



SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG CHILDREN ENGAGED IN BEGGING: A STUDY IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

KEYWORDS

Substance Abuse, Begging Children

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ABSTRACT

A study conducted among the children involved in begging activities in Coimbatore. The structured interview scheduled used to collect data from the 53 children during the data collection period. Purposive sampling method was adopted. The finding of the study report that the children we found that are we found that about 60% of children using structured interview schedule are using some form of drugs during the begging time. These children are from different parts of our country and have proxy and surrogate families. These parents provide use these children for begging and voluntarily provide drugs to these children to keep them in sleeping mode for a longer period. The use Tobacco, Alcohol, Cannabis, Inhalants (Ink eraser fluid, Glue), Nicotine and Betel nut. These children are trafficked, pushed into prostitution and organ trade by the anti social elements. Research finding indicate poverty forced migration, lack of access quality education and cultural and traditional practices cause for begging. Preventive measures at the source and destination areas prevention activities among families in vulnerable communities are suggested. Addresses forced begging in the context of the wider problem of child begging. Raise awareness among the general public are some of the measures suggested.

Introduction

"If current trends continue, 250 million children alive today, will be killed by tobacco" -WHO

Substance abuse refers to the harmful and hazardous use of psychoactive substances, illicit drugs. Consumption of this substance can lead to dependence syndrome and influence the individuals a strong desire to use repeatedly.

There are different types of drugs and other chemicals such as tobacco (Nicotine) and alcohol, volatile substances (glue, inhalants), cannabis, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, ecstasy are common among young people and children. Recently it is reported that substance abuse has been increasing among children as sizeable proportions in many states of India. Among the youth, students are particularly involved due to encouragement of peers, lure of popularity and easy availability of many such substances. The problem in India is there are no sensitization programmes about substance abuse in schools or for children out of schools.

There are other group of children we found them in railway stations, religious and spiritual sites, shopping places. In big cities major traffic intersections in big cities. We can find at traffic signals, woman beggar holding a sleeping child. Most of the children trafficked for commercial sex, forced child labour, harassment and other exploitation in big cities. A national study conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on child abuse (2007) reported that 70.3% of those children are first exposed to one some form of drugs by their friends and relatives and 11.7% by their parents. The ill effects of these drugs lead to lung problems, stomach ailments, cancer and blackening of teeth. The present study conducted the substance abuse among the children who are engaged in begging either with their family or through peer group.

Methods & Materials

Objectives of the present study is to

- To find out the number of children engaged in begging activities

- To find out the conditions of the children engaged in begging
- To find out the causes of children begging in the street

Descriptive type of research study conducted using structured interview schedule to collect data from the respondents. The interview schedule contains two sections (A and B) and twenty five questions in all. Section A dealt with personal information like name, age, place of origin and family details and section B contained questions on sources and use of drug abuse. One focus group discussion was also conducted with the respondents to get their opinion about these issues. An attempt was made to do face validity of the interview schedule.

The purpose sampling method was adopted and nine prominent locations were identified in Coimbatore city corporation area limit during the first week of July 2015. Data were collected from 31 boys and 23 girls during the reference period. The results were analyzed using frequency and percentages.

Results & Discussion

Table: 1
Age

S.No	Age (in years)	Frequency	Percent
1.	5 – 10	9	17
2.	11 – 15	26	49
3.	Above 16	18	34
	Total	53	100

The above table presents that (49%) of the respondents are an age groups 11 -15 and 34 percent these children are in the age groups 16 -18 years and 16.9% of the respondents are between 5 -10 years.

Table: 2
Education

S.No	Educational Status	Frequency	Percent
1.	Illiterate	11	21
2.	Primary (up to 5th Std)	23	43
3.	Middle (up to 8th Std)	10	19
4.	High School (up to 10th Std)	9	17
	Total	53	100

Table 2 presents that 43 percent of the children have studied up to primary school, 21 percent of the respondents could have any schooling, 19 percent of the children have studies upto 8th standard and 17 percent of the children have studies up to 10th standard.

Table: 3
Place of Origin

S.No	Place of Origin	Frequency	Percent
1.	Rajasthan	17	51
2.	Tamil Nadu (parts of Ambur, Gopi and Madurai)	27	30
3.	Andhra Pradesh	6	11
4.	Karnataka	4	8
	Total	53	100

It is reported from the above table that most of the children (51%) are reported from the state of Rajasthan and 30 percent from Tamil Nadu. Andhra there are 6 children and 8 children from Karnataka also reported.

