



Beggary & Reasons behind its Adoption by the Migrated Rural Children in Gandhinagar

Abstract

This study examines the economic & social condition of the migrant minors representing lower strata of Gandhinagar demography. It's a descriptive research based on primary data collected through; schedule, observation and interviews. The sample for the survey is deprived minors migrants in Gandhinagar frame. The major findings of the study revealed that most of the children of migrated family from the rural area often engage in begging for the money and food, face major problems having direct impact on their survival. There are varied factors that influence children to choose begging as a means of earning money. One of the major reasons that are seen is that the family is from below the poverty line and usually the parents are the one who choose begging for their children. The money that is earned by the child by begging is used to support the family financially. Another reason for child begging is that child is an orphan as well as forced by other children or the families that are already in this field of begging. Sometimes the child may have conflict with his parents and may run away from home and thus is again directed into begging. Carelessness of parents. Many a times it is seen that the child is unable to handle academic pressure from the parents and runs away from his family to avoid it.

Keywords: *begging, migrated families, Migrant minors*

Introduction

Begging is defined as “a range of activities whereby an individual asks a stranger for money on the basis of being poor or needing charitable donations for health or religious reasons. Beggars may also sell small items, such as dusters or flowers, in return for money that may have little to do with the value of the item for sale.” ILO (Pakistan), 2004. Begging is one of the most serious social issues in India. In spite of its rapid economic growth, India couldn't get rid of beggars. Seeking and giving alms has the sanction of all the religions in India. Begging is operated as an organized crime by a gang. They buy or rent children to use them for begging and thus the children get involved in the vicious circle. And often it is impossible for them to break out of it. Children are visible to everyone but the government. There seems to be no initiative from the side of government to help these children lead a dignified life and to put them into schools. In India, people had made begging as their way of earning. People are forcing their children to beg instead of giving education to their children. According to them education is just the wastage of time and also it requires money which they don't have. In need to increase their family income they ask their children to beg from other people. They are not aware of the fact that they are spoiling their own children's future. Now the question that comes in our mind is – are they only responsible for their children's dark future? Or are we not more culprit than them?

Because of our action, we are much more responsible for developing a dark future for our coming generations. Poor children beg as they are guided to do so but when we give them money with a consideration that we are helping the needy, it's not just that way. We are destroying their future, their morale and their habits. Some of these children are peddle by gang's. In India, more than 60,000 children trapped each year. Many of them are kidnapped and then are forced to work as beggars. The money they earn through begging is taken by such gangs by pestering and torturing them. Even they're kept devoid of food or cut their body parts which make them look lean and thin and more convincing to earn sympathy from commoners. Even they are not allowed to keep their earning along with them and are treated as slaves and also the gangs don't give them food so that they look gaunt and get more sympathy and which results in more

earning for the gangs. Also we know that a disabled child will get more sympathy so they also cut some parts of their body so to get more money.

Review of Literature

India is a poverty-stricken country, which is also leading to the growth of beggars in the country. Most of them come from Bangladesh and some of them are from India.

There are few beggars in the country who actually are the real ones, who beg because they are handicapped, because of their inability to work or because they are old or blind or because they really need money for basic needs. There are many others who live far below the poverty line and opt for begging to earn their livelihood.

Some instances reveal that the entire family is involved in begging camouflaged as “business of alms”. Their family members continue to increasing with marriage and birth. Moreover, each of its members is pushed into begging near street sides or at temples. Children of such families do not go to school but only beg. They have to beg because their family’s income is not enough to feed the whole family in a day. Thus, poverty is one big reason for such a situation.

Objectives

1. To study the reason behind begging by migrant children of rural poor family.
2. To know the impact of begging on their development.

Methodology

This work is based on judgmental sampling with 80 main respondent “Children” from migrated rural family. Besides, discussion with 10 parents of such children selected randomly.

The sample frame of the study is public places of Gandhinagar like food corners and trade exhibition areas. Main respondents are the children from migrated rural poor family. The parents of the children were extra respondents for the purpose of discussion about their socio- economic background. The study is divided in two sections. Section-I discuss the reason behind begging by migrant children of rural poor families and section-II records the impact of begging on the development of the migrant children.

Results and Interpretations

In the survey, through the analysis of primary data, the findings show that age group of 06-10 years is majorly involved in begging. It also shows that the major part of respondents is male. Basic facilities like education and shelter are not available for children of the street. Many of the respondents are involved in child begging willingly. The hygiene and medical facilities like residential area, appearance, vaccination etc to the given respondents are almost poor or very poor. The data also shows that the biggest reason for child begging in Gandhinagar is poverty. The following tables show the data gathered through survey:

1. Age group of child

Table No. 1:

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Up to 6	62	77.50%
7 to 12	18	27.50%

Source: Sample survey

The table above shows that 77.50% of the sample representative of rural minors’ populace falls under the age group of 6 years and below.

2. Gender of the child.

Table No. 2:

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	58	72.50%
Female	22	27.50%

Source: Sample survey

72.50% of the sample under observation is male indulged in begging

3. Native Place of Wanderers

Table No. 3:

Place	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Marwad	49	61.25%
Dungarpur	11	13.75%
Udiapur	2	2.50%
Gujarat-Rural	18	22.50%

Source: Sample survey

The majority of wanderers are from Marward accounting for 61.25% of sample.

