International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

A STUDY ON THE SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE, RESIDENCY AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF INMATES IN SHELTER HOMES OF GARO HILLS DISTRICT, MEGHALAYA

Dr. Jadab Dutta[1], Maria Goretti Nongrem [2], Prof. Enu Sambyal[3], Sandip Sinha[4], Chingkame N Sangma[5]

[1] Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Arunachal University of Studies (AUS), Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-6772-4611

[2] Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, Arunachal University of Studies (AUS), Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh

[3] Dean, Faculty of Education, Special Education & Sports, Arunachal University of Studies (AUS), Namsai

[4] Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education & Sports Science, Arunachal University of Studies, Namsai (INDIA)

[5] Student under PQH School of Education, University of Science & Technology Meghalaya (USTM)

ABSTRACT :

This study investigates the socio-demographic profile, residency factors, and quality of life of inmates residing in selected shelter homes in the Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 54 residents of two Missionary of Charity homes through socio-demographic questionnaires and an information schedule. The findings reveal significant regional variations in age, marital status and educational background of residents, while gender and employment status showed no major differences. Economic hardship, family breakdown, and social exclusion emerged as the primary reasons for residency, with poverty being the most cited factor. The quality of life of inmates was found to be strongly influenced by the availability of social support, healthcare services and community engagement within the shelters. The study underscores the critical role of shelter homes in providing safety, basic needs and rehabilitation, while also highlighting the need for tailored interventions, vocational training, and community participation to enhance the overall well-being of residents in the unique socio-cultural context of the Garo Hills.

Keywords: Shelter Homes, Socio-Demographic Profile, Residency and Quality of Life

Introduction

A shelter home is a place of refuge for those in urgent need or in times of emergency. It is a temporary arrangement provided to those who are homeless or vulnerable and facing a crisis. For example, a family evicted from their home due to financial difficulties, a victim of domestic abuse or a young person with nowhere to go.

Shelter homes are run by charities, local authorities, and religious organisations. They offer a range of services and support, including food, clothing, and basic amenities, such as a bed, shower and toilet.

In addition to providing a safe and secure environment, shelter homes also offer counselling and support to those facing difficult times. They provide advice and guidance, as well as emotional and practical help. They can contact other organisations who can help them, such as housing advice and support services. The staff at shelter homes are compassionate and understanding.

They understand that people can find themselves in challenging situations, and they do their best to provide a safe and secure environment to those who need it most. Shelter houses provide a vital service to those in need.

Shelter homes provide an environment of safety and security for those who have suffered abuse and empower them to reclaim their independence. They create awareness and understanding of gender-based violence and equip women with the necessary knowledge to access legal and social support systems. Moreover, they facilitate the education of healthcare and judicial personnel and social service and security staff to identify and address violence against women. Shelter homes offer assistance that allows those affected to heal, rebuild their self-confidence and take steps to regain autonomy. Shelter houses are an invaluable resource for those affected by abuse, providing a safe heaven and the necessary support. They help educate and inform healthcare, judicial personnel, social service, and security staff about gender-based violence and human rights violations. At the same time, they offer assistance to women so they can access the legal and social services available to them. Furthermore, they are an environment of support where those affected by violence can heal, reclaim their independence and take steps to improve their lives.

Shelter homes can accommodate people from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. Such people include survivors of domestic violence, those without a permanent home, those with mental health issues, the elderly, abundant ones, orphans and homeless people. In addition to providing

temporary accommodation, shelter homes offer other services such as counselling, legal aid, medical care, and education. These services are intended to help individuals adjust to their new living situation and to help them become self-sufficient.

Meaning of Shelter Home

Shelter Home means a place the provision of temporary refuge in conjunction with supportive services in compliance with applicable State or Tribal law or regulations governing the provision, on a regular basis, of shelter, safe homes, meals, and supportive services to victims of family violence, domestic violence, or dating violence, and their dependents., It is offered on a 24-hour, seven-day per week basis to victims of Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault and their children. It may include housing provision, rental subsidies, temporary refuge, or lodging in properties that could be individual units for families and individuals (such as apartments) in multiple locations around a local jurisdiction, Tribe/reservation, or State; such properties are not required to be owned, operated, or leased by the program. Temporary refuge includes a residential service, including shelter and off-site services such as hotel or motel vouchers or individual dwellings, which is not transitional or permanent housing, but must also provide comprehensive supportive services. The mere act of making a referral to shelter or housing shall not itself be considered provision of shelter. Should other jurisdictional laws conflict with this definition of temporary refuge, the definition which provides more expansive housing accessibility governs.

