



Challenges Of Non-Governmental Organizations In The Rehabilitation Of Street Children: Experiences From Selected Ngos In Bihar

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Abstract

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) play an important role in rehabilitating street children in the city of Bihar. NGOs use a variety of methods for locating and rescuing street children for rehabilitation. In order to get to know the kid, interviewing is conducted, children are taken to drop-in centers, and medical screenings are conducted to determine the children's health state. Finally, counseling is provided in order to help the children modify their streetwise behavior. Aside from this, the NGOs also use a variety of other methods to help rehabilitate the street children they rescue, including family tracing and reunion, outreach initiatives, welfare meetings, and day programs. Children who have been rehabilitated get both official and informal education, including vocational training and talent development programs, in addition to the usual social assistance. Donor organisations, commercial corporations, people, and the government all contribute generously to the NGOs that provide these services. The NGO's attempts to fulfil its objective are hampered by a variety of issues. Some of the difficulties include a shortage of cash. Poor working conditions, limited funding from the government, and a lack of faith in the caretakers by the rehabilitees all contributed to a lack of support from the community and a lack of trust in their caretakers. The authors of this study argue that although street children, like other children, may play an important role in bringing about societal change, they are also at risk of the issues that come along with it. For this reason, it is important to look into how to keep youngsters safe from these societal problems and how to use their boundless energy for good in the world around them.

Keywords: Street Children, Non-Governmental Organisations, Life Skills, Rehabilitation

1. Introduction

This is largely due to old Roman legislation, which gave the father complete control over his Off spring, preventing the rise of street children. The father was able to use this ability to murder or sell off undesired children (Peacock, 1994). Nomadic children began appearing in rural Europe around 1212, and they lived by stealing, begging, or performing odd tasks in order to stay alive in the face of hunger and civil strife. So-called "captives" were enslaved and sold into slavery.

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Many youngsters were forced to leave their parents' homes during the Great Depression of the 1930s and 1940s to live on the streets as nomads. Industrialization and the dissolution of extended family relationships have been implicated as contributing factors in the issue of street children in more recent periods as well. Because of the high percentages of poverty, divorce, desertion, suicide, alcoholism, and parental death, the traditional family structure that provided childhood stability is no longer working, resulting in orphanhood and child maltreatment. Consequently, it is believed that there are between 100 and 200 million street children around the globe who are unable to escape their current situation (Mwangosi, 1991). The difficulties and dangers that street children endure on a worldwide scale are immeasurable. They lack food, safe drinking water, and sufficient medical treatment. " Having to survive and 'work' on the streets is a dreadful torment for street kids (Khaday, 2015; Dallape, 2009; 2009; Kopoka, 2016 and Eugenius, 2018) It is inevitable that children who are brought up in dysfunctional households will have children of their own, creating a cycle that is irreversible and circular (Lukasinsika, 2019).

1.1 Street Children in Bihar and India's Context

The rise of poverty, political violence, conflict, harassment, abusive parents, and the impacts of HIV/AIDS have all contributed to the rise in street children in Bihar (Kopoka, 2016; OAU report, 1992). Specific studies show that the majority of street children in the globe come from impoverished homes across the world (Libent, 2017; Lugalla and Kibassa, 2019). There were almost no street children in Bihar cities previous to the market economy's arrival in many Bihar countries. Most youngsters were pushed to go to cities and towns because of the temptation of a better life afforded by the rise of town and city industries. When they finally make it to the cities, they'll have no place to call home and no way to make a life.

Thus, they spend much of their time on the streets asking for food (Ennew, 2009). As of now, there are a lot more male street children than girls in Bihar, and this is a trend that will only continue.

