in managing the shelter. In 7 shelters, the staff did not report any issues. At the remaining shelters, the staff reported varied issues and challenges. In several shelters, the staff reported plumbing issues, overflows in the toilets and sewers, garbage disposal, electrical repairs, locker maintenance, and delays in repairs and maintenance works. In 1 shelter, the staff reported that residents used too much water (Shelter below Ishanpur Bridge). In a couple of shelters, the staff pointed to incomplete compound walls. In 1 shelter, the staff reported that children playing on the adjacent playground broke the window glass of the shelters (Shelter near India Colony) and in 1 shelter, the staff reported that some of the residents were addicted to alcohol, cigarettes and this created issues and the police also have been called.

3.8.7. SHELTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

As per the SUH Guidelines, a Shelter Management Committee (SMC) has to be constituted with local ward member, ULB representative, caretakers, and few nominated residents of the shelter as members. The SMC is supposed to supervise the day-to-day functioning of the shelter. The SMC is supposed to examine the registers at periodic intervals and ensure the timely redressal of complaints. The shelter manager, along with the SMC, is also supposed to evolve norms about voluntary services by the residents for maintenance of the shelters.

It was found that a SMC had been formed at only 13 of the 25 shelters. At majority of the shelters, the staff present at the shelter at the time of the survey did not know the composition of the shelter

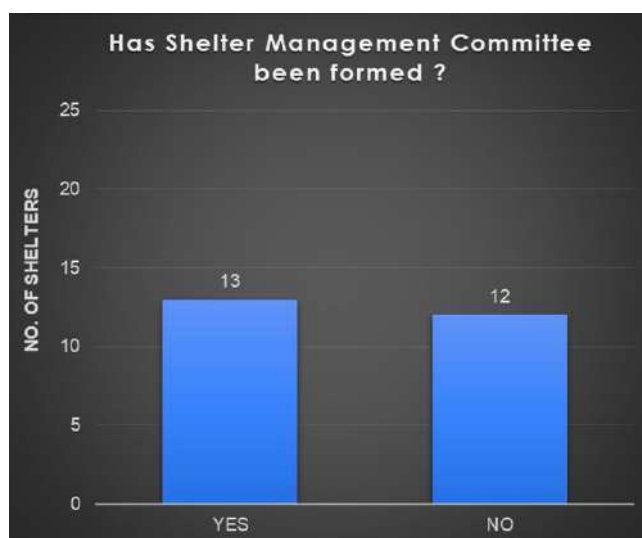
management committee. However, at 7 shelters some details on this committee composition were provided as follows:

1. Municipal corporator, ACE (Engineering Department), ACO (UCD Department), PHS (Health Department), Director of Managing Organisation, Shelter Volunteer
2. Municipal corporator, ACE, ACO, Shelter Manager
3. Municipal corporator, AMC official from Engineering Department, Shelter Manager
4. Municipal corporator, AMC official, Trustee, Shelter Manager,
5. Municipal corporator, AMC officials, Shelter Manager
6. Municipal corporator, CO, ACO, Shelter Manager, Shelter Volunteer
7. ACE (Engineering Department), ACO, Health Officer, Shelter Manager

It is possible that the staff present at the shelter did not know the full composition of the SMC, however, if the above reported data is true then the fact that a shelter volunteer was reported in only 2 of the shelters with SMCs shows that the SUH guidelines about the SMC composition are not being followed.

Constitution of SMCs has also reported to have increased since the survey. However, clear information about participation of residents in SMCs and the actions taken by SMCs has not been obtained.

Image 15. Shelter Management Committee



3.9. AVAILABILITY OF ENTITLEMENTS AT THE SHELTERS

As per the SUH Guidelines, the Shelter Management Agencies and Committees would be responsible to ensure the availability of various entitlements and benefits to the homeless. The guidelines give the following illustrative list of schemes/benefits where such convergence is desirable:

- Identity Proof and Postal Address
- Elector's Photo Identity Card (EPIC), Aadhaar Card etc.
- Old age, widows and disability pensions
- BPL cards, PDS ration cards etc.
- Bank, Post Office, Jan Dhan Yojana Accounts
- ICDS services

- Admission to government schools
- Admission to public hospitals for health care
- Free Legal Aid
- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Housing for All
- Skill Training under DAY-NULM & Prime Minister's Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, SEP component of DAY-NULM
- Identity card/vending certificates to homeless street vendors
- Rehabilitation of disabled schemes of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- Referral services for women & children in distress with SWADHAR, UJJAWALA, SABLA, One Stop Centre, Women Helpline Scheme, and Schemes of MoW & CD
- Subsidy under PDS
- Direct Benefit Transfer under various Govt. schemes
- Linkage to and other schemes/services/entitlements of the Ministry

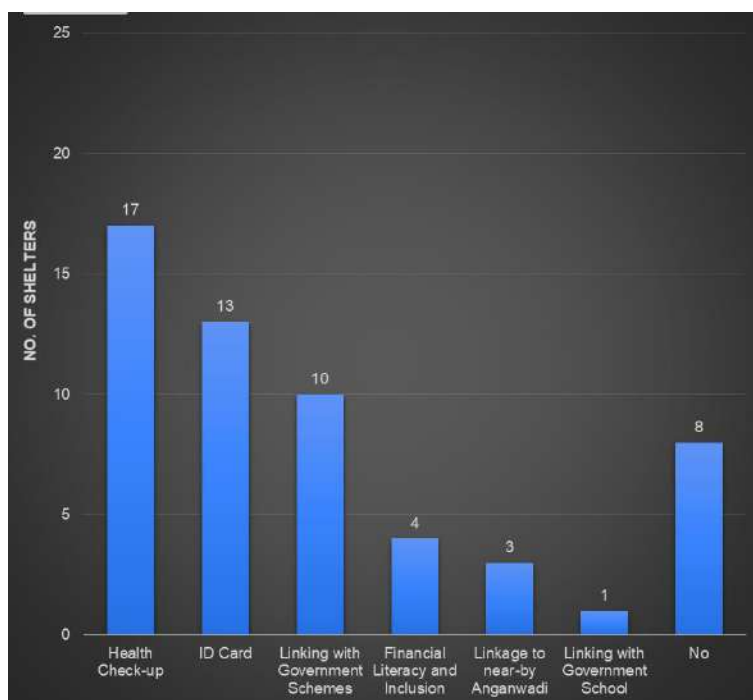
The survey captured data on linkage to the following entitlements based on discussions with the staff present at the shelters:

- Health
- ID cards
- Linking residents to government schemes
- Linking children to Anganwadis
- Linking children to municipal schools
- Furthering financial literacy and inclusion

Image 16 presents the survey findings. The survey found that at 8 of the 25 shelters, none of these entitlements were offered. Health check-up was the most common service provided (at 17 shelters). However, this does not tell us how frequently health check-ups were organised, and what kind of health services were provided, which would have to be examined in more detail. The second and third most common services provided at the shelters were the making of ID cards for the residents (at 13 shelters) and linking the residents to government schemes (10 shelters). However, the survey has not captured what kind of ID cards were made and which schemes the residents were linked to, both aspects that would also have to be examined in more detail. The weakest services were furthering financial literacy and inclusion (4 shelter); linking of children to Anganwadis (in only 3 shelters; one of which had admitted almost 15 children to an anganwadi); and linking of children to municipal schools (1 shelter).

