

# An Overlooked Demography Of Street Children And Their Social Issues In Jaipur City: Observational Study

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Some of the most noticeable children are those who live and work on the streets and in public places in cities all over the world. "Street children" are children who reside and labour on the streets. **Aim of the Study:** The study's objectives were to find out about the demographics and social problems of street children in Jaipur city, Rajasthan, and to describe them. **Material & Methods:** With a pre-made questionnaire and the respondent-driven sampling (RDS) method for the hard-to-reach population, an observational study was done on street children in Jaipur. Microsoft Excel and SPSS 23 were used to figure out the statistics. **Results:** Out of the 400 people who took part in the study, 91% were men and 9% were women. 84% were Hindus, 11% were Muslims, and 4.5% were Christians. About 58% had only gone to elementary school, followed by 25.3% for middle school and 3.5% for high school. About 46% left their home to get a job, followed by 84 (21%) because of domestic violence and 47 (11.8%) to get away from their parents' rules. 23 (5.8%) and 19 (4.8%) street children left their homes because their father or mother had died. **Conclusion:** Street children are the most vulnerable and hidden people, and no census ever counts them. With the help of non-government organisations (NGOs), an effort to train people for jobs and find them will change the situation in the future.

**Keywords:** Street Children, Overlooked, Demography, Social Issues, Society

## Introduction:

Street children live and work on the streets and public squares of cities all over the world. They are some of the most visible children because they are out in the open. Yet, ironically, they are also some of the most "invisible" children, making it hard to reach them with important services like education and health care and hard to protect them. Many children who live or work on the streets like the term "street children" because it gives them a sense of who they are and where they belong. The umbrella term is a quick way to talk about a lot of different things, but it shouldn't hide the fact that children who live and work on the street do so in many different ways and for many different reasons. [1]

It is impossible to say for sure how many street children there are, but it is likely to be in the tens of millions or more. Some estimates put the number as high as 100 million. As the world's population grows and more people move to cities, the numbers are likely to go up. By 2005, it was expected that 60% of the people living there would be under 18 years old. Henry Mayhew used the term "street children" for the first time in 1851 in his book *London Labour and the London Poor*. However, it wasn't widely used until the 1979 in United Nations. [2]

Before this, children who lived on the streets were called homeless, abandoned, or runaways. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) divides children who live and work on the street into the following groups: A child on the street may;

i) A young person who is homeless and has nowhere else to go. The person's family may no longer be living or may have abandoned him or her. Such a child needs to struggle to survive. He or she can shift from buddy to friend or reside in locations like deserted buildings.

ii) A youngster who frequents the same household and lives on the street. The child may even spend every night at home sleeping, but due to family maltreatment, overcrowding, and poverty, the child spends most days and some nights on the streets.

iii) A member of a street family. Some children live with their families on the streets or in city squares. Families who are forced to leave their homes because of war, natural disasters, or poverty may have to live on the streets. When they need to, they move their things from one place to another. Most of the time, kids in these street families work on the streets with other family members.

iv) In a care facility after having been homeless and at risk of going back to living on the streets. [3]

## Material and Methods:

**Study design:** Cross Sectional Observational study

**Study Population:** This study looked at children who live on the streets of Jaipur and are between the ages of 5 and 15 years old. After getting approval from the institution's ethics board, this study was done from April 2017 to March 2018.

## **Exclusion Criteria:**

-The study only had children who agreed to take part and give permission.

-Children who didn't cooperate were not allowed to come.

-Children who have been there before Children younger than 5 and older than 15

**Sample size:** The sample size for this study was calculated using the formula,

$$N = Z^2 PQ/L^2.$$

Where  $n$  is the size of the sample,  $Z$  is a constant (1.96),  $p$  is the rate of drug use among street children,  $q = 1 - p$ , and  $L$  is the amount of error that can be made, which is 5% if the rate of drug use, which is 57.4% among street children according to the source article. (Pagare D. et. al.)<sup>[4]</sup>

With a 5% error margin and a 95% confidence level, the sample size was 375.4, which is 376. With a 10% non-response rate, the study involved 400 street children between the ages of 5 and 15.

