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Pathways to Offending and Victimization: A Theoretical Exploration of the Experiences of Homeless Women Pavement Dwellers

Ankita Das

L.L.M. In Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration, KIIT School of Law, Prasanti Vihar, Patia, Bhubaneswar – 751024, Odisha, India; ankitadas0929@gmail.com

Abstract

Homelessness in India is deeply entrenched in its social fabric, particularly affecting women. The adversities that arises from the phenomenon of homelessness like inadequate food, shelter, economic strain, societal discrimination, creates motivations and opportunities that influence offending which engages them in property crimes (petty theft, shoplifting, theft of vehicle and its contents), drug selling and trading sex. Women, are left to fend for themselves on the streets and often experience worst forms of abuse and violence including sexual assault, rape, trafficking, etc. Women being the most disadvantaged the focus of this paper will revolve around them. In this article theories related to criminality and victimization pertaining to women pavement dwellers shall be discussed to chalk out the theoretical foundation on which the study shall rely. It will further examine the adversaries arising from the phenomenon of homelessness and the factors leading to the phenomenon of homelessness which in turn is pushing the women towards offending and victimization.

Keywords: *Homelessness, Offending, Theoretical Perspectives, Victimization, Women*

'I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.'

- Dr. BR Ambedkar

1.0 Prelude

Homelessness, plagues the society to an extent that it denies its people inclusive growth and upliftment. As per the 2011 Census, approximately 1.77 million people in India were classified as homeless, representing 0.15% of the nation's total population. (Census, 2011). However, a staggering 7.78% of India's total homeless population, numbering 134,040 individuals, resides in West Bengal. (Roy & Siddique, 2018) Within this group, 68.52% are male and 31.48% are female. Art. 21 of the Constitution of India ("Constitution") confers on all its citizens , right to life which includes right to live with human dignity (Art. 21, India Consti.). As a corollary it can be assumed that right to bare necessities of life such as shelter, clothing, nutrition, free movement goes in tandem with the spirit of Article 21 of the constitution and that homelessness goes converse with the said Article. In India 'homeless' has been defined 'as those who do not live in Census houses, but rather stay on pavements, roadsides, railway platforms, staircases, temples, streets, pipes, or other open spaces (Census website, 2024). The situation of homelessness is not merely about lacking a physical shelter. It is a result of systemic poverty and marginalization. In the case of *Samarpal & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.*, (Delhi High Court, 2008) involving the relocation of slum dwellers, it was highlighted the homeless "do not live but only exist," pointing to the gross violation of Article 21 of the Constitution. (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990) that causes the most alarming sort of crimes (Richerson,

2016). *Victimization* is the process of being victimized or becoming a victim either from a physical or a psychological or a moral or a sexual point of view (Muratore, 2014). The Women Pavement Dwellers are both victims of crime and victims of abuse of power. They frequently encounter violence from police, shelter staff, and even bystanders, often being denied the right to sleep, coerced into sexual acts, or forced to leave temporary shelters (Bhattacharya, 2022, p. 691). Access to healthcare remains another critical challenge. Many homeless shelters do not provide medical care, particularly maternity services. Homeless women suffer from high rates of illness, exacerbated by exposure to extreme weather and substandard living conditions. The lack of proper healthcare leads to undiagnosed and untreated illnesses, increasing mortality. Women are frequently denied treatment at hospitals, forcing many to give birth on the streets and contributing to high maternal and infant mortality rates (Chaudhry et al., 2014). There is a dire need for more comprehensive and gender-sensitive shelter options, especially for pregnant and nursing women.

2.0 Theoretical Perspectives on Criminality of Women Pavement Dwellers

The study of women's crime remained rooted in notions of biological determinism and an uncritical attitude towards the dominant sexual stereotypes of women as passive, domestic, and maternal (Smart, 1976, p. 222). Tracing the continuance of sexist assumptions from Lombroso who termed women as inferior (social Darwinism) to Pollak – Women are marginalized, distorted and beyond, examined how assumptions of the abnormality of female offenders came to dominate both theory and criminal justice policy despite evidence of more critical thinking in relation to men and men's crime. Women were ignored, marginalized, or distorted, both in their deviancy and in their conformity.

