

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Childhood is the formative stage of human development, as well as potential human resource and the greatest hope for tomorrow. A child can be moulded in any shape. It is said that children are like incomplete soil vessel, their shape could be formed as the potters' interest so if we want to make our society healthy and prosperous, first we should think about children.

Children are the future pillars, builder and twinkle star of the nation. “Only as we move closer to realize the rights of all children, then only countries will move close to their goals of development and peace.”(UNICEF 2005:2-3). In many developing countries such as Nepal, inadequate focus has given on the basic needs and rights of children. In each stage of childhood, a child who is innocent, vulnerable, dependent and voiceless needs the proper support of adult care. Otherwise, there is a chance for every child to be in danger. If they are not taken care properly and adequately, it will hamper their life and their future, which will lead towards uncertainty.

“The growing scale of poverty, rapid population growth, unemployment and shortage of agriculture land and other social problems like family breakdown, parental negligence and inappropriate family atmosphere have led the children to leave their home. Once they are displaced from their home, they find themselves without shelter and means of survival. Then they come on street and become street children.” (Pradhan 1993:15-16)

The term "Street Children" in English is not new, George. C. Needham in 1884 used the term in passing to describe the children. According to him through the stress of circumstances, they are forced into a course of life, which tends to the multiplication of criminals and increase of the dangerous classes. But until the 1980s term as "street urchin." waif" used in early part of the century or "run away on abandoned child". After 1980s, the term has more common as "street children."(Jean 1995:18-19)

“The national convention report on street children held in October 1993 uses the term like "homeless", "helpless", "*khate*"<sup>1</sup> "*Sadak Chhap*"<sup>2</sup> "*Sadak Balbalika*"<sup>3</sup> to the street children.”(National Children Report 1993:5-7)

The word "Street Children" is composed of two different words –‘street’ and ‘children’. We all know that street means a common area of land, which can be used by any one to move from one place to another. The word children mean any one between age group zero to eighteen. The nature and characteristic of street children differ from normal children. They have been much influenced by the street culture, which is reflected in their life style. While talking about the street children it is difficult to say when, how and from where the tradition and practice of being street children really started. There is no evidence that suggests how this tradition came into existence. In the late 1980, when initiated activities from the non-government sector in Nepal, the street children were used to refer to the children who lived in the street, worked, ate and slept in the street.

“Street children are those who use the street as their permanent home. Spending their major time in street, doing whatever necessary for their

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<sup>1</sup> Scavenger

<sup>2</sup> Street dwellers

<sup>3</sup> Street children

day-to-day survival as well as support to their family. According to the study, all the children who stay in the street are street children.” (CWIN1990:9-12)

The nature of street children is not stable in one place. They move from one place to another in the cities .Some of them have made certain area where they do their daily business and sleep at night. They usually sleep on *patis*<sup>4</sup>, temples, public bus station and the house under construction. As far as concerning their jobs, any body could visualize from the distance that some are collecting recyclable material such as rage from the piles of wastes on the road. Some are collecting milk pouch, mineral water bottles and polythene bags on the bank of river and from garbage.

Rhea Singh(1999) classifies street children into three categories.

- ) **Run away children:** These children have run away from their home in urban areas with high hopes and dreams. Mostly they escape from their hard lives, family abuses and neglect.
- ) **Squatter children:** These children come into the street from the neglected families who live in the poor and shanty areas of the town. Some of them are even entitled to support their families.
- ) **Orphan or abandoned children:** These children are forced to lead a street life either due to the lose, desertion of parents or due to the maltreatment of the step parents.

All these street children either fight for their own survival by either begging or rag picking in the street of our cities. They are also involved in criminal activities as transporting drugs, gang fights, stealing, pick pocketing etc. The serious problem among them now a day is taking glue,

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<sup>4</sup> Public resting place

sniffing from plastic bags a substance they call “Dendrite”<sup>5</sup> (CWIN 1992:18-22)

Kathmandu Valley is the most migrant area for the street children. In Kathmandu Valley, there are three districts i.e.; Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. Most of street children have migrated in Kathmandu from the adjoining district namely Nuwakot, Kavrepalanchowk, Sindhu-palanchowk, Dhading, Makawanpur, Dolkha and Ramechhap. (National Children Report 1993:18-24)

In Voice of street children(1993) magazine Gauri Pradhan mentioned that why children land in the street and what makes them to do so is because of the death of their parents, maltreatment of their stepparents or alcoholic father and too much work at home.

“Nepal is one among the twenty countries, which signed the UN convention of the Rights of the child. In the beginning, it has extended its commitment through ratifying the convention in the same year. However, not addressed the problems and issues of street children.”(UNICEF 1996:10-12)

Street children are the common problem that has been occurring throughout the world for a long time. In the context of Nepal, street child has emerged as a major social problem. In fact, street children are one of the most neglected groups of children who have been denied all the privileges and rights of our society. The change in the political system also did not bring much difference for the minimization of the street children as it was expected. Poverty and poverty related causes, uncontrolled population, cultural lag, political instability, civil war, natural disaster, domestic violence, social evils are the push factors to

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<sup>5</sup> Thick sticky liquid with strong smell used for joining things. Mostly used in painting and making shoes.

become street children where as urban facilities, influence from movies, magazines and freedom life are the pull factors to become street children.(CWIN1998:11-17)

For a child, nothing is warmer than a home with parental care and love. However, not every child is privileged of this thing although it is his/her inherent right. Among these children, street children are those who use the street as their permanent home, spending majority of their time out there doing whatever is necessary for the their own day-to-day survival. Children are, the future stars of a society though there are facing many problems regarding their rights, survival and protection. The government and non-governmental organizations have taken some initiatives to solve the street children problem in Nepal. However, the problem of street children has not yet stopped. The problem is going momentum continuously in another acute form.(Pradhan1993:18-24)

Street children are the worldwide burning problem and one of the burning problems of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Street children are not a traditional phenomenon of our society. This problem is emerged only after1990 However, it has been increasing every year as a part of our urban reality. The number of street children in Kathmandu Valley is increasing every year by 70% due to growing urbanization problems and squatter homes, which has been increasing as urban tragedy and this problem is intolerable. Along with the number of street children, their problem is increasing which leads multiple problems to the nation. Poverty in our society has created many problems and it is complexed with other issues. The state of street children is therefore an outcome of such complexities. (Pradhan1998:11-19)

Street children are those who are totally displaced from their home, spending majority of their time in street doing whatever necessary for

their own day-to-day survival. The nature and characteristic of street children differ from normal children. They have been much influenced by the street culture, which is reflected in their daily life. The nature of street children is not stable in one place. They move from one place to another. As far as concerning their jobs, anybody could visualize from the distance that some are collecting recyclable materials such as plastic bags, milk pouch, iron rod; plastic bottles etc from the piles of wastes and garbage bins, on the road and on the bank of river. There is not enough study of street children from different perspective. It is a social problem, which is increasing due to growing population, poverty, parental negligence, and family breakdown, lack of proper socialization and abuse of stepmother\stepfather. The children who are future pillar of nation led into the street due to above mention social problems. Therefore, the proposed study aims to open a sociological inquiry\debate into the world of street children.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The phenomenon of street children is largely confined in large urban center in Kathmandu Valley. Because of the low GNP, high population growth rate and limited resources forced people of Nepal to survive in difficult situation. Because of the religious matter, cultural trends, early marriage, poor education trend of avoiding girls to the school and limited job opportunities make the situation even worst. To cope with the ever-increasing financial pressure, more and more children from the low income generating family are being pushed into the street.

