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Living Status of Child Beggars in The Major Traffic Signals of Chennai City, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

The well-being of the Children is the primary objective of the development goal of India. The population of children Begging in the Major Traffic signals of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu has been on increase. The Socio-Economic and Health vulnerability of the begging children in the Major Traffic signals is highlighted in this study. At the age of schooling involved in such activities for their survival. Female Children are the most Vulnerable bearing the economic burden of the family. They speak Telugu and Hindi find reluctant to choose a medium of education of their choice which is not also freely available to these children. As they are migrated from different states, do not confine to proper census housing unit, hence unable to access free education in the State of Tamil Nadu. Due to lack of education, awareness and ignorance these children are subject to many problems such as abuse of any kind, exploitation affects their health in long term. Those children live in road side tent either with parents or with guardian . Parents are the main forces behind their begging. Most of the respondents have medium family size of 4 persons. They move to the begging field as a group carrying their siblings in hand. Children are addicted to narcotics such as Pan, Beetle, kanga, and alcohol and unhealthy, and drug abusers. Female child beggars with no education of age between Six to Ten years are the breadwinners of their families, and shoulder the economic burden of their parents. Health status is bad they are not a future asset but a liability of the state, “creating a sad state in the post-pandemic era. Health is a primary concern of the state which again has an impact on the government in the form of more allocation for health care in this vulnerable section.

Key Words: Child Beggars, Major Traffic Signals, Bread Winners, Skin Diseases, Health Care, Vulnerable Children.

Introduction

The greatness of a nation never lies in possessing magnificent stately towers and buildings but in the quality of its citizens. A Nation can prosper by promoting initiatives for the betterment of its People. The well-being of the entire population particularly the Children is the primary objective of the development goal of India. The inclusive growth of the nation must reach all sections of the society Children the future architects of the nation in particular. The concept of a Welfare State in India emerged in course of time and the modern state is indebted to addressing substantially the Socio-Economic and Health problems of children. According to Rameshwori Pandya Children are the future human resources of India. Investment in Children is an investment in the future of the country and the quality of life of the people of India.

Child care is the greatest responsibility of the family and it has become the primary concern of the state when such care is lacking at the familial level. Government Programs attempt to enhance human dignity and ensure quality in general. Quality food, clothing, shelter, education, and health of children, in particular, are the fundamental constituents that remain at the helm of affairs of the state.

The so-called inclusive growth goal of the nation also insisted that the growth must reach all sections of the society which include "CHILDREN". According to the draft of the UN on children, every child has the inherent right to life. In developed countries, children are placed in special status. Where the case is different in a country like India, being victims of physical and mental immaturity, need special protection and care. In India, a child shall be registered as and when born and given name, nationality, and care by family. In the same way, a state must also respect the birthright of every child and be committed to preserving their identities.

More child Beggars are found in major traffic signals of Chennai City, Tamil Nadu. Particularly in major traffic signals of Chennai such as Nandanam,, Thousand lights, Beasant Nagar signal and so on. In such signals, more two and four-wheelers pause for a while due to the regulation of traffic. These child beggars make use of this opportunity to beg and bring money (Income) to their families. Parents and guardians of these children are also lazy and reluctant about the future of their children and pressurize them to do so.

A vast multitude of homeless and street children who live in road roadside in increasing number are found involved in this activity in post-Covid 19 era in the major cities of the country which is a serious problem in the capital city of Chennai too. Children whose parents passed away due to Covid-19 or were deliberately forsaken by parents due to poverty, or deliberately thrown into the street, female children in particular are to be highlighted.

Another group of Children by selling small articles such as stationary reach the public and beg. Due to Covi-19 many lost job and consequently children turned as breadwinners of the family by means of begging. Though article 24 of the constitution prohibits children from being used for domestic work, in a factory or in any hazardous work. Still there are cases on child forced to earn by begging which is also an offence. These children are human resources of India and assets need to be addressed cared through well designed programs.

These children are denied one way or other of their inherent right to social life. The struggles stem from the facts that pushed to earn for their livelihood,

support the family members and to take care of their young one left behind. Such children are placed in poor living status in India.