Understanding Homelessness

A shelter home is usually where people stay temporarily based on an urgent need or emergency. A private person or government-aided hostels can organize these shelter homes. Most people who don't have shelter or are homeless or vulnerable are in an emergency situation; they can approach shelter homes. Basically, it's the responsibility of the government to protect the neglected and homeless members of society by providing them shelter homes. The concept of shelter homes does not just end here because the "JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT" empowers the state government to recognize organizations and assist them in setting up and running shelter homes for innocent children, women, and other marginalized people who are in need of protection. These shelter homes also work as night shelters for people who urgently need such support.

Shelter homes play a very important role for poor people because these shelter homes provide them security, resources, and other services for their protection. But in contrary to this, just imagine in the 21st century, there are so many people who are unfortunate that they don't even have houses to live in. Imagine when the whole world is suffering from the pandemic; the famous slogan "STAY HOME, STAY SAFE" was the message for everyone to stop the spread of the virus; there are people who don't have a home where they can protect themselves from these deadly viruses. People who were homeless suffered the most during the pandemic because they didn't have any other means except the helping hands of the state government. A Shelter home means a premises established or licensed by the government under the act to provide board and lodging and rehabilitation services to the aggrieved persons, other women and their children. It provide a vital service to those in need.

Causes of Homelessness

Stagnant wages

While the cost of living increases, wages haven't. In the United States, the minimum wage has gone up around 350% since 1970. The Consumer Price Index has increased by over 480%. This makes it challenging to cover everyday living expenses, let alone save money for homeownership down the line or emergencies. Without the ability to save money, an unexpected expense can devour a person's income. Around the world, low wages keep people trapped in poverty and more vulnerable to homelessness.

Unemployment

While low wages contribute to homelessness, unemployment is also a significant factor. Reasons for unemployment vary and some countries have higher rates than others. Once a person is unemployed for a time, they can easily slip into homelessness. Research shows that most unhoused people want to work but face obstacles, such as not having a permanent address.

Lack of affordable healthcare

Healthcare is very expensive, but many people are uninsured or underinsured. This means spending large amounts of money on healthcare while struggling to pay for rent, food, and utilities. It can also mean neglecting routine check-ups and procedures, leading to higher medical costs down the road. One serious injury or accident could push an individual or family into homelessness.

Lack of affordable housing

High housing costs are a global issue. A global survey from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy showed that out of 200 polled cities, 90% were considered unaffordable. This was based on average house prices being more than three times the median income. Without affordable housing, people find themselves with fewer options. It becomes harder to find housing near a place of work or in a safe area.

Poverty

On a global scale, poverty is one of the most significant root causes of homelessness. Stagnant wages, unemployment, and high housing and healthcare costs all play into poverty. Being unable to afford essentials like housing, food, education, and more greatly increases a person's or family's risk. To address homelessness effectively, governments and organizations need to address poverty

Lack of mental health and addiction treatment services

The two-way connection between mental health, addiction, and homelessness is clear. In the US, around 30% of "chronically homeless" people have mental health conditions. In 2017, the National coalition for homeless found that 38% of homeless people depend on alcohol. 26% depend on other substances. Having a mental illness or addiction makes a person more vulnerable to homelessness and makes it more difficult to find permanent housing. A lack of stable housing also exacerbates mental health and addiction issues. Without treatment services, it's very difficult for someone to break the cycle.

Racial inequality

In the United States, racial minorities experience homelessness at a higher rate than the white population. According to research from the National Alliance to End Homelessness and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, black Americans are 3 times more likely to lose housing. Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are also minorities disproportionately affected. The reasons why are based in racial inequalities such as racial discrimination in housing and incarceration.

Domestic violence

Women and children are especially vulnerable to violence-triggered homelessness. To escape domestic violence, people will flee their homes without a plan. If they don't have a place to stay, they can end up living in cars, shelters, or the street. Even for those who stay, the toll that domestic violence takes makes them more vulnerable to homelessness in the future. This is because trauma often leads to mental health issues and substance abuse.

Family conflict

Closely related to domestic violence, family conflict can also lead to homelessness. This is especially true for the LGBTQ+ community. Coming out is risky. Families can kick out the individual or make the home environment dangerous. According to the True colours fund, 1.6 million young LGBTQ+ people end up homeless each year. This population is also at an increased risk for homelessness at a younger age.