Street children have been increasing every year as a part of our urban tragedy. With growing urbanization problems, the issue of street children has been increasing. The increasing migration, family breakdown, poverty, unemployment, increasing trend to landlessness in

village and expectation of better life are found as push and pull factors of driving street children into street.

Even though there has been no official record of street children population yet, CWIN(1997) estimated the number of street children in Nepal to be around 5000 who have landed into the street of cities due to various socio-economic, socio-psychological and family violence.

Even the problem of street children is universal but it is neglected by society as well as nation. The government and NGO\INGO are working in the field of street children but it is not sufficient and appropriate. We have to think about development, protection and surviving procedures for street children as well as overall development of child in time being. The following research questions inspire me to carryout this study:

- ) What ethnic and cultural backgrounds do street child represent in Kathmandu Metropolitan city?
- ) What are such influencing factors that push and pull children into street?
- ) What are the major current problems faced by them?
- ) What are there activities for surviving?
- ) How do they spend their life?
- ) Do the children still have family relationship?
- ) Do they give money to their family members and go home time to time?
- ) Do they take drugs? If yes, what types of drugs and why?
- ) What do they think about their future, or what they want to be in the future?

) Are they happy with their present life?

This research mainly wants to seek the answer of these research questions.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The general objective of this research is to highlight the condition of street children in Kathmandu Metropolitan city. The specific objectives are:

- i) To identify the driving forces which bring children into the street and their socio-cultural and economic background.
- ii) To find out the major current problems of street children, and their surviving activities.
- iii) To examine street children's relationship with their family, relatives and society.
- iv) To assess their hope about present and future life.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The problems of street children are considered as most prominent but not new issues. They are compelled to work in much more neglected areas and their condition is deteriorating. They always suffer from various problems, which further aggravated their worsening condition. So-called civilized people always keep on neglecting them and called them as Khate but never try to help them. Various efforts made by governmental as well as non-governmental organizations are negligible to formulate and implement appropriate policies and programmes.

As a major concentrated area in Kathmandu Metropolitan city, various studies regarding street children have been made just to analyze the socio-economic condition but never try to identify their problems and its



solution to minimize. Therefore, this study is concentrate mainly to analyze the problems and conditions of street children and to find out the solution which had not conducted before. This study may be helpful to formulate the plans, policies and strategies to the planners and policy makers for the betterment of street children. And it will be important reference for future research.

### **1.5 Organization of the Study**

The study organized into seven chapters. The first chapter includes the background or introduction, statement of the problems, objectives of the study, significance of study and limitation of study. The second chapter deals with review of literature. The third chapter provides research methodology. The fourth chapter presents the socio-cultural background and reason for leaving home. The chapter five presents major problems and surviving strategies. The chapter six deals with family relationship and future hope. The last seven chapter contains summary, conclusion and recommendation of the study. The bibliography and appendices are presented at the end of the thesis.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A street child is one whose home is the street and is unprotected and unsupervised. The concept of street children is broad which include children who live in public land. (UNICEF1996:6) The concept of street children is not a traditional phenomenon of our society. However, it has been increasing every year as a part of our urban reality. Every child has an inherent right to justice, freedom and peace, and deserves access to all kinds of basic human need such as education, health care, protection, love and respect. The social commitment is thus necessary for the overall social, physical, emotional development as well as promotion and protection of the coming new generation.

Kathmandu the “living legends” has been converting into a “city of garbage” and “city of loosing beauty.” On the contrary, Kathmandu has become a home for thousands of street children and working children. (Pradhan1998:17)

In this chapter, an attempt is made to review the related literature and present a conceptual framework on street children.

In Voice of Child Workers Issue no.19/20(May-Sep1993) article, Mr. Pradhan said that street children as one of the most neglected groups of children in Nepali society. This article concluded that the problem of the street child has been with every passing day due to growing urbanization. The increasing migration, family breakdown, poverty in the village , attraction of city homelessness and landlessness have been pushing the rural population into cities and this trends has not only created a lot of unplanned settlement and squatter area but has also led to and increase in

the number of street children. The author suggested that NGOs should not only concentrate on large projects alone but should consolidated their efforts and focus on community based programs for the upliftment of the children. (Pradhan1993:19-23).

A report by Police Headquarter in 1998 shows that there were about 3100 street children in Nepal. They found that 700 street children existed in Kathmandu of which 58.2% were between the ages of 11 and 15 years, 54.8% had both parents alive 47% were illiterate and 65.8% were living in the street .(Police Headquater1998).

Bhetuwal(2001) in his study concluded that 41.3% of street children left home due to the causes of maltreatment cum abuse, 6.7% by poverty and 18.7% by expectation of better life. It means that children from poor rural families with little or no land, left home for better opportunity. He further stressed that poverty and illiteracy of parents are the major factors to develop the child labour in Nepal. In this context poor economic conditions of the family, lack of sufficient land and food , necessity to work, inaccessibility of school, influence by friends and middle men and large family size are the major causes of street children in Kathmandu. (Bhetuwal 2001:66-67)

Ms Lazima(2000) in her study tried to explore the lives of street children in urban Nepal. And has adopted a multi-pronged approach to her analysis in order to ensure that street children realities are understood and analyzed in political, economic, socio cultural and historical context. She has extensively discussed some of the general discourses on children in Nepal to juxtapose street children with what is considered the normative for children and children in the world view of urban privileged classes, the NGO's and the state. (Lazima 2000:69-72).

Singh(1999) in her study pointed out that the very characteristics of street children in their involvement in the earning activities means that they spent their maximum time in physical and environmentally hazardous activity, which is not suitable for their mental and physical development.

However, they do not seem to be concerned about sanitation and health because survival is their only concern. They are being exploited directly or indirectly from different persons. Despite the problem, some still prefer to stay in the street. She further says that street children enjoy street life because of autonomy and freedom access to quick discretionary cash and entertainment, which they cannot have at home. She says that problem of street children has a strong relation to urbanization, population growth, poverty and various other socio- economic aspects. Therefore, it is important to start doing something about their situation before it takes a more serious turn. (Rhea 1999:14)

Tirtha Raj Timsina(2000) in his study states that among the various forms of child labour as always passing their miserable life without any sympathy and affection from others. Child labour is a common phenomenon; the complete abolition of child labour may not be possible overnight. Effort should be made without further hesitation to defend the child rights and to battle against all forms of violations of child rights and child servitude .He further states that due to various causes like hardship of life in rural, maltreatment of family member, expectation of better life, influenced by friends, death of parents, poverty and others the children are compelled to live in street. Street may not be their primary goal but rather a natural progression in their search for easy work and relative freedom. He says that the problem of street children is one that can not be solve unless children from disadvantaged families are given a way to fully enjoy their fundamental child rights. (Timsina 2000:69-70)

Aarti Ghale(2003) in her study states that street children come from the poor; least organized and most deprived segments of the urban population. Majority of street children were between the age group of 9-14 years followed by the age of 14-16 years. She says that they do not give important towards health and personal hygiene because their main concern is meeting the daily requirement of food. She further says that the ultimate solution of this problem is by social awareness and action groups to provide them with the tools to reintegrate into society in an agreeable way. Such social work requires commitment and dedication from government agencies, non- government organizations and society as a whole. (Ghale 2003:60-61).