Review of Literature

According to Maureen Jowett and Steve (2007), four categories of children are identified until the 1870s, they are 1) children found on the street such as beggars, 2) prostitutes and young offenders, 3) children at work, 4) children taken care by HOMES. Ambroise Tardien (1868), Anthol John (1868), Dr Barnado (1889), Charles Booth (1889,) and Seebohm Rowntree (1901) were some pioneers who raised social consciousness about child welfare individually or as groups. Despite the voice of the social reformers and social activists children in modern society face problems of varied nature such as malnutrition, deficiency, handicapped, juvenile delinquency, and denial of freedom to expose themselves to activities and recreation. Child trafficking /prostitution and pornography are novel types of child-related issues but are very common in the current scenario as children are exploited sexually for commercial purposes. Organ transplantation, beggary, child labor, involving in anti-social practices added issues of children at present. These continue to plague the children.

In some states like Maharashtra if a girl child is born in a rural area, then the girl will be named "NAKUSHA" which means unwanted. It is discriminatory towards Women. This kind of behavior of parents reflects the patriarchal mindset of society and it indicates the anger of the parents on the birth of a girl child. Such children are accidentally or incidentally thrown out of the family and found in a place where more people gather and probably in the market area and in major traffic signals. Research says that Delhi is quite unsafe for Children. Delhi records a much higher rate than all other cities for crime against children. But the same research proves that Chennai and Coimbatore are the safest. Murder of children, abatement of the suicide of a child, infanticide, feticide, human trafficking, selling of minors for prostitution, rape, attempt to commit murder, exposure and abandonment, and simple hurt, are some of the heinous crimes done to children.

A study stated that Juvenile and Police unit (JAPU) frequently rescue kids who were doing odd job and begging. Most of the children were from Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Orissa. It is found that Urban Poverty and untold crimes were the reasons behind the issue. The government rescued the children found in the street and roadside and handed over them to parents and the child welfare committee (CWC) who again handover them to Homes run by the Government or NGOs. These children rescued were victims of child marriage, physical abuse, beggary, Child Labor, trafficking, and so on. As per the report of the Times of India the number of Children rescued in 2017 has been falling.

Another study on "Children Hired" states that child abuse takes different forms when they are hired from their family and paid Rs 50-Rs100 every day. According to a report of TOI, Chennai nearly 26 children were rescued from begging in a week. Most of the Kids were sent by their poor parents and relatives to beg and earn money for their survival. In some cases, they were hired by local women and used for begging. The police of Juvenile Aid Protection along with the children and the JAPU WING OF THE CRIMES AGAINST Women and children [CAW&C] unit found that most of the rescued children had been pushed into begging either by parents or relatives. They are Kidnapped and hired for Rs 50-Rs 100 per day. Their lives are tragic and tormented. They are marked by unremitting misery and misfortune by not being stable and comfortable.

From the review of previous studies and reports, it is identified that the number of begging children rescued from the street had fallen. However, children begging in the street, roadside, and market areas and in the major traffic signals in particular persists. So, a humble attempt is made to study the social life of these child beggars found in major traffic signal of Chennai City, Tamil Nadu.

Significance of The Study

The fundamental requirements of the livelihood of children are food, clothing, shelter, health, and education, and counselling has an appreciable impact on their socio-Economic and health status of children which have to be addressed. Beggary is an age-old

evil where more beggars are found in large cities and in places where people gather in large numbers. Child beggary is one of the major groups. Though the deliberate attempt was made on one side to prevent beggary in general and child beggary in particular street children of one kind and begging children in major Traffic Signal and their socio-eco-health related issues form the nucleus of this study.

India is a country with 63 percent youth population. Present children are the future human resource, who seed the nation building. Hence, the children-related study is very significant in the current Society. Though there are many programs and regulatory acts promoted by the Government of India, Tamil Nadu as well these benefits have not reached this vulnerable section of the society as they are not confined to particular census house units. An integrated program for street children was established in 1998 to promote a major initiative by covering shelter, health care, safe drinking water, education, recreational facilities, and protection of children against abuse and exploitation. But, such a program was organized with the main aim to protect children without family and home. But this study is confined to begging children in the major traffic signals of Chennai city. There are also programs called Child line service that functions to make long-term follow-up care. Besides, there is also a special provision for children in the Indian Constitution to protect, develop, and safe guard the welfare of the children.

