

Problems and Prospects of the Street Children in the Perspective of Social Inclusion

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Abstract:

People's perspectives, needs, and concerns must be acknowledged if social integration and inclusion are to be achieved. Children who are in need of social inclusion include those who are orphans, abandoned and destitute, missing or runaway, street children, children of sex workers, abused, tortured, and exploited; children who use drugs; children affected by HIV/AIDS; children affected by natural disasters; children with disabilities; and children who have terminal or incurable illnesses. Everyone in society, regardless of background, must be able to voice their opinions and have a stake in the society in which they live. The inclusion of society fosters and upholds stability and a readiness to accept change when it is required. A socially inclusive society is one in which everyone is respected, accepted, and feels like they belong. The most impacted vulnerable groups that require real social care are children living on the streets and children living on platforms. With the aid of numerous NGOs, donations, and social actions that will increase the wealthy side of our humanity or compassion as a whole, we the civilized people should take the initiative to care for them.

Introduction:

According to the Census of 2011, India has 1.2 billion people overall. Children make up almost 40% of the country's population. Care for children is the finest strategy to grow the nation's human resources because child development is just as vital as the development of material resources. India currently has at least one million street children, according to current estimates, in the cities of New Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai. Over eleven million kids in urban and rural India as a whole rely on the streets for their primary source of income. Today, a democratic society with principles like equal opportunity and anti-discrimination protection is being established over the globe. The concept of social justice—being entitled to the same rights and services as other citizens—has spread more widely in recent years. In general, social justice refers to the ideal situation in which each member of a community enjoys the same fundamental freedoms, security, opportunities, responsibilities, and social advantages. It alludes to ideas of justice that are applied to a whole society. 2014 (Gurusamy) The phrase "social inclusion" is used for the underprivileged children and is used in tandem with the idea of social justice. Nearly every aspect of life, both personally and societally, is impacted by social inclusion. Numerous categories can be used to group these dimensions. A society that values social inclusion is one in which all citizens have access to

fundamental necessities for a dignified existence and where their diversity is valued. We can see the same expression in relation to youngsters on the street or in public places.

Objectives: The prime objectives of the study are:

- a) To focus on the concept of social inclusion
- b) To highlight on the context and prospect of street and platform children
- c) To know about the constitutional provision for the street and platform children
- d) To focus on the problems and solutions of the deprived children
- e) To become aware of the report of NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights)

According to sociology, social inclusion is the process of ensuring that all people and groups in society have access to certain rights, including employment, decent housing, health care, education, and training. The essence of social inclusion and social integration, which is that differences among members of society are allowed, is touched by this straightforward remark. Social inclusion or integration does not imply uniformity among its members but rather a society that values interaction while allowing for variation. The process of enhancing a person's capacity, opportunity, and dignity to participate in society while being disadvantageous due to their identity is known as social inclusion, according to the **World Bank**. It involves creating a sense of value and significance throughout all social groups.

The term "street child" is frequently used to describe young individuals who are noticeable in metropolitan centers of low- and middle-income countries. It is a phrase that the general public is familiar with, and NGOs commonly use it to solicit donations from them. It goes without saying that this classification is too crude and invariably includes kids who don't have much in common. Age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, and the experiences these youngsters have had throughout their lives vary among street children. Children on the streets (street children who work and hang out on the streets), children on the streets (street children who work but have a home to go to at night), and children of the street (street children who live on the street without family support) are the three categories that UNICEF uses to distinguish between the various types of children living on the streets.