The AMC has reported in July 2021 that through the SUH, 11,689 linkages to various services have been provided. It should be noted that in accordance with the survey findings, 6,792 (~58%) of these linkages were for health check-ups and medical treatment, whereas services for children were only 497 (~4.2%). After 3 years of shelter operations, it should be noted that as per this data, 995 (~8.5%) residents were linked with financial instruments like bank accounts but only 12 had actually received benefits of direct benefit transfer schemes from the government.

Image 16. Availability of Entitlements at the Shelters



3.10. SHELTER RESIDENTS: CHARACTERISTICS AND EXPERIENCES

The survey captured the characteristics of the residents living at the shelters in terms of:

- household type (single men, single women, women with children, and families)
- occupation
- vulnerable groups (disabled, mentally ill, recovering from ill health, elderly and others who cannot take care of themselves, women with children, only young children)
- migration status (permanent / semi-permanent migrant, seasonal migrant)
- migration source areas

These findings at the 25 surveyed shelters are presented in this section. It should be kept in mind that the situation at the shelters – in terms of how many residents live there and their characteristics – is dynamic. Therefore, for example, just because a particular shelter had only single men living in it at the time of the survey does not necessarily mean that families never come to live there. Or if a particular shelter had only families living in it at the time of the survey does not necessarily mean that single men or single women never come to live there. Although this dynamism is not captured in the survey, the findings are still useful to give us a sense of who uses the shelters.

3.10.1. HOUSEHOLD TYPE

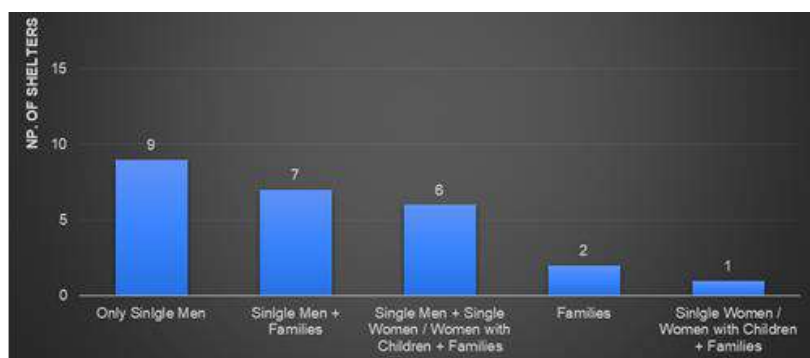
The survey found that the shelters comprised of diverse combinations of household types (Image 17):

- At 9 shelters there were only single men
- At 6 shelters there was a mix of single men, single women / women with children and families
- At 7 shelters there was a mix of single men and families
- At 2 shelters there were only families

- At 1 shelter there was a mix of single men and single women
- At 1 shelter there was a mix of single women / women with children and families.

Looking at the data in another way, 16 of the 25 shelters had families living in them; 22 of the 25 shelters had single men living in them; and 8 of the 25 shelters had single women / women with children living in them. These findings point towards the fact that substantial number of shelters in Ahmedabad are being used by a mix of household types, and while there is a dynamism in this regard, the shelters must be designed and managed to dynamically support the needs of this mix of household types.

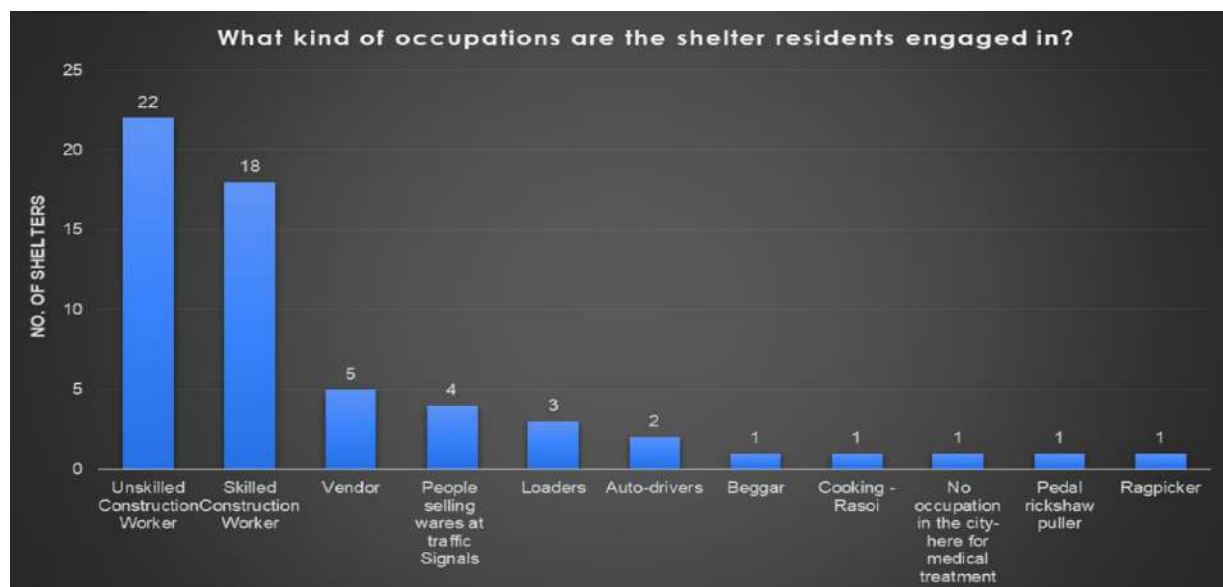
Image 17. Type of People Living in the Shelters



3.10.2. OCCUPATION

The survey found that construction workers were living at almost all the shelters (23 of 25 surveyed shelters). Other occupational groups were also found, however, at fewer shelters – for example, there were vendors living at 5 shelters; people selling wares at traffic signals at 4 shelters; and loaders at 3 shelters (Image 18). One question thrown up by this finding that needs reflection is: what is the occupational profile of the homeless population in Ahmedabad? If we understand this profile better, then comparing this to the survey findings, we would also be able to understand whether certain occupational groups among the homeless are less inclined to move into homeless shelters and explore the reasons for this.