It was following the exposure of criminology as criminology of men which marked the starting point of feminists' efforts to search for alternative forms of conceptualizing the social worlds of deviance and conformity, punishment and control. It was from here feminist writings evolved concerning women and criminal justice development. Queries regarding (1) whether the theories produced to explain men and boys offending could be extended to women and girls, (2) Why women offend less than men were posed. In other words, 'gender' being the inference, crime theories should consider both men and women criminality and factors must be emphasized which act differently upon women and men.

Henceforth, the following portion of the article will discuss the theoretical perspectives related to criminality of women pavement dwellers. It will further take into consideration factors influencing offending among women pavement dwellers.

A. Feminist Criminology

Feminist criminology offers a powerful lens to understand the experiences of women pavement dwellers in India, highlighting how structural inequalities, patriarchy, and intersecting identities contribute to both victimization and criminalization as affirmed by Smart. Homeless women in India are often subjected to gendered violence, including rape, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. Studies from Delhi and Kolkata reveal patterns of abuse by police and bystanders, where homeless women are frequently beaten, evicted without notice, or coerced into sexual acts. These experiences underscore the role of the state not just in failing to protect, but actively perpetrating harm.

Feminist criminology further draws attention to intersectionality—how caste, class, and gender combine to deepen exclusion. Many pavement-dwelling women are migrants from marginalized castes or tribal communities, whose lack of identity documentation cuts them off from welfare and legal rights. The urban housing system largely excludes them; for instance, Delhi shelters serve less than 10% of the homeless population and are often unsafe or inaccessible to women. This theory pushes for gender-sensitive reforms, including safe, long-term shelters, accessible healthcare, trauma-informed policing, and inclusive legal frameworks.

B. Strain Theory

Strain theory, one of the most well-known theories used in studying the phenomenon of homelessness and its analysis have investigated ideas about economic strain and its individual adaptations given by Robert Merton's (McCarthy & Hagan, 2024, p. 257). There is a significant relationship between unemployment and crime like street crime, drug selling, associated with monetary

dissatisfaction as found in an Analysis of study on Vancouver youth (Baron, 2007).

Further, research on homelessness has extensively utilized Robert Agnew's (2006) general strain theory (GST). Robert's GST further contends that individuals feel negative emotions, including anger or fury in response to a variety of strains that include those which happen when relationships impede goals, are a source of adverse interactions, or take away valued things. These negative emotions in turn gives rise to possibility of offending often associated to economic crimes to decrease strain, particularly for individuals who possess alternative sources of concern (e.g., low self-control) argued Robert. He further Magnitude have been found in males and females when studied on their connection between offences related to property, violence and anger.

C. Control Theory

Low self-control in the pursuit of individual-interest causes crime as noted by Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime (1990). A study of youth homelessness in Vancouver (Baron, 2003) which explored Gottfredson & Hirschi's thesis on low self-control generalized that control (Grasmick et al., 1993) was significantly linked to property and violent crime.

Another study of data of Midwestern city from 125 homeless (Baron et al., 2007) hypothesized that some components of low self-control like, anger were positively linked to violent offending (group fight, robbery & assault) whereas others (physicality, self-centeredness, impulsivity) were indirectly linked to substance use. Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime is " usefully complemented, and not contradicted, by social learning theories, deviant subculture, and differential association as noted by Glaser (1990)". These theories describe why neighborhoods that are socially disorganized have the most opportunity, social support, and learned rationalizations for individuals to display low self-control in street crime.