India's urbanisation has contributed to the rise of street children, who are able to access resources like water and power as well as business and marketing possibilities. Amenities like this are scarce in rural India. As a result, India's family structure is in a state of flux. There are fewer and fewer children growing up in loving and secure families. As a result of the breakdown of many families, many children have been left on their own. Increasing numbers of families are characterised by a lack of parental presence, drunkenness, and domestic abuse (Kopoka, 2016). In 1991, the Social Welfare Department conducted a research that found that the number of street children in India was on the rise. Moshi and Arusha regions had 259 full time street children and 520 part time street children during that year. Bukoba town had 300 street children. Other studies have shown that the number of street children is growing, despite numerous measures to stop it. There has been a tenfold rise in the number of street children since 1991, according to UNICEF (1992). During the period between 1994 and 2009, Omari (1994) estimated that India had between 2,000 and 4,000 street children, with over 2,000 of them living in Bihar full-time at the time of his research. According to a study issued by the National Programme of Action (NPA) (2015) on child survival, protection and development in India (NCC/CSPA, 2015), the number of street children in the nation has increased significantly. .

Table 4: Educational background of respondents.

Level of Education	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Never attended	9	22.5

Standard 1-2	14	35
Standard 3-4	13	32.5
Standard 5	4	10
Total	40	100

1. 2 Bihar's street children and other non-governmental organisations.

Bihar City has more street children than any other Indian city because of its size and rapid population growth. Children from all around the nation come to the city. There is a constant battle for survival in the lives of the street children every single day. They're all under the age of six. Because these children are not in school or are away from their families for most of the day or all day, they do not get proper care and direction in their formative years, which has a severe impact on their social and physical development (UNICEF, 1992). Since the problem of street children first emerged in most Sub-Saharan Biharn countries in the early 1980s (during the early years of the economic crisis) and has only grown worse since the mid-1990s (during the period of structural adjustments –SAPs-and economic reforms), the economic crisis and the impact of structural adjustment programmes have been considered important factors in generating this problem (SAPs). The economic crisis and SAPs, it is said, have damaged communities and families on a social and economic level, thereby providing the circumstances required for this issue to worsen. A slew of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dedicated to helping street children have sprung up in the last two decades as a result of these efforts. Nearly all non-governmental organisations had their start in the early to mid-1990s, according to several research. This may be explained in a variety of ways. Many studies on street children in India have shown a direct correlation between poverty and an expanding population, and this has been a horrible time for India economically in the 1990s. For two reasons: First, in the 1980s economic crisis deepened, and second, World Bank/IMF-promoted structural adjustment measures undertaken by the government in the mid-1980s started to have a detrimental influence on the lives of the majority of Indians. All of these events in India have had the overall effect of destroying social support systems such as families and communities, which has resulted in an increase in the number of street children during the previous two decades (Lugala and Kibassa, 2019).

Table 2: NGOs strategies for the rehabilitation of street children

Strategies used by the NGOs	Number of respondent	Percentage (%)
Picking boys and dropping them in drop-in centers	56	93.33
Interviews	44	73.3
Medical check-up and screening	40	66.6
Counseling	39	65.
Observation	39	65
Family tracing	23	38.3
Family reunification	22	36.6
Reach out programs	22	36.6
Follow up programs	22	36.6
Welfare meetings	21	35
Reintegration	20	33.3
Day out program	20	33.3

Poverty in India is increasing, while the government's capacity to deal with the country's social development issues is dwindling. Because of what has transpired in the previous two decades, a 'development space' has been created as a consequence of this. The government's incapacity to serve as a catalyst for social progress may be used to explain this area. The emergence of civil society organisations was essential to fill this void. Since the Indian government has failed to fulfill its responsibility as a catalyst and promoter of development, NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have exploded throughout the country during this time period. As a result, understanding the evolution of non-profit organisations that work with street children, among others, is critical (Lugala, and Kibassa, 2019).

2.1. Non-profit and religious organisations' contributions to the welfare of homeless youth

When it comes to tackling the issue of street children, NGOs and religious institutions play a critical role. This is due to the fact that initiatives for homeless children cannot only be funded by the government (UNICEF, 1986). The effectiveness of these initiatives depends on enlisting the assistance of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and finding a location where they can do their work efficiently (WHO, 2015). Transparency and accountability are issues that plague many NGOs. NGOs are required to maintain organisational responsibility and to be open about their goals, operations, and financing (UNDP, 2016). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) must operate together, according to UNICEF (2016).