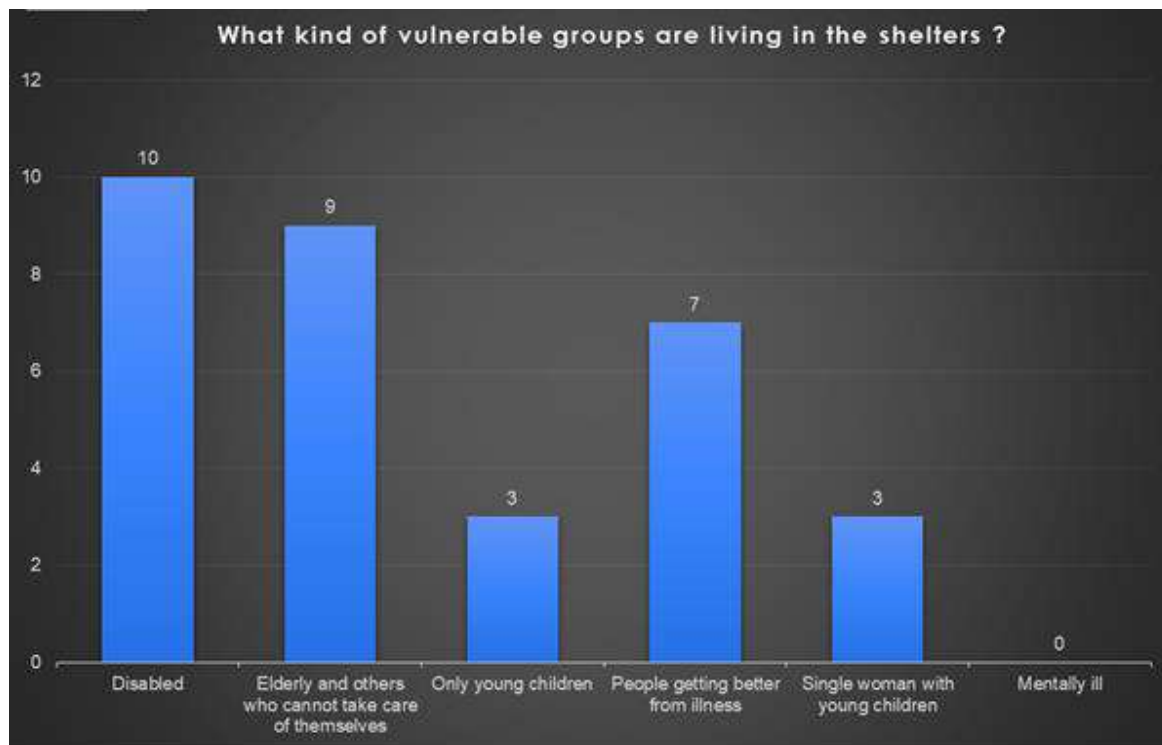
Image 18. Kind of Occupation



3.10.3. VULNERABLE GROUPS

There were one or more disabled persons living in 10 shelters; elderly and others not able to take care of themselves in 9 shelters; and people recovering from ill health in 7 shelters (Image 19). These three groups are also those who may require more support, for example, in terms of food provision, medical help, etc. The Madhupura shelter was found to be accommodating some women who had asked for help through 181 Women Helpline number.