Azad(1998) in his study for UNICEF Nepal, of 111 street children in Kathmandu to determine their health status and their daily exposure to environmental pollution found that new comers. On the street had less incidence of fever, earache, vitamin B deficiency and colds, than their longer term street peers, the existence of contact to the family was found to positively influence street children's personal cleanliness behaviour and while all subjects performed environmentally hazardous occupations. The nature of the jobs street children did for their survival and the very fast that they spend most of their time in the street exposed them to all kinds of health hazards. (Azada 1998:25-27).

ILO/IPEC(2001) published report estimated that there are 3965 children engaged in rag picking in the various urban centers of Nepal, with the highest concentration located in Kathmandu and Dharan. The study interviewed three hundred rag pickers: 264 boys and 36 girls come from rural areas especially from hill and mountain regions. (ILO/IPEC 2001:17-19)

Pradhan and Tuladhar(2002) states that in Nepal there were no separate rules and acts until 1990 regarding the issues of children. After the revolution, the promulgation of the new constitution of the kingdom of the kingdom of November 1990 contains clause of special benefit to children such as right to education, equality, citizenship , right against exploitation and special protection for the disadvantage such as disabled children and orphans are some noteworthy steps toward the well being and protection of children.

As Nepal is the state party to the convention on the rights of the child (CRC), the promotion and protection of the rights of children is one of the basic obligations of Nepal. The rights of children in Nepal are furthering protected under the children's Act 1992 and child labour (Prevention and Regularization) Act 2000. Nepal has ratified the ILO convention No 192 on 13 September 2001. Similarly, the government has also ratified the optional protocol on Trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation and pornography and use of children in the arm struggle as well as the SAARC convention on the welfare of children. Another positive step towards promoting child rights is an attempt from the government is considering increasing the age of children from 16 to 18 in accordance with Nepal's commitment to the CRC and ILO Convention No 182, both of which consider any person under 18 as children. Issues of children concerning child sex, abuse and exploitation, and the administration of juvenile justice were also addressed in the amendment. (Pradhan and Tuladhar 2002:22-24)

Many studies on street children have been conducted in other parts of the world. Street children from other geographical location show similar socio demographic characteristics as in Nepal.

Angelli(1986) has published reports and case studies from different countries showing how street children have become a growing urban tragedy. The literature on street children from different parts of the world suggest that a few silent characteristics of the children's lifestyles are common cross-culturally, such as making a living by selling recyclable goods, living in groups , experiencing violence, having unstable relationships with their families and having a high level of competence and resiliency.(Angelli 1986:20-22 )

Blanc(1991) has examined policies and programmes designed to provide immediate service, long-term support and protection to street children. Emphasis has been placed on utilizing the children's survival skills to design flexible programmes that respect children's freedom and dignity by creating a healthier environment and providing opportunities that would better support them in the future.(Blanc1991:26-30 ).

Apteker(1998) has explained the states and middle class people's perceptions and reactions to street children as well as children's ways of using those reactions for their own personal gain. He has also highlighted the ways in which smaller street children are protected by bigger children, who in turn capitalize on the cuteness of the small ones by making them buy or sell goods on the street because people are generally more sympathetic towards smaller children. (Aptekar 1998:16-20)

The published book about education of street children in India by UNESCO(2001) states that their aims was to assess and evaluate the programmes of education for children in difficult circumstances with special reference to street and working children in India. The major findings of the study are the basic issues of the street and working children are to protect them from abuse in the cities through preventive and protective measures.(UNESCO 2001:26-30)

On the basis of above various related literature what it can conclude that the children in the street have gradual deteriorating socio-psychological condition with numbers of hurdles due to which they are passing aimless and neglected life. Therefore, the ultimate solution to face with their problems and to minimize the growing number of these children by increasing social awareness and motivating actions of related organizations to help these children by providing them required tools to integrate them into society in an agreeable way. Minimum education, control of population growth rate, provision of training and skill development, creation of employment opportunities and provision of reward and punishment based on positive and negative attitude of the child can reduce the number and problems of the street children.



# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In simple words, research refers to a search for knowledge and study about phenomena to discover new facts. Research is necessary to examine the extent of the validity of the old conclusions or to find out some new facts and generalizations in connection with the existing ones.

The Webster's International Dictionary gives a very inclusive definition of research as "a careful critical inquiry or examination in seeking facts, or principle; diligent investigation in order to ascertain something."(Wolf and Pant 2002:26-28)

According to Wolf and Pant(2002), research is undertaken not only to solve a problem existing in the work setting, but also to add or contribute to the general body of knowledge in a particular area of interest to the researcher. Research is thus a knowledge, which can be used for different purposes. It is used to build a theory, develop policies, support decision, making and solve problems with the opening of new frontiers of knowledge through research, new concepts and theories are developed to explain, verify and analyze the social phenomena. (Wolf and Pant 2002:14)

Thus, how to collect information during research is decided by research methodology. The main purpose of this study is to identify the driving forces, which bring children into the street and their socio-cultural and economic background, and present problem and their hopes for their future. To achieve the aim of this study, study site, research design,

nature and source of data, data collection procedure, sampling procedure, analytical tools and presentation and interpretation techniques were applied and presented here one by one as main methodology of this research.

### **3.2 Study Site**

Kathmandu as a Metropolitan city of Nepal, of course it is also the capital city. At present; it has increased population as dumping site of people of throughout the countries. Various reports regarding street children indicate that a large number of street children are found in Kathmandu Valley. It is said that there are 800 to 900 street children in Kathmandu Valley. Therefore, this study is conducted in Kathmandu Valley. The study is focused in the main tourist junkyards and business area of Kathmandu where street children are roaming, begging, annoying walkers and vendors in the street. Mostly this study is done in places like Thamel, Kingsway, Basantapur, Swoyambhu, Patan Durbar Square, New Road and Jamal. 13respondents from Thamel, 11respondents from Newroad, 14 from Basantapur, 5 from Patan Durbar Square, 9 respondents from Jamal and 8 from Swoyambhu.

### **3.3 Research Design**

By research design, we mean an overall framework or plan for the collection and analysis of data. According to Kerlinger (1998), “Research design is the plan structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research question and to control variance.”(Kerlinger 1998:74)

The fundamental objective of this study is to explore the condition and reality of street children. Both exploratory and descriptive research design have been followed to make the study authentic and reliable by using the

available data in a systematic manner. Exploratory to explore their situation and problems and descriptive to describe the current problems and hopes for the future.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

Street children are the most exploited and neglected group of people in our society. Cluster sampling has been used among available street children in different areas of Kathmandu Valley. In Kathmandu Valley Thamel, Kingsway, Basantapur, Swoyambhu, Boudha, Patan, Ratnapark, Jamal were the main places where I talked with 60 street children several times separately and in groups.

