

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Problem of street children is universal phenomenon. It is comparatively very high in those countries where there is rapid growth of urbanization. The number of street children has grown in recent decades because of widespread recession, political turmoil, civil unrest, increasing family disintegration, natural disaster, and growing urbanization. He further asserted that the street children could be the one orphaned, abandoned children, simply neglected or runways. They could be with or without family. They are also termed as community children (Swart, 1990).

Many visible and invisible factors are associated with the homelessness of children. Some of the main factors are: family breakdown, poverty, natural and manmade disasters, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation by adults, urbanization and overcrowding etc. which in fact force them to spend their life on to street. In other words an individual does not become a street child on his own but social factors such as family background, economic factors, and political factors play a significant role to become a street child (Swart, 1990).

In Nepal due to high poverty level chances of being street child is high. In many cases parental support to their children is not enough to fulfill their demand and thus it drives them to live independent. Street children are the common problem that has been occurring throughout the world for a long time. This problem has emerged as a major social problem in Nepal. Due to lack of good governance and political system, responsible government authorities have not paid much attention to address this issue.

This study tried to understand the current situation of street children in Kathmandu valley. However, the study mainly investigates and identifies different social, economic and cultural factors that force children to live a street

life and also examines problems faced by children when they enter into a street life.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many social organizations and service centers are mushrooming throughout the country with a motto to support needy street children. However, we don't see much change brought to the lives of these street children. Hundreds of street children could still be seen around New Road, Basantapur and other parts of the valley. It is crucial to investigate factors that lead to the increment of street children. Could it be due to family background, economic or social factors? All these factors should be properly analyzed in order to find the root cause of the issue. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordinated and concentrated effort to address this problem collectively (Pradhan, 2007). Because of the lack of street child legislation it is extremely difficult to monitor the performance of such centers and government organizations.

According to Berg (2008), children normally end up in a street due to family, social, economic, political and other causes. In Nepal there used to be slaves known as *Kamaiyas*. They were freed from the unjust bondage of slavery. It was indeed a great achievement for Nepal in the field of human rights and social justice. However, government did not address the deep rooted problems of poverty and unemployment of the freed *Kamaiyas*. They were freed but they had no place to go, and no place to turn to for their survival. This might have been an important factor to add the numbers of street children in our country.

Berg further asserted that the conflict that Nepal was mired into for twelve years claimed lives of so many people (Berg, 2008). So many people were made homeless, and so many of them were displaced. It may have been another significant reason for the numbers of street children to rise in Nepal. A child being in a formative stage can be molded in any shape in terms of behaviors. Failure to provide them a proper care; food, affection, love, education and

shelter could hamper in their physical, mental and social development, which could lead them to a path of street life.

According to Social Welfare Council 2010 data, there are currently 951 NGOs that have been registered to work for child welfare and many of these organizations are working in Kathmandu Valley. However, we still see a lot of street children in Kathmandu Valley. Therefore, the problem of street children and root cause leading them into a street life should be closely examined to figure out the real situation.

This study is focused on the Following research questions

-) What are the social backgrounds of street children?
-) What are the influencing social factors leading children onto the street?
-) What are the major problems faced by them?
-) What are their activities for survival?
-) What are their perceptions towards their life and society?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research are as follows:

-) To identify social, economic and cultural factors of being a street children
-) To identify various problems of street children.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This is a sociological study on street children. Thus, it is important from the point of view of sociological literature. This study mainly focuses to identify relationship between society and street children and various problems faced by them. The researcher hopes this research will help other researchers and students to carry out the research on the same field. Similarly, the research will be beneficial for concerned organizations to formulate plans and policies; and

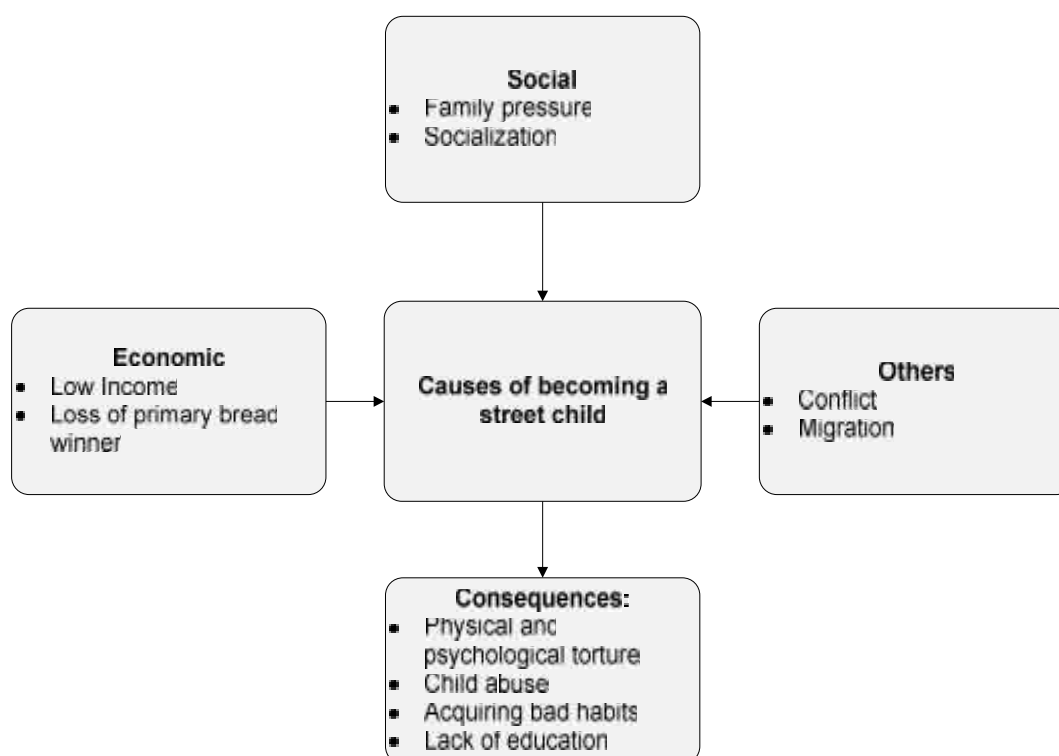
also to find out various problems associated with street children and find adequate mechanism to solve them.

In addition this study will provide information about street children and their rights. It provides the knowledge and necessary information concerning with the street children in Nepal. It will provide an idea regarding current situation of the street children, which will ultimately help in the development of the children's welfare. But above all this, the study aids in creating awareness among people in terms of eliminating all forms of abuse, exploitation and injustice against children.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The high level of poverty is believed the most influencing driving factors for children being onto street. Social causes, family causes and economic causes and economic causes are the outcome of the poverty and are the leading causes that in-forced child being onto streets.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Being Street Children



Source: Field survey 2010

I have developed a conceptual framework to examine the causes of being a street child. Under my study, there are various factors such as economic, social and other which compel a children to live a street life. In the figure, different causes of being a street child are illustrated. Due to economic factors such as low income and loss of primary bread winner is one of the major factor that leads a children to live on a street. Similarly, family pressure and socialization (following in the steps of friends or elders) also contributes towards children's move on the street. Other factors such as conflict and migration also contributes towards influx of children into the city like Kathmandu. Consequently, they end up being street children. Street life has its fair share of hazards-physical and psychological torture they receive, abuse, lack of education and acquiring bad habits.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The first chapter describes introduction including general background, statement of the problem, major objectives and conceptual framework. All the available literature is reviewed in the second chapter. The third chapter describes the research methods such as sampling methods, method of data collection and representation. The fourth chapter presents information such as study area, its demographic characteristics and different social factors contributing towards children becoming street children. The fifth chapter analyzes the various problems faced by street children. The sixth chapter contains the summary of important findings, conclusion and recommendation for further study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the review of related literature as well as definition of street child both in the national and international contexts. Some of the facts, opinions, principles and study reports directly related to the street child are also reviewed. Relevant literatures from internet have been reviewed and referred.

2.1 Street Children: An Overview

There is no universal definition of child. In many countries a child is defined in terms of age, limit, which differs with various activities. According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), "age limits are a formal reflection of society's judgment about the evolution of children's, capacities and responsibilities (UNICEF, 1997)".

According to Children Act and Labor Act of Nepal (1992) "Child" means a minor not having completed the age of sixteen years.

According to Kanbargi (1991), the term street children refer to children for whom the street more than their family has become their real home. It includes children who might not necessarily be homeless or without families, but who live in situations where there is no protection, supervision, or direction from responsible adults.

