

PARENTS BACKGROUND OF STREET CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY OF COASTAL ANDHRA REGION IN ANDHRA PRADESH IN INDIA

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Abstract: In this paper, for understanding the present predicament of street children, it is important to analyse the background of the parents and the family from a number of angles. These include the following aspects: overall economic position of the family, the occupation of the father is out of 411 respondents, majority 197 (47.9%) of the parents are coolies followed by 53 (12.9%) government employs, 48 (11.7%) agriculturists. 37 (9%) beggars, 23 (5.6%) business persons, 15 (3.6%) private employees, 15 (3.6%) drivers, 11 (2.7%) topy workers (building work), 6 (1.5%) servant maids, 4 (1%) welding workers, followed by 1 (0.2%) each industrial worker and fish hunter. the occupation of the mothers. Out of 395 respondents, majority 212 (53.7%) of the mothers are coolies followed by 84 (21.3%) house wife, 38 (9.6%) beggars, 17 (4.3%) private employees, 14 (3.5%) agriculturists, 11 (2.8%) government employees, 6 (1.5%) business persons, 5 (1.3%) welding workers, 3 (0.8%) drivers, 2 (0.5%) servant maids, and 1 (0.3%) each industrial worker, water man, topy worker (building work). literacy level of the parents of the street children. It is observed that majority of the fathers of these respondents are illiterate. Illiteracy is much higher among the mothers as compared to fathers. The average age of father of the children at the time of death is 32 years, which is very low by any standard. This shows the poor health situation of the fathers. The average age of mother of the children at the time of death is 27 years, which is very low by any standard. This shows the poor health situation of the mother. The average income earned by the mother is Rs. 9,416 which is very low. The average annual income earned by the father is Rs 30,781. From the survey it is observed that out of 264 fathers who are taking alcohol, 186 (70.5%) are taking the same daily, another 58 (22%) weekly, and 20 (7.5%) occasionally.

Introduction: The phenomenon of street children is an offshoot of complex interplay of various socio-economic and cultural factors, religious, cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity. The large-scale presence of street children is a symptom of social disease. It has acquired a gigantic dimension in the wake of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation especially in the developing countries such as India. The country future depends upon the quality of present day children. Hence, there is every need to attend to this problem.

Methodology: Objectives:

- To examine the Birth Place of the Parents
- To examine the Occupation of the parents
- To examine the Literacy and Education Status of the Parents
- To examine the Marital Status of Parents
- To examine the Reason for the Death of the Parents and Age of Parents at the Time of their Death
- To examine the Annual Income of the parents and Habits of parents

Source of Data; the present study is based on the primary data, primary data was collected from a sample survey conducted in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and Guntur Municipal Corporations, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Selection of the Sample: Selection of the sample is done through a purposive sample at a few places of concentration of the street children in the three cities selected for the study. For the purpose of the research study, a sample of 150 street children fulfilling the operational definition mentioned above has been selected from each city. The places of concentration selected are seven in each city. These include railway station, bus stand, busy centres, market centres, temples, hotels and parks. Out of total sample of 450 street children, 57 are girl children, the street children are scatted over different places taking a variety of work activities for their livelihood. The rarely stay for a longer periods of times at a fixed place as such no official estimates are available about the exact number and status of street children in the selected cities.

Birth Place	Number (Father)	Percent	Number (Mother)	Percent
Rural	348	77.3	325	72.2
Urban	74	16.4	95	21.1
Total	422	93.8	420	93.3
Not responded	28	6.2	30	6.7
Total	450	100	450	100

Source: Primary data

Occupation of Parents:

Table 2 Occupation of the Father					
S. No	Occupation	Numbers	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Government Employee	53	11.8	12.9	12.9
2	Private Employ	15	3.3	3.6	16.5
3	Coolie	197	43.8	47.9	64.5
4	Agriculture	48	10.7	11.7	76.2
5	Business	23	5.1	5.6	81.8
6	Industrial Worker	1	0.2	0.2	82
7	Driver	15	3.3	3.6	85.6
8	Beggars	37	8.2	9	94.6
9	Servant Maid	6	1.3	1.5	96.1
10	Topy Work (building work)	11	2.4	2.7	98.8
11	Welding Work	4	0.9	1	99.8
12	Fish Hunting	1	0.2	0.2	100
	Total	411	91.3	100	
13	Not responded	39	8.7		
	Total	450	100		

