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## MENTAL HEALTH STATUS OF ADOLESCENTS RESCUED FROM STREET

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### *Abstract*

The phenomenon of street children and adolescents is a global one. It is a product of urbanization and industrialization. In any countries of the world we can see the phenomenon of street children and adolescents. Among the large number of the people migrating from the rural areas to cities a significant percentage of poor class, settle down in slum, pavements, shanty town or wherever there is vacant land. In their struggle to earn live hood, parents, hardly give any attention to youngsters who in turn are left totally neglected on the streets. For many such children and adolescents, the street has become their home. The children are seen in rag picking, selling the lottery tickets, polishing shoes, hawking news papers, street vending or peddling various items on the pavement.

In another view, street children create a major social problem in India from various view point. It is despicable problem not only in the developing countries but also in some of the industrialized and urbanized countries of the world. Rapid emergence of the street children, teenagers and in developing cities of any country is a natural phenomenon all over the world as the poorest of the poor masses of the rural areas migrate to their accessible cities with a positive and comprehensive hope of getting regular employment and thereby ensuring themselves somewhat a normal life. Poor and helpless people settle in the slums, pavement and also in some cases in the backyards of some well-to-do city residents, and gradually contribute to aggravate the problem.

The nation's children, adolescents are the supremely important assets. They are the promise to tomorrow. Their nature and solitude are our responsibility, the deceleration of the right of the child by the UN general assembly (1959), states that the child shall be given opportunities and facilities by law and by other means to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in condition of freedom and dignity.

However, the overall development of children and adolescents not only in physically and socially but also mentally is very important. Soundness of mind is very essential for the health of the individual. So this study aims to analyst the mental health status of street children and adolescents.

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## **Introduction**

Street children are present in every country and almost every city in the world. The term “street children” has been used to refer to children in a variety of circumstances, creating confusion about who street children and adolescents are and what kinds of experience brought them to the streets. “On” street of the street and on and off the street are commonly used to classify street children in many countries .children on the street are engaged in the street but have regular contacts with their families. Children of the street live, work and sleep in the street .children on street faced unhappy reality of increasing separation from their natural families and become at risk for losing their access to basic facilities, such as health, education, recreation. Once this process is underway it is a difficult top hold in check, with the result that the children may end up abandoning the family or being abandoned by it.

Street children do not form a homogenous group, not their life circumstances remain constant. Besides the natural transition from childhood to adolescence and adulthood, children’s involvement in street life and family contact varies, furthermore, children may be represented in one or more of the three categories. UNICEF has become aware of the difficulties with its on definition of on

versus children of the street .since 1990 it has been grouping all working children, whether working on the city streets or elsewhere, as “working children” it uses the term “street children” to refer to the smaller number of largely abandoned children and youths for whom the city streets are home. Poverty is a necessary but not sufficient condition that spurs may children to street life. The strongest encouragement in the debate over street children’s emotional vulnerability relates to the development of autonomy. Freedom is consistently reported by street children as both their goal and highest value. Freedom from instructions, Freedom of movement, Freedom to choose, Freedom to Activities and daily rhythms, Freedom from commitments. Although the emotional sacrifice entailed in achieving these freedom may be high and the value placed on than may,. In part, be defensive denial of that cost, the exercise of such freedom does have implication for sense autonomy and self-reliance. In overall development of street children, these may be extremely important attributes. Resilient children show few of the intellectual or emotional handicaps normally associated with their normal and material circumstances. The noted paradox between evidence showing developmental risk and vulnerability across physical, emotional, social, and

cognitive/educational areas on the one hand, and on the other, evidence of the resourcefulness, adaptability, and coping ability of street children.

Psychosocial needs of children and adolescents fall in main four areas:

1. The need born and security,
2. The need for new experience,
3. The need for praise and recognition
4. The need for responsibility.

If these needs are not met or are thwarted, children may be at risk for emotional and behavioral problems, and fulfillment sought elsewhere street children may fall in this category. For many street children, freedom from adult control is the most important attribute to their adopted way of life.

#### **Definition of mental health and street adolescents**

A sound mind in a sound body has been reorganized as a social idea. Mental health is an essential component of health. The WHO defines "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absences of disease or infirmity.

The world health organization (WHO-1992) defines a street adolescent as 'any young person who spends most of his or her time on the streets instead of at home, school, work, playground or a place of worship'.