### **3.5 Nature and Source of Data**

To fulfill the above-mentioned objective of this study both quantitative and qualitative data have been collected and analyzed. Primary data i.e., first hand qualitative as well as quantitative data obtained from the fieldwork-using questionnaire for interview. The secondary data were collected to get the authentic and reliable information about economic, social as well as influencing factor to force street children to come in street, to know their current problems, approaches of government plan and programs to minimize such problems in society from the related published and unpublished articles, books journals, magazines and reports.

### **3.6 Techniques of Data Collection**

#### **3.6.1 Observation**

Observation is one of the important techniques of data collection in which informations are gathered in a direct way. It has the advantage of putting researcher into first hand contact with “reality”. Observation is carried

out to verify the collected information and relevant features in the study area. A great deal of data was collected through direct observation. (Kerlinger 1998:483-486)

In this study, the research had closely observed street children to understand and know about their living styles, behaviours, and activities, get up, socio-economic situation, hygiene, health, the relation with their friends and their livelihood strategies that consist of their day-to-day activities. The observation of this fieldwork is mostly consisted of listen and converse with street children in free and natural atmosphere as possible. During research, researcher also observed some disputes and fights of street children with their friends and their solution.

### **3.6.2 Interview**

The interview is perhaps the ubiquitous method of obtaining information from people. It is a face-to-face interpersonal role in which one person, the interviewer asks a person being interviewed, questions designed to obtain answer pertinent to the research problem. (Kerlinger 1998:483-486)

In this study, semi-structured questionnaire was prepared for the interview to know the origin place of child, family background, and reasons for leaving home, hygiene and future aspiration. Street children do not live in fixed place so they were interviewed wherever they met in spot. This interview technique has some rationality to be used when the researcher started to make a respondent to speak on some pre-defined set of questions as key informant interview. The comments and opposition of the other listener on speak of particular respondents made the idea of key informant interview transformed into the group discussion. It was good technique for the researcher to grasp with the children's view on different matters related to study.

### **3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation**

All the raw data were collected through observation and interview using semi-structure questionnaire, which have been thoroughly checked and manually processed. They were classified and tabulated in the required format under the different headings. In this study both qualitative and quantitative analyses have been done. Qualitative analysis has been done to study socio-economic condition of street children, reasons to be children in street, their major current problems, their survival activities and their relationship with their family where as quantitative analysis has been presented in table and calculated in percentage.

These above methods are used in this study by researcher. The field visit was conducted informally. For the required data, the respondents were made to speak, free as much as possible and data were collected whenever street children met in the spot. Altogether 60 respondents were used to generate the information. They were from different background of caste/ethnicity, age and sex groups.

### **3.8 Limitation of Study**

The limitations of this study are:

- a) The street children were usually hesitate to talks to stranger and did not readily give detailed information about them. Hence, the information will obtain may be limited in the representation of the children reality.
- b) The study will be strictly limited to Kathmandu Valley and information obtained from this study may not be applied totally for the whole nation.

- c) The study will be predominantly based on the information collected by a student researcher to fulfill partial requirement of Master Degree in Sociology. In addition, information was collected through the methodology also have its own limitations.
- d) The study conducted only with the age between 5 to 16 years children.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SOCIO-CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND, EDUCATION STATUS OF STREET CHILDREN, AND REASONS OF LEAVING HOME**

This chapter presents socio-cultural, economic and educational status of the street children in the first part and in the second part the reason for leaving home.

#### **4.1 Socio-Cultural Background**

Nepal is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious nation. The geographical features of Nepal have played decisive role in shaping its socio-cultural life. For example Sherpa of Himalayan region have different socio-cultural life style than Tharu of Terai region. In spite of different culture, tradition and religion Nepalese people have harmonious and intimate relation with each other.

Street children of Kathmandu Metropolitan city are the mixture of different caste and ethnic groups. They come from different socio-cultural background. Majority of them 23.3% come from high caste Brahmin, other from ethnic groups like Lama, Gurung, Newer, Magar and Biswokarma. In spite of socio-cultural background, street children live together in harmony. They do not discriminate and segregate with each other in name of caste.

##### **4.1.1 Caste/ Ethnic Composition**

Unity in diversity has been considered as the main characteristic feature of Nepal. Due to caste\ ethnic diversity of the country, the street children in Kathmandu constitutes children from various caste\ ethnic groups such as

Brahmin, Chhetri, Gurung, Lama Newar, Biswokarma and others. As mention in 2001 census, there are one hundred one caste and ethnic backgrounds identified, among them eight castes/ethnic groups have been studied in this study. The rational aspect behind the discussion of different ethnic communities, having different living standards, traditions, norms and values regarding blind superstition that may be the causes to lead towards poverty. Poverty is the main cause and push factor of children to survive in street life i.e., Tamang, Magar, Biswokarma communities' children are more vulnerable than other ethnic groups. The researcher tried to opine the most influencing population of street children from the following table. The finding of the study is presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Caste/Ethnic composition of the Respondents**

<b>Caste/Ethnic Composition</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Brahmin	14	23.3%
Biswokarma	11	18.3%
Chhetri	10	16.7%
Lama\Tamang	9	15%
Gurung	6	10%
Newar	4	6.7%
Magar	4	6.7%
Tharu	2	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007



Table 1 shows that majority of respondents were from Brahmins 14 (23.3%) as they occupied greater number of population in country. Followed by Biswokarma 11 (18.3%), the deprived caste. That means most of the low caste communities are increasing who have considerable low economic status. Poverty is the main cause and compelling factor for children to survive in street life. Therefore, the children of these families are increasing day by day. Chhetri were the third ranked in population 10(16.7%), followed by Lama\Tamang 9(15%), Gurung 6(10%), Newar and Magar 4(6.7%), and Tharu 2(3.3%).

#### **4.1.2 Age and Sex of Respondents**

Here, a brief description about interviewed street children's age and sex are discussed. According to CBS Nepal, the people below the age of 15 considered as children. Statistics show that people of this age group covers significant parts of national population. The age between 10-16 years is a critical period for a child. This age is the period of socialization, self-identity and self-esteem. However, due to various causes children in this age compelled to leave their home. So the study was concerned on the age rang from five to sixteen years. Most of them were above the age of ten rather than below it. The majority of children visible in the street of Kathmandu Valley were boys. Among the 60 street children interviewed only 3 (5%) were girls and remaining 57(95%) were boys. Among 57(95%) boys most of them are Brahmin, Chhetri and Biswokarma come from Gorkha, Sindhupalchock, Makawanpur, Dolkha and Dhading. They came here due to orphan and poverty. This viewpoint apparently shows that girls are discriminated by cultural values and family norms in comparably with boys' i.e., more restriction for girls to go away alone. Therefore, fewer girls are exposed with hard situation in the street. Most of them were found to be living with their families in the squatter areas.

However, usually boys have fewer objections to go away. Sometimes parents consent them to work from tender age as an economic supporter. According to the CWIN's report 2004, there are 5000 street children in Nepal out of them 250(5%) are girls. This point apparently shows that girls are restricted by cultural values and family norms in comparable with boys' that plays positive role in controlling the number of street girls.

