



## STREET CHILDREN THEIR RIGHTS AND EDUCATION IN INDIA: AN APPRAISAL

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper highlights the problems of children living on streets. However, these children having child rights in the Indian constitution, even then thousands of children are still on the street. Rapid emergence of the street children in developing cities of any country is considered as a natural phenomenon all over the world as the poorest of the poor masses of the rural areas migrate to their accessible cities under the operating forces of 'push and pull' factors. Their over accumulation in these places, however, gradually aggrandize the problem. All these children are depriving of so many amenities particularly the most important is education. Summary: Paper suggests that Each and every child of the slum must be provided with free education apart from the free boarding facility, at least up to matriculation and there should be job guarantee for the matriculates.*

**KEYWORDS :** Street Children, Child Rights, Problem of Drop- out, Health Conditions of Children.

### Introduction:

Street children comprise a major social problem in India from various viewpoints. The problem is more seriously in industrialized and urbanized countries of the world. However, rapid emergence of the street children in developing cities of any country is considered as a natural phenomenon all over the world as the poorest of the poor masses of the rural areas migrate to their accessible cities under the operating forces of 'push and pull' factors. They comprehensively hope of getting regular employment in cities and thereby leading a better living over there. Such poor and hapless people settle down in slums, pavements, railway platforms, bus stations, abandoned construction sites etc. Some parents however, engage their children in vending of tea, egg, snacks etc. and shoe- polishing at railway platforms and bus stations etc. and some other compel their children to work as domestic aids and maid servants, doing sundry works in hotels and garages etc. and earn daily for their self as well as for other members of their families. All these children are depriving of so many amenities of their childhood particularly the most important requirement of life is education.

### Objectives:

The main objectives of this paper are given bellow:

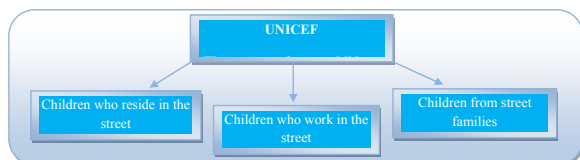
- To access and analyze the problem of street-children in Indian.
- To examine the constitutional rights of children in India.
- To access and examine the problem of education of street children up to elementary level.

### Methodology:

Paper is mainly based on secondary data and information. Most of the information and data has been procured from published sources like books, journals, UNICEF and World Bank reports and through net.

### According to UNICEF

- Children who reside in the street: Children who have run away from their families and live alone in the street.
- Children who work in the street: Children who spend most of their time in the street, but who regularly go back to their homes.
- Children from street families: Children who live with their families in the street.



### Reasons of Street Children:

**1. Economic:** Poor economic situations are a major factor contributing to the problem of street children. Poverty, unemployment, elevated prices, declining national income, poor distribution of wealth within society, and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor are all factors with a direct impact on the rise of the phenomenon of street children.

**2. Familial Relations:** The family is the primary institution responsible for fulfilling the basic needs of children, including providing security, love, food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and entertainment. Moreover, the family is considered the reference point for the construction of children's norms, for the shape of their personality and for the direction they take in life.

**3. Low Educational Level of Parents:** In spite of attempts to eliminate illiteracy, there remain high levels of illiteracy among the families of street children. As a result of their own lack of education, parents may be unaware of the importance and value of education and may not provide appropriate educational care for their children. This situation encourages children to drop out of school and remain in the streets.

**4. Large Family Size:** The size of the family has a strong impact on the family's economic situation. Families with more children incur more costs and require more efforts in terms of provision of care. Often poor families are unable to assume complete responsibility for raising and supporting their children if there are many.

**5. Dropping Out of School:** The country has failed to meet the target set in the 11th five year plan that is reduction in drop-out rates from 50 percent to 20 percent at the elementary level, the study by non-governmental organization Chief Rights and You (CRY) said.

**6. Migration from Rural to Urban Areas:** Urban areas hold considerable appeal for many poor rural residents, as they believe they will achieve their hopes and dreams there. Eventually, however, they encounter a harsh reality that destroys the dream that originally pushed them to the city.

