

# **MUSIC PERFORMERS PERFORMING ON LOCAL TRAINS**

## **A STUDY IN MUMBAI**

**PRADEEP BAGRAO**



A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Social Work under the guidance of  
Prof. Mouleshri Vyas

**Centre for Community Organisation and Development Practice**

**School of Social Work**

**Tata Institute of Social Sciences**

**Mumbai**

**2018**

## DECLARATION

I, Pradeep Bagrao, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “**Musicians Performing in Local Trains : A Study in Mumbai**” is the outcome of my own study undertaken under the guidance of **Prof. Mouleshri Vyas**, Centre for Community Organisation & Development Practice, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences. This work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate in any university. I have duly acknowledged each and every source used by me in the preparation of this dissertation.

Date: 26th March 2017

Pradeep Bagrao

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**Musicians Performing in Local Trains : A Study in Mumbai**” is the original work of **Mr. Pradeep Bagrao** under my guidance and supervision. The results of the research presented in this dissertation have not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate of either this institute or of any other institute or university.

Date: 26th March 2017

Prof. Mouleshri Vyas  
Centre for Community Organisation &  
Development Practice  
School of Social Work  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

## ABBREVIATIONS

BPBA	Bombay Prevention of Begging Act
CNC	Computerized Numerical Control
CSMT	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus
DRM	Disability Rights Movement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRN	Indian Railway Network
MIDC	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation
NAB	National Association for the Blind
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NSSO	National Sample Survey Office
NT	Nomadic Tribe
PWD	Person With Disability
TC	Ticket Collector
TUMCOS	Thota Uthpannagala Marketing Co-operative Society Limited
UA	Urban Agglomeration

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Mouleshri Vyas being my guide for the study, for the constant support, continuous encouragement and critical appraisal throughout the study. I would like to thank her for the time and effort that she put in this dissertation despite her own hectic schedule. Her small research methodology classes, editing each draft personally, taking late submissions, grammar notes were very helpful in completing this study. Her suggestions were not only invaluable for this study but for any of my future academic and career endeavours.

I thank all the participants of the research who allowed me to interview them and portray their stories in this study, without them, this research and study would not have been possible.

I owe special thanks to ‘Swaradhar’ and it’s co-founder ‘Hemlata Tiwari’ for helping me to reach the respondents and giving me insights about different aspects of the lives of music performers performing in local trains.

Discussions with my friends have helped me clarify my aspects of this study. I owe my thanks to my dear friends Anand Suryavanshi, Simanta Mazumdar, Jyotiprasad Bori, Bishal Das and Norpline Kerketta for patiently listening to my arguments and supplementing it with their suggestions.

I am thankful to Vibhav Sonkar and Isha Shandilya for accompanying me in the sleepless nights spent in the cyber library to complete documentation part of the study. Their constant motivation helped me to continue my research documentation in pressure situations.

Finally, I am thankful to all those whom I have not been able to name but who have extended their helpful cooperation and contribution at anytime during the study.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study highlights different aspects of livelihood of the musicians performing in Mumbai local trains. The occupation that these people have chosen is termed as begging and it is considered as a criminal offence as per the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959. This study aims to find out the reasons behind their choice of such occupation. This is their only source of income, therefore to what extent it is helping them to sustain financially and how it affects their social lives is another aspect to be looked upon. Several of those engaged in this occupation are visually challenged, therefore there must be some reasons for this. The study also looks at how efficiently support mechanisms such as non government organization, government bodies, social welfare schemes etc. have played their roles. Though this occupation is illegal and falls under criminal offence but still is running since very long and yet the number of people engaging in it is increasing, therefore there is a possibility that some agency might be playing supportive role. The study tries to explore such possibilities. Comments on Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 from music performers performing in local train are recorded to understand their stand. This is an exploratory study using the qualitative research methodology.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

A person singing a song or playing an instrument and accepting money given by passers by and commuters is a common sight in Mumbai local trains and its premises. These artists are very much different from mainstream artists. For them, the train compartment is their auditorium, commuters their audience and sometimes railway platform, railway bridge as their stage. They are not as well dressed as the artists who are all set to perform in shows, they do not have any kind of sound system but surely perform in front of large crowd and more often than not satisfy them with their music. They are poor and most of them are persons with disability and failed to get the opportunity to perform on bigger stages. They continue to do so in Mumbai local trains which provide large number of audience to them but this practice is termed as beggary. Beggary, by law is a criminal offence and punitive actions are taken against those who are engaged in such practices, including these artists.

There are various reasons why people choose this way of earning livelihood, because of which they are stigmatized as beggars and criminalized. Unemployment stands as a prime reason behind them choosing this occupation. India is the second most populous country in the world. Industrialisation along with the population explosion has resulted in mass unemployment in the country. Lack of income in agriculture and death of indigenous methods of production due to industrialisation have forced large rural population to move in urban area. This has increased unemployment in mega cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai etc. According to NSSO report 2014, an unemployment rate in rural is 2.3% and in urban is 3.8%. This shows, the constructed image that cities hold more jobs is actually not true as unemployment rate is higher in urban areas, as is the presence of large numbers in the informal economy.

Mumbai is the financial capital of India, so people from all over the country come to Mumbai with a dream to become wealthy and many of them come with the hope to get two times of meal a day. Mumbai often regarded as city of dreams is the hub of Indian cinema—Bollywood. Many artists come from all over the country to try their luck in Bollywood and many of them keep on

struggling and end up doing something else. These artists don't get platform to showcase their art.

Mumbai is the country's largest industrial hub. Mumbai has a large work force which use local trains. There are primarily three railway lines, Central line which starts from Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Khopoli, Western line which starts from Churchgate to Dahanu Road and Harbour line which starts from Mumbai CSMT to Panvel. Mumbai local, being a means of transportation to the office workers it also provides livelihood to various hawkers and artists who perform in these locals. Many unemployed people in Mumbai with or without musical talent start singing in Mumbai local trains to earn money.

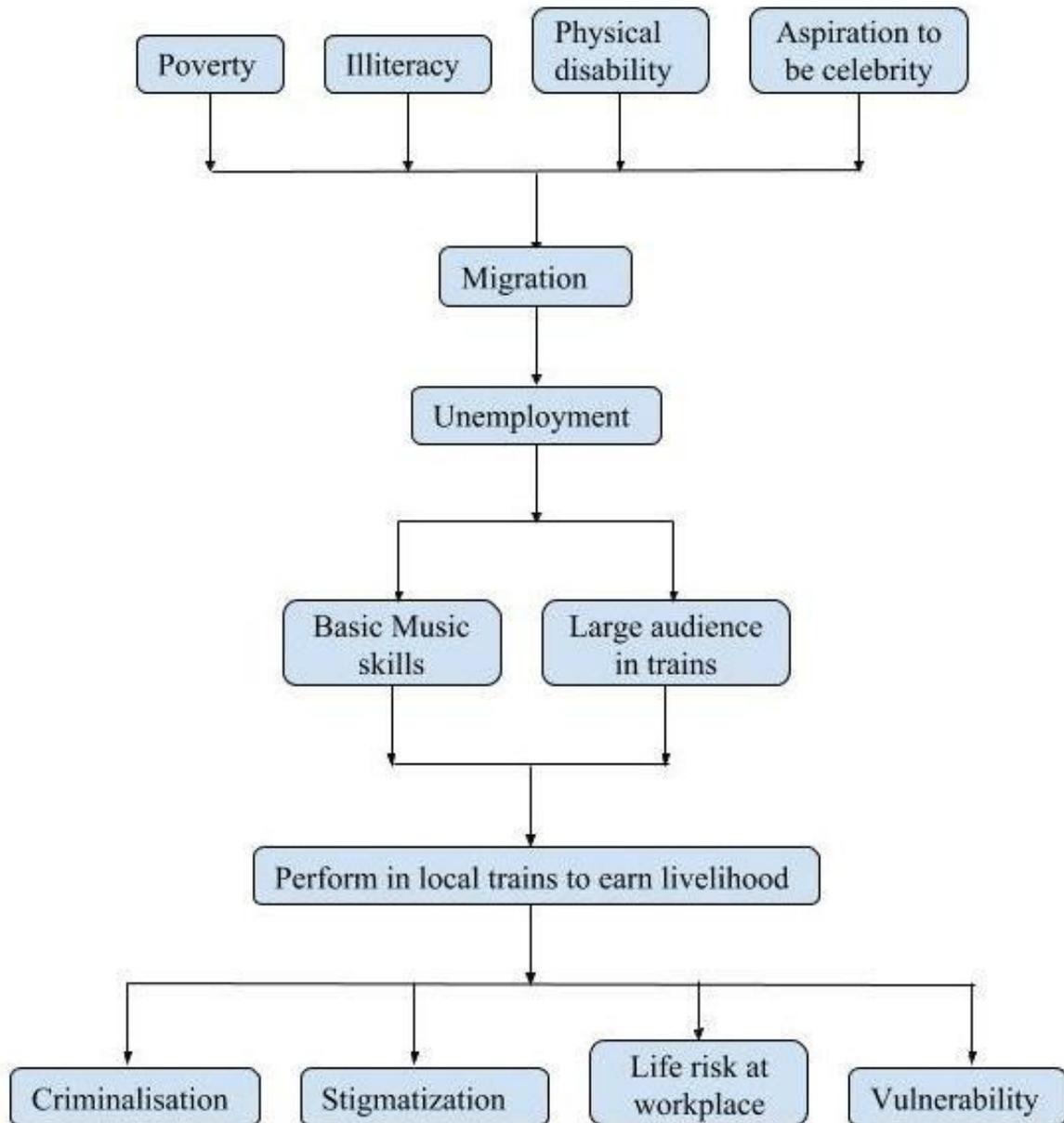
Music has been there in India's culture for a very long time. India has a prosperous history of music. The legacy of musicians like Amir Khusru, Tansen still continues through their preachings and '*Gharanas*'. The music has been ever evolving and developing art form of India. Now days there are various music schools and colleges which continue to provide musical education to the people. Especially, the special schools for visually challenged people are seen to be providing basic knowledge of music to visually challenged people. Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal which facilitates Indian Classical Music provides various certificate as well as diploma courses. Few of them are Sangeet Praveshika (equivalent to matriculation), Sangeet Madhyama (equivalent to diploma), Sangeet Visharad (equivalent to degree), Sangeet Alankar (equivalent to master's degree). There are handsome number of performers out there in the local trains who come from such special schools who are trained musicians. Job opportunities for visually challenged people are very less. Companies and factories are reluctant to offer them a job. Despite having education most of the time they fail to make it count. But to run their family many of them choose to sing in local trains. Singing in local trains is not at all a secure occupation as it involves so many risks including life risk. Visually challenged people change compartment during very short halts of train in between stations to reach out to the maximum number of audience in order to increase the possibility to earn more money. Railway police and other authority can catch them anytime and send them to beggars' home. This occupation makes them more vulnerable as it also doesn't provide any social security.

But the government considers people singing in trains and on platforms and taking money given by the commuters as beggars and begging is ruled as offence in the 'Bombay Prevention of Begging Act (Bombay Prevention of Begging Act of 1960). It is contrary to the 'Right to livelihood' included under article 21 'Protection of Life and personal liberty'. It also violates article 19 of Indian constitution which talks about 'Freedom of speech'. These two are fundamental right of every human and these rights are overlooked by this act (Bakshi & Kashyap, 2012).

Whereas, in countries like USA, UK, Canada and Russia, the street performing or busking is still practised. Street performers or the buskers are the people who perform various acts including musical performances in public places and those passersby give them reward in the form of money, food, drink, gifts etc. Even India has tradition busking where various tribes such as Potraj, Vasudev, fortune tellers, Madari etc. perform in public space and earn money given by the audience. Also, there are various tribes with traditional occupation of door to door singing and asking for alms. But Members of these tribes are facing problems as these traditions are on the verge of extinction due to vast urbanization.

There are many artists who perform music in Mumbai local trains, but there is no collectivisation of these artists. There have been some studies done on beggars, but none of the study has been conducted on the beggars in local trains with the perspective of seeing them as music performers. This study can prove to be a link between buskers busking through music and musicians performing in mumbai local trains. This study has put forth stories of few such artists and has tried to give voices to their issue.