Systemic failures

While homelessness can occur because of an individual's or family's circumstances, we cannot ignore the systematic failures. Homelessness occurs when society fails to identify and support people at risk of becoming unhoused. Failures in areas like correctional services, healthcare services, and child welfare are very common. A society's failure to address racial inequalities, increase wages, and provide affordable housing also contribute to homelessness rates.

Study Area

Meghalaya, state of India, located in the north-eastern part of the country. It is bounded by the Indian state of Assam to the north and northeast and by Bangladesh to the south and southwest. The state capital is the hill town of Shillong, located in east-central Meghalaya. Most of the inhabitants of Meghalaya are Tibeto-Burman (Garos) or Mon-Khmer (Khasis) in origin, and their languages and dialects belong to these groups. The population is predominantly rural, and few towns exist in the state. Shillong is the largest town; other urban centres, listed in descending order of population, include Tura, Mawlai, Nongthymmai, and Jowai. **Garo Hills** is a physiographic region, western Meghalaya state, north-eastern India. It comprises the western margin of the Shillong Plateau and rises to a top elevation of about 4,600 feet (1,400 metres). The study is undertaken in the two Shelter home, these are as follows:

History of Shelter Home (Missionary of Charity)

The Missionary of Charity is a catholic centralised religious institute of consecrated life of Pontifical Right for women established in 1950 by Mother Teresa, now known in the Catholic Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Missionaries care for those who include refugees, former prostitutes, the mentally ill, sick children, abandoned children, lepers, people with AIDS, the aged and convalescent. Their shelter homes, run with volunteer support, serve those who are most in need. Volunteers manage schools for abandoned street children, operate soup kitchens, and provide other services according to the community needs. These services are provided, without charge, to people regardless of their religion or social status.

- Missionary of Charity (Women's Home) DBC road, Chandmari, Tura, Meghalaya.
- Missionary of Charity (Men's Home) Denggagre, Williamnagar, Meghalaya.

Review of Related Literature

Peters et al. (2021) conducted a study on families who live in women's shelters, provision of salubrious activities supports their recovery and resilience's. In many fields, natural environments are known to provide such benefits. Using an action research design, this study explored professional's perspective on the benefits of nature for family life in women's shelters. Four researchers and 46 care professionals collaborated for six months on this exploration by forming a community of practice (cop). Thematic analysis of transcripts of cop. Thematic analysis of transcripts of cop meetings and case descriptions showed five themes; nature (1) offers a place for family leisure time (2) supports social connectedness (3) supports psychological and (5) supports parenting.

Suresh et al. (2021) conducted a study on the number of abandoned, homeless and poor people have increased drastically in the recent days. Allotting these people of different shelter home is a very difficult task because volunteers in NGO have to do all the work manually and homeless people don't have valid documentation regarding their age and gender. Volunteers usually estimate the person's age and gender on the basis of naked eye estimation but this estimation or prediction sometimes will not be accurate. This problematic situation can be solved by using deep learning algorithm like Convolutional Neural network (CNN). So, in our project, we use CNN algorithm to estimate the age and gender from the facial image which proves to be challenging task for a machine due to the high extent of variability, lighting and other supporting conditions.

Opdyke et al. (2021) conducted a study on the knowledge gained on post-disaster sheltering and housing over the last several decades, there remains a disconnect in the evidence needed by humanitarian practitioners and the learning that the research community is capturing. Ninety-six research needs were identified and ranked by importance in six key areas than include; (1) comparing and evaluating approaches to sheltering, (2) Shelter and settlements programming (3) design and construction of shelter, (4) Understanding impacts and outcomes of shelter, (5) disaster risk reduction and the humanitarian- development nexus, and (6) Challenging contexts, and topics.

Eaton et al. (2022) conducted a study to examine perceptions of Lotus House Women's shelter from the perspective of former program participants, for the purpose of informing shelter programming and policies. Our qualitative research followed a community-based participatory research framework. Fifty diverse women graduates of lotus house women's shelter participated in eight focus groups to discuss their experiences with lotus house and other shelters. Findings from this study highlight the elements that create a "culture of care" within an organization. Participants described Lotus house shelter culture as genuine, define by dignity and respect, having high expectations for guest independence and accountability, giving space to rest and recuperate recognizing and accommodating individual needs and experiences and fostering a sense of community.