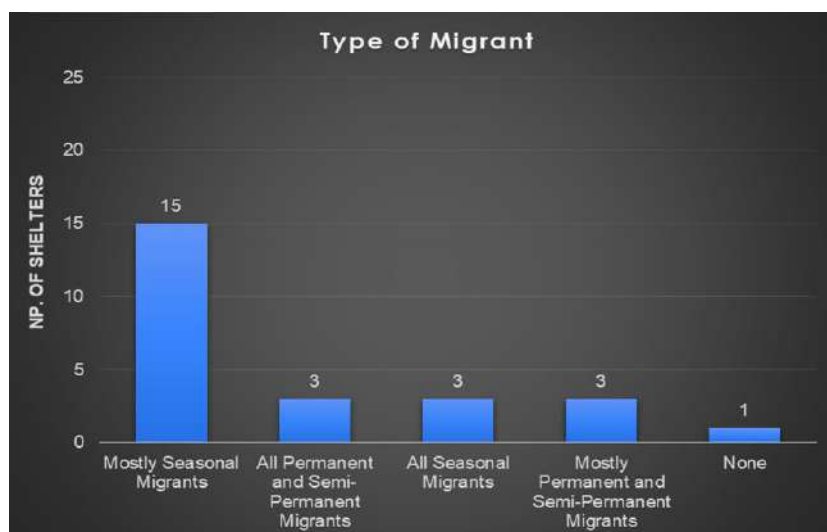
Image 19. Type of Vulnerable Groups



3.10.4. MIGRATION STATUS

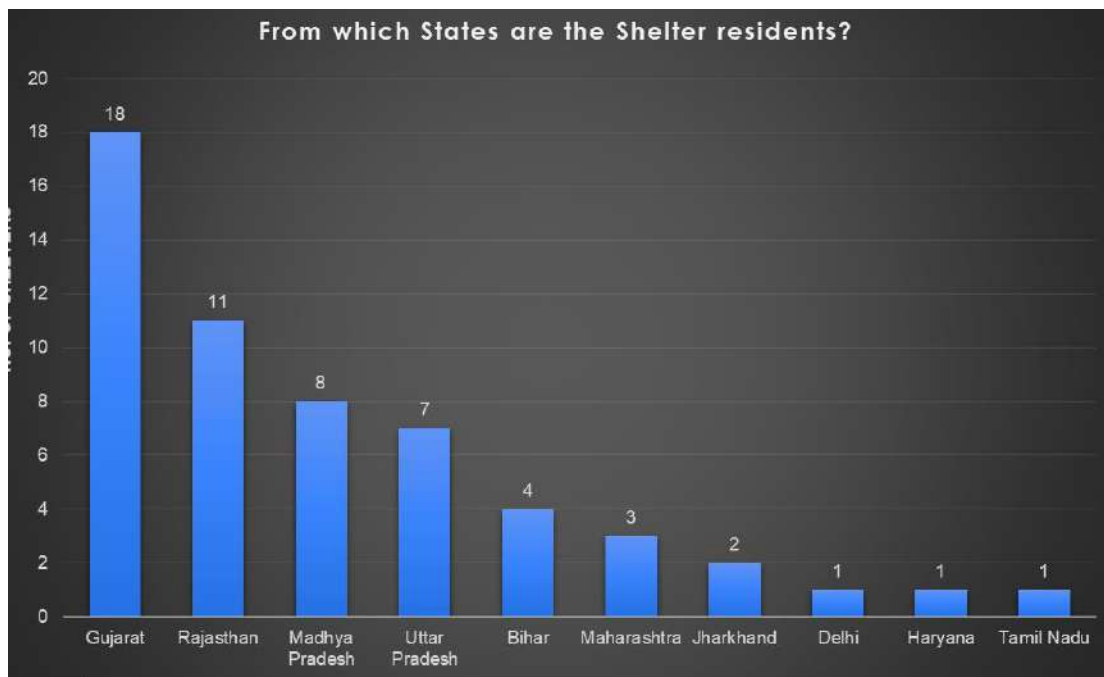
At 15 shelters, most of the residents were seasonal migrants while at 3 shelters, all the residents were seasonal migrants. At 6 shelters, all or most of the residents were permanent / semi-permanent migrants. (Image 20)

Image 20. Migration Status



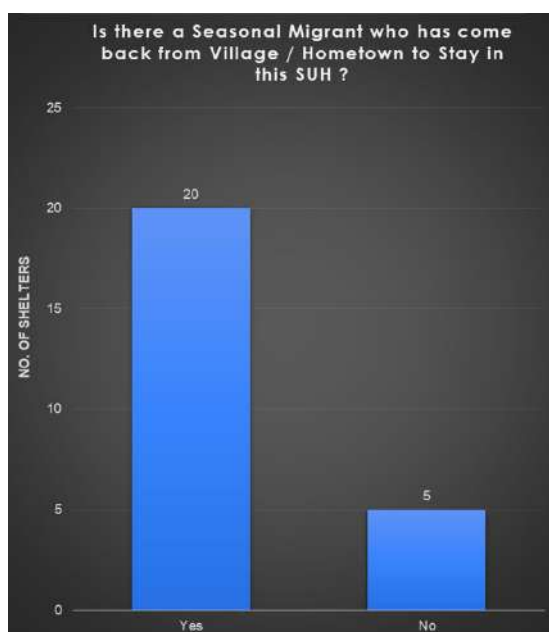
The migrants were from Gujarat (districts of Dahod, Panchmahal, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Mehsana, Banaskantha, Tapi, Patan, Morbi etc); Rajasthan (districts of Banswara, Dungarpur, Udaipur etc), Madhya Pradesh (districts of Indore), Maharashtra (districts of Pune, Jalgaon, Nashik), UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Delhi.

Image 21. Migration Source Area



In 14 shelters, there were migrants specifically from Gujarat's tribal districts of Dahod / Panchmahal, and at several shelters there were migrants specifically from Rajasthan districts of Banswara and Dungarpur – migrants from both these regions are known to be seasonal migrants. At majority of shelters (20 shelters), residents reported that they had gone their village/hometown and then returned to live at the same shelter. This tells us that many people at the shelters are moving between the city and village and returning to live in the same shelter every time they return to the city.

Image 22. Any Seasonal Migrant came back to stay in these SUH



3.10.5. PREVIOUS PLACES OF RESIDENCE OF THE SHELTER RESIDENTS

At 13 shelters, there were residents who reported that they had moved to the shelter from various open spaces such as footpath, open plot and under a flyover. While in many cases, residents had come to the shelters from such spaces of their own choice through information they obtained from a shelter caretaker, the managing organisation, the AMC, or friends, it is of great concern to us that at 3 shelters some residents reported that they had been forced to move to the shelter. At 2 of these shelters, some residents reported that they were forcibly moved from some footpaths to the shelter by the AMC – one of these was the shelter in Saraspur, and some residents here stated that the police patrol the area and pick people up from footpaths and bring them to the shelter. At 1 other shelter, some residents mentioned that their previous settlement had been damaged by a “trust” which had forced them to move to the shelter.

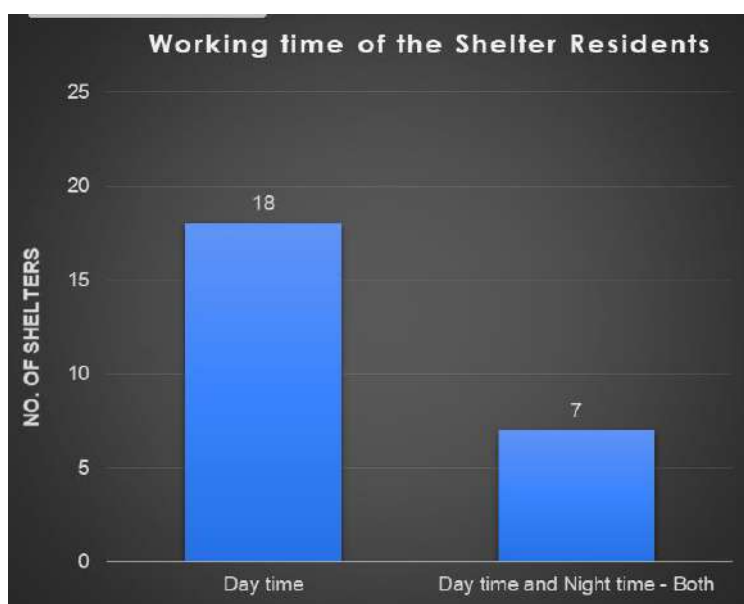
At 2 shelters, some residents mentioned that they had earlier lived in “*Chapra*” or “their own shacks.” They had come to know about the shelter from advertisements, and then saw that the facilities at the shelter were better than where they lived, and had therefore moved to the shelter.

At 3 shelters, there were residents who reported that they had moved to the shelter from rented rooms, and had come to know about the shelter from the managing organisation or their contractor. At 2 shelters, there were residents who reported that they had come directly from their village to live in the shelter. Some residents had come from the village to get medical treatment at Civil Hospital, and they had heard from the shelter there. Other residents had come from the village to work in the city and had heard about the shelter through other shelter residents or their contractor.

