



AN ANALYSIS OF CAUSATIVE FACTORS WHICH PUSH AND PULL THE CHILDREN OUT OF THEIR HOME INTO THE STREET WORLD AT LAHORE

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ABSTRACT

The prime objective of the research is to identify those causative factors which push and pull the children out of their home into the street world. The study is conducted in the Lahore city which is famous for serial killing of street children in the past. The field based, exploratory type of study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods of the research and weighted from data collected. Observation and a comprehensive interview schedule were used for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics techniques were used for data analysis. The results of the research indicate that none fulfillment of basic needs was the main reasons for the street life of the children. It was found that the very fewer street children had knowledge about STDS and child rights. The research also depicts that majority of the street children had future plans, which indicate that they were not satisfied with their current life and wanted to go back to their homes. The research reveals the dire need of initiating such programmes with the cooperation and combination of public and private organizations which directly addresses the root causes of the problem.

Key Words: Street children, Causes, Non-fulfillment

INTRODUCTION

Children are roses of this world. They give fragrance, beauty and meaning to human life. They are innocent, trusting and full of hope. They are the real capital and future of nation. They are very precious, delicate and need proper care and treatment. Their lives should mature gradually as they gain new experiences. It is a universal truth that economic prosperity and socio-cultural progress of a nation largely depends on the proper up bringing of its future generation. The educational, civilized and developed societies always predict and plan their future keeping in mind the present status and situation of their children.

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Childhood is considered the best stage in the cycle of human life. Nobody can forget the memories of his/ her childhood from the page of his/ her mind. Childhood is the most enjoyable and delightful period of human life but not for those who are caught up by the cruel clutches of the decree, not permitting them to heave up their mind and heart with many inner most wishes and inclination. But those who strive for really endeavor to mean it, particularly true for street children, preferring to shun their home to find out the horizon of their wishes and dreams.

Much ink has been spilt down about the definition and explanation of street children by the people present in various walks of life. The definition about street children came to the boundary of knowledge of the layman in 1990. Different schools of thought have coined their own preferred definitions. These definitions have been built upon and framed as per their own preferences and existing problems. Let us have a glimpse over these definitions.

The United Nations (1985) has its own definition of street children. According to UN, "Street Child is any girl or boy for whom the street in the widest sense of the word (including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland etc) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults". Lewis defines a street child as someone younger than eighteen who has decided to leave home to care for himself / herself on the street unassisted by an adult.

It is estimated that there are 10 to 100 million street children in the world today. These children live a transitory life style and are vulnerable to inadequate nutrition, physical injuries, substance use and health problems including sexual and reproductive health problems. Some street children are "on the street" which mean they still see their families regularly and may even return every night to sleep in their family homes. "Children of the street" on the other hand, have no home but the street. In present research, children of the street are focused.

In Pakistan, street children are deprived of their basic needs and rights. They have limited access to social services. Being separated from their families, they are deprived of parental care guidance and love which are significant factors in the healthy development of a child. They are at the mercy of criminals, police, drugs addicts and smugglers. Unhealthy living environment, lack of proper food, shelter and basic health services make them vulnerable to different types of diseases including sexually transmitted diseases (STDS) and HIV/AIDS, exploitation and abuse. They are heavily into substance abuse, glue being the cheapest and the most accessible of all the substances. They are socially rejected and lookdown by the society, due to which they develop negative attitude towards society which has life long effect and some time force them to indulge in anti social activities The problem of street children is not that particular individual or family, it is problem of society which has to be eliminated by addressing the root causes of the problem. So this drastic plight calls for serious consideration to have the deep study of the problem.

Pakistan is also confronting the problems of street children like many other countries. No statistics are available related to street children in Pakistan. It is estimated that 10,000 street children are present only in the city of Lahore.

The objectives of this study are following,

1. To know about the demographic characteristics of street children.
2. To find out the vulnerability factors which push and pull the children on the street?
3. To know about the socio-economic activities of street children.
4. To know about the street children awareness about child rights.

METHODOLOGY

Methodological techniques are very important for analyzing sociological problems empirically. Sound methodology is most important to establish chain for knowledge and empirical verification of hypothesis.

The population for the study consisted of street children who were spending their life away from their home at least for one month ago and they have no or very little contact with their families. Present study was conducted at Lahore city. Different areas i.e., Data Darbar, Railway station, Minar-e-Pakistan, Laxmi Chock, Regal Chowk and Badami Bagh were the focal locals of the study. 370 street children were selected as a sample size through purposive sampling.

According to Lawrence Neuman, “Purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situation. It uses the judgment of an expert in selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind”.