Source: Primary data

Table 3 Occupation of the Mother				
S. No	Occupation	Number	Percentage	Valid Percentage
1	Government Employee	11	2.4	2.8
2	Private Employ	17	3.8	4.3
3	Coolie	212	47.1	53.7
4	Agriculture	14	3.1	3.5
5	Business	6	1.3	1.5
6	Industrial Worker	1	0.2	0.3
7	Water Man	1	0.2	0.3
8	Driver	3	0.7	0.8
9	Beggar	38	8.4	9.6
10	Servant Maid	2	0.4	0.5
11	Housewife	84	18.7	21.3
12	Topy work (building work)	1	0.2	0.3
13	Welding Work	5	1.1	1.3
	Total	395	87.8	100
14	Not responded	55	12.2	
	Total	450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 1 shows the birth place of the parents. Out of 450, majority of the parents of these respondents were born in the rural areas. The non-response to this Question is low. Out of 422 (93.8%)

fathers for whom information is available, 348 (85.2%) were born in rural areas. Similarly out of 420 (93.3%) mothers for whom the information is available, 325 (77.4%) were born in the rural areas,

and the rest were born in the urban areas. The study reveals that though these children were found at present in the urban area, for majority the background is rural areas only.

An analysis of table 2 shows the occupation of the father. Out of 411 respondents, majority 197 (47.9%) of the parents are coolies followed by 53 (12.9%) government employs, 48 (11.7%) agriculturists. 37 (9%) beggars, 23 (5.6%) business persons, 15 (3.6%) private employees, 15 (3.6%) drivers, 11 (2.7%) topy workers (building work), 6 (1.5%) servant maids, 4

(1%) welding workers, followed by 1 (0.2%) each industrial worker and fish hunter. An analysis of table 3 shows the occupation of the mothers. Out of 395 respondents, majority 212 (53.7%) of the mothers are coolies followed by 84 (21.3%) house wife, 38 (9.6%) beggars, 17 (4.3%) private employees, 14 (3.5%) agriculturists, 11 (2.8%) government employees, 6 (1.5%) business persons, 5 (1.3%) welding workers, 3 (0.8%) drivers, 2 (0.5%) servant maids, and 1 (0.3%) each industrial worker, water man, topy worker (building work).

Literacy Status of the Parents

Sl.No	Literacy	Number (Father)	Percent	Valid per cent	Number (Mother)	Percent	Valid per cent
1	Literate	137	30.4	33.7	110	24.4	28.4
2	Illiterate	270	60	66.3	277	61.5	71.6
	Total	407	90.4	100	387	86	100
3	Not responded	43	9.6		63	14	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 4 shows the literate status of the father of the respondents. Out of 407 respondents, majority, 270 (66.3%) of the fathers are illiterates, 137 (33.7%) are literates.

An analysis of table 4 shows the literate status of the mothers of the respondents. Out of 387 (86%) respondents, majority, 277 (71.6%) mothers are

illiterates, 110 (28.4%) are literates.

The above table 4 shows the literacy level of the parents of the street children. It is observed that majority of the fathers of these respondents are illiterate. Illiteracy is much higher among the mothers as compared to fathers.

Level of Education of Parents

Sl.No	Qualifications	Number (father)	Percent	Valid percent	Number (mother)	Percent	Valid Percent
1	Primary	97	21.6	55.7	97	21.6	69.8
2	Upper Primary	27	6	15.5	28	6.2	20.1
3	High School	7	1.6	4	10	2.2	7.2
4	Intermediate	29	6.4	16.7	4	0.9	2.9
5	Graduate	14	3.1	8	--	--	--
	Total	174	38.7	100	139	30.9	100
6	Not responded	276	61.3		311	69.1	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 6 shows the educational qualifications of the fathers. Out of 450 respondents, 276 (61.3%) did not answer the question. Out of 174 (38.7%) fathers who are literate, majority of the respondents, 97 (55.7%) only were educated at

primary level, and another 29 (16.7%) at Intermediate level, 27 (15.5%) at upper primary level, 14 (8%) at Graduate level, and 7 (4%) at high school level.

The above table 6 shows the educational qualifications of the mothers. Out of 450

respondents, 311 (69.1%) did not answer the question. Out of 139 (30.9%) mothers who are literate, majority of the respondents 97 (69.8%) studied at primary

level, 28 (20.1%) at Upper Primary level 10 (7.2%) at high school level, 4 (2.9%) at Intermediate level.

