



## The Street Children at the Railway Platform and their Rehabilitation in Patna

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**Abstract :** India has an estimated one million or more street children in each of the following cities – New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, etc. The republic of India is the 7th largest and 2nd most populated country in the world where 32% of the population lives below the poverty line. “The Street children” is a term used for children experiencing homelessness and who live on the streets of a city. Homeless children are often called street kids and street youth. Some street children, notably in more developed nations are part of a subcategory called ‘thrown away children’ who have been forced to leave home. Street children are often subject to abuse, neglect,

exploitation, or in extreme cases even murder by “clean-up squads” that are at times hired by local business people or police. In Western societies, such children are sometimes treated as homeless children rather than criminals or beggars.

**Key words:** Sexual abuse, Victims, Poverty, Unemployment, Illiterate, Breakdowns, Domestic violence, Drugs, Begging.

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### Introduction :

The phenomenon of street children has been documented as far back as 1848 by Alan .M. Ball, in the introduction to his book on the (Alan M. Ball, 1848) “History of Abandoned Children, *And Now My Soul Is Hardened: Abandoned Children in Soviet Russia, 1918–1930*. Street children differ in age, gender, ethnicity, social class and these children who live on the street without family support have different experiences throughout their lifetime. Push factors that force children out of their families and into streets and railway stations include poverty, physical and psychological abuses in homes, some level of family breakdown, migration, difficulties in school or abuse in school

or even just an impulse to see the city. Undoubtedly, all children have the right to be protected wherever they are (Project, 1996). Efforts have been made by various governments to support or partner with non- government organizations. Some governments have implemented programs to deal with street children. The general solution involves placing the street children into orphanages, juvenile homes or correctional institutions.

### **The purpose of the Study :**

The purpose of the study is to know the street children at the platforms, their family backgrounds and various kinds of problems which they face in their daily living. In spite of facing different problems like Economical, Psychological, Sociological, and Political etc. Children continue to roam around and earn their livelihood.

*The main purposes behind this research are:*

- To bring awareness about the street children and their living conditions at the platforms.
- To know the problems faced by the street children in their daily lives.
- To discover the social as well as economic problems faced by them.
- To make them aware of their occupational risks.
- Making children aware of the value of education.
- Encouraging children to go back to their homes and to go to schools for a better future.
- Making them aware of the benefits of education.
- To study and know the mind of the street children about their staying at the platforms.
- To improve the status of street children.

### **Hypothesis :**

The present study deals with those barriers which the street children face during their stay at the platforms. Hypotheses related to the present study are as follows:-

- The street children, due to lack of moral values easily get diverted and choose wrong paths.
- The children will easily get attracted towards bad company and can find various ways to collect money they need for their daily living.
- Due to lack of education, they take recourse to begging, stealing etc which leads to other social problems in the societies like beggary, poverty, child marriage etc.
- Street children do not get proper guidance from their parents and lack family care and support. They are easily tricked into bad environment and company.

### **Methodology :**

Two main methods are used in this project work which includes both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source includes interview schedule and observation; whereas, secondary sources includes book, report of survey and studies and documents.

The methodology is designed with a combination of qualitative and quantitative research tools. All the methods are based on scientific approach.

### **Sample :**

As sample, 100 teenage girls and boys from different stations and rehabilitations of Patna like Patna Railway Station, Rajender Nager Terminal, Danapur Railway Station.

**Rehabilitation centers** (SISHU-GRIHI BALUPAR, BALSAXH - JAMAL ROAD, RAINBOW- PATLIPUTRA, OPEN HOUSE DORD-GANDHI MAIDAN, AMEN BIRDARI SNEHE GHAR CHITKHARACHILD LINE-PATLIPUTRA were taken. They were selected through purposive sampling and were interviewed.

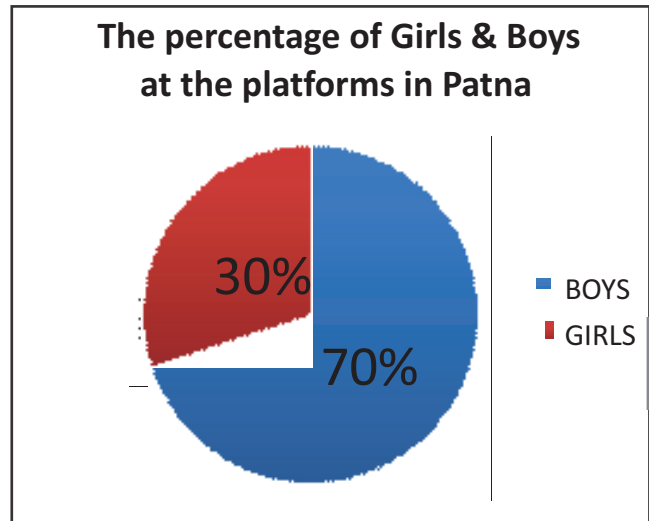
Techniques used in this study are:

