The homeless and marginalized in any society are testimony of the fact that cities are engines of development for rich and contrary to the welfare of poor and needy. Infrastructural development of the cities has become so overwhelming to us that we often overlook the basic problems and development of marginalized people being excluded from it. In the buzzing streets of these cities remain those who are shelter-less, voiceless and deprived of many luxuries that a city is suppose provide to its inhabitants. The number of homeless in the urban area is rapidly growing in recent times with various socio-economic issues. Official definition accepted by the Census of India, says that; “Homeless are those who do not live in buildings or census houses but live in the open on roadside, pavements, in Hume Pipes, under fly-overs and staircases or in the open in places of worship, mandaps, railway platforms, etc. are treated as Houseless households”.

Estimates suggest that there are 1.77 million homeless people in India (Hindustan Times report in September, 2017). Jharkhand has a total 23,391 homeless populations as per Census 2011. Food, clothing and shelters are basic human needs. However, there are many who barely manage to acquire the first two necessities but the third remains beyond their reach, a large section of the population therefore lives and sleeps in open and is characterized as ‘homeless’. These citizens can be recognized as the most vulnerable socio – economic group.

Multiple vulnerabilities, such as social stigma, lack of information among the general population, sexual harassment of women and young girls, high mobility and different issues related to homelessness, makes it even more challenging to engage with.

To overcome the challenges and issues related to urban homeless population, Ekjut is working with State Government Departments, Civil Societies, Research/Academic Institutions or individuals to ensure their engagement to work on issues of homelessness, destitution and people’s right to city, since 2014. The motive is to set up a State Resource Centre for Urban Homeless (a free and direct access consortium for the multi stakeholders to facilitate and address issues in all urban areas of Jharkhand) by sharing, gathering, collating and disseminating information on homelessness and related themes. While the resource centre would facilitate and address issues in all the urban areas of Jharkhand, two largest cities namely Ranchi and Dhanbad have been chosen for special focus in the initiative to demonstrate access to shelter homes and the participation of urban poor in various relevant government programmes.
Areas of Operation under the project –

1. Homelessness in cities of Jharkhand (supporting in conducting thematic researches and rapid assessments, city and homeless spot mapping & conducting homeless headcounts)

2. Shelters, management and reform

3. Access to social security/protection systems

4. Understanding child safeguarding issues (specifically related to homeless or street children) & fostering collaborations with state government departments and civil society agencies.

Ekjut initiatives under the homeless work –

1: Research studies on understanding homelessness

2: Shelter home assessment

3: Conducting orientation and training programmes with government and civil society on homelessness, shelters and related themes

4: Night outreach and rescue

5: Convergence with government schemes and entitlements