

CHAPTER-ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Despite of the decade of planned development, Nepal remains underdeveloped with the higher proportion of poor and underprivileged people. Under the conditions of extreme poverty, underemployment and low wages, child labour becomes a survival strategy for poor family. These families encourage their children to search for jobs that lead a lot of children to adopt street living for survival. Though it is called that children are the future architects and backbone of any country, the situation is different in Nepal due to these socio-economic conditions. Children are often neglected, abused and exploited and exposed to the worst forms of labour such as sexual abuse and physically exerting or dangerous works. Children working on the street are clearly a much more visible fact in Nepal than other forms of child labour.

Many different terms are used to define street children. They are generally viewed as neglected, deserted or an orphaned child, who begs or collects and sells recyclable goods and sleeps on the street. The conception is based upon certain assumption about street children and their lifestyles. The criteria for defining "Street Children" still seem vague. In the late 1980's, when programmes for street children were begun from the non-government sections in Nepal, the term street children was used to refer to those children who literally lived in the streets i.e., those who worked, ate, slept on the street. By 1993, the definition of street children became more ambiguous as reflected in the report of street Children's National Convention held in the October 1993 (CWS, 1993). The report uses the terms as "homeless", "helpless", "khate", "uncared for" and "underprivileged" to refer to and thus define the street children.

In Nepal, different terms are used to refer to the street children. The direct translation of street children is Sadak Balbalika. The media and NGOs use the term Khate. Originally created by the children of the street who work as rag pickers. The term however is popular in Nepalese urban areas. Some people also refer to the street children as Sadak Chhap, which means those who live and work on the street. In this study, children as defined as those who are under 16 years and younger. This is in accordance to the Children's Act 2948 (1992) of Nepal. The concept of the street broadly includes all public lands buildings, temples, pavements and public shelters built for travelers. The nature of

work these children do is an important criterion that determines whether they are street children or not. For example, those children who beg, sing on the street, rag pickers, porters and those working in restaurants and hotels but living on the street are all considered as street children whether they live with their guardians or not. However, those children working in restaurants, hotels and private homes have not been considered in this research as street children unless they work in these places and live in the street. Those living with their families but spending time on the streets have also been considered as street children.

The definition provided by the Inter – NGO Committee on the street children and Street Youth (1985) is used as a definition of a street child; which is as follows:

“.....any boy or girl.. for whom the street (in the widest sense of the world including unoccupied dwellings, waste lands etc) has become his or her habitual abode or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults. The definition realistically close to the purpose of this study as it includes both "Children of street" and "Children on the street". The former refers to the children who live in the street and later refers to the children who only use the street as their workplace or social hangout, but live with their families. Hence, "street children" in this study is used to refer to all children who have a special relationship with the street. Henceforth the term "children of the street", "children on the street" and "street children" are used without quotes. It must be emphasized here that the two categories – children of the street and children on the street are not fixed and exclusive. In other words, children move between the categories all the time. For example; children who live on the street spend night in the shelters, in friends tented room or go home occasionally. Children who work in hotels, restaurants or in private homes live on the street in between jobs. The terms here are used to point out the various relationships that the children have with street culture, their families and their peers.

Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, poor health, sluggish economic growth and agrarian economy characterize the Nepalese Society. As a consequence of these condition, child labour is widespread and a major long-term socio-economic problem. Child labour geoparalizes children's potential to become productive adults, robbing them of their health, their education and their prospects for a better future. It is an affront to the principles of social justice, child rights and to the protection of human rights. In Nepal, child works in general and child labours in particulars – is a common phenomenon. An

estimated 42% years old is the total population of children from 5 to 14 years old is economically active (Suwal et al., 1997). At the expense of education, children who work as domestic helpers as well as wage labourers are compelled to take heavy workloads for survival. This deprives them of their right to development, protection and participation (ILO/ IPEC, 1995). Most of the urban centers of Nepal have street children. Previous researchers have shown that the critical problems affecting children taking to the street emerge from an unhealthy environment, poverty, emotional and financial insecurity, illiteracy and exploitation, lack of alternative work and abusive environment created by step parents.

The fact is that the street children are related to many castes/ ethnic groups of Nepal and constitute children from Bahun/Chhetri, hill ethnic groups and Dalits including Indian nationality. The literacy status was seen low – 60 in 100 were illiterate and among them who attend school, their mean grade was 3rd grade. Parent's lack of desire to send their children to school was the main reason for children not attending school (57%), followed by poor economic condition (35%). Most of the street children come from large families with the average family size of 6 (ILO/ IPEC, 2002). Most children run away from their origin because of the ill treatment of their family members. Main ill treatment reported include physical abuse (49%), mental abuse, malnutrition, lack of schooling and being thrown out from the house. Family poverty in association with death and/ or absence of his/ her own mother was the main reason for many children coming to the street. Beside that the respondents parents' literacy rate was reported to be only three percent. Only 26% of the respondent's fathers were reported to be literate. (Ibid, 2002)

The migration of children to the city is in acceleration way. All such migrant children do not have prosperous lives in the cities, it is evident that some of these children the journey ends up in the street without food, shelter, clothing and protection, the problem of the street children is increasing in Nepal. The migration with aiming to be employed can be asserted to have a direct relation to deteriorated village life, attraction to the cities, family disruption, lack of education and lack of recreation facilities in village (CWIN, 1998 and Sattaur, 1993). Children may end up on the streets for several basic reasons. They may have no choice. They are abandoned, orphaned, or disowned by their parents. Secondly they may choose to live in the streets because of mistreatment or neglect or because their homes do not or cannot provide them with basic necessities. Many children also work in the streets because their earnings are needed by their families. But homes and families are

part of the larger society and the underlying reasons for the poverty or break down of homes and families may be social, economic, political or environmental or any combination of these.

The study surveys the general situation of street children of Kathmandu Valley and looks into the factors that impel children to leave their homes and motivate them to live and work on the street. The street has become the place for survival, serving as home and workplace for many children. The fact of children living on the street of Kathmandu has grown significantly in the last decade; the number of children working in the street has also greatly increased. The changes created by the situation have important implications for the country. While the increase in the population of street children is very noticeable, the conditions associated with the occurrence are not generally understood because of the scarcity of information of date. Mere assumption as to the causes of the movement to the street may be inaccurate and this cannot clarify the situation. Clearly, poverty is one of the major factors but the other causes too play a role in leading to this situation, Hence this study has tried to reveal the socio-economic condition, working condition and causes of street children.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The fact of street children has become a very common in urban areas and within a decade it has turned out to be one of the major long-term socio-economic problems of our country. According to the Nepal Labour Force Survey 1998/ 1999 conducted by the central Bureau of statistics, the population of children of 5 to 14 years old was 4.86 million out of which 1.986 million were involved in various economic activities (mostly in agriculture). A significant number of the children, 1.406 million were not attending school (NMPCL, 2001). It is believed that many of the children, who are involved in economic activity, are working in the worst forms of child labour. It is seen that most of the child labours are produced in the rural areas of the country where poverty is a severe problem. The families living under poverty consequently encourage them to look for work outside the home to assist their family economically. This causes the children to migrate to urban areas in the hope of earning and living better and thus exposing them to the worst forms of child labour which finally take them to the street where they are exposed to sexual exploitation, trafficking, begging, petty crimes, pedophilia, rag picking, pottering etc. there are many other reasons which compel children to leave their home

such as poverty, domestic violence like the death of parents, presence of step-parent where children are left themselves with no adult guidance, parents or parent abandoning the children and physical and psychological violence inflicted by alcoholic parents and other adults on children are some of the major causes for children for leaving their home.

It is hard to pinpoint exactly when the fact of street living was noticed in the urban areas of Nepal. Children living on the streets of Kathmandu were apparently quite obvious by the late 1980s when concerned people started to take action to help these children. According to the survey done by CWIN in 1990, there were 500 street children but their number has rapidly increased nearly three fold within five years. The number of children spending their lives in the streets has been estimated to reach 1500 in Kathmandu alone (CWIN, 1995).

The condition of street children is heart-rending. They live in the world that teaches them violence and abuses, and exposes them to unhealthy behaviours and lifestyle like sexual exploitation, alcohol consumption, and drug abuse. No organization has yet managed to address the specific needs and aspirations of the street children. The policies and the acts introduced by the government to address the problem have had little impact so far. The study intending to uncover the street children's needs has to be raised and policies and plans to help developing the children's sense of place and belonging in the society must be implemented. These children need a means to be reintegrated into the society. They need to be given facilities of still development and vocational training, especially in the poor rural areas. That's why deserting has tried to uncover the everyday life of street children that may help to know about the poverty has been considered as one of the root causes of the children taking to the streets and increase the poor economic situation has led to growth in the number of street children in the urban areas of Nepal. The problem of children taking to the street not only lie in poverty but also the due to the socio-psychological reasons such as increasing occurrence of family problem, death of earning member of the family, change in family structure and mistreatment by alcoholic parent or step parent, unhealthy environment, insecurity, illiteracy and exploitation. From economic prospective, it also has poor macro-economic implication for the nation as a whole, as a child in the street is definitely grow up with and become an unskilled and up productive citizen. So this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- i) What is the social and economic condition of the street children?
- ii) What type of problems do the street children face?

- iii) How do they solve those problems?
- iv) How do they spend their life on the street?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objectives of the study are to analyze the causes of the street children and its relationship with the socio-economic and demographic condition in Kathmandu Metropolitan city and the specific objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the street children.
2. To find out the problems faced by street children while living on the street.

1.4 Importance of the Study

Nepal has been facing a big problem of street children and the state has not yet adequately questioned the cause and effects of that long-term socio-economic problem. Different concern agencies have been working continuously for protecting children from harm, devastation and crises and few international communities and promises have been made through different conventions but the children and their rights have still been marginalized everywhere. In spite of considerable support and information on the rights of children, including resource material, financial commitment, liberal and democratic atmosphere, the child rights movement has not been much effective as expected. The main reasons for this situation is mainly due to the underestimating of issues, lack of realization of the problems of street children by the Nepali society particularly concern agency, lack of co-ordination on the part of the government and ambiguous vision undertaken by some initiators working in the field thus that has hindered sustainability of many of lunched programs. The upcoming constitution is to commit itself to ensuring children's rights.

1.5 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into six chapters in total. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study, which brings to the reader an understanding of the issues to be studied and its objectives. The second chapter consists of review of the relevant literatures for the study. The third chapter deals with the research method for the study. The fourth chapter

covers analysis of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the street children. The fifth chapter deals with the working condition and survival strategy to cope the street living. The sixth chapter includes the summary, conclusion and the recommendation.

CHAPTER-TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 General Overview

Review of literature is the reviewing research studies other relevant propositions in the related area of the study so that all the past studies, their conclusions and deficiencies may be known and further research can be conducted. As the part of reviewing, the previous study, prevailing policies and practices cases of child work, state of child right in Nepal are critically assessed reviewed.