Table: 4
Income

S.No	Daily Income by Begging (in Rs.)	Frequency	Percent
1.	100-200	9	17
2.	201-300	13	25
3.	301-400	5	9
4.	401-500	16	30
5.	500 and above	10	19
	Total	53	100

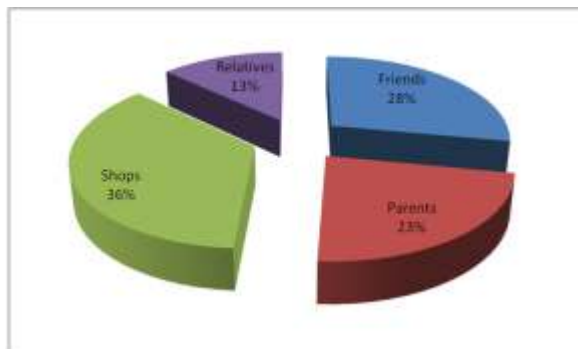
The above table presents that the income level of children per day through begging. It is evident from the above table that 30 per cent of the children earn Rs. 400 to 500 per day. Another 25% of children earned up to 300 rupees. Further, 19% of children could able to get Rs.500 and above in a day.

Table: 5
Types of Drug Abuse

S.No	Types of substance	Frequency	Percent
1.	Tobacco (Smoking/ Chewing)	17	32
2.	Alcohol (Beer, Wine, Hard Liquor, Desi Alcohol)	13	25
3.	Cannabis (Bhang, Charas, Ganja, Sulpha)	10	19
4.	Inhalants (Ink eraser fluid, Petrol, Glue, Iodex etc)	6	11
5.	Opium (Doda, Phukki)	3	6
6.	Utilizing above all substance	4	7
	Total	53	100

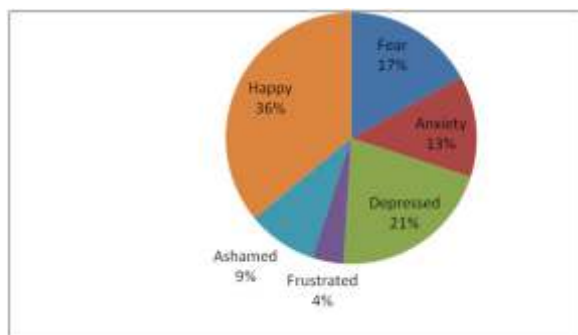
The above table presents the various types of drugs and chemicals used by the children. Use of tobacco is high in their daily work (32%) of the respondents are using and 24.5% of the respondents are using Alcohol and beer, 19% of the respondents are using Cannabis. Further, inhalants also found 11.3% of the respondents use.

Figure: 1
Source of Drugs



From the above Figure, it is found that 35.8% of the respondents are getting substance from shops without any prescriptions and 28.3% of the respondents are getting substance from friends, 22.6% of the respondents are parents provide to their children. Relatives also provide to 13% percentage of their children some forms of drugs.

Figure: 2
Mental Status



From the above figure it can be said that 35.8% of the respondents are feel happy while in their work, 20.7% of the respondents are depressed, 16.9% of the respondents express fearfuliness. Anxiety is also found 13% of the children.

Table: 6
Children Face Maltreatment

S.No	Maltreatment	Frequency	Percent
1.	Physical abuse	11	21
2.	Verbal abuse	28	53
3.	Sexual abuse	5	9
4.	Others	9	17
	Total	53	100

The above table shows that 52.8% of the respondents facing verbal abuse, 21% are face physical abuse 16.9% respondents not facing any problem.

Discussion

One group of begging children origin is from parts of Madurai in Tamil Nadu and their parents roam around the city by beat-

ing themselves with whip , drums and doing some gymnastic work on roads involving their children in begging activities.

Another group begging children are involved in begging by holding cards with printing statements like that they are orphans, deaf & dumb, poor & separated from family by natural calamities like floods and Tsunami.

Third group of children are from other states like Andhrapradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan. Due to poverty migrate from their state and involve them in begging. These children parents are involved in selling toys and balloons at the exhibition, children roam about along with the parents and also involved in begging and substance use.

Majority of children using cough syrups, pain relief ointments, glue, paint, solution, shoe-polish, nail-polish and cleaning fluids. The finds report that children who are involved in begging may be either their own child or children of others. There is possibility of these children meeting with accidents while begging on the roads (main signals) by way of crossing the roads here and there. Sometimes these children seem to be abused physically, sexually and girl children forced into prostitution. Begging has been treated as traditional work by some parents. Some children wish to go to school but parents are not willing to send them to school because they depend on the income of the children. Many adolescents' girls and children beg with a card acting as a deaf & dumb and saying that their families are poor.

It is suggested that to establish new rehabilitation centre for substance abusing children in Coimbatore district. Awareness-raising in all settings among parents about child rights and the risks associated with begging. Discouraging the public in Greece from giving to beggars

Enhancing parents' skills base and job opportunities and providing credit for income-generating activities to increase family incomes and thereby reduce poverty as a factor using parents into sending their children away.

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