Marital Status of Parents

Sl.No.	Status	Number (Father)	Percent	Valid percent	Number (Mother)	Percent	Valid percent
1	Currently Married	248	55.1	67.4	239	53.1	70.5
2	Widowed	51	11.3	13.9	32	7.1	9.4
3	Separated	12	2.7	3.3	12	2.7	3.5
4	Divorced	57	12.7	15.5	56	12.4	16.5
	Total	368	81.8	100	339	75.3	100
5	Not responded	82	18.2		111	24.7	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 7 shows the marital status of the parents. Out of 450 respondents, 82 (18.2%) did not respond to the question with regard to marital status of the father. Out of 368 (81.8%) respondents, a majority of 248 (67.4%) are currently married, 57 (15.5%) divorced, 51 (13.9%) are in the category of widowed, and 12 (3.3%) are separated, respectively.

Similarly out of 450 respondents, 111 (24.7%) did not respond to the question with regard to mother's marital status. Out of the 339 (75.3%) respondents, a majority of 239 (70.5%) mothers are currently married, 56 (16.5%) divorced, 32 (9.4%) widowed, and 12 (3.5%) are separated.

Age of Parents at the Time of their Death

Sl.No	Age	Number (father)	Percent	Valid Percent	Number (mother)	Percent	Valid Percent
1	< 25	4	0.9	10	20	4.4	28.2
2	26 - 30	20	4.4	50	42	9.3	59.2
3	31 -35	8	1.8	20	9	2	12.7
4	36 - 40	7	1.6	17.5	-	-	-
5	46 - 50	1	0.2	2.5	-	-	-
	Total	40	8.9	100	71	15.8	100
6	Not responded	410	91.1		379	84.2	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 8 shows the age at the time of the death of the father of these children. Out of 450 children, 40 (8.9%) fathers of these children are not alive. Out of 40 children, majority 20 (50%) of the respondents father died at the age between 26 -30 years and 8 (20%) died at the age between 31-35 years. 7 (17.5%) died at the age between 36 -40 years. 4 (10%) died at the age less than 25 years, and 1 (2.5%) died at the age of 46 - 50 year. The average age of father of the children at the time of death is 32 years, which is very low by any standard. This shows the poor health situation of the fathers.

The above table 8 shows the age at the time of the death of the mother of these children. Out of 450 children, 71 (15.8%) mothers of these children are not alive. Out of 71 children, majority 42 (59.2%) mothers died at the age between 26 -30 years, and 20 (28.2%) of the mothers died at the age less than 25 years, 9 (12.7%) mothers died at the age between 31 -35 years. The average age of mother of the children at the time of death is 27 years, which is very low by any standard. This shows the poor health situation of the mother.

Reason for the Death of the Parents:

Sl.No	Reason	Number (Father)	Percent	Valid Percent	Number (Mother)	Percent	Valid Percent
1	Natural	18	4	43.9	40	8.9	56.3
2	Accident	15	3.3	36.6	21	4.7	29.6
3	Suicide	8	1.8	19.5	8	1.8	11.3
4	Not Known	-	-	-	2	0.4	2.8
	Total	41	9.1	100	71	15.8	100
5	Not responded	409	90.9		379	84.2	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of the table 9 shows the reason for the death of the father of these children. Out of 41 (9.1%) of the fathers, majority of the fathers 18 (43.9%) died with natural causes and another 15 (36.6%) died of accidental causes and 8 (19.5%) committed suicide.

With regard to causes of death of the mothers of these street children, out of 71, majority 40 (56.3%) died on natural causes and another 21 (29.6%) died on accidental causes. The case of death of 2 (2.8%) mothers of these is not known.

Annual Income of the Father

Sl.No	Income(in Rs)	Number	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	< 25000	226	50.2	77.1	77.1
2	25000 - 50000	15	3.3	5.1	82.3
3	50000 --75000	8	1.8	2.7	85
4	75000 - 100000	30	6.7	10.2	95.2
5	100000- 125000	1	0.2	0.3	95.6
6	> 125000	13	2.9	4.4	100
	Total	293	65.1	100	
7	Not responded	157	34.9		
	Total	450	100		

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 10 shows the annual income of the father of these street children. Out of 450 children, 157 (34.9%) did not answer this question. Out of 293 (65.1%) children who answered this question, a majority of 226 (77.1%) percent fathers are earning less than Rs. 25,000 per year and another 30 (10.2%) answered that their fathers are earning between Rs. 75,000-1,00,000 per annum. 15 (5.1%) fathers are earning between Rs. 25,000 – 50,000. 8 (2.7%) fathers are earning between Rs. 50,000 – 75,000. The average annual income earned by the father is Rs 30,781. The same is presented in Diagram 1.

