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TREND PATTERN AND ESTIMATES OF STREET CHILDREN IN LUCKNOW

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Abstract

Children are like assets to our nation and also the wealth of the india future. Childhood is important as children grow socially and given better care as well as healthy body for their survival . Thus the issue of street children has been vast problem for every state of india and has attained huge amount in ongoing debate under the world health organisation (WHO) . On basis of work no payment condition as well as their working environment and freedom of workers are in worst condition. This is the universal to country and state to state problem and becoming worse day by day. The research undertakes the primary survey . The study aims to find out the trend pattern and estimates of street children Living in various places of lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh.

Overview of the Literature

There have been very few studies which have looked at the problem of the street children in UP. Pandey who surveyed 1250 street children in Kanpur (Pandey 1991) conducted one of the pioneering major studies. The study looked at various dimensions of child labour. After that there has been no large or systematic study of street children in UP. Some small studies have been done in recent years. Ankur Yuva Chetna Shivar, an NGO, carried analysis of street and working children in the main railway station in Lucknow. Similarly, another NGO named Plan India has done analysis of children living or working on eight railway stations from Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi to Bhopal, some of which are in UP. These studies had a limited coverage and were focused on children working in and around railway stations.

A recent study in Madras shows that many street children (45.6 percent) would like to live in a secure place, while 71 percent are very eager to change their present life. 63 percent children have an ambition to do something meaningful in their future. The vast majority of them have a survival instinct and the tenacity that helps them survive the day-to-day trials of street life. That does not, however, provide them a future.

Though these studies provide some insights into the plight of street children, they do not do full justice to the nature and problem of street children in a holistic manner. They are based on limited sample and cover only particular location, e.g. railway station. There is, thus, a clear and urgent need to estimate the extent of street children in UP and to look at their problems and living conditions in-depth. The study will be covering the entire urban area of Lucknow to perform an in-depth analysis of the problem. The proposed study would be an attempt in this direction.

Conceptual Framework

Street child is a term used to refer to children who live on the street of a city. It is difficult to put them under precise categories. They form a continuum, ranging from children who spend some time in the streets and sleep in a house with ill-prepared adults, to those who live entirely in the streets and have no adult supervision or care. Children on the street are often engaged in some kind of economic activity ranging from begging to theft to productive work. Family ties may exist but are tenuous and are maintained only casually or occasionally.

Based on the relationship of the child with its family, the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF (1988) and the World Health Organization distinguished between three categories of street children namely:

- (a) Children on the street: This category comprises children working on the street but maintaining more or less regular ties with their families. Their focus is home, to which they return to at the end of the working day and have a sense of belonging to the local community.
- (b) Children of the street: Children in this category maintain a tenuous relation with their families, visiting them only occasionally. They see the street as their home where they seek shelter, food and companionship.

- (c) Abandoned Children: Children in this category are also children of the street but are differentiated from category (b) by the fact that they have ended all ties with their biological families and are completely on their own.

Although there is no denial of this fact that the number of street children is following an increasing trend but then this is also accepted by various academicians (Hecht 1998, Green, 1998 & Ennew 2003,-04) that there exist huge discrepancies in these figures and estimates by NGO, Govt and other groups vary widely. Aware of the numerical discrepancies even the most responsible of the international agencies find these larger claims and figures hard to resist.

Further it was also argued by a social anthropologist, Juddith Ennew that cited numbers and estimates of street children were rarely referenced and usually had “no Validity or basis in fact”. Thus because of these reasons there has been a continuous paradigm shift in the definition concepts, methods and estimates for Street children across the world. The following Table shows these changes in the key elements which has taken place in the different research works as per the need and appropriateness.

Distributions of Street Children by Age and Sex **for Lucknow as a whole**

Sl. No.	Type of Street Children	5-9 age		Total	10-13 age		Total	14-17 age		Total	Total		Grand Total
		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female	
1.	Ties With Family	1020 (33.22)	930 (33.10)	1950 (33.16)	1440 (46.91)	1350 (48.04)	2790 (47.45)	610 (19.87)	530 (18.86)	1140 (19.39)	3070 (100.00)	2810 (100.00)	5880 (100.00)
2.	Ties With Family Occasionally	10 (0.78)	10 (1.20)	20 (0.94)	290 (22.48)	140 (16.87)	430 (20.28)	990 (76.74)	680 (81.93)	1670 (78.77)	1290 (100.00)	830 (100.00)	2120 (100.00)

3.	No Ties With Family	20 (0.94)	20 (8.70)	40 (1.69)	60 (2.82)	10 (4.35)	70 (2.97)	2050 (96.24)	200 (86.96)	2250 (95.34)	2130 (100.00)	230 (100.00)	2360 (100.00)
	Total	1050 (16.18)	960 (24.81)	2010 (19.40)	1790 (27.58)	1500 (38.76)	3290 (31.76)	3650 (56.24)	1410 (36.43)	5060 (48.84)	6490 (100.00)	3870 (100.00)	10360 (100.00)

Estimate of street children by sex and by Age in

Lucknow as a whole

Out of 10360 street children surveyed, 62.64 percent were boys and 37.36 percent were girls. Table gives the distribution of street children by sex and age. The data collected for street children in this Table is from the various parts of the Lucknow city. The survey shows that out of the total 6490 male children (16.18 percent) belong to 5-9 age group, 27.58 percent belongs to 10-13 and 56.24 percent belongs to 14- 17 age groups respectively. Whereas in case of female street children out of the total 387 females 24.81 percent belongs to 5-9 age group, 38.76 percent belongs to 10-13 and 36.43 percent belongs to 14-17 age group respectively. Further, as the age increases the percentage of both male and female street children is also increasing. As per type the overall sample of street children were divided into three categories. Out of the total 10360 street children surveyed total 5880 (56.75 percent) have ties with their families whereas 212 (20.46 percent) have occasional ties and remaining 2360 (22.77 percent) have no ties at all with their family members. It can also be observed from the Table that as the age of these children increases their ties and bonding with their family also declines. The data table shows that the highest percentages in both male and female street children (86.96 percent and 95.34 percent) have no ties with their families and they belong to 14-17 age groups. The simple reason which can be traced out for this might be the financial and physical independence attained by them with every passing year.