**Conceptual Framework:**



**Figure 1.0: Conceptual Framework**

As the conceptual framework suggests Poverty, illiteracy, inability to find employment due to physical disability and aspiration to be a celebrity are the prime reasons for the rural to urban

Migration (here Mumbai). Household needs to increase its income to get out of poverty and that's why few members of household or all members of household migrate to urban area. Illiteracy leads to unemployment and to find employment, migration happens from rural to urban. Physical disability lowers the chances of employment in rural areas, therefore to find suitable employment persons with disability migrate to urban areas. People with musical skills who want to be celebrity migrate to Mumbai in order to grab any opportunity if presented to them. But due to lack of jobs and employment, few of the migrated people remain unemployed. They need to do earn some money in order to survive in Mumbai. People with basic/musical skills start performing in local trains as it provides a large number of audience and probability of receiving more money. But as per the BPBA, singing in public places and accepting money is criminal offence and thus these artists have to face legal actions. Many times they are sent to Beggars' Home and sometimes even to the jail. The stigma of beggars is attached to this occupation. People think of it as the inability of a person to earn her livelihood on her own and depends on alms given by others. These people face discrimination and they are even ill-treated by people, railway police and TCs. This occupation also involves physical risk. Artists continuously change railway compartments to cover more audience and local has very short halt at every station. Lives of artists are at stake. Labels of beggars, criminals affect the socialization of these artists. It doesn't draw out enough money and there is no social security. This as a whole makes them more vulnerable.

### **Rationale for the study**

The purpose of this study is to understand the issues of musicians performing in Mumbai local trains to earn their livelihood. To study the stories of such musicians and to know whether local trains are the best place for them to earn their bread and butter.

Mumbai is 24X7 busy city. Millions of people work in various sectors in mumbai on a daily basis. The working class of mumbai which is in millions use local trains for their daily travelling from home to workplace and workplace to home. Thus Mumbai local trains become lifeline of Mumbai. These local trains have also became the only source of income for the artists who perform music in trains for their daily earnings.

These artists being one of the most vulnerable groups their issues are hardly addressed rather they are criminalised for the condition in which they are. This is a vital issue in discourse of urban poverty which needs to be properly addressed and this research can be a starting point. It is also very important to understand how these artists conceive the Beggary laws, their thoughts on their own occupation and the reasons to choose this as occupation.

Another aspect of this study is to understand the feasibility of busking and street performing in India and particularly in Mumbai. Street performing and busking has been the culture and tradition in many foreign countries. Public places such as streets, parks, markets, beaches etc are the important location for busking and these are permitted areas for busking. But Mumbai local trains is a different setting than streets and public places where street performing and busking take place in foreign countries. Mumbai local trains are very crowded and commuters pay for their travelling unlike busking places in foreign countries where anyone can roam without paying anything.

In this situation, it is very important to know the problems faced by artists while they perform in local trains, the treatment by railway authority and also from commuters. Along with that socio-economic condition of such musicians and study of steps taken by the government regarding this issue become important parameters to assess the validity of busking in Mumbai local trains.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of Musicians performing in Mumbai local trains.
2. To examine support/threats to these performers.
3. To study what this occupation means to the performers and whether they would prefer to continue with it or change if they have an alternative.

Music is very close to the researcher's heart and he has a keen interest in it. He is frequent commuter in Mumbai railway trains for past 6-7 years and he has been seeing such artists in

local trains. When he came to know about Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 and the fact that all these artists are criminals under this Act, that increased his interest in this area. Since then, he has been working on this issue. He is working as an executive committee member in an organization called, 'Swaradhar' for past 4 years. Swaradhar is an organization based in Mumbai. It is working towards providing dignified livelihood to artists performing in Mumbai local trains. Organization has identified musically talented artists performing in local trains and formed their band/orchestra and they perform in various shows. The organization is also involved in creating awareness that these performers are not beggars but musically talented artists. Researcher feels that this study can also help organizations like Swaradhar to understand ground realities and this research as a document for their further work.

To make this an authentic document the work should be substantiated by the previous works done on the same and related issue. In order to understand the legal aspects, the beggary acts need to be understood. Therefore, the further chapter 'Review of literature will review the previous literature regarding the issue under study.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Works done previously on the issue must be taken into account while taking same issue further. Literature review is the section where existing literature related to study is reviewed in order to understand the issue very well. It helps in finding the gaps in existing studies and sets the background for the further investigation. This chapter, Review of Literature is divided into 6 parts addressing the literature based on the different aspects. It starts with an introduction, the second part talks about the reasons behind the choice of the location of the study and describes it. Third part is about the migration that is taking place from rural areas to urban areas. Next part talks about the vulnerability of the persons with disability that leads to beggary. Fifth part consists discussion over the beggary acts in India and their implementation. Last part introduces busking and holds discussion over existence of busking in foreign countries and it also has little discussion over feasibility of busking in India .

### **Introduction**

India has a long tradition of music. Indian music is presented and explained systematically and in detail in the Natyasastra, perhaps one of the first literature written on the drama art and music. This literature written by the sage Bharata has been dated differently in different sources from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. to the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Jairazbhoy, 1995). Even today, the Indian music is enjoying prosperity, Indian music has given many legends, but with increasing craze of Bollywood music, only a bunch of music artists are getting fame and becoming wealthier and the poorer one are struggling to earn their bread and butter. Homeless people and many disabled persons tend to beg as they cannot find any other way to earn their livelihood. In Mumbai, many of them start singing in local train as it provides them large audience and start to ask for alms. Mumbai is often scripted as India's most cosmopolitan city, a city of high finance and high living standards and also called as 'City of Dreams'. (Roy, 2011). Therefore people from all around the country come to try their luck and fulfill their dreams in Bollywood. Many of them keep struggling and time comes when it becomes hard even to get two times meal a day. On the other hand few people are so poor or physically disabled that they don't get a chance to perform

on stage and both kinds of people start performing music in local trains. Often they are harassed or troubled by police and railway authorities as these people are considered as beggars rather than artists. As per the law these people are supposed to be kept in Beggars Home for rehabilitation, but many researches suggest that these home are not fulfilling the purpose. When these people are labeled as beggars, we might lose on few very good artists who can even shine countrywide.

### **Mumbai and Mumbai local trains:**

Mumbai is the largest metropolitan city in India. Despite having weak developmental capacity, the state in Mumbai is still somehow effectively governing the dynamic city. Lack of world class infrastructure and good administration, also the large unending slums are still prevailing in Mumbai, still it has managed to grow as one of the largest economies in the world. It holds its position as India's financial, commercial and entertainment capital, and continues to draw entrepreneurial migrants from all over India. The city has got very dynamic culture and slums, informal spaces and the urban polished life are integrated in a single city. (Chattaraj, 2012)

Mumbai is the capital city of state Maharashtra which is the second most populous state in the country. Mumbai contributes 40 percent of the states total GDP and 5 percent of national GDP. Mumbai generates 33 percent of the country's income tax, 60 percent of customs duty, 20 percent of central excise duty and 40 percent of foreign trade (Bhagat & Jones, 2013).

Urbanization and Industrialization cause a mass exodus of people from rural to urban areas. 15 percent of Mumbai population is immigrants; they are not born in Mumbai. (GOI, 2011) In the course of the past 100 years, the population of India expanded four times from 238 millions to 1 billion. The urban population rose just about 13 times. In terms of a nation's entire population, the urban population increased from 11 percent to 34 percent, that is over thrice of the previous percentage (Acharya, 2000). Mumbai is the financial capital of India. Mumbai is lifeline of India and local trains are lifeline of Mumbai. The Indian Railway network (IRN) is one of the largest and busiest Railway networks in the world, handling massive numbers of passengers and quantities of goods daily. (Ghosh, 2011).

The local trains carry 6.6 million passengers daily. In spite of the fact that the typical limit of each train is 1,700 amid peak hours, in excess of 5,000 individuals jam into them. The Mumbai suburban railway network in the Central and Western Railways is spread across 319 kms. There are five corridors, two on the Western Railway, two on the Central Railway, and one on the Harbour Line. Every day 6.6 million people travel in the suburban section using the services of 2,435 trains. The Mumbai suburban railway is one busiest railway routes in the world and this fact can be drawn out from the record that suggests, Mumbai suburban railway has most high density of passengers in the world. The nine-car trains are designed to accommodate 1800 passengers (900 sitting, 900 standing), but during peak hours, the number of passengers crosses 5,000 among which 4,000 are standing (Sehgal & Surayya, 2011)

Thus, Mumbai being largest and wealthiest city in the nation attracts large rural population to migrate in order to have wealthy lifestyle. Mumbai contributes so much to the nation's economy and its flexibility in accommodating migrants are the main reasons why migration takes place at first hand. Migration has been one of the most important issues for Mumbai. Therefore, the issue of migration needs to be understood in aspect of this study.

### **Migration:**

Mega cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata etc. have experienced migration due to growing industrialization in urban and scarcity of the sustainable livelihood in rural areas. Migration is seen largely for the sake of seeking employment. Migration is one of the biggest factors behind the growing population of such cities.

Megacities have seen significant migration in the period of 1991-2001. Particularly talking about Greater Mumbai UA, it has experienced heavy migration drawing 24.9 lakhs of migrants (Census, 2001). As per the estimation of survey conducted by NSS in 1999-2000, Migrants have 37% share in the population of Mumbai. Around 75% migrants come from rural contrasted with 23% from urban areas. 43% of Mumbai population constitute migrants from Maharashtra, the migration taken place within state. In two decades after 1980, the interstate migration, predominantly from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar has increased. Around 69% of the male migrants state employment as reason for the migration (Singh, 2005).

Sometimes, migration with an aim to secure livelihood after failure leads to homelessness. Homeless people are more likely to get into beggary as they have very less resources to survive and they are among the most vulnerable population. Among the homeless people in Mumbai, nearly 40% migrated from Maharashtra and 60% from other states of India and among them around 95% are migrated from rural areas. Those who migrated from their native place, near half of them reported that they migrated with their family. Around 88% percent are working and among them around 38.3% are working as labourers followed by beggars 16.3% and hawkers 12.8%. Among them, more than 50% are earning below Rs. 5000 per month (Dutta, Lhungdim, & Prashad, 2016)

Persons with disability is another group which are very much prone to rural to urban migration in search of employment. This can be understood by the case of Vangani village, which lies along the route of central line of Mumbai local trains. Vangani is almost 70 kms away from Mumbai CSMT and it can be reached in one and a half hours from there by local train. In 1998, a local politician announced a scheme to provide free homes to visually challenged people. This news was received very positively and soon after that more than 50 families migrated to Vangani, but the politician who proposed this scheme died before the scheme could materialize This created panic situations for the families who had migrated. Even today, so many visually impaired people migrate to Vangani after completion of higher secondary or senior secondary in search of jobs. Right now there are more than 350 families with visually impaired persons who have migrated since past eighteen years. These families still struggle every day to meet their needs. (Gupta & Jaiswal, 2016)

Mumbai suffers from very high migration from rural areas. It includes more of the within state migration and also inter state migration and reasons being the perception of a high unemployment in the rural areas and high prospects of employment in urban areas. But the statistics show that urban suffers more unemployment than rural areas. Migration among persons with disability is also very high, who migrate to Mumbai. The failure in securing job makes their conditions more vulnerable. Next section tries to understand their vulnerable conditions and results led by those conditions.

### **Vulnerability of persons with disability leads to begging**

Persons with disability are one of the most vulnerable groups. Narsing Rao (2016) states, “Disability and poverty are closely related. While disability causes poverty, in a country with mass poverty it is also possible that poverty causes disability. The mechanisms are malnutrition, exposure to disabling disease, inadequate access to inadequate preventative and curative health care, and an enhanced risk of occupation-related accident among the poor.”

Disabled people are most likely to get into beggary as most of them failed to have secured livelihood. It increases their dependency and results in poverty and vulnerability and then choose the path of beggary for survival. The population of disabled persons in India is 26,810,557, i.e., 2.21% of total population. Also the total number of beggars and vagrants is 413,670 (vagrant is a person without a settled home or regular work wanders from place to place and lives by begging). Out of which 70,506 are disabled (Census, 2011). These are very shocking numbers. Around 17% of beggars and vagrants are disabled persons. Disabled persons who constitute 2.21% of total population also constitute 17% of the total number of beggars and vagrants.

Disability is not limited to physical or mental impairment but also refers to the economic and social inactivity. Buckingham (2011) says, “The concept of disability remains difficult to define. At the simplest level the term usually describes a condition of physical or mental impairment that limits a person’s participation in social and economic activity. In recent disability theory a person’s experience of impairment is increasingly understood as moderated by cultural and social expectations and ideas of what is ‘normal’ are seen as constructed”. The international disability rights movement helped to change focus of definition of disabled from medical model to social model, where the definition of disabled goes beyond the mere physically and mentally impaired body to a social structure arrangements where cultural values and traditions are creating disabling environment for persons with disability. DRM is continuously striving for ‘independent living’ for disabled persons (Mehrotra, 2011).

Physically disabled people were traditionally facing exclusion from society in India. In brahmanical texts, disable people including blinds, mental and physical impairment were

excluded from inheritance. (Derrett, 1968). Also in western christianity, physically and mentally disabled people were understood as incapable of performing rituals for well being of family. And very important among them was perform funeral rites for the father was taken away from disabled. (Colebrooke & Tercapanchánana, 1864). Many disabled persons are poor and subjected to other discriminations based on caste, religion and gender which reduces their sense of entitlements to employment, education, health etc. available to them (Alexander & Buckingham, 2008).

