CHILD BEGGAR

"Empower Dreams, End Child Begging."

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Introduction

Child begging is a prevalent issue in urban parts of the country. This study aims to analyze the circumstances of child beggars of the children who come to the child care institution, focusing on various aspects such as demographics, locations, parental status, expectations, and origin states. By examining this data, we can gain insights into the challenges faced by these vulnerable children and develop targeted interventions to address their needs effectively.

Background

The Government of Delhi has launched a wide range of plans to address the issue of child beggary in the city, estimated to help around 50,000 children. A special committee, led by district magistrates and comprising various stakeholders, will be activated to crack down on gangs forcing children into begging and to rescue and rehabilitate these children. The government intends to round up children found begging on the streets and convince them to join childcare institutions. Efforts will be made to counsel parents who force their children to beg, encouraging them to enroll their children in schools instead. The government will conduct various workshops to gather ideas from stakeholders on addressing child beggary and has invited NGOs to run residential homes for affected children, which the government will fund. The focus is on holistic rehabilitation through education and immediately stopping child begging.

(Source: https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi/delhi-govt-to-rehabilitate-children-begging-on-streets/story-ueNFLPJGREWR9cAogTNHOL.html)

Data & Demographic Analysis:

The data for this study has been obtained from a few Child Care Institutions through the Child MISS Homelink Network. The sample size consists of 150 children who came to these institutions during the period of five years, starting from January 2018 to December 2023 from Don Bosco Ashalayam, New Delhi, Don Bosco Ashalayam Lucknow & Holy Cross Sisters Snehalaya, Lucknow.

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Limitations of the study

Limited Scope	The study focuses solely on child begging in New Delhi and Lucknow, limiting generalizability to other regions or different parts and various other countries.
Incomplete data	Some datasets may have missing or incomplete information, potentially affecting the accuracy and diversification of the analysis.
Sampling bias	The study may suffer from sampling bias, as it relies on data collected from specific sources or locations, potentially overlooking child beggars not captured within these parameters.

Reliance on reported cases	The study relies on reported cases of child begging, which may underestimate the prevalence due to non-reporting or children not accessing available services.
Temporal limitations	The analysis is limited to data from the past five years, potentially ignoring the longer-term trends or changes in child begging dynamics.
Inaccessibility to hard to reach population	Challenges in accessing marginalized or hidden populations of child beggars may result in limited representation in the study.
Ethical & cultural influences	Ethical and cultural factors may have influenced the collection and reporting of the data, which may impact the reliability and validity of the findings.
Lack of longitudanal data	The study lacks elongated data tracking results and line of child beggars over time, limiting insights into their long-term rehabilitation and well-being.

Addressing these limitations is crucial for future research to gain a deeper understanding of child begging and to develop more effective interventions and policies.
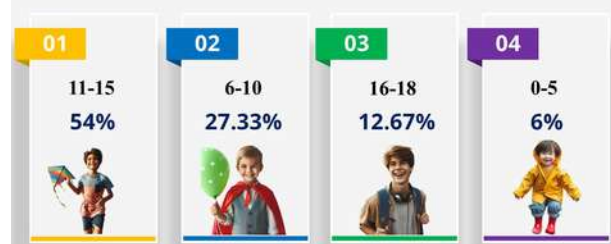
Objectives:

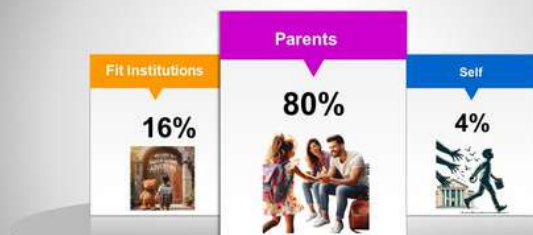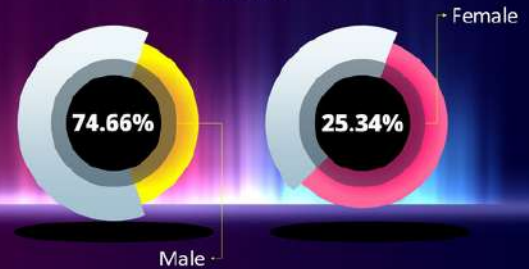|	
Temporal and Spatial Distribution Analysis	Study the trends and differences in the temporal and spatial distribution of child begging cases over the past five years, with a focus on identifying patterns and factors influencing prevalence.
Demographic Analysis of Child Beggars	Cover the demographics of child beggars, including age groups, gender distribution, and geographical origins, to understand the reasons of children affected by child begging.
Rehabilitation Outcomes	Evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts by studying the proportion of child beggars restored to various places, such as their parents, self-care, or fit institutions, and analyzing the time taken for restoration.
Intervention Preferences and Needs	Recognizing the expectations and needs of child beggars, including their expectations for support and their craving for involvement, to better understand the development of targeted and relevant interventions.