Integrating prevention and rehabilitation methods. There should be an emphasis on developing social services for families with children, as well as a greater role for schools in the early diagnosis of children's social problems and an increase in opportunities for free time. The development of children-friendly urban and rural environments should also be a part of preventative measures.

2.2 Awareness and responsibility for street children among the community members

The public's perception of street children is primarily unfavorable in spite of several initiatives aimed at aiding them, as research conducted in countries like Kenya, Brazil, and others has demonstrated (Kayongo, 2015; Lugalla and Mbwambo; 2019). By providing interventions such as social and developmental assistance, policies and programmes in India must shift from focusing on street children to all children. By concentrating their efforts only on the plight of street children, organisations run the risk of overlooking or ignoring the root cause of the issue, which is widespread urban and rural poverty. In order to address the root causes of street children, India must adopt a more comprehensive approach to community development, focusing on both community and family assistance. Due to a lack of community pressure on government or non-profit organisations to provide a long-term solution for street children, services for underprivileged children should be brought back into their families and communities. As a result, the community has failed to come together as a powerful force to combat the issue. This is possibly the most heartbreaking and awful element of the growing disaster in India (Lugala and Mbwambo, 2009).

Table 2: Problems undermining effectiveness of NGOs in rehabilitation of street children

Problems	No of Respondents	Percentages
Lack of funds	48	80
Stigmatization	45	75
Lack of trust	38	63.3
The cruelty of street children	36	60

Poor education background	34	56.7
Poor working environment	33	55
Lack of transparency	7	28.3

2.3 Justification of the study

According to the literature, there has been a great deal of study done on street children in India and throughout the world. There have been several studies focusing on the causes of street children, the general difficulties of street children, what is required to control the problem, community attitudes toward street children, copying methods of street children, and legal rights and protection for street children in India (Sala and Henry, 1997). There is a consensus among experts that children living on the streets are there due to a combination of social ills such as poverty, familial dysfunction, and a lack of support from the larger society. NGOs' success in rehabilitating street children is an open question because of the dearth of reliable data. This research is based on a study conducted in India that aims to fill up this information gap.

3 Methodology and Findings

Analyzed were the life cycles of two non-profit organisations in Bihar City that deal with male street children, Dogodogo Centre and Child in the Sun. This research employed a qualitative methodology. Quantitative techniques were used as required, and the results were interpreted in line with the perspectives of the participants. Male street children were the focus of the research since there are few female street children in the city of Bihar.

3.2 Finding and enrolling street children at drop-in centers: a variety of methods

NGO social workers visit spots like Ubungo bus terminal, Mnazi Mmoja recreational grounds and the fish market regions of Feri and Kariakoo, as well as all of the large bus stops in the city to look for street children and pick them up. The majority of street boys in these locations operate tiny enterprises, such as selling bottled water, eggs, and other low-cost products. Then there are the people who wash cars, beg and steal. It is not a simple chore to pick up from the streets. Social workers from non-profit organisations (NGOs) must build relationships with street children to educate them about their organisations' benefits while also educating them about their own bad consequences. This takes time and patience, and it's only after the youngster has gained trust that the centre can accept him or her. Some of the street children, on the other hand, choose to join the centre of their own will. All children, regardless of their age, background or educational status, are subjected to a similar set of procedures by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) until the organization's management is satisfied that the child's behaviour is normal, at which point he or she can be transferred to another branch for vocational training or schooling.

Keeping children in drop-in centres is a flawed system that needs improvement. Due to their differing personalities, some of these defects stem from the care centres' administration and other issues stem from children who are picked up. Because of these inadequacies, some of the youngsters who are picked up or who voluntarily attend such centres return to the streets. Table 1 lists some of the reasons why people end up living on the streets.

