

Assesment of living condition of street children

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ABSTRACT

Street children are present all around us and yet little is known about their numbers or the conditions in which they live in our cities. Street children have been described as children of the street, children who are part of a street family. Children found in the street are identified kept in institutionalized care and main streamed. Problem faced by street children are overwhelming. In addition to living and working in environments that are generally harmful to their wellbeing. Street children faced problems such as hunger, lack of adequate shelter, clothes and other basic needs, as well as lack of (or limited) education opportunities, health care and other social services. Exploratory research design were adopted in present study and the sample size for the present study were 80 street children from Lucknow city. Descriptive sampling technique were used. The sample was collected from different areas in Lucknow city. The sample size for the present study was 80. Self-constructed interview schedule. 66.7 per cent boy's and 74.3 percent girls were involved in begging. 77.8 per cent boys and 74.3 per cent girls were involved in rag pickers. 71.1 per cent boys and 54.3 per cent girls were involved in street vending.

Key Words : Street children, Living condition

INTRODUCTION

The problem of children living on the street is a global phenomenon. It has created countless problems to millions of children in all parts of the world (UNICEF, 2007). They live a transitory life style and lack basic necessities like food, health care, and a safe place to stay. In the world, street children exist on the margins of society, living in inhumane conditions, suffering from hunger, harassment and physical abuse, deprived of basic services such as education and health care (Vanessa, 2007). The society also threatens them as outsiders rather than as children to be nurtured and protected. Thus, they are both spatially and socially oppressed, through multiple forms of social control, marginalization, and powerlessness. As a result everyday life for a street child can be like living in an enemy territory (Hutchison, 2010). Most importantly they suffer from physical, sexual and psychological abuses and become victims of child trafficking for the purpose of labor and sexual exploitation. Their vulnerability to this wide range of problems and hazards represents a major feature of their everyday life. This is also a determining factor in developing their abilities to be able to cope with street life (UNICEF, 2007). Although the phenomenon of street children is a global one, Latin American, Asian, and African countries are specially affected by the problem

more than any other part of the world. A report issued by the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT, 2002), a research organization in the Netherlands, states that out of the estimated 100 million children living and working on the streets of the cities of the world, the majority are in developing countries: 40 million in Latin America, 25-30 million in Asia, and 10 million in Africa (FSCE, 2003).

Review literature :

Scivoletto *et al.* (2011) conducted the study on street children facing abuses in Russia, Colombia, Bulgaria, India, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, showed that living on the street causes some normally treatable diseases (e.g. malnutrition, severe weight loss, pneumonia, malaria, nausea) and some problems due to cold air such as sore throat, headache and nasal irritation, skin diseases such as lice and Scabies, and sores around the mouth. Long-standing effects of diseases in street children Caused damage in the central nervous system, heart, liver, kidney and bone marrow, and Consequently these hazards caused a higher risk of mortality among them.

Khalafalla Ahmed *et al.* (2011) conducted the study on street children studied the factors that affect homelessness in Khartoum State on 300 street children. It is found that most of the street children were born in this State but the origins of the majority of them are the western and southern Sudan. Factor analysis was used and showed that there are seven factors which could be labeled city life, risky behavior, economic reasons, natural and environmental, family disruption, observation, and family abuse. The study recommended to locate perspective programs in areas where most street children families live in at present; intervening at home to prevent children from coming to streets; reduce school fees; create opportunities to increase income of vulnerable families specially those affected by war and drought; build trust with street children to convince them return home; provide safe night shelters for street children to protect them; help addicted children to overcome their addiction; reform and improve legislations and laws to protect children.

Pehlivanly and Ezgi (2008), conducted the study on street children that street children can be explained in the context of social exclusion. On 15 street children he was employing qualitative methods, main aim of this study is to understand the reasons for children to start working on street, focuses on the findings from the life histories of children who work/live on streets of Ankara, in which two types of information, are analyzed in the context of Social Exclusion.

METHODOLOGY

In this exploratory research, the following objective were framed-

- To identify the living condition of street children.

Sampling :

- In this exploratory study, the researcher collected 80 samples by adopting simple random sampling.

Hypothesis :

- There exist no significant difference between selected independent variable and living condition of street children.

Instruments used :

The researcher used self - made interview schedule for data collection for this study. The

interview schedule comprises 2 sections. The first section deals with the general information-name, age, gender, staying with, numbers of family members, hours spend on street. Time period stay on street, educational status. Second section deals with specific information-living condition of street children, types of activities, push or pull factors, abuses faced by street children.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Living condition of the respondent (N=80) :

Results in showed that as $p < 0.005$ which meant that no significant difference was found between respondent across different age in terms of the living condition. Thus null hypothesis was accepted (Table 1).

Table 1 : t-value between living condition of street children and independent variable age						
Sr. No.	Age	Mean	Std.	t	Sig	Conclusion
1.	8-10	14.9375	1.41279	.012	.912	N.S.
2.	10-12	15.5833	1.38123			

Results in showed that as $p < 0.005$ which meant that no significant difference was found between respondents across gender in terms of their living condition. Thus null hypothesis was accepted (Table 2).

Table 2 : t-value between dependent variable living condition of street children and independent variable Gender						
Sr. No.	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	Sig.	Conclusion
1.	Boy	19.33	2.33	8.14	.006	N.S.
2.	Girl	18.71	1.58			

Conclusion :

Poverty is the main cause for Street child labour. These children were found to be working for longer hours with lower earnings. The phenomenon is strongly associated with economic and social factors. The majority of these children have come to the street because of poverty and conflict with their guardians. Death of parents, family breakdown, peer pressure, large family size and lack of parenting skills were also another significant factors contributing to street life as found in this study. The results of this study also indicates that, majority of children were exposed to street life because of living condition.

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