

A Study of the Problems of the Out of School Children in Urban Slums

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Abstract:

The social, economic and cultural development of a nation is an achievement which rests largely on the educational attainment of its masses, so our first and foremost task is to identify masses that are unable to get the benefit of education. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, Government of India had launched the scheme of non-formal education in 1979-80. But in spite all of its efforts the country is far behind the target of universal education. It is in this context the researcher examined the problems of out of schools children living in the slums of Delhi. The present research was of descriptive survey type. The survey studied the problems of the out of school slum children relating to school, family, personal, studies, teachers and classmates. The sample comprised of 400 out of slum school children enrolled in the centre schools run by the different NGO's in Delhi. Problem checklist was used to study the different problems. Descriptive analysis of data included percentage. The study revealed that out of school slum children had more problems related school, studies and personal. Also the research shows that the girls and upper primary age level (12-14yrs) out of school slum children had greater problems as compared to boys and primary age level (6-11yrs) out of school slum children.

Key words: Problems, Out of School Children, Urban slums.

Introduction

Education is a basic right and more importantly a catalyst for economic growth and human development. Every society in the world aims to give efficient education, to present educational

facilities based on equality and justice and to prepare people efficiently for their future lives. If our generation wants to use the maximum of education, then he or she has to contribute not only to the improvement of the individual but also to the development of society. However, it would be very difficult to indicate that everybody in the metropolis continuously developing can benefit from the educational facilities equally and sufficiently. Thus especially those who are living in the slums of metropolises are doomed to suffer inequality because of the rapid growth of population due to urbanization. People migrate from rural areas and settle down in slums of urban area in search of employment. A variety of factors such as economic, socio-cultural and demographic ones are pushing the rural population to the urban areas, a phenomenon that has resulted in the formation of the urban slums.

Slum is a commonly used term for thickly populated urban areas with dilapidated and substandard housing. The Census of India (2001) has defined slum as “a compact area of at least 300 populations or about 60-70 households of poorly built congested tenements, in unhygienic environment usually with inadequate infrastructure and lacking in proper sanitary and drinking water facilities”. The children living in these slums are called by different names, such as street children, high risk children, abandoned children etc. The UNICEF has called them “children in difficult circumstances”. They work on the street either under the supervision of employers inside or outside their family or are in business for themselves. They return to their families in the night. They are out of their homes forced by poverty, violence, drink and sexual abuse. A classification scheme outlined by United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is commonly used in international literature to differentiate among homeless children. These categories are:

1. ***Children on the street***- These are children with continuous family contact. It refers to children who

- engage in street based activities.
2. **Children of the street-** These are the children who have weaker ties to their families or occasional family contact, and
 3. **Abandoned children-** These are abandoned and neglected children who have no connection to family at all (Mufane 2000).

Need for the study

People living in the slum are found in all the major cities of the developing countries and play a prominent role in urban scenario. They survive by doing mobile street work such as washing, parking, begging, cleaning gutters, pickling rags and so on (Swart Kruger & Richter 1997). Due to low occupational and economic level the slum children possess very low or no formal education. They do not place much importance to education, as it does not fetch them immediate benefits. These slums children do not have any access to basic amenities of health, sanitation, or education. In spite of the various efforts made by the government and some of the non government organizations, the pace of progress is not very satisfactory.

It is in this context that we examined the problems of slum children in the city of Delhi. To study the dynamics of demand and supply we conducted a survey in a slum school/center school to understand comprehensively the problems of these out of school slum children related to school, teachers, personal, classmates, study and family. It is hoped that the findings of the study shed light on the prevailing conditions and create an awareness about the need for policy reforms in the education sector.

Operational definitions of the terms

The following terms are defined to clarify their use in the

context of this study:

- I. **Problem:** - Means hurdle or barrier that obstructs an individual to reach his goal or an objective. It is mainly related to school, classmates, studies, teachers, personal and family. It is the context of education only.
- II. **Slums:** - Means human habitations developed either in the outskirts or in the middle of the city with temporary structures without basic amenities of life.
- III. **Out of school children:-** It refers to the children of school going between 6-14 years of age and regularly not attending any school providing formal education.
- IV. **Slum school/ Centre school:** - These terms are used synonymously. These are mainly non formal centers.

Objectives of the study

The following were the specific objectives of the study:

- I. To identify the different categories of the out of school children enrolled in educational centers of urban slum area.
- II. To study the problems of the out of school slum children.
- III. To study the problems of the out of school slum children with reference to gender and age.