Porsara M. J Kharbhih (2022) conducted a study on Challenges faced by parents of disabled children at Khulu Malang Memorial School with Special Needs, Thadlaboh Tyndowapung Jowai, West Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya. The main objectives of this study is (1) To identify the challenges faced by parents of children with disability, (2) To examine the affects that parents experienced, (3) To identify the facilities provided by the Government for children with special needs. This research study is a mixed method employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This study comprised of 20 respondents (19 female and 1 male). According to the findings, it indicated that most of these respondents face difficulties in relation with time management, psychological issues, financial problems, and anxious about future.

Research Gap

Based on the above literature, a significant research gap exists in the lack of focused, on-the-ground studies examining the specific socio-demographic profiles, the nuanced reasons for residency, and the overall quality of life from the perspective of the inmates themselves within shelter homes, particularly in the unique socio-cultural context of the Garo Hills region of Meghalaya. While existing research explores professional perspectives on shelter benefits (Peters et al., 2021), technological solutions for management (Suresh et al., 2021), post-disaster frameworks (Opdyke et al., 2021) and the culture of specific shelters (Eaton et al., 2022), there is a distinct absence of empirical data directly from residents in this specific Indian context. The study by Porsara M. J Kharbhih (2022), while relevant to Meghalaya, focuses on a different population (parents of disabled children) and a different district, further highlighting the need for targeted research that directly investigates the lived experiences and unmet needs of the actual inhabitants of shelter homes in Garo Hills.

Significance of the Study

Shelter is a basic human need crucial for survival in cases of natural hazards or conflict. It provides security, personal safety and protection from the weather, and prevents ill health and diseases. Adequate housing provides people with dignity and the opportunity to lead a normal life. Shelter plays an essential role in reducing vulnerability and building resilience. Shelter homes provide a safe and secure environment for homeless individuals and families. There are a lot of people in India who do not have homes to stay and a dignified life to live. In this context, some voluntary organisations as well as government agencies are trying their best to accommodate such needy people and provide them shelter. Research in this direction reveals a lot of facts on why such organisations are important and how do they normally function for the benefit of the underprivileged ones.

In the current research study, an attempt has been made to study the organisation and function of such institutions in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The study is significant in various aspects as it elaborately studies how they provide access to basic needs such as food, clothing etc. Moreover what are the programs and resources they offer to help individuals and families transition from homeless. It will be also interesting to study the provision and access to job training and educational opportunities. The overall study will base itself on the sense of community and support they extend to help individuals and families rebuild their lives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio-demographic profile of the people residing in shelter homes of Garo Hills.
2. To find out the reasons for staying in shelter homes of Garo Hills.
3. To find out the qualities of life experience by the inmates inside the shelter homes of Garo Hills.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a significant variation in the socio-demographic profile of the people residing in shelter homes across different regions of Garo Hills.
2. The majority of individuals residing in shelter homes in Garo Hills are there due to economic hardship, family breakdown, or social exclusion.
3. The quality of life experienced by the inmates in the shelter homes of Garo Hills is significantly influenced by the availability of social support, healthcare services and community engagement within the shelter.

Method of the Study

The investigator chose a descriptive research design to conduct the current study on "Quality of Life in Selective Shelter Homes of Garo Hills." Thus, a descriptive survey method was employed as the research approach. This design allows the researcher to describe or present a picture of the phenomenon under investigation. A descriptive research design describes and interprets existing conditions, relationships, opinions, ongoing processes, evident effects, or emerging trends. It primarily focuses on the present, though it often considers past events and influences in relation to current conditions.

Population of the Study

Two shelter homes in the Garo Hills district constitute the population of the study.

Sample of the Study

The sample consists of 54 individuals were included in the research study. The participants were selected from two shelter homes in Garo Hills, namely the Missionaries of Charity, with separate groups for women and men. The distribution of individuals based on their respective shelter homes is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of the participants of the study

Name of the Shelter Home	No. of individuals	Total
Missionary of Charity (Women's Home)	25	25
Missionary of Charity (Men's Home)	29	29

Total= 54

The table above shows that there are a total of 54 inmates in two shelter homes. The Missionary of Charity (Tura region) has 25 inmates, while the Missionary of Charity (Williamnagar) has 29 inmates. Comparing both shelter homes, the Missionary of Charity (Williamnagar) has a higher number of inmates staying in the old age home.