D. Differential Association Theory

Edwin Sutherland's theory (1947) was heavily influenced by Charles Horton Cooley's personality theory, the "looking-glass self." (Hagan & Diagle, 2023, p. 374). As per Sutherland's theory of criminality, crime is learned through social contacts, communicated in the same way any other traditional patterns of behavior and attitude are transmitted.

A number of studies report positive relationships between the ratio or number of criminal friends and offending. Friendships that offer tutelage in crime (e.g., to teach, assist offend) were positively linked with offending (drug selling, prostitution selling, theft) controlling for friends' offending. (Hagan & Diagle, 1997). The data of the study further tested the thesis that some friendships can insulate individuals against crime. Research also hypothesized that female-dominated close friendship networks would deter crime more than male-dominated networks would, based on power-control, friendship, social bond, and gender socialization theories. (McCarthy, 2006).

E. Rational Choice Theory

Cornish and Clarke's (1986) rational choice theory proposes that offenders weigh the opportunities, costs, and benefits when committing a particular crime. Rational choice theorists argue that it is not that individuals are purely rational in their decision making but rather they do consider the costs and benefits.

A study of data from Vancouver and Toronto youth (McCarthy & Hagan, 2005) found that perceptions of two potential benefits, excitement and the belief that crime could provide more money than legal work, were mediated by theft and drug selling (but not trading sex). (McCarthy & Hagan, 2005). Other research has focused on potential costs. An analysis of Toronto data (Baron, 2013) found that perceptions of the certainty (get caught) and severity (how much of a problem they would face) of being punished if they assaulted someone were negatively associated with respondents' willingness to use violence in the future when provoked. However, both variables significantly interacted with other factors; certainty interacted with three variables (months without shelter, the belief that violence was acceptable, and friends used violence) and on the other hand severity interacted with the first two.

In the light of the above, we can say that Homeless Women offend weighing the opportunities, costs and benefits of particular crime. Homelessness and the lack of other basic necessities motivate them to commit crimes where they belief that such crime can provide them more money than legal work. However, Research support has been mixed for rational choice theory. Analyses of offenders' motivations, however, have shown that many acts impulsively and fail to fully consider negative

possibilities. Changing such opportunity structures (e.g., creating defensible space and target hardening) may discourage potential offenders.

The following discussions will give us an understanding of the offences perpetrated by women pavement dwellers and factors influencing their offending which will give us a more in depth and causal understanding of the above-mentioned theories.

2.1 Women Pavement Dwellers as Offenders and Factors Influencing Their Offending

Don Gibbon's thesis argues that there are situations which offer criminogenic conditions. Gibbon's argument is part of a broader theoretical framework that takes into consideration as to how foreground variables contribute to crime (Birkbeck & LaFree, 1993). It encompasses strategies that focus on opportunities, including those presented by the built environment (Jeffrey, 1971), lifestyles (Hindelang & Gottfredson, 1978) or routine activities of people (Cohen & Felson, 1979), external social control level (Clarke, 1980) or motivations that occurs in particular settings and interactions (Katz, 1988). Homelessness generates motivations and opportunities that affect offending among all in general and Women in particular (McCarthy & Hagan, 2024). When concentrated mainly on adversity it includes inadequate food, shelter, and legally acquired money and its build up over time. Theorists have also pointed to and relative deprivation (Lea & Young, 1984) and economic strain (Merton, 1938) as motivations for offending. However, Absolute deprivation may also come into play here (Cohen & Machalek, 1988; Davide A. Snow et al., 1989).

In the following discussions, the paper focuses on different factors that characterize homelessness and influences offending among homeless women (Adversity, Unemployment and exposure to homelessness i.e., the duration of time homeless and other correlates – Friends and contact with the legal system).