3.10.6. WORKING PRACTICES OF THE RESIDENTS

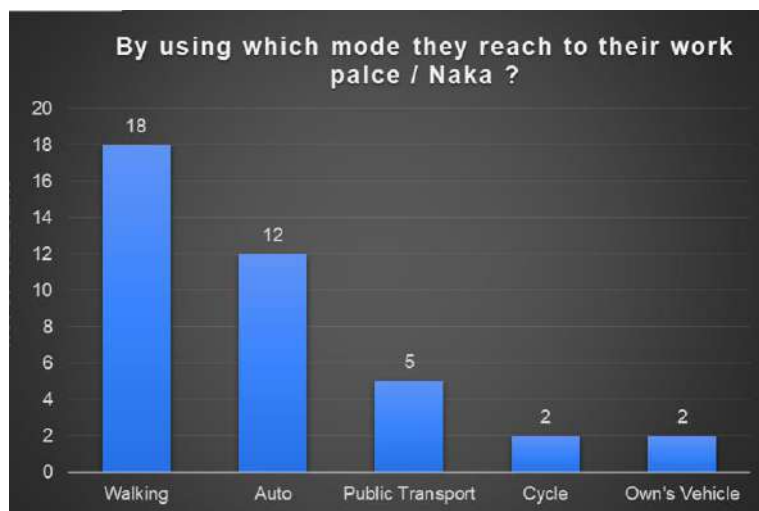
While most shelter residents are day-time workers, at 7 of the 25 surveyed shelters, there were some residents who worked in the night-time (Image 23).

Image 23. Working time



The urban poor often prefer to live in places in the city which are close to their workplaces so that they do not have to spend money on transport. The survey therefore attempted to capture the mode of transport that the shelter residents used to reach their workplace or Naka through discussions with the residents (Image 24). It was found that walking was the most preferred mode of transport, found among residents at 18 shelters. Auto was the second-most preferred mode of transport, found among residents at 12 shelters. There were some residents who were using public transport at only 5 shelters.

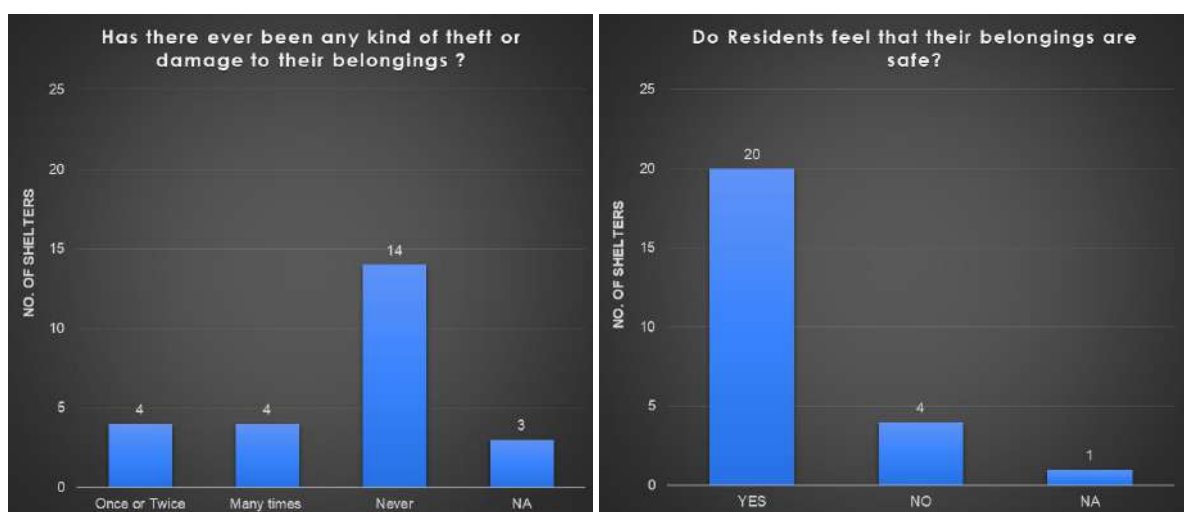
Image 24. Mode of Transportation



3.10.7. EXPERIENCES AT THE SHELTERS

Residents were found to be feeling safe at majority of the shelters, which is a major improvement on the management of the shelters and the security they provide as compared to few years ago. However, there were still 4 shelters where residents reported that they felt their belongings were not safe; 4 shelters where belongings had been stolen/damaged many times; and 2 shelters where there were issues with people drinking alcohol (Image 25).

Image 25. Safety of the Belongings



4. SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report presents the findings of a survey of 25 existing homeless shelters in Ahmedabad, assessing their quality and their use by different groups of the homeless. Based on these survey findings and a recognition of the process and challenges of urbanization in India, the report makes recommendations to improve both the existing shelters as well as make new shelters that can better meet the needs of the present and future homeless of the city. The recommendations are described in 2 parts – first part dealing with the improvements that can be made at the individual shelters and the second part dealing with macro level changes that need to be made to make the scheme more successful.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT SHELTERS

4.1.1 BETTER FACILITIES AT THE SHELTERS

The facilities at the shelters have improved compared to some years ago. However, further improvements are required. We recommend the following improvements – some require to be done on an urgent basis, while other improvements are to be done on a long-term basis:

1. *Provision of secure storage facilities* : At 4-5 shelters, residents have reported theft of belongings, cash and cell phones. We suggest that AMC make an enquiry into this matter and accordingly make the required provisions for secure storage facilities. Small lockable lockers can hold money, purse and cell phones. Large shelves that can help stack most of the belongings, were present in most shelters, but were few in nos. and need to be enhanced. If these too are lockable then those residents moving out temporarily can even lock them.
2. *Provision of adequate water*: All the shelters reported having municipal water connection and also most shelters reported having 24-hour running water in the toilets/bathrooms, which is a great improvement from the condition of the shelters few years ago. However, there are water problems at some shelters which should be addressed on an urgent basis. One of these shelters is the Shelter near Jhansi ki Rani, where shelter residents have to sometimes go outside the shelter for toilet use, bathing and washing clothes. At several shelters, the shelter staff reported having to sometimes call water tankers (municipal or private). While such issues of inadequate water are bound to occur sometimes, we recommend that AMC *improve its responsiveness* to such instances of inadequate water.