**Table 2: Age and Sex wise distribution of Respondent**

<b>Age</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
5-9	10	16.7%	8	13.3%	2	3.3%
9-13	21	35%	20	33.3%	1	1.7%
13-17	29	48.3%	29	48.3%	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Table 2 shows that, out of 60 respondents majority were found with an age group of 13-17(48.3%) followed by 9-13 years (35%) and 5-9 years (16.7%) . Among them, there were more male street children than female. Out of 60 respondents 57(95%) males were living in the street whereas, few percent of female street children 3(5%) were living in the street.

#### **4.1.3 Origin Place of Street Children**

Kathmandu Valley is now gradually became the main center of attraction to all kinds of people such as job seeker, street child, migrants etc. The findings showed that children moved toward capital due to poverty, neglect behave of parents and attraction of modern facilities. On the other hand, some parents and relatives would leave their children on the road during the daytime just for begging. The street children of the Kathmandu valley seem to be a homogeneous mixture of all places of 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 division of Nepal. Most of street children came in Kathmandu Valley were Brahmin(23.3%), Biswokarma(18.3%), Chhetri(16.7%) and Magar(6.7%) from Makawanpur, Dolkha, Dhading and Sindhupalchok due to available of direct transportation and adjoining districts of the Kathmandu Valley. They mostly came in Kathmandu due to poverty, domestic violence and being influenced by peers. Table 3 shows the place of origin of the street child according to the population.

**Table 3: Origin Place of the Respondents**

<b>District of Origin</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Makawanpur	8	13.3%
Dhading	6	10%
Chitwan	6	10%
Gorkha	5	8.3%
Sindhupalchok	5	8.3%
Dolkha	3	5%
Kathmandu	3	5%
Kaski	3	5%
Jhapa	3	5%
Sunsari	3	5%
Dhankuta	3	5%
Dang	3	5%
Morang	3	5%
Ramechhap	2	3.3%
Illam	2	3.3%
Lamjung	1	1.7%
Banke	1	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The table 3 shows that most of the street children are from adjoining districts of the Kathmandu Valley, where the direct transportation is available. The table also shows the places of origin of the children are diverse and coming from different part of the country. That means the street children are mainly from less developed and rural squatter settlement and coming with the expectation of better life.

The street children number from Makawanpur is 13.3% followed by 10% from Dhading and Chitwan .Street children from Gorkha and Sindhupalchock is 8.33%. Followed by 5% from Dolkha, Kathmandu, Jhapa and Kaski, Dang, Morang, Sunsari and Dhankuta respectively. Street children from Ramechhap and Illam are 3.3% each. The table also shows that 1.7% of the street children were from Lamjung, and Banke. This indicates that the adjoining districts have more influence in the street children possibly because of more opportunity to explore, to withstand independently and to enjoy with modern development.

#### **4.1.4 Religion and Culture of Respondents**

Religion is unified system of believes and practices related to sacred things. During research it was found that most of all street children belief in God and Goddess. Most of street children 80% were Hindu and 18% were Buddhist. During research, it was found that some street children changed their religion by turning into Christian due to attraction of facilities provided by foreigners. Among 60 respondents, 2% were Christian who had recently changed their religion from Hindu.

While taking about culture, it is a system of learned behaviour shared by and transmitted among the members of a group. Man begins to learn it since his birth.(Regmi 2001:19-25) In this study, it was found that street children came from different cultures, as Nepal is a multi-culture nation.

Children's life style and behaviour showed that they came from different cultures but now as they are living in street they are mostly influenced by street culture, which is undisciplined and wild like spitting, kicking each other, vulgar gesture and used bad words while talking with each other.

#### **4.1.5 Parental Occupation of Respondents**

Most of the street children do not have adequate income sources in their family. Over 80% of the total populations are solely dependent on agriculture for their survival in our country Nepal. Out of 60 respondents, 35% of the street children's parents are involved in agriculture and other are involved in several low-income jobs such as construction labour, petty business, domestic servant, carpenter, driving, carpet worker etc. Among them most of low caste and untouchable parents are engaged in construction labour in city due to lack of land and discrimination in their village. Moreover, parents of ethnic groups are mostly engaged in petty business and carpet factory. Only a few children belong to the middle class families.

In the context of Nepal if we talk about parent's occupation, we normally understand father's occupation because of patriarchal society. While study it was also found that 5% children who had their mothers worked as domestic servants and carpet workers in Kathmandu Valley. Majority of 75% parents of street children had low income, even though they worked hard and due to increase in the price of food and rent, they were not able to feed their children regularly. Street children also said that due to alcoholic and gambling habit of their fathers, their parents were unable to save money for daily food. In order to fulfill their basic needs and their wants they came in street. They said that mostly they enjoyed in the street with their friends than in their rent room with their family. The parental

occupation of the interviewed street children are shown in the table below.

**Table 4: Parental Occupation of Respondents**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agriculture	21	35%
Carpet worker	5	8.3%
Petty business	9	15%
Domestic servant	6	10%
Porter	4	6.7%
Construction labour	7	11.7%
Carpenter	5	8.3%
Driving	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

This table shows that most of the respondents' parents have low occupation with less income. Some of them did not have parents but parental occupation of their family is same. The table shows the agriculture is the most dominant occupation of our country. Out of 60 respondents, 35% were from agriculture whereas petty business followed by 15% and construction labour was 11.7% 10% were domestic servants, 8.3% were carpenters and carpet workers. 6.7% were porters as paid as labours and 5% were drivers. Normally parental occupation seems under the line of hard work.

#### 4.1.5.1 Sufficiency of Family Income

In Nepal most of people lives under poverty line except few professionals, business- persons and some landowners. Among the various factors to increase children in the street, poverty is an important factor, which compelled children to leave their family due to lack of sufficient income and resources. In order to fulfill the basic requirements of their household, children of under or unemployment poor families have to work for the families' survival.

Most of the parents cannot manage their income and expenditure. The expenditure always over takes the income level. The respondents reported that their father (60%) were alcoholic. Sometimes they spend their whole income on alcohol. According to information given by respondents, their parents have different way of living. It becomes clearer from the table no four.

Children of poor and under or unemployment families mostly work hard to survive. On the work place, these children are physically and mentally exploited and tortured by their masters. So, they are forced to run away from their work place to the street. To generate sufficiency of family income the respondents were asked some questioned, on reply they gave mixed opinion. This is shown in the following table.

**Table 5: Family Income Sufficiency based on their Parental Occupation**

<b>Family income</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Sufficient	11	18.3%
Just sufficient	9	15%
Insufficient	23	38.3%
Don't know	17	28.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The above table shows that out of 60 respondents' majority or 38.3% respondents showed not sufficient in family income that is why they left home for the sake of job as well as for sufficient food. 28.3% respondents did not know about it. These portions might not be wanted to tell or hesitated about their family income whether it is sufficient or not. Even 18.3% respondents had sufficient family income to fulfill their basic requirement but children left home due to maltreatment of parents or step- parent; some were forced by friends to leave home. Remaining 15% respondent's family income was just sufficient for their family survival but no saving for their education, health and other required needs.