- Interview-Schedule: It has been used for collecting data in the project work. The purposive sampling and interview method is used in the research project 'The Street Children at the Platform and their Rehabilitation in Patna.' In this survey the life of teenagers is studied. Causes of being on the platforms and problems which they face in their lives are also studied.
- Observation: It is the main means of data collection. It implies the use of eyes rather than of ears and the voice. It is accurate watching and noting of phenomena with regard to the cause and effect on the street children. It is watching other person's behaviors as it actually happens without controlling it. The activities are performed in the usual cause without being influenced by the external force.

**Results and Discussions : Data Analysis**

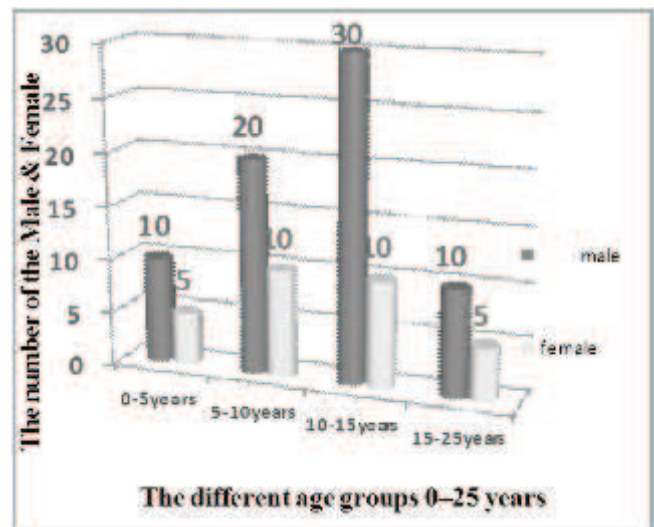
After the research work, following facts came to light:

- **FIG-1** In the chart 70% of the children are boys which is shown by the blue colour and 30% of children are girls which is shown by red colour. The majority of the children at the platforms are boys.

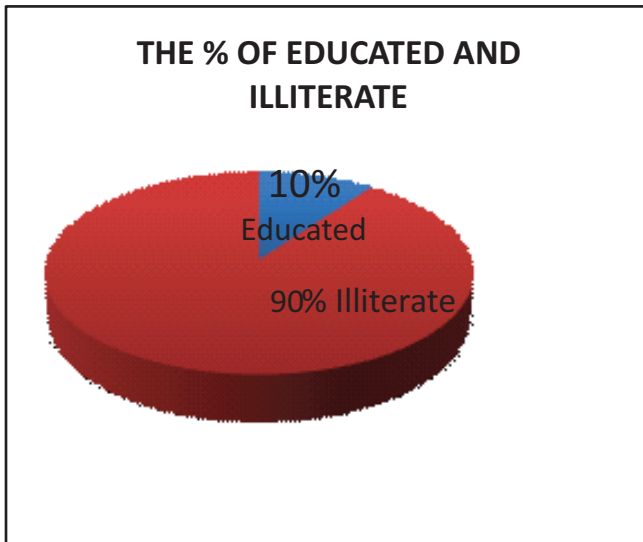


**FIG: 2 Age and gender profile**

This pie chart demonstrates that 10-15 years boys are living at the platforms. This has gone up to 30% which is shown in green colour. Here we found that in this middle age children want more freedom to live their lives in their own way. They lack support and awareness.

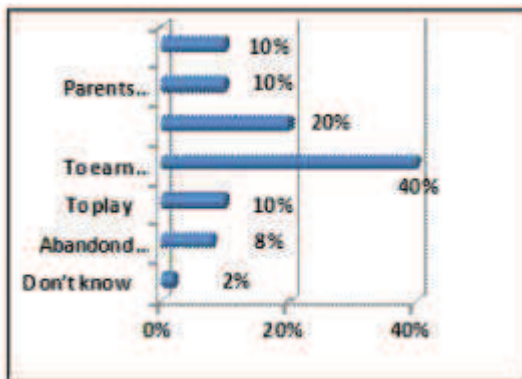


**FIG: 3** In the above chart it is shown that 90% children are illiterate in blue colour, only 10% children are being educated . It is shown in purple colour. We found that 90% children are not willing to study due poverty and lack of family support.