Table 1: Reasons that contributed to run-away from the drop-in centres

Reasons given	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Cruelty from fellow children	54	90

Lack of freedom	52	86.66
Location of the centres	20	33.33
Lack of tolerance	18	30
Punishments	12	20
Hobby of wondering in streets	9	15
Desire to earn money	6	10

3.3 Procedures in identifying and rehabilitating street children

3.3.1 Interviews

In order to learn more about the rehabilitated street children, the NGOs use interviews as a primary method. A preliminary interview is done after being selected or joined willingly in order to identify the immediate problem(s) or

Table 5: Services given to street children and the number of children involved

Type of service	No children	Percentage (%)
Basic needs	38	95
Primary education	20	50
Counselling	18	45
Vocation Training	10	25
Secondary education	5	12.5
Talents development	5	12.5
Informal class	2	5

The child's needs are met, and a solution is supplied right away. Children and their caregivers benefit from this method because it encourages them to work together toward a common goal.

3.3.2 Observation

The NGOs social professionals supervise the children's everyday behaviour while they are at the centre. Children's interpersonal relationships, dialogue with elders, and school attendance are all monitored, as is the degree to which they earn the confidence of the NGOs' staff by being honest about their genuine backgrounds and previous lives.

3.3.3 Medical check-up and screening

The NGOs must be assured of the health situation of the street kid in order to provide full rehabilitation. Many children have been reported to be infected with HIV, tuberculosis, syphilis, and other sexually transmitted illnesses as a result of their exposure to rape, homosexuality, drug usage, bhang smoking, and the like. When a health issue is discovered, the appropriate treatment regimen is followed and each child's medical history is recorded for future reference.

3.3.4 Guidance and Counselling

Nearly three-quarters (65%) of the NGOs surveyed have offered or are providing counselling to runaway children and their family members (if any are known). Street children need counselling and guidance because of the hardships they've endured. Many have been bullied, assaulted, participated in homosexuality, thievery, and drug trafficking in their personal lives. While in the city of Bihar, some have encountered extended periods of starvation and bad transportation. The street children's methods

of coping with life on the streets imply that they are brave individuals. As a result, they need a great deal of tender loving care in order to help them overcome their psychological trauma and act like normal kids again. Group and one-on-one counseling must be conducted by the NGOs in order to achieve this goal. 39 percent of the interviewees from non-profit organizations believe this method is a good one since it allows them to monitor the progress of the youngsters. Because they assume they're tough and mature enough to handle themselves, some street children don't take the counselling sessions seriously. As a rehabilitee would describe it, I began counselling at Dogo Dogo. Having an adult listen to my ramblings was an unusual experience. It was difficult since I could do anything I wanted on the streets. As long as I was out and about, I didn't have to worry about being on time for anything. People started asking after me all of a sudden. Admonishing me not to do such-and-such... as if I were ignorant. Nonetheless, many children have reawakened their dreams and reunited with their families thanks to counselling sessions, which have allowed them to open up about their pasts. Many people's lives have been altered through counseling as the following paragraph demonstrates;

The children who live on the streets are distinct from those who are raised by their parents.

We'll need a lot of time to heal before we can act like them again. However, in the center, they like sudden changes, and if you don't conform to their expectations, they'll kick you out. In the street, people laugh at you because they know you've just gotten food, and surviving on the streets means doing whatever it takes to stay alive. "Many of my Bunju buddies have already been expelled....".