**7. Wars and Natural Disasters:** Wars and natural disasters often lead to massive spikes in the street children population. Wars contribute to the deterioration of the national economy, the destruction of homes, the killing and displacement of thousands and the dispersion of families. This, in turn, leads to an increased number of orphans and homeless children. The same applies to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods and hurricanes.



**India** has an estimated one million or more [street children](#) in each of the following cities: [New Delhi](#), [Kolkata](#), and [Mumbai](#). When considering India as a whole, there are over 11 million children who earn their living off the streets in cities and rural areas. It is more common for street children to be male and the average age is fourteen. Although adolescent girls are more protected by families than boys are, when girls do break the bonds they are often worse off than boys are, as they are lured into prostitution.

**Constitutional rights for children in India:** The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines basic rights of children covering multiple needs and issues. India endorsed it on December 11, 1992. Following are a few rights in the immediate purview of Smile Foundation as well as India.

**The right to Education:** 50% of Indian children aged 6-18 do not go to school. Dropout rates increase alarmingly in class III to V, its 50% for boys, 58% for girls.

**The right to Expression:** Every child has a right to express himself freely in whichever way he likes. Majority of children however are exploited by their elders and not allowed to express.

**The right to Information:** Every child has a right to know his basic rights and his position in the society. High incidence of illiteracy and ignorance among the deprived and underprivileged children prevents them from having access to information about them and their society.

**The right to Nutrition:** More than 50% of India's children are malnourished. While one in every five adolescent boys is malnourished, one in every two girls in India is undernourished.

**The right to Health & Care:** 58% of India's children below the age of 2 years are not fully vaccinated and 24% of these children do not receive any form of vaccination. Over 60% of children in India are anemic. 95 in every 1000 children born in India do not see their fifth birthday, 70 in every 1000 children born in India do not see their first birthday. On the health front, improper allocation of resources has resulted in poor implementation of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).

**The right to protection from Abuse:** There are approximately 2 million child commercial sex workers between the age of 5 and 15 years and about 3.3 million between 15 and 18 years. They form 40% of the total population of commercial sex workers in India. 500,000 children are forced into this trade every year.

**The right to protection from Exploitation:** A study found that children were sent to work by compulsion and not by choice, mostly by parents, but with recruiter playing a crucial role in influencing decision. When working outside the family, children put in an average of 21 hours of labour per week. Poor and bonded families often "sell" their children to contractors who promise lucrative jobs in the cities and the children end up being employed in brothels, hotels and domestic work. Many run away and find a life on the streets.

**The right to protection from Neglect:** Every child has a right to lead a well protected and secure life away from neglect. However, children working under exploitative and inhuman conditions get neglected badly.

**The right to Development:** Every child has the right to development that lets the child explore her/his full potential. Unfavorable living conditions of underprivileged children prevent them from growing in a free and uninhibited way.

**The right to Recreation:** Every child has a right to spend some time on recreational pursuits like sports, entertainment and hobbies to explore and develop. Majority of poor children in India do not get time to spend on recreational activities.

**The right to Name & Nationality:** Every child has a right to identify himself with a nation. A vast majority of underprivileged children in India are treated like commodities and exported to other countries as labour or prostitutes.

**The right to Survival:** Of the 12 million girls born in India, 3 million do not see their fifteenth birthday, and a million of them are unable to survive even their first birthday. Every sixth girl child's death is due to gender discrimination.

#### Suggestions:

Each and every child of the slum must be provided free education and free boarding facility, at least up to matriculation and there should be job guarantee for the matriculates. For the non-matriculates, need-based vocational training be provided according to their own choices and demand of the market.

It is universally accepted that if we educate a man, we educate a person but if we educate a woman, we educate a family. So, girl children should also be provided with formal or non-formal education depending upon their age and interest.

Government level to facilitate proper implementation of the welfare schemes from the street children.

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