Water is the most basic requirement for life, and there must be a system in place that can provide municipal water tankers on an urgent basis, within a few hours, when water from the municipal water connection is not adequate. Sending water tankers after 10-15 hours creates immense difficulty for the shelter residents, especially for women who require water to maintain personal hygiene during menstruation. Also, most of the residents of the shelters do manual work and therefore they require water to maintain personal hygiene and health. Underground storage, must be made available at all places that have none, because it enables additional water storage and can reduce this distress. It should be the responsibility of the managing agency to respond to such shortage quickly, rather waiting for Municipality to respond, and this unforeseen cost must be factored into the budget.

3. *Provision of potable drinking water at all the shelters:* Although several shelters store the drinking water separately, very few of them actually provide potable water. A simple filter contraption that is easy to clean must be provided and maintained, at all places, so that water for drinking is safe.
4. *Sanitation:* At several shelters, the shelter staff have reported issues with plumbing repairs and maintenance, overflowing toilets / sewers, garbage disposal and cleanliness. We recommend that AMC look into these issues and strengthen the system through which the shelter staff can make complaints as well as strengthen their systems for quickly resolving these issues when a complaint is received. Better still would be for organizations to manage those at their level, for which the AMC must provide budget. Awareness activities for better cleanliness as well as proper formation of Shelter Management Committees at the shelters can also help in encouraging shelter residents to maintain better cleanliness. It was observed that in some cases bathrooms were used to wash clothes and vessels. This caused inconvenience and unclean baths. Special *chokdis* for washing clothes and vessels must be structured into the design. And so also covered shed for drying washed clothes. The adequacy of the toilets to the ratio of residents has not been recorded. Yet as this did not come up as a major problem shows that this may not be the case. In a few shelters access to all available toilets was restricted as it was locked for staff use, or was broken or used for storage. This must be urgently corrected as access to toilets is a necessity and also part of the ODF program.
5. *Provision of cooking facilities:*
 - a. A few shelters reported availability of cooked food provided by the managing organization or through some linkage. In some shelters inhabited mainly by single males, cooked food was preferred, as also in the morning when there is a rush to leave for the nakas. However, the tribal migrants preferred to cook their own food as their diet varied. Thus the AMC must experiment with providing food for single male migrants along with the option of cooking facilities. In most cases small kitchens did not allow for cooking even in batches, and gas connections were missing in many. The shelters which have a separate room for kitchen, should be provided with gas connection and maximum number of gas stoves as allowed by the kitchen size. Cost for usage may be factored into the user fees, or AMC grants.
 - b. Where the kitchens are very small or there is no separate room for kitchen, the AMC must give proper thought to how cooking facilities can be provided. At some shelters, we have seen that covered sheds have been made so that residents can cook, including in monsoon. Such covered sheds should be made before the 2020 monsoon season, wherever there is adequate open space inside the shelter compound.
 - c. In shelters where there is no covered space or very little covered space in the shelter compound, it might still be possible in some cases to erect a covered shed nearby or on the terrace, if possible. Residents living in shelters located under flyovers are at times cooking outside the shelter compound under the flyover, but while the flyover gives protection from rain, a proper cooking space could be demarcated or erected, fenced and the ground levelled, and cleanliness activities may be extended to cover such a cooking space. AMC has done this in some cases, but it should be done across all the shelters. Until such time that uninterrupted gas supply is made available, fire wood may be allowed where there is adequate open space.

4.1.2 ENSURING BETTER ACCESS TO THE SHELTERS

At 2 shelters, it was reported that the residents cannot access the dormitories 24x7 (Shelter in Saraspur near Everest Char-Rasta and Shelter below Guruji Bridge). This should be looked into by AMC and necessary steps taken to ensure that all the dormitories are open 24x7 in all the shelters. At 2 shelters it was reported that homeless persons cannot come to the shelter anytime of the day or night (Shelter under Jashodanagar bridge and Shelter under Chanakyapuri Bridge No. 1 in Gota). AMC should take necessary steps to ensure that homeless persons can come to the shelter at any time. Some homeless persons might work till late at night and therefore return to the shelter late at night; some homeless persons may work during the night and return to the shelter in the early hours of the morning, and they should be able to access the shelter. New homeless persons should be allowed to approach the shelter at any time of the day or night as per their need. At almost all shelters, homeless people have to show a ID to access the shelter. It may be useful to ask for IDs, but many homeless persons fail to have one. In such cases entry must not be barred, instead support may be extended in preparing one.

4.1.3 SHELTERS THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES ALONG WITH OTHER GROUPS

1. The homeless shelters in Ahmedabad have not been designed with family rooms. Although a positive step has been taken at many shelters by opening one or more dormitories for family use, this arrangement does not give any privacy to families. It was also reported at some shelters that the shelter staff forces the men and women of the families to go into separate dormitories when comes for checking, which raises questions about whether the AMC and its staff actually supports this positive step. Furthermore, this positive step is not adequate.
2. It is important that shelters are designed with individual family rooms. As per the SUH Guidelines, for families living on the streets, family shelters may be provided with a special design for privacy, with shared common spaces. The SUH Guidelines also mention that depending on the need, a shelter may cater to working men, women and family with appropriate spaces demarcated for each of the categories. The survey findings also point towards the fact that substantial number of shelters in Ahmedabad are used by seasonal migrants, and also by a mix of household types (single men, single women, women with children, families), and while there is a dynamism in this regard, the shelters too must be designed and managed to dynamically support the needs of this mix of migrant and household types.
3. It may be worthwhile to note herein that it is better to understand the profile of homeless in Ahmedabad, which might have emerged from enumeration of homeless that included occupational data, etc., and design shelters accordingly.

4.1.4 SHELTER FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

1. As per the SUH guidelines, special shelters for the physically and mentally challenged, the sick and elderly must be set-up. Several shelters had such residents in here. At one shelter, Jivraj Bridge, separate dorm for the senior citizens was provided, and there were reports of women rescued through the Women Helpline 181, being accommodated. Although this is a very critical support, nevertheless it is true that such persons need to be specially cared for and persons with requisite skills must be available to care for them.

2. Provision of such professional care in SUHs is not known. Actually there are, even statutory facilities for the mentally challenged, destitute women and children etc., and to hold them in homeless shelters is inappropriate. This practice of bringing in the most vulnerable must be discouraged, unless professional help is available at the shelter.