3.3.5 Family Tracing and Reunification

The NGOs' personnel were able to identify the children's house of origin and the reasons for their departure via interviews. As a result of the child's rehabilitation, if it is feasible to restore him to his family, plans are made to do so. As an alternative, in the event that the boy's circumstances prevent him from returning home, the youngster will remain with the organisation until they are 18. Intriguingly, we found two opposing viewpoints on this method. A whopping 25.1% of the NGOs' employees said that nothing beats family tracking and reunion. Many people believe that children's explanations and descriptions are the most important factors in their development, and that's why youngsters constantly alter their characteristics to meet new problems. To illustrate this, one of the rehabilitees stated; "If you hear that youngsters with ages between 10-15 years are being transported to Kigogo home to begin education, you go to the matron and tell him/her that the prior information you given was incorrect. Also, when there is a chance of returning home on leave, you go to the matron and modify your information about where you are from or indicate a place that is farther upcountry in order to receive more money when you sell the ticket they issue you."

On the other side, 22 (36.6 percent) of NGO employees believe that social workers accompany children to their reunion with their families. This is an excellent and successful technique for rehabilitating street children since some of them may have ran away from home because of small offences, as children's own explanations suggest.

those who have left their homes for a variety of reasons. This is a difficult technique to implement in practise, since all of the NGOs studied had a workforce of little more than three social workers. This is a small staff compared to the vast number of street children that have been rehabilitated in this facility.

3.3.6 Reintegration

To ensure full reintegration into society, one of the primary goals of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is to include all rehabilitee children in daily duties at the centres. To prepare children for the

kinds of tasks they would experience in their communities, activities like cleaning the organization's environs, washing and gardening, as well as livestock keeping and shopping, are beneficial.

3.3.7 Follow-up programmes

22 (36.6 percent) of the NGOs' employees believe that a follow-up programme is a vital tool for determining whether or not goals have been met in terms of the program's conception, execution, and outcomes. As a project or programme, the rehabilitation of street children requires that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) make at least one special home visit in the first three months after the children leave the centres to perform follow-up activities. Due to the high expenses of overhead, this experiment is seldom performed. Many NGOs staffers believe that project plans are merely a way to get funders to provide large sums of money by making it seem like there is a follow-up plan.

3.3.8 Welfare meetings

More than seventy-nine percent of the NGOs' employees had no idea that their employers may fire them if they expressed concern about how children were being treated in the facilities. This might be explained by the NGOs' management's reluctance to offer permission to interview youngsters and employees of the organisations. A lack of openness and accountability in the everyday activities of NGOs is inferred from this.

3.3.9 Day out Program

According to the UNICEF's human rights principles (1946-2006) Article 12, children have the right to relax, play, or engage in any leisure activity that corresponds to their ages, regardless of their living situations and possibilities. In light of this, the non-profit organisations have devised a unique day in which all children may go out and visit any location they like and return at a predefined time. Social workers designated by non-profit organisations do a covert follow-up throughout the day so that they may observe the children's behaviour when they are on their own. On top of that, the NGOs offer playgrounds where children may play a variety of activities, including football and athletics, on a daily basis.

4.0 The NGOs Operational Challenges

4.1 Funding

Non-profit organisations investigated had a stronger working relationship with a variety of external and internal institutions, as well as religious groups and people, that give moral and financial support. There are certain donors that offer long-term contributions for NGOs, however these organisations are required to operate within the budgets that have been provided and agreed upon by those organisations. Only a tiny amount is provided by the government, and most of that money is given as gifts. Relationships between the NGOs executive and government officials determine how much and when a project will be delivered. They are forced to seek funding from other sources as a result of this.

4.2 Stigmatization

Community members believe that the youngsters being rehabilitated are social misfits and trouble-makers, which stigmatises the NGOs in issue. Because of these beliefs, NGOs do not have the support of the local community they need to help rehabilitate street children.

4.3 Lack of trust among the children

More than a third of the youngsters questioned claimed that they had gone away because they had been deprived of the affection they needed from their family and other people. As a result, youngsters are disillusioned and distrustful of new acquaintances. Even though the NGOs' staffs work constantly for their rehabilitation, they are distrustful of them. On the basis of this, they fail to provide accurate

information on their origins and the needs of their communities.

issues, making their recovery a time-consuming, exhausting, and expensive procedure. The executive director of a non-profit organisation had this to say:

A youngster may tell you five to six tales before revealing the whole truth, therefore it's no surprise that he or she may take you to more than two locations before disclosing his or her genuine residence... You can see how expensive this is, and it's out of our price range..