#### **Characteristics of street children and adolescents**

1. Most of the children and adolescents are boys. Although girls also form part of the group they may not be as visible as boys in every day street life.
2. Most of them don't have regular educational opportunities.
3. Studies conducted so far proved that most of them fall in the age group of 10-16 years.
4. They are away from home mainly because of intolerant atmosphere prevailing there like poverty, neglect; break down of the family, hard work, harsh living conditions and maltreatment.
5. Mostly street children and adolescents work for their daily livelihood only.

#### **Mental health of street children and adolescents**

The phenomenon of street children and adolescents can be considered as a necessary evil, but number of these children and teenagers reflect the level of development of a country. The main problems faced by street children and teenagers are,

1. They do not enjoy parental love, affection, protection and guidance.
2. They are deprived of the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing.
3. They have no access to school education.

4. The families do not give the feeling of security and love so essential for their normal growth and developments.

5. They are looked down upon by society as unwanted elements.

Confronted by so many deprivations like physical, psychological, social and economical certain amount of inner conflict develops and finds expression and finds expression in some forms of unsocial behavior. If not properly taken care of these street children and adolescents will future become an extremely heavy load on the national economy in the shape of unless an unproductive human being. So it is essential for these children and adolescents to have a sound mental health.

### **Street children and adolescents in India**

The reality of the street child is the naked and vicious face of poverty, sickness and exploitation. The tragedy is, that those who bear it themselves innocent, lonely and frightened young children.

Street children are those unfortunate children who basically.

1. Have only intermittent contact with parents or family (usually mother or sister) but live most of the time with other street children in the city streets, or are on the move

2. Have been but early abundance by their parents/relatives/found themselves on the

street from the beginning because of family problems, or have chosen to leave home due to same kind constant abuse.

3. The child who has run away from home can further be separated into two categories.

4. The child who have unpleasant or traumatizing home environment.

5. They experience family problems they are unable to solve i.e., alcoholism, child abuse, ill treatment by stepparents, employment and poverty. Their tolerance level has been far exceeded, leading to drastic decision to their family. Those who have run away from home, who wanted to study, work but were not allowed and came to experience the exciting experience of city life glamorized by magazines and movies.

Religion of street children in India varies greatly according to area ,but, in general, approximately 70% are Hindu 18% are Muslim, Christian and other percentage of Hindu children is as high 82% in Hyderabad, indoor & Bangalore 82.7% of street children are boys, girls are more difficult to trace but they are, by far , there most valuable.

### **Objectives**

- To study demographic profile of the respondents.
- To understand the psycho-social problems of the respondents.

- To study the mental health status of adolescents rescued from street

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used in this study. From the universe of 500 adolescents who are staying in Jenaseva Sisubhavan girls rescue home at Aluva and boys home at Nedumbassery, Cochin. From that the researcher took 60 adolescents as the respondents with the use of simple random sampling method in this study. The researcher conducted a pilot study in Jenaseva Sisubhavan at Aluva, Cochin. During the study the researcher had to interact with many teenagers in institution and enabled to understand the psycho-social problems faced by institutionalized street rescue adolescence and then an interview schedule was framed. It contains 50 questions with 8 clusters, it includes personal data, physical well being and psychological well being including depression, anxiety, stress, phobia, and substance abuse data, social maladjustment and peer group influences, environment of rescue home and environment school/college of the respondents.

## Findings of tables

- ❖ Most of the adolescence is between the age of 13 and 15 years, 41.7 % respondents. Only few adolescence are at the age of 19, 5% respondents. As the age increases, the number of adolescence was decreases.
- ❖ Majorities, 60% of the respondents are males and 40% of the respondents are females.
- ❖ Regarding the education status is nearly 43.3 % them were having the secondary education and the 5% of them doing degree. Most of adolescence doing secondary education than other education in rescue Home
- ❖ Majority, 46.7% of the respondents are Christians and least, 21.7 % of the respondents are Muslims. Remaining 31.7% are Hindus.
- ❖ The adolescents physical well being level is average.51.7% of the respondents have moderate level status of physical well being. 15 % of the respondents have low level status of physical well being. Remaining 33.3 % physical well being level status is high..
- ❖ In adolescence depression level is average.68.3 % of the respondents have depression level is average.30% of the respondents