2.1.1 Children as Social Issue

The international year of the 1979 raised the necessity and importance of understanding issues related to children. As a response to this international call for the "Children's cause", issues such as children's health, education and development were researched and reported worldwide. While children's work caught the attention of the international labour organization and UNICEF carried out the research on the status of children in developing countries (UNICEF 1980), local initiatives were undertaken to address some of the problems of Nepali children. Studies were conducted to assess the magnitude and situation of working children. However, the diversified problems, topics and areas covered by international, national and local investigation what seemed common was the lack of children's voices and their own prospective on the issues important to their own lives. This lack has also wide spread in most of the literature on child labour, child development and the socialization of children published in the 1980s and 1990s within Nepal elsewhere.

The socio-economic and cultural realities of developing nations, though, continued to important in shaping the popular notions of childhood, and the case of Nepal is of no exclusion. Nepal's children's Act 1992 makes the work of children under the age of 14 to be illegal, but hundreds of children are leaving their homes to work in cities and there are thousands of parents sending their children to work in factories. The children's act also declared that there should not have discrimination between sons and daughters but the reality in Nepal is that girl children are less preferred by parents, work more and are deprived of education and other basic rights. These contradictions in theory and practice

are not only reflecting the gap between the law and the everyday reality of the Nepalese society, but are also indicating the difference in how children and childhood are perceived by the state and by the people.

2.1.2 The Unified Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The United Nation's Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) was adopted by the General assembly of the United Nations on the 20 November 1989. It is consist of 54 articles, among them some are: The definition of a child, best interests of the child, children's human rights and its implementations, parental guidance and the child's evolving capabilities, preservation of identity, the child's opinion, the freedom of expression, parental of children without families, refugee children, health and health service, education, standard of living, drug abuse and sexual exploitation, sale, trafficking and abduction, armed conflicts and rehabilitation are of the main topics of the convention.

A decade has passed since Nepal ratified the CRC and pledged its commitment to the rights of the child. Nepal submitted its initial country Report to United Nation's Committee on the rights of the child in 1995, and the additional report in 1996 in response to questions raised by the committee. This is Nepal's second and third (combined) Periodic National Report (1997 and 2002) submitted to the committee, and it covers all the efforts that have been made to translate the CRC into reality and the challenges faced after 1996.

Child Rights is everyone's concern thus, it is only with the joint efforts of all concern agencies that can bring about practical and meaningful changes in the present status of child rights in Nepal. Government of Nepal, NGOs, INGOs and civil society have taken many initiatives for protection and promotion of child rights. Achievements in the area of child rights at different levels are some of the significant aspects on efforts to promote and consolidate child rights.

Nepal has signed the optional protocol of CRC against the involvement of children in Armed conflicts (NICR, 2000). Since 1996, the Maoist armed struggle has claimed many lives, including that of the police, rebels and ordinary citizens. There are many reports that the Maoists have been using children and youth into their movement, although detailed information about the situation and umber of children is not found available. The uses of children in armed struggle by the Maoists have been a matter of great concern to the government and the public at large. There is no mechanism to monitor the situation besides what is reported by the media and other agencies. The media have been reporting

that young boys and girls are leaving schools to join the Maoists insurgency, and they are also working as messengers, sentries and spies. Thousands of other men, women and children have been reported to have left their villages in search of protection and migrated to India or are working and living in difficult situations in various parts of the country. The Government of Nepal has launched an integrated security package that encompasses local development projects as a means in order to contribute to peace building process. Economic programs such as 'Bisheswor with the poor' and 'Ganesh Man peace Campaign' have also been working as a supportive program to prevent young boys and girls from joining the armed conflict. Civil society, child clubs and Human Rights Organisation have been raising the issue of children in the conflict situation. Child clubs have also been advocating against the use of children in armed conflicts. MWCSW has encouraged human rights groups to carry out human rights monitoring, and protecting children from being affected and against the employment of children. MWCSW also intends to review the Youth Recruitment Act 1971 in view of the provision of CRC and the Optional Protocol. MWCSW has also given priority to rescue and rehabilitate, children involved in the conflict.

2.1.3 The State of Child Rights in Nepal

It has been a decade since Nepal has relied the UN convention on the rights of the child. Since then, Government of Nepal has expressed a number of political commitments towards safeguarding the rights and interests of Nepali children. The commitments, however, have not been properly translated into practice. So many of these commitments remain only on paper, or have first been an attempt to save face in front of the international community. It is widely felt that the government has failed to consolidate its commitments, and lacks a paper vision and strategy to meet the challenges necessary to make child rights a reality in Nepal.

The surface attempts made by Government of Nepal can be seen through their activities throughout the year 2000. For example, government has included the "Ministry of Children" within the "Ministry for women and social welfare" since 19 April 2000, with the intention to accord a high priority to children's issues. In addition, government has again signed two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the involvement of children in armed conflict, and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography during the millennium summit in 9 September 2000. As well, government has expressed its commitment for the protection and promotion of the Rights of the Child.

Further, the ILO Convention no. 182 on the worst forms of child labour, came into force this year on November 19. The convention was unanimously adopted by ILO General Assembly on June 17, 1999 and is being implemented in 40 out of 175 ILO members states. government is also in the process of ratifying this convention. According to ILO, Nepal has been selected as a sampling country from Asia to launch the time bound programme on elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2005. The adjustments and alternations made in 2000 make the future seem very promising for child rights in Nepal.

CWIN (2003) stated that the uncertain political situation is leading the country towards more uncertainly and children's rights to difficult path as well. The conflict between government and the Maoist rebels has further aggravated the already worsen economic order of the country. The shift in budget allocations from development sector to security has affected essential areas of education, health and rural drinking water, which have a direct impact on the children. The time bound programme introduced by ILO in Nepal has shifted its goal to eliminate the worst forms of child labour from 2005 to 2007. Due to the dissolution of the parliament in May 2002, the pending bills on sex abuse and the amendments of children's act were installed. Furthermore, since the local governments were suspended, there is a great confusion at the local levels on how to carry out plans of action on different development issues, including children's issues. The Human Development Report 2002 has placed Nepal's HDI at 142 out of 173 countries. Compared to last year Nepal's index has improved in 2001, Nepal ranked 129th among 262 enlisted countries worldwide. Nepal seemed able to improve itself in gender related development, placing itself 119 out of 146 compared to its 120th position in 2001. In 2004, CWIN has recorded a total of 4506, incidents related to the exploitation of children, sexual exploitation of children, children trafficking, forced prostitution, child labour exploitation, child death rate, missing children, children in armed conflict with the laws. This report is presented in line with the four main components of the CRC viz

-) Children's right to survival
-) Development
-) Protection
-) Participation

Children's Right to Survival:

This component covers such areas as child population, infant and child mortality, immunization, child health and communicable diseases, children and natural calamities, children and accidents, children and food shortage, and children and famines. According to the population census in 2001, children under 14 comprise 39.35% of the total population of Nepal. Infant mortality in Nepal is 64 per thousand births and child mortality stands at 100 per thousand births. Diarrhoea, Hepatitis, Pneumonia and diseases caused by vitamin A deficiency are some of the main causes of child mortality.

In the year 2003, about 90% children were provided immunization against polio children's health is a serious challenge to child rights and child development in Nepal. Thousands of children die due to curable and preventable diseases such as measles, pneumonia, diarrhea, encephalitis and Kal-agzar. Many other children die due to lack of public awareness and inadequate health services in rural areas. In the year 2003, various natural calamities claimed the lives of 79 children while 21 suffered serious injuries. As in previous years, hundreds of thousands of from eastern western and mid-western regions suffered due to flood and food shortages. At least 24 districts in these regions had to live without daily necessities like salt. The districts affected by the armed conflicts are facing the shortage of basic daily necessities the most. Thus the health of children is getting worse due to lack of food supply and also due to lack of medical facilities and supply to those districts. Although Nepal has achieved the appreciable declining of infant mortality, it is still one of the countries with the highest rate (47%) of malnutrition in the world.

It is the inherent right of every child to live a safe and happy life. Unfortunately, violence of all forms targeted at children is growing everyday in Nepal, threatening access to these basic necessities. These abuses are evident through CWIN's data relating to violence, inadequate schooling and work conditions, domestic violence directed to the children this year. Out of them 26 children were murdered due to family and acronomy. Due to growing social anomalies, lack of the feeling of responsibility towards children, ignorance about family planning and lack of reproductive rights of women, 32 innocent infants were brutally killed after birth.

Whatever is the calamity, children suffer the most. As a result of various natural calamities, 49 children lost their lives this year, while two suffered serious injuries. Of the 49 children died, 29 children died in the landslides occurred in different parts of the country, 11 children were swept away in the floods and 9 died from effects of lightning.

Development:

Health, education and a healthy environment are the basic needs of every person. Despite these necessities, hundreds of thousands of children in Nepal face death for curable disease. However, various child development programmes are being undertaken deterioration in malnutrition of children has become an issue of distress. Concurrently, the majority of children are denied the right to education. It has covered the wide areas such as birth registration, early child development, education for children, child adoption, gender discrimination, child marriage, disabled and mentally challenged children and housing rights.

According to the CRC and the Children's Act 1992, every birth is to be registered because, that is the first and one of the primary important rights of children. Nepal has a goal to achieve to achieve 'Education for all by 2015' and 'Gender parity in education by 2005'. Though Nepal is unlikely to meet this goal since education section is affected badly all over the country with frequent strikes and the innumerable bandhs. Nepalese society is seemed still discriminative towards women and girls. They have less fundamental rights of health, education and economic development. Only 74% of girls compared to 86% of boys are enrolled in primary schools and the dropout rates of girls are double that of boys. Nepal is one of the few countries in the world where female life expectancy is lower than that of males. Due to lack of awareness, child marriages are still practiced in many societies and communities. Children's housing rights are often neglected in Nepal and children from marginalized communities; slum areas, streets and displaced families suffer the most. Rampant migration and the displacement of thousands of families due to the conflict situation, unorganized urbanization and evaluation due to development projects have created further challenges in children's housing rights

Protection:

Violence against women and children is growing in our society due to the lack of awareness, conservative social attitude towards the women and growing consumerism. Among 226 cases of sexual abuse recorded by CWIN, 147 or 6.5% compared to last year. 31 percent of the incidents were of brutal rape of children below 10 years of age and six of the victims were boys. Even a girl of one and half years in age was raped. Twelve percent incidents were of incest. Seven children were killed after being raped. Gangs were involved in 22% of the incidents. The rapists were arrested only in 65 cases. Five of the abused boys were sexually abused by pedophiles. It is estimated that foreign pedophiles abuse about 5% street boys. Loopholes in existing children's act and lack of

proper action from law enforcing agencies might help to explain some of the reasons pedophiles are encouraged to use Nepal as a new destination of pedophilia. Even today, some pedophiles are openly their activities, yet the law enforcing agencies are keeping a blind eye towards the issue. According to social watch group, about 500 girls under the age of 16 are forced into prostitution in Kathmandu alone.