With regard to adversity, studies found that frequency of both crimes theft and selling sex were associated with both the lack of proper shelter and the duration of the current homeless episode (measured in months) (McCarthy B. & Hagan J, 1995). An analysis of MHRAP data on females revealed that the duration of time spent in areas that provide insecure shelter had positive association with exchanging sex (Tyler et al., 2000). Similarly, another study using Mid-west Longitudinal Study of Homeless Adolescents (MLSHA) data reported that having spent a night or more in a derelict building or on the streets was explicitly linked to sexual subsistence strategies (exchanged sex for food, shelter, money, or drugs) whilst homeless (Les B. Whitbeck et al. 2004)

Several studies have established associations between employment and offending. A study from Toronto and Vancouver examined that employment and theft was indirectly linked (Hagan & Diagle, 2023). The four-city homeless young adult study found unemployment during the post-interview month to be associated with participation in any of three criminal (drug selling, stealing, selling sex) and two legal activities (selling blood, panhandling) (Ferguson et al., 2011)

In terms of exposure to homelessness as quantified by the length of time, A study of the Midwest Homeless and Runaway Adolescent Project (MHRAP) data (Xiaojin, 2004). Discovered that the number of days currently homeless had a direct correlation with a measure that combined property crime (theft, break and enter, shoplifting) with panhandling. Another study focusing on female youth from the MHRAP data (Xiaojin, 2004) found a positive relationship between time on the street and selling/trading sex.

Studies indicate that relationships between offending and friendships with other youth employ comprehensive measures for friends' involvement in crime (Whitbeck et al., 2001) Whereas, other studies cite legal but delinquent or deviant behaviors like school dropout (Chen X, et al. 2004) or drug use (Ferguson KM et al., 2016).

In terms of associations between offending and criminal legal system identified that having been charged for an offense while homeless was positively correlated with re-offending for them (Hagan & Daigle, 2023).

3.0 Theoretical Perspectives on the Victimization of Women Pavement Dwellers

The women's movement was one of the most predominant movements for victims (Daigle, 2018, p. 39-40). With regard to recognizing Victimizations like sexual assault and domestic violence as an offshoot of sexism, traditional sex roles, stress on traditional family values and economic subordination of women, the movement established its purpose serving female victims of crime (Daigle, 2018). Feminists were worried by the way female victims of domestic violence and rape were treated in the hands of criminal justice and

advocated for their special care and services (Daigle, 2018). As a result, in 1970 domestic violence and rape crisis shelters began to emerge (Daigle, 2018). Further, as these centers and shelters relied largely on volunteers, services free from disruption kept running even without significant budgetary support. (Young & Stein, 2004).

In the light of our understanding of the influential movement that led to the recognition of victimization of women and the need for special services to back them, let us now discuss the theoretical perspectives related to victimization of women pavement dwellers. Thereafter, the chapter will discuss the factors influencing victimization of Women pavement dwellers. Further, this chapter will also highlight how they become victims of primary victimization (in the form of physical, mental and financial impact of crime) and secondary victimization (at the hands of criminal justice administration i.e., police, judiciary and society at large).

A. Conflict Theory

Conflict theory, rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx, explains social structures as outcomes of ongoing struggles between dominant and subordinate groups over scarce resources and power.

Conflict theory suggests that the state and its institutions, including the police, legal system, and urban governance, serve the interests of dominant classes while suppressing the marginalized. This is evident in the way women pavement dwellers are policed more harshly, evicted without recourse, and frequently denied access to basic services such as shelter, healthcare, and education. Their visibility in public spaces is seen as a threat to social order, leading to surveillance, arrest, and exploitation under laws like the Bengal Vagrancy Act, 1943 (Acts of State Government, 1943).

Conflict theory also explains why systemic neglect persists—resources and opportunities are dispro portionately controlled by elites, and policies often prioritize urban beautification or real estate over inclusive development. Even welfare schemes remain under-implemented, reflecting the broader structural bias against the poor. Moreover, these women pavement dwellers are often drawn into informal or illegal economies, not out of choice, but because legal avenues are structurally blocked.