Indian constitution prohibits the employment of Children in any factory or in any hazardous occupation. Perhaps Street Children are the assets and their labor is being used on BEGGING though child labor is prohibited under regulation act 1986. Children involved in begging to bring income to the family which is also a means of earning by being employed in odd work in an unsafe environment more vulnerable than an involved in hazardous work. Though the employment of children below 14 years is prohibited by law children continue to beg in hazardous environments such as roadside, market side, and working in a condition where there is no safety for their life, especially in traffic signals has to be addressed through studies.

Statement of Problem

The Population of children Begging in the Major Traffic signals of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu has been on increase. The living status of these vulnerable children from the Socio-Economic and Health front becomes the major focus of this present study.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study

- To study the socialdeterminants of Child Beggars in the Major Traffic signals of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu.
- To study the Economic responsibilities of Child Beggars in the Major Traffic signals of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu.
- To identify the health issues of Child Beggars in the Major Traffic signals of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu.

Methodology

The Population for this research paper is Begging children in major traffic signals of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu. A sample of 50 respondents were interviewed through purposive sampling. Primary data was collected from the respondents through structured questionnaire. A face to face interview was conducted and related information was collected. Data tabulated were analyzed using simple statistical tool of average. Interpreted and findings were made. This study is subject to the geographical limit of Chennai City and major Traffic signals where the street children beg. Only Children of age group below 14 were interviewed.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic particulars such as Age, Gender, Religion,level of Education and Size of family, languages spoken, migration are some essential factors to study the live status of Children begging in major Traffic Signals of Chennai City. The analysis of these factors is significant for the current study to identify the Social status of children begging in the major Traffic Signals of Chennai City, Tamil Nadu. To study the living status, the profile of the respondents is significant. Likewise, to study the social status, demographic profile of the respondent gains momentum. Some of the essential Socio-

Demographic factors are analysed below to arrive at the objective of this study.

Age is an important social variable to study the different age group Children involved in begging activity. Among the respondents 70 percent of the respondents are in the age group 6-10 years. A majority of the respondents is in the age group of 6-10 involved in the begging activity in the major traffic signals of Chennai City. They are at the age of schooling but involved in such activity for their survival.

Gender is an essential factor to study the Social status of Child beggarsin the major Traffic Signals of Chennai City.Among the respondents 26 percent of begging children in the study area are Male and other 74 percent are Female. As female out number male in census 2011 it is inferred that more female Children involve in the begging activity in the study area. This explicates that female Children are the most Vulnerable bearing the economic burden of the family.

Language spoken is an important demographic factor that helps to identify the children from other states and turned beggars. Among the respondents 42 percent of the children begging in the major Traffic signal speak Hindi and 45 percent of them speak Telugu. As they speak varied languages, related medium of education is not possible in the state free of cost. So there is no viable source of opportunity to get a school of their choice. So they are more reluctant to seek education. Thus they involve in this work without minding the importance of education. This particular information also conveys that there are children of migrants who turned into Child Beggars in the major Traffic Signals of Chennai City in a post-Covid-19 era.

The level of education is an imperative social factor in improving the standard of living of children. Of respondents 86 percent of the respondents had no education and involved in begging in major Traffic Signal. However,6 percent of the respondents was school drop outs and involved in this activity in the study area. It is found that more percentage of children with no education have involved in begging activity in the study area and conveys that poverty and family burden are the root cause for these children to involve in begging in the study area.

Again educational facility is denied to these Child Beggars in the major Traffic Signals of Chennai City. Education is an important social dominant of the status human life. Education at the gross root level is also denied to the children beggars in the major traffic signals by virtue. Among the child respondents 92 percent of the children who are begging in the traffic signal are denied education. As they are migrated from different states, do not confine to proper census housing unit, hence not able to access the facilities available in the State of Tamil Nadu free education too. Moreover, they speak Telugu and Hindi as a common language feel reluctant to choose a medium of education of their choice which is not also freely available to these children living in huts.

Child labor is an offence. Children age below 14 are imparted with compulsory education. But, Socio-Economic and Cultural background of these children prevent them to enter even the first stage of education. After primary level also school drop outs are found among the respondents though the percentage is insignificant reflecting the interest of children on education and the callous behavior of the parents in motivating their wards on the path of education. These Children fall under the category of either voluntary dropout of school or refusal to accept the educational facilities offered by the state government. Due to lack of education, awareness and ignorance these children are subject to many problems such as abuse of any kind, exploitation affects their health in the long run.

