

# The Existence of City Facilities and Street Children in Malang

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## Abstract

Street children are a common phenomenon in Indonesian big cities. The existence of street children caused fear and concern among people in Indonesia. In order to protect child's potential lost, the role of government is needed. Effective solutions are required but unfortunately it still not been achieved now. Through observation and interview on thirteen street children in Malang East Java, this research intended to know 1) Social problems causing the emergence of street children. 2) The life condition of street children in Malang, and 3) Street children perception about life they had. This research is qualitative study using observation and interviews to collect data. The results of the study found that street children in Malang work voluntarily without family coercion, they work due to economic pressures faced by family. Economic pressure lead children go work on the streets to lessen parents burden. It is found that the physical and psychological threats on the streets cause street children do not like the life they had. Actually, child wanted out from the street life if opportunity comes but unfortunate that opportunity never comes. This research concluded that the government participation is needed to alleviate children from street life. Without help from others, it will be difficult to make the children out from street life.

**Keywords:** Street children, causes, problems

## 1. Introduction

The existence of street children in big cities is a disturbing problem among people lived in cities in Indonesia. Street children seeking life on the streets by way of begging, singing, crossroads traffic directing often creates fear and inconveniences among road users.

Street children spend much of their time on the streets. To survive they use advantage of a many public facilities such as sidewalks, parks and road crossing. Public facilities are use for a place to play, work, chat, and rest. The physical appearance of street children that dirty makes the city look seedy.

The existence of street children in big cities in Indonesia should be a concern of the government since there actually no child want to become street children. A child should ideally be at home for guidance, protection and affection from parents and not live and work on the road.

Attention on the lives of street children has been mandated by constitution, Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945, Article 34 states that "The poor and neglected must be maintained by the State". Based on the constitution, Indonesian government made Republic of Indonesia Law Number 4 of 1979 (Undang Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 4 Tahun 1979) to regulate the children protection. This Act emphasizes that the children are potential successor of the nation. To be able to take their responsibility to the nation, children should receive the best opportunity to grow and develop their physical, spiritual, and social capabilities in a good environment.

In reality, the government efforts to protect street children through raids and rehabilitation does not eliminate the existence of street children in major cities of Indonesia. This reality indicate that government has not yet find an effective solution for street children. The presence of street children that lost their potential due to work in the attract curiosity. Through research on street children in Malang, researchers wanted to uncover the reasons why street children still exist despite numerous attempts by the city authorities to eradicate it.

Based on introduction above, this study aims to determine: 1) Social problems cause the emergence of street children. 2) The life condition of street children in Malang. 3) The perception of street children about the life they had.

## 2. Research Methods

In accordance with the purpose of research to explain the phenomena then methods used in this research is qualitative descriptive. This study took place in Malang city East Java with thirteen street child-sex male and females key informants. Data collection is done by observation and in-depth interviews. Voice recording and photo taking is done during the study in order to clarify the context of research.

## 3. Results And Discussion

### 3.1 Characteristics of Street Children in Malang

UNICEF distinguishes street children into two categories: first, "*Children of the street*" which means children who actually live on the street and do not go home at night days. Second, "*children on the street*" that

children who work the streets but return home at night to give what she/he got to his parents (Aptekar, 2014: 8). By research on the street children in Malang, it is not found a category of *children of the street* or a street child who purely life on the street. Malang city street children still maintain a relationship with their families. Not one of the children were separated from families as a result of expelled or fled from the house.

Based on the findings it is known that the characteristics of children in each city in Indonesia vary. As stated by Salahudin (2004) in the city of Semarang, there are street children who actually live cut off from her family. Their lives are very alarming, even sex between fellow street children become commonplace due to their life condition.

Street children whose homes are in Malang area work commute. They are working in the streets every morning and evening while night they slept in their house. Meanwhile street children who his home outside Malang city were lived for some time on the street as a result could not return to home every night.

Street children who temporary lived in the street looks dirtier than street children who return to home every night. They only shower once a day is on the afternoon and did not change clothes every day. These street children admitted only came home at certain times if they miss their family or on the holidays such as Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha where they give a portion of their money to the sister and brothers. Then if they bored and running low of money they will go back to the streets in Malang city for work. Departed from the house, the child usually only carry two pairs of clothes, one pair is the clothes they wear and one pair other is stored in the pants pockets for spare clothes. On the street, they only shower once a day is in the afternoon and not every day change clothes.