The components had covered domestic violence, Corporal punishment, child labour exploitation, street children, child in armed conflict, child sex abuse, trafficking children, missing children, social discrimination against children, children of jailed parents, juvenile justice. The estimated number of children living on the streets of Nepal is 5200 in the year of 2005. The trend of migration towards the city areas is on the rise and the conflicting situation has left more chances of children entering in the streets of urban centers. Street children are exposed to crime, substance and drug and unsafe sex. They are also venerable to HIV infection. In the year 2003, CWIN recorded 54 cases of domestic violence and abandonment of children, 471 cases of domestic violence against women as well. Child labour is a political as well as socio-economic, political and cultural reality of the country.

The adoption of new laws and policies only cannot solve the child, labour problem unless society as a whole is realized in this direction. Also, the armed conflict in Nepal has already calmed the lives of around 12000 people. Gross violations of human rights have become a concern for everyone. According to Amnesty International (2002) "Nepal: A deepening human rights crises" nearly half of the victims of the people's war were civilians. 57.2% were children below the age of 16 years of age. There is little awareness and acknowledgement of different forms of child sex abuse apart from rape. Almost 20% of the children from both schools and living at risky conditions face sexual abuse of one type or other. Commercial sexual exploitation of children has become a critical issue in Nepalese society. Besides girls working as domestic helper, boys, especially those living on the streets are equally vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.

According to research report by ILO in 2002 carried out with 440 commercial sex workers in Kathmandu, 30% were children. Trafficking in children is a serious issue in Nepalese society and consists of both intra-state and cross-border trafficking and between both genders. The increasing gap between rural and urban lives, lack of education and opportunities in the deprived community, attraction towards city life, poverty, unemployment, gender and caste discrimination, domestic violence and lack of social

awareness about the children are most common backgrounds of this problem. Also, every year there are thousands of cases of missing children and child suicide. Childhood is basically considered as the most carefree and happy stage of human life. But increasing poverty, marginal life, stress and psychosocial problems lead innocent children to either commit suicide or run away from home.

Participation

This component covers: promotion of child participation in which the rights and dignity of the child has been finally realized in Nepal. Gradually, participation of children in issues concerning them is one of the positive aspects of the child's right related movement in Nepal. Child Rights Forum and Child Clubs have played a significant role in translating children's rights to participation in practice. In 2003, children were a part of a government delegation to the UN General Assembly Special Session (UN GASS) on children. Children are directly and indirectly affected by the ongoing armed conflict situation in Nepal. There is a need to protect children from the effects of violence and lead towards a path of peace. CWIN participated in a national campaign on peace of for children, together with Bal Chetna Samuha and Milijuli Nepal and collected 100,000 signatures of children and submitted to them Prime Minister with an appeal to restore peace for children.

2.1.4 Children Rights Policies in Nepal

The constitution of Nepal, 1990, seeks to protect the interests of children by conferring on them certain fundamental rights and imposing for their benefit certain 'Directive Principles and Policies of the State'. The state shall make necessary arrangements to safeguard the rights and interests of children, ensure that they are not exploited and make gradual arrangements for free education. Apart from the constitution, the following three laws make important provisions for the protection and advancement of the interests of the children and child labourers.

The Children's Act, 1992

This act was enacted to protect the rights and interest of Nepalese children and to ensure their physical, mental and intellectual development. It also contains a number of

provisions on child labour and it has recently been amended to make the Act more abuse specific, especially in relation to sexual abuse. The act defines a child as a person below the age of 16 years and states that a child who has not attained the age of 14 shall not be employed in any work as a labour.

The Labour Act and Labour Rules 1993

This act contains specific provisions for the prohibition of employment of children below the age of 14 years and prohibits admission to hazardous work for minor. It prohibits the employment of children and provides various safeguards to minors. (aged between 14 and 18 years)

The Child Labour (prohibition and regulation) Act, 1999

It is followed Nepal's ratification of the ILO minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and has made important amendments in the Labour Act, 1992. The Child Labour Act enlists specific occupations as hazardous work and prohibits the use of children below 16 years of age in such activities. The act has not yet been enacted.

The child labour act, 2000

This act is expedient to prohibit engagement of child in factory, mining and similar other risky work and to make necessary provision for health. Child's safety and services and facilities while engaging them in other work. Parliament has made this act in the twenty twenty-ninth year of the reign of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev.

2.1.5 Street Children in Nepal

A CWIN (1990) study of 100 street children showed longer working hours (14 to 18 hours per day), lower income of rag picking (NRS. 23 per day), a lower rate of begging (18%) and the type of street children interviewed in the study included 48% run runways, 13% squatters and 39% abandoned or orphaned children. The most common and prevalent reasons given for the street children taking to the street were all types of abuse (physical and mental) and neglect.

UNICEF (1996) report 'situation analysis of street children in Nepal' also confirms that children do not get paid regularly and that they are beaten. "There is always another side to the matter when talking about the developing countries. Ethical decisions are difficult,

although it is necessary to view the questions from a varied moral stance," Havtaniemi says.

2.2 Overview of Relevant Literature

An attempt is made to review the literature that appeared pertinent to the objective of the study in order to present conceptual framework on street children. It has been reviewed here in order to know about their existing status.

Shah P. (1994), in his study suggested that besides subjected to health hazards such as accidents, STDs and drug addiction street children has virtually no access to basic health, nutrition, or education. According to him, the most damaging effect observed in street children was the development of the deep sense of insecurity, which often resulted in uncontrolled aggressiveness overt rebellion directed at old social system.

According to police headquarters of Nepal (1998), research of the street children of Kathmandu valley found that about 3100 street children existed in Kathmandu having 5-15 age where 47% were illiterate. A majority of child labour is employed as daily wages basis. Their family background is very worst having low income. So, as a result they spend mostly in street (Nepal C., 1998).

Ms. Lazima Wonta_Vatia tried an attempt to explore the lives of street children in urban Nepal and also had adopted a multi-pronged approach to her analysis in order to ensure that street children's realities are understood and analyzed in political, socio cultural and historical context. She has discussed some of general discourses on children in Nepal to juxtapose street children with what is considered the normative for children and childhood in the worldview of urban privileged classes, the NGOs and States.

In 2001, ILO/ IPEC published report on street children. This survey is based on rag pickers known as 'Khate'. According to this study, there were 3965 children engaged in rag picking in various cities of Nepal. But most of them are located in Kathmandu and Dharan. This study included 264 boy and 36 girls. It especially focused on their nature, process problems of rag picking children.

According to the study of UNESCO (2001), about education for street children and working children in India, its major findings are basis on street and working children and their protection from abuse in cities. Especially it focus and evaluate the programmes of

education for children in different circumstances with special reference to India.

Majority of street children were between age group of 11 years following by the age group of 11 – 16 years, where out of total number of 80 children 61.25 has been studied up to primary level, 21.25% were illiterate and only 15% were literate. From this survey, it can be inferred that street children do not give high importance towards health and personnel hygiene issues. However, fever, cough, diarrhoea, back pain are the major form of sickness among them (Ghale A., 2003).

Gauri Pradhan (1990) found in his study that most the children are attracted towards the city life. Major causes for increasing the number of street children in the city are abused by their family members especially by stepparents or alcoholic parents and very weak economic condition. So, they are migrated towards the street in hope of high hope and imagination. Azad in his study for UNICEF (1996), Nepal of 111 street children in Kathmandu to determine their health status and their daily exposure to environmental pollution found that new comer on the street have less incidence of fever, ear-ache, vitamin B deficiency and cold than their longer term street children, the existence of contact to the family was to found positively influenced street children.

CAR-NWG, in his study, focused on street children of Narayanghat. The children have migrated to Narayanghat because of poor economic condition of family, family disputes expectation of attractive life of urban areas. This study finds out that majority of boys work as hotel assistant and girl as domestic workers.

CHAPTER-THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with research methods that have been employed in this study. It basically discusses the research design, rationale for the selection of study area, nature and sources of data, unit of study, universe and sample size, techniques of data collection, analysis and interpretation of data and limitation of study.

3.1 Research Design

As the fundamental objective of this study is to investigate the hidden fact and nature of street children in Kathmandu, the research design is based on descriptive and exploratory. It is descriptive because it attempts to describe the socio-economic and demographic characteristics and working condition of street children. On the other hand it is also exploratory because it tries to analyze the relationship between socio-economic and demographic characteristics. The nature of street children's lives makes it more difficult to gather data about them. The attachment of street children to the particular street keeps changing in tremendous way as they move to different places and jobs. Due to higher mobility of street children (both in terms of location and job), and the non-existence of census, it is not possible to infer the characteristics of the population through probability sampling methods.

3.2 Rationale of the Selection of the Study Area

Kathmandu as the capital city of Nepal has able to attract people of the whole nation at large by its prosperous economy through centralization of the governance as well as other opportunities and facilities like transportation, communication, education etc. Drastic changes in the social and economic structure of Nepalese society can be seen, mainly due to; cause and effect of consumerism and urbanization. The fact of street children was initially considered occurring only in the Kathmandu valley. But now it has spread to various urban areas. The fast growing urban areas like Pokhara, Birgunj, Biratnagar, Dharan, Birtamod, Butwal, Hetauda, Nepalgunj are having the same. The main reason behind selecting Kathmandu metropolitan city as the study area is of high concentration of street children in these days. In the Kathmandu valley, the dessertant has selected those areas where the number of street children found more often and they are like junction

points for them. These areas like Thamel, Basantapur, New Road, Jamal, Gaushala etc are being tourist spot and core city area, the street children feel easier to sustain their lives here.

3.3 Nature and Sources of Data

This study is relied on both qualitative and quantitative data. In apropos to sources of data, both primary and secondary sources have been used. Primary data have been collected from field survey by using various techniques – interview schedule, interview with key informants, case study, and observation. Similarly, the secondary data are accessed from the different published and unpublished researches and studies done by different concerned organizations and individuals.

3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure

Both ‘children of the street’ and ‘children on the street’ are the units of the study and as it mentioned that this study has adopted the definition of street children developed by Inter-NGO Program on Street Children and Street Youth 1985. Even after rigorous reviewing the relevant literatures it was seen that current population size of the study area was not possible to concretize their actual size. However a survey done by CWIN 2007, the number of children spending their lives in the streets has been estimated to reach 1500 in Kathmandu alone. This represents as the universe for this study. Due to the large number of universe, it is not possible to include all of them in the study; only 60 numbers of street children has been selected as a sample by purposive sampling method.

The sample taken is purposive because the dessertant has to select the target group of the children (of age 5 to 16 years) who are currently living in the street. Thamel, Basantapur, Durbar Square, New Road, Jamal, Pashupati are the main areas visited for information collection. Concerned organization and NGOs working with street children are the key informants and also interviewed.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

In this study to collect necessary primary data, various techniques like Interview schedule, Interview with key informants and simple observation, have been used.

3.5.1 Interview Schedule

The selected samples, hereafter respondents, have been interviewed through the structured questionnaire to collect the necessary information directly from the street children. In making the interview schedule, emphasis has been given on children's family background, socio-economic and demographic characteristics, their reasons for leaving home, their various means of earning, expenditure, intra-group activities, habitual activities, relation to/responses of other members of society living on the street, support networks, aspirations for the future etc. To obtain the information the researcher spent almost one month time in the field.