#### **4.1.6 Educational Status of Respondents**

Education is the fundamental right of every child regardless of caste, creed and society .The Dakar conference is an example of it. It ensures that every country must be able to provide Education for All Children by 2015. Therefore, we cannot undermine a slogan that makes education imperative to every individual. However, in our country, still large numbers of children are deprived from educational right. Among them street children are deprived of their basic rights as well as educational right. Further among them. Large number of interviewed street children did not receive formal or informal education

The government of Nepal and international donors has made a commitment to children's right to education through the framework of the education for all campaign. The particular steps have been made to promote universal access to free primary education for all children. However, it was also recognized that many children are left behind. It was estimated that the net enrolment of children into primary education in 1999 was only 65% (<http://www.hrw.org>, Published date1999)



Education is not only a vital tool for children's development and for their constructive engagement in society and work, but also the main alternative to children's involvement in exploitative labour situations or recourse to street life. Education also becomes more significations for children in difficult family situation.

During research, it was found that literate children were only belonged to high caste Brahmin, Chhetri and Newar. Only five children out of sixty were literate, which indicates that most of street children are deprived from education. Among five literate children, one child had completed his lower secondary that was Brahmin and came from middle class family from Gorkha. Three Chhetri of Sindhupalchok and one Newar of Kathmandu had completed their primary education. Only one literate girl who had completed her primary education from Chitwan was also Brahmin. Most of illiterate children were lower untouchable caste and ethnic groups like Magar and Tamang. This indicates that caste system also played important role in receiving education. While interview some respondents who belonged to low caste stated that if they had no a single grain of rice how could they send their children to school. Literate children told that their parents were also literate but due to death of their parents they came in street and they liked to study and rejoined school if they got opportunity to do so. Educational status of street children is as follows:

**Table 6: Educational Status of Respondents**

<b>Education Status of respondents</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Illiterate	48	2	50
Literate	4	1	5
Primary	3	1	4
Lower Secondary	1	0	1

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Table 6 reveals that out of 60 respondents 52 respondents could not read and write. Only 8 respondents out of 60 are reported as literate. Among 8, 6 respondents got primary education and only 2 respondents got lower secondary education. This table indicates that most of all street children are illiterate and deprived from education.

#### **4.1.6.1 Causes of Not Joining and Continuing School**

The major causes according to the respondents are unavailability of school in village area, death of parents, negligence of parents and others. Out of 60 respondents' 23 respondents who were belonged to untouchable and ethnic groups said that due to poverty their parents were unable to enroll them in school where as 13 children who were Brahmin, Chhetri and Gurung told that they were enrolled in school by their parents but they dropped it being not interested in study.

Most of children of ethnic groups and low untouchable caste said that due to negligence of their parents, not giving important to education, they were deprived from education. They also added that their parents did not know anything about education because they came from backward place.

Street children are barely exposing to school. There are other many reasons for not enrolling and continuing school. Some of these are low economic status, lack of awareness on schooling, neglecting behaviour of guardian who is involved in house hold chores rather than educational activities, no school around there, reluctant nature to study of the respondents etc.

During survey, when they were asked to give reason for not joining and continuing school. They gave different reasons mainly related with family condition and personal causes. Nevertheless, poverty is the vital factor to

push the children to street life. The major causes of not joining/continuing school according to the respondents can be shown in the table below.

**Table 7: Causes of not joining and continuing school**

<b>Causes</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Poverty	23	38.3%
No school around	5	8.3%
Not interested	13	21.7%
Death of parents	3	5%
Negligence of parents	11	18.3%
Other	5	8.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

This table reveals that majority of the street children 38.3% were leaving school due to poverty. 21.7% respondents were not interested in study, it shows that they have not proper counseling in the importance of education in human life. 18.3% respondents were not able to go to school due to the negligence of parents, it reveals that most of guardians are illiterate and only engage in house hold chores. Due to unavailability of school around and other causes 8.3% children were deprived from education. Death of parents is also the important cause to leave the school, which covers 5%.

## 4.2 Reasons of Leaving Home

Street children are a widespread phenomenon in both the developed and developing countries. In Nepal with the growing urbanization problems, the issues of street children have been increasing. The increasing migration, family breakdown, unemployment problem, increasing trend to landlessness in village etc are found everywhere in big cities or small towns. Several reasons along pull and push factors are associated with the lives of a large number of street children. Temptation to earn more and expectation of better life in the city are the main pull factors while poverty, family problems, domestic violence, abusive and alcoholic parents are the main push factors, which compelled children to live miserable life in street. Child age is one of the precious as well as delicate and full of curiosity of human life. If he / she is deprived from their basic requirements and expectation, some sorts of thing will force them to the danger. These can be various reasons to force or motivate a child to the street.

As children grew elder they have to take the responsibility of work in household and earn to support economy of their home. The unequal distribution of wealth and the result of mass poverty in countryside are the main reasons to leave home by children. So, to find out the reasons of leaving home open-ended single question was asked to all respondents about it. The question was “why you became street child?” They give different reasons. Like quarrel nature of parents, poverty, domestic violence, alcoholic nature of parents (particularly father), gambler father, step parents (mother /father) etc causes lead them toward the street. The reasons given by street children for leaving their homes were diverse but interlinked for example expectation of better life and too much work at home are linked to poverty in the family. Similarly, quarrel nature of

parents and maltreatment by family members are directly linked to lack of parental guidance and care.

Many children left their homes (15%) because friends or acquaintance that had been to the city before and were able to lure the children, tempting them with better opportunities in the cities influenced them. Others simply disliked living at home due to lack of unfulfillment of their wants and quarrel nature of their parents, and some wanted to see the city, hence some left for adventure. Once they landed on the street, they stayed there because they enjoyed the street life much better than life at home, or were not able to save enough money to return to their homes. Some major reasons and their respective number of street children can be shown in the table below.

**Table 8: Reasons of Leaving Home**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Expectation of better life	14	23.3%
Too much work at home	5	8.3%
Quarrel nature of parents	11	18.3%
Maltreatment by family members	15	25%
No schooling	2	3.3%
Influence by peer and labour broker	9	15%
Other	4	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Above table shows the reason of children coming to the street. In the study, it was found that majority of street children 25% were drove to the

street due to maltreatment of family members. It is interesting to note that mostly 20% out of 25% children were belonged to high caste Brahmin and Chhetri as well as they came from middle class family. They came in street due to abuse of their stepmother. They also mentioned that due to their stepmother their father used to beat them frequently and never care them. Only 5% out of 25% were Magar, Gurung and Tamang. Mostly due to bad behaviour of stepmother, children were forced to leave their home.

14(23.3%) street children came with the expectation of better life in city. These children were mostly come from poor family. Mostly 10 respondents who were Tamang and Magar said that due to lack of agriculture land, their parents worked as porter and domestic servant. In spite of their hard work their parents were unable to feed them. Therefore, to earn money and spend better life they came in Kathmandu. Other 4 respondents were Tharu and Biswokarma, they also said that due to lack of ultimate resource, their family were living in poor condition. Therefore, to earn money to support them economically and to be independent they came in Kathmandu with expectation of better life.

11 (18.3%) respondents left their homes due to quarrel nature of their parents. Among them, 7 respondents were belonged to untouchable caste (Biswokarma) and only two were from Brahmins and Gurung. These children said that their father and mother disputed regularly with each other within the house as well as in society. Mostly due to drunk \ alcoholic nature of father, lead them to deviate from right path. The children of these parents usually make decision of leaving home due to regular tension in home. Ultimately, they choose street for their survival.