Disability Rights Movement (DRM) became powerful after 90s in India and success resulted in the form of Persons with Disability Act, 1995 (PWD Act), in 2016 the Act is modified and amended as 'The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016' with more rights to the PWDs. But still these laws fail to uphold their promises. The disability Act promises equal opportunities to the disabled, provides 3% job reservations for disabled. But the NCPEDP, a Delhi based organization alleged that government annual report did not provide any information on the implementation status of reservation for disabled in government sector. Others have also recently raised issue of employment for disabled in private sector. The business processing outsourcing jobs and the information technology sector can be potential sectors to provide jobs for disabled persons (Mehrotra, 2011). Education is another fundamental right to which everyone is entitled to pursue but here also the Act fails to deliver promises. Most of the schools lack in providing friendly infrastructure to the disabled students. There are very few schools having trained instructor, modified seating arrangement, accessible doorway needed to support mainstream education of disabled children. India has 2500 designated special schools for an estimated 55 lakh (5,500,000) children with special needs. Even these places, however, are rarely filled. Delhi University for example, despite reserving 1300 places for special students, is only able to fill approximately 300 (Tandon, 2007). These numbers self explanatory, how much behind India is in achieving a just society for disabled persons. Government failing to keep promises about employment and education for disabled is the prime reason why there is huge number of unemployed disabled.

Schools for visually challenged persons give special attention to musical education. Music can be considered as a gift to visually challenged if it is taught to them. They can get inclined to the

music very easily and that's why music education should be an integral part in schools for visually challenged children. 'Richard Walsh Music School for the Blind' is a music school only for visually challenged persons. Thus, there are initiatives taken to make visually challenged persons enabled with musical skills (Kumar, 2015).

Persons with disability have always been discriminated by the society. Even the traditional and religious texts try to abandon them from their rights. Disability rights movement is a milestone in persons with disability to have rights. In 1995, Persons with Disability Act came into rule which was further amended as The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, but the act is failing to deliver as PWDs are still failing to access their rights. Right to Education of PWDs is nowhere near for them to access. Failure in higher education and failure of government to keep promises of providing employment to PWDs are increasing unemployment rate in PWDs. But the initiatives taken to give music education to the visually challenged children when supplemented with unemployment give them option to have their livelihood based on music. They might find performing in local trains as a way of earning their livelihood. But beggary act in India, terms this as beggary and criminalizes those who are engaged in it (Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959) Therefore, it is important to understand and study beggary and its implications.

### **Begging and Beggary Act:**

According to the Oxford dictionary, "A person who lives by asking people for money or food" is a beggar. "A person who is not capable to fulfill his basic needs on his own and therefore depends on other people for money and food and asks them for same is a beggar. Beggary primarily is indicative of extreme poverty. It is the absolute failure on the part of an individual to sustain effectively through certain means of productivity and livelihood". (Sarkar, 2007)

It is considered that urban areas are rich and prosperous and only rich people live in cities therefore poor people in urban areas are often neglected. Begging is not much seen in rural areas but largely seen in urban area; extreme poverty is one of the primary reasons behind it. But urban poverty gets less attention and rural poverty is always remains as an important discussion topic. In india many government schemes are in the welfare of rural poor but not much schemes are designed to address urban poverty(Mander, 2012). Distance between rich and poor is more in

urban areas. There are no concrete plans to abolish poverty from urban.

To prevent the beggary, first Bombay Beggars Act 1945 came and then it was modified in 1959 and amendment made as 'Bombay Prevention of Begging Act' (BPBA). This Act defines begging as "Soliciting or receiving alms, in a public place whether or not under any pretence such as singing, dancing, fortune telling, performing or offering any article for sale" (Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959). Here, "It is apparent from the definitions of the begging act that the act is not only unjust and unfair but also a tool of the government to control a certain class of the population. The act which is extremely vague can have multiple meanings. It can prove to be very harsh because it includes much more than just soliciting alms. Anything from dancing and singing to offering goods to being shabbily dressed, which may or may not be in the pretence of receiving alms could be considered as beggary" (AAA, 2005)

This act also violates fundamental rights of a person. Article 21 of Indian constitution deals with protection of life and personal liberty which was extended to the right to livelihood in 2009 as per the Supreme Court's judgement as it was considered that no person can live without means of living, that is livelihood. It also violates Article 19(a) which deals with freedom of speech and expression. The beggary act overshadows both fundamental rights which every Indian is constitutionally entitled to (Bakshi & Kashyap, 2012)

Almost all anti-begging laws are based on the assumption that people choose idleness voluntarily and also that idleness imposes criminality (Goel, 2010). It says that poor people find it easy to earn through begging and that's the reason why begging does not vanish even from mega cities like Mumbai.

The BPBA is a remainder of the colonial mindset from which we still have not got ourselves free. "The people it criminalises are not actual offenders, rather they are status offenders. They offend by being what they are, rather than by doing what they do" (Ramanathan, 2008). As per the study conducted by Swaradhar NGO, many artists have finished various levels of classical music and few of them even possess Visharad degree. They are poor, they are physically disabled and still they are trying to showcase their musical talent but the law doesn't allow them to do so (Swaradhar, 2014)

There can be more than one reason for which a person engages in begging. A person may beg

because he is lazy and don't want to do anything else to earn a livelihood or he may be an alcoholic or a drug addict, and begs in order to earn enough money to pursue his addiction, or he may be forcibly pushed into beggary by any gang. And there is also the possibility that he is starving, homeless and helpless. There can be any of these four reasons behind a person begging. A law can be formulated in such a way that all these four categories can be dealt with at different level. Different reasons behind begging hold different solutions in order to eradicate beggary. Nobody should beg and nobody should need to beg (Ramanathan, 2008). But the current beggary act, that is BPBA which is implemented in most of the country with few or no modifications categories all the beggars in on category without knowing the reasons behind behind the act. This leaves many basic gaps in the act.

The Act was formulated and passed to control and further reduce the issue of beggary such that people into begging could be rehabilitated by providing them some vocational training. This vocational training would help them in getting a job and stand on their own in society and would help them in living respectful life. But in this act beggar and beggary has been negatively defined and also the way this act is implemented makes it a very anti-poor act (Tarique, 2011) Concept of beggars' home is not implemented properly. An artist should be trained for his/her art than any other job. People in beggars' home should be trained as per their strengths,. People performing music in local trains should be trained to be good musicians, but that doesn't really happen.

Bombay Prevention of Begging Act is most likely to be replaced by 'Persons in Destitution (Protection, care and Rehabilitation) Act' this year. The bill of this act contains almost all the definitions given in BPBA with addition of few more. The primary motto of this bill is to eradicate beggary from society. According to this bill, rehabilitation centres will be established by governments, persons in destitution can approach these centres by themselves. Outreach and mobilisation units will be formed, they will conduct surveys and will identify persons in destitution and can refer them to Rehabilitation centre. These units will also function to spread awareness about the services available in this act in various areas. Identity cards will be issued to these people, which will help in availing benefits under this act. This act, if effectively implemented, can be successful in reducing beggary in India. But it doesn't guarantee that people

will be trained as per their strengths. This act doesn't guarantee that people performing music in local trains will be provided music training for their enhancement. Rather this act will kill the music in these people, because singing in public places for daily earning is still offence according to this act, therefore these people will opt for another job after vocational training from rehabilitation centre. The provisions of the model bill suggest that law enforcement will not be punitive but rehabilitative in nature. Though begging is still not decriminalised entirely, penal action will be only taken against repeat offenders. (The Persons in Destitution (Protection, Care and Rehabilitation) Model Bill, 2016)

The act criminalizes the conditions of the poor, rather than coming up to any solution. Violation of fundamental rights are not considered yet and the solutions that are proposed in acts are not properly implemented and they are nowhere near to solve the problem. Definition of beggar in the act is itself problematic and suggests that the idleness is willingly chosen and performing in public spaces that also includes railway premises and railway trains is not any kind of work but a violation of the act. Beggary act in India is very unjustful to the poor and failure in terms of rehabilitation. But in some foreign countries, the beggary acts are flexible and where performing in permitted public places is allowed.

### **Concepts of Busking and Street performing:**

Oxford dictionary defines busker as "A person who performs music in a public place and ask for money from people passing by." According to Jamie Kastner, Busking is "an art of persuading strangers to fork out money for free music" (Kastner, 1992). Street performing is restricted to performing on the streets.

"Forgoing the sanctity of a walled theatre space, with darkened auditorium, fixed seating, prepared audiences, and reassuring reviews, the street performer instead engages and manipulates the urban environment, using its traffic, noise, and passersby as props for his show. Buses rumble by; helicopters hover overhead; heckles interrupt the rhythm of the performance; rain, cold, or police can defeat the performer entirely. The audience surrounds the street performer, restless, waiting, and impatient. Yet the street performer succeeds in transforming urban space into theatre place" (Harrison-Pepper, 1990). Audience is not forced to pay money. If

someone likes it then he/ she gives whatever money he/she wants to give. Artist keeps on delivering amidst the hustle of the streets.

One key factor facilitating the interventions street performers make is the reduction in distance between performer and audience that comes from performing in the street (Mason, 1992) However, such interventions are not always so positively viewed. In fact, much of the history of street performance is found in the laws that prohibit it (Harrison-Pepper, 1990). At the more liberal end, local authorities have introduced codes of conduct for performers to adhere to. At the stricter end, performers have either to audition for licenses or have been banned completely. A notable example of this is Covent Garden, London, where a detailed licensing system operates (Simpson, 2008)

In Britain, the number of beggars has increased. Most of them are either engaged in busking or Big Issue vending (Big Issue vendors are homeless people, who use their money to buy big issue magazine and then resell it to earn profit in few parts of the United Kingdom). There are very few people who don't do any of these two things and only beg. Among all of them, buskers make more money than Big Issue vendors. Those who rely only on begging are able to secure very less amount of alms (Jowell et al., 2000, p. 224). It can be inferred from this that people are happy to give money in exchange for service or in kind rather than as free gift or charity. Also, people who entertain passersby are liked more and thus earn more.

Busking also provides opportunity to perform and showcase talent to those who for some reasons can't reach bigger stages for some reasons such as poverty, physical disability etc. Many of the buskers have received fame and applauds after world came to know about their talent. For many well-known artists, busking has been a starting point to their career. Social media has helped such artists to reach more and more people. There is a case of two buskers from Beijing, China. Person from Beijing, China posted a video clip of two buskers 'Wang Xu' and 'Liu Gang' singing a well known song in transport subways of Beijing where they generally used to perform to solicit money from passerby. The video was posted on social media and It went viral and people liked it very much. The duo acquired sizeable fan club in China. They started featuring in many reality shows and appeared as guests in many high profile events. Now they are regarded as celebrities. Thus, these migrated artists though being talented used to perform shirtless in

subways but fortunately they got chance to showcase their talent on bigger stages and acquired a status of celebrity and now living a life that every artist aspire to live (Jeffreys & Wang, 2012)

Some sort of street performing and busking has also been seen in India from long ago. Dombari (acrobats), Madari, Magicians, Garudi, Potraj etc are street performers and buskers in India. Most of these communities are Adivasis and they are following their traditional occupation. Such forms of busking in India are very less and they are dying day by day. But music as a busking is rarely seen in india, equivalent to nothing as compared to the extent of busking happens in foreign countries.

Busking is a way by which an artist who wants to showcase his art can directly interact with audience at public spaces. Audience is not forced to pay the money, but those who wish to donate money can do so. Busking has been proven to be an effective alternative to unemployment situation as it helps busker to earn enough money in places like Britain. If opportunity provided then some talented buskers can rise to be celebrity and there are examples of Wang Xu and Liu Gang who have proven themselves as talented artists. Even country like India which has stringent beggary act has a tradition of busking in forms of Dombari (acrobats), Madari, Magicians, Garudi, Potraj etc. who are categorized as nomadic tribes. This act rules their tradition as crime as it involves performing in the public space and then accept donations from audiences. Therefore, there is a need for parallel study of busking in foreign countries, traditional occupations of the nomadic tribes based on public performances and beggary act.

The next chapter is about the methodology of the research which will give a detailed description of the research design of the study.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The methodology adopted in this research is 'Qualitative as it employs the method of exploring the answers to research questions. Qualitative methodology helps researcher to understand socio economic condition and struggle in their day to day life. It also allows the researcher to have knowledge about views of artists on BPBA as well Busking. Also researcher is able to understand the issue deeply because of the deployment of qualitative method. It allowed researcher to have deep one to one deep interaction with respondents and gave liberty to pen it down freely. Qualitative research is more flexible.

“A qualitative methodology enables you to further your knowledge of the situation when seeking to describe social reality.” (Alston & Bowles, 2003). Researcher wants to understand the issues of musicians performing in Mumbai local trains and the objectives of the research suggest likewise.

## **Research Design:**

“A research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. The plan is the complete scheme or programme of the research. It includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data” (Kerlinger, 1986).