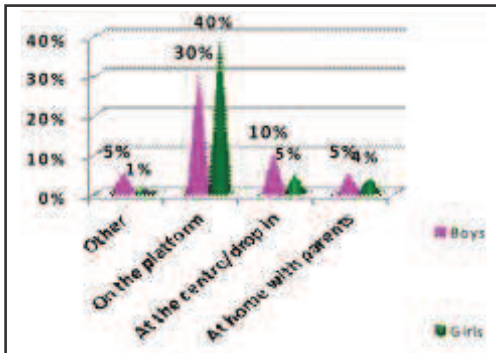


**FIG: 4** This chart shows the reasons for living on the platforms and at the centers.

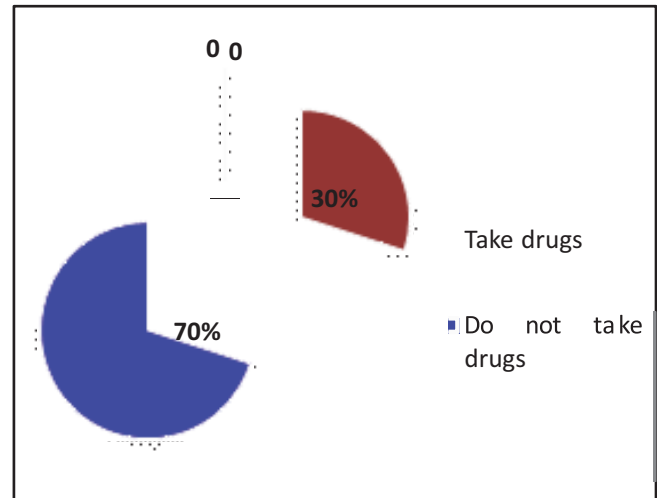
This column displays that 10% face abuse at home, 10% children are orphans, 20% have no home to live, 40% are at the platforms to earn money, 10% are there just to play, 8% are abandoned by parents and 2% children don't know why they are at the platforms.



**FIG. : 5** Sleeping arrangement at the platform and at the Rehabilitation Centre in Patna.



**FIG.- 6** Shows that 30% children take drugs and 70% don't take drugs. The figure shows that 30% of children take drugs which is in blue colour, 70% of children do not take drugs which is in brown colour. We found more boys are addicted to the drugs and suffer from different diseases.



**FIG. : 7** shows that 95% of the street children are satisfied with their earning & living at the platform. They are happy because they came there willingly 5% of children are not happy because they have been forced to live here.

**Findings :**

The present study has brought forth many interesting and heart rending perspectives regarding the impact of the street station culture on the life of the children at the platforms and their rehabilitation centres.

The findings are linked to the four rights of the children, namely -

- Right to survival,
- Right to protection,
- Right to development
- Right to participation (Lain Byrne, 1998)

We have taken into account these four rights as India is signatory to the United Nation Convention

on Rights of Children (UNCRC). It is a mandate for Indian Government to consciously work on protection of these four internationally recognized rights of the children. During this study, efforts have been made to understand the effect of railway life on the children living on the platforms.

### **Suggestions :**

On the basis of the findings of the study and the problems faced by the street children while staying at the platform to beg or pick rags, following suggestions can be drawn; (Hecht. Tobias, 1998)

- First of all parents should support their children to study and not allow and force them to get into bad habits, begging and living alone on platforms.
- We try to highlight the problem and help them to improve their condition and bring them into the main stream.

Government should establish schools and houses with all the facilities for the street children who are living on the platforms, government should provide different types of training and job opportunities for the children. Parents should be aware of family planning so that they can give their children better life and good education, which will help them to improve their economic condition.

### **Limitations :**

Collecting data was quite challenging in the beginning. Children were a bit hesitant to answer the questions. Certain difficulties that were met while collecting data and personal information from the respondents are listed below:

- Sometimes it was very hard to meet children at the platforms.
- Some respondents were not co-operative due to lack of trust and shyness.

- In some cases it was difficult to get the information.
- Few respondents gave answers other than the options mentioned in the schedule which made the schedule vague.
- Some of respondents were not able to open up.
- When we were visiting rehabilitation centers we were not allowed to meet the children without the permission of the higher authorities.
- We had to spend a lot of time in visiting the centers.
- Sometimes it was very tiresome because it was a first time experience for us visiting these places.

### **Conclusion :**

The street children support their parents economically as well as at a tender age take the responsibilities in the family. Children have the ability to do many tasks and they have better skills but due to lack of education and poverty, they fail to use and utilize their abilities in a proper way. If children get proper support and guidance from parents, they will be able to build a bright future. Children must be helped and encouraged by the parents and society to go for studies rather than wasting their time with the friends, taking drugs, gambling and roaming at the platforms. There is a saying "*Children are the Tomorrow's Future.*" But we feel sad and pained when we see the pathetic conditions of the street children at the platforms, who due to lack of moral values, education and proper guidance, move towards a dark in future.

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