

## **Aggressive and Violent Behaviour among Children Living on Street in Mumbai city, India**

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The phenomenon of street children is universal and exists in both the developed as well as in the developing countries. Owing to its complex nature as well as socio-economic and cultural diversities, defining the phenomena is a rather arduous task; therefore, some researchers and international agencies have categorised this population on the basis of their relationship with their family. As per this categorisation, the first group of children are those who stay with street families, the second group of children are those commended to an institutional care, the third group consists of those children embroiled in child labour, that is those who work and return to their homes after a specific interval and finally, the last group of children are those who work and/or stay on the street alone and have little/no contact with their family, better known as the children living on street. The population of street children worldwide is in millions and in Mumbai city it is about 37059, out of which 2973 are the children living on the streets (2435 boys and 538 girls). There are many reasons for the pathetic phenomenon of the street children namely abuse, neglect violence, exploitation, household poverty, natural or manmade calamities, severance of all sorts of contact with family, kidnapped and orphaned. Whatever may be the reason but the fact remains that they live and work in a pathetic condition, which further leads to the brutality, maltreatment, rejection, distress that in turn leads to the exacerbation of their health, particularly mental health. The living and working condition of children living on the streets is somewhat documented and studied but very few studies have addressed their behavioral issues. Therefore, this paper aims to understand the symptoms of aggressive and violent behavior among the children living on the streets in Mumbai city, India.

This paper is part of a doctoral research survey carried out during the year 2015-2016 in the city of Mumbai, India, where the researcher has tried to address issues like health, abuse, exploitation, violence, psychosocial distress, aggression, psychiatric symptoms and other problems. Along with the above issues, the study has also explored the factors contributing to the psychosocial distress and behavioural problems of the children living on the streets. Therefore, the researcher has used the descriptive-explorative research design. In consideration of the frequent mobility of the target population, the study has used the convenient sampling technique and collected data from 234 children living on street, out of which 53 were girls. Children of the age group 10–18 years, residing on the streets, railway stations, bus stations and other public places without been commended to the care of any family or responsible adults and has spent six months or more on the streets were included in the

study. The data has been collected through semi-structured interviews with respondents, in-depth interviews with key informants [outreach workers, social workers, and service providers], Focus Group Discussions [FGDs] with research participants [peer educators] and case studies of few participants were developed. It helped to understand the psychosocial distress of the children living on streets. The interview schedule was prepared with the help of standard instruments like Aggression Scales. The Aggression scale consist of 11 items [teased others to make angry, got angry very easily, fought back, said things about other kids to make others laugh, encouraged others to fight, pushed or shoved others, angry most of the day, got into the physical fight, slapped or kicked someone, called other children with bad names, threatened to hurt or to hit someone], where each of the items indicates the symptoms of the aggression a week preceding the survey. Each item was evaluated on the seven-point Likert scale [0 times- never, 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 times, 6 times]. The predictor variables in this study are - age group, Education, Religion Caste, Duration of stay on street, Occupation, and other variables related to abuse. Further, Bivariate analysis was use to determine the aggressive symptoms among children by their socio-economic, demographic and other characteristics using the Chi-square statistics to test for the statistical independence. However, the Principle component analysis [PCA] has been used and categorised aggressive behaviour into normal, moderate and severe groups. Additionally, the Ordered logistic regression were used with an ordered dependent variable.

The result indicates that about two out of five children reported that they got angry very easily five or more times with someone in the last week. One-fourth of the children reported that they had fought back 6 or more times in the last week when someone hit them. The 54 percent of children agreed that they pushed or shoved others 6 times or more in a week. Almost two-fifths of the children accepted that they slapped or kicked someone 5 or more times in the last week. The severity of aggression were categorised into three groups- normal, moderate and severe level of aggression. The result indicates that one third of the children were having severe level of aggression. The 39 percent of children from the age group 13 to 15 years and 35 percent of children from 16 to 18 years of age were found with the sever level of aggression. Further gender-wise analysis shows that 42 percent boys were found with the sever kind of aggressive behavior compared to 4 percent of girls. The chi-square test also showed the statistically significant association between gender and level of aggression. About 46 percent of Muslim children reported sever level of aggression and had a statistically significant. Around 45 percent of children from OBC caste group were found with a severe aggressive symptoms. The study found the inverse relationship between the time spent and level of aggression. 42 percent of children those who spent four years or less on street reported severe kind of aggression compare to 24 percent of children