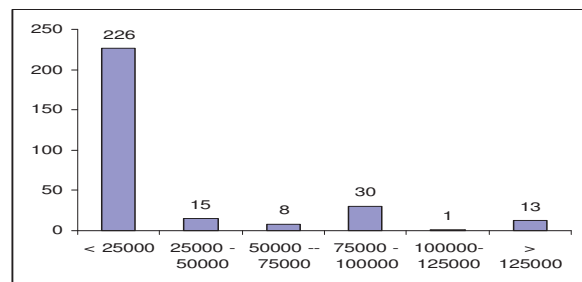


Diagram -1 Total Annual Income of the Father

Source: Table 10

Sl.No	Income (in Rs)	Number	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	< 10000	152	33.8	80	80
2	10000 -20000	32	7.1	16.8	96.8
3	30000- 40000	4	0.9	2.1	98.9
4	40000- 50000	1	0.2	0.5	99.5
5	> 50000	1	0.2	0.5	100
	Total	190	42.2	100	
6	Not responded	260	57.8		
	Total	450	100		

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 11 shows the annual income of the mothers of the street children. Out of 450 children, 260 (57.8%) did not answer this question. Out of 190 (42.2%) children who answered this question, majority 152 (80%) mothers of these children are earning less than Rs. 10,000 per annum, and another

32 (16.8%) answered that their mothers are earning between Rs. 10,000 – 20,000 per annum. 4 (2.1%) answered that their mothers are earning between Rs. 30,000 – 40,000 per annum. The average income earned by the mother is Rs. 9,416 which is very low. The same is presented in Diagram 2.

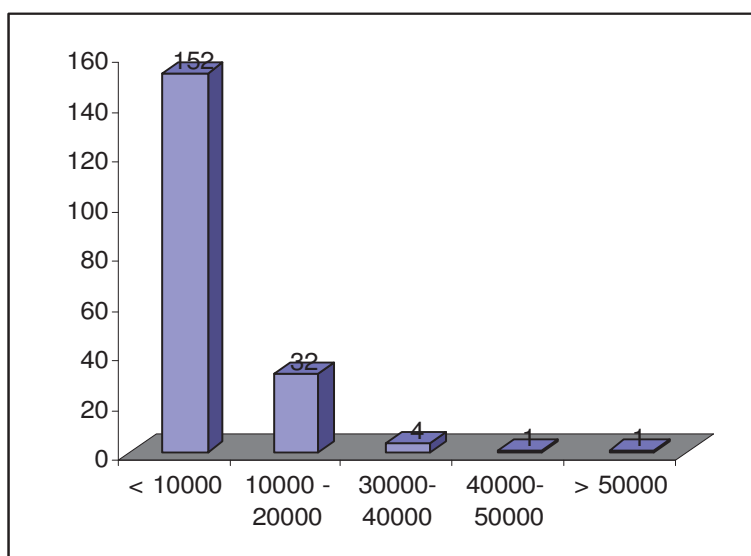


Diagram - 2 Annual Income of the Mother

Source: Table 11

Sl.No	Response	Number (father)	Percent	Valid Percent	Number (Mother)	Percent	Valid Percent
1	Yes	264	58.7	62.9	55	12.2	13.1
2	No	156	34.7	37.1	366	81.3	87
	Total	420	93.3	100	421	93.6	100
3	Not responded	30	6.7		29	6.4	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 12 shows the habit of taking of alcohol by parents. Out of 420 (93.3%) respondents, majority of the fathers 264 (62.9%) take alcohol. Similarly out of 421 (98.1%) mothers, majority of the mothers, 336(87%) do not take alcohol. Only 55 (13.1%) take alcohol. As expected, majority of the

fathers of these respondents are accustomed to taking alcohol. From the survey it is observed that out of 264 fathers who are taking alcohol, 186 (70.5%) are taking the same daily, another 58 (22%) weekly, and 20 (7.5%) occasionally.

Sl.No	Smoking	Number Fathers	Percent	Valid Percent	Number Mothers	Percent	Valid Percent
1	Yes	253	56.2	60.4	12	2.7	2.9
2	No	166	36.9	39.6	409	90.9	97.1
	Total	419	93.1	100	421	93.6	100
3	Not responded	31	6.9		29	6.4	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table - 13 shows the smoking habits of the parents. Out of 450 respondents, 31 (6.9%) did not respond to the question of smoking by the father.