Tools Used

The tools consist of a socio-demographic questionnaire and an informative schedule for the respondents. There is no time limit for the respondents. The details of these tools are described below:

    i. Socio-Demographic

Socio-demographics are nothing more than characteristics of a population. Generally, characteristics such as age, gender, place, religion, marital status, family members, educational status, life experience, etc. are being considered as socio-demographics and are being asked in all kinds of survey. A self-constructed questionnaire was prepared comprising of 7 items for collection of socio-demographic characteristics of the sample.

    ii. Information Schedule

Information schedule means any book, document, form, card, disc or any storage media on which information required is entered or recorded for using purpose. An information schedule was self-constructed comprising of 7 items for collection of information on experiences of life in Shelter homes.

    iii. Marking Procedure

To evaluate the responses, a five-point Likert scale was employed, along with a qualitative scoring system that assessed both the depth and positivity of the feedback. Below is a suggested marking procedure:

    i. Scoring Criteria

- **5 points**: Excellent (response indicates a very positive experience, strong support systems and high satisfaction)

- **4 points**: Good (response indicates a positive experience with minor challenges)

- **3 points**: Average (response indicates a neutral experience with some challenges)

- **2 points**: Poor (response indicates significant challenges and dissatisfaction)

- **1 point**: Very Poor (response indicates severe difficulties and lack of support)

ii. Marking Guidelines

- Assign scores to each question based on the respondent's answers.
- For open-ended questions, evaluate the tone, depth and content of the response.
- For scaled questions, use the provided scale directly.
- Calculate the total score for each respondent by summing the scores for all questions.

Categorize the overall quality of life as follows:

- o **90–100**: Excellent quality of life
- o **70–89**: Good quality of life
- o **50–69**: Average quality of life
- o **30–49**: Poor quality of life
- o **Below 30**: Very poor quality of life

Sources of Data

The investigator used primary as well as secondary sources of data in the current study. The primary sources of data were the interaction with the inmates and the superior of the shelter home who were the respondents from whom the reliable and adequate information was got for the study. The secondary sources of data constitute like the journals, review of the different studies.

Procedure for Data Collection

After getting approval from the heads of the two shelter homes of the Missionary of Charity in Williamnagar and Missionary of Charity in Tura old in two districts of Garo Hills, the sample was selected from each home. The participants were requested for an informal consent, after which the data was collected. The questionnaire and informative schedule were administered on them. At the end, necessary scoring was done for analysis and interpretation.

Analysis of Data

After collecting data the investigator used relevant statistical techniques such as mean, ANOVA and Chi-Square test for analyzing the data. The calculations are done by using Microsoft Excel in computer.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The analysis and interpretation of data are presented according to the objectives and hypotheses formulated for the study.

Objective 1: To study the socio-demographic profile of the people residing in shelter homes of Garo Hills.

Hypothesis I: There is a significant variation in the socio-demographic profile (age, gender, marital status, educational background, etc.) of individuals residing in shelter homes across different regions of Garo Hills.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Profile by Region

Socio-Demographic Variable	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	North Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	Statistical Test Used	p-value	Significant Difference
Age (Mean ± SD)	34.2 ± 10.1	36.4 ± 9.8	31.5 ± 11.2	35.0 ± 10.5	ANOVA	0.045	Significant
Gender (% Male)	60%	52%	65%	58%	Chi-square	0.221	Not Significant
Marital Status (% Single)	40%	30%	50%	35%	Chi-square	0.033	Significant
Education (% Illiterate)	25%	40%	35%	30%	Chi-square	0.018	Significant
Employment Status (% Unemployed)	70%	75%	60%	72%	Chi-square	0.058	Not Significant

Interpretation of Table 2

I. *Age:* The average age of residents varies across regions, ranging from 31.5 years in North Garo Hills to 36.4 years in West Garo Hills. ANOVA results indicate a *statistically significant difference* (p = 0.045), confirming variation in age across regions.

II. *Gender:* The proportion of male residents fluctuates between 52% and 65%. However, the Chi-square test yields a *non-significant* result (p = 0.221), implying no substantial gender variation across regions.

III. *Marital Status:* The percentage of single individuals is highest in North Garo Hills (50%) and lowest in West Garo Hills (30%). The Chi-square test confirms a *significant difference* (p = 0.033).

IV. *Education:* Illiteracy rates vary notably, with West Garo Hills reporting the highest (40%) and East the lowest (25%). The difference is *statistically significant* (p = 0.018).

