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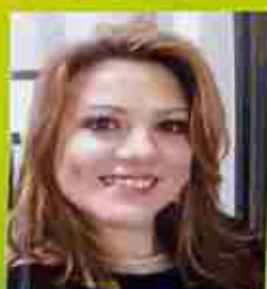
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Situation of Street Children in Patna



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Highlights

To analyse the lifestyle and life skills, examine the nature and extent of the problems, explore the gender wise, region wise and category wise variation in problems faced of by Street Children in selected pockets of Patna and to suggest survival and coping mechanism for street children in response to their problems.

In this twenty first century, it is well known that the street children are facing a lot of physical, mental and socio-economic problems throughout the world. The historical background of street children is linked with the development of industrialization and urbanization in developed and middle income countries. Currently, the problem of street children is more prevalent at middle and low income cities across India. However, compulsion to leave their home, means of surviving, health, physical and mental status, impact of substances use, poor working and living condition are found to be major issues faced by street children. In addition to the above, other reasons such as the adverse impact of poverty, physical and verbal violence, sexual abuse, unemployment, separation or death of parents, lack of infrastructure and industrialization and urbanization, have also been identified in other scholarly work.

According to the UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), the steadily growing numbers of street children worldwide could be 100 to 150 million. India has the highest concentration as per the estimations by UNICEF with 11 million children living in the streets of India, while other groups put the numbers as high as 20 million. Two in three is a male. Moreover, while the majority of street children are between 11 to 15 years, a large percentage belongs to the 6-10 age groups. A large proportion of these children are laboring as porters at bus stands or railway stations; as mechanics in informal auto repair shops; as vendors of food, tea or handmade articles; as street tailors; or as rag pickers, picking things from garbage and selling usable materials to local buyers. **A study in 2007 in India found the following:** • 65.9% of the street children lived with their families on the streets. Out of these children, 51.84% slept on the footpath, 17.49% slept in night shelters, 30.67% slept under fly over & bridges, railway platforms, bus stops, parks and market places. • The overall incidence of physical abuse among street children, either by family members or by others or both, was 66.8% across the states, out of these, 54.62% were boys and 45.38% were girls.

Patna is the capital of the Indian state of Bihar and one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world. Ancient Patna, known as Patliputra, was the capital of the Magadha Empire under the Haryanka, Nanda, Mauryan, Sunga, Gupta, Pala and Suri dynasties. The modern city of Patna is situated on the southern bank of the Ganga River. The city also straddles the river Sone, Gandak and Pun Pun. The city is approximately 25 km long.

and 9 km to 10 km wide. The bridge over the Ganga River named Mahatma Gandhi Setu is 5575m long and is the longest river bridge in India. The economy of Patna is based on the local service industry and the per capita gross district domestic product in Bihar is rs.31, 441. In June 2009, the World Bank ranked Patna as the second best city in India to start a business, after Delhi. In the recent years, the growth in Patna has been quite phenomenal with the improvement in the law and order after the change of regime. Several multinational companies have also come to Patna; one example is Tata consultancy services. The hinterland of Patna is endowed with excellent agro- climatic resources and the gains of the Green Revolution have enabled the older eastern part (locally called as Patna City) to develop as a leading grain market in the Bihar state.

The population of Patna is over 4,718,592 comprising of rural (2, 757, 60) and urban (1,961,532) population. The population density is 1471person per square kilometer and the growth rate is 30.17 (1991-2001). There are 839 females to every1,000 males. The overall literacy rate is 63.82% and the female literacy rate is 50.8%. Many languages are spoken in Patna. Hindi and Urdu are the official languages. The native dialect is Magadhi or Magahi, named after Magadha, the ancient name of Bihar. Dialects from other regions of Bihar spoken widely in Patna are Angika& Bhojpuri. Yet another language is Maithli from Mithilanchal. Other languages widely spoken in Patna include Bengali and English. Patna is also a major rail junction and is well connected with all major Indian cities and serves as an important transit point for a number of local people from other districts of Bihar and tourists from abroad. It is well connected through National High (NH) ways with other major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Calcutta etc. Despite all these improvements, Bihar accounts for 8.9% of the child labor in India.