Baker, Panter & Todd (1996) state that street child is a common problem and has been occurring throughout the world for a long time since even before written history. Developed countries have managed to protect, however it is not fully controlled. One of the serious problems, which influence becoming street child, is the poverty level. Moreover it is also connected with the unstable political situation, closure of border between the countries, gender and race etc. Sometimes children want to be free from their parents and their wish to stand independently drives them to be on a street.

They went on to say that street children throughout the world are subjected to physical abuse by police or have been even murdered outright, as governments treat them as a blight to be eradicated rather than as children to be nurtured and protected. They are frequently detained by police simply because they are homeless, or criminally charged with vague offences such as loitering, vagrancy, or petty theft. They are tortured or beaten by police and often held for long periods in poor conditions. Girls are sometimes sexually abused, coerced into sexual acts, or raped by police. Street children also make up a large proportion of the children who enter criminal justice systems and are committed finally to correctional institutions (prisons) that are euphemistically called schools, often without due process. Few advocates speak up for these children and it is also observed that family members of the street children or concerned individuals are not willing and are unable to intervene on their behalf (Baker, Panter & Todd, 1996).

According to Central Bureau of Statistic (2002) there are over 12 million children population of which child labor at risk is about 2.6 million. According CWIN (2003), there are 5000 street children and out of them around 2000 on the street and 3000 off the street, among which 800-900 street children are in Kathmandu valley. The same report also mentioned that there are about 32,000 children in India and 5,000 children within Nepal and below 16 years are involved in trafficking and child prostitution. Though there is no investigation and study made by the government to verify the above mentioned street children increasing trend, it is envisioned that the number has been increase because of high poverty level and unstable political turmoil.

2.2 Street Children in Nepal

Street children have been one of the serious issues worldwide, but it is even more severe in developing countries like Nepal. In Kathmandu only, Child Protection Centers and Services (CPCS, 2010) estimates the number of street children are approximately 1000-1200. They are living, sleeping and working under the open sky and surviving as they can without family support. They are

staying with friends and working as *Khalasis*, Beggars, and Rag Picker. Despite their young age, they are exposed to some of the worst form of exploitation and forced to experience social exclusion day after day. The reasons for which they got to the Kathmandu streets are numerous and complex. Socio-economic conditions in villages, family violence, attraction for the city, political instability, are some of them (CPCS, 2010).

According to Pradhan (2002), the most popular group among the street children are rag pickers called *khate*; they survive by collecting bits of plastics and garbage in the street and they are one of the most neglected groups of children in Nepali society (Pradhan, 2002).

CWIN (2003) carried out a survey research on street children of Kathmandu, which is based on a survey of 500 street children of Kathmandu. One fifth of these children were personally interviewed and asked about their personal history. Out of them 48 percent were runaway children, 13 percent were squatter children, 39 were percent orphan children. Most common reason for being street children was prior abuse and neglect.

Although the majority of the population still lives in rural areas and derives their livelihood from agriculture, the pressure of change including population growth, declining fertility of farmland and the pressures of globalization has contributed in significant and rapid rise in the numbers of street children living in cities (CPCS, 2010).

Currently an estimated 38 percent of the population is aged less than 14 years and the pressure of change falls heavily on this age group, and this has resulted in significant levels of child migration. Children move away from their homes for a variety of reasons such as death of one or both the parents, poverty, illiteracy, domestic abuse and the perceived attractions of city life. Many of these children find themselves living on the streets in urban areas and attempt to earn money in marginal economic activities such as collecting rags, shining shoes, dishwashing in hotels, pulling carts and rickshaws and begging. Street

children are highly vulnerable to exploitation and sexual abuse. Trafficking of children also occurs with children being 'recruited' often for an exchange of money. These children will often then be used for domestic labor, carpet weaving and a variety of other jobs. They and their families are lured by promises of good employment but the reality is very different with very low pay, if any at all, and harsh living and working conditions (CPCS, 2010).

2.3 Working Areas of Street Children

It was found that most of the street children were found to be involved in some sort of income generating activities. Some of the street children worked in a tempo-collecting tempo fare from the passengers. Some were found to make money by gathering plastics and other materials. Some street children also made money by asking for money from passersby. Some children were involved in other activities like construction work or working in a restaurant. But, most of the children were in and out of their work-returning to street whenever they like. CWIN (2003) has categorized working areas of street children as follows:

Tempo fare collector

More than 400 children from the mountain areas are hired as tempo fare collectors. They earn from 25 to 120 rupees per day, which is sufficient for food and cigarettes but not for a living space (CWIN, 2003). Usually they sleep in the tempo or on the street. Their dream is to get a driving license and own a vehicle someday. Unfortunately most of them will never get anything other than pollution related diseases as they hang on the back of a tempo all day in on a busy street traffic inhaling exhaust fumes. They often suffer from serious lung and respiratory disorders (CWIN, 2003).

Plastic pickers

From early morning till late evening the plastic pickers collect recyclable

waste in large bags from the garbage piles on streets of Kathmandu and sell it per kilogram. Their number is estimated at to be about 500 in the capital alone. Spending hours each day digging through refuse they are particularly liable to infections, skin diseases and gastro-intestinal problems (CWIN, 2003).

Beggars

Begging is the daily occupation of about one hundred street children in Kathmandu valley. It is physically easier for these children than for those mentioned above because they are not dealing so much with garbage and hazardous fumes. Yet beggars suffer more from social isolation than the other groups as psychological cuts can go even deeper. Begging destroys any feelings of self esteem, due to which some children dangerously undervalue themselves (CWIN, 2003).

Other children

Sell newspapers, bread, biscuits, wash dishes in restaurants, carry water, and work as construction laborers. There is no such thing as fundamental labor rights with luxuries such as regular work hours, guaranteed wages, and job security (CWIN, 2003).

2.4 Causes of Being Street Children

Berg (2008) studied a village near the town of Dhangadi to examine how decade long conflict has affected young children. Because of conflict, insecurity and force to join rebel groups, many children left villages and headed towards big cities like Kathmandu. In addition, Berg further discusses about psychological impact of the armed conflict on children. He found that children have various psychological problems: fear, sleeping problems, sadness and worries, physical problems losing 'sato' and anger.

Hartman (1985) goes into analyzing the factors that forced the children to leave their homes and pass their hard life on the street. Many of the children desert

their homes because of their abusive and alcoholic parents, mistreatment by step-parents and due to the attractions in the town.

Pradhan (2002) states children are not only deprived of their fundamental right to survival and protection but also equally exploitation and discriminated against in their everyday life. In certain region of the country, the children are still being pushed in to slavery, child labor, street children, child abuse and neglect and bondage are very common issues.

According to Hickson and Gaydon (1989), many children come from structurally disadvantaged homes where poor living conditions result in many difficulties. Parent's loss through death or abandonment and/or family conflict or shortage of housing may force children onto the streets. In many cases the move to street life is an adaptive response to the stress and severe oppression experienced by families living in a society of conflict. Thus, the move to the streets often represents a desire to take control of one's life and displace old values and conditions with new ones.

According Swart (1998), the street child phenomenon is directly linked to rapid industrialization and urbanization with the concomitant breakdown of extended family ties: "Harsh or neglectful treatment of children by their families frequently derives from parental depression, anger, anxiety and frustration at life circumstances" (p.34 Swart, 1998).

Population is rapidly growing all over the world. However, unlike many other parts of the world, Nepal is one of the densely populated places in the world. According to UNDP Human Development Index, adult literacy rate in Nepal is only 48.6 percent (UNDP, 2007), which is significantly low as compared to other parts of the world. Per capita GDP is about US\$ 252 (UNDP, 2007), which is merely sufficient for the parents to feed and for schooling of their children. Population is increasing in geometric progression while income is increasing in arithmetic progression. It is therefore utmost important to develop

both aspects in a balancing way so that the street child problem in the future could be reduced significantly.

2.5 Legal Provisions/Policy

Children are an integral part of the society and they deserve the childhood and it is a born human right. The United Nations (UN) convention on the rights of the child has ensured that every child in the world has right to survival, development, protection and participation (UNDP, 2007).

However, an overwhelming majority of children in the world are deprived and denied of their fundamental rights. Nepal is one of the examples of nation plagued by the problems of street children. As mentioned above, rigid socio-cultural norms, illiteracy, economic backwardness and ignorance of basic human rights are the major determinants of street children. Being a street child does not only exploit the childhood of a child, but it also comes as a major obstacle in their development process.

Government of Nepal has signed the CRC on children right and this indicates that the government has promulgated some rules and laws but specifically not addressed the problems and issues of street child. We talked about Juvenile Justice in Nepal for Children right. We regard children as the "Foundation stone of the nation" but generally we do not treat children well in practice. Children have been entitled as the "future stars" and the "rising sun" in most of the societies since the time immemorial; survival and protection. It is therefore utmost important to develop a concrete future plan so that the street children problem can be minimized.

