

28 Social Problems and Social Welfare

28.1 Social Problems (Child Labour, Dowry, Prostitution, Juvenile Delinquency, etc.)

Adhikari, Harasankar: Growing up in an Adverse Milieu: Education and Occupation of Sex Workers' Children. *Indian Journal of Social Work* 68, 2 (2007): 282-307.

This study, conducted in the Bowbazar red-light area of Kolkata, aims to understand the parenting practices of female sex workers (FSWs) and how these affect the process of socialization of the sex-workers' children. The study looked at the quality of attentiveness and responsiveness to children's needs, the relational pattern of the child with the immediate environment, and the effects of their upbringing on the children's experience as school students and earners.

The FSWs of this area come from a variety of social backgrounds, though a large number are from Scheduled Castes, driven from rural areas by extreme poverty. About one-third of them are literate, but similar proportions are schooled to high school level. In effect, the families of the sex workers are single-parent families; paternal and kin ties are weak; and maternal attention is constrained by the mothers' obligation to earn a livelihood from sex-work. The majority of the children eventually gravitate to occupations linked to the sex-trade. In cases where the FSWs' children were provided space and attention from an early age, and particularly when they received attention from NGOs, they tended to perform better in school, but even then, the process of separation from the sex-work milieu is typically nullified by the peculiar circumstances of their lives and upbringing. The author concludes that, if intervention on behalf of the children of FSWs is to be successful, it has to take into account the acute loss of space during childhood. Their deeper needs such as insecurity and anxiety also need to be addressed, albeit by different types of interventions.

See also Bandyopadhyay (12.3)

Sarkar, Sumita: Beggary in Urban India: Reflections on Destitution and Exploitation. *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 68, 4 (2007): 531-44.

This paper reviews the phenomenon of beggary in India as a growing socio-economic problem and an extreme form of destitution and poverty in urban areas. It analyses beggary from a developmental perspective as an inevitable outcome of the exploitation and criminalization of the poor under the present political economy. Although beggary has its traditional roots in religious mendicancy and notions of pious charity, it has become a major social problem in the twenty-first century, in towns and cities in particular. Distinguished from 'organized beggary', beggary in India is another manifestation of the larger socio-economic problem of low incomes, high unemployment rates, the rising cost of living, high population growth, inadequate public policies and continued rural-urban migration and displacement. As an impoverished underclass, the beggars face extreme destitution characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, homelessness, insanitary living conditions, disease, and marginalization and exclusion from social and political rights.

After surveying the scenario of beggary in India, the author reviews critically the various legal and administrative procedures for dealing with the phenomenon. Laws and schemes tend to be punitive and aggressive, aiming more at the elimination of visible beggary than the rehabilitation of those for whom beggary is the only form of sustenance. According to the author, the state varies greatly in its complicity with beggary being relative tolerant in rural areas, small townships and religious centres, and intolerant in the larger urban conglomerates. Except for providing night-shelters, the state in urban areas has done little to improve the situation of beggars who have minimal access to public sanitation, health institutions and adequate shelter. The author concludes with a number of practical suggestions for community and NGO involvement in support to the destitute, and a plea for the collection of reliable data on the number, needs and conditions of the impoverished for the formulation of effective policies for dealing with beggary and destitution.

See also Srivastava (17.1); Thukral & Abbasi (29.1)

28.2 Social Welfare (Social Programmes and Delivery Systems)

See Mishra (18.3); Pattamaik (9.6); Sen (4.2); Staples (16.1)