The researcher has conducted the study by using ‘Exploratory research design’. The reason behind choosing this type of research design is that the researcher has not come across similar study. In the research, researcher studied various aspects local train performers’ lives such as their choice of occupation, socio-economic condition, their understanding and issues faced by BPBA etc. which are exploratory in nature. The purpose of the study is to make readers

acquainted with the issues of Mumbai local train artists as they haven't been studied yet. Researcher has tried to understand these issues and tried to portray them in this study. This is a 'Cross sectional study' as researcher collected data using one sample at one time. The data is collected once and is analysed and interpreted after that.

### **Sampling:**

Most of the times, it is not feasible to record responses of whole universe of population, in that case researcher uses a strategy to choose a target group from the whole population, that strategy can be termed as sampling method.

“Quantitative researchers employ probability sampling and so claim representativeness. Qualitative researchers eschew representativeness, claiming that non-probability techniques are more useful for assessing the social reality in which they are interested. Non-probability sampling is generally used in exploratory research” (Alston & Bowles, 2003). If this paragraph is a quote, please give the reference.

The researcher chose 'Non-probability' sampling by using the technique of 'Convenience sampling'. It was very difficult to find, contact and interview respondents as per their convenience. Therefore researcher took help from an organization, namely 'Swaradhar' to reach the respondents. Swaradhar was the only organization that researcher came across who work on the issues of railway train performers. Swaradhar has been working on this issue for last 6 years in Mumbai and has developed good contacts with the performers. The researcher himself has been an active executive member of an organization for the past 3 years. He has had contacts with many such local train performers. He used those contacts, Swaradhar has also shared it's contacts other than researcher had. 7 out of 11 artists who were interviewed are associated with Swaradhar. Researcher searched remaining 4 artists on his own.

6 out of 11 artists perform on central line railway locals. These all 6 artists live near central railway stations. Remaining 5 artists perform on western railway line locals. Out of these 5 artists 3 live near western railway stations and 2 live near central railway stations. Samples containing 6 artists from central line and 5 artists from western line gave a good idea of overall

scenario as artists were evenly distributed geographically.

### **Universe of study**

Universe of study is all the musicians who perform in Mumbai local trains and it's premises to earn their livelihood by accepting money given by passersby and commuters. These musicians can be instrumentalists, singers or both.

### **Size of Sample:**

Considering the universe of study and time span of research which is two years, researcher had decided to interview 12 respondents, but due to some unavoidable circumstances, researcher could not interview one of the respondents. Therefore, the sample size is reduced to 11. All the interviews were conducted at a place convenient to the respondents, such as their homes and workplace. 3 interviews were conducted at respondent's home with their consent, 3 interviews were conducted at the nearest railway stations to the artists' homes as they emphasized that their homes might not be the best place for interviewing and asked researcher to conduct interview near railway stations itself and remaining interviews were conducted at their work site which is railway platforms while they were sitting idle or before starting their work, all with their consent.

### **Criteria of Sample selection:**

As the research is conducted on the people who perform music in Mumbai local trains, a respondent must be regular performer in the Mumbai local train and it also should be his primary source of livelihood. Sampling used was convenient sampling, but there was not any gender based criteria, still researcher failed to interview any female respondent. All respondents are male. There was not any age based criteria and sample includes adolescent, youths to 48 years old respondent.

### **Tool for Data Collection:**

Both primary as well as secondary data was helpful in this study. For the primary data collection, the researcher used **interview guide for in-depth** interview to interview performers. With the

help of in-depth interview, the researcher was able to understand respondents deeper. It didn't restrict researcher to particular set of specific questions and researcher could ask maximum questions revolving around the objectives of the research as per the interview guide. All questions were open ended, hence respondents could also express their heart out. Researcher met all respondents in person and explain the purpose of the reason. All the interviews were recorded on the phone with consent of respondents and then transcribed.

The research also involved study of various beggary acts implemented in country. Even comparative study has been done between Indian beggary laws and other nation's beggary laws. The concept of busking and street performing is not well known in India, researcher also had very less idea about it prior to this study. So, to understand the various concepts around busking and it's mechanism and implementation in various countries, research used secondary data. Various reports were referred in order to retrieve factual data wherever needed to supplement the arguments. Major secondary data collection tools are listed below.

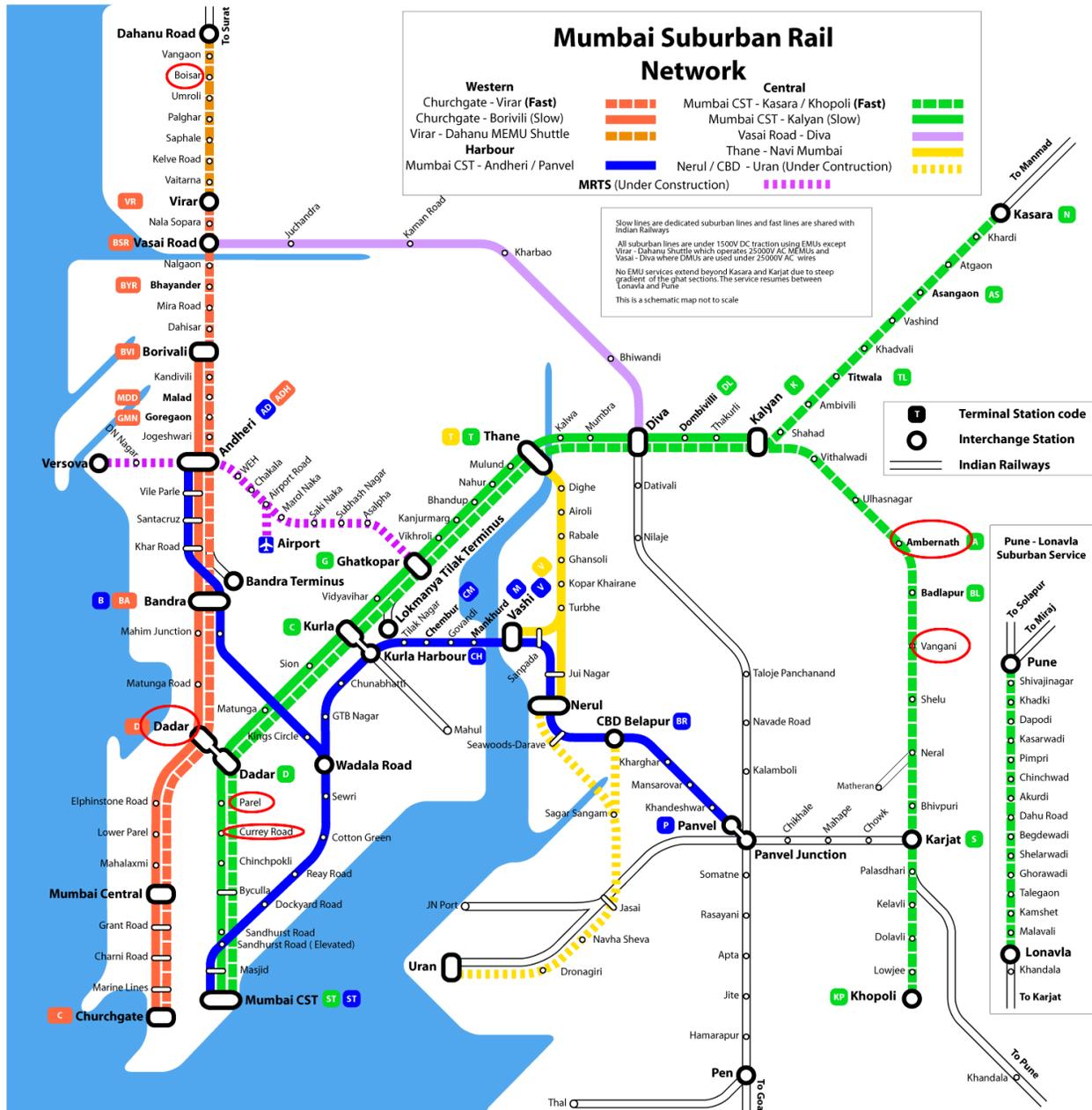
1. Journal
2. Books
3. Articles
4. Reports

### **Field of Study:**

The research is basically conducted on people who perform music in Mumbai local trains. The reason to choose Mumbai local trains over other railway network is that the issue that the researcher was studying is predominantly seen in Mumbai local trains.

There are three railway lines in Mumbai, central line, western line and harbour line. Central line is spread over Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Khopoli, but field for central line was limited from Mumbai CSMT to Karjat. Western line is spread from Churchgate to Dahanu Road, but field for western line was limited from Churchgate to Virar. Harbour line is spread from Mumbai CSMT to Panvel and trans-harbour line is spread from Thane to Vashi. There are 33 railway stations between Mumbai CSMT and Karjat railway station. 27 railway

stations between Churchgate to Virar railway station. Harbour line was not considered for data collection as it has very less number of local train performers, this data was informed by the Swaradhar and had come out of as finding when they conducted research on railway train performers and also the organization Swaradhar, which was helping in data collection didn't have much artists who perform on harbour railway line. The map given below will give an idea of how Mumbai Suburban Rail Network has spread across the region.



Source: transportformumbai.com

In the above map, the western railway line is shown in 'Orange' colour. Central railway line is shown in 'Green' colour and harbour railway route is shown in blue colour

### **Researcher in the field**

Researcher has been travelling in Mumbai locals for a long time. He has seen the the art as well as struggle of the artists performing in local trains. Researcher has his own observation that, not all those who sing in local trains are musically educated or musically talented but it is sure that they are in need of money. Researcher already had links with Swaradhar organization which works with such artists for their upliftment and dignified livelihood. Therefore, he decided to take help of Swardhar organization to introduce him to artists. Swaradhar was happy to provide assistance for research as they thought it might aid them in their upcoming activities. Researcher already knew few artists who were associated with Swaradhar, he started data collection by interviewing them.

The very first interview was conducted on Dadar railway platform in the morning just before artist starts his singing in local train. Researcher was losing flow in between the interview as it was the first interview and that resulted in losing on asking a few questions. After introspection, researcher realized where he went wrong and from there he went on to improve himself interview by interview. He called that respondent once again and met him and asked the remaining questions which he had missed during interview.

Next two interviews were also conducted with the help of Swaradhar. This time interviews were conducted in respondents' homes. Here, researcher got an opportunity to see the locality, residence and people surrounding the artists. The Both artists were visually challenged and their wives were also visually challenged. One of the artists had two children and they both had sight. During the interview I could see that how difficult it was for them to handle their two kids. The couple had to be careful all time. Couple had continuous watch on things like mobiles, remote and other electronic objects to keep them out of reach of children. After conducting his interview, respondents also talked about his other problems such as there is water supply cut in their area. Both artists live in same village, Vangani. Both live in chawls, but they are different

from each other. Another artist was living in the chawl that had many blind residents. Sanitation was problem in that area. This artist had his aunt in his home to help his wife in household chores, unlike previous artist who lives only with his wife and two children. One thing is very noticeable about these blind artists is that you can ask them to come at any railway station on any platform, they will be there. They are good in railway travelling, they might be used to the railway local travelling as of now. They almost know every road of Vangani and they can even walk whole of Vangani without navigation stick. They have whole map set in their mind.

There is one group of artists living in Boisar, they are very good in sufi music. Swaradhar provided their contact number to researcher. He tried to contact them, but he came to know that they had gone to Rajasthan as one of their family members died. It took almost 1 more month of continuous effort to match the timings as Boisar is quite far. Finally, he interviewed two artists in Boisar.

Once, while returning to home from his workplace, researcher saw a boy playing 'Sarang' (Ektari), his age was ranging from 12-14. He had learned few tunes and used to play that in the train at only evening time. Researcher asked him few details and further gave him details about the research and further sought permission for his interview. He also told about other people belonging to his community and practicing same profession. Researcher visited their place and interviewed one of the artists. They were 'Gosavi' nomadic tribe and had migrated to Ambernath around 40 years back. They live in slums, the slum is near railway station and market place. Therefore, the government is asking them to move away from there and to demolish the slums, but These slum dwellers claim that government does not have proper rehabilitation facilities for us and that's why they are still living their only under the fear that they can be thrown away from there at any time. Slums are made up of mere tarpaulin and not even tin is used. They are living in such conditions for last 40 years.