Based on interview, its kind a hard to know for sure the age of the children who working in the streets of Malang. When interviewed, only five of the thirteen children who can gives exact date of birth. Eight children found difficult to remember the date of birth due to their birthday was never celebrated by parents.

### 3.2 Social problems cause the emergence of street children in Malang

Based on the research it is note that economic factors are the main cause of children working the streets. Parents who have difficulty to fulfilling family economic needs motivate their children to work in the street. As a human being, children does not want always to be a family burden but want to give contribution to lessen family economic problems. Working in the street is a strategy to lessen their parent's economic burden. This is some of citation gained from street children interview:

I work in the streets looking for money to eat. It is also for mother and father meal and pay the house rent (Putri, May 10, 2016)

I find money to eat every day, for saving as well. Sometimes when my mother needs money, I give some. My parent's job is selling crackers in the street but sometimes they did not sell well. When my mother cannot buy clothes for my younger brother, I give my money to them (Ayu, May 10, 2016)

I Work because I wanted to be independent. I always want to be independent since I was small. Since in elementary school I don't want to be burden of my family.(Heru, May 26, 2016)

This finding is similar to research by Bilbars. Bilbars (1998: 202) says that poverty forced families to make children involved work on the streets for a living. The unique case of street children in Malang is the child consciously wants to work the streets to help their parents. There is no coercion from parents for children work in the streets.

Nareter (2011: 30) says that the association of children of non-street with street children also a gateway for them to become street children. When the child is already familiar with how the lives of street children, children are encouraged to try to become street children. This phenomenon also happened in Malang, children of the poor family can mimic the workings of street children to earn money.

I work ngamen (find alms by singing) after I saw small children ngamen in the street. In my neighborhood many of my friend also work ngamen in the street. ngamen is fun and make money so I also went along (Asrof, July 18, 2016)

I know street children life from my friends around. In my neighborhood, many children become punk (street children). I admire the punk kids that were really independent so i want to be one of them. (Emos, May 26, 2016)

I know this kind of work from a friend. One day I join my friend and see them use envelope to gather donation from food stalls customer. It is success and they got a lot of money. Because of this ia want to try. (Ayu, May 10, 2016)

#### 3.2.1 The reality of the lives of street children in Malang city

Every street children is known to be afraid in the first day they work in the streets. This fear caused by the danger in the street that may threaten safety. Family economic pressure then forced the children go down to the street. After several attempts to work the streets, eventually the child becomes accustomed and not afraid of the streets again. The streets Malang proved be a safe place for street children. The absence of street thugs and criminal make street children enjoy working there. On the street, older street children is not a threat to the young

because they feel have the same condition.

Yes the first day I work in the street I feel afraid. I afraid if there are child that invites me to brawl. I afraid of being kidnapped, beaten or rob by thugs and street *punk*. After sometime, I become accustomed and no worried. To become excepted in the street I must be familiar with other children.

When I meet them I must greeted and ask them to do high five to become friends. (Emos, May 26, 2016)

Yes the first time I feel afraid, but after try and try again I become accustomed (Aldy, July 17, 2016)

Yes I think there is still fear in the street but now become less and less. I become brave because it is for the sake of my family (Romadhon, July 18, 2016)

(Filho 2001: 21) says that work is the great hope for children and adolescent in the street. Employment with low qualifications or without any qualifications are targets of street children. Taken form the job of street children there are two. First, work with misdemeanors such as theft, robbery, prostitution and drug dealing, and secondly, non-offence work without crimes such as begging and loitering. In case of street children in Malang, they prefer doing work without crime such as soliciting donations by singing, begging and directing traffic. This fact is compatible with Davies (1998: 318-319), It is said that street children rarely engage in criminal practices such as theft because it can harm them. Theft can be easily get caught, making street children arrested by police and losing the trust of people around the street.

Street children Malang reluctant to commit crimes because they still maintain a good relationship with their extended family. Street children do not want bother their families because the crimes committed by a street children could damage family reputation.

Should people do not underestimate us. We are not nyolong (steal), but we just want to be independent. We are not criminals even though we have tattoo, ear piercing or smoking. We did not steal because we do not like it. We do not want to embarrassed our parents. (Heru, May 26, 2016)

Naterer (2011: 25) says that street children perform the stereotypical role of victimized individuals that are in great need of help and pity. Street children in Malang also consciously trying to show the impression that he was living with the poor condition and in need of help. This strategy make them easier to get money in the street.