Place of living of child beggars in the city of Chennai is a major determinant of social status. It is also observed from the study that 54 percent of children live in road side tent either with parents, single parent or with guardian such as uncle, relative and so on. They are the main force behind their begging.

Size of familys is an important social determinant child begging in major Traffic Signals of Chennai City. Among the respondents 76 percent respondents live in a family with the size of more than 3 siblings. Most of the respondents have medium family size of 4 persons in a family. This shows that they move to the begging field as a group carrying their siblings in hand.

Begging children in the major Traffic Signals of Chennai City are living in varied familial background. This fact is an important social determinant of the child beggars in the study area. Among the respondents 48 percent of respondents had lived with mother alone, 20 percent of respondents had lived with father alone, again 20 percent respondents had lived with both father and mother alone. 12 percent of the respondents live with relatives and Uncle who are the guardian. As a major percentage of respondents live with their parents they are the source behind these children begging, "CHILD BREAD WINNERS". 75 percent of the respondents had no earlier history of this kind of work, but turned only after post covid-19. It is found from the study that they are growing in a larger number more recently. They have no educational background and are born to beg and help their family. Another type of child beggars is also found but an insignificant number involved in this activity as part-time. After school time in the evening replacing their parents these children beg.

Health issues are pertaining to the behavioral pattern and well-being of children. The social, emotional and Behavioral functioning of children is an essential area that receive our attention. According to Mottpoll report 2017 there are the Top 10 health concerns for children. They are Cyber bullying, lack of exercise, unhealthy eating, Drug abuse and neglect. This study also had attempted to study the health issues of begging children found in the study area who are found to be unhealthy and drug abusers. Moreover these children are addicted to narcotics such as Pan, Beetle, kanga, and alcohol. Despite these children are active and do not face any major health issues during the period of study. 10 percent of the respondents have rashes in their skin. Because they seldom take bath. And moreover, they are exposed to direct sunlight and a polluted environment throughout. They look shabby and unhealthy. Again life is uncertain for this vulnerable group as they beg in the major traffic signals. Their work zone is accident-prone, hence no guarantee of life for these poor children. Despite they beg for their survival and to feed their family.

Conclusion

Begging is an age-old old problem has turned a social menace in the life of mankind. Begging is a virtue and every society has to have concern on this segment of people. When begging becomes a major source of earning of a specific group, especially children to shoulder the family responsibility it becomes a curse on the mankind. Even in the developed country administrators face hardship with this menace. Child beggars have emerged more in number in major cities of India. One of the major challenges of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu after Pandemic is “growing number of Child Beggars in major Traffic Signals”.

A humble attempt has been made to study the Social -Economic and Health issues of Begging Children in major Traffic Signals “of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu to highlight their living status. It is found from the study that Begging Children in major Traffic Signals “of Chennai City in Tamil Nadu are female children of age between Six to Ten years who speak Telugu and Hindi. With no educational background and thirst to aspire education, these children of migrant parents from other states of India involved in begging in the post pandemic era. These children in a large number live in the encroached road side huts with parents or single parents or with other relatives. They are basically from a family size of medium having three to four sibling move to beg in the major traffic signals as group.

The child beggars found in the study area are victims of Skin borne diseases as they are exposed to pollution and sun light throughout. They are also malnourished and deficient of all nutrients. They seldom bathe as they do not have spare dress. These child beggars are victims of unhealthy eating practices as per the measuring yard of Top 10 health concern for children used by Mittpoll report 2017. Child beggars are addicted to narcotics of a varied kinds such as Pan, Beetles, Kanga and alcohol. They are ignorant of the negative impact of intake of narcotics. They are also prone for other social evils. Again, these children are victims of drugs which is one of the Top 10 health concerns for children quoted by Mottpoll report of 2017.

It is concluded that female child beggars of age between Six to Ten years with no education are breadwinners of their families, and shoulder the economic burden of their parents. As their health status is bad they are not future assets but a liability of the state, “creating a sad state in the post-pandemic. Health is a primary responsibility of the state which again has an impact on the government in the form of more allocation for health care in this vulnerable section of ” CHILD BEGGARS OF MAJOR TRAFFIC SIGNALS OF CHENNAI CITY IN TAMIL NADU”.

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