Despite adequate legal provisions and policies, there are not significant results in favor of street children. There is Child Act of Nepal (2006) and other internationally recognized acts such as ILO (1997) that ensures right of

children. However, due to lack proper implementation and lack of accountability, significant progress has not been achieved so far.

State of Child Right

According to Cockburn (1991), child right violations are predominantly incurring in the forms of economic, social, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The statistics, cases recorded and analysis shows how the traditionally ingrained unfair social systems such as child labor exploitation, racial and caste discrimination, gender and social discrimination and sexual abuse have infected our society. Despite people with conscience and children themselves raising voices against such social anomalies, the government has failed to safeguard children's rights and their best interests.

He further asserts that it should be noted that these incidents or cases are just a fraction of incidents of violations of children's rights in Nepal. Majority of incidents of child rights violations still goes unreported due to inadequate mechanism, lack of access to such mechanism and awareness among people. Many other cases care also covered under the influence and pressure from various forces. There is a continuous conscience and growing voice against violence and the strong voice in favors of peace. The children are zone of peace campaign has in fact, appealed all conscious and peace loving people.

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2.6 Role of NGOs/ INGOs

In Nepal there are several non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international non-governmental organizations (INGO) working in the field of children and street children. Out of them CWIN (Child Workers in Nepal), APC-Nepal (Association for the Protection of Children Nepal) and CPCS (Child Protection Centers and Services) are three of the leading NGOs working in the field of street children.

Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN)

Established in 1987, Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) is a pioneer organization in Nepal for the rights of the child and against child labor exploitation. CWIN is an advocate organization for the child's rights with focus on children living and working under the most difficult circumstances. CWIN's main areas of concern are child labor, street children, child marriage, bonded labor, trafficking of children, children in conflict with laws and commercial-sexual exploitation of children. As a watchdog in the field of child rights in the country, CWIN acts as a voice of children through lobbying, campaign and pressure to the government to protect and promote children's rights in the country, and to end all kinds of exploitation, abuse and discrimination against children.

CWIN's helpline system entered a new phase with the installation of toll free number. The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Nepal Telecom and the Nepal Telecommunications Corporation all jointly own the Child Helpline with its toll free number 1098. The help lines in Kathmandu, Biratnagar, Pokhara, Hetauda and Nepalgunj will now all have the same number and CWIN plans to expand the Child Helpline into other parts of the country.

Association for the Protection of Children Nepal (APC-Nepal)

Since 2001, APC-Nepal provides the street children of Kathmandu with a sympathetic ear, moral support and a wide range of facilities, including various shelters with living conditions where they can feel secure and have the freedom and opportunity to learn and develop.

Since its inception, APC believes that street children cannot and should not be considered as passive victims of their family, society, or fate. On the contrary, in spite of their young age, they need first to be listened to, empowered and respected as the prime actors of their lives and decisions. APC's effort throughout the years has greatly contributed in the lives of street children in Nepal.

APC is now able to help more **than 400 children** that are in need through 5 centers. They are currently running 10 different programs designed to fit the needs of the most destitute children, living and working in the streets of Kathmandu.

CPCS (Child Protection Centers and Services)

Child Protection Centers and Services (CPCS), a non-government organization, was founded in 2002 to help children's in need in the streets of Nepal. Every year hundreds of kids, attracted by the allure of the "big city", leave their villages. Once they arrive on a big city they discover the harsh realities of life in the streets and are left on their own to face multiple forms of danger and abuse (moral, sexual and physical).

CPCS was created to support these children and youth and to prevent more children from ending up in the streets. The organization has focused to work from three different sides to eliminate street children:

1. Prevention (prior to and during the street life): set of interventions focused in two ways:

- prevent and, if possible, avoid the arrival of the child in the street
- create awareness among general public, the families and the children themselves on the realities of life in the Street (its causes, its daily routines and its consequences).

2. Risk reduction (during life in the street): short term perspective focusing on immediate reduction of the dangers of street life.

3. Social rehabilitation (after life in the street): long term perspective focusing on progressive and eventual reintegration of a child into society.

This organization currently has eight centers in the Kathmandu Valley, one in Butwal, and seventeen other regional centers (Gorkha, Dolakha, Sindhuli, Jhapa, Narayangadh, Itahari, Lahan, Birtamod, Biratnagar, Katari, Sarlahi, Ramechhap, Chautara, Banepa, Hetauda, Surkhet and Nepalgunj) where CLASS (CPCS Local Action Support and Services) programs are being held.

CPCS is able to help 850 children via different project activities, 400 to 500 children are supported by socialization or rehabilitation centers, 1100 ex-street children and children at risks go to school and several dozen receive medical or legal support.

NGO's and INGO's are established with various programs to serve underprivileged individuals. These organizations have been playing a constructive role in helping needy street children in Nepal. Many of these organizations have been campaigning on advocacy for human rights, women's rights and child rights. Therefore, the role of NGO's and INGO's are very important for constructive development of more equitable social and economic political structure in the country.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is systematic way of doing research that generally deals with the research area, design and sampling design. Different tools and techniques are used for data collection, data representation and limitation of the study.

3.1 Selection of Study Area

Street children are found in almost all urban areas of the country. The trend of rapid urbanization because of industrialization is inviting rural people to the urban areas to find opportunities. It is not that all people are getting equal opportunities. Those who are unable to find opportunities may leave their child onto street and then they will start begging. Katmandu Valley has the highest pull factor for all kinds of people. Street child is one of them who come to the Kathmandu Valley to enjoy their life, support their families in whatever way they could and sometimes just to escape from hardship of their village lives.

Therefore, I have chosen Kathmandu metropolitan city for this study. Being a capital and chance of opportunity, majority of children seek to come to Kathmandu from various villages around the country. Therefore, the site was suitable for me to identify the various causes which force a child to be on a street and examine the problems faced by them while they enter in a street life.

3.2 Research Design

This research is both exploratory and descriptive in nature. Exploratory, in the sense this research explored and uncovered different problems associated with street children as well as their demographic characteristics. This also explored social structure and institutions (like economy, caste/ethnicity and religion) and

their influence on street children. Descriptive research presented a clear picture of phenomena under investigation.

3.3 Sampling Design

A sample design of the research is definite plan determined before any data are actually collected from obtaining a sample from the given population. Sample design of this study was a purposive sampling. Instead of drawing a random sample of the population, the researcher exercised her judgment to select units or areas for the sample that the researcher presumed to be typically representative of the population. There are many street children living in the streets of Kathmandu valley. However, only 50 children were taken for study using purposive sampling. Through purposive sampling, an attempt was made to street children of varying age, sex, having varying educational status and social/cultural and geographical background.

3.4 Nature and Source of Data

This study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data. Data is collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was the first hand data collected by the researcher using different tools and techniques such as interview and case study. Secondary data was collected through the review of literature i.e. published books, existing dissertations, journals, articles and magazines.

3.5 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Different tools and techniques like Interview method, Questionnaire method and direct observation method are used in order to collect primary data from the subjects.

3.5.1 Interview

Interview method is one of the best methods of obtaining information from the respondent. In this method, there was a direct contact between respondents and

the researcher to obtain required information from them. It provided mostly qualitative and quantitative data regarding demographic characteristics associated with street children, their problems and reasons for their move from villages to the streets in Kathmandu. Interview method is useful to understand social factors of being street child and their consequences.

It was not easy to interview some of the street children due to lack of education and their erratic behavior. They did not prefer to sit in one place for an hour and talk to the researcher. Some of them were intoxicated by glue sniffing and some of them asked money. However, after convincing them for a while, they became ready to cooperate and answer questions.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaire method is one of the very reliable methods of data collection. During the data gathering phase respondents were asked various questions about their current situation, family history and situations that brought them into the street. One on one conversation with street children's were very useful to understand their behavior and problems they have faced since they entered into the street life.

3.5.3 Observation

Observation method is another reliable method of data collection. Observation provides an opportunity to document activities, behavior and physical aspects without having to depend upon people's willingness and ability to respond to questions (Powell, 1996). Watching street children activities, learning their behavior and listening them are key measures of observation in this research.

3.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The collected data is analyzed both descriptively and statistically. The crude form of data that was collected by using different tools and techniques like interview and case study method later was processed through editing, coding, classifying and tabulating. The quantitative data was presented in the form of tables and charts (Bar chart, Pie chart etc).