### Sampling Method:

It was done using the respondent-driven sampling (RDS) method for the hard-to-reach population (Lipovsek and Longfield, 2007)<sup>[5]</sup>. At first, the Social Justice and Empowerment Department was asked for a list of where street children lived. After getting to these places, one person from the target population was chosen from each one based on how well he could bring in more people. These people were the first to take part in the study.

After getting them to trust us, we talked to them and gave those cash or other rewards. Each of them was then asked to find three to four other street kids who also met the requirements. This process was repeated until the desired sample size of 400 street kids was reached. All of the children who took part in the study did so on their own, and because they were underage and didn't have anyone to help them, their verbal consent was taken before they were interviewed.

**Data Collection & analysis:** The information was gathered with the help of a questionnaire that had already been made, and the answers were put into an Excel (Microsoft Excel 2007) spreadsheet. Tables and graphs show how often something happens and how much it happens. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to look at the data.

### Results:

**Table 1: Distribution of street Children According to Age and Sex**

Age (Years)	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		Frequency	Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
5-9	44	11.0	10	2.5	54	13.5
9-13	275	68.8	23	5.7	298	74.5
13-15	45	11.2	3	0.8	48	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>91.0</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Above table shows, Out of the 400 people who took part in the study, 364 (91.0%) were men, and most (68%) were between the ages of 9 and 13 years. The next largest age group was 5 to 9 years, with 13.5%. Even so, there were 48 (12%) children between the ages of 13 and 15. [Table 1]

**Table 2: Distribution of Street Children According to Place of Origin**

Place of Origin	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	237	59.3
Urban- colonies	109	27.3
Urban slum area	54	13.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Above table shows, more than half of the street children, 237 (59.3%), came from rural areas. After that, 109 (27.3%) came from urban colonies, and 54 (13.5%) came from urban slums. [Table.2]

**Table 3: Distribution of street children according to Religion**

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	336	84.0
Muslim	44	11.0
Christian	18	4.5
Others	2	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Above table shows eighty-four percent of the people in the study were Hindus. After that, 44 (11.0%) were Muslim and 18 (4.5%) were Christian. [Table.3]

**Table 4: Distribution of Street Children According to Type of Family**

Type of Family	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear Family	261	65.3
Three Generation/ Joint Family	69	17.2
Broken Family	70	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Above table shows most street children (65.3% of them) came from a nuclear family. After that came 70 (17.5%) from broken families and 69 (17.2%) from three-generation or joint families. [Table.4]

**Table 5: Distribution of Street Children According to Literacy Status**

Literacy Status	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	50	12.5
Primary	235	58.8
Middle	101	25.3
Secondary	14	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Above table shows how street children are split up by how much schooling they've had. About 48% have only been to primary school, followed by 101 (25.3%), and then 14 (3.5%) who have only been to middle school. But 50 of them, or 12.5%, could not read or write. [Table 5]

**Table 6: Distribution of Study Subjects according to Reason for Leaving Home**

Reason for Leaving Home	Frequency	Percentage
Death of father	23	5.8
Death of mother	19	4.8
Domestic violence	84	21.0
Presence of stepparents	11	2.8
For entertainment (to avoid parental restrictions)	47	11.8

<b>To earn money</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>45.8</b>
<b>Peer pressure</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>Other reasons</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Above table shows interviews were done with the people in the study to find out why they left home. About 46% of the people in the study left their homes to find work, followed by 84 (21.0%) who left because of domestic violence and 47 (11.8%) who left to avoid parental rules. 23 (5.8%) and 19 (4.8%) street children left their homes because their father or mother had died. The other 44 children (11.1%) left home because of stepparents, peer pressure, and other things. [Table.6]

## Discussion:

Street children are a "hidden" group of people who don't show up in national census, education, or health data, mostly because they don't have a permanent address. In a strange way, people who are part of hidden populations are often more likely to use drugs and get sick from them than the general population. They have always been taken advantage of and left out. They have been used as cheap and disposable labour, for sex, and to commit crimes. Most of them are men, and their relationships with their peers, how they live in groups, and how they try to stay alive are pretty much the same all over the world, even though they are usually younger in developing countries than in developed ones.<sup>[6]</sup>

In India, police and other members of civil society hurt these children physically. The government treats them more like a problem that needs to be fixed than like children who need to be cared for and kept safe.

