



A Study on Family Status of Selected Street Children

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Abstract

Many children are escaped from the home because of poor family background. Then the main reason for the children to run away from home is the existing socio Psychological environment within the family. Street children are the products of broken Families are those in which there are continuous conflicts between the husband and wife. The sample comprised 100 street children (75 boy's and 25 girls) in the age group of 10 to 15 years. The researcher chosen the sample was selected through random sampling from the commercial zones, railway platforms, bus stands and Rein Basera established by state government for destitute children of Patna, Capital of Bihar. An interview schedule was developed by the investigator to collect information regarding family status of the street children. Percentage analysis was used in this study.

Keywords: Children, Street children, Family status, Presents of parents and Kinds of punishment.

Introduction

While family occupies a central place in the social organization, the most valuable asset in the family is the child. Child care has been the prime responsibility of the family. However in recent times the nature and functions of family have undergone radical changes Due to the influence of various external forces operating from time to time. As a result, several disturbing trends are noticed in the contemporary family system in the form of Material dissolutions, violent behaviour among the family members, parental abuse, Maltreatment and exploitation of the children. Placed under critical and difficult Circumstances, these children venture on to the streets of the cities in search of their survival.

The main reason for the children to run away from home is the existing socio Psychological environment within the family. Street children are the products of broken Families are those in which there are continuous conflicts between the husband and wife. In Such situations children may blame themselves for the parents discard or reach a state Confusion and abject terror, resulting in unhappy child hood. Other factors are desertion by either one of the parents and the inability of the parents to cater to the needs of all the children especially in the large families and low socio-economic groups. In such situations, parental frustration and the interplay of mental, physical, environmental forces often result in Family instability and violence against defenceless children who get victimized at the hands of their parents¹.

When children are abused. Abandoned and maltreated they venture on the street. After interviewing 1000 street children in Mumbai, Apteker² (1994) claimed that the major reasons for being street children was family violence.

A majority of the children who leave their homes face a lot of problems initially because they are entering into a new world. Their most acute problems are homelessness. Struggle for survival and socio cultural vacuum. The condition of children having no home, No parents and no place to sleep are most pathetic. No society can offered to ignore the street children, as they are society's future citizens. They are to be integrated with the mainstream of social development by providing them the congenial family environment. As the children are the societies future children, every society cannot neglect the children and they will provide all the facilities for the future development of the children. So the government and non government organisations are doing their possible help for developing the street children.

The government should take steps to make the parents of the children be aware of the responsibilities for carring and developing their children. Awareness programmes should be provided to this sort of parents by government for preventing these problems of the children. Hence there is an urgent need to analyze the reasons for their being on the streets and the details of their family environment of selected street children.

Statement of the Study: The investigator has selected entitle for investigation as "A Study on Family Status of Selected Street Children".

Need and Importance of the Study: In India's many children's are not interested for school learning life. Which problems they are faced everyday life in their society. So the study helps for some other related children's characters modified and interested to school learning. The main concept is children's are affecting in our learning style.

Methodology

The sample comprised 100 street children (75 boy's and 25 girls) in the age group of 10 to 15 years. The sample was selected through random sampling from the commercial zones, railway platforms, bus stands and Rein Basera established by state government for destitute children of Patna, Capital of Bihar. An interview schedule was developed by the investigator to collect information regarding family environment of the street children. The data collected for assessing the family environment of the street children was consolidated and presented in percentage.

Results and Discussion

Employment status of parents and monthly household income: The details of parent's employment and monthly household income are shown in Table-1.

Seventy six per cent of the fathers were employed. Seven per cent were employed, 13 per cent were dead and where about of four per cent of the fathers were not known. In the case of mothers only 22 per cent were employed, 64 percent were unemployed, 9 percent were dead and were about of 5 percent of mothers were not known. Housing and Urban Development Corporation (1994) demarcates that families with less than rupees 2460 per month belong to low income group. Thus 87 percent were below poverty and only 13 percent were in the income range of above Rs. 2460. None of the parents had any other source of income. Probably low income which has far reaching negative influences in the family is a factor that would have lead to neglect of children and their needs, in addition to forcing them to eke out a living forfeiting all the joys and interests of childhood. Thus the street children are a product of poverty and complete illiteracy of their parents, who cannot bargain for a better deal.

The details of the presence of the fathers and mothers in the family are shown in Table-2.