4.1.5 SHELTER STAFF AND FACILITIES FOR THEM

While all the shelters had 3-6 caretakers, a few shelters reported not having a shelter manager. This aspect needs the AMC's attention. In fact, it was not clear in how many of the shelters a full-time shelter manager (as mandated in the SUH guidelines) was manager living at the shelter. Furthermore, at majority of the shelters, it was reported that not a single staff-person lived at the shelter. It is also a matter of concern that facilities have not been made at most of the shelters for a staff-person to stay, such as a separate room, separate toilet/bathroom and cooking place/gas, and these must be urgently provided.

4.1.6 LINKAGES TO SERVICES AND ENTITLEMENTS

1. As per the SUH Guidelines, shelters are supposed to be a space for convergence, provision and linkage of various entitlements of social security, food, education and health care systems for the residents, as well as to enhancement of livelihood standards.
2. While some efforts have been made in this direction, more needs to be done. This is also significant, given the fact that the homeless in many cases are one of the most vulnerable class of persons requiring state sponsored welfare and economic empowerment, the most. This is also particularly true of such women and children. As revealed in the data, 17 out of 25 shelters do enable some linkages, yet from the long list of such forward backward linkages mentioned in the guidelines, only 5 have been undertaken so far, the most common being health check-up, whose regularity was not certain.
3. This is one area, where more professional counselling and concerted action is required. Herein the data from the survey of the homeless will be useful. Another concern of many homeless persons it was observed was lack of ID and address proof, that was sought in 24 out of 25 shelters, and is the basic requirement to access government benefits. Concerted efforts must be made to procure ID and address proofs, for all such residents asap. One essential entitlement for most of the long term and permanent migrants is decent and semi-permanent or permanent housing facilities, for which critical linkage process must be undertaken. In fact the profile of the homeless residents must be seriously studied and counselling pursued to enable linkages to suitable housing schemes, wherein priority for this group must be included. A gradual up-scaling from the shelter to affordable rentals and finally towards owning a house may be considered, for it is all about decent housing rights.

4.1.7 FORMATION OF THE SHELTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)

Only 7 of 25 surveyed shelters had formed a SMC, and even in these cases, a shelter volunteer in the SMC was reported at only 2 shelters, whereas as per the SUH guidelines, the SMC must have a shelter resident as a member. However, observation revealed that the role and functions of the SMC even where they were formed, were not clearly understood, and hence not followed as per SUH guidelines. More orientation and handholding support by AMC's supervisory staff is required.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME

Since homelessness is not static, and the numbers of homeless persons can be expected to increase over the coming years in many Indian cities in the context of rural-urban migration – of both permanent and seasonal nature – it is of utmost importance that the city of Ahmedabad devise a long-term approach to respond to the issue in a humane and just manner. A few important considerations and approaches can be taken at the city level to help make the SUH scheme more effective at combating homelessness.

4.2.1 ADDRESSING THE SCALE OF HOMELESSNESS THROUGH SHELTERS

The homeless shelters in Ahmedabad which were surveyed here currently have the capacity to accommodate only 1272 homeless persons. As per various estimates of homeless population, this is only 10-20% of the capacity that the city needs to have. The most conservative estimate for the number of homeless as per the recent government survey is around 8095 individuals, and around 11,293 individuals as per census 2011.

To meet the needs of only the current homeless population, many more shelters are required in Ahmedabad. As the SUH guidelines mention, their locations should be such that they are close to where the homeless live. A strategy that is currently being employed is to add more beds to the shelters by using bunk beds. While an economical and space saving solution, it should also be noted that an increase in the number of residents at the shelter will also cause an increase in the requirement of other amenities such as cooking space, toilets, space for washing clothes, and storage space, which are already lacking in some shelters.

4.2.2 SEASONAL MIGRANTS AS A CRITICAL MASS IN THE SHELTER

At 15 shelters most residents and at 3 shelters all residents were seasonal migrants, and they actually constitute one of the largest categories of homeless. Most as we know from other studies are in the construction sector. However, some from this community have shifted to working as waste collectors and unskilled workers in factories, or loaders on AMC waste collection dump trucks. It is pertinent to note that in spite of a separate Building and other Construction Workers Welfare (BOCWW) Board that specially collects cess for the welfare of these workers, and has amassed nearly 3000 crore, no effort to provide decent living conditions to these homeless migrants are undertaken by the Board. The Gujarat Urban Livelihood Mission, Urban development and Housing Department, and Labour department, along with the Board, must urgently converge processes to enable building and provision of decent housing for the construction workers in the city.

As seasonal migrants, these families need services that can adapt to their high degree of mobility. Linkages with education facilities or day care for children, welfare schemes of the BOCW, etc need to be facilitated for these migrants.

4.2.3 IMPROVING THE SPATIAL SPREAD OF THE SHELTERS

Spatial Spread: There are large number of shelters in Ahmedabad – At various stages of the survey, different numbers of shelters have been reported by AMC. The latest information received has indicated that there are 30 shelters out of which 27 are currently functional. While this is a large number, it is important to note that the spatial spread of these shelters is not even across the city. The Map 1. shows the location of the shelters.

From the survey, residents at a majority of the shelters have reported that they walk approx. 2 km to their place of work or to a labour Naka. Drawing a buffer of 2 km around these shelters, it can be seen that many parts of the city are not covered by any shelters.