In addition, street children Malang also take advantage of street work that temporarily abandoned by adults. Managing traffic or become a watchman in a parking lot done by street children when the work is abandon temporary by an adult. This case shows that street children are actively seek and utilize as much as possible economic opportunities that they encounter on the road.

This work *nyeppek* (traffic controlling) is done in *shift*. In the morning there is policeman and volunteer that directing the traffic. Later when the policeman and volunteer are leaving, we replace them. (Edo, July 26, 2016)

When my body is not healthy and I feel tired to work, I go to parking lot. If there is no parking guard, I become watchmen of the vehicle and ask donation from it (Emos, May 26, 2016)

Children seizing the workplace from the adults is in line with opinion of Chudacof. Chudacof (2007: 5) says that in the urban area, children always compete with adults to seizure public space. Public spaces that are not occupied by adult will be used for children to play.

The existence of municipal facilities in Malang city gave support to the street children. Street not only providing a place for the money but also provides a wide range of facilities to live. The existence of empty kiosk, food stalls, Gasoline filling stations (SPBU), and overpasses become a shelter for street children. They can sleep in overpass or empty kiosk, buy a meal in food stalls, or shower and defecation in gasoline filling stations toilet. The existence of public and private vehicles passing in the street also become a tool to move everywhere. This finding explains why children become a common phenomenon in cities.

If it is raining, I take shelter in that empty kiosk or food stalls and when the rain stop I work again (Aldy, July 17, 2016)

If tired, I take a break and when hungry I buy food in the warung (food stall) around the street (Rangga, Juli 17, 2016)

When I want to take a bath or defecation, I go to the gasoline filling station. There is toilet that I can use freely (Emos May 26, 2016).

I usually sleep under Highway bridges or the porch of a stalls. I can also sleep in internet cafe (Asrof, July 18, 2016)

Street children are prefer to work in groups. This is because friend is not only beneficial to provide a sense of security but also for psychological reasons. Alone in the street is not fun because children can feels lonely and miserable but working with friends allows children joking and laughing. When street children are sleeping in the street, a friend can provide comfort. A friend is a helper to eliminate the sorrow of sleeping in the street.

I never work alone, yes, if I was alone I feel fear (Aldy, July 17, 2016)

I of us usually work together with my friends and never alone. why? Because it is not fun to be alone.

If there is no friend, no one to speak to. (Heru, May 26, 2016)

I work in no definite time, usually I work until 9:00 PM, 10:00 PM but sometimes until 1:00AM. At night when there is no vehicle to hitch, I sleep on the road. It is OK, not bad as long as it done together with my friend (Emos, May 26, 2016)

This finding is similar to the findings of Coticini (2005: 73) that says love and friends make children feel at home on the street. In Malang non-material assets such as affection and trust between friends is a richness street children lives. Social network among street children is not only important when street children in life crisis but also improve the quality of everyday life. The findings Narterer (2011: 30) is also the same, the group is beneficial to provide emotional support for street children.

### 3.2.2 Street Children perception on street life

Street children was not an ideal work for children and it's only undertaken as a result of family economic pressure. Working as street children though it can provide sufficient material income but it is not regarded as an ideal job. Burgard (2013: 1106) says that good job is work that linked to health for individuals and societies. Burgard said that employment is linked to health in positive ways, both as a predominant mode of earning income and other material benefits, and as a source of social integration, prestige, and meaning. Work as a street children although can fulfill the needs of material but cannot give prestige, meaning and social integration in the community. This why children actually do not like this kind of work.

For street children in Malang, there are three kinds of threats on the street. The first is the physical /safety threat from of motor vehicles, the second is the psychological threat from people insult, and the third is the threat from official raid. About the physical threat from motorist, to overcome this the child must always be vigilant when working on the street. In addition to accidents, exposure of smoke and weather in the roads can also be physically debilitating for street children.

I ever got an accident. In the street, hit by motorbikes or cars is common. It is all right, a lot of friend help me when I got an accident. (Aldy, July 17, 2016)

In the street, my foot ever hurt by shard of glass. it is OK, I my father salve me (Yudha, Juli 17. 2016)

I got this little scars in my leg from hot motorcycle exhaust. It is not treated but relief anyway. (Budi, July 20, 2016)

I ever got injuries in the street. A motorist girl abstracted and then hit me. She help me and take me to the hospital and then I escorted home by my friend. (Ayu, May 10, 2016)

In the street I ever, feel dizzy and exhausted because of the rain. I almost fainted in the street and then my friend help and escorted me home. (Putri, May 10, 2016).