B. Victim Precipitation Theory

This theory generally revolves around an explanation of how a person's behavior can lead to his / her own victimization (i.e., victims may unintentionally or intentionally cause a perpetrator to victimize them) (Wilcox, 2010). Victimization here is framed as precipitated / check the spacing explains that the victim consciously attempted to provoke an attack Whereas, passive precipitation states that the victim unconsciously displayed behavior that resulted in the victimization. (Wilcox, 2010). Stephen Schafer also identified "Precipitative victims-who owe some degree of responsibility" in his seven categories of victims. The concept of victim proneness often linked with Han Von Hentig's (1941) rendition of victim precipitation theory which suggests that individuals are more likely to be subjected to specific type of victimization if they have a history of said victimization (Daigle And Muftic, 2016).

The above ideology can be taken into consideration to establish why homeless females who have experienced childhood/early life adversity become more susceptible to certain types of victimization, for example, homeless individuals with a history of sexual abuse are considered to be at greater risk of future sexual victimization while living in the open (Couldrey, 2010).

The homeless women in certain situations actively involves in verbal and physical fights among themselves/ common people which in turns leads to their victimization. In contrast, Hentig argued that (1) females, (2) mentally defective/deranged, (3) the blocked, exempted and fighting, (5) have propensity for victimization based on their characteristics (Hagan & Diagle, at 33-34). These unconscious behaviors or characteristics being passively precipitated by women pavement dwellers (victims) engage them in active victimization.

C. Lifestyle Theory

Michael Hindelang, Michael Gottfredson, and James Garofalo's (1978) (Hagan & Diagle, at 35-46). Lifestyle theory argues that victims could be victimized due to their lifestyle that puts them into situation making them susceptible to victimization (Couldrey, 2010). As an individual becomes exposed—through lifestyle and behavior—to potential offenders, he or she is creating situations in which the victimization of crime will take place.

It was established that homeless people's victimization and lifestyle is positively linked. (Lee and Schreck, 2005). They may involve in activities resultant of a necessity to survive like spending large quantities of time alone in public places, high crime areas, trading sex, food

scavenging, drug and alcohol use and description, which likelihood of their victimization (Turner et al., 2018).

D. Deviant Place Theory

The theory explains that individuals are at a greater chance of being victim of a crime when they are exposed to precarious places (Gaetz, 2009). They might unintentionally end up in an unsafe area with minimal or no opportunity to relocate to another area for safety (Gaetz, 2009).

Homeless Women are more likely to find themselves in unsafe places which expose them to frequent victimization. This can encompass dwelling in dangerous, rundown buidings, urban areas which have high rates of crime and weaker structures like tents and abandoned transports which make them more susceptible to sexual violence, physical abuse victimization in the hands of public and police personnel.

E. Social Exclusion Theory

This theory revolves around victimization of individuals as they get disconnected from the same resources that otherwise safeguard them from victimization. Restricted access to the social, cultural, economic, political frameworks of the community might hinder ability to reintegrate into the society (Gaetz, 2004). In the case of prolonged homelessness, dearth of basic necessities like access to proper dwelling places, means of livelihood, socio-cultural solidarity, and appropriate life and a healthy lifestyle makes them more vulnerable. Social exclusion can prove to be a factor pushing an individual toward a phenomenon of homelessness but may be intensified when they no longer have a shelter.

F. Routine Activities Theory

Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979) proposed a thorough test of routine activity theory would require operationalization of all key elements of the theory namely, exposure and proximity to motivated offenders, suitable target lack of capable guardianship for victimization to occur. (Wilcox, 2010 at p. 63). The more an individual's routine activities exposes one to a motivated offender, the more risk of crime victimization entails (Wilcox, 2010 at p. 63). Offenders select their suitable targets depending on the attractiveness of the target.

Several studies by scholar have theorized conditions shared with homelessness, including brevity, sleeping in the public places or in unsafe form of shelter, and participation in deviant (e.g., pan handling) or illegal street survival tactics (e.g., selling stolen goods or sex) as lifestyle or routine activity factors that increase individual's visibility to motivated offenders in areas with little or no social control (McCarthy & Hagan, 1995; Gaetz, 2009).