Researcher also interviewed an artist who stands at one place on railway bridge and perform to earn money. Even though he is standing at one place, he was receiving very good amount of money. He had fanclub and they knew his name. They were greeting him and giving him money. To interview artists which are not associated with Swaradhar, researcher took help of a Swaradhar artist with whom researcher had built very good rapport. Artist told researcher that he

can find some artists between Parel, Currey road and Chinchpokli railways station. After 2-3 rounds to these stations, researcher could find two artists. Almost all the artists working between these stations are blind. They get into the train from Parel station and sing till train reaches Currey road, where they get down and waits for another train on another side of platform going towards Parel. Thus they travel to and fro between these stations performing in front of different audiences every time with minimal exertion. But it is difficult for blind artists to change compartments as train stops for very less time and they need to guess the next door of the compartment. It is very risky and life-threatening for artists. They have life threat at every step they take while performing, still they choose this occupation. Researcher was left thinking that someone has too risk his/her life everyday to earn two times meal a day.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study has been done in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the master's' degree over the span of two years along with other academic engagements. Due to time constraint the data is collected from a small sample group and the whole study is based on that collected data. The research topic under the study is fairly new, therefore there is not much literature available on the research topic, researcher therefore has also used literature based on foreign countries. Convenience sampling is used for data collection. This method of sampling might not give the overall idea of the issue. Data was not collected from all the stakeholders of research topic. For example, the railway authorities and other government authorities which could have been an important stakeholder in this researcher were not considered as respondents for primary data collection. This research also talks about the legality of this occupation. Literature on the beggary laws is reviewed for the study, therefore law scholars also could have been one of the potential sets of respondents for primary data collection. To understand the interaction between artists and commuter and also to understand the perceptions of commuters about artists, the commuters themselves might have been one of the major sets of respondents for primary data collection, but due to time constraint all these stakeholders were not interviewed to collect primary data.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The study describes socio-economic condition of artists performing in Mumbai local trains. It runs you through their life experiences, various problems they have to tackle in day to day life. Along with that economic constraints and the social stigma that they face have been tried to study in this research. The study gives an idea about artists' experience at workplace i.e, railway trains and railway premises. The study tries to link various factors pushing artists to choose this occupation. Further, the study talks about the legality of this occupation and alternatives to the occupation.

### **ETHICAL CONCERNS:**

1. To maintain transparency, the purpose and use of research was explained to the respondents by researcher at the start of the interview. Prior permission of the respondent was taken before recording interview. One artist thought that researcher is no one but a government authority and he refused to interview, that's why that interview could not take place.
2. Researcher has maintained confidentiality by changing the names of respondents in findings. All the data collected in the form of interviews has been kept secure.
3. Researcher has given liberty to respondents whether he/she wants to answer particular questions or not and has respected respondent throughout the conduction of interview In one of the interviews, artist refused to answer a question regarding his daily income and also wished not to answer question regarding his working hours. Therefore, researcher also respected his wish and didn't repeat the question or forced him to answer.

4. Researcher approached respondents as per the convenience of respondents. Researcher took interviews as per respondents' convenient place, be it their home, nearby railway station or at the workplace with time suitable to respondents. Researcher tried not to disturb respondents when they were busy.
  
5. Plagiarism is absolutely unethical. To avoid plagiarism researcher has acknowledged other people's work copied in his research using proper citations and references. To better understand the phenomena of busking, different aspects of beggary act and beggars, researcher has taken the help of the literature and work done before by other people, but has acknowledged each and every work. Proper in-text citation has been used wherever required and list of references has been added at the end of research using APA style of citation.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

After the collection of data, transcription was carried out following which the data was properly coded into broader themes and sub-themes. In order to make sense of the data collected, the textual data generated was used for analysis. Since the research is purely qualitative, the data analysis is thematic analysis, where the themes are studied properly such as choice of occupation, economic condition, socialization, support received, relation between performers and commuters, views on BPBA. Then it is interpreted accordingly, which looks into various aspects of their livelihood with respect to each of the theme. It also helped to analyse the level of impact on social as well as professional lives of musicians due to the criminalization of their occupation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EXPERIENCES OF MUSICIANS PERFORMING IN MUMBAI LOCAL TRAINS**

This chapter talks about the findings and analysis of the data collected using in-depth interviews. It is basically a description of life experiences of artists. The chapter is divided into 7 major parts, that includes profile of artists which gives basic details of each of the artist; choice of occupation is a part of the chapter which takes us through why they chose this particular occupation; economic condition of the artists is explained in the next part; socialization is a part which basically talks about the interaction of the artists with the society at the workplace as well as in the personal life; next part is views of artists on Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 which talks about the artists' understanding of BPBA and their remarks on that. The next part about performers and performing in local trains gives an idea about artists' views on their own occupation and also their views on replacing the current situation of their occupation with the way busking happens in foreign countries and last part includes two case studies.

#### **PROFILE OF THE PERFORMERS PERFORMING IN LOCAL TRAINS**

A total of 11 performers were interviewed. The table on the next page is a basic profile of the performers. It includes their names (names have been changed for confidentiality purpose), age, current residence, native, physical ability/disability, academic qualification, musical education, musical skills, experience in the working field.

7 out of 11 artists are associated with Swaradhar. They are Ketan, Kailas, Sandeep, Sonaram, Imran, Ramesh, Rajaram. They were reached with the help of Swaradhar. Other artists are reached by researcher on his own by visiting various railway stations.

Sr. No.	Name of the Respondent	Age	Current Residence	Native	Whether Physically challenged	Academic Qualification	Musical Education	Musical skills	Exp in the field
1.	Ketan	34	Vangani	Latur	Visually challenged	11th	In School	Dholki, Singing	7 yrs
2.	Kailas	32	Vangani	Nanded	Visually challenged	9th, Powerpress machine course	Sangeet Madhyama	Singing, Harmonium	9 yrs
3.	Sandeep	39	Vangani	Sangli	Visually challenged	5th, vocational training	No	Dholak	16 yrs
4.	Sonaram	22	Boisar	Ajmer, Rajasthan		No	Traditionally from father	Daf, Sufi Singing	8 yrs
5.	Chiman	48	Ambernath	Abu road, Rajasthan		No	Traditionally from father	Ektari	35 yrs
6.	Imran	32	Kalyan	Madhya Pradesh	Visually challenged	10th	In school	Flute	10 yrs
7.	Mahadev	13	Ambernath	Abu road, Rajasthan		6th	Traditionally from father	Ektari	4 months
8.	Ramesh	24	Boisar	Ajmer, Rajasthan		No	Traditionally from father	Daf, Sufi Singing	6 yrs
9.	Rajaram	26	Boisar	Ajmer, Rajasthan		No	Traditionally from father	Daf, Sufi Singing	5 yrs
10.	Sanjay	35	Ulhasnagar	Nanded	Visually challenged	12th	In school	Singing	4 days

11.	Rajendra	29	Vitthalwadi	Indore, MP	Visually challenged	12th, MS-CIT, Telephone operating course	In school	Singing	18 months
-----	----------	----	-------------	------------	---------------------	--	-----------	---------	-----------

**Table 1.0: Basic profile of artists**

All of the respondents who are interviewed for this research are either themselves in-migrants or their families have migrated to Mumbai. There are 7 cases of inter state in-migration and 4 cases of intra state in-migration. Chiman has migrated with his father 40 years back in his childhood. Mahadev, Sonaram, Ramesh, Rajaram are second generation in-migrants, their fathers migrated to Mumbai, but they were born and brought up in Mumbai. All other respondents are first generation in-migrants.

This in-migration is the result of lack of income sources, unemployment, illiteracy in the rural area and this is supported by the image of Mumbai as a ‘Dream City’. One of the respondents, Rajaram said, “*Mumbai sapno ki nagari hai, yaha koi bhi sapna pura ho sakta hai, hamare jaise kalakar ko bollywood me mauka milega to hum bhi famous ho jayenge, paise ka bhi koi kami nahi hoga phir.*” (Mumbai is a city of dreams, here every dream can be completed. Even artists like us, if gets break in Bollywood then he will also be very famous and with that money will also come.)

7 of the 11 respondents are visually challenged. Most of the visually challenged artists said that it is very difficult for a visually challenged person to find a job in village which can earn him/her enough money to be self-independent and run his/her household. There are very less opportunities for visually challenged people to have good education in village with their family background being lower class. It becomes very important for them to have some kind of technical skill that can earn them a job. That’s why all the visually challenged respondents have had at least one type of vocational training. Mumbai is a place where there are many organizations which provide vocational trainings to visually challenged people and Mumbai

being industrial hub can also provide them job opportunities. These are the prime reasons why visually challenged people migrate to Mumbai.

All the Rajasthani migrants who are interviewed for this research belong to nomadic tribes. Sonaram, Ramesh, Rajaram who live in Boisar belong to 'Goswami community' (It has different names in different states, somewhere they are called Gosavi community). They play daf and sing sufi songs and earn money through it. This has been their tradition and they are nothing but continuing it. Their ancestors used to play daf and go door to door singing and asking alms. This generation of theirs is now moving to the metro cities like Mumbai where they are finding new prospects to their livelihood based on their musical talent. Chiman and Mahadev also belong to nomadic tribe but they are unaware of their tribe's name, but they showed a card which mention them as Nathpanthi Davari Gosavi community, some political leader helped them to get that card. 'Nath Panthi Davari Gosavi' community is one of the 42 nomadic tribes in Maharashtra. The Nomadic and Semi- Nomadic Tribes along with the Denotified Tribes (DNT) and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are legally categorized on the basis of their history and vulnerabilities. Scholars have classified them in following categories on the basis of their occupations and practices: 1) Pastoralists and hunter-gatherers, mainly shepherds, cowherds and hunters of small game, 2) goods and service nomads, such as blacksmiths, stone workers, weapon makers, salt traders, basket makers and so on, 3) entertainers including dancers, acrobats, snake charmers, monkey trainers and wrestlers, and 4) religious performers, ascetics, devotional singers, minstrels and astrologers (Xaxa, 2014). Chiman and Mahadev, though being from Rajasthan were given Nath Panthi Davari community card, to let them legally have the status of nomadic tribe. They play Ektari, their traditional Sarangi. Chiman said, "*abhi gaon me aisa gaana bajane pe jitna paisa milega, utne me kaise hoga biwi-bachho ka, ghar ka, mehngai kitna badh gaya hai!*" (with inflation, it has become very difficult to take care of family with the

money that would be earned in village). Survival through the traditional way of earning livelihood in rural has become difficult due to inflation and that has made them to migrate to Mumbai.

The data shows some pattern that all the sighted person engaged in this occupation are illiterate and they are in this field because this is their traditional occupation. None of them have learnt music in any institution but from their parents. Whereas, almost all visually challenged persons have some kind of vocational training, few artists even have academic qualification.

### **CHOICE OF OCCUPATION**

According to Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959, if someone performs any kind of art including music in any public space including Mumbai local trains and receives money from commuters then it is beggary and it is a criminal offence (Bombay Prevention Begging Act, 1959). Despite knowing this fact why few people choose this as their occupation is something to be known. This section will try to throw light on few of the reasons behind it.

### **Failure in pursuing other occupations**

Though visually challenged respondents have had vocational trainings, they failed to sustain their jobs. Sandeep from Vangani did a course from NAB (National Association for the Blind) in which he was trained to make navigation sticks (used by visually challenged people) and welding of metal plates used behind tube lights. He also did a course from another organization called NAT, where he was trained to prepare brush which is used to clean roads and also to weave dusters. NAT provided him job for only 4-5 years as per the organization's policy and then the

organization handed him the telephone booth in Vikhroli. The earning through telephone booth was very less and ever decreasing, so he decided to shut it down.

Another respondent, Ketan was working in TUMCOS Electricals in Ambad MIDC Nashik, then he was transferred to Machine House PVT LTD in same MIDC where he worked for 1 and half years, then he was given break saying that he is not trained to operate CNC (Computer numerical control) machine and he would be called soon within the period of six months for the training of same, but was never called again. Then he came to Mumbai and started working as a vendor in Mumbai local trains, selling small objects such as nail cutters, scissors, passport covers, card holders etc. but he was not able to earn good money through it as sale was very low and also regular harassment from railway police made him to leave that job too.

Sandeep, Kailas, Ketan these visually challenged respondents who have been performing in local trains for more than 7-8 years have initially tried to find some other works, but other visually challenged respondents like Rajendra and Sanjay who are fairly new in this occupation haven't tried anything else before to earn their livelihood. Thus, the new generation of visually challenged people from lower income background which is migrating to Mumbai for in search of livelihood finds comparatively easy to get directly into the occupation of performing in local trains than other occupations.

Sonaram, who is 22 years old says, "*mein to padha likha nahi hu, mujhe kon office me naukri dega*" (who will give me job in the office if I am illiterate). He thinks that it is very difficult to get a decent job due to lack of his academic qualifications, so why to try for it if I have talent that is music.

Out of the 11 respondents, 6 were visually challenged. Almost all the visually challenged respondents have tried different occupations except Imran before entering into this occupation.

All sighted respondents are illiterate and they didn't try any other occupation before entering into

this occupation. Their current occupation is their first and only occupation. But all the sighted respondents interviewed for the study could not secure any job as they are illiterate and also they could not get any chance to perform at bigger stages and to showcase their talent. They think that they will not get good jobs and therefore find it not worth trying to find other jobs, rather to continue with the current occupation which earn them enough money to run their households. Whereas, most of visually challenged people have tried their best to get another job, which can help them in earning ‘dignified livelihood’, but fail in their attempt as employers seem to be reluctant to give jobs to visually challenged people as all those artists who had jobs were sacked by employers.