Research Questions for the study

The present research investigation aims at exploring answers to the following research questions:

- I. What are the different categories of the out of school slum children enrolled in the centre schools run by the NGOs?
- II. What are the different problems of the out of school children in urban slums of Delhi?
- III. What are the different problems of the out of school slum children with reference to gender and age?

Review of literature

Mahapatra, K (1994):- Studied the educational problems among the children of daily laborers. He also examined the socio-economic conditions and aspirations of daily laborers towards their children's education. The result revealed that most of the daily laborers are unable to meet their children's need in every aspect like food, clothes, provision of study materials and recreational facilities. But still then, they are sending their children to school with the aspiration to see them as engineer, doctor, lecturer and Government officer in future.

Prakash, S (1998):- He used sample survey techniques to study the problem of Delhi and Bombay slums. The study revealed that per household income of Bombay slum dwellers is higher than that of residents of jhuggis and jhoparis in Delhi. Both in Delhi and Bombay jhuggi and jhopadpatti residents are immigrants from far and wide, though the two metropolitan areas have been attracting rural as well as urban migrants. Participation of children in labour force represents a substitution of employment for education prompted by the poverty of the parents.

Panda (2000):- Studied the education of urban poor. In his study he undergoes a pilot study of slum dwellers of Delhi. He examined the educational facilities in terms of school, non-formal centres available in the slums. He conducts a door-to-door survey in the slums. An overall 68 household survey was done. The study revealed that the slum under study had electricity and drinking water facilities, majority of slum dwellers 76.5 had single room accommodation. The boys and girls attend the school but not very regularly. Particularly in the case of girls, their parents fear that once their daughters become literate, it will be difficult to get them married.

Chugh (2003):- Studied the learning achievement of slum children in 16 Government schools of Delhi. Overall 372 children from grade 5th and 56 teachers were involved in the

study. The study revealed that the mathematics competencies were better as compared to the language competencies although they were very much below the target of 80 percent as suggested by the minimum level of learning. The data also revealed that one fourth students are under performers. Even for language the situation was not better. She also concluded that the children being from the same socio-economic background, the school levels factors are also responsible for the variations in the achievement test.

Tsujita (2009):- Studied the educational status of slum children between 5 and 14 years old. He concluded that the attendance ratio of slum children is much more than that of children in Delhi as a whole. Parental perception of education and financing education are the major constraints. Even if children are attending schools majority of them are over aged. There are both demand and supply side reasons for discouraging slum children from attending schooling. Moreover, the existing various Government programs can be improved to reach slum households.

Cameron (2010):- Studied the access and exclusion from primary education in slums of Dhaka. The result of this survey suggests that the education situation in the slums of Dhaka is as bad as for some of the poorest rural areas of Bangladesh. 23% of children of aged 6-11 yrs were out of school. Girls are attending primary school in greater numbers than boys. Boys and girls who had finished primary education were equally likely to fail to make the transition to secondary education.

Rathore (2012):- Studied the reasons and remedies of school dropouts at the primary level. The researcher selected four talukas on the basis of random sampling. He used lottery system to select these talukas. The total dropouts in these schools were 30. The study revealed that the main reason of the dropout of the school is poverty (96.66% -parents and teachers). Mostly dropouts are of farm labour and their monthly income is

below Rs 2000. Reasons of dropping out are work at home, not interested in studies and parents illiteracy.

Design of the study

Method

For the present research the descriptive survey method was adopted.

Population and Sample

All Out of school children of slums of Delhi constitute the target population. Out of the total population only 400 randomly selected students from the conveniently selected 20 centre schools/ slum schools run by different NGO's of Delhi were taken as the sample of the study.

Tool

As the researcher could not find appropriate standardized research tool, the following research tools were developed.

1. To divide the out of school children in different categories, the Students Identification Schedule (SIS) was prepared.
2. The investigator used self-developed Problem Checklist (PC) comprising of 84 statements covering six areas namely; school, study, teachers, classmates, personal and family to know the problems of out of school slum children.

Statistical technique used

After the collection of data statistical technique of percentage was applied and results were interpreted.

Result Analysis

Research question No.1- Different categories of the out

of school children

The out of school children comprise those children who have never attended school or who attended school irregularly because of several reasons. They may be working children, street children, bonded child labours, children of migrating families etc. The researcher finds the three categories of the out school children as given by the UNICEF.

