

Assessment of Adjustment among Street Children.

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ABSTRACT

Adjustment is a process of maintaining a balance between the needs such as physical, social, psychological

and the circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs, and it is a continuous process to

produce harmonious relationship between a man and his environment adjustment during emotions

lead to a normal behavior, whereas maladjustment leads to abnormal behavior among street children and

increase risk of vulnerability. The present study was conducted on selected street children belonging to the

age group of 4 to 16 years who were segregated into three age groups 4-8, 8-12- and 12-16 through

random sampling from Urban areas of lucknow. Adjustment inventory by Srivastava & Tiwari (1985) to

assess the level of adjustment was administered and compared across gender. The data was collected,

coded, tabulated and analyzed using Anova test to assess statistical significance of data. It was found that

there was significant influence of occupation of the respondent's father and also mother's occupation on

the emotional adjustment of street children. The results of the study confirms that differences in level of

adjustment are due to parent's occupation.

Keywords: *Emotional adjustment, street children*

INTRODUCTION

According to Oxford Dictionary the meaning of adjustment is: "To arrange, to put in order, to harmonize discrepancies or to adopt to standard or purpose." In Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, "it is stated that adjustment is to achieve mental or behavioral balance between one's own needs and the demands of others as a result of which the individual is put to a more satisfactory state." These meanings refer psychological and sociological implications of the term adjustment. In Britannica Encyclopedia (1768, Vol.I) it is stated that adjustment (in psychology) is the process of behavior by which all creatures maintain an equilibrium between their needs and demand an obstacles to the environment. It is therefore a harmonious relationship with the environment involving the ability to satisfy one's needs and meet most of the demands both physical and social that are put upon one

(Dictionary of Behavioural Science, edited by Benjamin W. Wolman).

Adjustment is a process of maintaining a balance between the needs such as physical, social, psychological and the circumstances that influence the satisfaction of these needs, and it is a continuous process to produce harmonious relationship between a man and his environment. Emotional Adjustment leads to the modification of one's behavior and attitude.

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development & family studies, BBAU Perception on the relationship, between poverty and emotional adjustment of street children was investigated in the study of the of the University of Nigeria. The findings showed that some factors pushed the growing individuals into the life in the Street and among these, poverty is prominent. Also it was discovered that in the contemporary society, people of different developmental stages are found in the streets' not only children ,as a result economic crunch and poor living conditions.

The problem of street children in urban India thus is very complex and acute, and therefore calls for immediate, suitable, and feasible policy action to bring these children back into the normal system. Very little work has been done exclusively on the problems and situation of the street children in our country covering all the above dealt aspects in its holistic perspective (Rizzine, Irene, 1992). The study it is hoped, would be of help to planners, administrators and policy makers in providing them with sufficient knowledge and information about the street children and in carving out suitable schemes and programmes not only for welfare and rehabilitation of these children but also for possible and feasible preventive strategies to contain the problem.

Adjustment is an important task because, good adjustment lead to a normal behavior, whereas maladjustment leads to abnormal behavior.

There are many instances where even highly intelligent people fail to manage their emotions and some average intelligent persons manage their emotions effectively and harmoniously. It is called

'emotional intelligence'. As mentioned above, because there is difficulty in defining street children, it follows that definitions may result in being either helpful or unhelpful (Aptekar, 1994:32). Aptekar

(1988)33 points out that the term 'street children' tends to carry very strong emotional overtones

(Aptekar, 1988) and because every aspect of their life is exposed to the public gaze – their physical appearance, their way of life and their behaviour – conflicting emotions of pity, disgust, horror and disapproval among the public has resulted. Williams (1993) has pointed out the irony of this as the term 'street children' was initially coined by international agencies in order to avoid any negative stereotypes of street children.

Nigam S. (1994) has conducted a study on and observed that in India, 90% of street children are working children with regular family ties, but they are on the streets due to poverty and their parents unemployment. The remaining 10% are either working children with few family ties who view the streets as their homes or abandoned and neglected children with no family ties. The National Policy for Children established in 1974 emphasizes the provision of equal opportunities for the development to all children during their growing years. Policy stresses programs to maintain, educate, and train destitute children and orphans.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Symonds (1993) has conducted a study on street children and found that rejected children indulge themselves more often in delinquent behaviour and are more aggressive than overprotected children. Such children become withdrawn or distractible, hyperactive and have night terrors, while some of them run away from home. Sometimes they exhibit a mixture of submissiveness, aggressiveness, insecurity, sadistic tendencies, shyness, stubbornness and non-compliance.

Remington F. (1993) has conducted a study on over 120 million children live in the cities and towns of South Asia. Denied their rights, enshrined in the CRC and deprived of basic services, many of them suffer extremely from exploitative and violent conditions. Growing up in crowded slums and shanties, competing with adults for their share of crumbling urban



services and leaving school early in order to help their families and themselves, to fight the pressures of extreme poverty, these children have become victims of the urban cash economy and its individualism. Many of these children spend a significant part of their time away from home and school, and many are engaged on the streets and marketplaces without support or protection

Garrison (1960) conducted a study on street children and found that, "good adjustment was associated with extroversion and poor adjustment with introversion.

Bhagia (1966) in his study found that (i) girls exceed boys significantly in their adjustment to general environment and organizational aspect of the school.

An UNICEF study found that almost 40,000 children die every day in developing countries, 25% of whom are in India. Studies in some major cities indicate that the street children in India are of moderate health status, suffering from various chronic diseases and undernourishment. They are deprived of all health programs, but seem to prefer government hospitals in case of dire need. Street children often have to pay for water. Almost 97% in Calcutta, 99% in Bangalore, and 90% in Madras reported having no access to toilet and bathing facilities, 83% in Kanpur, however, had access to such facilities.