In addition to physical threats, street children are also often get a psychological pressure from insults and grumble by motorists and residents surrounding streets. Actually street children are feel embarrassed by this but then they get rid their shame because must work to earn money for family.

In the street I got insult very often, so many people do not appreciate my work (Aldy, July 17, 2016)

Yes often got an insult. The insult is not only come from motorist but also people around the street (Asrof, July 18, 2016)

Actually, I do ever feel embarrassed in the street. But over time I think the person who insult me is never give alms to me, so I don't care of them and get rid of my shame. (Rangga, August 10, 2016)

In addition of the three threats above, raids by Polisi Pamong Praja (municipal officer) are major threat that feared most by street children. Malang street children are always trying to escape from raid done by municipal officer to avoid rehabilitation program. Based on street information, the rehabilitation program will be apply to street children who caught in the raid. In street children opinion, rehabilitation program held by ministry of social warfare is not the best solution for the problem street children faced. The rehabilitation program in contrary is bringing new problems because was held outside the Malang city. Rehabilitation that program held in Sidoarjo about 78 kilometer from Malang makes children feel sorry because their parents should redeem them in Sidoarjo. Street children came from a poor families so they feel that the rehabilitation is troublesome because the parents must give up one day work and seek additional income for transport to commute in Sidoarjo.

Of course I am afraid, if someone caught in the raid three times, he will disposed to rehabilitation program in Sidoarjo (Aldy, July 17, 2016)

I ever caught, first when I was little and taken to Sidoarjo. In there I was fed, told to cleaning toilet, sweep the floor, learning needlework and ask to wake up early in the morning. (Budi, July 20, 2016)

Fear, yes because I have heard stories from friends that it was not good there. In Sidoarjo my friend trained in military exercises and parents were told to come there to redeem. It is very far and the parents do not have money, don't you feel pity on him? (Heru, May 26, 2016)

In the street police officer is not a threat for street children. The police officer is a companion that actually protect street children from the thugs and accident in the street. Police officers will only drive out children from the street but did not arrest them. This finding contrasts with the case of street children were found



by Rizzini and Lusk (1995), which the biggest threat to street children in Latin America is violence and brutality from the police.

I am not afraid to police officer because they just asked me to leave the street but not arrest and rehabilitate me (Ayu, May 10, 2016)

Once I was got an accident but it not severe police officer in the guard post help me. (Romadhon, July 18, 2016)

The police officer just scolding me, they just asked what I am doing here, and ask me to leave. It is all right I just said yes and I move to other place (Heru, May 26, 2016)

Various things that not pleasant in the street actually make children want to get out from street life. Unfortunately street children do not know what they should do to get a better job. Ask the street children to study in school to get better education is naïve. This is because of economic pressures, parents do not care about their child's life. Parents do not remember the child's birthday also they never ask about the child's progress in school. This why children do not like to go to the school. Peer pressures in schools is also make street children do not like to go to school. As a result of poverty and the street children status that they had, not many peers want to be their friends. In school there is many children insult the status of street children.

Invernizzi (2003: 337) says that when reaching adolescence, going into the street becomes stigmatic for girls. This also happened in Malang, as his body grew and become no longer proper to work in the street, girls will stop working in the street.

I will stop working in the street if I my body grow older. That is because it is embarrassing for adolescence girl's work like this. In the future when I don't work in the street, I will doing any kind of work. Become domestic servant it's OK, become factories worker it also OK. (Ayu, May 10, 2016)

Differ from girls, boy street children is more difficult to abandon street life. Based on the research it is found that male street children can continue to work as street children if they are not helped by other parties. When still a child, street children still has a wish to out from street life but when he became mature, he will stop hoping. Based on the findings it is concluded that that help from other parties, private or state apparatus are still needed by the street children. With a nota that the aid should be more effective.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the research, it can be concluded that the main factor causing children to work in the street is the economic pressure that suffered by family. Economic pressures make children want to help parents to fulfill the family economic needs. All of street children actually feel fear when he/she first started working on the street. Economic pressure then forces them to ventured and adapt to the street life. Street children choose to work in the streets because it is a profitable place. The streets offer a variety of work opportunities with life supporting facilities. It is known that there are no children who want to become street children. Working as street children is not ideal because it doesn't give any prestige, life meaning and integration with society. Actually street children wanted to get out from the street life as long as they got an opportunity.

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