3.5.2 Interview with Key Informants

A check list has been adopted to conduct interview with key informants. In selecting key informants the emphasis has been given to those individuals who have been active participants in their respective areas of specialization over a number of years. Key informants, those who have been involved in the areas of child labor, anti-trafficking and child rights, working with children in difficult circumstances, government officials and people from NGOs and INGOs, for the study have provided an insight on the needed information about the study area, policy level information's, its applications, implementations and an overview of the study topic.

3.5.3 Observation

The observation was adopted to collect information about their everyday life. During the field survey and at time of interview the respondent have tried to observe the scenario of the street children, such as behavior, verbal and non-verbal communication with friends and the other members of society, dress style, working condition etc.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The data, collected from the field survey, have been processed using statistical tools. The answers were first fed into the computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. Using the same software thereafter analysis has been done. Mostly, simple tools like frequency tables, cross tabulation have been used in analyzing the findings of the research.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

This study covers only small area of Kathmandu valley such as Thamel, Basantapur, Durbar Marg, New Road, Jamal etc. So, the sampling distribution may not reflective of entire scenario of Nepal.

Due to insufficient time, financial construction information obtained may be limited and research could not go ahead the targeted study area. And since this study was not based on probability sampling, statistical inference about the population of street children could not be drawn from the data. Without statistical analysis the magnitude of the problem cannot be determined, and hence specific policy recommendations for allocation of resources for complementary solutions have not been generated.

3.8 Difficulties in Field Research

It was difficult to keep the children interested enough to give the required information, partly because these children were frustrated by the fact that they had given information to many other before this but had seen no results. They either outright refused to be interviewed or answered reluctantly and tersely. Sometime the dissertant had to make him greater effort, sometime it needed to give some stuff to persuade them, to develop with the street children. Problems encountered in the process of data collection were numerous as well as diverse in nature. A lot of interference were encountered from the surrounding people who gathered around the street children being interviewed, wanting to know the reason from the questioning and in a lot of cases prompting the answers as well. In such condition, with so many people encircling a child, he is bound to feel pressured and scared and thus very often they were reluctant to talk freely to the researcher. The children were usually felt shy and hesitated to talk with stranger and not ready to get detailed information.

CHAPTER-FOUR

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STREET CHILDREN

This chapter deals with socio-economic and demographic characteristics like permanent address, age, educational status, main source of family income etc of the street children in Kathmandu valley.

4.1 Permanent Address of the Respondents (Place of Origin)

The children interviewed were asked their permanent address to find out where they actually came from. It is generally assumed that most of the street children are migrated from the rural areas. The study supports the fact that children living in the street of Kathmandu valley come from different parts of Nepal (mostly from the rural areas). It has been seen that for the quest of better opportunities and better living standards, these street children are compelled to migrate from their homes, either through peer pressure or due to friend's influence, to cities.

Table-1

Distribution of the Respondents by Place of Origin

Place of Origin	No.	Percent (%)
Central Development Region (CDR)	39	65
Eastern Development Region (EDR)	9	15
Western Development Region (WDR)	6	10
Mid-Western Development Region (MWDR)	4	7
Far Western Development Region (FWDR)	2	3
Total	60	100

(Source: Field survey 2012)

The above table shows that the street children of Kathmandu valley have come from different development regions. Among 60 respondents, the majority of children have migrated from CDR 65%, than 15% from EDR, 10% from WDR, 7% from MWDR and

3% from FWDR. The figure shows that the highest percentage of street children seen belong to CDR region because Kathmandu valley itself lies in this region and children around it have direct contact with the people of Kathmandu valley. The families from other developmental regions are left to cope for their own livelihood due to that a majority of the youngsters come under the pressure to earn extra wages from the family that in turn drives them towards the city for the quest of jobs and opportunities to have a better standard of living. This clearly indicates that the temptation of the city draws these children towards it in the hope of finding work and better life styles. Thus poverty in the rural areas is seen as one of the main factors for promoting migrating children to the city.

4.2 Age and Gender

Since the nature of respondents relates itself to the particular group, it is mentioned that in the study children are defined as those who are under 16 years of age or upto 16 years. The actual definition of age is ‘the actual length of time a person has existed’ and in this survey we are referring to the age of the street children interviewed and their age groups. The children interviewed have come from different age groups ranging from the tender age of 5 to 16 years of age. There is an unequal distribution of children of both sexes. Out of 60 children surveyed, 45 are boys and 15 are girls. It shows that the girls are likely to be less secure in the street. It is believed that many of the economically active children are working in the worst form of child labour. The families living under poverty are unlikely to send their children to school and consequently encourage and sometime force them to look for work outside home to support their family.

Table-2

Distribution of the Respondent by Age

Age group of respondent	Sex		Total	Percent (%)
	Male	Female		
5 – 8	10	4	14	23
9 – 12	23	6	29	48
13 – 16	12	5	17	29
Total	45	15	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

Out of the children interviewed, the majority of the children are from the age group 9-12 (48%) followed by the age group 13-16 (29%) and the least are from the age group 5 – 8 (23%) respectively. The above table indicates that the children whose age ranges from 9 – 12 are seemed most vulnerable to migrate to cities and consequently become street children

4.3 Caste/Ethnic Composition

Nepal has ethnic diversity and comprises of 4 castes and 36 descendents. The stratification of the society under the Hindu religion shows four castes as Bahun, Chhetri, Vaishya and Sudra. Among them there lie different ethnic groups. The ethnic diversity of street children is from various groups such as Tamang, Chhetri, Damai, Newar etc.

Table-3

Distribution of the Respondents by Ethnicity

Age Group of Respondent	Total	Percent (%)
Tamang	21	35
Chhetri	18	30
Damai	10	17
Brahmin	3	5
Newar	4	6
Kami	2	3
Rai	1	2
Pode	1	2
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

Out of 60 respondents, 35% of them belonged to Tamang, 30% of them belonged to Chhetri, 17% of them belonged to Damai, 5% of them belonged to Brahmin, 6% of them belonged to Newar, 3% of them belonged to Kami, 2% of them belonged to Rai and 2% of them belonged to Pode. Because of the caste discrimination in the village area the untouchable groups are harassed and criticized by high caste groups. Therefore the

untouchables prefer to change their clan name like Sarki into Karki, Poda into Pradhan etc. Those children have faced such problems in village. Therefore they do not like to face the same condition in Kathmandu. So, they change their clan names.

Tamangs ethnicity are densely populated surroundings the Kathmandu valley. Most of the Tamang respondents are belonged to the surrounding districts of Kathmandu. Due to closeness to the capital city, Tamangs children have seen many opportunities in the city. Being street children in large number from Tamang ethnic group is due to their poor economic condition, their illiteracy and ignorance. All the respondents from Tamang ethnic group expressed that they are economically poor and their parents are illiterate. Although most of the street children have similar socio-economic background, Tamang street children are found in large number because they are inhabited surrounding the Kathmandu valley and their population is also higher than other caste/ethnic groups such as; Newar, Rai, Sarki, Damai, Poda etc. In the case of chhetri the reason behind becoming street children are more than a decade Maoist insurgency and family problems such as; poor economic condition and family tension. Same reason are seen in other caste/ethnic groups (Dami, Brahmin, Newar, Kami, Rai, and Poda).

4.4 Educational Status

Educational status is one of the most important indicators of socio-economic development of people as well as nation. The higher proportion of literacy status and educational attainment is considered to be an important factor in the process of modernization and that affects the people in every sphere of their life. It is assumed as an opening for individual to innovate ideas and actions. At the time of going school, children have to work as either family helpers, wage labourers, rag pickers for survival and to support their families. This deprives them of their rights to education and development. Parent's lack of desire to send their children to school is one of the leading reasons for children not attending schools followed by poor economic condition. Education is one of the primary aspirations among street children in Kathmandu Valley. Most of them showed a strong desire towards attaining education if given the opportunity.

Table-4

Distribution of the Respondents by Educational Status and Age

Age Group of Respondent	Educational status				Total	
	Illiterate		Literate			
	No.	%	No.	%	Frequency	(%)
5 – 8	12	55	4	10	16	27
9 – 12	6	27	28	74	34	56
13 – 16	4	18	6	16	10	17
Total	22	100	38	100	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The literate means those children who are able to read and write and had gone to school for study. The figures in the above table show that children of age group 9 to 12 years are seen in majority who become street children having the highest number of literacy (74%) and the highest number of illiteracy (55%) are seen the above table, followed by the age group of 5 to 8 where 12 are illiterate and 4 are literate. The age group 13 to 16 shows least literate no. is 6 and illiterate number is 4. The data shows that, despite their interest to study due to various circumstances these children had to leave their studies to earn money to support themselves and their families.

4.5 Educational Attainment

The word literacy denotes the ability of a person to read and write with understanding a short simple statement in his/ her everyday life (UN, 1967) the word literacy does not indicate the level of formal education attained by literate people, denotes those people who have been literate without formal schooling and those who have completed different levels of formal education. Most of the street children come from the large families with the average family size of six and with the family economic status being below the poverty line. Thus, the families do not have the means to educate their children and in most of the cases prefer their children to be economically active from a very young age.

Table-5

Distribution of Literate Respondent by Educational Attainment

Education	Sex		Frequency	Percent
	Male	Female		
Never attended school	16	6	22	37
One	1	2	3	5
Two	8	3	11	18
Three	14	4	18	30
Four	1	0	1	2
Five	1	0	1	2
Six	2	0	2	3
Seven	2	0	2	3
Total	45	15	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

From above tables, it is been seen that the girls have the least educational attainment. The reason behind it might be due to gender discrimination from early childhood and treated as household workers in home. The larger numbers (37%) of children have never attended the school. Similarly, the highest percent of literate have attended class three with 30% followed by class two with 18% and class one with 5%. 3% children are educated up to class six and same percent children are educated up to seven class. The lowest number of children are educated up to four (2%) and five (2%) class. The data indicate that most of the children are under the primary level of education. This is because the free schooling and some subsidies are given only for the primary level of education by the government. The children never get the opportunity to study; as they grow older they have to start earning money to survive and to look after their family.

4.6 Cause of Not Continuing School

Every child has the right to go to school and Nepal government has made a provision to provide primary education to every child. For this, free schooling and free distribution of books have been launched. In some rural areas of the country, some facilities and aids are

given. The free programs like free lunch and school dress for children along with stationeries have been providing for some economically backward ethnic groups. These programs attract students to go to school to some extent; however, the tremendously increasing number of street children shows this program is remained ineffective.

Table-6

Distribution of the Respondents by Cause of Not Continuing School

Causes of Not Continuing School	Frequency	Percent
Parents did not want	9	15
Poor economic condition	16	27
Not interested	12	20
Death of parents	8	13
Poor academic progress	7	12
No school around	3	5
Help at home	5	8
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows the reasons for not joining and continuing school are different. Most of the reasons are related to the family. Out of 60 respondents, 27% discontinued their education due to poverty. Similarly, 20% are not interested to join or continue study and 15% are deprived from education due to negligence of their parents. 5% have never attended as there are no schools around. 12% have not continued school because of poor academic progress and 8% of them have given up school due to help at home.