UNICEF (1994) has conducted study on estimation reveals the fact that in six major cities of India - Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kanpur - there are about 4,14,700 street children, and of these about 48 per cent spend their nights on the open street. Thus the phenomenon of street children with all its magnitude and dimensions is a challenging social adjustment problem of urban India.

Manimekalai, et al (1999) has conducted a study on child labour and revealed that the street children, who are the worst

suffering of all the child labour community, are actually toiling themselves for the sake of the family survival in the unorganized nature of work. This is really a social crime, and attributed to the lack of state's responsibility and its inability.

Punithavathi Pandian (2000) conducted a study on street children and observed that children who spend considerable part of their time in gainful employment are deprived of education. That is not only a loss to children but also to the nation in the future. Education is an investment both to the individual and to the society at large, producing not only huge direct benefit but also an immense magnitude of externalities, economic social, cultural and political. Education is also considered a human right, and efforts are initiated in the recent years to make elementary education a fundamental right in the constitution.

Methodology:

Past researches, majorly focused on the physical and health related aspects, among street children and very few have concentrated on their psychological aspect. Hence the present research was taken up to study the level of adjustment among street children with a sample of one hundred twenty children .

The study was conducted in Lucknow district which is purposively selected to conduct the study, as it is the capital city and largely inhabited. Sampling technique adopted in the present study is simple random sampling. Information was collected through interview method. The derived sample size of 120 respondents were equally divided into three age groups For assessing the adjustment among street children, Adjustment Inventory developed by Srivastava & Tiwari (1985) was used .Cross sectional study was conducted to examine the adjustment among street children .The data collection was done through

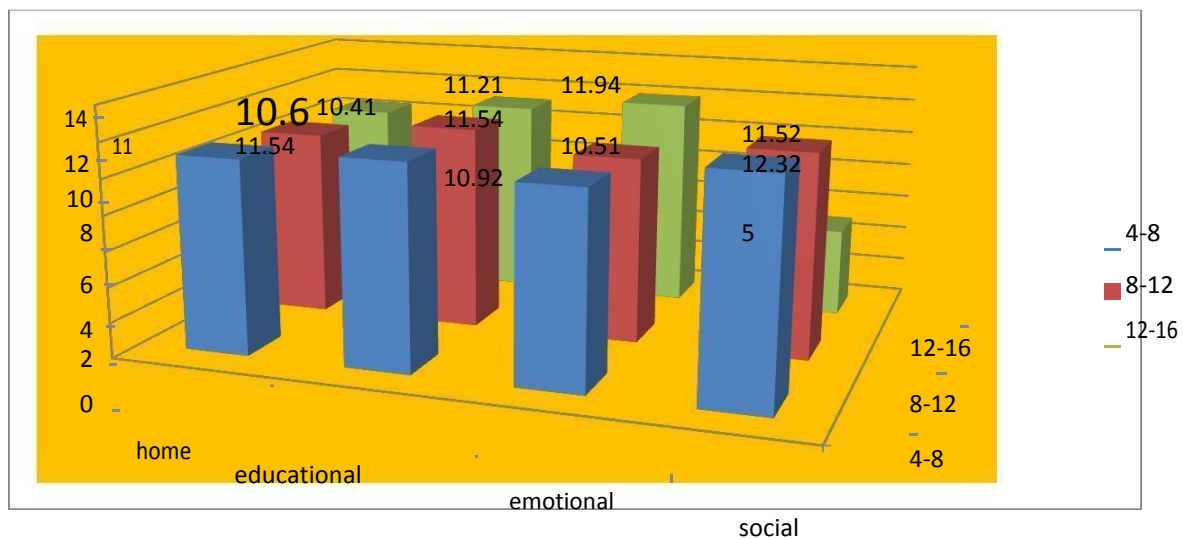
interview method, to elicit the required information from the sample. The data collected was coded, tabulated and analyzed

using the PAS software. ANOVA test was used to interpret the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 Level of Adjustment according to Age of respondent.

Adjustment	(4-8) (N=40)	(8-12) (N=40)	(12-16) (N=40)	(F)	(P)
Home	11.0±1.78	10.60±1.51	10.41±1.62	1.69	0.18
Educational	11.54±1.78	11.54±1.18	11.21±2.12	0.33	0.72
Emotional	10.92±2.16	10.51±2.55	11.94±2.24	2.31	0.10
Social	12.32±1.85	11.52±1.98	11.52±1.54	2.77	0.06



The data clearly indicates that the social and home adjustment is highest among the children in the age group of 4-8 years in comparison to the children belonging to 8-12 and 12-16 years respectively. No significant differences exist in educational adjustment across various age groups. The emotional adjustment was found to be highest ($\mu=11.94$)

followed by the children in the age group of 4-8 years and 8-12 years. A highly significant difference among various age groups was found in social adjustment, where it was found that children in the age group of 4-8 years were better adjusted in comparison to other age groups.

Adjustment differences across various age groups clearly explain the psychological status of these children. Children who are young (4-8 years) showed better adjustment at home and social areas and as they become mature, these adjustments also declined.

CONCLUSION

Street children are not a homogeneous group. Each child has a different family background, a different reason for being on the street, a different education level, and different requirements to be filled. An effective categorization will bring a better understanding of the adjustment problems and the needs of each group of street children. Even though the country has progressed significantly in the areas of child survival and child development, there is still a long way to go for ensuring child protection. The findings of the study clearly indicate that there is significant impact of age on home adjustment, educational adjustment and social adjustment of street children. The government and nongovernmental organizations has to concentrate on these children and efforts should be made to enhance their quality of life.

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