### **Choice made to perform in Mumbai local trains**

Music is taught in almost all the blind schools. Almost all the visually challenged respondents who have gone to school are being oriented to music in their schools only. Kailas, who has a diploma in music (Sangeet Madhyama) says, “*aplyakde ek kala ahe, tyala kalechya madhyamatun aplyala ek manch milava. Konitari apli wahawa karavi, fakt wahawa karnyapeksha tyana apli kala avdun tyatunach apla udarnirvah vhava mhanun mi ha marg swikarla.*” (I have an art. Using art as a medium if I get a stage, if someone appreciates me. More than appreciation they should like my art and through that I should earn my livelihood). In the initial days of his occupation, he was very disappointed to make this choice, but now he feels that it is not as bad as he was earlier thinking about it. It satisfies him when commuters appreciate him. He said that people listening to him in local trains even ask for his contact and sometimes even ask for shows after listening his singing in local trains.

Rajendra, who has pursued education till 12th, he has also completed MS-CIT (Maharashtra State Certificate in Information Technology) after that he completed a course in telephone

operating when came to Mumbai in search of job was asked if he has some connections with higher authority then only he would be given jobs. This continued to happen in 4-5 companies and that left him nothing but to get into this occupation.

Another respondent, ketan who tried so many jobs and finally lost all his money by investing it in objects bought for vending in local train says, *“mi tyanantar purn harlo hoto, pan majhe kahi june mitr yaat hote mhanun mag bolalo apan pan karun baghuya ekda, karan kas ahe na, khar sangaych tar ha ahe bina modicha dhandha, yaat kahi paishe lagat nahit”* (After that I felt like I have lost everything. But few of my old friends were engaged in this occupation, so I also thought to give it a try, because the thing is that it does not involve any kind of investment.) So for the people coming from lower income background it is very is to get into this occupation as it doesn't any monetary investment.

But there are few respondents who have been traditionally doing this, say that they chose this because they feel like doing their traditional occupation. For Chiman, playing Ektari is like worshipping Lord Mahadev. He said that he is educating his children just to remove the label of illiterate, he anyway wants them to continue the music and perform in local trains. Similarly, respondents belonging to Goswami community has been traditionally trained in music by their family and traditionally, they are supposed to earn their livelihood through music only. Ramesh is one of such respondents who says, *“Mujhe gaana gana achha lagta hai, to kyu na mein usise paisa kama lu.”* (I like music, so why not to earn by music only.)

Here we can see two prime sets of reasons behind the choice of this occupation. For visually challenged who do not have enough money to invest but have been acquainted with at least basic knowledge of music it is very easy to get into this occupation of performing in local train where few of their friends are already engaged in the same occupation. On the other side, Nomadic tribe who have been traditionally using music for their livelihood don't bother much to get into this

occupation. It is their traditional occupation and they want to continue their tradition as they suppose it as worship to God.

### **Willingness to have alternative livelihood**

Musicians who are performing in local trains are earning enough money to run their household, but still most of them are ready to accept any other job happily if offered. Rajendra says, “*Mujhe agar koi alag job milta hai to achha hi hai, kyonki kaisa hai, mera itna education hai. Agar mujhe koi puchta hai ki apne itna education liya hai, phir bhi aap job kyu nahi karte, yeh kam kyu karte ho, toh isme image ka sawal hai, isme image ghat jaata hai*” (If I get another job, I will gladly accept it. Because I have educational qualification and if someone asks me that despite having education why don't you do anything else, why you are doing this work, so it lowers the image in society). Ketan is another artist who is happy to be discovered himself as artist proposes that if the government is ready to take care of us until we don't become self-dependent, then it's okay otherwise he would like to continue his career in music, not in local trains but on stage, in various shows.

Another artist, Kailas says, “*Nahi, he kam tar nahi karnar, pan mala sangeet kshetrat kam karayla avdel, jar mala sangeet kshetratach kam karaychi sandhi milali tar khup changal hoil.*” (No, I would not do this occupation. But I like to work in the music field. It will be great if I get a chance to work in the music field only).

But Chimman says, “*hum hamara khandani peshha hi karenge na, woh hamari kala hai*” (Obviously, we will do our traditional occupation, because it is our art and tradition). Thus, the groups which have a tradition of music are not much bothering about alternative livelihood.

Even all interviewed artists from Boisar are happy to continue this work unless they get very good office job, which they think is very difficult to get as they are illiterate.

Visually challenged respondents have education that should get them jobs but they are not given jobs and finally they chose to accept this occupation of music, therefore they want such a job which are regarded as respectful jobs to that either their education or musical talent will be counted. Whereas, respondents belonging to nomadic tribe do not have any educational qualification and completely rely on their musical talent for their livelihood, therefore they are not much concerned to have occupation other than music. Here, the prime reason behind unwillingness to continue this occupation is the stigma attached to it as they think it is demeaning to them.

### **ECONOMIC CONDITION**

The income varies artists by artist. It is upto the artist how much he earns. Earnings also differ day by day someday you get Rs. 200 and another day it is Rs. 800, says Chiman. Sanjay says, *“Jyachyakde Dholki asate tyala jast miltat”* (The artist who has dholki gets more money). This suggests that the earning fluctuates day by day, but those who know how to play any instrument or those who are more musically skilled get more money. But Chiman said that he and his family only go to the trains when there is any need of money. Another respondent from Ambernath, Mahadev, who is 13 years old has started playing Ektari in local trains since last 4 months as his family has to repay the debt taken for his sister’s marriage. In a day time he goes to school and then after 8 pm, he performs in local train.

Parents of all the artists who have migrated within the state to Mumbai are either farmers or laborers. All of them are of lower income background. Kailas, a classical singer when came to Mumbai, he was on his own and did not have any financial support from his parents. Even after his marriage, he had not have household material, not even utensils. He started borrowing money from people but earning from his occupation of selling pass covers in local train was so less that

he was not even able to return the interest and the principal amount was not even to think about. He struggled his way to become what he is today.

There are 7 out of the 11 respondents who are also associated with Swaradhar organization, which provides them opportunities to perform in shows and thus helps in securing good payment as honorarium. Out of these 7, Kailas owns a home in a chawl in Vangani since last one year. Ketan stays in flat in one of the buildings on rent in Vangani, Imran also rents a flat in Kalyan. Sandeep rents a room in a chawl in Vangani. Three artists from Boisar were living in slum near railway station but since last year they have moved to chawl, where each of them lives on rent with their families.

Whereas, Chiman still stays in a slum with his family. He has been living there for the last 40 years. Mahadev also lives in the same slum. Remaining artists lives on rented houses in chawls.

Sonaram, Ketan says that on an average they earn 400-500 daily which is not a bad amount to survive and run one's household. Though income is not much handsome, but it has definitely helped these artists to elevate themselves from extreme poverty to what they are now.

The income is very fluctuating and therefore it does not ensure financial security of the artist. It suggests that those who have musical skills are more likely to get more money. They have good houses. Therefore, most of the musically skilled artists have not much problem in continuing this occupation.

## **SOCIALIZATION**

Capability theory argues that “the measure of any community and individual's human well being is not simply a matter of economic status but includes social recognition, a sense of value and the opportunity to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.” (Alexander, 2010).

More or less, the identity of being beggars and performers in local train affects the socialization of respondents. Sandeep hides his identity and he is reluctant to tell what job he does because he thinks that it changes the way people see him. He feels that people start ignoring him after knowing about his job. Even Ketan told that we were being exploited by the people in Vangani after knowing what we do, but now the scenario has very much changed and people have started recognizing them as artists. Adding to that Kailas says, *“Te ata amche kasht baghatat, tyamule tyana ata sagal samjlay. Ata barach badal zalay lokanchya vaghyat”* (Now they see our hardships and they have realized everything. People’s behaviour has changed a lot).

Rajendra feels that people in personal contact if treated well then treat very well in return, but the new person judges after knowing the occupation. They don’t face much problem in interacting with people whom they meet daily or regularly, people who are friends to them. Everything is almost normal. It is the new one, who without knowing them in person judges them, Ramesh told.

Respondents in Boisar live in their community, so it helps them in keeping good relations with each other. Socialization has also become easy for them.

Staying in the same area for a long time gives artists time to wipe out the preconceived notions about them and after knowing the artists personally, it is altogether different equation, then it all depends on how well they treat other people and keep the relationship going.

### **Performers and commuters**

More than often commuters like the performances from the artists. Sometimes they do not react and very few times they ask artists to get down, that is too if there is very much rush in the train. Kailas said that commuters perceive them as a common man and cooperate well with them. Sometimes they inform us if they think that railway police or TC is going to trouble us.

Whenever commuters like the song, they ask for contact numbers and even try to get us any show to perform in. Rajaram also has an opinion that commuters have mixed reaction, few of them don't even bother and one of them even give 100 rupees and some ask us to get down from the train as they don't want disturbance in their sleep.

Sonaram says, "*Par dekha jaye, toh jyadatar logo ko hamara ganaa achha lagta hai, ussi liye to har kalakar ganaa gata hai*" (But overall I would say people enjoy our singing and that is what an artist perform for.)

Ketan told that there are trains in which he has to go regularly as commuters in that train wait for him. If he misses those train then next day commuters ask him for the same. Thus, few of such artists have created their fan base in trains itself. Further Ketan adds, "*ata tar mi haat pudhe karan pan sodun dilay, jyala gaan avadat to swakhushine paise deto, jyala dyaychech nahit, tyachyakade magun pan to nahich denar*" (Now I have stopped extending my hand to ask for money, those who like my song, willingly give money. If someone doesn't wish to give money, he will not give money even if I ask him). This makes it the interaction pretty smooth between performers and commuters.

Another artists Imran, he is a flute player. He is very good at it and he can make it's melody listen even from a long distance. He stands on the railway bridge at a particular place in Dadar railway station and plays the flute. He has been playing flute at that particular position since many years and thus he has been able to create his own fan base. Everyday many people greets him on a regular basis and if he misses any day then they show concern. He is able to build very good relations with commuters.

Artists from boisar mostly perform in railway trains in groups of 2 or 3 and mostly sing sufi songs at high notes. Thus, it takes more space and also creates more sound, therefore, few people find it very problematic, whereas, others enjoy it as 3 singers with daf in hand make it very

impactful performance, it allows them to have chorus as well. Ramesh from the Boisar says, “*Andhe logo ka complaint log jaldi nahi karte, par humara kabhi kabhi kar dete hai*” (People are not keen about complaining police about visually challenged, but they sometimes complain about us). This shows that people show sympathy towards visually challenged artists.

Interaction between performer and commuter largely depends on how commuter perceives performer. If performer performs well then there are chances that commuter will treat him respectfully as an artist. Having a fan club makes it very evident that the artists have got talent and there are people who appreciate this talent. But there are also cases where few commuters find such artists nothing but nuisance. Even complaints are filed against such artists.

### **Selection of railway stations and train to perform**

Almost all the artists perform in slow locals to minimize the rush and easy access to the commuters. Sandeep said that most of the artists try to travel in the opposite direction of the rush, that is in the morning from Mumbai to Down side (Karjat, Kasara, Churchgate, Panvel) and in the evening from down side to Mumbai. Due to this, commuters are very less troubled in rush hour. Generally, artists prefer to perform from 11 AM to 3-4 PM when crowd in train gradually decreases.

Imran is one of those artists who performs standing at one place. He stands at one corner of west side of middle bridge of Dadar railway station. This allows him to create his own fan base, so if he misses on day, the very next day people ask him for the same. This also helps him in avoiding risk of getting in and down from local train.

Few artists choose to travel to and fro between two slow line stations for the ease of travel and then perform in all trains coming on those two stations. This makes the travel ease and everytime

gets new audience. Sanjay, Rajendra are few of those artists who travel to and fro between Curry road and Sandhurst road and perform in the trains.

### **Support**

Artists performing in Mumbai local trains do not have financial stability as daily income fluctuates. They do not have social security rather they are criminalised by the Constitution. Many of these artists have musical talent as well as educational qualification but they do not have assured livelihood alternative and they are continuously striving for the dignity that they deserve. It is very much important to know what external support they are getting to uplift themselves.

### **Support from various organizations**

As mentioned by Kailas, Sandeep, Rajendra and Sanjay, they have received vocational training from organizations such NAB, NAT etc. but they failed to provide them life long job through that training. These organizations are dedicated to visually challenged people only and also includes people who are not artists performing in railway train.

There is another organization that has been supporting some of the respondents, namely 'Swaradhar'. This organization dedicatedly work for the artists performing in local trains irrespective of his/her physical disability. They provide opportunities to these artists to perform in shows. This helps them to earn good amount of payment in the form of honorarium. Ketan told that he has worked with the organization in awareness program intended to change perceptions of people and commuters towards such performers from beggar to musically talented artist.

Most of the artists claim that there are no organizations that are working to solve our problems. Seeing this artists performing on the stage in the show, whom people only have been seeing performing in local train can help in changing the way society see towards these artists. But there are very few such organizations, this study encountered only one such organization.