3.7 Limitation of the Study:

The respondents are selected through purposive sampling and might not provide socio-economic, cultural and demographic variation, as intended. Interviews are used extensively for data collection; due to sensitivity associated with the research, other research methods could not be used as effectively.

Also, this research is varied out where the problems associated with street children are going to be found under the framework where social, economic and cultural based will be assessed. This research may not answer all the questions and it may not give the complete picture of the situation; but it will provide a good understanding of current situation of a street children.

CHAPTER IV: SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STREET CHILDREN

This research is focused on 50 street children of Kathmandu metropolis who have been rescued by CWIN Child Helpline. Many of these children have already left the Helpline, but some are still going through rehabilitation or receiving some sort of help. Various data gathered through interview and case studies suggested that street children came from different social, economic, geographical and demographic background. Furthermore their problems and reasons for leaving home were also found to be different. This chapter concentrates on demographic characteristics and situational analysis of street children. In addition factors such as social, economic, and political and other caused has also been analyzed.

4.1 Age Group

Among the 50 street children who were selected for this study were between ages of 6 to 18 years. Table 4.1 below shows the age group distribution of respondents.

Table 4.1: Age wise population composition of child

Age group	Number of respondents	
	Total numbers	Percentage
6-7	3	6
7-8	4	8
8-9	7	14
9-11	11	22
11-13	17	34
13-18	8	16
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey 2010

Out of the 50 respondents majority were found with an age group of 11-13 (34 percent) followed by 9-11 years (22 percent) and 13-18 years (16 percent). The mostly influencing age group could be seen as 9-11 years and 11-13 years with 22 percent and 34 percent respectively. More than half the street children under the study fall under age group between 9 to 13 years. This is also supported by the case studies where the age of the respondents were in the same age group between 9 to 13 years.

Age group between 9 to 13 years makes over 50 percent of the total respondents. Children under 11 are too young to leave home and live on a street; so only few of children in this age group leave their home. And children over age of 13 are fairly matured enough, so they are less likely to make moves like this.

CASE STUDY 1: Dominant age group from 9-13

Kabita Khadka was 12 years of age and resident of Bode in Bhaktapur. During the investigation it was found that she and her mother were going through terrible hardship. Her father had abandoned them.

They were living with Kabila's uncle. People and locals informed that her uncle was fed of looking after them and left them on the street. He was hoping someone will find them and take care of them.

While they were on the street they were helped by locals and other passerby. With the help of local people and police they were brought to child helpline.

4.2 Caste/ Ethnic Composition

Unity in diversity has been considered as the main characteristic feature of Nepal. Population wise, Brahmin and Chhetri are the most dominant population in the country. Table 4.2 presents the caste/ethnic composition of the respondents under the study.

Table 4.2: Caste/ Ethnic Composition of Respondents

Ethnic composition	Number of	Percentage
Brahmin	13	26
Chhetri	10	20
Tamang	8	16
Newar	4	8
Gurung	4	8
Tharu	4	8
Limbu	3	6
Sherpa	1	2
Magar	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey 2010

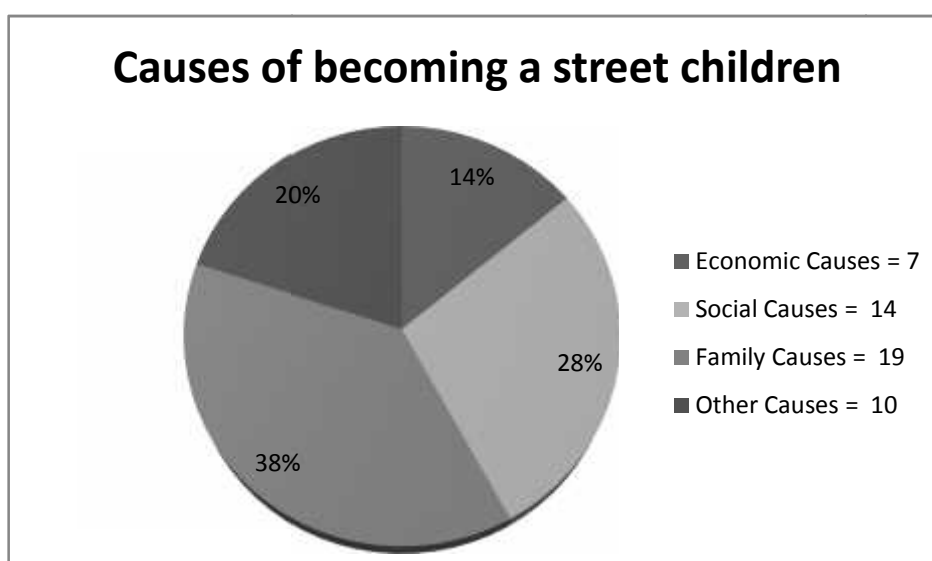
The number of street children corresponds to the percentage of different ethnic groups in the total population of the country. The largest populations are from Brahmin (26 percent) followed by Chhetri (20 percent), Tamang (16 percent), Newar/Gurung/Tharu (8 percent each), Limbu (6 percent), Sherpa (2 percent) and Magar (6 percent).

Although majority of the street children under the study came from castes Brahmin, Chhetri and Tamang. It could not be asserted that because of certain socio-cultural characteristics associated with a particular caste, children of that caste group are higher compared to other castes. Most of the street children living in Kathmandu valley came from surrounding districts such as Nuwakot, Makawanpur and Kavre. It was found population of Brahmin, Chhetri and Magar was high in those districts and consequently number of street children of those groups coming into Kathmandu valley.

4.3 Causes of being a Street Child

Open-ended single question was asked to all respondents. The question was “Why you become street children?” The response from all respondents were collected and then grouped. The researcher categorically divides into groups the root causes and driven forces as obtained is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Pictorial representation of reason of being a street child



Source: Field survey 2010

The details of findings and observation as mentioned in the above figure are described further in the subsequent subsections.

4.3.1 Social Causes

This is one of the most influencing reasons of children being onto street. It is not an individual who decides to live his/her life on the street. On the contrary, it is a particular society and various social factors that force a child to become a street child. All these social factors and the way they make a child leave their respective homes and lead a life on a street of Kathmandu must be closely examined. In order to understand the plight and problems of street children and solve them, one must look into these social factors.

Table 4.3.1: Street child due to social problems

Social causes	No of Respondents	
	Numbers	Percentage
Child labor	4	28.57
Mother involved in sex work	3	21.43
Beggars	3	21.43
Children rejected by their family because of delinquent	3	21.43
Drug addicts	1	7.14
Total	14	100.00

Source: Field survey 2010

From the 50 respondents who were asked questions it was found that 28 percent street children were influenced by the social causes. Out of children with social causes, the child labor (28.57 percent) is the most influencing causes followed by children of beggars and children whose mother is a prostitute (21.43 percent). Children's deliquesces behavior (21.43 percent) followed by children of drug addicts and rejected children by their family due to women trafficking (7.14 percent). It can be concluded that social problem is one of the root causes that drives child being onto street.

4.3.2 Family Causes

This is other prime factor, which influences children being onto street. Due to lack of economic support and high level of poverty, parents have a difficulty to support their family and then start taking alcohol. Intolerable situation can be created within family and children try to be free from such home. Some of the main root causes as observed during survey are presented in the Table 4.3.2 and it shows number of respondents along with their representation in percentage.

By broken families, it means one of the parents of the child has left home and they were often found to be staying with step father or step mother. In some

cases, primary breadwinner (father) had left home often marrying some other women; these children are categorized under ‘not cared by father’. Abandoned children mean those children whose both father and mother them and they are completely on their own. Orphans refer to those children who have lost both of their parents. Some children are considered to have lost trust of their family, relatives and even society. These children pick up bad habits like drinking, smoking and playing cards; they are seen as bad influence on family and society. And they prefer to live on the street rather than in a society that sees them as social shame.

Table 4.3.2: Causes of being street children due to family problems

Root family causes	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Mistreated children	9	47.37
Abandoned children	3	15.79
Orphan	3	15.79
Broken families	2	10.53
Not cared by Father	2	10.53
Total	19	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2010

The root cause of the street children is due to mistreatment from their parents. About 47 percent street children are from those families where children are not treated with good environment. Abandoned children and orphan children (15.5 percent) followed by father that refused to recognize their child (10.5 percent). No one observed due to gifted children in a poor and sick family and children who need reconciling with their family after family crisis.

Majority of street children who flee from their villages come under the category ‘mistreated children’ and Krishna Tamang (see case study 2) is one of the examples. He had been punished before and when he could not take care of his younger sister, his family tried to punish him; and he ran away.