Therefore, it is seemed that most of street children have not joined or continued school because of poverty. Children have to bear financial burden at small age so that their education becomes disrupted.

4.7 Type of Family

The poor families generally reflect high fertility rate and bigger family size can be observed. Not only poor economic condition is the reason behind this, superstition, social values and norms are also responsible. Usually such couples take the children as investment. They think more hands mean more income; however, they forget about their mouths. So, parents could not able to fulfill the basic needs of their children. As a result, children are pushed in the street.

Table-7

Distribution of the Respondents by Type of Family

Type	No. of Children	Percentage
Nuclear	11	18
Joint	49	82
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

Above table shows that, most of the children (82%) who came to Kathmandu valley are from joint family. Only 18% of street children belong to nuclear family. In most nuclear families, presence of step-parents i.e., either step father or step mother are observed in this survey. In joint family due to the death or absence of parents children are cared and reared by grandparents, uncles and aunts. So, children are not getting perfect care and love as of their parents by their guardians.

4.8 Parental Background

There is a debate between nurture and nature but in sociological sense the behavior of human is highly affected by his/ her socialization. Family particularly parents play an important role in that process. The reasons for leaving home could be of complex nature but one of the reasons is due to the poor socio-economic conditions of the family. Poverty as well as disruption of family structure such as loss of either one or both parents, remarriage of either parent, alcoholic abuse of parent, are seen as some of the socio-economic reasons for leaving homes and becoming street children.

Table-8
Distribution of the Respondents by Parental Background

Parental Background	Frequency	Percent
Both parents	23	38
Father only	7	12
Mother only	8	13
Step mother	12	21
Step father	5	8
No parents	5	8
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that the majority (38%) of the children have both parents, 21% have step mother, 8% have step father, 13% have only mother, 12% have only father and 8% are orphans. It is seen that street children despite having both parents are driven to the street in quest of work for the simple reason of poverty and the need to support the family economically. By this figure, it can also be assumed that the parents encourage their children to work so that more income flows in the house. It has been that most parents in rural areas are of the perception that boys after a certain age should go out with the view that facing difficulties is a valuable lesson to become a responsible adult and to earn money.

4.9 The Parental Occupation

As Nepal is one of the least developed countries in the world, Nepalese society can be characterized by poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, poor health, sluggish economic growth and agrarian economy. Nepal being based on subsistence economy, it still shows dominant of feudalistic production system and the acute poverty in the masses. Respondents were asked about their main source of family income, it becomes easy to deduce the breakup of family income sources into agriculture, wage labor, business, services and other sources of income.

Table-9
Distribution of the Respondents by Parental Occupation

Parental Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Agriculture	22	37
Wage labour	13	22
Shopkeeper	3	5
Service	8	13
Driver	5	8
Don't know	9	15
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The table gives the picture that majority (37%) of the respondent's main source of family income is agriculture, 22% are wage labour, 5% are shopkeepers, 13% are involved in services, 8% are engaged in driving and the rest do miscellaneous work.

It is seen that majority of the street children's families are dependent on agriculture. This means they either own a small fraction of land that they live off or they work for landlord. The income from this job is barely enough to sustain the family. Wage labour on daily wage basis is found very lowly paid in Nepalese society and generally found irregularly in access barely enough to sustain the family. The strikes and bandhas cause more trouble to these people to sustain.

4.10 Consent of Parents

Low per capita income (around US\$568) and higher percentage (24.7%) of Nepalese people are living below poverty line (UNDP 2012). As consequences of the poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, poor health of parents and poor economic conditions of the families, child labor is widespread and is become a major socio-economic problem. Parents either encourage or force their children to work from an early age due to large number of families and no sufficient source of income.

Table-10
Respondent Left Home without the Consent of Parents

Consent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	65
No	21	35
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that 65% of the street children left their home; it means they came to the street without parents' or guardians consent and 35% did not leave home. The figure in the table clearly shows that the majority of the children on the street (65%) have come to Kathmandu valley in the hope of finding better job and life. 35% are those who have come with the consent of parent and may live around Kathmandu or in slums and scatter areas.

4.11 Living before They Left Home

Along with other reasons poverty and the destruction of family structure are major causes for the children leaving their homes and taking to street children. Despite widely accepted concept of rights to education, survival, protection, nutrition, healthcare and a favourable condition for better overall development, children are among the most neglected, abused and exploited segment of Nepalese population. In Nepal, due to the extreme poverty and destruction of family structure children are compelled to live with relatives or others for survival. The analysis of previous living can give clear picture about the causes of coming to the street. There might be higher chances to be on the street if they have lived with other people as a servant or relatives. In this section all the places they had been living before coming to the street are being considered as home.

Table-11
Distribution of the Respondents by Living before They Left Home

Respondents Living with	Frequency	Percent
Parents	27	45
Relatives	14	23
Others (work as helper in hotels and others' home)	19	32
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The table shows that 45% of the children lived with their parents, 23% with relatives and

32% of them had been given shelter by the other people. The table makes clear that about three-fifth of the respondent lived with relative and others, the reasons for leaving home is mainly due to the poor economic condition of their families and death of parent/s or remarriage of parent/s or the abusive treatment received by these children at the hand of parent/s, step parent or relative.

4.12 Period of Arrival to the Street

This study mainly focuses on the reasons of leaving home and taken to the street may affect on their level of familiarity to the street and also spheres of involvement to cope their existence on it.

Table-12

Distribution of the Respondents by Period of Arrival to the Street Period	Frequency	Percent
1 – 6 months	13	22
7 – 12 months	7	11
1 – 2 years	18	30
2 – 4 years	16	27
4 – 6 years	6	10
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table suggests that a lot of children have arrived to the street ranging from 1 to 2 years (30%) followed by 27% who have left homes since 2–4 years, 22% who have left their home since 1–6 months, 11% who have left their home since 7–12 months and 10% who have left their home since 4-6 years. Most of the children have been living on the street staying in the street for long. This could be, may be they are used to independent and adventurous life of the street and do not want to return to their restrictive life at home on the other hand they may not have home to return back if they are orphans or due to the presence of abusive parent, step parent/ relative or lower level of income on the street or may be they are embarrassed to let their family know about their street life style.

4.13 Reasons for Leaving Home

It is found in the literatures that most of the children living in the street have come from very poor families where they do not have enough food to feed all the members of the family and broken family. In such condition, opportunity to education, health care or other facilities are seemed far from imagination. Many children from rural areas come to city and get fascinated to it, expecting it to offer them plenty of the influence of peer groups who have been to the city and tell them wonderful tales of the glittering city life.

Table-13

Distribution of the Respondents by Reason for Leaving Home

Causes	No. of Children	Percent
Lack of food at home	7	12
Maltreatment by parents	22	36
Death of parents	15	25
Influence of friends	10	17
Self earning will	1	2
Wanted to see the city	5	8
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

Of the total respondents, 36% of them left home because of maltreatment of parents especially by step mother. 25% of them left home due to the death of parents, 17% of them left home due to their companion, 12% of them left home due to lack of food at home, 2% left home due to self earning will and 8% attracted by city life.. It is clear that maltreatment of step parents and extreme poverty, desire for the better life, attraction of urban life is some major reasons behind street children leaving their home.

4.14 Touch (Relation) with Family

Every human being has its own social background which influenced them to some extent. Family is one of the surrounding even though they left home. It is assumed that street children have run away from their home so they are not in touch with family. But living on the street does not mean that the children have not served ties with their families. The state of touch with family may depend on the location of their home, the relationship of the children with their parents and the marital status of their parents. In this study

respondents were asked to release their touch with the family.

Table-14

Distribution of the Respondents by Touch (relation) with Family

Touch with Family	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	80
No	12	20
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that 80% are in touch with their families after leaving homes in search of job to earn money or better living condition in the city. The figure indicates that the reason for leaving their home is due to poor economic condition of their families that compel street children to look for alternative means to support their families economically or hoping to make better life. 20% of the children are seemed not in touch with their families that could be due to being orphans or due to running away from their home as they have very strict parents. One of the important aspects to be requested in this study is to determine why do children have left their home and moved to the street. The reasons for street children leaving their home are directly related to their family's structure and other reasons such as poverty and socio-economic factors as well.

4.15 Interest of Study

Education is a fundamental right of children. It is seen that parents with poor economic condition lack the desire to send their children to school due to which 57% children are not attending school (ILO/IPEC, 2002). Another reason for the children being either drop-out from school or illiteracy is also due to the poor economic condition of the family (35%) where they barely have enough food to feed themselves and cannot afford to send their children to school (Ibid). they would rather use all available hands to help bringing income into the family.

Table-15

Distribution of the Respondents by Interest to Study

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Interested	46	77
Not interested	14	23
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The figures in the above table shows that 77% of the children were found interested to study and 23% did not show interest in study. It is seen that due to poor economic situation of their families and also due to lack of awareness of parents towards educating their children, a lot of children missed the chance to get education. So, about two-third of the students wished to study.

4.16 Reasons to Want to Study

One of the major attractions for the children to come to the city is as they get opportunity to better their lifestyle. Now, they are found to be aware that to earn good money one needs to have a good job and to get a good job one needs to have education. Due to various reasons they could not get such opportunities at their home place then they migrate to the city in the hope that they could find the opportunities they were looking for.

Table-16

Distribution of the Respondents by Reasons to Want to Read

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
To do job	26	43
To be a Thulo Manche	25	42
To be rich	9	15
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The table shows that 43% of street children would like to study or do further studies for

being able to read and write so to get a good job and to earn more money and have a better living standard. Another 42% wished to study to become a ‘Thulo Manche’, and 15% wanted to be able to read and write so that they could impart that knowledge to others and to be able to read and write and to acquire knowledge respectively. The table clearly indicates that they are aware of the fact that one needs to be educated to find proper job and to earn money and to have better standard of living as well.

4.17 Future Aim

Almost all the children have come to street with the hope of getting better opportunities and making better living standard. So, it is important to know and understand the perception of the street children regarding their future plan.

Table-17

Distribution of the Respondents by Their Future Aim

Future Aims	Frequency	Percent
Doctor	5	8
Dancer	3	5
Army	4	7
Police	9	15
A rich person/ businessman	16	27
To do a job	9	15
Driver	3	5
Hero	6	10
Teacher	3	5
Don't know	2	3
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows the aspirations of the street children about their future plan. Many of the respondents (5%) seemed attracted towards driving. It may be due to their family members are already involved in this field or they want to travel from one place to another. 27% want to be rich and successful businessmen who can earn lot of money. 10% of them want to be police officer, 7% like to join army and serve the nation and 15% want to be job holders. About 5% like to be teacher, 5% want to be dancer and 8% want

to be doctor. It is clear that all the respondents have higher aspirations for their future and none of them want to remain in the present condition they are in. All of them want to achieve something in life but they themselves don't have any idea about their future though they have dreams and desires.