Table-1
Employment Status of Parents and Monthly Household Income

Category	Employment status	Percentage						
		Boys	Girls	N	Family income (rupees per month)	Boys N=75	Girls N=25	Total N=100
Father's	Employed	58	18	76	>1000	49	10	59
	Un Employed	5	2	7	1001-2000	9	6	15
	Dead	8	5	13	2001-3000	11	7	18
	Do not know	4	-	4	Above 3000	6	2	8
Mother's	Employed	12	10	22	>1000			
	Un Employed	52	12	64	1001-2000			
	Dead	6	3	9	2001-3000			
	Do not know	5	-	5	Above 3000			

Table-2
Presents of parents in the family

Presence of Parents	Percentage		
	Boys N= 75	Girls N= 25	N=100
Both parents family	55	14	69
Step parents family	8	4	12
Single parents family (only mother)	6	4	10
Single parents family (only father)	4	2	6
No parent family	2	1	3
Total	75	25	100

An important finding is that 69 percent of street children were from families where both the parents lived together. Twelve per cent came from step parent's family and 16 per cent belonged to single parent family. Three percent respondents had no parents. Children grow up starved of affection, devoid of guidance and in the absence of wholesome adult role model.

This tragic situation aggravated in many cases by step parents, who often see these children as a threat to themselves and their own children. Children whose parents are separated or remarried are embarrassed because they are marginalized in the Indian society. Physically and emotionally drained by the daily struggle to survive, parents find no time and energy to communicate to their children the all important expression of love and affection. This is very damaging to the children's concept. Parental attitude towards children.

Only 18 percent of the children expressed that their parents were kind and gentle. A large percentage (61 per cent) suffered due to rude and harsh attitude of parents while 11.5 per cent felt that their parents were indifferent towards them compared to their siblings. It was observed that mothers were relatively more kind and gentle compared to fathers.

Kinds of punishment given to the children by their parents:
 The kinds of punishment expressed by children are shown in Table-3.

Table-3

Kinds of punishments given to the children by their parents

Kinds of punishment	Percentage		
	Boys N= 75	Girls N= 25	N=100
Verbal abuse	55	19	74
Slapping	49	10	59
Beating Hitting	44	-	44
Made to kneel down	42	-	42
Tying the hands and legs with cord	16	8	24
Made them strave	16	8	24
Locked in dark room	11	6	17

Both boys and were punished in different ways. The common modes of punishments were verbal abuse, slapping and beating and hitting. Punishment such as making them to kneel down and tying the hands and legs with the cord were mentioned only by boys. These stressful physical and psychological experiences in the family lead to deterioration in the children's relationship with their parents and forced them to leave home.

The study conducted by Raghu and Prasad³ (1995) showed that nearly 70 per cent of street children cited physical abuse. To slap a child, twists his ear and push him around have become accepted ways of treating children who in turn have internalized this sort of treatment. From the findings, it is clear that major initiative is required towards parent education for the prevention of cruelty towards children.

Reasons for leaving Home: The different reasons for leaving home are shown in Table-4.

Table-4
Reasons for leaving home

Presence of parents	Percentage		
	Boys N= 75	Girls N= 25	N= 100
Poverty	52	18	70
Alcoholism and family violence	32	6	38
Broken home	23	10	33
Neglect of parents	15	8	23
Conflicts with parents	14	7	21
Forced to do work	17	4	21
Desire to be independent	12	-	12
Natural calamities	2	1	3
Sexual exploitations	-	3	3
Fixed marriage with old men	-	3	3

Poverty, alcoholism and family violence, broken home, neglect of parents and conflict with parents were the most commonly mentioned reasons by the children for leaving home. Twenty one present expressed that they were forced to work outside the home and contribute to their families. The other reasons were desire to be independent, forced to attend to school and natural calamities. The situation of girl's children is pathetic and more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Three girls cited sexual exploitation and other three girls reported their marriage was fixed with old men by parents for getting.

Subramaniam and Y. S. Sondhi⁴ (1990) found that in their study the poverty was the main problem for the children to come on the streets. United Nations Children's Fund (1992) emphasizes many awareness programmes based on this problems may be a chance to reduce the separation of the children from their families. The intervention must combine with education to train and to prepare the children not coming

out of their families and to get out of dead end situation and income generating activities for parents to prevent family disintegration.

Conclusion

The basic cause for the child to reach the street is the family atmosphere that the child finds unendurable. Family must be strong and able to keep the child in the home. The voluntary agencies must cooperate to prevent children from going to the streets and rehabilitate the street children so that they can return home and live happily. For the families of runaways extensive plan of action must be formulated by the government as well as the voluntary organisations. To assist in the solutions of conflicts arising among the members of the family, adequate counselling services must be setup by different welfare agencies. Programmed education for personal relationships, psychosexual development marriage and family life must be integrated to prepare young people of both the sexes for responsible marriage and parenthood.

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