



ROLE OF NGOS IN ORPHANS & STREET CHILDREN PROTECTION & DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY

Mrs.B.Anitha

Research Scholar, Department of Social work, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

Abstract

“Street children” are those children who work in the streets and markets selling or begging, and yet stay with their families, and homeless children who have run away or do not have contact with their families. Children run away sometimes due to violence, abuse, or extreme poverty at home. Street children are most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They are forced to work for long hours, without food, without safety equipment, and for very low wages. The children are not aware of their rights or are unable to enforce them. Tens of millions of Indian children are made the victims of exploitative practices India still needs the support of civil society, and concerned citizens to help children. The present article deals with street children, child labour and role of NGOs in their protection.

Key words: *Street children, Child labour, Vulnerable, Exploitation, Civil society, NGOs*

Introduction

Some kids are abandoned by their parents within a few months of their birth, and some are left even before they open their eyes to see the world. To give a normal childhood to the destitute, orphans and children whose parents couldn't take care of them, several NGOs are doing their best to provide them a homelike environment and care. Donate to an NGO for children in India, to give a poor child a better childhood.

“Street children” are those children who work in the streets and markets selling or begging, and yet stay with their families, and homeless children who have run away or do not have contact with their families. Children run away sometimes due to violence, abuse, or extreme poverty at home.

According to 1991 India Census, their number was 18 million, though only 5–20 percent of them are truly homeless and do not have families. Today the number of street children could well be 36 million, given the growth in joblessness, urban migration, and the COVID pandemic.

Most of the street children do rag picking, vending, taking care of animals, assisting in shops, hotels, restaurants and domestic labor to survive. As a consequence, they lack formal education of any kind. Due to the low and uncertain income, they suffer from poor health and malnourishment. Combined with the unhygienic conditions they live in, poor health and lack of access to medical care, they are subject to critical illnesses, which results in higher mortality rate.

Problems of Street Children

Street children are most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They are forced to work for long hours, without food, without safety equipment, and for very low wages. The children are not aware of their rights or are unable to enforce them.



Impact on Street Children

- Loss of the innocence, and fun of childhood
- Sexual/ physical abuse
- They are sometimes forced into anti national activities
- Malnutrition and unhygienic appearance
- Drug and substance abuse and addiction; easy access to solvents helps them in handling hunger but makes them addicts
- Loss of values and morals
- Loss of hope for a better future, personal development
- They are extremely vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.
- Exploit.

Tens of millions of Indian children are made the victims of exploitative practices like child labour, sexual abuse and trafficking. Despite aggressive attempts to implement a pro-child rights policy environment, India still needs the support of civil society, and concerned citizens to help children. At every stage, India's children face difficult challenges. The many improvements made for children's welfare can be credited to India's NGOs, which have tirelessly provided on-ground support and activism while working with officials.

Here is how India's NGOs are working as **child development NGOs** and giving underprivileged children their due:

1. Eliminating child labour

Ten million children today are forced to work 14-16 hour shifts in horrible working conditions, in sectors like farming, stone cutting sector, embroidery and mining industries.

NGOs educate trade organisation to reach out to business owners and educate them about the evils of child labour. Some NGOs raid workplaces like farms and factories where child labour is practiced, and free these children, to send them to school and rehabilitate them

India ranks among the 74 countries with 'significant incidence of critical working conditions' (US Department of Labor report – List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor).

To end child labour, NGOs offer intervention, both at the demand and supply side.

i. Demand: NGOs educate trade organisation to reach out to business owners and educate them about the evils of child labour. If necessary, NGOs like Save the Children perform regular raids at workplaces like farms and factories where child labour is practiced, and free these children from the practices of bonded labour.

ii. Supply: NGOs also develop relationships with locals in villages and cities to report child labour within businesses. Families are advised to push their child towards higher education, with the support of NGO scholarships and other programs. Access to education and essential services are enabled to prevent families from taking the desperate decision of selling their child into a life of slavery.



2. Education and enrolment

Bringing out-of-school children back to the classroom

Bringing street children and child labourers back to school.

India faces low literacy due to low enrollment, as well as high dropout rates.

How Save the Children is working for child education:

- i. Emphasising the importance of education to children and communities
- ii. Working to establish 'safe schools' that do not discriminate on gender, caste or socio-economic background
- iii. 'Inclusive Learner Friendly Environments' (children aged 3-18 years)
- iv. Pushing for a financial framework supporting the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009
- v. Create fun school environments, using child-friendly and interactive methods
- vi. Driving funding for libraries, computers, sports equipment and Mobile Learning Centers
- vii. Bringing out-of-school children back to the classroom
- viii. Bringing Street children and child labourers back to school

3. Rehabilitation and relief

Through awareness campaigns on nutrition and essential health care, NGOs like Save the Children reduce newborn and child deaths. The NGO's programs are closely linked with Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, Department of Health and Family Welfare and Panchayat Raj Institutions, through whom it pushes for better policies and their implementation.

