

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

International Journal of English Language, Literature in Humanities

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



**A Two Day International Conference on
Emerging Trends in English Language Teaching
(ICETELT 2019)**



Organised by

The Department of English, School of Science and Humanities

Kongu Engineering College (Autonomous)

Perundurai

Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

Ms. K. Vijaya Lakshmi

HOD, Department of General Engg

Al-Ameen Polytechnic College

Erode, Tamil Nadu, India

k.vijiaapc@gmail.com

Dr. P. Seethalaxmi

Asst. Prof. in English

Asan Memorial College of Arts&Science

Jaladampet, Chennai, India

sanju.laxmi@gmail.com

Homelessness as a Societal Challenge

The society faces a lot of challenges. One of the most world-wide acute problems is homelessness. It's a long prevailing problem which has been haunting the human society since Stone Age. There has been notable advancement in every sphere of life and the contributions to it has been flowing from around the world through ages and civilizations. It's yet pathetic to see people suffering on the roads and streets as a form of social dwelling. Homelessness leads to insecurity for the people and it paves a platform for the worst violence. More specifically against women by way of sexual exploitation, assault to rape and sexual abuse. The mothers of young girls end up staying awake at night, every night to keep guard of their children. There is a lack of security, education and development for the children arise in such homeless environments.

The people who are homeless live in the pavements, under pipes, on road sides, under flyovers and bridges. The issue of homelessness is dealt in this Paper with the aid of the poems “A Homeless Man” and “Homeless” by the most prolific poets, Francis Duggan and Vikram Seth respectively.

Francis Duggan (1946-) is an Australian poet of twentieth century. He has dealt with the theme –homelessness of a man. He portrays a sixty seven years old man, who has no home to stay all these years and live on the streets in “breaking cold and gray”. (Ahm 6)

The poet lucidly portrays the status of a homeless man, that too in an old age. He also gives the criticisms and comments of the society on the homeless man. Without understanding the circumstances and situations of the homeless man, the society sarcastically comments on him. He mentions that a misconception prevails that a wealthy person is successful, whereas the poor ones are failures, as in the lines of Francis Duggan,

“We applaud the wealthy see them a successful
and condemn all of those in poverty.”(Ahm, 15-16)

Similarly, in the words of Joanne Passaro, one can see how the homeless are portrayed as failed ones.

“-homeless men are failed men, in traditional gender terms, because they are dependent and unable to support themselves.”(2)

Francis Duggan states that he is not the only person who is homeless and there are many who are homeless and live on the roads and streets. He compares them with himself and says that he is lucky and he has been treated better than them. In this poem, the poet portrays only the prevalence of the homeless man and he misses to give a solution for it. He describes how a homeless man suffers and how he is treated by the society. He also points out that there is a lack of compassion among people, for the sake of poor and needy.

“So many of us lacking in compassion beyond our

own selves we can't seem to see" (Ahm, 13-14)

On the other hand, an Indian poet Vikram Seth (1952-) writes a poem in which the homeless man speaks about himself. The poem is "Homeless", taken from Vikram Seth's second anthology *The Humble Administrator's Garden*, first published in 1985. It won Commonwealth Poetry Prize and Alice Hunt Bartlett Award for Poetry. The homeless man envies the others who have a house to live. He states the difficulty in staying in a stranger's place and the situation of being thrown out of that place too, at any time. He feels pity on himself for not having a place to sleep during nights and "to lie down in peace." (Hs 13)

The poem signifies that even a homeless man has all the rights to raise a family and will need to impart familial responsibilities in exercising the right.

"As my family has all our life,

And as I probably will." (Hs, 7-8)

He longs to have a place of "soil, grass, brick, air" (Hs, 10) and not to move from that place, when the season changes. The jealousy feelings and wishes of the poet reveal that there is a lack of compassion and empathy among people. Most of the people are self-centered and focuses only on their own needs. They miss to notice the existence and needs of the others. So, in both the poems the poets exemplify the condition of the homeless people and they feel there is a lack of humanity and benevolence among humans. Though they never give the solution for the sufferings of the homeless people explicitly through their poem lines, they have implicitly mentioned that there should be a need of compassion, humanity and kindness towards people around.

Works cited

Duggan, Francis “A Homeless Man”, 28 Jan. 2008. Web. 6 Mar. 2019.

<https://www.poemhunter.com/Poems/A Homeless Man>>

Passaro, Joanne *The Unequal Homeless – Man on the streets, Women in their Place*. New York : Psychology Press, 1996. Print.

Seth, Vikram “Homeless”, 21 Aug. 1985. Web. 6 Mar. 2019.

<csmonitor.com/1985/0821/uhome1.html>