- have high depression. Remaining percentage is 1.7% low.
- ❖ The adolescents also faced anxiety .71.7 % of the respondents have anxiety level is average.28.3 % respondents have high level of anxiety.
  - ❖ In rescue home adolescents also faced high level of stress.38.3 % of the respondents have high level of stress. 30 % of the respondents have average level of stress. Remaining 31.7% stress level is low.
  - ❖ Phobia level low among teenagers in rescue home. 41.7 %of the respondents have least level of phobia. 15% of the respondents have high level of phobia.43.3% have remaining phobia level.
  - ❖ Substance abuse is low among teenagers in rescue home. 90 % of the respondents have level of substance abuse is average. Only 10 %of the respondents have high level status of substance abuse.
  - ❖ Most of Adolescents also faced personal problems. 41.7 % of the respondents have high level of Personal problems.18% of the respondent have least level of Personal problem. Remaining 40% Personal problem level.
  - ❖ The social adjustment and peer group influence among them the level of status is average.55 % of the respondents have average level.16.7 % of the respondent have high level social adjustments and peer group influences. Remaining percentage 28.3% have low level .
  - ❖ Environment of rescue home level also average.96.7 % of the respondents have average level environment of rescue home and 3.3 % of the respondent have high level
  - ❖ Environment of school/college is low level.43.3 % of the respondents have low level .21.7 % of the respondent have high level. Remaining 35% is average level environment of school/college.

#### **Findings of chi square table**

- ❖ This concerned with the age of the respondent rejected by its significant level. This shows that the age of respondent have significant influence on the substance abuse. The null hypothesis is rejected.
- ❖ This concerned with the gender of the respondent rejected by its significant level. this shows that the gender of respondents have

significant influence on the anxiety level. The null hypothesis is rejected.

- ❖ This concerned with the education of respondents accepted by its significant level. This shows that the education of respondents have no significant influence on the school/college environment of adolescents. The null hypothesis is accepted.
- ❖ This concerned with the age of respondents accepted by its significant level. This shows that the age of respondents have no significant influence on social adjustment and peer group influence of adolescents. The null hypothesis is accepted.
- ❖ This concerned with the gender of the respondent rejected by its significant level. This shows that the gender of respondent have significant influence on the stress level. The null hypothesis is rejected. The null hypothesis is rejected.

### **Suggestions**

The mental health statuses of adolescents rescued from street were clearly understood from the study. The present study has made an effort to understand the psychosocial factors

associated with adolescents in conflict with attitude of society towards them, social support & peer group influences, environments of school/college.

Social and psychological factors have a great role in developing rescue adolescents behavior. This study has revealed that mental ill health was higher in the age group between 13-15 and also has found that each social and psychological factor had a great influence in developing adolescents' behavior in rescue home. So it is the high time to take possible action to eliminate mental ill health of rescue adolescents from street.

In order to prevent the mental ill health of rescue adolescents from street certain measures are to be undertaken:-

1. The study has found that less self control, less self confidence, lack of guilty feeling, and hereditary had a great role in developing bad behavior and mental ill health among children and adolescents.
2. Intervention at society level is next measurement to provide mental ill health of adolescent's society plays great roles in personality and behavior development of each individuals.
3. Many of the children as well as adult develop personality and behaviors through the association with their friends. This study has found that the individual had got support a great extend to involve many bad

and good activities from their peers. The various interventions that can be provided to peer groups are

4. School environment has an important role in the development of personality and good mental health and behavior of each individual. The study has found that the individuals who were problematic in the school become developed mental ill health among them. Various programs can be adapted at school level.

5. The rescue home environment also affect the mental health of each adolescents so should provide various programs for them.

6. Government has a great role to tackle provide the good mental health for rescue children and adolescents from street. For that it should take action programs

### **Conclusion**

The study shows that the rescue adolescents from street were facing many social and psychological problems from society. Many mental health problems are faced by institutionalized adolescents who rescued from street. Lack of social support and peer group influences, lack of good environment of school/college, personal problems, use of substance are the major issues for their mental ill health. Children and adolescents are an asset for any country as they are future citizens. It is the duty of their care takers in rescue homes,

society and also the state to meet the physical, emotional, educational and other needs of children and adolescents. Needless to say child's and teenagers' experience in the earliest stages of life determines his or her success or failure later in life. , study also suggests having various measures to study and develop more of positive attitude in the rescue home adolescents. This should be the part of prevention of mental ill health program planned for rescue home adolescents and also a part of counseling and psycho education for them and for their care takers in home. There should be skilled professionals like medical professionals, psychologist, psychotherapist and social workers should be a part of promote the mental health team which gives the synergistic effect for improve the good mental health of the rescued adolescents. From this their standard of living will also be increased with betterment life. The study was made among adolescents in janeseva sisubhavan recue home at Ernakulum district where held.

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