who spent five years or more on street. It has also seen that type of work or occupation also played an important role. The result of ordered logistics regression analysis to understand the factors contributing to the severity of aggression among children living on street. Model I deals with the socio-economic variables including [age, education, religion, caste, duration of stay, occupation], Moreover, model II include the variables related to abuse and violence, additionally to socio-economic variables model III comprised abuse related variables in this study. The result indicate that gender has significant impact on the level of aggression. Girls were 33 percent more likely to have aggressive behaviour, those who had spent five years or more on street were more likely to have severe kind of aggression in model I. The substance abuse and violence faced by the children were the significant predictors for their aggressive behaviour. Those who reported the substance abuse and violence faced were respectively 11 percent and 10 percent more likely to have severe aggression symptoms. Surprisingly, study found that those who were reported as involvement in sexual abuse were 8 times more likely to have aggressive symptoms in model II and 10 times in model III. The model III present the correlation between socio-economic, abuse and violence related variables with aggressive behaviour. The result further indicates that those who spent 5 years or more on street are 31 percent more likely, those who faced violence were 14 percent more likely to have aggressive behaviour.

Although the findings of study are strong and similiar with some of the previous research, the sampling of such mibile nature of population was a difficult task. Hence, the researcher has used the convinient sampling technique to address this limitation. Further, pretesting phase helped to address the issue of accuracy in responce. Though gender is an essential demographic component, the present study was able to capture the meager number of street girls.

Based on the result of this study conclude that a significant proportion of children living on street have symptoms of aggressive and violent behaviour. This group of children stay and work on street alone and without responsible caregiver. They face various forms of abuse, maltreatment and violence, which further leads a unhealthy and insecured environment for them. Children living on street are indeed prone to act aggressively, but also aggression is a dynamic and is a result of the insecured enviornment. This aggresive or violent behaviour is useful to protect themselves or to create dominance in the group. All these factors leads to the severe mental health issues among children living on street. This study pressing the need to tackle the issues of these children with a empathic approach. It also suggest that there is a need to have activities to change the approach of the society towards these children. Finally, these study recommends the need of further research in this field.

**Results of the proportional odd model using aggression as three ordered categorizes in model I, II and III**

Variables	Model I		Model II		Model III	
	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Std. Error
<b>Age in years</b>						
10-12.						
13-15	1.50	0.77				
16-18	0.43	0.26				
<b>Sex</b>						
Boys						
Girls	0.324263**	0.17			0.69	0.42
<b>Education</b>						
Illiterate						
Up to primary	15.34712**	18.34			11.65068**	11.19
Middle school and above	38.14018***	48.36			22.99976***	22.76
<b>Religion</b>						
Hindu						
Muslim	1.43	0.78			1.49	0.67
Other	1.79	1.09			2.741375**	1.39
<b>Caste</b>						
General						
OBC	1.89	1.22			0.82	0.47
SC/ST	0.27	0.19			0.1714354***	0.10
Unknown	0.35	0.19			0.71	0.32
<b>Duration of Residence</b>						
01-04.						
01-05.	0.3179884***	0.13			0.3100355***	0.10
<b>Verbal Abuse</b>						
Not faced						
Faced			2.046246**	0.69	1.962842*	0.75
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>						
Not faced						
Faced			0.50	0.24	0.55	0.30
<b>Substance use</b>						
Not faced						
Faced			0.1144913**	0.10	0.18	0.19
<b>Involvement Sex Abuse</b>						
Not involved						
Involved			8.928556***	5.74	10.62804***	7.43
<b>Violence faced recently</b>						
Not involved						
Involved			0.1017297***	0.04	0.1485737***	0.08
<b>Log likelihood</b>	118.86714		210.85862		0.6986172	