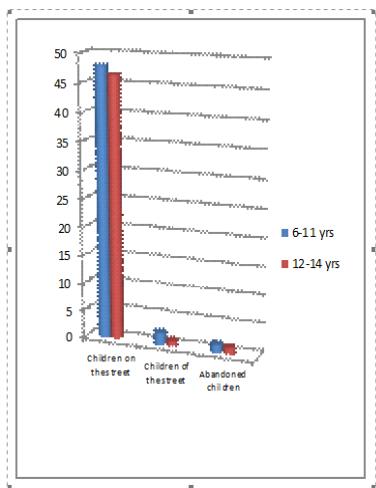


Fig-1

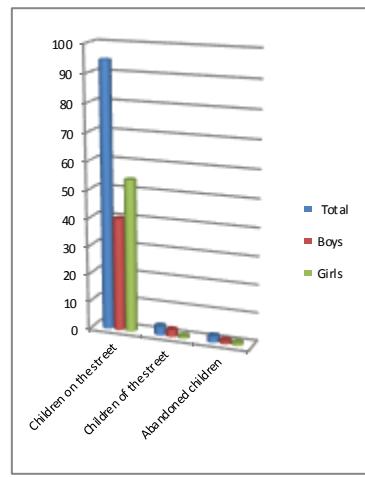


Fig-2

(Fig-1: Percentage of the different out of school children according to age and Fig-2: Percentage of the different out of school children gender-wise)

According to the survey three categories of the out of school children were enrolled in the educational centers. These categories are:

- Children on the street-94.5%
- Children of the street- 3.25%
- Abandoned children- 2.25%

From the analysis of data it is seen that in the children on the street category girls form the larger share at 57.49% (Fig-2) whereas the children of the street category boys form the larger chunk at 76.92% (Fig-2). Also, they share equally in the category of abandoned children. It is also interesting to note

that the percentage of out of school slum children is higher in the primary age level (6-11 years) in all the three categories (Fig-1).

Research question No.2-

The area specific analysis highlights the problems of out of school slum children in Delhi. The problems faced by the out of school children are divided in six broad areas. It is found from the study that the out of school slum children had highest problem with their school and least with their teachers.

Problems related to studies

The result shows that in all the three categories, boys had more problems related to studies as compared to girls (Fig-4). Also the out of school slum children between the age group of 12-14yrs that is of upper primary age level had more problems with their studies as compared to primary age level (6-11 yrs) (Fig-3).

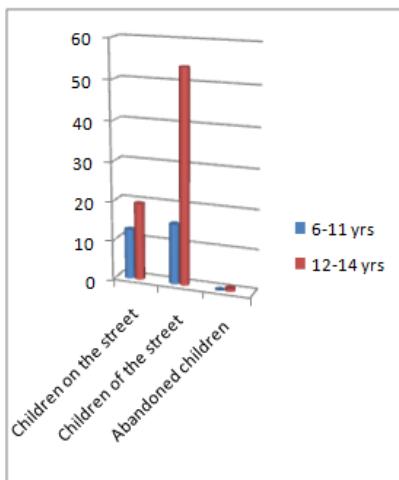


Fig-3

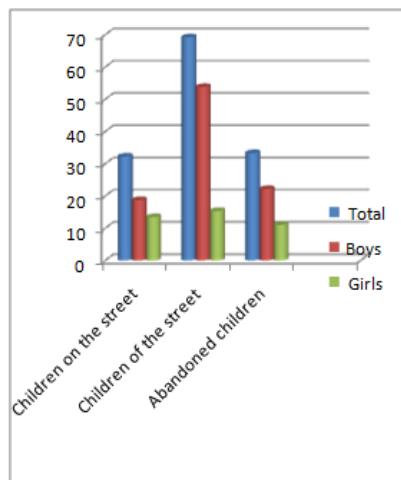


Fig-4

(Fig-3: Percentage of different out of school slum children having studies related problems age-wise and Fig-4: Percentage of different out of school slum children having studies related problems gender-wise)

Problems related to classmates

The study concluded that the out of school slum children had lesser problems with their classmates. Only 11.11% children on the street had some problems with classmates, in which boys had 6.08% and girls had 5.03% respectively (Fig-6). Girls and boys both of upper primary age level (12-14yrs) had more problems (6.61%) as compared to primary age level (4.49%) (Fig-5) out of school slum children.