9(15%) respondents left their homes due to influence of peer and labour broker, who had been to the city before and were able to lure, the children, tempting them with better opportunities to earn more and get

better life in the city. Among these children 5 children who were Gurung came from Kaski mentioned that they came with their relatives who worked as driver in Kathmandu and to work as conductor with them to earn money and fulfill their wants. Moreover, other respondents were Chhetri, Magar and Tamang. They said that they came with their friends to see city and watch movies\videos in big cinema hall of Kathmandu Valley.

Other 5 (8.3%) respondents left their homes due to intolerable work at home. Among them 4 respondents were Chhetri who came from Gorkha and Dolkha, said that they had to start work from early morning to late evening. They always busy in household chores, they could not manage time even to play and they were not sending to school. Therefore, they left home. Remaining respondent who were Newar also complained the same problem of leaving home. 4(6.7%) respondents left their homes due to other causes like, losing residence from natural disaster( flood, land slide, earth quake), lost their parents in accident in work site, civil war or by disease. These children were mostly come from ethnic groups. These above mentions are the complementary factors that lead children for leaving their homes

Remaining 2 (3.3%) respondents left their home due to lack of school around their homes. These children were Magars who came from Lamjung, entered in the city with a dream to study in good school. They worked as servant in houses but due to physical and mental torture, they left their work place and came in the street.

From above study, it is clear that high caste groups Brahmin and Chhetri leave their homes due to death of their mothers and being orphan. These children mostly come from near districts of Kathmandu Valley like Dolkha, Gorkha, Chitwan and Sindhupalchok. Most of low caste groups

Biswokarma leave home due to poverty and domestic violence. They come from backward places like Dang, Lamjung, Ramechhap etc. These children are mostly worked as collecting discarded plastic bags, plastic bottles, milk pouch, old paper, newspaper and iron in garbage bins and on the bank of rivers of Kathmandu Valley. These children are often been to prison for accusation of theft and pick pocketing. It may be due to low caste or other causes. While study it is found that most of ethnic groups leave their homes due to alcoholic fathers' bad behaviour and influence from peer and brokers. They are mostly innocent and illiterate. They are mostly engaged in begging in tourist centers. They are often victim of bullies and tortured by elder street children and street hooligans. Children also leave their homes due to other social causes like bonded child labour, rejected by their family due to illegal or delinquent behaviour, drug addicted parents etc.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **MAJOR PROBLEMS AND SURVIVING STRATEGIES**

This chapter presents major problems faced by street children in the first part. The second part presents their surviving strategies.

#### **5.1 Major Problems of street children**

During discussion with my respondents, majority of them mentioned the current problems as lack of permanent place for living, food, loneliness, physical torture and so on. The problems are presented below one by one.

##### **5.1.1 Permanent Shelter**

Out of 60 respondents 85% street children said that lack of permanent shelter is one of their serious problems. Due to lack of permanent shelter, they stayed at footpath, temple, inn and near garbage bins. Among these children, 72% were belonged to ethnic/indigenous groups who were ignorance, innocent and came from backward places. Mostly newcomer's street children used to stay under open sky due to lack of permanent shelter and new unknown places. During research, it was found that 28% clever and old children belonged to Brahmin and Chhetri. They were familiar with the street life and easily adopted in the street environment. They used to stay in child centers open by NGO/INGOs. Only few children stayed at shared rooms that had good jobs.

Street children said that during winter season, it is horrible for them to stay whole night under open sky. Therefore, they burnt garbage, tyre, discarded paper, newspaper etc to get rid of chill cold. The places of street children for shelter are shown in table below.

**Table 9: Shelter places of Respondents**

<b>Places</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Footpath	15	25%
Temple	14	23.3%
Inn( <i>Dharmashalas</i> )	9	15%
Shelter at NGO's of child centre	17	28.3%
Shared room	5	8.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The table shows that 28.3% street children stayed at child center run by NGO's and 25 % on footpath. In temples 23.3%, respondents stayed in night and in inn or *Dharmasala* 15%. Remaining 8.3% respondents stayed in shared room who worked as conductor of microbus or buses. Their incomes were more than other street children Now a day due to close contact with street children, most of new comers and old street children stayed in child center run by NGO's. There was no strict rule to stay at these shelters. Children immediately can stay in these places. Therefore, they stay at these places whenever they like to stay.

### **5.1.2 Daily Food/ Meal**

Food is the basic needs of human being to live. Without it, it is impossible to survive. According to the street children, they prefer to take food in different suitable places. They have not specific time and schedule for eating. They eat whenever and wherever they get it. They can also stay without food for two or three days in critical situation.

Those who are clever and strong easily fulfill their hunger. At least two-time meal a day is essential for children's growth but not all the children in the street can get it. Almost all street children suffer from malnutrition. Most of the time, they do not have adequate food. They generally eat in low standard filthy squatter restaurants or survive on left over or thrown away food in the garbage bins and dirty water.

Out of 60 respondents 27 were managing daily food two times a day by searching plastic bags, milk pouch, iron, bottles etc and therefore, they were able to organize foods hardly selling those collects. 19 were with poor health and suffering from illness time to time though they were unable to organize food twice a day. 14 were able to manage food three times and more than three times by working as tourist guide and begging in tourist junkyards. The existing situation of having their meal is shown in the following table.

**Table 10: Per day meal of Respondents**

<b>Per day Meal</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
One time	19	31.7%
Two times	27	45%
Three times	9	15%
More than three times	5	18.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Above table shows that 31.7% respondents did not have two time meals per day. They were physically weak, dull minded and are mostly new comers. Next 45% were hardly having two times meal per day. Only 15% got three time meals per day that were stronger and clever than others.

Remaining 8.3% had meal more than three times per day, it means they were stronger, clever and lived as street children more than several years. They were well keen to have enough money from tourists and living in tourist junkyard like Thamel, Basantapur and King's Way.

### **5.1.3 Loneliness**

Loneliness is one of the serious problems of street children. Street children were hated and drove away by people. Out of 60 respondents, 58 were suffered from loneliness. As street children were hated and drove away by people. They were not accepted in society so that their relationship were only limited within street children. They were isolated and became victim of loneliness. Because of that, they did not care about norms and values of society and became wild and indiscipline. Due to segregate from society, they never frightened to commit crimes, which are emerged as the serious problem in society. These children were taking intoxicate things just to run away from loneliness. During research, it was found that these children were badly suffered from loneliness and they had developed negative feeling toward common people. Rude behaviour toward the common and tres-passer is evidence of their loneliness.

### **5.1.4 Physical Torture and Stealing**

Almost all the street children are victims of mental and physical torture. During study, it was found that the police and Metropolitan tourist police often chased and, taken and locked them in the police station. Policemen used to accuse them of theft unjustly then beaten and locked up in prison for several days. Elder strong street children, hooligan guys and beggars in the street mostly tortured them. They were also victims of street fighters and bulling from elder street children. In work place, also they

were beaten, scolded, mentally and physically tortured and fire them without paying in minor mistakes.