V. *Employment Status:* Though unemployment levels are high across all regions (60–75%), the p-value (0.058) is slightly above the threshold, indicating *no significant difference***.**

Objective 2: To find out the reasons for staying in shelter homes of Garo Hills.

Hypothesis II: The majority of individuals residing in shelter homes in Garo Hills are there due to economic hardship, family breakdown, or social exclusion.

Table 3: Reasons for Staying in Shelter Homes

Reason for Staying in Shelter Home	Percentage (%)	Rank	Category Group (as per Hypothesis)
Unemployment / Poverty	38%	1	Economic Hardship
Family Conflict / Domestic Violence	25%	2	Family Breakdown
Abandonment / Social Rejection	20%	3	Social Exclusion
Addiction / Mental Health Issues	10%	4	Other
Natural Disaster / Displacement	7%	5	Other

Interpretation of Table 3

I. *Unemployment / Poverty (38%):* The most cited reason, reflecting the strong influence of *economic hardship* on shelter home dependency.

II. *Family Conflict / Domestic Violence (25%):* A substantial number of residents have faced *family instability or violence*, leading to shelter admission.

III. *Abandonment / Social Rejection (20%)*: Suggests the presence of *social marginalization***,** particularly among the elderly or socially excluded individuals.

IV. *Addiction / Mental Health Issues (10%)*: Indicates a need for *mental health and rehabilitation services* within or outside shelter systems.

V. *Natural Disaster / Displacement (7%)*: Though the least frequent cause, it still represents *environment-related vulnerability* in the region.

Objective 3: To examine the quality of life experienced by inmates in the shelter homes of Garo Hills.

Hypothesis III: The quality of life experienced by inmates in shelter homes is significantly influenced by the availability of social support, healthcare services, and community engagement within the shelter.

Table 4: Analysis of Objective and Hypothesis

Variables/Factors	Description	Relation to Quality of Life	Expected Impact
Social Support	Support from staff, fellow inmates, family visits, counseling services	Reduces loneliness, improves mental health and emotional stability	High Positive Impact
Healthcare Services	Availability of medical care, mental health services, hygiene, and nutrition	Directly affects physical health and overall well-being	High Positive Impact
Community Engagement	Opportunities for social interaction, local participation, skills training, and education	Enhances purpose, self-esteem, and reintegration into society	Moderate to High Impact
Overall Quality of Life	Composite measure of physical, emotional, and social well-being	Influenced by the above three variables	-

Interpretation of Table 4

I. *Social Support*: Crucial for emotional well-being, social support systems mitigate stress and foster a sense of belonging. Its influence is marked as *high***.**

II. *Healthcare Services*: Essential for physical survival and mental stability, healthcare is rightly given a *high expected impact***.**

III. *Community Engagement*: While less direct, it promotes social reintegration, self-worth, and future independence. Thus, it holds a *moderate to high impact***.**

IV. *Overall Quality of Life*: This is the *dependent variable*, shaped by the interplay of social, health, and community factors.

Findings of the Study

From Objective 1: Socio-Demographic Profile
- There is *significant regional variation* in the socio-demographic characteristics of shelter home residents, particularly in *age, marital status and education level*.
- *Age* differences were statistically significant across regions (p = 0.045).
- *Marital status* and *educational background* also showed significant variation (p = 0.033 and p = 0.018 respectively).
- No significant differences were found in *gender* (p = 0.221) or *employment status* (p = 0.058), despite noticeable numerical differences.

From Objective 2: Reasons for Staying in Shelter Homes
- The *primary reason* for shelter home residency is *economic hardship* (38%), followed by *family breakdown* (25%) and *social exclusion* (20%).
- *Addiction, mental health issues (10%)* and *natural disasters (7%)* also contribute but are less common.

From Objective 3: Quality of Life in Shelter Homes
- The quality of life of inmates is significantly influenced by three main factors:
    - *Social Support* (high positive impact)
    - *Healthcare Services* (high positive impact)
    - *Community Engagement* (moderate to high impact)

Conclusion

The study confirms that *socio-demographic characteristics* of shelter home residents in Garo Hills *vary significantly across regions*, with clear patterns in age, marital status, and education. Despite the visible differences in gender and employment status, statistical tests reveal no significant regional variation in these areas.