Temporal and Spatial Distribution

- **44%** 2022
- 2021 **14.67%**
- **14%** 2023
- 2020 **11.33%**
- **10%** 2018
- 2019 **6%**

Age group of children

01	02	03	04
11-15	6-10	16-18	0-5
54%	27.33%	12.67%	6%

Restored to

- Fit Institutions **16%**
- Parents **80%**
- Self **4%**

Gender

- Female
- **74.66%**
- **25.34%**
- Male

Month wise Cases Found

- 01 Jan - Mar **51.33%**
- 02 Jul - Sep **26.67%**
- 03 Apr - Jun **15.33%**
- 04 Oct - Dec **6.67%**

Places where the children were found

40.67%	17.33%	16%	13.34%	8%	4.66%
Street	Work Places	Slum	Others	Railway Station	CWC
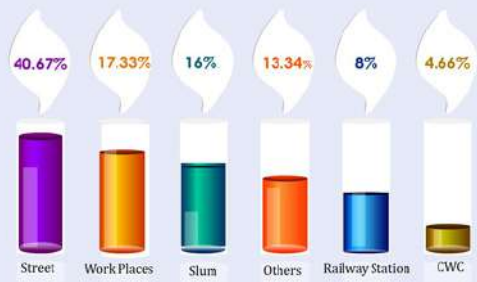
Expectation of the child

1. **44%** Return Home
2. **23.33%** Basic Needs
3. **17.33%** Educational Support
4. **8%** Emotional Support
5. **5.34%** Counselling
6. **2%** Economical Support

Parental Status

- 05. No Information **0.66**
- 02. No Parents **10%**
- 01. Have both Parents **72%**
- 04. Only Mother **8.67**
- 03. Only Father **8.67**
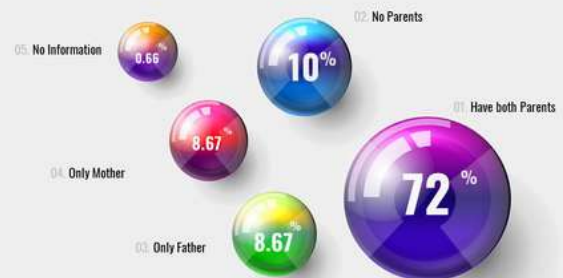
State of origin of the children

Uttar Pradesh	39.33%
Delhi	20%
Bihar	19.33%
Rajasthan	10%
Others	7.34%
Punjab & Chandigarh	4%
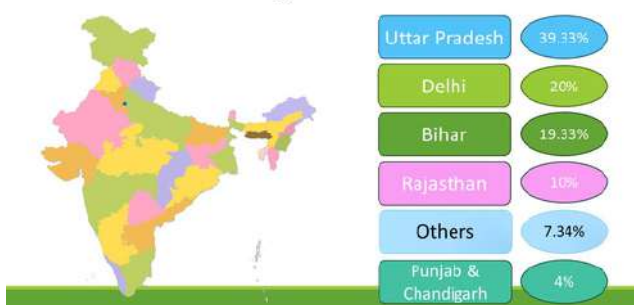
Time taken to restore the children

- 0 – 5 days **66%**
- Within 1 month **24%**
- More than 1 year **8%**
- Within 1 year **2%**
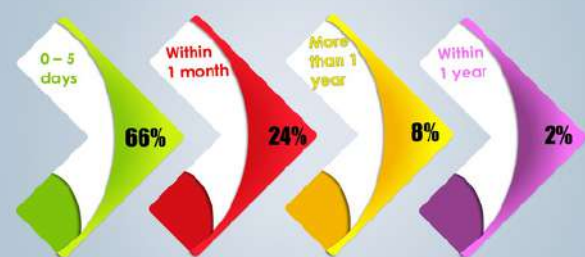
Findings:

1. Temporal and Spatial Distribution:

- The prevalence of child begging has changed over the years, with a significant increase observed in 2022 (44%) compared to other years.
- The majority of cases were found in the age group of 11-15 years (54%) and the first quarter of the year (Jan-Mar, 51.33%).
- Street and workplaces were the primary locations where children were found (40.67% and 17.33%, respectively).

2. Restoration and Rehabilitation:

- A great number of child beggars (80%) were reunited with their parents, highlighting the importance of family reunification efforts.
- The majority of restorations occurred within 0-5 days (66%), indicating the need for prompt intervention and support services.

3. Expectations and Support Needs:

- The most common expectation among child beggars was to return home (44%), followed by basic needs (23.33%) and educational support (17.33%).
- Parental status varied, with 72% having both parents and 10% having no parents, highlighting the diversity of family backgrounds.