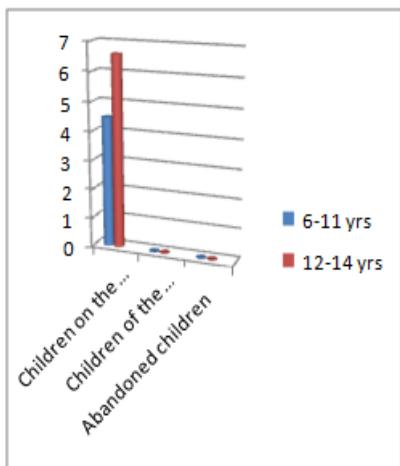


Fig-5

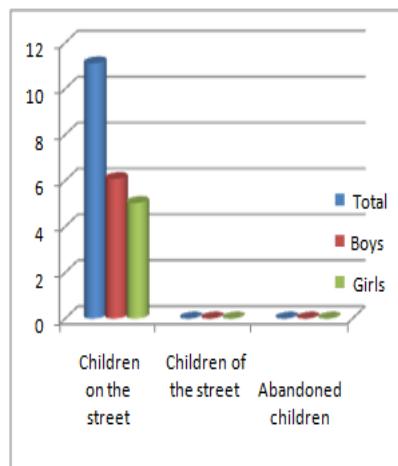


Fig-6

(Fig-5: Percentage of out of school slum children having problems with their classmates age-wise and Fig-6: Percentage of the out of school slum children having problems with their classmates gender-wise)

Problem related to teachers

The study reveals that out of school slum children had very few problems with their teachers (4.5%). Only 4.23% from children on the street, 7.69% from children of the street and 11.11% from abandoned children have some issues. In which boys and upper primary age level (12-14yrs) had more problems as compared to girls and primary age level (6-11yrs) out of school slum children (Fig-7 and Fig-8).

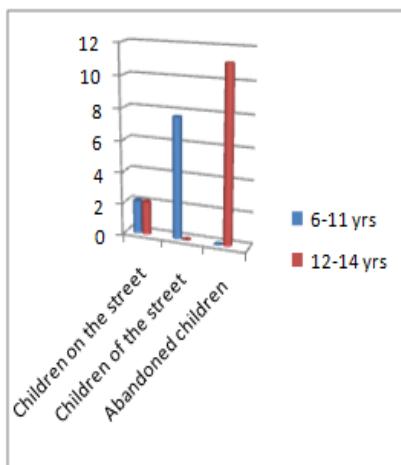


Fig-7

(Fig-7: Percentage of different out of school slum children having problems related to teachers age-wise and Fig-8: Percentage of different out of school slum children having problems related to teachers gender-wise)

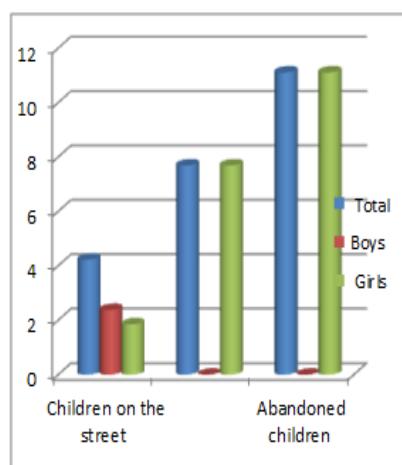


Fig-8

Problems related to school

The result shows that the school related problems should be considered as an important one because highest percentage of out of school slum children (56%) expressed that they had problems with their schools. Also girls (29.36%and 15.36%) and upper primary age level (12-14yrs)(33.07% and15.38%) out of school slum children had more problem as compared to boys and primary age level (6-11yrs) out of school slum children Fig-9 and Fig-10) of children on the street and children of the street category.

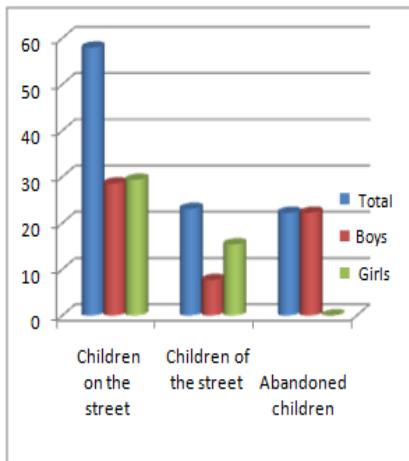


Fig-10

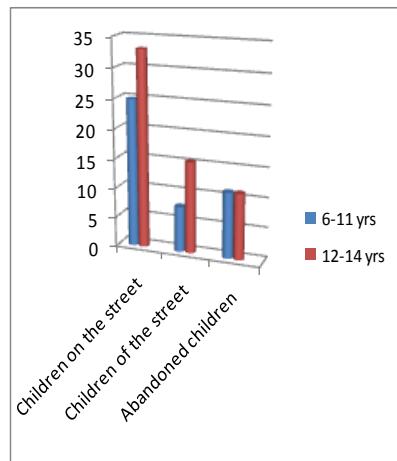


Fig- 9

(Fig-9: Percentage of different out of school slum children having problems related to school age-wise and Fig-10: Percentage of different out of school slum children having problems related to school gender-wise)