### **Support from Government**

All the artists claimed that they are not receiving any kind of help from the government. Chiman says, *“Sarkar bolti hai sabhi ke upar case karo aur sabko andar dal do, baki kabhi kisi ne pucha hai inki musibat kya hai, Kyu bhikh mangte hai! Khali baat karne se kuch nahi hoga”* (Now the government says, file case against every beggar and arrest them. But has any one asked what is his problem, why he is asking alms. Nothing will change just by talking about it.)

The current act on beggary i.e, Bombay Prevention of Begging Act is most likely to be replaced by 'Persons in Destitution (Protection, care and Rehabilitation) Act' this year. It claims to be different and more rehabilitative than BPBA, but it has retained almost all the definitions used in BPBA. It has added that rehabilitation centres will be established and along with that a system will be established to outreach and identify destitutes, even destitute himself can reach to the rehabilitation centre. Vocational training will be provided in the rehabilitation centres. Destitutes will receive ID card of they being rehabilitated from destitution and will be able to avail added benefits under this act in order to fulfil their fundamental needs. This act is still not in the rule and not sure how much it will be helpful to change the picture as the act continues to criminalize beggars.

The expression by the artists that government is not extending any support to them seems to be very true as constitution criminalizes them and therefore, the government is not giving them their rights or any kind of help as they don't want to promote 'crime' by helping 'criminals'.

## **Treatment from railway authority**

Almost everyone has the same thing to say that behaviour of railway police and TC differs from person to person. Ketan says, “*Manus mhanun te changlech vagtat, pan kaydyachya chaukatit basat nahi mhanun pakdtat, baryach vela case pan hotat*” (As person they are good with us, but what we do is not legal therefore they catch us and many times even case have been filed). Though, almost all of the artists stated that police file cases against artists and take them to beggar’s home, but none of the visually challenged respondents has been caught by police and sent to the beggar’s home. But the artists who are physically not disabled are often have been caught by railway police. Chiman stated that railway authority treats us as beggars. He also shared an experienced where he said that railway police and TC as well as commuters sometimes treat us as a part of pickpockets’ team. Once he was playing Ektari in railway train and a pickpocket stole someone’s wallet and ran away. The person started accusing that Chiman is also his partner and took him to the police station, where police didn’t listen a word from him and asked to give all the money he had and put him in jail for one day. Similar kind of incident happened with artists from Boisar. They generally sing in the train in group of three. One day police took them to police station and started interrogating them about what they were doing in the train. Ramesh said that this kind incidents regularly happen and then they have to give share or whole of that day’s earning to railway police.

Police have caught Mahadev 3 times in 4 months of his occupation, but considering his age, everytime they release him with warning.

This shows that railway police deals gently with visually challenged people as compared to the physically not disabled artists.

## VIEWS ON BOMBAY PREVENTION OF BEGGING ACT, 1959

All the respondents interviewed for the research oppose BPBA. They disagree being criminals. Chiman says, *“Log bolte hai, apko kisne permission diya hai, hum bolte hai, hame kon permission dega! Hum to apna khandani pesha kar rahe hai, uske liye konsa permission.”* (People ask who has given you permission. But, I say why do we need permission, this is our traditional occupation.) This law declares their tradition as illegal.

Going further, Kailas even disagrees being Beggar as per the Act. He says, *“Jar mala koni paise detoy ani te ghenyasathi mi maza haat pudhe kartoy tar mi bhikari tharto ka? As tar dukandar pan bhikarich mhanava lagel.”* (Someone is giving me money and if I extend my hand to take those money, can you call me beggar. Same way, the shopkeeper will be a beggar. He sells grocery, we sell our art) Most of the artists interviewed claim that they don't ask money from commuters and other people, rather people give them willingly. If we are willingly singing and people are gladly giving us money even without asking for money then what is wrong with it, Ramesh asked this question. Kailas said that if commuters and artists don't have any problem then what problem railway authority has. He calls for a gathering of commuters and artists to have a discussion over this and then after come to the conclusion of existence of this Act. If gathering is not possible then he suggests survey to be taken by either government or any organization.

Ketan takes this discussion forward and connect it with fundamental needs and rights of human that is Food, Shelter and Clothes. He says, *“Baki ha kayda bananychi garajach kay ho, jar ann, vastra, nivara, he kaydyane amhala ghatnatmak adhikar ahet. amhi tar annasathich bhataktoy na, yacha gairvapar tar hot nahi. Mhanje eka bajune apla kayda sangto ann, vastra, nivara hya mansachya mulbhut garaja ahet, pan ha beggary act sangto he karan chukich ahe, mag tyane*

*ann panya vachun marave ka??*” (At first place, Why we need such act. If food, shelter and cloth are our fundamental constitutional rights, then all we are trying to get food. We are not misusing anything. At one side our constitution states food, shelter and cloth as basic necessities, but this beggary act says, it is wrong to get it, then only option remains is to die without food )

Further he argues that if state is ready to take responsibilities of our livelihood until we become self-dependent, then it is okay to have such act in India.

Thus, this act primarily raises three questions, 1. Does someone need permission to follow traditional way of earning livelihood? 2. If someone is willingly giving money to another person and second person also accepts it willingly, is it an act of beggary and how can it be criminal offence then? 3. Does Beggary act overpower fundamental human rights of food, shelter and cloth and further the right to livelihood?

Almost all the artists are in opposition to the act. Their thoughts on BPBA lead us to think that government is criminalising the victims rather than coming up to the solution.

### **Beggar’s home: not a place to be in**

No one except Imran from the respondents has ever gone to Beggar’s home to be produced before the magistrate. They have either visited to release someone or just heard from someone about the conditions of beggar’s home. According to respondents Beggar’s home is not a place where one can stay, it is very dirty and smells every time in each of it’s corner. Ketan says that *“Ithe manas rahtat yachi tumhala shanka yeil. Pratyek room madhun vegala vaas yeto.”* (if you visit beggar’s home you will be doubtful that humans live there. Every room has its own different odour.)

Imran shared his experience when he was taken to Beggar’s home. A person asked him to come with him and told him that visually challenged people are getting money in the office. He just

need to go there and fill out a form and he will receive money. From there he was taken to the beggar's home. Four more artists told that railway authority fool you and take you to the beggar's home where money is asked from artist without him/ her being produced before magistrate. The whole bribing works there.

Stigma attached to the beggars can be seen here. The living conditions in beggar's home are not at all good. The procedure according to BPBA is not followed by beggar's home. People are not produced in front of magistrate, instead of that money is asked to get free and conditions are so bad in beggar's home which compels them to give bribe to authority to get themselves free from beggar's home.

### **Visually challenged are special cases for the court**

It is seen in many cases that magistrate says that don't bring visually challenged people to beggar's home and their cases to him. Visually challenged people are exempted in a way from beggary act.

Imran, when produced before magistrate just said that he was playing the flute. Then magistrate straight away said not to bring visually challenged people to beggar's home.

Visually challenged people are sympathetically viewed even by magistrate. They are deliberately tried to exclude from the BPBA. Authority in beggar's home take advantage of this and take visually challenged people in beggar's home and then ask for bribes. Artists claim that they are not given a chance to prove themselves not guilty in front of magistrate.

## PERFORMERS AND PERFORMING IN LOCAL TRAIN

There are both types of artists, one who wants to have a livelihood based on music and others who are doing it only for the sake of earning livelihood. There are few who have realized music as their passion and they would like to continue their occupation in music only.

Sandeep says, *“kas ahe na, ha sansar pani tikavnyasathi kiwa ya mulabalanch palan poshan karnyasathi evadh tari karavach lagel. Karan aplyala kahi government service nahiye, je ahe te sagal yavarach.”* (Actually, I am doing this all to run my household, to look after my children. I have to do this because no one is going to give me a job and I don't have any government job. Therefore this is the only way to earn our bread and butter.) other artists Sanjay, Rajendra are also working with same mentality.

Whereas, those artists belonging to nomadic tribe are doing it to continue their tradition. Chiman says, *“Jo sarangi hum bajate hai, usse pehle sone ka khappar bola jata tha, jise bade bade sadhu sant bajate the, ab woh hamare paas aya hai, woh hamare liye Saraswati hai”* (The Sarangi that we play was called Golden gourd shell used by jogis and it was played by Sages and saints, now it has descended to us and it is nothing less than Saraswati goddess for us.) He says when I play Ektari, I feel like I am worshipping God Shiva.

Artists like Kailas and Ketan had no early intentions to step into this occupation. But after getting into this occupation they are very much keen to continue career in music only, but they are aspiring for bigger stage to perform on.

Imran, who is a very good flute player was always determined to have an occupation as a flute player and over the year with intense hard work he has excelled in his art and now also performs in various shows, but also continues to perform on the railway platform.

## **Busking as a replacement to the current scenario of begging**

When we talk about alternatives to the current begging situation, one of the potential solutions is legalizing and promoting busking and street performing. Busking is seen as somewhat more respectful than begging. Busking is very common in a few foreign countries. In India, especially in Mumbai, which has the world's busiest railway local train service, large number of performers, is it possible to have busking as replacement to the occupation of these artists? Where artist can perform even in public places allowed by government and earn their livelihood. Let's see what respondents have to say about it.

All the artists are in favour of busking. Where every artist will have an identity as a busker or street performer and will not be labelled as a beggar. Ketan says, not everybody gets a chance to perform on a big stage, what about those underprivileged talents, busking can be one way to get them recognition.

Ramesh has a view that this will help in changing the perceptions of society. These performers will be seen as musicians and not beggars, that will result in an increase in income.

Kailas says that this high time when our government needs to learn from them. Whereas, Imran feels that it is not only government but all citizens, artists have to come together and collectively work together to aware masses then only it is possible to be implemented.

Performers are looking forward to busking in order to have an identity to their occupation and to gain financial and legal security.

Busking can be a solution to the various issues faced by the artists as being busker the degree of stigmatization will be reduced,. Removal of beggar's label and legal status from the government will help them to increase their income and it will enable them to have a dignified life.

### ***Case study 1:***

Ketan (34) belongs to Vangani village which is nearly 65 km away from Mumbai. 9 years ago, he migrated from his native place Amravati to Mumbai in search of job. He is visually challenged but he has struggled his way to achieve what he is today. He has been performing in Mumbai local trains for last 7 years. Today, the whole of Vangani knows him for his excellence as an artist and recognizes him as a talented artist.

He has pursued education till 11th standard. When he was in 12th standard, he received a call for job in Ambad MIDC Nashik. Initially, he was working in TUMCOS Electricals in MIDC. After few months he was transferred to Machine House Pvt. Ltd. in same MIDC where he worked for next one and half year. Everything was very normal and suddenly he was told that new older machines are replaced by new CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machines and as he did not know how to operate it, he was given a break, he was told that he would be called soon within a period of six months for the training to operate CNC machine, but he was never called again. He kept on waiting for few more months, meanwhile, he got married with Gopika (name changed to maintain confidentiality), she too was visually challenged. Without employment it became very difficult for Ketan's father who was a laborer in the village to run the household. Therefore, Ketan took decision to move to Mumbai to find job suitable for him and to bring stability to his life. In initial period in Mumbai he tried to find job for himself but failed to do so. Looking at his other friends, he then decided to sell daily use objects such as scissors, nail cutter, spoons, pass covers, pens etc. in local train. But at those days railway police used to harrass too much and a condition arose when investment increased far more than the revenue, therefore he needed to stop his work. This attempt incurred him so much loss and financial tension increased too much. He went sleepless in so many nights during these days thinking about how he is going to run his

family. He always used to ask himself a question, “What is my mistake?” A thought of suicide also came into his mind. But he thought otherwise and decided to give his life another chance. He then bought a ‘*Dholaki*’, he was taught how to play Dholaki in his school, he decided to try his musical skills, but till then he did not use it because he always wanted to be independent and playing ‘*Dholaki*’ and then asking for alms, he found this way of earning money is demeaning to him. But he was left with no other choice. From that day onwards he plays ‘*dholaki*’ and simultaneously sings a song. His wife, Gopika also have basic musical knowledge gained from her school days. They both started performing in railway locals. People started loving their performances. Now, they earn Rs. 500-600 daily.

He discovered his new talent and with that his new life. But the label of beggar was still there with him. Then he got associated with ‘Swaradhar’. Swaradhar made him aware that he is not a beggar but an artists, it is the government who fails to recognize him and and criminalizes him which leads other people to stigmatize him. There are many artists like him, Swaradhar identified them and collectively made their band, now the band performs in various shows. Through Swaradhar, Ketan got an opportunity to perform with musicians like Sachin-Jigar in the Amitabh bachchan hosted TV show “*Aaj Ki Raat Hai Zindagi*”telecasted on Star Plus. Ketan also performed in front of great marathi music duo Ajay-Atul in a Marathi television show “*Chala Hawa Yeu Dya*”. He has also performed with and in front of many other great musicians. He has also participated in many activities initiated by Swaradhar for the awareness among the people on issue, criminalization of musically talented artists performing in local trains.