Data was collected with the help of a well designed interview schedule. Collected information’s were analyzed through SPSS software. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-1. Demographic Characteristics Of Respondents

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
9-11	76	20.5
12-14	111	30.0
15-17	183	49.5
Total	370	100.0
	Mean age = 14.90	Std. Dev. = 3.18
Number of siblings	Frequency	Percentage
1-4	91	24.6
5-8	208	56.2
9 and above	71	19.2

Total	370	100.0
	Mean = 6.24	Std. Dev. = 3.78
Geographical Background	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	123	33.2
Rural	247	66.8
Total	370	100.0
Earners family members	Frequency	Percentage
One	166	44.9
Two	145	39.2
Three	59	15.9
Total	370	100.0
Dependent family members	Frequency	Percentage
1-4	88	23.8
5-8	165	44.6
9 and above	117	31.6
Total	370	100.0

Above table indicates that about one-fifth i.e., 20.5 percent of the respondents had 9-11 years of age, while 30.0 percent of the respondents (children) had 12-14 years of age and about a half i.e., 49.5 percent of the respondents had 15-17 years of age. Mean age of children was about 15 years .

Table also presents the number of siblings of the respondent. As the siblings play an important role in the life of children so the number of the siblings of the respondents was asked. About one-fourth i.e., 24.6 percent of the respondents had the siblings 1-4 in number. A majority i.e., 56.2 percent of the children had the siblings 5-8 in numbers and little less than one-fifth i.e., 19.2 percent of them had the siblings 9 and above in number. Average number of siblings (as calculated by mean) was almost 6.

Table also indicates that about one-third i.e., 33.2 percent of the respondents' family belonged to urban areas, while a majority i.e., 66.8 percent of the respondents' family belonged to rural areas. In our rural areas has less entertainment, educational and economic opportunities as compare to urban areas, so due to more attraction majority of the children run towards cities.

Table further depicts that a major proportion i.e., 44.9 percent of the respondents had one earning member, while 39.2 percent of the respondents had two earner family members and remaining 15.9 percent of the respondents had three earner family members. It indicates low economic status of the respondents' family.

Table also shows that 23.8 percent of the respondents reported that in their family 1-4 dependent members, while a major proportion i.e., 44.6 percent of the respondents said that 5-8 family members were dependent and 31.6 percent of them told that 9 and above family members were dependent.

Table-2. Distribution of the Respondents According To Their Total Family Members and Family Income

Family size (Nos.)	Frequency	Percentage
1-6	134	36.2
7-12	147	39.7
13 and above	89	24.1
Total	370	100.0

Monthly Family income (Rs.)	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 4000	191	51.6
4001- 8000	127	34.3
Above 8000	52	14.1
Total	370	100.0

The size of family is an indicator of economic growth. Family members include all the persons (adults and children) living in a house. Respondents were asked about the number of family members. Data in table indicate that 39.7 percent of the respondents had 7-12 family members, 36.2 percent of the respondents had 1-6 family members and 24.1 percent of the respondents had 13 and above family members. Table also presents the approximate family monthly income of the respondents. Table depicts that slightly more than a half i.e., 51.6 percent of the respondents had up to Rs. 4000 family monthly income, while about one-third i.e., 34.3 percent of them had Rs. 4001-8000 monthly family income and only 14.1 percent of the respondents had above Rs. 8000 monthly family income. Above table presents the picture of poverty among the respondent's family.

Table-3. Distribution of the Respondents According To Alive Status of Their Parents

Alive	Frequency	Percentage
Father	103	27.8
Mother	84	22.7
Both	172	46.5
None of them	11	3.0
Total	370	100.0

If both alive then their living status	Frequency	Percentage
Together	125	72.7
Separated	17	9.9
Divorced	30	17.4
Total	172	100.0

Parents' relationship with each other if they live together	Frequency	Percentage
Loving	34	27.2
Dominated by father	11	8.8
Dominated by mother	71	56.8
Physical torture	20	16.0
Abusive torture	14	11.2
Total	125	100.0

Above table indicates that the 27.8 percent of the respondents reported that their fathers were alive, 22.7 percent of them told that their mothers were alive and a major proportion i.e., 46.5 percent of

the respondents said that their parents (father & mother) both were alive, whereas only 3.0 percent of the respondents told their parents (father & mother) both were died. Table reveals that a large majority i.e., 72.7 percent of the respondent's parents (father and mother) was living together, only 9.9 percent were living separated and 17.4 percent of the respondents stated that their parents were divorced. Table also presents the parents' relationship with each other who live together. Table indicates that 27.2 percent were living together with loving, while 8.8 percent of the respondents told that their parents were living together while their father's were dominated and 56.8 percent of them said that their mother were dominated. About 34 respondents' parents had conflicting relation with each other i.e., physical torture (16.0%), abusive torture (11.2%) etc.