Millions of street children in India live or work on the streets, making them arguably the most underprivileged population. There are few ladders for street children to climb back up; they have slipped through the cracks of society. They conduct their lives similarly to how their parents and certainly future generations will. Because their parents are unemployed, orphaned, or have fled their homes, frequently to avoid abuse, children live and work on the streets. They frequently lack proper nutrition, have little medical care or education, and start working as children very young. Along with drug addiction, key issues include child prostitution and sexual abuse. Compared to the emerging middle class, these kids inhabit a different reality. They constitute one of the most in needy peoples on the earth when considered as an independent nation. Cities and regions all have their own unique street children. However, boys make up the bulk of this population. The fact that girl street children are frequently not located in open areas makes them difficult to locate. 40% of street kids are between the ages

of 11 and 15 while another 33% are between the ages of 6 and 10. According to a research, the majority of kids (89.8%) reside on the streets with their families. (India-2a2015)

Issues with street children: Hundreds of millions of people are caught in a cycle of poverty, child labor, lack of education, and gender and caste discrimination. Some of the toughest circumstances in the world are encountered by these folks. Here are some issues related to these underprivileged kids:

- a) **Homelessness:** In India, street children may be homeless because their family is also homeless due to poverty or migration, or they may be homeless because they were abandoned, orphaned, or ran away. Families in their entirety living on city sidewalks or groups of kids sleeping in rows near a train station are common sights. The chances are stacked against homeless children. They are at a significant risk of developing addiction, abuse, and sickness since they are exposed to the weather, have an unreliable source of food, and are probably missing out on schooling and medical care. An unaccompanied child on the streets is particularly vulnerable.
- b) **Poverty:** Poverty is the main factor contributing to the crisis of street children. Children from wealthy homes don't have to scavenge or work. They have homes, eat well, attend school, and are probably in good physical and emotional health. A child living in poverty is burdened with several issues. These issues not only make the child suffer, but they also work together to keep him or her in poverty all of their lives. Poor children in India will likely have to forgo their education and training in order to survive; without skills, they will continue to live in poverty as adults.
- c) **Health:** For street kids, ill health is a recurring issue. Malnutrition affects 50% of children in India, but it affects street kids significantly more. In addition to being underweight, these kids frequently have stunted growth, making it very usual to mistake a 12-year-old for an 8-year-old. Street kids work and live next to animals, waste, and open sewers. In addition to being exposed and vulnerable to disease, they are also unlikely to obtain medical care or vaccinations. Only one in ten Indian youngsters have received the Hepatitis B vaccine, and only two out of every three have received the TB, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, and Measles shots. The majority of street kids have had no vaccinations at all. They typically can't afford medical care and don't have faith in pharmaceuticals. If they receive any treatment at all, it will frequently be damaging, as in the case of children whose parents apply hot metal to their stomachs to relieve chronic stomach pain. Child laborers experience fatigue, injuries, exposure to harmful chemicals, as well as problems with their muscles and bones.
- d) **Gender Discrimination:** Women experience discrimination frequently in Indian society. Their freedom, prosperity, education, and health are all impacted. Rajasthan, a conservative state in India, has the worst problem overall.

For instance, parents may prefer to have male offspring because girls are responsible for paying dowries and leaving the family home after marriage. Simply because they are female, many babies are neglected, abandoned, or intentionally aborted. This is demonstrated by the fact that, in India, female mortality rates among 0–4-year-olds are 107% higher than male mortality rates, compared to 74% in Western Europe. Rajasthan's rate is 119%. The fact that Rajasthan has an even lower female-to-male ratio than the rest of India (909/1000), which is an unusually low ratio, is more proof of the imbalance.

Boys are more likely to attend school and to do so for a longer period of time, making gender discrimination in education particularly glaring. Many parents and kids believe that education for females is a waste of time because the traditional role of a woman is to take care of the household. This is especially true when the child could be working or helping out around the house. Only 38% of Indian women are literate, and the gender disparity in literacy rates between men and women in India is one of the highest in the world (64% vs. 38%). Another difficulty faced by girls is child marriage. Early marriage has health hazards in addition to restricting educational opportunities and impeding personal growth. A girl under 15 is five times more likely than a woman in her twenties to die during pregnancy, and her unborn child is likewise more likely to die.

