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Living conditions and survival strategies of the street children: A sociological perspective

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Abstract

Street children in India were found to be a group of distinct character and they are said to be the consequent products of extreme poverty and illiteracy. The study had analyzed the living conditions and survival strategies of the street children. The study had examined the livelihood profile of the respondents in the study area namely Guntur district and it had analyzed the survival strategies and health conditions of the respondents in the study area. The present study had further estimated the relationship between the socio-economic conditions of the respondents and their social security aspects in the study area. The present research study adopts experimental research design and sampling technique applied was Stratified Random Sampling method. The sample size for the study is 135 and statistical tools like percentages and ANOVA were applied. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their survival strategies and there is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their social security aspects.

Keywords: living conditions, survival strategies, social security, street children

Introductions

The criterion of street children is more traced or linked to the urban areas when compared to rural areas. There are various contributing factors for this phenomenon. The aspect of social change is more transparent. The trends in the rapid industrialization and urbanization paved the way for the emergence of modern inter relationships among the social institutions of the society. The aspects of social homogeneity are said to be metamorphosing to structural social heterogeneity and inter dependence that exists among the human beings in the society acts as the social adhesive that retains the components of the social structure. Though majority of the Indian population lives in the rural societies, the emergence of rapid urbanization strands the citizens to migrate for the concrete urban jungles.

The rapid migration process acts as the genesis for the emergence of certain social aspects like pavement dwelling and squatter settlement with unhygienic residential areas which will turn into the inevitable factors in the modern human society. The element of overcrowding of public habitation in the urban areas will act as the catalyst for the emergence of certain social pathological disorders in the society. Both pull factors (urban areas) and push factors (Rural areas) were found to be contributing in this context. The emergence of slum areas is said to be the outcome of rapid expansion of urban areas.

Statement of the problem

Majority of the earlier research studies had claimed that street children and slum areas were interlinked and inter related. The social evil of extreme poverty and illiteracy and social disorder acts as the tap root system for the prevalence of street children in the society. Various contributory factors like unhygienic health habits, prostitution and criminal behavior will further intensify the practice of immoral survival strategies by the street children. In this context, the present research study aims to verify the living conditions and survival strategies of the street children in the identified study area. The study was conducted within the sociological perspectives of the social phenomenon of street children and an effort was made in order to verify the status quo of the street children and their survival strategies for their livelihood and the social security aspects related to those deprived group in the society.

Review of literature

Prajwala (2013)^[1] in her study had observed that many women and children were trafficked

globally for the commercial purpose of sexual exploitation and it is a common practice in India with in the states of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Northern states of the nation. A number of girls particularly from the street children class were being procured by various brothels and there exists the degrading form of violation of human rights. The victims of commercial sexual exploitation experiences pain of irreversible nature and trauma that psychologically handicaps the girls at their very young age. Meena, Mathur (2015) [2] had analyzed the socio-economic conditions of street children in the city of Jaipur and observed that majority of the street children were found to be the male gender and they were in the age category of 8-12 years. The aspect of migration was particularly observed and 72.2 percent of these street children lives with their families. The habits of alcohol consumption, smoking, gambling and drug addiction were found to be the common entertainment modes and relaxation for these street children in the study area.

Javid, P, Toyama, K. and Biswas, M. (2018) [3] in their study had concluded that street children typically live in independent status and they reside in the make shift arrangement of living and they survive on the little and bare needs. The study had estimated that there were around 100 million street children across the world.

Bernardo Turnbull, Raquel Hernandez and Miguel Reyes (2019) [4] in their had analyzed by interrelation between the interaction between street children and the people who tries to help them. The study concludes that Attentive self-awareness is necessary on the part of those who own the programs and services, so that the children's view can be included in the planning, implementing and running of these programs.

Prakash, Satya and Singh, Lata (2020) [4] had concluded that several of runaway children come to cities mostly through railways. Therefore, the need for special safeguards and care for children around Railway Stations is important.

This is the point where they can be contacted, treated with respect and their rights to protection and development guaranteed lest they join the huge numbers of invisible and vulnerable children.

Research objectives

The present research study was carried out by basing on the below mentioned research objectives those formulated for subjective analysis.

1. To study the living conditions and livelihood profile of the respondents in the study area
2. To analyze the survival strategies and health conditions of the respondents in the study area
3. To estimate the relationship between the socio-economic conditions of the respondents and their social security aspects in the study area.