Additionally, it provides on-ground assistance to Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) so they can help mothers, newborns and pregnant women. Communities are educated about the importance of natal checkups, hospital deliveries, breastfeeding, and access to nutrition. Malnourished mothers and children are provided cooking demonstrations as well as health camps. In disaster situations, the NGO generates massive fundraising to provide non-stop aid to communities. It does so by reaching out to lakhs who **support an NGO** rescue operation at such an adverse time.

Providing Safe Shelter

NGOs like Seruds run Children's Shelter where rescued children are provided a safe home, given medical care and education

NGOs working for Street Children

Global March Against Child Labour:

The Global March Against Child Labour (Global March) is a worldwide network of trade unions, teachers' associations and civil society organisations that work together towards the shared development goals of eliminating and preventing all forms of child labour, slavery and trafficking and ensuring access by all children to free, meaningful and good quality public education. This march began on January 17, 1998 under the leadership of Kailash Satyarthi, the Nobel Peace Laureate. The marchers united and advanced through Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the U.S. Their final destination was Geneva, Switzerland where the International Labour Organization (ILO) meeting was taking place. The voice of the marchers which included children and youth was heard and reflected in the draft of the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The following year, the Convention was unanimously adopted at the ILO Conference in Geneva.



Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BMM) Bandhua Mukti Morcha:

The vision and mission is to identify adult bonded labour, child bonded labour/child labour, with a view to rehabilitate the illegal labor. They lobby with the governments and the United Nations for betterment of the bonded labor. Very often, one needs to undertake legal casework on behalf of children, in order to free them. BMM assists children working and living on the street in multiple ways, and helps individual cases of violations.

Child Labour Action Network (CLAN):

The Child Labour Action Network's aim is to contribute to the creation of a society in which all children have equal opportunities for development and that they grow as responsible citizens with a view of coexistence, sustainable development and social justice leading to peace for all. With this in mind, CLAN lobbies governments and the United Nations, provides training or education on child rights, researches child rights, work in partnership with organisations, work with media and press with a view to mitigate child labour and rehabilitation of children in armed conflict, children in conflict with the law, children working and living on the street; reporting sexual exploitation of children to the CRC.

Grace Action India (GRACE):

Grace runs programmes on education, including the street children and working children, disabled children, preparatory school for slum and street children.

Plan International – India:

Plan began its work in India in 1979, and it is one of the largest international NGOs working in the country. Plan India reaches out to vulnerable children in remote areas and facilitates development processes that result in increased security for children.

SERUDS:

SERUDS is a grass root level Non-Government Organization (NGO), working as a Charitable Organization in Kurnool. It was founded in 2003 by a team led by Mallikarjuna Gorla, a software engineer. Today it works for street children and orphans through JoyHome Orphanage and 3 creches or daycare centers for children, who would otherwise have to fend for themselves and left hungry, of daily workers. These kids are given good food, medical care and education.

Salaam Baalak Trust:

Salaam Baalak Trust provides support for street and working children in inner cities, providing education, basic literacy and schooling. The main aim is to rehabilitate the street child either by returning them home or finding an alternative means of income off the streets.

CRY:

Child Rights & You: CRY's role is that of an enabler, a catalyst between two groups of people-development organisations and individuals working at grassroots-level with marginalised children, their families and communities. For the past 29 years, CRY has been supporting grassroots-level NGOs that work with children and communities to ensure that all Indian children get the following four basic rights guaranteed to them by the United Nations Charter of Child Rights, 1992 :



Right to Survival – to life, health, nutrition, name, nationality
Right to Protection – from exploitation, abuse, and neglect
Right to Development – to education, care, leisure and recreation
Right to Participation

The four core principles of the Convention are: non-discrimination. devotion to the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development.

Conclusion

All these activities are designed keeping one fundamental goal – the rights of a child are not snatched away from them. The idea is to ensure that every child gets what they truly deserve, a healthy start in life, quality education and protection from harm. Save the Children's campaigns have reduced infant mortality, chronic malnutrition and child trafficking, and increased access to primary and secondary education. The NGO works closely with governments, civil society and community members at a pan-India scale, necessitating heavy investment and infrastructure around the clock as there is always a cause the NGO is tirelessly working for. **Donate online** to join the movement to give every Indian child a future

References

1. Aptekar, L. (1994). Street children in the developing world: A review of their condition. *CrossCultural Research*, 28(3), 195–224. doi:10.1177/106939719402800301
2. Bajpai, A. (2006). *Child rights in India: Law, policy and practice* (2nd ed.). New Delhi, India: Oxford university
3. Chikarmane, P. (1996). Street identity. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 57(1), 33–38.
4. Chopra, G. (2015). *Child rights in India: Challenges and social action*. New Delhi, India: Springer
5. Martins, S. B., & Ebrahim, G. J. (1993). Street children. *Journal of Tropical Pediatrics*, 39(5).