- e) **Child labor:** Most street kids in India are employed. Rag-picking, when children as young as 6 years old dig through trash to gather recyclables, is a typical job in Jaipur. The kids typically get up before dawn and carry their heavy loads on their shoulders in a huge backpack. On their hands and knees, rag-pickers may be seen rummaging through rubbish piles alongside pigs and dogs. The gathering of firewood, caring for animals, street vending, dying, begging, prostitution, and household work are additional typical vocations. Children who labor are not only exposed to the stresses and dangers of their jobs, but also are not given access to the education or training that could help them break free from the cycle of poverty (Humanium, n.d.).
- f) **Abuse:** Many of the street kids who have left their homes have done so as a result of being physically or sexually assaulted. Tragically, their homelessness may encourage prostitution and child labor, both of which are abusive. Abuse not only deprives fleeing kids of their material stability, but also emotionally scars them. I-India encounters many traumatized and verbally silent abused children, some of whom have been silent for months. Children frequently feel guilty and hold themselves accountable for their abuse, which only makes problems worse. Even in the most loving surroundings, such harm might take years to heal; on the streets, it might never do so. (I-India, n.d.)
- g) **Sexual exploitation:** Sexual exploitation has a detrimental effect on children's physical health. They run the risk of getting AIDS and STDs by being forced into sexual relationships. Pregnancy is also a risk for young girls. They typically have no one to turn to for assistance should this occur. Furthermore, conceiving at such a young age poses a real risk to the health of both the mother and the unborn child.

- h) **Child prostitution:** The use of children for sexual activities in exchange for money or another type of punishment (gifts, food, clothes, etc.) is referred to as child prostitution. This practice falls under the broad category of sexual exploitation. These kids work in businesses including brothels, clubs, massage parlors, taverns, motels, and restaurants, as well as on the streets.

Children's constitutional provisions: There are various children's constitutional provisions. They consist of the following. —

Article 14: According to the article of the Indian Constitution, no one should be denied equality before the law or equal protection under the law on Indian territory.

Article 15(3): Nothing in this article prohibits the state from providing any particular provisions for women and children, according to the requirement.

Article 21: states that no one may be deprived of their life or personal freedom until doing so in accordance with a legal process.

Article 21(A): According to this article all children between the ages of 6 and 14 must receive free and mandatory education in the way that the state may specify by legislation.

Article 23: Human trafficking and forced labor are prohibited here.

Article 24: According to the article children under the age of 14 are not allowed to work in factories, mines, or any other dangerous occupations,

Articles 25: through 28 provide the freedom of conscience as well as the free exercise, professing, and spreading of religion.

Article 45: this article of the Constitutional Provision of 2017 states that the state shall make every effort to provide all children with early childhood care and education up until the age of six.

Reports of NCPCR (Under the article of “Recommendations for Safeguarding the Rights of Children in Contact with Railways”)(Sinha, 2013)

West Bengal has accounted for 77% of the total 113 cases of “selling of girls for prostitution”
The states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra together accounted for 44.5% of the child rape cases reported in the country in 2011.
In 2011, among the IPC crimes, an increase of 43% was registered in kidnapping and abduction, while rape cases were increased by 30%
The Sample Registration System in 2010, estimated that, out of the total deaths reported, 14.5% are infant deaths (<1 years), 3.9 are deaths of 1-4 years children, 18.4% are deaths of

children of 0-4 years and 2.7% deaths pertained to children of 5-14 years.

The highest charge sheet rate was observed in cases under “Buying of girls for prostitution 100% followed by ‘Rape’ (97.3%) in comparison to the prevailing national level charge sheeting rate of 78.8% for the IPC crimes and 93% for SLL crimes.

In 2011, 69% of cases of human trafficking are cases booked under Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956.

An increase of 122.2% has been observed in cases of ‘importation of girls’ during 2010-2011 and 56% of these cases reported in 2011 is from Madhya Pradesh.