CASE STUDY 2: Krishna runs away from punishment

Krishna Tamang is a son of Pinge Bhumba Tamang. He was rescued with the cooperation of Pharping police on September 17, 2010. He is currently in the protection of Child Helpline in Kathmandu.

According to Krishna, earlier on the day he left his house he was playing with his siblings. Unfortunately, his youngest sister burnt her leg. It was his parent's expectation that he would look after his younger sister, but since her sister got injured, his father chased to punish him. He ran away from home. He also informed the researcher he has been punished many times by his father and other relatives for playing cards or smoking.

He started to work in a hotel owned by his relative. He left hotel and amid difficulties and physical torture. He was wandering about at Pharping Bus Park from where police took him to Child Helpline.

Helpline had been working with him for last two and half months during which much change in this attitude and behavior was found. He told that he missed his home and family and also showed desire to go back to school.

4.3.3 Economic Causes:

Economic cause is another important cause of street child. Population is increasing quite significantly but economic status of people is becoming poor day by day. It is therefore difficult to feed their children. Based on the survey, the researcher classified economic causes in the following ways. The reasons of leaving their parenthood are discussed below.

- Shortage of food at their home
- A rural child discovers that he is one too many mouths to feed.
- A child lives in extreme poverty in a slum
- Child workers
- Children that are deliberately “left” by parents incapable of providing minimal requirements for subsistence.

When a village is hit by a famine, lack of food and money forces young children to pursue work outside of their homes. It is because income of parents (mainly father) won't be sufficient in such hard times. In some cases, a child

realizes their parents are having hard times running the household; especially when the family size is big. Many families live in extreme poverty, in a slum and children are forced to look for work; they normally end up in a street when they go through this process. In some instances, due to ongoing family hardship parents deliberately left their child on the street hoping some wise man or some organization will pick up their child and look after him/her. Following table summarized the finding of the economic causes, which drive children being onto street.

Table 4.3.3: Street child due to economic causes

Root economic causes	Respondents	
	Numbers	Percent
Shortage of food at their home	3	42.86
Child workers	2	28.57
Deliberately left children by parents in capable of providing minimal requirements for subsistence	2	28.57
Total	7	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2010

Based on the survey data and information, famine (42.86 percent) is the most economic influencing cause of being child onto street followed by child workers and deliberately lost children by their parents(28.57 percent each). Deliberately loss of child is basically occurring during festival time because of their inability of providing minimal requirement for subsistence.

4.3.4 Political Causes:

This is the most violent situation that forces children being onto street. The researcher tries to find out the real situation in the following areas.

- Children who have fled from war situation –During the decade long Maoist conflict, many children were forced to leave their home and move to cities like Kathmandu in order to survive.

- Children lost during a war or massacre –During the conflict many children were lost from their parents.
- Children without parents-During the conflict, many children lost their parents (in some cases both father and mother) and they are left on their own. Consequently, some of these children became street children when they moved to Kathmandu.

However, no respondents disclosed political reasons for becoming street children. The reason could be that they were reluctant to mention the political cause as the root cause or there were no such street children in real situation.

4.3.5 Other Causes

Besides above mentioned four causes these are some other reasons that forced children to be onto street. Here are the some causes found during survey. Behavior of their parents and social institutions and child’s desire for independence that drive them onto streets are the major causes found in the survey. Table 4.3.5 shows the result from the survey.

Table 4.3.5: Other causes of child being onto street

Root other causes	Number of respondents	Percentage
Bad habit	4	40
Desire for independence	3	30
Behavior of teacher in school	3	30
Total	10	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

Many children were found to have been acquiring bad habits like drinking and smoking from their peers and elders; and they were seen as bad influence. In order to enjoy free life they often tend to move towards big cities like Kathmandu. When children pick up bad habits and bunk classes, they get scared of punishment they get from the hands of their teachers. In order to escape any kind of punishment they prefer to be street children.

Bad habit of the child is one of the most influencing causes. About 40 percent of respondents are influenced by their habit. They normally have a lot of time to plan on what they want to do; and they often don't have anyone such as elder siblings or a wise friend to convince them to follow the right path. Behavior of teacher in school and desire of independence (30 percent each) is the other cause that influenced children to be onto street. Bonded child is one who wants to be free from their house owner. Teacher in school routinely used corporal punishment to maintain discipline and to punish children for poor academic performance. One of the respondents was saying that he was punished in front of his classmates that made him feel guilty and thus consequently left the school. He was saying that he is reluctant to rejoin school. The reason could be age factor.

4.4 Occupation of Parents

Most of the street children have come from the poor farmers or agriculture workers. The rest of the children's parents are involved in several low income jobs such as construction labor, driving, carpet and tailoring. Only a few children belong to the middle class families. When we talk about parents' occupation, we normally understand the occupation of the father simply because of our male dominant culture. The Table 4.4 shows the primary occupation of the parents of the respondents.

Table 4.4: Primary Occupation of Parents

Parent's occupation	Respondents	
	Numbers	Percentage
Agriculture	19	38
General labor	10	20
Labor at carpet industry	7	14
Driving	4	8
Tailoring	4	8
Garment	3	6
Teacher	2	4
Service	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

As we can see on the above table, agriculture is the most dominant occupation (38 percent) followed by general labor (20 percent) and labor at carpet industry (14 percent). In general individual working as labor in agriculture sector and carpet industry makes least amount of money than folks working as teacher or service holder who gets paid on a monthly basis. Therefore, household income could be one of the major factors that lead a child to a street life.

4.5 Literacy Status of Street Children

The literacy status of street child is significantly low. Among few respondents that could read only recognized Nepali alphabet. More importantly although many of them joined school, they dropped out in primary school.

Table 4.5: Literacy Status of Street Children

Education of Street Children	Respondents	
	Numbers	Percentage
Never attended	7	14
Pre-primary	2	4
Class 1	9	18
Class 2	10	20
Class 3	7	14
Class 4	7	14
Class 5	4	8
Class 6	2	4
Class 7	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

About 86 percent of the street children were admitted in a school at one point, but many of them dropped out of school between classes 1 and 4. Therefore, although they joined in school they have hardly learned alphabets and numbers properly. Many of these folks cannot read. Out of 50 respondents only 18 of them were read and write their own names in Nepali. Two of them recognized Nepali alphabet even though both of them did not attend school, but learned at home. Although they have some school background they were hesitant to talk more about their academics. The reason could be that they didn't want to disclose their conditions that they are onto street from early stage causing no memory about their past history.

4.6 Area of Origin

The street children of Kathmandu metropolitan city seem to be a homogeneous mixture of all places in Nepal but it is heterogeneous composition if we look at the ethnic background. In fact, the street children in Kathmandu represented 62 of the 75 districts of Nepal. There were children from all five geographical divisions of Nepal. Kathmandu is now gradually becoming a melting pot

because the main attraction to all kinds of people such as job seeker, street child, migrants etc. Following table shows the place of origin of a street child.

Table 4.6: Place of origin of street child in Kathmandu

Area of origin	Number of respondents	Percentage
Dhading	9	18
Makwanpur	6	12
Nuwakot	5	10
Chitwan	4	8
Kathmandu	3	6
Dhanusha	2	4
Jhapa	2	4
Lamjung	2	4
Tanahu	2	4
Kavrepalanchok	2	4
Siraha	2	4
Sindhupalchowk	2	4
Sunsari	2	4
Nawalparasi	2	4
Baglung	1	2
Lalitpur	1	2
Syangja	1	2
Gorkha	1	2
Solukhumbu	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

The Table 4.6 shows that most of the street children are from adjoining district of the Kathmandu Valley. The street child number from Dhading is 18 percent followed by 12 percent from Makwanpur and 10 percent from Nuwakot. Street child from Baglung, Lalitpur, Syangja and Solukhumbu is just 2 percent each. This indicates that the adjoining districts have more influence on the street child possibly because of more opportunity to explore, to withstand independently and to enjoy with development.

CHAPTER V: BEHAVIOR AND PROBLEMS OF STREET CHILDREN

This chapter analyzes various problems faced by street children and identifies how these problems affected their behavior. They have different roots in social, cultural and political factors and their implications are necessary to examine.

5.1 Problems Faced

Street children are a heterogeneous group formed by different children coming into Kathmandu Valley from various parts of Nepal. They could also be considered heterogeneous in nature if we look at the cultural and ethnic background. Generally, a street child's life is vulnerable especially because of street pollution and lack of good food and nutrition. Most of their illness is due to pollution and lack of food. One should not forget the delinquency behavior of the community and government agencies towards the street child. Some of the problems according to the respondents are discussed under the following subheadings:

5.1.1 Areas for Eating

This is one of the most important aspects of human being for their living. Depending on the income of the street child they prefer to take food in different places. Among the 50 street children, their preferable food taking places are shown in Table 5.1.1.