CHAPTER-FIVE

WORKING CONDITION AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES TO COPE STREET LIVING

As it is recognized and accepted universally that child labour is the output of the social situation and use of child labor is illegal. Solving the problem of the child is been considered as a greater challenge of the concern country. To cope the problem of the child labor there has been put greater efforts for a long. Despite putting greater efforts the problem is not realized yet to be minimized in the context of least developed country like Nepal. The rate of children taking to the street is increasing with leaps and bound and they are compelled to spend life in miserable condition that consequently ruined the life of the children as well as nation's future. So, in this chapter the situation that street children are facing in their everyday life and the strategies that have been used to cope the life of the street are analyzed.

5.1 Previous Working Experience on the Street

It is difficult to point out exactly when the fact of street living became visible on the streets of Kathmandu valley. These children who are in the street have come from poor and disordered family from the rural areas of Nepal with the hope of finding work to earn money and making better living standard.

Table-18

Distribution of the Respondents by Previous Working Experiences

Working Experiences	Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	30
No	42	70
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

It is seen that 70 percent have not worked before and 30 percent have withheld their previous jobs. A lot of respondents have not worked before and are inexperienced. The level and area of experience could have positive relation to the nature of present job and state of inexperience could lead to the worst form of child labor and exploitation due to their tender age, inexperience and vulnerability. Finding better work is difficult task accessible and worse form of labor such as rag vehicle etc.

5.1.1 Nature of Previous Works

It can be assured that street children, newly entered the street, generally take up a number of jobs available to them in tire streets. CWIN has identified more than 2 different types of jobs that street children have taken up in different stages of their street lives. It is found that these children do not stick themselves to one job but keep changing frequently from one job to another with time, in which they have access to.

Table-19
Distribution of the Respondents by Nature of Previous Work

Types of Work	Frequency	Percent
Khalasi	6	10
Garment	4	7
Rag picking	3	5
Carrying load	2	3
No previous job	45	75
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

In the above table, it is found that street children do not have a more choice to select job but to earn a living irrespective of what kind of job they are doing. They were engaged in low income as well as low status jobs. Out of 60 street children, 15 (25%) were engaged in different works and rests (75%) were not engaged in any works. Out of 15 (25%), 10% were worked as khalasi, 7% were engaged in garment, 5% were engaged in rag picking, and rest 3% were involved in carrying load.

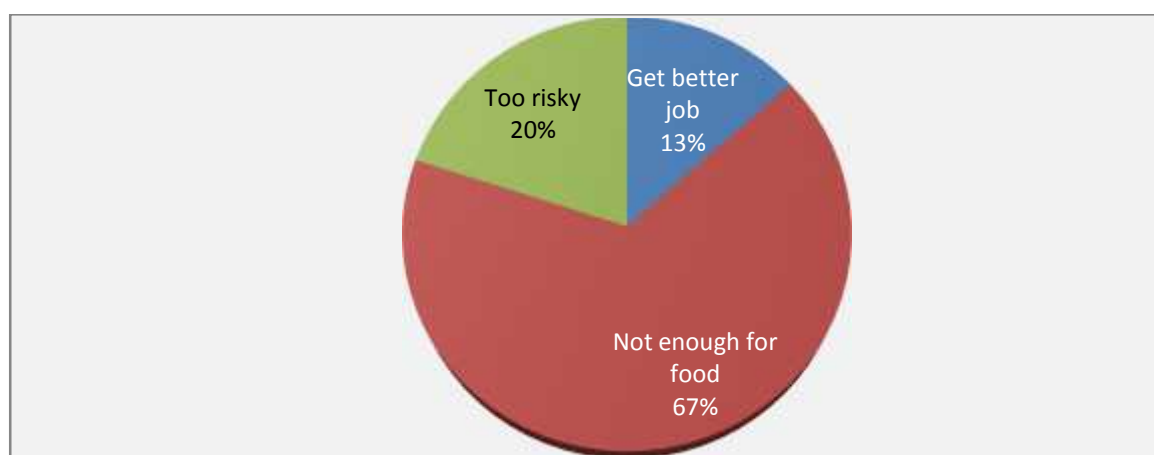
5.1.2 Reasons of Leaving Previous Works

Despite less choice to select job at while these children generally keep changing their job from time to time that depend on the place of their access and the type of work they did in the past. It is found that all of them came to the street for better opportunity and better standard of living as well.

They seem to earn more money for their food and many of these children also try to save money to send to their family who depend on their earnings. So, these children keep changing jobs in the hope that new job will bring more money.

Figure-1

Distribution of the Respondents by Leaving Previous Work



The above figure shows that out of 15 children who have past job experience, 67% left their previous job when it did not cope the problem for food followed by 20% who found their previous work too risky and the remaining 13% left their previous job when they got better opportunity. It is seen that two third of the street children left their previous job because of its low earning. Most of the street children have left their home and live independent life on the street so they have to earn enough for food and shelter. It is also found that these children have held ambitions to be 'Thulo Manche' and earn good money. This might lead to change their job frequently.

5.2 Current Work

The phenomenon of child labour is common to Nepalese society and it has been considered as a major socio-economic problem in these days. As the consequences of poverty, disordered family etc children are taken to street life and are trying to earn

enough for their own food and shelter. To cope with the everyday problems they are compelled to involve in earning activity, which are easily accessible for them whether it is more risky or exploitative.

Table-20

Distribution of the Respondents by Nature of Current Works

Types of Works	Frequency	Percent
Rag picking	17	28
Carrying load	12	20
Khalasi	16	27
Vehicle cleaner	5	8
Shoe boy	6	10
Begging	4	7
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that out of 60 children, 28% are rag pickers, 20% are potters, 27% are khalasi, 8% are vehicle cleaners, 10% are shoe boy and rest 7% are involved in begging. The table clearly indicates that rag picking and carrying loads are the most common sectors of involvement among the street children because of its easy and flexible nature and brings daily wages.

5.2.1 Current Work by Age

It is unfortunate that young children of schooling age are deprived of their rights. Increase trends of child labour in developing countries has become a concern and worry for every one of us.

It is natural that everyone, not only the government but also human rights activities, nongovernmental organizations are focusing on the sensitive sector of child labour. The term children itself refers to the particular age category and in this study the ages of these

children are ranging from 5 to 16 years of age. It is usually the smaller children who are taken to begging, rag picking while the older children take up such work as khalasi carrying loads, shining shoes besides rag picking as well.

Table-21

Distribution of the Respondents by Current Work by Age

Reasons	Age of Respondents			Total	
	5 – 8	9 – 12	13 - 16	Frequency	Percent
Rag picking	6	8	4	18	30
Carrying load	0	2	4	6	10
Khalasi	0	4	4	8	13
Vehicle cleaner	0	6	3	9	15
Shoe boy	1	5	0	6	10
Begging	4	6	0	10	17
Others	0	3	0	3	5
Total	11	34	15	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The table shows that such common work as rag picking is done by children of all ages. The children of age group 5 – 8 are not found carrying loads but begging is seen mostly to be done by the age group of 9 – 12 and 5 – 8. Cleaning vehicle is another job done by street children ranging from the ages of 9 and above. It is found that rag picking, shoe boy and begging are seen easy job and more suitable for tender age children.

5.3 Being Happy with Current Work

As it is found that most of the street children have left their home in search of better opportunities and better standard of living since they entered to the street they have been involved in different jobs to cope the everyday problems of food and shelter.

To cope these problems a lot of times they are forced to do the worst forms of child labour, all kinds of hardship, ill health, sexual and physical abuse and hunger on the times they are exploited and do not have a roof over their heads.

Table-22

Distribution of the Respondents by Being Happy with Current Work

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	28	47
No	32	53
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that 47% street children are satisfied with their current work whereas 53% are not. It is found that majority of them are not satisfied with their everyday life but they are not found to be keen returning to home either because of various reasons that made them to take street life. These street rather than return home whereas the rest worked due to their compulsion to earn money to survive on the street.

5.4 Daily Return

Daily earning is mainly based on the nature of job they do and time and effort put into it. By the nature of respondents and of their job they do not hold a regular job and sometimes due to unfavorable weather. The weather to affects their income since it becomes more difficult to work in the rain if they are rag pickers or porters or beggars.

Table-23

Distribution of the Respondents by Daily Return

Daily Earnings	Frequency	Percent
Less than Rs. 50	12	20
Rs. 51 – 100	19	32
Rs. 101 – 200	23	38
More than 200	6	10
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that higher proportion (38%) of respondent's daily earning is between 101 – 200 followed by 32% earning is Rs 51 – 100 and 20% earning below 50. It is found that the daily earning is directly proportionate to their effort and time they put into their job. The harder and longer they work the more they can earn. But by their own nature and jobs they seemed to prefer playing cards or relax in the day time a lot with their friends and earn just enough to cope their everyday life.

5.5 Daily Earning by Current Work

Street children do various kinds of work to earn for their livelihood such as rag picking, carrying loads, shining shoes, cleaning vehicles, begging etc CWIN has identified as many as 20 different jobs that the street children do for their livelihood. They do not consistently work on one job but keep changing jobs to suit their convenience. Whichever job pays them more earning or is easier or is flexible, they take it up.

Table-24

Distribution of the Respondents by Daily Earning

Daily Earnings	Daily Earning				Total	
	<50	50–100	100–200	>200	Frequency	Percent
Rag picking	1	6	11	0	18	30
Carrying load	0	2	4	0	6	10
Khalasi	0	2	3	3	8	13
Vehicle cleaner	2	6	1	0	9	15
Shoe boy	3	3	0	0	6	10
Begging	5	4	1	0	10	17
Others	3	0	0	0	3	5
Total	14	23	20	3	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The table shows that rag picking and begging are the most popular job among the street children where 18 and 10 street children in total are involved respectively. Among rag

pickers 11 of them earned between Rs. 100 – 200 as daily earning, followed by 6 who earned between Rs. 50 – 100 and 1 of them earned below Rs. 50. Similarly those children who are involved in carrying load 7 of them earned between Rs. 100 – 200 and 2 of them earned between Rs. 50 – 100 daily. Only those children who were involved in the profession of khalasi and carrying load earned maximum in the range of Rs. 200 and above respectively. Thus it can be said that the profession that requires higher physical strength making children able to earn more money than others.

5.6 Saving of Daily Earning

As living independent life most of them have to spend their earning on food; other basic necessities and a lot of them also spend their earning on gambling, alcohol and drugs. Only few of them do make enough to sustain themselves and remaining live a hand to mouth existence. It is said that those who do make enough to sustain were facing difficulty to save it as they are constantly harassed on the street for their money by drivers druggists, thugs and local goons. Thus, they generally prefer to spend money on the same day instead of saving it. But in the case of children who lived with family managed to save from their daily earnings and those who had to send some of their earnings to their family.