Out of the total juveniles involved in various crimes, 81.4% are children living with parents, whereas the share of homeless children involved in various crimes are 5.7% and the remaining are children living with guardians.

Elements of Social Inclusion:

Inclusive policies and legislation	Access to clean and safe places for living, work and recreation	Access to information and communication	Access to resources
Access to public spaces	Access to basic services, including education, health care, clean water and sanitation	Access to transportation	Transparent and accountable decision-making processes
Adequate income and employment opportunities	Affirmation of human rights	Opportunity for personal development	Respect for diversity

Freedom (of choice, religion, etc.)	Participation in decision-making	Social protection	Solidarity
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Paths of Solutions or Recommendations to make an inclusive world for the street children:

There are various perspectives on how a society that values social inclusion should operate.

1. People need to be heard, seen, and have their own voices above everything else. If a person or group is not taken into consideration and represented in the procedures that constitute formal society, then they cannot possibly have a voice. Even at the local level, the population count itself is one of the most challenging tasks. People continue to be uncared and so unseen.
2. To lessen this problem, awareness efforts must be run on television and radio as well as through educational seminars. Families must be aware of the risks associated with human trafficking, and access to information is essential.
3. Education is important in this area because it offers opportunity to learn about one's own society's history and culture as well as that of other societies. This fosters an understanding and appreciation of other societies, cultures, and religions. Education offers the chance to instill values like respect and appreciation for diversity, especially among young people. Education can also give those who are disadvantaged or excluded the ability to participate in debates and decision-making. People can better understand how socially inclusive or exclusive policies have affected them and other people by learning about historical processes and changes, which ultimately affects people's values, decisions, and judgments, especially those of those in decision-making positions (Platform, 2016).
4. In order for social inclusion to be successful, it is important to look at the areas where inclusion is weak and exclusion is most common, as well as the areas where engagement and involvement are failing. People are being excluded from social processes in what ways and why? What demographics are affected, and what are the economic, social, and political contexts where the issue is most noticeable?
5. Social inclusion can be promoted on many different levels, each with its own goals and intended audience. For instance, a national government would be interested in determining the aspects that relate to their sectorial policies, such as access to basic services, employment, health, and education. A municipal government might be more focused on developing new classifications, like social capitals, social mobility, etc.
6. Local government should formulate an effective local solution involving all residents within a participatory framework devising, promoting and monitoring initiatives that will

achieve measurable positive change. There are a range of modalities and strategies of inclusion available to local governments attempting to counter marginalisation and promote social inclusion.

7. The authorities must make a serious effort to comply with and enforce Article 34 of the International Convention of Children's Rights which states: "States must protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual violence."

Conclusion: There are numerous factors that might lead to a child being involved in the legal system. Children typically have legal issues, but they can also become involved in the legal system as crime victims or witnesses. For children and young people to thrive and contribute to society, we believe that we must make investments in their welfare. To do this, we will try to provide them a strong start in life, a quality education, and a safe environment to live in. Regardless of the parent's gender, we can advocate for laws and support organizations that provide parenting skills, domestic violence prevention, gang prevention, anti-bullying programs, substance abuse prevention, and other social services vital to the health and wellbeing of children and families in need. People of the society must support the adoption and implementation of nutritionally sound school breakfast and lunch programs that meet the caloric requirements of our children on average. They must also support the fathers, mothers, children, and guardians involved in the Child Protective Services process and work to ensure that all parties are treated equally and fairly under the law. Everyone needs to be urged to participate, and collaboration needs to be supported. The true problem for local government is not just to identify and include all relevant stakeholders, but also to foster a genuine level of engagement among hesitant parties. Actually **"In India, we need to cultivate a social norm where children are given the opportunity to express themselves freely, and adults listen to them and appreciate that they have something meaningful to say"**(UNICEF Advocacy and Communication Specialist, Prosun Sen)

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