Table 5.1.1: Preferable food taking places by street children

Food taken place	Number of respondents	Percentage
<i>Bhatti</i>	23	46
Food stalls	14	28
Restaurant	7	14
Begging	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, 2010

Table 5.1.1 shows that 46 percent of the street children go to *Bhatti* (place where cheap snacks and local liquor could be found) and followed by Food

stalls (where junk foods could be found in open area) with 28 percent, Restaurant (more expensive and standard compared to other two) with 14 percent and begging with 12 percent. During the study, it was observed that adult street children prefer to go either hotel or restaurant since they do have comparatively higher earning than smaller children. Small children and new street children were found begging for their survival.

5.1.2 Clothing problems

Proper clothing is equally important as food since they live on a street. They need clothes for the protection from sunburn, insect bites and polluted environment. Street children are struggling to get clothes. Following table shows number of clothes that street children possess.

Table 5.1.2: Clothes that the street children possess

Particulars	Number of	Percentage
One set of clothes	21	42
Two sets of clothes	19	38
More than two sets of clothes	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

According to the survey it was found that 42 percent of the street children only have one set of cloth i.e. what they are wearing at that time during the interview. These children do not have much of income and whatever they earn they spend on fooding, drinking and smoking. 38 percent of street children have two sets of cloths and 20 percent of children have more than two sets. These Children makes money by selling rags and begging with passerby.

5.1.3 Sleeping Areas

This is another big problem being faced by the street children. The night stay problem especially in the winter season is horrible. The survey results of the 50 respondents are presented in the following table.

Table 5.1.3: Sleep location of street child

Particulars	Number of	Percentage
Mandirs	15	30
Dharmshalas	12	24
Sheared room	11	22
Shelter at NGO's who works for street	7	14
Street	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

5.1.4 People's Behavior towards Street Children

The researcher in the study tried to research on what street children think about general people's attitude/ behavior towards a street child. Table 5.1.4 shows what respondents thought about community treatment towards them.

Table 5.1.4: People's behavior towards street child

Community treatment	Number of respondents	Percentage
Delinquency behavior	16	32
Social but miser for giving	10	20
Hate to the street child	8	16
Social and helpful	7	14
Not fully paid for their	5	10
Don't know	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

According to table 5.1.4, 32 percent of the respondents had experienced a delinquent behavior from general people. 20 percent said they are social but miser of giving economic support followed by hate to the street child (16 percent), social and helpful (14 percent), not happy for less payment (10 percent) and don't want to comment (8 percent).

Though there is Juvenile Justice for Child, no street child laws and policy as such have been implemented so far. It is therefore, government agency especially police is treating them differently than the children. They pose unnecessary questions to harass them. According to the respondents, their feeling toward government agencies, especially police is presented in Table 5.1.5.

Table 5.1.5: Police treatment to the street child

Police treatment	Number of	Percentage
Harassment	21	42
Not faced any problems	19	38
Beaten and forced to labor those who does	4	8
Beaten during interrogation those who does	3	6
Threatened and abused	3	6
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

As we can see on table 5.1.5, 42 percent of street children felt harassment followed by 38 percent who never faced any problems by government agencies. It is seen form the above table that 10 street child were caught for their crime and the treatment. Street children who were beaten and troubled by police during interrogation were 6 percent, beaten and forced to do labor were 8 percent and threatened and abused were 6 percent. The researcher felt that it is hard to get crime information of the street child since they are reluctant to disclose more information on it.

After having a new law for the administration of Juvenile Justice of Child Right in Nepal, most of the cases are either unreported or resolved in the local

and community level. Therefore the number of street child involvement and police treatment has been significantly reduced these days. The Children Act 1992 prohibits illegal detention, torture and any form of bad treatment, which hamper children development. However, the law enforcing agencies do not seem to be serious regarding this matter. It is reported in 1996 that a four-year-old boy was imprisoned in Jail. This is a tip of the iceberg. There are so many such problems existing in our society neither recorded nor reported for public knowledge.

5.1.5 Illness

Illness is one the major threat for street children since they don't have an easy access to healthcare and they don't have any savings or anybody to help them if they cannot go around finding food. To investigate on this issue, fifty street children were asked about type of illness they experience, its frequency, degree of pain and effect on their earning.

Table 5.1.6: Impact of illnesses on street children

Illness	Frequency	Degree of pain	Effect of earning
Burns	4	5	5
Dog bite	5	4	3
Wound	5	3	1
Scabies	3	3	0
Diarrhea	5	3	5
Hit by vehicle	2	5	3
Cold	5	2	2
Fracture	3	4	5
Hunger	5	5	2
Fever	3	5	5

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Using the health complaints by respondents table 5.1.6 has been prepared. Each of the illness were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 according to frequency, degree of pain, and earning.

Illness due to dog bite, diarrhea, cold and hunger is quite frequent whereas hit by vehicle is not so common. The respondents were saying that hunger is the most vulnerable part of illness. They don't have constant source of income or food. Therefore, they often need to skip a meal, which in return brings an illness. According to the respondents, they are earning maximum of NRS 100 per day, which is not sufficient for a treatment if they ever sick. Therefore, possibility of getting timely treatment is based on how much they make and sometimes social relations formed at work. The role of adults in guiding health-related behaviors is the most influential in comparison with the child. The adult street children demonstrated knowledge of both the conditions and the means of seeking treatment. Overall, many children knew the health risk at their work and living conditions exposed them. They were able to identify ways to minimize risk getting sick such as by washing their cloths regularly, wearing shoes or slipper while rag-picking and drinking clean water. The regular rag-picker keeps soap while irregular doesn't keep soap with them. They normally go to regular eating spots but large numbers of children does not have a consistent place to eat.

5.1.6 Behavior

It is common to show their angers if they are not getting what they want. It is common to show their angers if they are not getting what they want. They are found to be very hard working children, may be because they don't have lot of income, and they need to work on a consistent basis for food and other basic needs. In Kalanki area it is quite common to pick rags from the waste disposal

area. They are only able to earn about NRS 100 per day if they worked right from the early morning to evening according to the respondents. They are quite comfortable in daytime but it is horrible in night especially in the winter and rainy season.

Many of the street children were found to be aggressive, short-tempered and had inclination towards violence. They have negative feelings towards society and police; they told they were not treated well by society and police. Dipesh Karki (see case study 3 for details) epitomizes behavior of a street child; though he was talkative he wanted to hide his identity and he was also erratic and contradictory in his behavior and conversation.

CASE STUDY 3: Troublesome Behavior is common

Dipesh Karki about 10 years of age, who could not tell his address, was found by police at satdobato in 2067/05/14.

While at Child helpline, it was found that the child was very talkative as well as troublesome. It was almost impossible to get any information out of him. He told contradictory things about his home, his family and many other things.

It was found that a tempo driver took the boy to his home seeing the boy's terrible condition. The driver's sister informed police and the boy finally ended at Child Helpline. While wandering on the streets of Katmandu Dipesh picked up habit of drinking alcohol and smoking through money collected by asking from passerby. He was again found and brought to Child Helpline and it was arranged for the boy to study. He was brought to Helpline many times in order to help him to stand up to various challenges surrounding him.

5.1.7 Involvement

As discussed in previous sections that street children are involved in different activities. The problem in urban areas is quite serious and their involvement in different types of crime is increasing rapidly. They are found to have been involved in different types of crime such as stealing, pick pocketing, robbery, sexual abuse, child prostitution, drug abuse, and arson and public offences.

From the survey it is found that the children between age group of 13-18 are the one who have involved the most in different forms of delinquencies. Following table shows the delinquency behaviors of street children of various age groups.

Table 5.1.7: Child involvement in different forms of delinquencies

Involvement in different	Number of respondents	Percentage
13-18	21	42
11-13	14	28
9-11	11	22
8-9	3	6
6-8	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Street children are struggling for survival despite the fact that it is common to all. They are busy from early in the morning till late in the evening so they can earn their living. The researcher asked question to know their income generation activity. The table 5.1.8 shows the income generating activity of street children.