Let us now delve into a discussion which will give us a clear picture of victimization among women pavement Dwellers and factors influencing their victimization which will give us a more in depth and causal understanding of the above-mentioned theories.

3.1 Women Pavement Dwellers as Victims and Factors Influencing Their Victimization

A thorough literature review on contemporary homeless population suggests that like offending victimization is so intertwined with the phenomenon of homelessness that homelessness itself can be construed as a form of victimization in which social structure excludes individuals from the protection afforded by the community as a whole (Fischer, 1992).

Findings obtained from Victimization studies that have examined pathways into homelessness, prevalence of substance abuse disorders, mental illness, health, and demographic characteristics, life histories, routine activity indicate that victimization not only does not cause homelessness but is also a product of homelessness (Fischer, 1992). In the following discussions, the paper focuses on different factors that characterize homelessness and influences victimization of homeless women (Adversity, Unemployment and exposure to the duration of time homeless and other correlates like Illegal activities and friends).

In terms of adversity, multiple research has established correlations between need for food and shelter and victimization. An analysis of a random sample with regard to homeless individuals who took social services (Lee et al., 2005) found that the prevalence of hunger (not often enough to eat, recently gone without eating an entire day, went hungry during the past month because could not afford food) was positively linked with victimization (robbery, physical and sexual assault, threat) and particularly having one's possessions stolen. Another study of MHRAP data (Tyler et al., 2010; McCarthy & Hagan, 1995) found that the frequency of spending time homeless (large quantities of time alone on streets

at night) was positively linked to physical victimization (robbed, threatened with weapon, forced sexual activity, rape) among homeless females and the relationship was mitigated by having sold sex.

In terms of unemployment, many studies have assessed associations between unemployment and victimization, and both employed begging. An examination of MHRAP data (Lee et al., 2005) found that the frequency of begging had positive links with physical and sexual victimization. Another study (Hagan & Diagle, 2023 p. 63) discovered association with robbery and an omnibus measure of victimization with regard to street crime.

In terms of exposure to homelessness as measured by the duration of time, studies have found links have been found links with victimization. A study on homeless adults (Hagan & Diagle, 2023 p. 63) have found transience (no. of diverse locations spent throughout one's period of homelessness) was connected with having been victimized by street crimes particularly theft, robbery. Another study (Meinbresse et al., 2014) found associations with physical and sexual assault. Evictions have also been associated with victimization. A longitudinal analysis of data from research on illegal drug users in Vancouver discovered positive associations between eviction and victimization (attacks, assaults, violent victimization) (Kennedy et al., 2017).

In terms of association with Illegal activities, one studies have established association between physical victimization and offending. Data analysis from Women interviewed in Los Angeles Country revealed Physical victimization to be linked with employment of illegal or deviant survival strategies such as selling drugs sex (Tyler et al., 2008). Another research emphasized positive links between sexual victimization and offending. "An Analysis of the Homeless Young Adult Project (HYAP) data (Tyler et al., 2008) found positive connection between sexual victimization (forced sexual activity, assault, rape) and having traded sex."

In terms of relationship between friends and victimization, a number of studies have primarily addressed friends who are themselves criminal. A research that combined the MHRAP and SHARE data (Whitebeck et al., 2001) identified that hanging out with homeless youth who participated in delinquent and illicit behavior was linked to physical and sexual victimization.