In order to understand the trends, pattern and further to calculate the estimates a sample of 10360 street children was selected and surveyed. The results of which are given in the Tables given below. In Table it was asked from the children that where do they live and sleep to understand how worse is their economic condition.

Case Study No. 1 Begging

Nitu D/o Mr. Kailash Nath, belongs to village Meerpur, Block Fatehpur, City Barabanki (U.P.). She is 15 years old and is living in a slum with her relatives at Daliganj under Gomti river bridge. She is living here since 5 years and is engaged in begging. She is very poor and backward in economic as well as in social aspect. She started begging at the age of 10 years. She works for 6 hours in a day and earns only Rs. 2000 per month but she cannot support family. She hardly spends on food and clothing for herself; still she saves only Rs. 250 per month. She wants to study but her living condition is not sound. Further, the government is also not providing any support to the street children, neither for their livelihood nor for their safety. She also told the interviewer that as she begs in a group under a group leader, she cannot beg at any other place. She faced several problems in the society which resulted in her exploitation. She spends extra amounts on her living as compared to others. She wants a permanent employment, skill training etc from the government to come out of this profession.

Personal Information of the Street ChildrenTable : **Details of Person accompanying the Street Children to Lucknow city**

Sl. No.	Type of Street Children	With Parents	Came alone with the consent of parents	Came alone without the consent of parents	Came with friends with the consent of parents	Came with friends without the consent of parents	Came with relatives	Others	Total
1.	Ties With Family	570 (96.94)	8 (1.36)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	8 (1.36)	2 (0.34)	588 (56.75)
2.	Ties With Family Occasionally	40 (18.87)	27 (12.74)	9 (4.25)	22 (10.38)	11 (5.19)	82 (38.68)	21 (9.91)	212 (20.46)

3.	No Ties With Family	7 (2.97)	26 (11.02)	37 (15.68)	55 (23.31)	83 (35.17)	13 (5.51)	15 (6.36)	236 (22.77)
4.	Total	617 (59.56)	61 (5.89)	46 (4.44)	77 (7.43)	94 (9.07)	103 (9.94)	38 (3.67)	1036 (100.00)

Details of Person accompanying the Street Children to Lucknow city

Table outlines the responses of the street children regarding the person with whom they came to Lucknow city. A total of 1036 street children were interviewed, out of which about 60 percent told the surveyor that they came here with their parents. About 6 percent street children came alone but with parental consent while approximately 5 percent came of their own without any parental consent. About 7.5 percent stated that they came with friends with the consent of their parents and about 9 percent came with friends without the consent of their parents. Almost 10 percent street children reported that they were accompanied by their relatives while coming to Lucknow city whereas about 4 percent said that persons other than parents, friends or relatives accompanied them to the Lucknow city. About 57 percent street children who came to the Lucknow city still have ties with their families.

Reasons for Not Visiting Parents

Sr No.	Type of Street Children	Parents are dead	No desire/ attraction	Cannot manage visiting costs	They don't like me to visit	I don't know their address	Total
1.	Ties With Family	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)
2.	Ties With Family Occasionally	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)	0 (0.01)

3.	No Ties With Family	19 (14.29)	23 (17.29)	17 (12.78)	27 (20.30)	47 (35.34)	133 (100.0)
4.	Total	19 (14.29)	23 (17.29)	17 (12.78)	27 (20.30)	47 (35.34)	133 (100.0)

Reasons for Not Visiting Parents

Table shows the reasons due to which street children do not visit their parents. All the 133 street children who were interviewed do not have ties with their families. About 14 percent said that they do not visit their parents because they are not alive; about 17 percent said that they do not have any desire to visit their parents, about 13 percent stated that they do not have enough money while about 20 percent informed the surveyor that their parents don't like them to visit. Little over 35 percent reported that they don't know their parents address hence they do not visit them.

Conclusions

In general the results of the survey shows that majority of the street children were boys and half of them belong to 14-17 age group whereas in case of female street children 38.76 percent belong to 10-13 and 36.43 percent belong to 14-17 age groups, respectively. Further, as the age increases the age of both male and female street children is also increasing. As per type the overall sample of street children were divided into three categories. Out of the total 1036 street children surveyed, about 57 percent have ties with their families whereas about 21 percent have occasional ties. The remaining 23 percent approximately have no ties at all with their family members. It was also observed that as the age of these children increases their ties and bonding with their family reduces. This may be because they are living on their own. Further, majority of them are neither receiving any education nor do they have a proper place to live.

References:

1. The study is based on extensive primary data collected by the researcher to assess the trends pattern and status of street children in Lucknow.
2. Various UNICEF Reports.