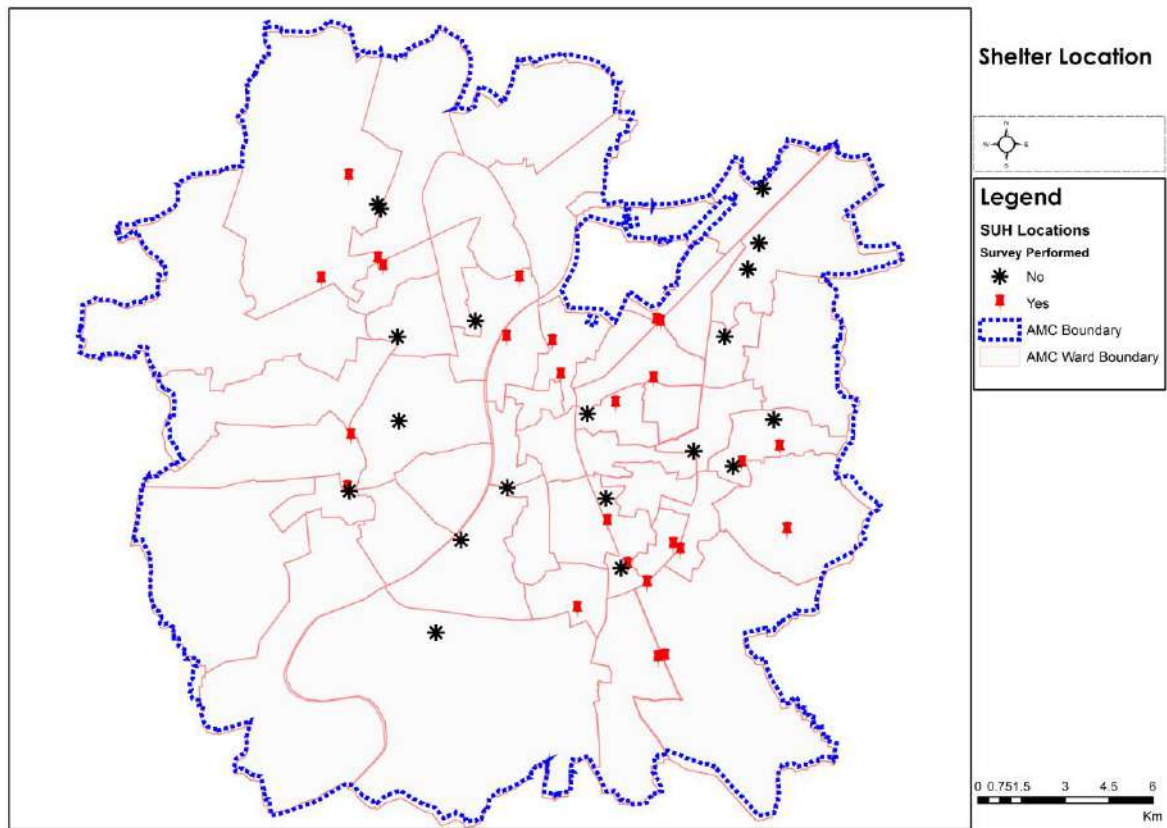
A greater capacity and properly designed shelters are needed to bridge these 3 critical gaps :

1. Overall city level capacity of the shelters
2. Spatial spread of the shelters
3. Making the shelters work for seasonal migrant families

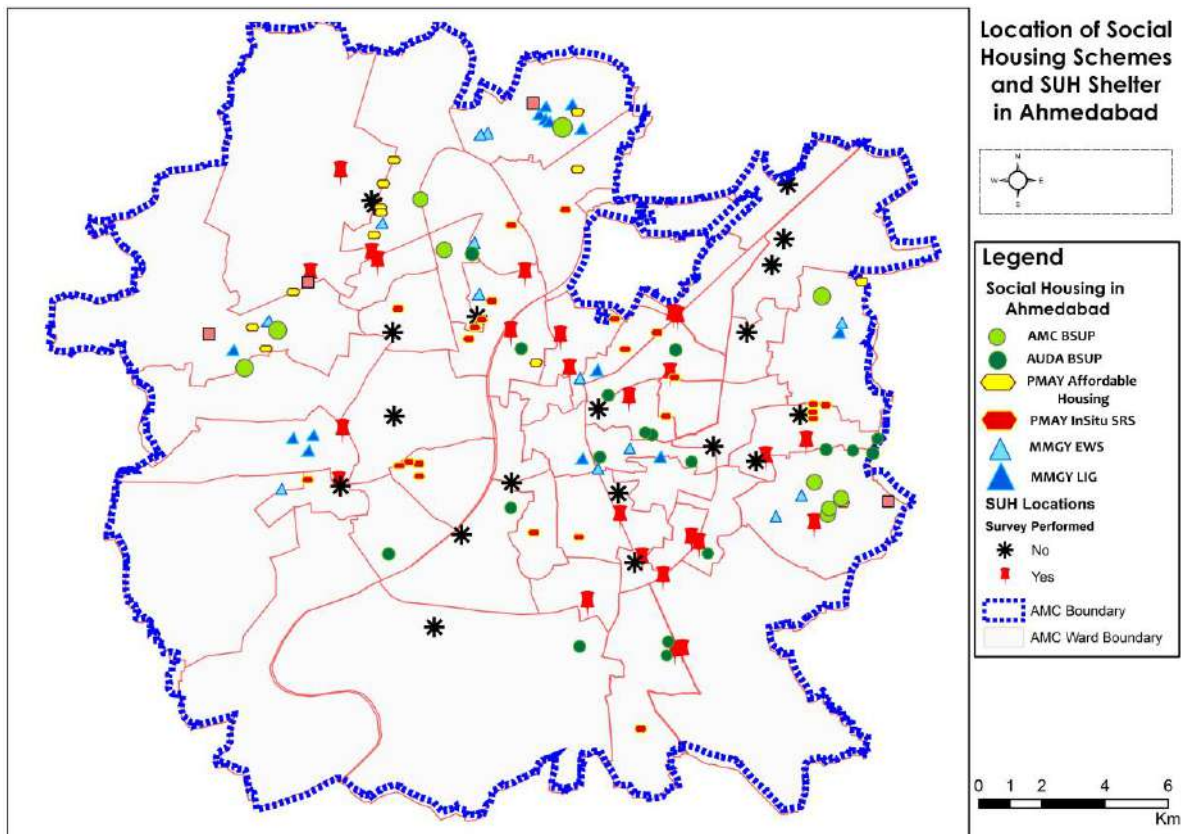
A more spread open, decentralized approach towards the planning of these shelters needs to be taken. A few techniques that can be used to achieve this more decentralized spread can be:

1. Linkage of SUH with AHP schemes: Government Built housing schemes (AHP/PMAY) can be linked with SUH to spread out shelters more effectively across the city. Map 1 shows the location of the present SUH in Ahmedabad. The black symbols also include the locations where shelters were previously operating. If we combine the Locations of SUH with other public housing schemes as in Map 2, we can see that it becomes possible to cover a far wider geographic area.
2. Locations such as bus stands and railway station are not having SUH near them. Newly developing parts of the city, where migrant laborers come frequently in search of work such as Lambha are not having any SUH near them. There is only 1 SUH in Vatva, where there is large concentration of migrant industrial workers. Shelters need to be planned and implemented in such areas which need shelters.
3. Labour Hostels: A distinction needs to be made between labour hostels and shelters. As indicated in few places in the survey, single male migrants prefer different things to family migrants, such as the availability of cooked food. Locations in developing parts of the city may need labour hostels more than family shelters, which would have a different design and different way of operation.

Map 1. Shelter Location with AMC Schemes (Source – Authors)



Map 2. Location of SHS and SUH Shelter in Ahmedabad (Source – Authors)





Citizens for Shelter Alliance, Ahmedabad (CISHAA)