People who live on the streets face an unclear future that is typically characterised by violence, rape, and other forms of abuse. With their spirits destroyed, they live their lives with dwindling faith and hope.

4.4 Poor working environment

Thirty-three NGO workers (55 percent) said that their job was made more difficult by a lack of working and teaching/learning equipment. In addition, roughly 18 youngsters who were questioned expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the limited available educational resources. Most of the youngsters were discovered to be sleeping on decrepit mattresses and worn-out linens. A new entrant child's bedding and coverings will be utilised until a fresh set is provided by humanitarians or benefactors. Similar to clothing, children are given clothes once a year, and they don't have to be the correct size! Children are given a low-quality pair of shoes and a pair of pants. School uniforms are made in a similar manner. In comparison to other children who live in homes, rehabilitee children seem different, even if they are better off than those who live on the streets, for obvious reasons. Table 3 lists the obstacles that impede the efficacy of non-profit organisations in the rehabilitation of street children.

4.5 Poor educational background and children's schooling

Some of the youngsters rescued from the streets had gone to elementary school before being found. It might be challenging for people who have never attended a primary school since they consider themselves adults, to begin school. These youngsters will be unable to handle their life effectively if they do not get any education, even at the most basic level. In order to help the rehabilitee street children, the NGOs provide a wide range of services (Table 5). Preparation for a fruitful life is one of the services that the youngsters are given. Opportunities for higher education are provided to those students who successfully complete elementary education and enter government secondary schools. However, informal education is often given in drop-in centres before the start of basic school level as a means to prepare the children for primary education. Like any children, street children have unique talents and abilities in a variety of areas. In order to cultivate these abilities, the NGOs have been working hard. Counseling sessions, on the other hand, are held twice weekly and the counsellor talks freely with them various concerns such as biological changes and how to deal with them, social life and health difficulties.

5. Conclusion

Young children and newcomers to the drop-in centers are bullied by the older and crueller guys because of the practice of placing them together regardless of their disparities in age and background. These kidnapped youngsters may try to flee and return to where they were taken up if this scenario is not managed properly. The community's perception of street youngsters as potential criminals was also shown to be true. The neighbors of the non-profit organisations are resolute in their opposition to the rehabilitation of the youngsters. Children are being held and rehabilitated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are seen as a threat to the neighbouring towns and cities. As a result of this irrational dread, communities are able to avoid their joint duties to support the children. Street children are rehabilitated through a variety of methods by non-profit organisations. They include interviewing, medical screening and check-ups, counselling, and behaviour change monitoring and tracking techniques.

Though effective tactics like family tracing, reunion of families, follow-up programmes and day out programmes are seldom fulfilled since they demand substantial sums of money to be implemented. All procedures relating to the rehabilitation of street children get relatively little government assistance, too. Here, it is suggested that the government and other stakeholders should improve social policies to better safeguard street children and other vulnerable children. To improve people's attitudes and mindsets about street children, government agencies should conduct public awareness programmes. Street children should not be seen as criminals or prospective criminals, but rather as the victims of family discord and social and economic breakdown. " The notion of collective responsibility should be emphasised in the NGOs centres for street children since it fosters intimate personal relationships with stable caring people. Staff in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be sufficiently educated to alleviate the psychological effects of children who have been traumatised. Rehabilitated street youth require dignity, financial aid in the form of loans, and career prospects. As members of society, they have a lot to offer. The youngsters living on the streets are unquestionably resourceful and tenacious individuals who deserve a shot at a better life. To understand them, we must pay attention to what they have to say. Parents, communities, and governments must acknowledge that youngsters are brimming with creativity, aspirations, and people's aspirations and that they should be engaged in choices that impact their life. They need to know more about their challenges and what they can do to improve their situation.

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