Table 5.1.8: Income generation activity of the street children

Activity of street child	Number of respondents	Percentage
Coolie	10	20
Hotel and Restaurant	8	16
Rag picking	7	14
Road side stall (such as tea stall)	6	12
Road side repairs shop	6	12
Beggar	6	12
<i>Khalasi</i>	3	6
News paper seller	2	4
Flower seller	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The most easily involved area is the coolie (20 percent). Almost all beginners get involved in this field because of easy access to this kind of work, and better income. Because of low investment they are involved in rag picking (14 percent). It is quite common to work for hotel and kitchen as *kancha* (16 percent). It is safe and secure for street to work in hotels and restaurants as they are often provided with to food and accommodation. 12 percent of the respondents are involved in road side stall and road side repair shops because this kind of job is relatively easier as they have to carry water, food and tea from one place to another. *Khalasi* is the other attraction for street children (6 percent); tempo and micro bus owner often employ these children because they can employ these kids which cheaper wages. Street children working as flower seller and news paper seller are about 4 percent each. Children in these two categories in relatively low as these works require some traveling and also owners do not trust them much. Some of them are very lazy and therefore such group prefers begging (12 percent) which is quite significant. It was found some of the beggars were involved in rag picking and vice versa because only

one of these work was not sufficient to fetch them food and other basic amenities.

GLUE SNIFFING

This is quite new phenomenon and hardly can found such child onto street during daytime. These glue-sniffing children either pour glue onto a piece of cloth which they then rollup and sniff or they pour the sticky substance into a shopping bag and hold it near their face. After sniffing glue, one start feeling dizzy, light-headed and drowsy and sometimes it gives a feeling of pleasure by distorting the senses and heightens carnal cravings. It can be termed as group activity among street children. It was also found that the younger ones are attracted to inhale glue after seeing the entertainment as being taken by the older age children.

They told that they get the glue from bicycle shop or hardware shop. Easy access to these glue and lack of legal provision to restrict children from buying alcohol, cigarette and glue makes street children vulnerable. They follow habit of glue sniffing from their friends. It was observed that the older street children are influencing the younger ones to sniff glue. According to them, they like to sniff glue because it gives them a pleasure and keeps them in good condition even when they could not get any food to eat.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUG EXPERIENCE

Tobacco and drugs experience among street children in Nepal is a common phenomenon. The use of alcohol has become common among different caste/ethnic groups, gender and among all age groups in Nepal. During observation and interview no one admitted that they were taking alcohol, tobacco or drug but it was noticed that they were at least taking one item almost regularly. This is based on the fact that their body was giving some kind of smell. The researcher recorded that the respondents after finishing interview

were taking tobacco and drugs in several occasions. They usually go to the closed area to feel secure while taking drugs.

5.2 Characteristics of Street Children

Street children are very active and carry out things what they find right for themselves. They can differentiate what is to be done or what are the things not to touch. If someone praise them for their good or scold them for bad habits they take action quite quickly without making any judgment.

Street children learn to cope with life on the streets very quickly. They learn to live off the street. They take up a number of jobs available in the streets. A street child may have varied working experiences. It is therefore extremely difficult to analyze their character individually because of heterogeneous composition of respondents. However, here are some of the findings about respondent's characters:

- ❖ They are shy on their behavior,
- ❖ They don't want to disclose the truth of being street child,
- ❖ Some of them are talkative but had no connection with what they said earlier,
- ❖ Older age street children force younger to follow them,
- ❖ Small age group street children are looking for possible opportunities,
- ❖ Many of them work as helpers for bus or tempo
- ❖ Many of them beg, pick pocket and steal
- ❖ Concentrate in the areas like junkyards, temples, market centers, cinema hall, bus terminals, hardware shops, tourist centers etc.

Many of the street children were found to be shy at first but when observed closely it was found that they often pretended to behave shy so that they do not have to give any information to anyone. They often lie about their names and address with the fear of their seniors and police. They also did not want to return to their villages. This was also found to be true with 14 year old Madan

Bahadur Mokhtan (see case study 4 for details). Older street children forced younger ones to follow them and maintained sense domination. As mentioned in case study 4, Madan was instructed by elders not to give any information; if he gave any information then he may be punished by his elders. Although they do not admit many of street children were involved in pick pocketing, pimping (leading customers to prostitutes) and stealing. Some of the respondents when assured that their deeds won't be told to police, they admitted being involved in crimes like stealing, pick-pocketing and pimping.

CASE STUDY 4: Pretending shy

Madan Bahadur Mokhtan aged 14 was rescued with the cooperation of Pharping police on September 17, 2010. He is currently in protection of Child Helpline, Nepal.

He was very shy at first and did not want to disclose his true identity. He told different names and different addresses. When the researcher told him that this is for his own benefit then only he conceded that he told lies because he did not want go home and he also feared he will be captured by the police. He also informed that he also feared his seniors (street children who were older than him) who told child like him to do not give any information to anyone.

He told that while he was in the street he picked up habit of smoking and glue sniffing. He collected money from passersby and also made some money by picking n selling rags.

After spending about two months at Child Helpline, his behavior and attitude seemed to be more positive.

CHAPTER VI: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter portrays the summary of findings of being street child conducted on 50 street children in Kathmandu metropolis as well as the conclusions drawn thereof.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The problem of street children is universal. Because of high push and pull factor of urban areas, it is believed that the number of street could have been in increasing order. Street children are the reflection of a growing social tragedy in the world. The reason of increase in street child number is due to widespread recessions, political turmoil, and civil unrest, increasing family disintegration, natural disaster and growing urbanization.

The objective of this research study is to determine possible causes of being street child and their age wise population composition, ethnic background and their life style.

For the study both descriptive and exploratory research design was adopted. 50 samples were selected on the basis of non-probability, and accidental sampling technique. The researcher has also used semi observation to analysis respondents' behavior and to acquire relevant information. Semi structured closed and open-ended questionnaires were prepared and asked to make study more flexible and rational. The findings of the study based on 50 respondents are summarized below.

6.2 Major Findings

All respondents were boys and no single girl during field survey was recorded. Based on the field observation and interview the following findings have been drawn but it could not be generalized to other urban areas. The summary of findings of the study is briefly described herein:

Age Group

The most influencing age wise population composition of street children is 9-13 years. The average age of street child is 13 years. However the study infers that children as young as 6-7 years are on street.

Cause that leads to become a street child

The study depicts that there are four categories of causes that influence child being onto street. They are social causes, family causes, economic causes and other causes. The study revealed that the most influencing causes are the family causes (38 percent) followed by social causes (28 percent), economic causes (14 percent) and (20 percent) other causes. In the family causes group mistreated children (47.37 percent) is the root cause noted during field study. Children of beggars and child born from prostitute (21.43 percent each) is the root cause of the social problems. Famine and poverty (42.86 percent) is the most influencing root causes as found in the economic causes. Despite of these causes habit (40 percent), desire for independence and behavior of teacher in school (30 percent each) is the other causes of child being onto street.

Ethnicity

The largest population is from Brahmin (26 percent) followed by Chhetri (20 percent), Tamang (16 percent), Newar/Gurung /Tharu (8 percent each), Limbu (6 percent), Sherpa (2 percent) and rest are (8 percent).

Occupation of parents

This is one of the most influencing causes that might drive children being onto street. According to the respondents, 38 percent are from agricultural profession followed by labor in construction industry (20 percent), labor at carpet industry (14 percent) and driving/tailoring (8 percent). This can be inferred that street children are from agriculture background family.

Literacy status

The literacy status of child is significantly low. Among 50 respondents, although 86 percent of respondents were admitted to school at one point, they dropped out of school from classes between 1 and 4. Since they dropped out while they were in primary school, they did not learn enough to read and write properly, hence they are not literate. Out of 50 respondents, only 18 of them demonstrated reading and writing skills in Nepal. From this research it is found that as much as 64 percent of street children are illiterate.

Area of origin

Most of the street children at Kalanki are from adjoining districts of the Kathmandu valley. One can say that Dhading (18 percent), Makwanpur (12 percent) and Nuwakot (10 percent) are the most influencing districts. Little influence for other 16 districts was observed in the field survey.

Behavior and problem of street child

The life of street children is vulnerable because of things they are exposed to. Due to lack of food and proper place to live they are more vulnerable of becoming sick. Some of the problem depicted during observation is presented in bullet form:

) Fooding areas: Due to significantly low income, they desperately need to choose fooding areas. 46 percent of the respondents usually go to Bhatti for food followed by 28 percent at hotel, 14 percent at restaurant and 12 percent manage by begging.

) Clothes problems: Most of them have (34 percent) one set of cloth followed by 24 percent of respondents have 2 sets, 14 percent have more than 2 sets, and 10 percent of them are managing by begging.

) Sleeping area: 30 percent of respondents usually go to Mandirs for sleep followed by Dharmashalas (24 percent), shared room (22 percent), shelter at NGO (14 percent) and on street (10 percent).

) People behave: 32 percent of respondents were found saying that they are facing delinquency behavior from people. 16 percent were feeling hate from people but in contrast 14 percent were saying that they are social and helpful. They also expressed that they are not fully paid for their labor.