Alternate hypotheses

In order to verify the above stated research objectives, the following alternate hypotheses were framed and tested for their statistical significance by the application of parametric tests.

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their survival strategies

Test applied: ANOVA

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their social security aspects

Test applied: ANOVA

Research methodology

The present research study had adopted exploratory research design and the study involves the analysis of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected with help of interview schedule method and personal observation technique. Secondary data was analyzed from the reports pertaining to street children under various dimensions in their published format.

The sampling area identified for the present research study was Guntur district and the sample respondents were the identified street children comprising both male and female genders from both urban and rural areas. Stratified Random Sampling technique was applied for drawing the sample from the identified study area and 135 sample respondents were fixed for the study. Thus, the sample size fixed for the study was 135.

The responses from the respondents were collected through Interview schedule method in the study area and personal observation was made by the researcher in order to understand the ground realities of the sample respondents and their responding patterns.

Likert scale method was applied in order to mark the responses and in order to draw meaningful inferences from the study, statistical tools like percentage method, mean scores and Analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied.

Data analysis and findings

Table 1: Age details of the Respondents (N=135)

Age (in Years)	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 7 Years	17	12.6
7-11	50	37.1
12-14	57	42.2
Above 14	11	8.1
Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 1 shows the age details of the respondents. It shows that 12.6 percent of the respondents were in the age category of below 7 years, 37.1 percent of the respondents were in the age category of 7-11, 42.2 percent of the respondents were in the age category of 12-14 and 8.1 percent of the respondents were in the age category of above 14 years. The result shows that majority of the respondents in the study area were in the age group of 12-14 years.

Table 2: Gender details of the Respondents (N=135)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	119	88.2
Female	16	11.8
Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 2 shows the gender details of the respondents. It shows that 88.2 percent of the respondents were males and 11.8 percent of the respondents were females.

Table 3: Educational details of the Respondents (N=135)

Educational details	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterates	68	50.4
Primary School Dropouts	60	44.4
Secondary School Dropouts	7	5.2
Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 3 shows the education details of the respondents. It shows that 50.4 percent of the respondents were illiterates, 44.4 percent of the respondents were primary school dropouts and 5.2 percent of the respondents were secondary school dropouts. The result shows that majority of the respondents were illiterates.

Table 4: Residential area details of the Respondents (N=135)

Residential area	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	76	56.3
Rural	59	43.7
Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 4 shows the residential area details of the respondents. It shows that 56.3 percent of the respondents

Table 6: Details of the Respondents with Physical Disabilities (N=135)

Sl. No.	Disability	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	11	8.1
2	No	124	91.9
	Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 6 shows the details of the respondents towards their physical disabilities. It shows that 8.1 percent of the respondents were having physical disabilities and 91.9 percent of the respondents were not having any physical

were residing at urban areas and 43.7 percent of the respondents were residing at rural areas. The result shows that majority of the respondents were residing at urban areas.

Table 5: Caste details of the Respondents (N=135)

Caste Details	Frequency	Percentage
Scheduled Caste	61	45.2
Scheduled Tribe	15	11.1
Backward Classes	47	34.8
Other Caste	12	8.9
Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 5 shows the caste details of the respondents. It shows that 45.2 percent of the respondents belong to Scheduled caste, 11.1 percent of the respondents belong to Scheduled Tribe, 34.8 percent of the respondents belong to Backward Classes and 8.9 percent of the respondents belong to other castes. The result shows that majority of the respondents belong to Scheduled caste.

Table 7: Type of Physical Disabilities among the Respondents (N=11)

Sl. No.	Disability type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Physically Handicapped (Polio)	6	54.5
2	Blindness	2	18.2
3	Mental disorder	1	9.1
4	Others	2	18.2
	Total	11	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 7 shows the type of physical disabilities that exists among the respondents with various forms of physical disabilities. It shows that 54.5 percent of the respondents with physical disabilities were found to orthopedically handicapped (Polio), 18.2 percent of the respondents were having blindness, 9.1 percent of the respondents were

disabilities. The result shows that majority of the respondents were found to be not having any form of physical disabilities.

having mental disorder and 18.2 percent of the respondents were having other forms of physical disabilities. The result shows that with regard to the respondents with physical disabilities, majority were found to be orthopedically handicapped (Polio).

