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Rights union flays Mayor's rehab drive

June 8th, 2010 [DC Correspondent](#) var addthis_pub = "deccanchronicle"; var addthis_options = "favorites, digg, delicious, myspace, google, facebook, reddit, live, yahoobkm, more"; .stabletd img{ float:left; }

June 7: The Chennai corporation's massive drive to "cleanse" the city of beggars has been slammed by a fact finding team led by Prof A. Marx, from the People's Union for Human Rights (PUHR). The clean-up or Singara Chennai drive has been launched across all 10 zones of the corporation and over 30 beggars have even been picked up.

The PUHR, however, feels that the corporation's effort is questionable and ambiguous much like the earlier drive against mentally ill persons. "We noticed during the last 'health drive,' which was supposed to help mentally ill persons, people who were merely sleeping or loitering on the streets were picked up randomly by the health inspectors. Even those who just looked dirty or a little disoriented were forcibly detained without any proof of them being mentally unstable. No psychiatrists or police were present to verify the same and only the corporation's employees executed the entire programme," said members of the team.

The team also said that the corporation's officials had committed several violations of the Indian Mental Health Act of 1987 that included the absence of a magistrate's order for the 113 people who were detained at a mental hospital. "Many of these people are sane and healthy but they have been brought to the hospital by force," said Prof Marx.

According to the corporation's authorities, after the drive, a total of 121 mentally ill persons were sent to the Kilpauk IMH and 31 people were sent to old-age homes.