4. Educational Status

Table No. 4:

Study	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Educated	47	58.75%
Uneducated	33	41.25%

Source: Sample survey

The free education facility provided by govt. can be traced through this survey as 58.75% of the sample does receive basic education.

5. Begging Practices

Table No. 5:

Type of Begging	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Forced	11	13.75%
Voluntary	69	86.25%

Source: Sample survey

13.75% of the sample showed most startling inhuman practice of forcing children into begging.

6. Sanitation and Cleanliness

Table No. 6

Residential Area	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Very Good	0	0%
Good	0	0%
Fair	4	5%
Poor	24	30%
Very Poor	52	65%
Total	80	100%

Source: Sample survey

The dwelling of the deprived need govt. attention in the area of sanitation and cleanliness. 65% of the population under sample survey responded negatively on sanitation facility.

7. Reason of Begging.

Table No. 7

Reason of Begging	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Due to poverty	49	61%
Child is an orphan	2	3%
Child have ran away from away	0	0%
Child was forced by someone	8	10%
Because it is an easy source of income	11	14%
Because the child doesn't want to study	10	13%

Source: Sample survey

The reasons behind begging has been recorded in the survey with 61% adopting begging due to poverty, 14% view it as an easy source of income, 13% opt it against studying and 10% of the sample revealed the injustice meted out to them through imposed vocation of begging. 3% of the orphans live as beggars to earn livelihood.

8. Problems faced by Migrants from rural areas

Table No. 8

Problems faced by the children	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Molestation	6	8%
Poverty	66	83%
Malnutrition	5	6%
Illiteracy	3	4%

Source: Sample survey

The biggest problem faced by migrants from rural areas is poverty as told by 83% of the sample.

Factors Responsible for Child Begging

There are varied factors that influence children to choose begging as a means of earning money. Some of them are discussed below:

- **Need/ Poverty:** Most children beg because they and their parents are very poor and some have lost their parents due to death or desertion. The money that these children take home by begging makes a difference to their lives. They probably do not have any alternative and hence they resort to begging.
- **Religious sanction:** In this study “PUNYA”, which is an opportunity of seeking and giving alms which has a blind sanction from all religions in India? In this process children ask for alms on specific days at some specific places by using the photographs of various Gods. For example Monday is considered lord Shiva’s day by the followers and thus long queue can be seen outside Shiva temples...thus a golden chance for the children to receive alms by keeping lord Shiva’s picture in hand. Similarly Tuesdays and Saturdays they target the temples of Lord Hanuman and Sai Baba.
- **Humanism:** People feel bad by seeing a child in distress and need and hence they give alms to such children. However this encourages children to take up begging as profession and as a result they stop going to school and all avenues to a respectable life close before them. They also lose all inhibition towards begging and also lose self-respect.
- **Family encouragement:** in this study we came to know that most of the children opt for begging because they were so poor that they couldn’t afford food for their families and thus elders encouraged them for begging. The money they gathered was given to their parents or elders to feed all the members of family.
- **Peer and sibling motivation:** Most of these children go to public places like temples and market to beg, in groups consisting of- siblings, cousins and friends. When one child targets a person, the other is watch them from a short distance. They show each other what they have received as alms. Some children even confessed that they came to beg because their friends induced them to.
- **Failure of government schools:** Students dropout from government school is due to variety of reasons. Those reasons include beating from a teacher /fellow or not being able to comprehend what was taught in the class. Even with the mid-day meal scheme, government schools fails to retain students or increase the student enrollment rates. When the children who said they go to school were asked to read simple Gujarati words they could not read.
- **Failure of governance:** It seems these children are visible to everyone but the government. There seems to be no initiative from the side of government to help these children lead a dignified life and to put them into schools.
- **Easy option:** For some mothers with children begging is an easy option. These women use children to beg and earn money. Some children beg instead of studying which is a difficult task for them.

Conclusion

Begging is attributed to poverty by 83% of the sample. The reasons behind begging has been recorded in the survey with 61% adopting begging due to poverty, 14% view it as an easy source of income, 13% opt it against studying and 10% of the sample revealed the injustice meted out to them through imposed vocation of begging. 3% of the orphans live as beggars to earn livelihood.

Thus, strict rules should be made against beggary and should be enforced strictly, the poor people should be provided free and timely medical aid, the law enforcers should take action against the beggars gangs, the poor should be made aware about the facilities available to them etc.

Suggestions to Eradicate Begging

- Laws dealing with beggary should be strictly enforced.
- Effective planning should be done by the government to solve unemployment and poverty.
- Beggars should not be allowed to stay in public places like railway stations, bus stops, market places etc.
- The state should provide for free treatment of mental ailments in psychiatric centers.

- Proper development should be brought in agricultural and industrial sector which provide them employment opportunity to stand on their own legs.
- Underground beggar organizations should be checked by public and police and should be given capital punishment.
- The Government should open special clinics to take care of those who are unable to pay for treatment of diseases like leprosy etc.
- General and technical education should be given to orphans.
- In the contrary, all the orphans and handicapped should be taken care of by opening more and more rehabilitation centers.
- To eradicate beggary it is necessary that we must provide everyone a constitutional right to work and also raise the minimum wages.
- Work homes should be established for lazy people.
- The people should be enlightened about the realities of beggary and its effects on the society as a whole and make them stop giving alms to the beggars.

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