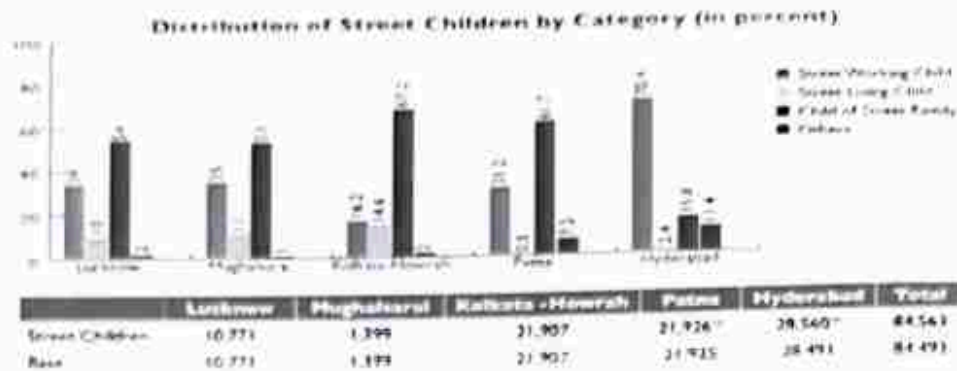
According to one of the study, 12.7 million children in the age group of 5-14 years were working. About 540,000 children were "main workers", who worked for over six months, while 580,000 were "marginal workers" who worked for less than six months in India. The state of Bihar faces the challenge of getting its children into school, not work. The total number of children as main and marginal workers accounts for 0.54 million and 0.58 million respectively.

The unavailability of systematic data makes it difficult to arrive at a trustworthy figure on the number of street children in Patna Bihar; instead we can make only an educated guess which can be gained from social indicators such as primary school enrolment and the prevalence of child labor. Because of its capital status and easy accessibility from other places, a number of street children approximately 700 to 800 come to the city every year. Most of them come from rural areas of other districts to escape poverty, domestic violence, hostile behavior of parents and unemployment. They could be easily seen roaming in and around Dakbanglow Road, R-Block, Karbighya, Gandhi Maidan, Bankipore Club, Patna Sahib, old Rajender Nagar bridge, Patna, Danapur, Rajendra Nagar, Patliputra Station and bus stand, etc. Here they are involved in petty works like rag picking, boot polishing, begging for money and selling papers and magazines at road crossing, cleaning car mirrors at traffic red light signals, working as small labor (chotu) in small shops and food vendors.

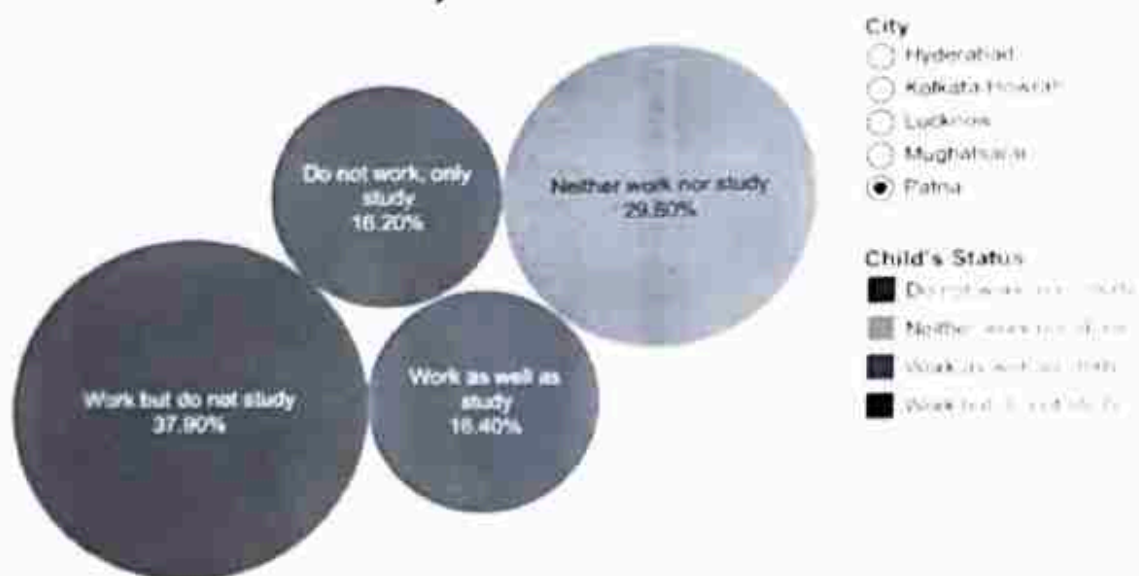
Proportion of Street Children in the City's Population

	Ludknow	Mughalsarai	Kolkata -Howrah	Patna	Hyderabad	Total
A. City Population ¹⁷	28,17,105	1,09,650	55,73,769	16,84,297	69,93,262	1,71,78,083
B. Street Children	10,771	1,399	21,907	21,926	28,560	84,563
B as a % of A	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	0.5%

¹⁷ As per Census of India, 2011



Work-Study Matrix for Street Children



Over the past century there has been an increasing challenge of several problems of the street children throughout the world. The study identified some of the pertinent issues of street children: status of street children across in regional pockets of Patna, alternative means of livelihood strategies of street children and social intervention in addressing the problems of street children.

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An Introduction of

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