4. Geographical Origins:

Uttar Pradesh (39.33%), Delhi (20%), and Bihar (19.33%) were the primary states from where the children come from and become child beggars, indicating migration patterns and regional inequalities.

These findings underscore the complex dynamics of child begging, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions addressing factors such as family support, education access, and geographical disparities to effectively address the issue.

Reasons for Child Begging

The study identified several underlying factors contributing to child begging

Poverty and Economic hardships	It is well-known that poverty and economic hardship are major causes of child begging. Families in extreme poverty often struggle to meet basic needs, leading children to beg for survival. This idea is supported by existing research on how poverty affects child welfare and opportunities for a better livelihood.
Natural tragedies	After natural disasters like floods or earthquakes, families can lose their homes, jobs, and access to essential resources. As a result, children, already in a vulnerable position, might start begging to survive when their families cannot support them.

Psychological issues	Children experiencing psychological issues such as trauma, depression, or anxiety may resort to begging as a way to cope. Psychological distress from abuse, neglect, or loss can drive them to the streets, seeking solace or distraction.
Social issues	Social issues play a crucial role in child begging. Factors like poverty, family instability, and lack of community support can create environments where children are forced onto the streets to survive. Addressing these root causes through social support programs, education, and community interventions is crucial to tackling this complex issue.
Physical issues	Children with disabilities often face barriers to education and employment due to discrimination and lack of accessibility. This situation can leave begging as one of their few survival options, highlighting the need for inclusive policies and support systems to ensure they have equal opportunities to thrive.
Religious aspects	In some cultural contexts, religious beliefs or traditions may lead to children being sent out to beg as a form of religious duty or practice, especially during festivals or religious events. This practice raises ethical concerns about child welfare and highlights the importance of balancing cultural sensitivity with the protection of children's rights.
Begging cartels	organized begging cartels or criminal networks exploit children by coercing or trafficking them into street begging for financial gain. These networks operate covertly, taking advantage of children's vulnerability and inadequate legal protections, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation.

All these factors together make child begging a complex issue. To solve it, we need comprehensive efforts that tackle social, economic, psychological, and systemic issues. This approach is crucial to protect vulnerable children and address the root causes effectively.

(Source: https://pwonlyias.com/editorial-analysis/begging-problem-in-india/#:~:text=Economic%20Aspects%3A,-Economic%20considerations%20often&text=Poverty%2C%20unemployment%2C%20underemployment%2C%20as,also%20contribute%20to%20begging%20menace.)

Recommendations

, based on the study findings, recommendations include implementing social welfare programs, expanding educational and vocational opportunities, strengthening legal protections, and raising community awareness to reduce child begging and support vulnerable children effectively.

Implementing the below-mentioned suggestions and prioritizing children's well-being can reduce begging and create a supportive environment for vulnerable children.

Recommendations

01 — Comprehensive Rehabilitation program

Implement holistic rehabilitation programs, covering education, vocational training, psychosocial support, healthcare, and family reunification.

02 — Strengthening family support system

Strengthen family support to prevent child begging by offering economic aid, counselling, and parenting education to address poverty and family.

03 — Enhanced access to education

Enhance education access for children through outreach, bridge schools, and flexible learning, vital for empowerment and poverty alleviation.

04 — Community based interventions

Deploy community based interventions to prevent child begging, establishing centers, clubs, and activities for children, offering positive outlets and support networks.

05 — Awareness and advocacy Campaigns

Raise awareness through advocacy campaigns targeting policymakers, stakeholders, and the public to mobilize support for effective solutions.

06 — Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

Encourage collaboration between government, NGO's and community groups, for ensuring holistic support systems.

Conclusion:

The study reveals important details about child beggars, including their demographics, locations, expectations, family situations, and where they come from. Understanding these factors helps policymakers, NGOs, and others create targeted plans to address the reasons behind child begging and provide the support and rehabilitation these vulnerable children need. It's essential to prioritize the well-being and rights of these children to ensure they grow up healthy and are fully included in society.

The findings underscore the urgent need for action by civil society, government, NGOs, and other stakeholders to adjust their approaches and strategies. This is crucial for tackling the root causes of child begging and delivering the necessary support and rehabilitation services. By prioritizing the children's welfare and protecting their rights, we can ensure they develop fully and become integral members of society.

Homelink Network is an ongoing initiative started by DB YaR Forum in 2002, to ensure appropriate, timely, and real-time response to the needs of the young at risk, based on accurate documentation and data analysis supported by the best of technologies available today.

We work towards

a. Developing data driven child care system through documentation, research and networking.

b. Systematically documenting the systems, processes, and workflow of the organizations.

c. Data-led intervention planning in organizations.

d. Data driven advocacy and engagement with stakeholders and government on children's issues.

e. Harnessing current advances in digital technologies in the service of the work with young at risk.

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