Personal problems

43.75% out of school slum children expressed that they had personal problems. Children of the street (61.54%) had more problems as compared to the children of the street (43.12%) and abandoned children (44.44%). Overall girls (22.22%, 38.46% and 33.33%) and upper primary age level (12-14yrs) (26.45%, 38.46% and 33.33%) out of school slum children had more personal problems as compared to boys and primary age level(6-11yrs) out of school slum children (Fig-11 and Fig-12).

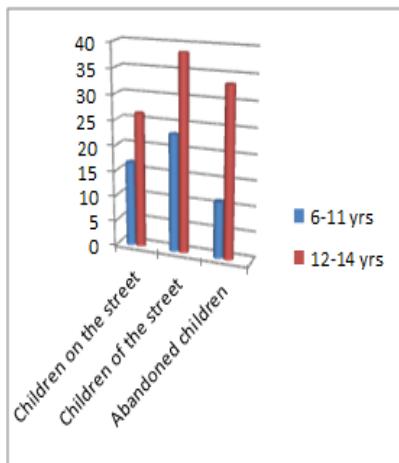


Fig-11

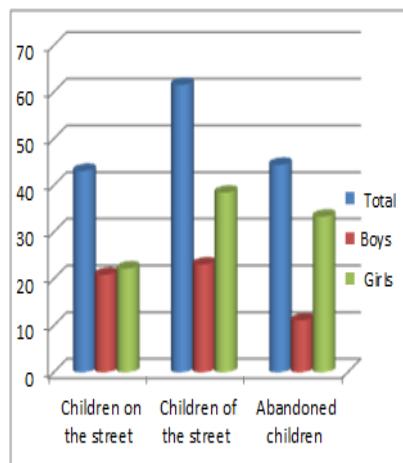


Fig-12

(Fig-11: Percentage of out of school slum children having personal problems age-wise and Fig-12: Percentage of out of school slum children having personal problems gender-wise)

Family related problems

The survey shows that only children on the street (21.69%) and children of the street (53.85%) had family related problems. The study also revealed that girls (11.37% and 30.77%) and Out of school slum children belonging to upper primary age level (12-14yrs) (11.90% and 30.77%) had more problems with their family.

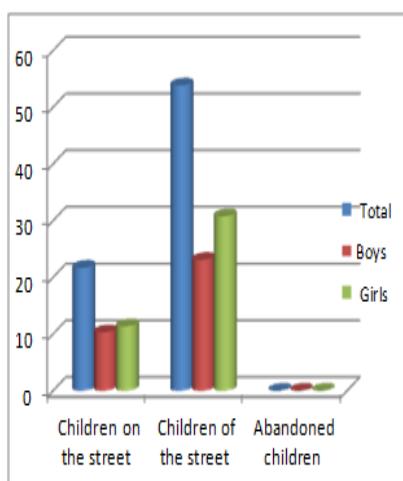
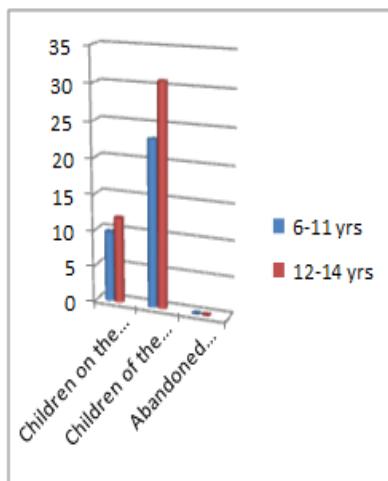


Fig-13

Fig-14

(Fig-13: Percentage of different out of school slum children having problems related to family age-wise and Fig-14: Percentage of different out of school slum children having problems related to family gender-wise)

Conclusion

The present study on out of school slum children highlights the diversity of their problems. Even if the non-formal centres run by different NGO's have taken up the task of educating them and ultimately lodging them in the mainstream of formal education, the facilities provided by them are insufficient. The majority of the schools are being single teacher schools with multiple class teaching, so as problems relating to study, school and personnel arise. So, Government and Non-Government organizations need a systematic approach for planning, organization and effective implementation of their programs in the light of social, economic and cultural context of particular slum area. Thus the study demands effective educational planning to realize the universal primary education a major component of "education to all."

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