) Police treatment: Harassment by the government organization according to the respondent is 42 percent followed by 8 percent to those who do crime and were beaten by police. However 38 percent never had experience of interrogation by such authorities.

Illness

The occurrence frequency of illness due to dog bite, diarrhea, cold and hunger is 5 in a 1-5 scale followed by burn (4 percent), fracture, fever, and scabies (3 percent), Degree of pain is 5 percent for boil/hit by vehicle/hunger but could be minimized if they do have good earning. They preferred to visit government hospital for medical treatment if they do need treatment. According to survey, 38 percent goes to government hospitals followed by 22 percent in Ayurvedic hospital, 18 percent get treatment from their friends and 10 percent don't care about diseases.

Behavior

They are mobile population and therefore do have little span of concentration. They are short tempered and reactive in nature inclined to violence and irresponsible about their future. They prefer to stay in a group of 4-8 numbers. Normally they conceal their true identity and don't want to disclose.

Involvement

They are mobile and always struggle to survive. They are involved in crime and the most influencing age group is 13-18 year children. For survival 20 percent are engaged as a coolie followed by 16 percent at hotel and kitchen, rag picking (14 percent), roadside repairs (12 percent), beggar (12 percent), and *Khalasi*/tempo conductor (6 percent).

Future aspiration

Street children do not seem to have any definite future plan. They are always busy working to meet their short term needs. They don't have adequate knowledge to plan for their better future. Among the respondents, 30 percent does not have any future plan. However 18 percent expressed their desire to become driver followed by soldier (12 percent), politician (10 percent), mechanics (8 percent), and social workers (6 percent).

Knowledge about street child law

Among respondents, 56 percent does not know about children law and they are blind followed or they are easily influenced by others. However only 24 percent participants knew about such law and 20 percent have only heard about it.

Glue sniffing

It is new drug addiction technique, which is by inhaling smell of glue and similar materials. They prefer to stay in a group but they are hardly seen in

open areas and in daytime. It is quite common to take it in the evening so as to have easy sleep.

The major finding of the study could be summarized in the following points:

- ❖ Children interviewed cited the following reasons for leaving home: family violence, parental alcoholism, abuse, poverty, personal reason, social causes and economic causes
- ❖ Most of the street children are from adjoining districts of the Kathmandu Valley.
- ❖ Brahmin and Chhetri background street children are higher than the other background.
- ❖ Street children are normally mobile population. However, generally they have made certain areas their base when they do their business and sleep at night.
- ❖ Street children take up a number of jobs available in the street such as rag picking, begging, tempo conductor, porting, flower selling, street vending, shoe shining etc.
- ❖ Almost half of the street children are literate. They only know Nepali alphabet to read and write.
- ❖ The preferable area of food places is Bhatti but it depends on income they are able to generate.
- ❖ Most of them have one set of clothes i.e. the cloth they are wearing.
- ❖ Mandirs and Dharmashalas is the preferred area for night stay.
- ❖ Community people are treating delinquency behavior to street children.
- ❖ Street children are harassed by government organization.
- ❖ Government hospitals and ayurvedic hospitals are the preferred area for treatment.
- ❖ Becoming coolie and *hotel kancha* (manual labor at a restaurant) is the common area to be involved for survival.
- ❖ Older age group street children force new comers and younger age group street children to follow them.

- ❖ Glue sniffing is a relatively new drug addiction technique adopted by Nepali street children.
- ❖ Behaviors of street children are totally different from the other children. They start with smoking cigarettes, tobacco-chewing, alcohol and then it leads to hashish and other drugs restricted drugs. Then they begin syringe. Eventually they develop diseases and die from Hepatitis 'B', HIV/AIDS, drug-overdose, etc.
- ❖ Street children know about children right and some of them are somewhat aware of Juvenile Justice.

6.3 Conclusions

Despite number of government and non-government organization working in the field of street children, number of street children is on the rise. Counseling and rehabilitation plans put forward by this organization are not making any difference in order to solve the plight of those children. By analyzing their problems from sociological perspective, different social, economic, political and other problems were uncovered. By solving these problems we may be able to stop them from living their village.

It was found that different social problems like parents being involved in illegal acts, not caring their children and children being rejected by society makes children leave their village and go to cities. Family pressure, children abandoned by parents or orphans leads to children becoming street children. Economic causes like lack of income, large family and famine also contributes to this phenomena.

Based on the field survey, available material and extensive literature review the following conclusions are drawn. The most influencing population wise group is 9-13 years and average age is 13 years. It was also found that majority of children coming to Kathmandu for work was from surrounding districts like Dhading, Makawanpur and Nuwakot. After being street children, it was found

that they suffered from many problems. Lack of education, appropriate food and shelter, sexual and other harassment, picking of bad habits like pick-pocketing, smoking, glue sniffing are some of the major issues associated with street children.

6.4 Recommendations for Further Studies

) Comparative study of street children in some major cities of Nepal like Kathmandu, Pokhara and Biratnagar will be useful to analyze the root causes of street children in Nepal.

) Why so many established NGOs and INGOs in Kathmandu valley are not able to eliminate the issue of street children? Working mechanism and assessment of some of major NGOs will shed light on unsuccessful campaign on street children.

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Interview Sheet

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Caste:

Questionnaires-

1. When and where did you come from?
2. Where do you stay/sleep?
3. Where are you working / what do you do for living?
4. How many members are there in your family?
5. What do your parents do?
6. Did you go to school? If so in what grade did you drop out?
7. Can you read / write? Can you write your name?
8. How was your economic condition in your family? Or any problem in your family.
9. Who do you think treats you best in your family?
10. Who did motivate/advise you to get in here?
11. Why did you come here?
12. What are your feelings now (after getting here)?
13. Are you regretting now to leave home? And if you are thinking so then why don't you return home again?

Appendix



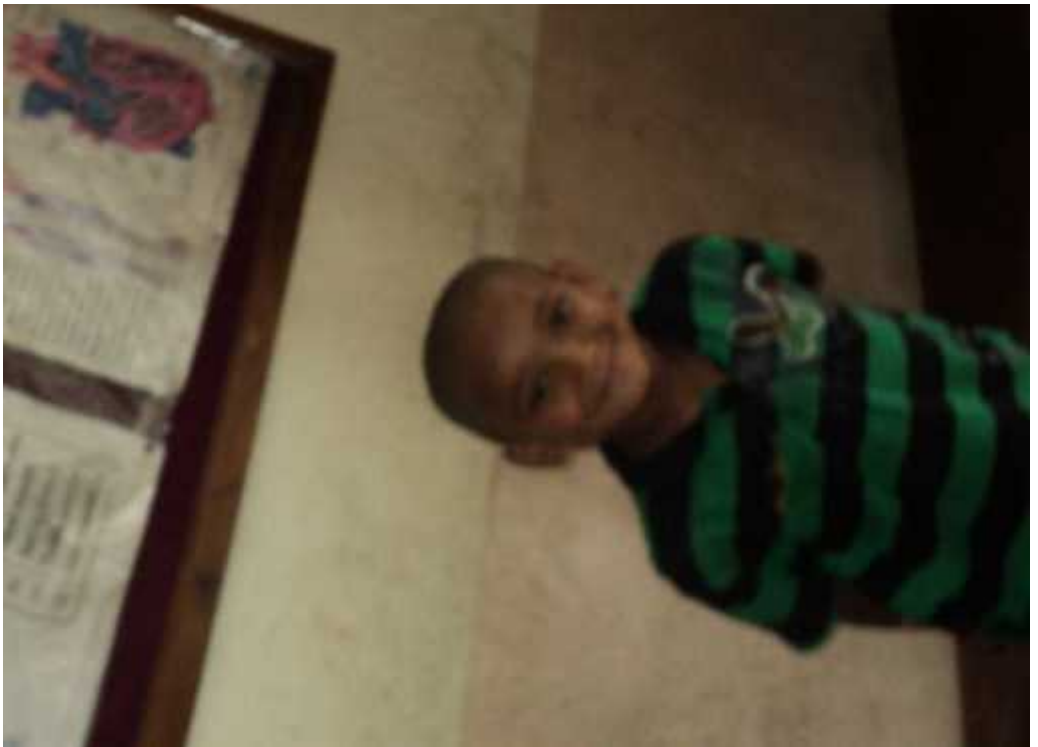
Researcher interviewing street children at Child Helpline of CWIN



Street children posing for a nice picture



Binod Rai - Street child rescued by Child Helpline (CWIN)



Raj Kumar KC - Street child rescued by Child Helpline (CWIN)