The Women Pavement Dwellers having faced having already undergone primary victimization in terms of physical, financial or emotional effect of crime, often further also suffers from secondary victimization at the hands of criminal justice administration i.e., police, judiciary and even by the society itself (Sarojanamma, 2004) Police, Government officials, shelter staff, common people all contribute to physical and sexual violence against homeless women, by kicking their utensils while cooking, throwing/ taking away all the belongings, destroying the temporary tents they have been forced to seek refuge in to clean footpaths, not letting them sleep, asking for sexual favours (Bhattacharjee & Narayan, 2024). Although there is dearth of comprehensive statistics concerning the magnitude of instances of police brutality faced by homeless women, a substantial body of evidence from this study shows that they are disproportionately subjected to elevated levels of violence (Bhattacharjee & Narayan, 2024). The victim is a victim of secondary victimization if his/her basic human/ legal rights are denied by the court because of its dependence on fake evidence presented by the criminal and verdict rendered against the victim on the basis of that evidence (Smart, 1976).

Several research works have found positive connections relationships between homelessness and interaction with criminal justice administration. A study in Toronto found that individuals currently living in the open were without any prior context being stopped and searched by the police (Hayle & Wortley et al., 2016). A data examined from three Midwestern cities noted sexual (coerced sexual acts, rape) and physical victimization (Thrashed, robbed, threatened with weapon) were being positively linked with arrest (Butler & Tyler, 2012).

The Homeless population especially the victims of rape and sexual offences rarely have access to medical care or treatment including maternity care (Tyler et al., 2010; McCarthy & Hagan, 1995). Due to lack of access to elemental needs like adequate clothing, bedding and shelter, they are at risk from climate extremes (Tyler et al., 2010; McCarthy & Hagan, 1995). Most often due to lack of care they need/ illness not being identified in due time, they are left in the open dying.

4. Closing

This article surveys multiple theoretical perspectives on how homelessness drives both offending and victimization among women pavement dwellers which

further helps us better understand adversaries arising from the phenomenon of homelessness and the factors leading to the phenomenon of homelessness which in turn is pushing women towards offending and victimization. It aims to advocate how destitution among women pavement dwellers creates motivations for survival crimes and victimization. On the Criminality side, ***Feminist Criminology and Strain Theory*** forms the theoretical foundation of the study. Feminist criminology not only interprets the criminalization of poor urban women but advocates structural change to ensure their dignity, safety, and citizenship. Strain theories (Merton's anomie and Agnew's General Strain Theory) examine how instances of family and relationship issues (Intimate partner violence/ Domestic Violence/ Divorce/ Unplanned pregnancies/ Desertion due to death/ remarriage of husband) and economic deprivation among homeless women may play significant role in giving rise to relationship anger, state anger thereby pushing them towards offending like property crimes and drug selling. On the victimization side, the chapter emphasizes that homelessness itself is a form of social exclusion, leaving women unprotected and traumatized thus *Routine activity and Conflict Theory* forms the theoretical foundation of the study. Routine Activities Theory explains how sleeping in the open and street-survival tactics exposes them to motivated offenders coupled with little or no guardianship. Further, conflict theory when applied to the shoddy state of affairs of women pavement dwellers it reveals how systemic inequalities perpetuate victimization.

Further, *Broken window theory* (Wilson & Kelling, 1982) by George Kelling & James Q. Wilson espoused a new approach to improving police relations in the community. Their theory advocates that urban areas filled with street people, youth gangs, prostitutes and the mentally disturbed are the ones most likely to maintain high degree of crime. Neighborhoods filled with deteriorated hosing, unrepaired broken windows and untended disorderly behavior gives out crime promoting signals. This theory can be applied to women pavement dwellers as they spent their lives on the street or in abandoned buildings and trade sex or beg for food, shelter, money, or drugs and often fall prey to illegal gangs. The police can combat crime in these areas through community participation. Further, through *neighborhood-oriented-policing (NOP)* and *problem-oriented policing (POP)*, (Ross, 2013) take initiative in identifying issues related to victimization and offending of women pavement dwellers and treat the root cause of the crime committed against women stressing on proactive problem solving instead of reactive crime fighting. Above theories if implemented properly can prove to be beneficial in curbing offending as well primary and secondary victimization among women pavement dwellers in India.

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