Table-25

Distribution of the Respondents by Amount of Daily Saving

Saving Amount Per day	Frequency	Percent
No saving	20	34
Less than Rs. 10	3	5
Rs. 10 – 20	5	8
Rs. 21 – 30	12	20
Rs. 31 – 40	9	15
Rs. 41 – 50	8	13
More than Rs 50	3	5
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

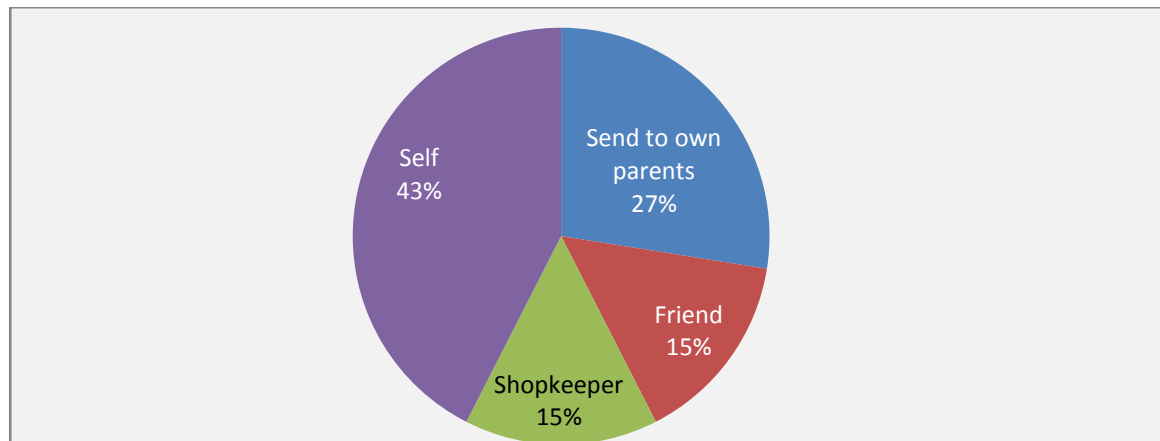
The above table shows the amount saved by those children who were able to manage it and who were not able to save. It is found that the higher proportion (34%) of them are not able to save money. 20 % are able to save only Rs. 21 – 30 daily out of their earnings, followed by 15% save Rs. 31 – 40, 13% save Rs. 41 – 50 and 8% save Rs. 10 – 20, 5% save below Rs. 10. It is seen that only a few of them (13%) are able to save more than Rs. 41 daily and 5% are able to save more than Rs. 50.

5.6.1 Management of Saving

Life on the street is tough enough where they have to not only put great effort to earn enough but also have to keep saved money. It is said that they have to be harassed constantly on the street for their money by drivers, druggists, thugs and the local goons. So, they were asked to release the information about where they keep their saving.

Figure 2

Distribution of the Respondents by Management of Saving



The above table indicates that the higher proportion (27%) of respondents keep their savings with their parents. This shows that these children might have good relationship with them and got support as well. 43% keep their saving with themselves followed by 15% keep their saving with shopkeeper and same percent keep their saving with their friend. As life on street is not safe, the street children have to be aware on the possible alternatives to sustain their daily life easily as well as to keep their saving safely.

5.7 Strategies When Earning is not enough

Since the earning of these children is quite low and only a few of them are found to be able to save some money from own earning. By the nature of their job and their own as well it does not give regular enough earning. Most of them have not found to be having saving motto for the future contingency. So, as living independent life on the street what would they do when their earning is not enough seems the important question in apropos to strategy to cope such life.

Table-26

Distribution of the Respondents' Strategies When Earning is not enough

Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Borrow money	17	28
Beg	14	23
Steal	8	14
Nothing	21	35
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The table illustrates that the strategy followed by the respondents when their earning is not enough, it is seen that 28% of the street children borrow money from their friends, shopkeepers, restaurant owners where they work before or from people they know. The larger fraction (35%) of these children do nothing when they do not have enough money. Some children (23%) choose to beg and 14% cope it by stealing as they are left with no alternatives. As they are living sorely independently they have no choice but to earn a living for survival and when it seemed insufficient to survive they have to choose either socially approved or disapproved way that is stealing.

5.8 Problems Faced by Street Children

Street children have to face many problems in the street such as; harassment, sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domination etc.

5.8.1 Harassment

All of us know that street children are vulnerable to so many disasters. They are exposed to sexual exploitation, deadly infections, addiction to alcohol and neurotic substances. The street is the most unsuitable place for the children to live. Majority of them are facing lots of harassment like physical as well as mental.

Table-27

Distribution of the Respondent's Harassment

Harassment by	Frequency	Percent
Senior	17	28
Tourist	2	3
Police	21	35
Local People (dada)	13	22
Pedestrian	7	12
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

According to the above table 28% of them are harassed by the seniors, 3% of them have been harassed by the foreigners, 35% of them have been harassed by police, 22% of them have been harassed by the local people (dada), and 12% are harassed by pedestrian. Therefore, they wanted to be away as far as possible from those persons to safe from the harassment.

According to respondents, people called them by derogatory term 'khate', 'khalasi', 'bhate' etc. These words always make them humiliation. Therefore, they do not prefer these term.

5.8.2 Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is vulnerable for crimes and sexual activities. They are abused physically and mentally. Sexual abuse of street children is not a new phenomenon in Nepal. As tourism bloomed, the frequency of being children as pedophilic victims has been raised. The misconception of sex with a child is that when sex is done with children of younger age, there is no chance of STD's or AIDS. It is also believed that these diseases are curable when children are used.

From the interview with street children, especially girls stated that they are sexually

exploited by their male counters and sometimes by others unknown people. People touch their sensitive organ and sometimes people appeal them for sexual relationship. They never reported their problems to the police office. They have said that people never look them positively.

5.8.3 Labour exploitation

Street children are usually forced to work for unpaid and low paid work. They are severely exploited by their employers. They are also forced to do lower label works which is very risky for their life. Due to this unsecure work and work place, they become victim of many accidents and sometimes, cause to death. As information shared by the some street children, if they get work according their capacity, it will be better for their life. Due to the dominating, exploiting nature and bitter behavior of people as well as society negatively affect their mind, behaviour and creates negative perceptions towards the society. In addition to labour exploitation, they are frequently looted by their seniors and robber. According to the respondents anybody do not care about their problems.

5.8.4 Illness

Street children, by their job's nature, live in a world of unhealthy conditions that leads to unhealthy lifestyle and sometimes they are sexually exploited by thugs and the local goons. They are also found to be alcoholic and drug abuse at the early age harm their health and their daily exposure to environmental pollution makes them susceptible to fever, earache, vitamin B deficiency, cold etc and their lack of sense of hygiene makes them take up environmentally hazardous situation at while the question what alternatives would they choose to treat themselves becomes important issue to be addressed.

Table-28
Distribution of the Respondents by Place to Go for Treatment

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Government Hospital	32	53
Private clinic	9	15
Medical	19	32
Total	60	100

(Source: field survey 2012)

The above table shows that most of the street children (53%) visit hospital for medical

treatment. The reason behind this is most probably because where medical treatment is either free or with minimal cost. 15% of them visit medical store and explains own problems to the chemist asking for medicines to treat their ailment and 32% visit private clinic for treatment which is considered more expensive than the others. Since they barely earn enough to feed themselves, they look for the cheapest means to medically treat themselves.

CHAPTER-SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Despite the five decades of planned development, Nepal remains underdeveloped with the higher proportion of poor and under-privileged people. Under the conditions of extreme poverty, underemployment and low wages, child labour becomes a survival strategy for poor family. Poor parents encourage children to search for jobs that lead a lot of children to adopt street living for survival. Though it is called that children are the future architects and backbone of any country, the situation of Nepalese children is being worse with leaps and bound due mostly to worsen socio-economic conditions. Children are often neglected, abused and exploited and exposed to the worse form of child labour such as sexual abuse or physically exerting or dangerous work. Children working on the street are clearly a much more visible fact in Nepal than other forms of child labour.

The exploitative practice of child labour has become one of the major socio-economic problem of the country. Child labour jeopardizes children's potential to become productive adults, robbing them of their health, their education and their prospects for a better future. It disrespects to the principles of social justice, child rights and to the protection of human rights. The image of the street children is being perceived by their lifestyles of begging, collecting and selling recyclable good and sleeping on the street inspite of their basic right to better life. The real situation of the future backbone is Heart-rending. Most of them are from poor and landless homes. Many of them leave illiterate, single parent or step-parent families behind in their quest for jobs to sustain themselves and their families as well. The street living teaches them violence and abuses and exposes them to unhealthy behaviors sand lifestyles like sexual exploitation, alcohol consumption and drug abuse. This study has tried to explore the answer of; what is the root cause of the children taking to the street? What are the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of street children? What are the real problems they are facing? And how they are coping their everyday problems? The main objectives of this study is to analyze the causes of street children and its relationship with the socio-economic and demographic condition in Kathmandu Metropolitan city. The general objectives are to analyze the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the street children, to find

out the relationship between the fact of street living and socio-economic and demographic characteristics of street children and to describe the real problems traced by street children and the survival strategy deal with street life.

This study is based on descriptive and exploratory research design. It is descriptive because it attempts to describe the socio-economic and demographic characteristics and working condition of the street children. On the other hand, it is also exploratory in nature because it tries to analyze the relationship between socio-economic and demographic characteristics and the fact of street living. Primary and secondary as well as quantitative and qualitative data have been used in this study. Both 'Children of the street' and 'Children on the street' is the unit of the study. The actual size of universe of the study was not definite due to their very nature of constant mobility or not permanent nature of residence thus by using purposive sampling 60 street children were being selected as a sample of the study from their highly concentrated areas such as Thamel, Basantapur, Ratna park, Jamal, Rato pool, Gaushala. Primary data have been collected from field through the various techniques – interview schedules, interviews with key informants and observation and secondary data were collected from the records of studies done by concerned organizations, NGOs and related past researches. The data were first fed into the computer using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) software. Using the same software thereafter analysis has been done. Mostly, simple tools like percentage, simple frequency table, cross tabulation have been used in analyzing the finding of research.

It is seen that the socio-economic condition is one of the most likely causes to increase the number of the street children in Kathmandu Valley. Most of the children came from the same development region and neighbor development region. This is because the Kathmandu itself lies in the central development region and it is easy for them to come to the capital city with any available transportation. The age group of 9 – 12 is found highest in the street showing that this age group is the most vulnerable to migrate to the city. The highest rate of Tamang children on the street shows their socio-economic conditions are in sensitive condition. Poverty is the main cause to discontinue school among the children. The lower economic condition and crowded population in the family have driven the children to go for the work and earn in order to support their family. Despite having both parents, the children are driven to the street in search of work.

Nepal is a poor and underdeveloped country but not all children from poor families are on the street. The families living under poverty are unlikely to send their children to school and consequently force them to look for work outside the home to support the family. This causes the children to migrate to urban areas in the hope of making a living and thus exposing them to the worst forms of children labour sector which finally compels them to take to the street, where they are exposed to sexual exploitation, trafficking, begging, petty crimes, pedophilia, rag picking, porter etc. The reasons of children leaving their homes are manifest and complex as well as there are various reasons to push children from their home without parent's consent. It is seen that poverty and disordered familial structure are the main factors to define them to the street living. Majority 65% of the respondents have left their home. It is found that 58% of the children had lived with relatives and the others before they have migrated to the city and had to leave due to poor economic condition of their families, death or parent/parents, remarriage of either parent, abusive treatment at the hands of either alcoholic parents, step parent or relative. Most of the children who have left their home have been residing on the street for more than one year.