Table 8: Consumption of Alcohol, Tobacco and Psychotropic substances among the respondents (N=135)

Sl. No.	Consumption of liquor	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	51	37.8
2	No	84	62.2
	Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no 8 shows the details of the respondents habits of alcohol consumption, tobacco and psychotropic substances usage. It shows that 37.8 percent of the respondents were having the habits of alcohol consumption and tobacco usage

and 62.2 percent of the respondents not having the above mentioned habits. The result shows that majority of the respondents were not having the habits of liquor consumption and tobacco usage.

Table 9: Employment Profile of the Respondents (N=135)

Sl. No.	Type of Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Workers in the Workshops/ Hotels	15	11.2
2	Beggars	33	24.4
3	Construction Workers	7	5.2
4	Street vendors	6	4.5
5	Cleaners	9	6.7
6	Rag Pickers	31	22.9
7	Workers in agriculture and allied practices	12	8.9
8	Helpers	8	5.9
9	Sex Workers	4	2.9
10	Non-Workers	10	7.4
	Total	135	100

Source: Primary Data

The table no. 9 shows the employment profile of the respondents with regard to their livelihood in the study area. It shows that 11.2 percent of the respondents are working in the workshops / hotels, 24.4 percent of the respondents are living as beggars, 5.2 percent of the respondents are living as construction workers, 4.5 percent of the respondents are living as street vendors, 22.9 percent of the respondents are living as rag pickers, 8.9 percent of the respondents are working in agriculture farms and allied activities, 5.9 percent of the respondents are living as helps in various private organizations, 6.7 percent of the respondents are

living as cleaners and 2.9 percent of the respondents are living as sex workers in the study area. The result shows that majority of the respondents are living as beggars, rag pickers, workers in workshops and hotels.

Verification of Hypothesis – Ha1

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their survival strategies

Test applied: ANOVA

Table 10: ANOVA Results

S. No	Variable	Sum of Squares		Mean Squares		F -value
		Between the groups	With in the groups	Between the groups	With in the groups	
1	Survival Strategies of Street Children (Overall)	264.38	4572.26	88.36	17.95	4.92*

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance (Table value is 2.78)

The table no 10 shows the ANOVA test results with regard to the relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their survival strategies. The result shows that the socio-economic profile of the respondents is positively related to the survival strategies practiced by the respondents in the study area at 0.05 level of significance. The derived F-value was found to be 4.92 and it is more than the table value 2.78. Hence, the proposed alternate hypothesis (Ha1) is accepted. It can be inferred that there is

a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their survival strategies

Verification of Hypothesis – Ha2

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their social security aspects

Test applied: ANOVA

Table 11: ANOVA Results

S. No	Factors of Health & Social Security	Sum of Squares		Mean Squares		F - value
		Between the groups	With in the groups	Between the groups	With in the groups	
1	Health Issues	72.19	3284.16	18.28	4.33	4.22*
2	Seasonality of Ill health	77.14	5846.68	26.42	8.28	3.19
3	Discrimination in accessing medical treatment	84.42	4476.22	68.58	14.65	4.68*
4	Criminal activities	379.15	5416.78	74.46	15.13	4.92*

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance (Table value is 3.26)

The table no.11 shows the ANOVA test results with regard to the relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their social security aspects. The result shows that among the existing four factors pertaining to health and social security aspects of the respondent street children, three factors were found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

The factors of criminal activities, discrimination in accessing medical treatment and health issues were found to be significant and hence the proposed alternate hypothesis (Ha1) is accepted. It can be inferred from the study that there is a significant relationship between the socio-

economic profile of the respondents and their social security aspects

Conclusion

The study had analyzed the living conditions and survival strategies of the street children. The study had examined the livelihood profile of the respondents in the study area and it had analyzed the survival strategies and health conditions of the respondents in the study area. The present study had further estimated the relationship between the socio-economic conditions of the respondents and their social security aspects in the study area.

The result shows that majority of the respondents in the study area were in the age group of 12-14 years and majority of them were males. The study further shows that majority of the respondents were illiterates and most of them were residing in the urban areas and majority of them belongs to scheduled caste by their social status. The results further shows that majority of the respondents are living as beggars, rag pickers and workers in workshops or hotels.

The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their survival strategies and there is a significant relationship between the socio-economic profile of the respondents and their social security aspects.

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