Table-4. Distribution of the Respondents According To Their Parents Education Level

Educational level	Father		Mother	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Below Primary	57	20.7	40	15.6
Primary	21	7.6	16	6.3
Below Middle	29	10.5	10	3.9
Middle	27	9.8	3	1.2
Below Matriculation	10	3.6	7	2.7
Matriculation and above	7	2.5	4	1.6
NA (Illiterate)	124	45.1	176	68.7
Total	275*	100.0	256**	100.0

* 95 children reported that their fathers were died (See Table # 3)

** 114 children reported that their mothers were died (See Table # 3)

Above table shows that about one-fifth i.e., 20.7 percent of the respondents' fathers were below primary and 7.6 percent of them were primary passed. About one-tenth i.e., 10.5 percent of the respondent's fathers were below middle and 9.8 percent of them were middle passed. Only 3.6 percent of the respondents' fathers were below matriculation and 2.5 percent of the respondent's fathers had matriculation and above level of education.

On the other hand only 15.6 percent of the respondents mothers were below primary and 6.3 percent of them were primary passed. While 3.9 percent of them were below middle and 1.2 percent were middle passed. Only 2.7 percent of respondents mothers were below matriculation and 1.6 percent of them were matriculated.

Table-5. Distribution of the Respondents According To the Causative Factors for Their Street Life

Causes	To great extent		To some extent		Not at all		Total Freq	%age
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age		
None fulfillment of basic needs	170	45.9	101	27.3	99	26.8	370	100
Lack of interest in education	40	10.8	33	8.9	297	80.3	370	100
Physical	50	13.5	29	7.8	291	78.6	370	100

torture by father								
Bad society	75	20.3	58	15.7	237	64.1	370	100
Parents' conflict at home	84	22.7	66	17.8	220	59.5	370	100
Desire to live in cities	91	24.6	63	17.0	216	58.4	370	100
Bad attitude of sibling	52	14.1	38	10.3	280	75.7	370	100

Above table depicts that a major proportion i.e., 45.9 percent of the respondents told that 'none fulfillment of basic needs' was great extent cause of respondents street life, while 27.3 percent mentioned to some extent cause and 26.8 percent of the respondents said that the 'none fulfillment of basic needs' was not the cause of their street life.

Only 10.8 percent of the respondents reported that 'lack of interest in education', was the great extent cause of their street life, while 8.9 percent told that the 'lack of interest in education' was the some extent cause of their street life, whereas 80.3 percent of them said that 'lack of interest in education' was not the cause of their street life.

Only 13.5 percent of the respondents reported that 'Physical torture by father' was the great extent cause of their street life, while 7.8 percent of them told that the 'Physical torture by father' was the some extent cause of their street life, whereas 78.6 percent of them said that 'Physical torture by father' was not the major cause of their street life.

About one-fifth i.e., 20.3 percent of the respondents reported that 'bad society' was the great extent cause of their street life, while 15.7 percent of them told that the 'bad society' was the some extent cause of their street life, whereas 64.1 percent of them said that 'bad society' was not the major cause of their street life.

Less than one-fourth i.e., 22.7 percent of the respondents reported that 'parents' conflict at home' was the great extent cause of their street life, while 17.8 percent of them told that the 'parents' conflict at home' was the some extent cause of their street life, whereas 59.5 percent of them said that 'parents' conflict at home' was not the major cause of their street life.

About one-fourth i.e., 24.6 percent of the respondents reported that 'Desire to live in big cities' was the great extent cause of their street life, while 17.0 percent of them told that the 'Desire to live in big cities' was the some extent cause of their street life, whereas 58.4 percent of them said that 'Desire to live in big cities' was not the major cause of their street life.

Only 14.1 percent of the respondents reported that 'bad attitude of sibling' was the great extent cause of their street life, while 10.3 percent of them told that the 'bad attitude of sibling' was the

some extent cause of their street life, whereas 75.7 percent of them said that “bad attitude of sibling” was not the major cause of their street life.

Table-6. Distribution of the Respondents According To Their Activities before Leaving Home

Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Studying	49	13.2
Working	277	74.9
Do nothing	44	11.9
Total	370	100.0

Above table presents the activities of the respondents before leaving home. Data indicate that only 13.2 percent of the respondents were studying before leaving home, while a significant majority i.e., 74.9 percent of the respondents was working before leaving home and remaining 11.9 percent of the respondents told that they do nothing before leaving home.