Out of 419 (93.1%) responses, majority 253 (60.4%) are smokers. Where mothers are concerned, only 12 (2.9%) of them are smokers.

Sl.No	Response	Number (Father)	Percent	Valid Percent	Number (Mother)	Percent	Valid Percent
1	Yes	179	39.8	42.7	28	6.2	6.7
2	No	240	53.3	57.3	388	86.3	93.3
3	Total	419	93.1	100	416	92.4	100
4	Not responded	31	6.9		34	7.6	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

Above table 14 shows chewing of tobacco products by the parents. Out of 450 respondents , 31 (6.9%) did not respond to the question of chewing tobacco by the father. Out of 419 (93.1%) responses, majority 240

(57.3%) of the fathers are not chewing tobacco. Whereas in case of mothers, out of 416 (92.4%) responses, only 28 (6.7%) are chewers of tobacco products.

Sl.No	Response	Number (Father)	Percent	Valid Percent	Number (Mother)	Percent	Valid Percent
1	Yes	5	1.1	1.3	1	0.2	0.3
2	No	386	85.8	98.7	367	81.6	99.7
	Total	391	86.9	100	368	81.8	100
3	Not responded	59	13.1		82	18.2	
	Total	450	100		450	100	

Source: Primary data

An analysis of table 15 shows the white correcting fluid usage of parents of the street children. Out of

450 respondents, 59 (13.1%) did not respond to the question about taking white correcting fluid by the

fathers. Out of 391 who responded, majority, 386 (98.7%) are not consuming white correcting fluid. Whereas in case of mothers, out of 368 responses, majority of them 367 (99.7%) are not taking white correcting fluid, and only 1 (0.3%) responded positively.

Summary: In this paper the occupation of the father is out of 411 respondents, majority 197 (47.9%) of the parents are coolies followed by 53 (12.9%) government employs, 48 (11.7%) agriculturists, 37 (9%) beggars, 23 (5.6%) business persons, 15 (3.6%) private employees, 15 (3.6%) drivers, 11 (2.7%) topy workers (building work), 6 (1.5%) servant maids, 4 (1%) welding workers, followed by 1 (0.2%) each industrial worker and fish hunter. the occupation of the mothers. Out of 395 respondents, majority 212 (53.7%) of the mothers are coolies followed by 84 (21.3%) house wife, 38 (9.6%) beggars, 17 (4.3%) private employees, 14 (3.5%) agriculturists, 11 (2.8%) government employees, 6 (1.5%) business persons, 5 (1.3%) welding workers, 3 (0.8%) drivers, 2 (0.5%)

achieve this goal, a holistic approach is essential and this approach should invariably involve family, educational institutions, government agencies, and NGOs keeping in view that each child is unique in general, and street children in particular.

Suggestions: Since poverty and discard among the families forced the children to take refuse on streets, some definitive measures should be taken up for improving the economic well being of such at risk families. They can be targeted for income generating schemes such as integrated rural development programme, self employment program for urban poor, etc. Women belonging to these families can be helped to avail the saving and credit schemes under

servant maids, and 1 (0.3%) each industrial worker, water man, topy worker (building work). literacy level of the parents of the street children. It is observed that majority of the fathers of these respondents are illiterate. Illiteracy is much higher among the mothers as compared to fathers. The average age of father of the children at the time of death is 32 years, which is very low by any standard. This shows the poor health situation of the fathers. The average age of mother of the children at the time of death is 27 years, which is very low by any standard. This shows the poor health situation of the mother. The average income earned by the mother is Rs. 9,416 which is very low. The average annual income earned by the father is Rs 30,781. From the survey it is observed that out of 264 fathers who are taking alcohol, 186 (70.5%) are taking the same daily, another 58 (22%) weekly, and 20 (7.5%) occasionally.

Conclusion: Rehabilitation and reintegration of the street children are very important, and this leads the child to live in the main stream of the society. To DWACRA, MGNREGP, Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh to improve their financial well being.

The income generating programmes for families should also be seen as programs for the prevention of children from continuing as street children. Since poverty is clearly the major cause of mothers and fathers for sending children out to the street in search of work, guaranteeing poor families with some income would certainly reduce their incentive to do this. Also to some extent vocational training for parents, and care for the children of working parents from low income neighbourhoods can prevent children from going on the streets.

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