They are often and randomly detained by police because they are homeless and don't have any control over their lives. A lot of the time, they are charged with crimes like loitering, being a vagrant, or stealing small things. Police beat or torture them, and they are often held for a long time in remand homes, lockups, etc. Because they don't have a good place to live, it's easy for both other street kids and adults to sexually abuse them.<sup>[7]</sup> In this study, it was found that 91.0% of the street children were boys. Only 9% of children living on the street were girls. In their study in Juarez, Mexico, Lusk M., et al. (1989)<sup>[8]</sup> were surprised by how many boys there were (83%). In many cultures, girls are more likely to be abandoned and abused than boys. In their study of street children in Latin America, Scanlon T., et al. (1998)<sup>[9]</sup> found that only 10–15 percent of street children are girls. This is likely because girls have other options, such as caring for younger siblings, working in the home, or becoming prostitutes. Aptekar L. (1994)<sup>[10]</sup> also said that most street children in the developing world were boys.

Based on the results of our study, 59.3% of street children came from rural areas, followed by 27.3% from urban colonies and 13.5% from urban slums. De Galan (1981)<sup>[11]</sup>, Munoz C., et al. (1990)<sup>[12]</sup>, and Wright JD, et al. (1993)<sup>[13]</sup> all said that migration from the country to the city, which is another part of modernization, is enough to explain where street children come from. In the study group, it was found that 84.0% of the street children were Hindu, 11.0% were Muslim, and 4.5% were Christian.

Nearly 60% of street children, or 65.3%, came from nuclear families, while 17.5% and 17.2% came from broken families and three-generation/joint families, respectively. In 1981<sup>[14]</sup>, Wainaina J. did a study of the "parking boys" of Nairobi. He found that 85% of the "parking boys" of Nairobi were raised by a single mother. In their study, Subrahmanyam Y., et al. (1990)<sup>[15]</sup> also found that family discard was a big problem.

One reason why street children don't have homes is because of social problems. When asked why they left their homes, 45.8% said they did so to make money because they were poor. This is similar to what Dutta N. et al.<sup>[16]</sup> found, which was that extreme poverty was the main reason why the number of street children in India is growing. Domestic

violence (21.0%), parental restrictions (11.8%), and the death of the father (5.8%) or mother (4.8%) were the reasons people left their homes. The other 44 (11.1%) kids left because of their step-parents, peer pressure, and other things.

Praveen S. [17] did a study in four of Rajasthan's biggest cities. He found that most street children left their homes because of problems with their families, such as physical abuse, verbal abuse, and sexual abuse. According to the study, verbal abuse is more common in all districts. In the Panwar B et al. [18] study, both parents were alive for 84% of the children, but both parents had died for 5% of the children. Even though this study has some flaws, one of them is that the sample was made up of street kids, so the results can't be applied to the whole population and the situation may be different in other places. Studies that describe more than one thing will be more useful and clear. It might show the way for the street kids to get better.

## **Conclusion:**

Street children are the most vulnerable and hidden group of people, but they are not counted in any census. They are among the most vulnerable people in society because they don't have enough money to meet their physical, emotional, social, cultural, and cultural needs. This makes them easy targets for exploitation and abuse.

The study tried to figure out how many of these kids there are and what their social problems are. Prevention and intervention programmes that are run by the community help these vulnerable groups and look out for their well-being. With the help of non-government organisations (NGOs), an effort to train people for jobs and find them will change the situation in the future.

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