Table-7. Distribution of the Respondents According To Their Education Level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	60	16.2
Below primary	98	26.5
Primary	87	23.5
Below Middle	54	14.6
Middle	42	11.4
Below Matriculation	21	5.7
Matriculation	8	2.2
Total	370	100.0

Above table shows that 16.2 percent of the respondents were illiterate, while more than one-fourth i.e., 26.5 percent of the respondents were below primary and less than one-fourth i.e., 23.5 percent of them were primary passed. About 14.6 percent of the respondents were below middle and 11.4 percent of them were middle passed. Only 5.7 percent of the respondents were below matriculation and 2.2 percent of the respondents were matriculated.

Table-8. Distribution Of The Respondents According To Their Type Of Work

Type of work	Frequency	Percentage
Vehicle cleaning	64	17.3
Work at tea shop	84	22.7
Massage work	58	15.7
Shoes polish	52	14.1
Flower selling	44	11.9
Not working	68	18.4
Total	370	100.0

Above table presents that about 17.3 percent of the respondents were involved in vehicle cleaning, 22.7 percent were doing work at tea shop and 15.7 percent of the respondents were doing massage work. About 14.1 percent of the respondents were shoes polisher, 11.9 percent were flower seller and remaining 18.4 percent of them were not doing any type of work.

Table-9. Distribution of the Respondents According To Their Food Getting Way

Food getting way	Frequency	Percentage
Lunger Khana of Shrines *	250	67.6
Purchase readymade	20	5.4
Self cooked	16	4.3
Provided by owner	84	22.7
Total	370	100.0

* Free food point at Shrines

Above table presents the food getting way by the respondents. A large majority i.e., 67.6 percent of the respondents reported that they getting food from Lunger Khana of Shrines, 5.4 percent of the respondents were purchased readymade food, 4.3 percent were self cooked and 22.7 percent of the respondents told that the food provided them by the owner.

Table-10. Distribution of the Respondents According To the Type of Substance They Used

Type of substance	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Opium	5	1.4	354	98.6	359	100.0
Hashish (Chars)	27	7.5	332	92.5	359	100.0
Heroin	10	2.8	349	97.2	359	100.0
Alcohol	22	6.1	337	93.9	359	100.0
Glue sniffing	141	39.3	218	60.7	359	100.0
Cigarette	215	59.9	144	40.1	359	100.0
Pan	56	15.6	303	84.4	359	100.0
Gutka	77	21.4	282	78.6	359	100.0
Niswar	82	22.8	277	77.2	359*	100.0

* 11 respondents never used substance.

Above table reveals that 5 (1.4%) respondents used opium, 27 (7.5%) used Hashish (Chars), 10 (2.8%) respondents used heroin and 22 (6.1%) respondents were drinking Alcohol. Whereas 141 (39.3%) of the respondents used Glue sniffing, a majority i.e., 215 (59.9%) of the respondents were smoker, 56 (15.6%) of them used Pan, 21.4 percent used Gutka and 22.8 percent of them used Niswar.

Table-11. Distribution of the Respondents According To the Missing Their Family and Wanted To Go Back To Home, Knowledge About Stds, Aids & Child Rights

	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Missing their family	305	82.4	65	17.6	370	100.0
Intention to go back home	193	52.2	177	47.8	370	100.0
Knowledge about STDs	59	15.9	311	84.1	370	100.0
Knowledge about AIDs	207	55.9	163	44.1	370	100.0
Knowledge about child rights	91	24.6	279	75.4	370	100.0

Above table indicates that a huge majority i.e., 82.4 percent of the respondents reported that they were missing their family; while 17.6 percent of them were never miss their family.

Table also depicts that little more than a half i.e., 52.2 percent of the respondents had intension to go back to home and remaining less than a half i.e., 47.8 percent had no intention to go back to home.

Table further shows that 15.9 percent of the respondents had knowledge about STDS and a huge majority i.e., 84.1 percent of them had no knowledge above STDS.

Table also presents the respondent's knowledge about AIDS. A majority i.e., 55.9 percent of the respondents had knowledge about AIDs and 44.1 percent of them had no knowledge about AIDS.

Table further presents the respondents' knowledge about child rights. About one-fourth i.e., 24.6 percent of the respondents had knowledge about child rights and a large majority i.e., 75.4 percent of them had no knowledge about child rights.

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that a majority of street children are between the ages of 15-17 years. It is concluded that majority of children working before leaving home. None fulfillment of basic needs, desire to live in cities and parents conflicts at home are found the major causative factors for street life of the children. Majority of the street children belonged to poor rural families. It is concluded that most of the children are involved in different kind of work activities i.e. vehicle cleaning, work at tea shop, massage work, shoes polish and flower selling. It is concluded that a large majority of the street children are getting their food from Lunger Khana of Shrines. A huge majority of the street children are addicted to different types of substances among smoking and glue sniffing are most famous. It is concluded that majority of street children are literate. It is also concluded that a huge majority of the street children are missing their family. It is also concluded that the very fewer street children have knowledge about STDS and child rights.

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