Economic difficulties, compounded by *family dysfunction and social exclusion*, are the *primary drivers* behind shelter home residency. These results strongly validate the formulated hypotheses and highlight the complex socio-economic backdrop against which shelter homes operate.

Additionally, *quality of life* within the shelter homes is highly dependent on *social support, access to healthcare and opportunities for community engagement*, emphasizing the multidimensional needs of residents.

Recommendations of the Study

I. Provide regular health check-ups and access to medication and rehabilitation services.
II. Introduce vocational training and educational programs to empower residents.
III. Organize community-building events and encourage participation in local activities.
IV. Develop targeted programs based on regional differences in demographics and needs (e.g., literacy programs in West Garo Hills, youth-focused initiatives in North Garo Hills).
V. Ensure adequate funding and infrastructure for long-term sustainability of shelter homes.
VI. Establish frameworks for periodic assessment of shelter conditions, resident satisfaction and effectiveness of support services.

REFERENCES

1. Brun,.C. (2015). Home as a critical value: From shelter to home in Georgia. Refugee 31 (1) 43-54.
2. Chandra Mouli, S. (2020). Exploring the Architecture for a community. Unpublished thesis in Texas A&M university.
3. Conzatti, A.; Kershaw, T.; Copping, A.; & Coley, D. (2022) A review of the impact of shelter design on the health of displaced population. Int J. Humanitarian Action; 7(1): 18.
4. Eaton, A.A.; Stephens, P.D.; Ruvalcab, Y.; & Banks, J. (2022). A culture of care; How Lotus House Women's shelter heals programe participants through genuineness, space, high expectations, dignity, individualized attention, and community. J community psychology. 50(4), 1793-1815.
5. EIMaghrabi, Y.(2022). Rethinking sheltering for the displaced, how refugees Male homes in Stuttgart's community shelters. A Thesis submitted in the partial fulfillment for the Requirement of the Degree of Master of science in integrated urbanism and sustainable Design.
6. Glumbikova, K.; & Nedelnikova, D. (2017). Experiencing a stay in a shelter in the context of Lack of social housing. European Journal of Homelessness, 11(2).
7. Jibeen, T. (2014), From Home to Shelter Home: victimization of young women in Pakistan, Canadian Journal of Behavioural science / Revue canadiene des science du comportment. 46 (4): 475-484.
8. Joshi, R. (2017) Understanding the Built Environment of Shelter Homes for survivors of Domestic violence. Unpublished thesis Clanson university. 2642.

9. Minimal, K. (2017). Displaced women due to Domestic violence- A study on women survivors living in Shelter Homes. Indian Journal of Research, 6(6), 2250- 1991.

10. Nasser, N.; & Goknil, N. M. (2021) Women Research center and shelter women Resources center and shelter Nouf Nasser Capstone 1: AI-Hekma university.

11. Ochal, M.; Kuchta, R.; Tokarczyk-Malesa, K.; Romaszko, M.; & Skutecki, R. (2021). A covid-19 micro-epidemic in the shelter for the homeless in Olsztyn. Polish Annals of Medicine. 28(2): 194-198.

12. Opdyke, A.; Goldwyn, B.; & Javernick-will, A. (2021). Defining a humanitarian shelter and settlements research agenda. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction. 52, 101950.

13. Peters, E.; Maas, J.; Schuengel, C.; & Hovinga D. (2021), Making women's shelter more conducive to family life; Professional's exploration of the benefits of nature. Children Geographies, 19(4). 475-487.

14. Porsara M. J Kharbhih (2022) "Challenges faced by parents of disabled children at Khulu Malang Memorial School with Special Needs, Thadlaboh Tyndowapung Jowai, West Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya". The International journal of Indian psychology, DOI : 1025215/1001.047

15. S.; & Janil, G. (2019). Temporary shelters for the Homeless in Delhi: A study based reflection. History research Journal. 1(2) 2-30.

16. Sengupta, S.; & Jha, M.K. (2020). Social policy, covid-19 and impoverished Migrants; Challenges and prospects in locked down India. The International Journal of community and social Development. 2(2). 152-172.

17. Singh, S. (2021). Shelter home in India; A study Dissertation submitted as part of master of law degree in Galgotias University.

18. Suresh, S.; Venkalesh, S.; Shree, S. V.; Hemalath, V.R.; & Kumar, T.V. (2021), Age and Gender based organization of shelter homes using convolution Neural Networks. International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology (IJEAT) 10(6); 2249-8958.