Living on the street does not imply that the street children have no ties with their families as is found in the study where 79% of the children are in touch with their families. The frequency of contact of the street children with their families is seen directly related to their current age group. The age group of 9-12 is in touch with their families at the most (67%). The frequency of contact to the family varies with the range of daily to yearly since most of their homes are in remote areas and not easily assessable, these street children visit their families once a year (54%) and 7 – 94% are living with their parents. The older street children visit their families less than the smaller age groups. Among the other reasons lack of education is one since education is a primary need of children and it is their fundamental right too. A lot of poor parents lack the desire to send their children to school due to which 57% are not attending school. In this study it is seen that 74% of the children show a desire to study if they are given that opportunity and the reasons given was so that they could get a decent and well paying job (75%). When asked about the future a fair number of the street children to be a driver because they were fond of travelling and they found a lot of adventure in this job. Very little of them seemed confused (2%). This might be as they cannot think too far into the future by the nature of their life styles. They seemed open to the idea of some good Samaritan giving them

opportunity to make their life successful but they were some children who showed hesitancy to change their way of living as they either lived with parents or did not believe in others doing good to them. It is also found that during the street stay, they have to face lots of harassments and exploitation from seniors both physically and mentally. It is found that 30% of the respondents have previous work experience and rag picking and begging were the common jobs. Children keep changing jobs in the hope to earn more from their new jobs and to suit their convenience. It is seen that 67% of the children left their previous work since they did not have enough to eat and 20% left as they found their work too risky.

In addition to current job it is seen from the study that rag picking (25%) and carrying load (17) are the most common profession among street children as it is easy, flexible and brings daily wages and the age group of 9-12 and 13-16 are seen to follow these jobs. Khalasi and vehicle cleaners are the main jobs of those who have previous working experience on the street. Since most of the children come from poor families, they are forced to take to the street in search of work and thus are exposed to the worst forms of child labour and have to face a lot of hardship at the early age. It is seen that 54% of the children are not happy with their current work and due to the tender age at which they are forced to look for work, it is seen that 70% of the sampled children have not worked before and thus are unexperienced and vulnerable.

In addition to trying to earn enough to feed themselves, a lot of street children also try to save money for their family, who depend on their earnings. Thus the children keep changing jobs in the hope to earn more from their new job. Street children do not have a regular daily income, as they do not hold a regular job. Daily earnings depend on the nature of work and the effort and time put into it. It is found that the most common daily income is Rs. 100 – 200 per day (37%). 25% rag pickers earn Rs. 50 – 200 daily and 17% of the total carrying load earn more than Rs. 100 daily. As living independently they have to spend their earnings on gambling, alcohol and drugs. The life on the street is all about survival and only the fittest survive. The amount they earn depends on the amount of effort and time they put into it. But a lot of these children work to earn enough to survive for the day or earn a little extra. Many of the children do not make enough to hand to mouth existence whereas those who do earn enough find it difficult to save, as they are constantly harassed on the street for their money by drivers, druggists, thugs and the local goons. About 52% manage to save for their daily earnings with low in amount. Having

money is seemed dangerous for the street children, as they get harassed from druggist, thugs and local goons. It is found that 36% keep their savings with shopkeeper and 28% keep it themselves and a few of the children (16%) send money home from their savings. When their earning is enough, most of the street children (39%) borrow money from friends, shopkeepers or restaurant owners where they work currently or where their goodwill worth. By the nature of their work they seemed more vulnerable in environmentally hazardous conditions. Regarding the health check up majority of them (68%) go to governmental hospital, as it considered less expensive than the other means.

6.2 Conclusion

Poor economic condition particularly lack of adequate resource to feed family members and lack of desire to send children to school accelerating the rate of street children in the city in quest of better opportunities and better living standard as well, in Nepal, as a consequence of highly depending on subsistence farming, the practice of child labour is widespread where children are force/ encouraged to support their family as a family helper in agriculture, in domestic chores, as wage labour since the early age of their life. This deprives them of their right to education and development and ultimately leads to the street life. Another reason for children to leave their home and end up in the street is ue to change in social relations particularly in family structure. Children's own desire to see the city or to look for a job in the city is found as another major reason for the children to come to street life. Children of rural areas are found to be influenced by the street children who work/ live in the street and the gradual socialization of children into the street culture and eventual permanent residency is also seen on the streets, they accomplish their day to day life through the involvement in rag picking, begging, pottering etc profession that expose to the worst forms of child labour. It is found that majority of the street children in the Kathmandu valley live in the most unprivileged conditions, where negligence, denial and exploitation are common phenomenon. They are exposed to harassment by local thugs and goons who frequently take away their earnings, deplorable environment, bad peer influence leading to bad habits such as taking or dealing in drugs, alcohol and gambling. The main reason behind such exposure is their own vulnerable condition in terms of health, hunger, lack of proper counseling and guidance from parents and life in the street in general. The children's relationship with the family is found different when they are living in the street and whey they are only

working on the street but living with their families. The difference of relationship with the family is important to understand the life of these children. The better relationship with the family shows that family members still remain active agents to socialize them for as the street vendor.

6.3 Recommendations

Today in Nepal, there are many children living on the streets. They have little or no access to education, health services or family support. Yet the reality is these are the children who are most at risk to health problems (including the threat of HIV/AIDS), to abuse, to exploitation, to exposure to criminal activities, and to a life marginalized from social opportunities.

In this context, there are NGO who are fighting to support these children to help them survive and understand their rights. These organizations work to protect children and to help them return to our society as responsible and active citizens. Who are these children? Where do they come from? How can they live without parents at such young age? Are they tempted by soft or hard drugs? What dangers will their lives encounter? In what type of social context do they grow up? Are they surrounded by and education system?

These are the questions that arise and more than answer you will find a new approach to these various questions, mixed with emotions and life inexperience.

On the street, children are required to develop their own coping and safety strategies and for most. This means of forming groups for protection. For many children this is their means of reducing risk to physical, sexual and other abuses. However the reality is that many groups or gangs can become the source of these abuses. Furthermore in protecting themselves from immediate abuse children expose themselves to long term risks involved with gangs; exposure to substance abuse, exposure to criminal activities, and exposure to high risk sexual behavior or sexual abuse.

Many people think that poverty is the main cause for children to land on the streets. But research has proven that this is not a whole truth, this is just a part of reality. There are other several reasons which push them out from the “home” and make them live on the streets. One of the main reasons for being a street children is the lack of a proper family a street child is the lack of a proper family environment. Domestic violence, bad relations between parents, alcoholic or drug addicted parents, lack of opportunities and lack of love

and care in the family are the contributing factors for children to be one the street.

The next common reasons are poverty and hunger. Delinquency, the attraction of the city, peer influenced and experience of violent behavior and exploitation are other persisting reasons.

To minimize the rate of children taking to the street and to assist those who are already living or working in the streets. The following recommendations are put forward to the concern agencies. During the survey it is found that they had higher future aspirations and their interest in studying if the opportunity was given. The majority of them responded by saying that they would like to go to school if they are given chance. The simple answer, however, tells us little about the problems that arise when street children are put into regular schools. Their everyday life seems to be a problematic to adjust themselves in school life. Many times they fail to cope with the new environment of tire school and then return to the streets again. A similar situation often occurs when the children are reunited with their families; they run away after staying for a few days. Thus, it is recommended that it is better to provide education facility through the separate school for only street children.

6.3.1 Recommendation for Future Research

More research on issues related to children in general and street children in particular must be carried out. So, it is recommended that more depth study on children's work, on child rearing practices, process of socialization, familial relationship and problems of the families are necessary to design appropriate programs for child care and development in general and to alleviate the problems of street children in particular.

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Annex

Questionnaire for Street Children Survey

Serial No

Place-

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex: Male/ Female:
4. Caste:
5. Home Address:
6. Parents: Yes/ No
7. Step mother: Yes/ No
8. Step father: Yes/ No
9. Family size:
 - a. Nuclear
 - b. Joint
10. Are you in touch with your family? Yes/ No
11. If yes how often you go home?
12. Income source of family:
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Business
 - c. Service
 - d. Wage labor
 - e. other (specify)
13. Literate/ Illiterate
 - a. If literate, what level of school education?
 - b. Left the school?
 - i. If yes, Why?

1. Negligence of parents	5. Father distorted
2. Poverty	6. No school around
3. Not interested	7. Others (specify) ...
4. Death of parents	
14. Have you left home? Yes/ no
 - a. If yes, when did you left home?
 - b. Why did you left home?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| i. Maltreatment by parents | vii. Wanted to see the city |
| ii. No opportunity for school | viii. To work and earn in the city |
| iii. One's own misdeeds | ix. Lack of food in home |
| iv. Death of parents | x. Influenced by friends |
| v. Parents abandoned children | xi. Insecurity due to people's war |
| vi. Thrown out of one's home | xii. Other (specify) ... |

15. With whom did you live before you left home?

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Father and mother | f. Sister and brother-in-law |
| b. Father | g. Brother and sister-in-law |
| c. Mother | h. Maternal Uncle's home |
| d. Father and step mother | i. Friends |
| e. Grandparents | j. Others |

16. What kind of work do you do?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| a. Rag picking | h. Guard |
| b. Carrying loads | i. Domestic servant |
| c. Conductor of microbus, bus tempo | j. Restaurant boy |
| d. Vehicle cleaner | k. Pick pocketing |
| e. Begging | l. Others |
| f. Shoe-boy | |
| g. Construction labor | |

17. Have you worked before? Yes/ No

- a. What kind of work you do before?
- b. Reasons for leaving previous work.

18. Are you happy with your work now? Yes/ No

- a. If happy, why?
- b. If unhappy, why?

19. Did anyone help you to get this job? Yes/ No
- a. If yes, who helped you?
 - i. Family
 - ii. Friend
 - iii. Sir/ Miss
 - iv. Uncle
 - v. Tourist
 - vi. Someone you know
20. How much you earn in a day?
21. Are you earnings enough to feed you? Yes/ No
22. How much do you keep your saving? ...
23. Do you send money to your home? Yes/ no
24. Where would you go if you need to borrow some money? ...
25. Who feeds you when you do not have money? ...
26. If you need clothes, where do you go?
- a. Junkyard owner
 - b. Restaurant owner
 - c. Family
 - d. Brother/ sister
 - e. Sir/ Miss
 - f. Tourists
 - g. Someone you know
 - h. Friends
 - i. Some NGOs
 - j. Others
27. Have you suffered any kind of abuse or harassment? Yes/ no
- a. If yes, by whom?
 - i. Elders
 - ii. Tourists
 - iii. Police
 - iv. Local people
 - v. Others
 - vi. Don't know
 - b. What kind of harassment do you encounter?
 - i. Simple scolding and beating
 - ii. Sexual harassment
 - iii. Others
 - iv. Local people
 - v. Others
 - vi. Don't know
28. Would you like to study?
29. What do you want to be in the future?

Thank you for your valuable time