Ketan has found his new identity and calls himself as busker and not a beggar.

## ***Case Study: 2***

Chiman (48) is an artist who plays '*Ektarti*' (traditional Sarangi). He has his origin in a Garwar village, near Abu Road, Rajasthan. He migrated to Mumbai 40 years back. He was a child when he migrated with his family to Mumbai. Since then he has been playing *Ektari* in local trains to earn his livelihood. He is illiterate but plays very good *ektari* which is their traditional means of earning livelihood. They are among the nomadic tribes. Chiman has certificate as they are nomadic tribe and belongs to 'Nathpanthi Davari Gosavi Community'. The tribe traditionally have been earning livelihood through various arts, acrobats fortune telling etc.

Chiman's family migrated to Mumbai in search of employment which would enable to run a household. After reaching Mumbai his father found Mumbai local train a suitable solution as he could continue his traditional occupation by playing *Ektari* in local trains. The family situated near Ambarnath railway station in a slum. After 8 years of age, Chiman also started playing *ektari* in local trains. It is the only source of income for the family since then.

Chiman and his family have belief that when they play *ektari*, they worship their God. Chiman is very religious. They suppose themselves as disciples of Lord Shiva. Chiman believes that the *ektari* that they are playing right now was a musical instrument used by Sadhus and sages, but now it has come down to their tribes and now it is his duty to keep this tradition and pass it to the future generation. He never believe *ektari* as a tool to earn money, he only goes in railway train to play *ektari* whenever there is need of money at home. To wipe the stigma of illiteracy, he is educating his children and send them to school. But even after their study he wants them to continue with traditional occupation as he considers it as 'God's gift'. He has taught his children to play *ektari*. He is a true lover of music. He is a devoted musician.

Irrespective of whether artists have got musical talent or not, there is prevalence of poverty and that has led them to migrate from rural areas to urban areas. Illiteracy, inability to secure jobs

due to physical disability and attempts to retain the traditional occupation are the prime reasons behind choosing this occupation even though with this occupation a stigma gets attached, therefore, most of the artist are willing to have an alternative to this occupation. The occupation doesn't let them earn high income, still it's enough to run a household but due to stigmatization, it affects the socialization of the artists and thus it takes time to build relations with people. The issue seems to be more ignored as artists claim that there are not many organizations as well as government support that can enable them to have better lifestyle. The BPBA actually criminalizes them and they find it unjustful. While the commuters who daily travel like them performing, the alternative to this act can be legalizing busking and regulating it. This will help such needy artists to have legal way of earning their livelihood and smooth functioning of busking as it is regulated.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

This study is an attempt to understand and highlight the issues of musicians performing in Mumbai local trains to earn their livelihood. There are a variety of artists performing in local trains, some of them are musically skilled, some have a tradition of music, some of them have basic knowledge about music but not formal education and some do not have any musical knowledge but the common aspect that drive them to perform in local trains is poverty. Unemployment is the prime reason behind the choice of this occupation. There is a large number of persons with disability performing in Mumbai local trains. Employers are reluctant to give them jobs, also this occupation does not involve any kind of investment and ultimately unemployment coupled with poverty force them to end up with this occupation. But there are certain nomadic tribes who have the tradition of music as the means of their livelihood, few members of these tribes are engaged in performing in Mumbai local trains. Mumbai local trains provide them large number of audience which nowadays they fail to accumulate in rural areas.

The Bombay Prevention Of Begging Act, 1959 defines the artists performing in public places and soliciting money as beggars and begging is ruled as a criminal offence in the act. According to this act, all musicians playing in Mumbai local trains are beggars and effectively criminals. The attached stigma to this occupation is the main reason why most of the artists want to discontinue this occupation and want to opt for another livelihood alternative. Artists belonging to the nomadic tribes don't have much problem to continue the occupation, they just want their occupation should be decriminalised.

Even when the artists are criminalised, they continue to engage in the same occupation; because it earns them enough money so that they can run their home. Income also varies from artist to

artist. Musically skilled artists, use of instruments in performance such as *dholaki*, *ektari*, flute and singing in a group increases the probability of earning more money. Daily income ranges from Rs. 200 to Rs. 700. The income also fluctuates on a daily basis. Though, the occupation helps them in making enough money, but the daily income fluctuation cannot guarantee income stability and financial security.

This occupation earns them enough money to run their household, but it is also complemented by restricted socialization. The image of beggar in the society has very low standards. These artists are seen as beggars and they are ill-treated several times. The stigma attached to them does not allow themselves to freely interact with the society. They are seen as someone who depends on other people's income for their livelihood and they themselves do not do anything. It takes time to build relationships with new people as new people have their own preconceived notions about such artists which are termed as beggars. But those artists who are comparatively good and also perform in some shows along with performing in local trains, it becomes easier for them to have good relations with people. While performing in local trains, commuters who are audience for these performances give mix reactions. More often than not they have no problem with artists performing in local trains and sometimes they like their songs very much and they appreciate for the same. Avoiding rushing hours is the best way to get positive response from the artists. Artists also try to avoid rush as it helps them to perform well, as well as reduces inconvenience to the commuters. They deliberately perform in slow trains, some artists travel to and fro between two railway stations on slow track and perform in those local trains only. Therefore, most of the commuters also support them.

These people are extremely vulnerable and poor, they need massive support for their upliftment, but this group of people has been much unaddressed as very less organizations work with them to solve their issues. Researcher encountered only one such organization, that is Swaradhar,

which aims to empower these artists and to have dignified livelihood. Government also does not provide any aid to these artists rather criminalizes them under BPBA. It seems that act does not aim to solve the issue but it wants to ignore and suppress it. The artists are criminalised for condition in which they are rather than who they are. The new 'Persons in Destitution (Protection, Care and Rehabilitation) Model bill', 2016 does not look more promising and the success of the bill is doubtful. While government does not look in favor of helping these artists, non government organizations need to step up and need to come out in support of these artists and address this issue as early and as effective as possible. Because the Act BPBA itself is contradictory to the fundamental human rights, such as freedom of expression and right to life which covers right to livelihood. Other provisions under the act such as establishment of beggar's home has become the symbol of inhumane treatment to the beggars.

Artists claim that we, the performers have no problem, commuters who avail the service have no problem then why we are still criminalised. If government has solution to artists' problems then they should come up with one and implement it, else let artists earn their livelihood the way they are earning without harming anyone and that is their right. Artists are left with no option but to perform in railway trains. Also it is a tradition for some of the artists, then criminalizing them suggests that government wants them not to follow their traditions.

Overall scenario can be explained as artists are needy therefore they are doing this occupation despite facing the stigma, artists are able to earn enough money to run their household and it does not cause any harm to commuters, government could not come up with any concrete solution till date. Therefore, government can learn from some foreign countries where busking is legal and regulated. Thus, it will wipe out the labels of beggars and criminals attached to the artists. Artists can do justice to their art irrespective of their economic condition and physical disability. India has a history of street performing in form of Potraj, fortune tellers, madari,

gosavi singers etc. So, this will be nothing but the legal continuation of the traditions. Busking can thus help in reviving our own traditions that are the verge of death.

## References:

Alston, M., & Bowles, W. (2003). *Research for social workers: An introduction to methods*. Psychology Press.

Kerlinger, F. N.(1986) Foundations of behavioural research.*New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.*

Jowell, R., Curtice, J., Park, A., Thomson, K., Jarvis, L., Bromley, C., & Stratford, N. (Eds.). (2000). *British Social Attitudes: Focusing on Diversity-The 17th Report*. Sage.

(Ramanathan, U. (2008). Ostensible poverty, beggary and the law. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33-44.)

Dutta, M., Lhungdim, H., & Prashad, L. (2016). *An Enquiry Into Migration and Homelessness-A Developmental Discourse: Evidence From Mumbai City* (No. id: 10059)

(Narsing, R. M. (2016). Integrating the Disabled-a reality?. *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, 51(1), 149-156.)

(Buckingham, J. (2011). Writing histories of disability in India: strategies of inclusion. *Disability & Society*, 26(4), 419-431.)

(Colebrooke, H. T., & Tercapanchánana, J. (1864).*A digest of Hindu law, on contracts and successions*. Madras: J. Higginbotham.)

(Tandon, A. (2007, May 8). Disabled still languish in the margins. Retrieved March 15, 2018, from <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070508/edit.htm#7>)

(Alexander, J. M. (2010). Ending the liberal hegemony: Republican freedom and Amartya Sen's theory of capabilities. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 9(1), 5-24.)

(Alexander and Buckingham 2008) (Alexander, J. M., & Buckingham, J. (2008). Deserving dignity. *Frontline*, 23, 97-101.).

(Mehrotra, N. (2011). Disability rights movements in India: Politics and practice. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 65-72.)

(Xaxa, V. (2014). Report on the high level committee on socio-economic, health and educational status of tribal communities of India).

(Singh, D. (2005). Migration and occupation in Mumbai: issues and implications. In *Paper presented on 35th International Conference of International Conference of International Union for study of population (France) July* (pp. 18-23).)

(Jeffreys, E., & Wang, S. (2012). MIGRANT BEGGARS AND BUSKERS: China's Have-Less Celebrities. *Critical Asian Studies*, 44(4), 571-596).

Gupta, S., & Jaiswal, A. (2016, October 06). Poverty, migration and disability in India: From challenges to change. Retrieved March 25, 2018, from <http://globaldisability.org/2016/10/06/poverty-migration-disability-india-challenges-change>

Kumar, P. (2011, August 25). Richard Walsh Music School for the Blind. Retrieved March 25, 2018, from <http://enabled.in/wp/richard-walsh-music-school-for-the-blind/>

Bakshi, P. M., & Kashyap, S. C. (2012). *The constitution of India*. Universal Law Publishing.

AAA (2005). *People without a Nation-The Destitute People*. New Delhi: Ashray Adhikar Abhiyaan

Ghosh, S., Banerjee, A., Sharma, N., Agarwal, S., Ganguly, N., Bhattacharya, S., & Mukherjee, A. (2011). Statistical analysis of the Indian railway network: A complex network approach. *Acta Physica Polonica B Proceedings Supplement*, 4(2), 123-138.

Goel, A. (2010). Indian anti-beggary laws and their constitutionality through the prism of fundamental rights with special reference to Ram Lakhan V. State. *Asia Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law*, 11(1), 23-38.

Harrison-Pepper, S. (1990). *Drawing a circle in the square: street performing in New York's Washington Square Park*. Univ Pr of Mississippi.

Jairazbhoy, N. A. (1995). *The rāgs of North Indian music: their structure and evolution*. Popular Prakashan.

Kastner, Jamie. (1992). "Toronto Busker's Life Is No Easy Street." *Toronto Star*,

Mander, H. (2012). *Ash in the belly: India's unfinished battle against hunger*. Penguin UK.

Mason, B. (1992). *Street theatre and other outdoor performance*. Taylor & Francis.

Ramanathan, U. (2008). Ostensible poverty, beggary and the law. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 33- 44.

Roy, A. (2011). *Conclusion: postcolonial urbanism: speed, hysteria, mass dreams* (pp. 307-335). Wiley-Blackwell.

Sarkar, S. (2007). Beggary in Urban India Reflections on Destitution and Exploitation. *INDIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL WORK*, 68(4), 531-544.

Simpson, P. (2008). Chronic everyday life: rhythmanalysing street performance 1. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 9(7), 807-829.

Tarique, M., & Raghavan, V. (2011, October 03). *India's war on its poor*. Retrieved April 24, 2014,

from

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/mohammed-tarique-vijay-raghavan/indias-war-on-its-poor>

The Persons in Destitution (Protection, Care and Rehabilitation) Model Bill, 2016. (n.d.).

Retrieved September 19, 2016, from

[http://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/Model%20Bill%20%20\(with%20Screen%20Reader%20access\)636057509796331695.pdf](http://socialjustice.nic.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/Model%20Bill%20%20(with%20Screen%20Reader%20access)636057509796331695.pdf)

Venkatraman, T. (2015, July 03). Most beggars singing in trains are trained in music: Study.

Retrieved February 02, 2017, from

<http://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/most-beggars-singing-in-trains-are-trained-in-music-study/>

## ANNEXURE 1

### **Interview Guide for In-depth Interview**

1. Background/family description/living condition
  - I. Resident
  - II. Native place
  - III. Education
  - IV. Family members
2. Occupational details
  - I. Current occupation/ period of working.
  - II. Reasons behind choosing this as occupation.
  - III. Previous occupations.
  - IV. Musical education.
  - V. Any occupational preference other than this.
3. Daily schedule.
4. Social linkages and relationships.
5. Support from NGOs and organizations.
6. Support from Government.
7. Treatment from railway authority.
8. Treatment from commuters.
9. Views on their own occupation.
10. Views on BPBA 1959
11. Views on street performing/Busking.