Many of the respondents experienced physical abuse. 40% reporting physical abuse occurring usually or often. 43% reported that physical abuse occurred but that was rarely. Only 18% of respondents reported never experiencing physical abuse. Respondents identified perpetrators who usually or often physically abused them as street adults 40%, police 30%, security guards 15% and 14% reported that other street children usually or often beat them and 1% reported NGO staff as perpetrators.

During study, almost 95% street children said that stealing their money is one of the current burning problem. They said that their money was often stolen or looted by hooligan boys, elder and strong street adults. Respondents also said that alcoholic beggars and elder boys mostly took their money forcefully by threatening them. Due to the risk of keeping money with them, they do barely saving. Therefore, they prefer to spend all their earnings rather than to save, as they have no safe place to keep it safely.

## **5.2 Surviving Strategies of Street Children**

Food is the basic requirement to survive for every living being. In order to survive, street children are compelled to do anything at anywhere, whatever they get as job. So, street children and their activities are influenced by their need to survive day-to-day life. Work plays a vital role in street children lives, which enable them to survive and provide the means for their independence .Work in the street environment clearly pose many hazards and risks to children living in the street.

Street children are struggling to survive. They are busy from early the morning to late evening to make some earning. The main source of

income is begging, rag picking and work in hotel or restaurant. They are involved in different economic activities more than single occupation. Most of the children who came to city, with the aim of betterment of life, hardly/rarely receive their expected and suitable working places. Therefore, they select begging and rag picking mostly as a desired source of income. Those children who are even not able to do these two works must sleep in the street without food. They are working with great discomfort to survive, even though they are suffering from humiliation, negligence, abuse, exploitation and disease. In other words, they are missing their entire childhood in sufferers.

The children of the streets of Kathmandu generally work very hard for their survival. During study, it was found that most of the runaway children find employment in small-scale hotels and tea shops as the hotel boy which is the severest form of child labour exploitation. They have to work about 14-18 hours a day and are often made the victims of abuses. Many hotel boys either runaway from the working places or they are fired without any pay for minor mistakes. Once they come on the street with empty pockets, they generally beg for few days and later many of these children earn money by collecting scrap and waste: discarded plastic bags, paper, newspapers, milk pouch, and metal, which can be sold at the junk collection centers for the few rupees needed for the day's meal. On the average, such rag-picking child can earn Rs60-Rs75 per day collecting other people's discarded waste. During wet or cold weather when they cannot collect enough scrap to earn to have food, they had to sleep hungry or scrounge through garbage for food scraps.

The study of fieldwork showed that the work of street children, which are neglected from other like rag picking in containers and near bank of polluted river. They are also working in different sectors with or without

payment. Many jobs, which are performed by these children, have an adverse effect on child's health, physical development as well as mentally. Nevertheless, they are compelled to work in order to survive. Normally others always exploited them so they commonly select the street as suitable place to get rid of their suffering .The distribution of respondents involvement in livelihood based on field survey are shown in table below:

**Table11: Types of work of street children**

<b>Types of work</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Begging	24	1	25	41.7%
Rag picking	20	0	20	33.3%
Domestic work	3	2	5	8.3%
In hotel/ restaurant	4	0	4	6.7%
Conductor	3	0	3	5%
Porters	1	0	1	1.7%
Looking after shoes/ motorbike	2	0	2	3.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The above table shows that among the 60 respondents 25(41.7%) were beggars, who show that, begging as a major occupation of street children. A weak or newly migrated child living on the street generally did not know where to find work to find work to earn money for food, and usually turned to beg. Among the beggars, some traveled different places by begging while others sat at one spot with a bowl in front of them or their empty hands out in gesture. Handicapped or disfigured children

could make more money by begging. Thus some of the normal street children were smart enough to act as mute, deaf or disfigured in front of the foreigners. According to the CWIN survey, about 39% of the street children got their money by begging as well as working. Study also revealed that most of these working children beg as part time work either because they failed to collect enough plastic or papers for their food or because the junk collection centers did not accept wet materials during wet weathers. Most of the children aged 5 to 14 years are involved in these kinds of jobs because it is an easy and do not need to take and ask permission to beg with others. Moreover, when children feel hungry at first time in street, they come in contact with other street children with begging for survive and learn how to beg from their friends. The street children who beg in the tourist areas often receive food, warm clothes, shoes and money. However, they often resell these things to the second-hand vendors instead of using them.

Rag picking covers 33.3% of the respondents as a second largest occupation of street children for their survival. These children collected old papers, plastic bottles, plastic bags, milk pouch, iron etc. Most of the children of 14 years to above are involved in these kinds of jobs. It is also a kind of easy getting jobs in the street. *Kowari Owner*<sup>6</sup> often exploited these children by not paying. On the average, such rag-picking child can earn Rs60-Rs75 per day.

8.3% of the children worked as domestic workers who are brought by relatives, tempting them with better opportunities and for schooling in Kathmandu. These children were mostly come from backward places and poor family background.

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<sup>6</sup> Owner of junk collection center.



6.7% respondents worked in small-scale hotels/ restaurants and teashops. They had to work about 14-18 hours a day and often made the victims of abuses. 5% respondents were worked as a microbus or bus conductor. These children were aged 15 to above and they were living in Kathmandu more than five years. These kinds of children felt happy to work as conductor of bus or microbus. In the field survey, it was found that most of the conductors wanted to be driver in future. Due to cheapest worker, most of the driver gave them these job .3.3% were engaged in looking after shoes/ motorbike near temple and shops. These children were small children mostly found in temples of Kathmandu in the morning and in special occasion. Remaining 1.66% were potters. They were above 14 years and they carried load of businessmen in business center like Ashan, Bhotahity, MahaBoudha etc. Mostly girls were involved only in begging and domestic work.

### **5.2.1 Feeling of street children about Their Work**

Street children rarely get the suitable job opportunities according to their age and requirement due to their nature. They generally pass their life by engaging in the neglected forms of works as begging rag picking, cleaning, sweeping, look after shoes and others. In the study, some question had been asked with them to know about their feeling about their jobs. Out of 60 respondents' majority of them were not satisfied with their jobs because they are exploited physically and psychological. Most of street children complained that they were not paid as they worked by owners. Even they were worked for survival. The children's feeling about their jobs can be clearly shown in the table below:

**Table 12: Feeling about work of Respondents**

<b>Feeling</b>	<b>No of Respondent</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Satisfied	23	38.3%
Not satisfied	37	61.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

This table shows that out of 60 respondents majority of them about 61.7% were not satisfied with their jobs, some respondents had recently changed their work as they were not fully paid, not treated well by their masters and associated workers. Generally, they were physically and mentally tortured. Only 38.3% or 23 respondents seem satisfied, as they did not have alternative job with their current job. Those who were not satisfied with their present jobs were searching for a better one to minimize their problem of surviving and miserable life. In contrast, who were satisfied of their job kept their view that their present job was easy way to earn money and were enjoying their life being independent and without bondage, maltreatment and load of work.

### **5.2.2 Earning Money and Saving Pattern**

Begging and rag picking are the easiest and accessible types of work. So most of street children are engaged in these works to survive. They can also get money according to their capacity of collecting wastage from junkyard and working time. In an average majority of street children that is 48.33% of the street children earned Rs 50 to 100 per day. The earning money per day of the respondent is shown in table below.

**Table 13: Earnings**

<b>Earning amount per day</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than Rs 50	23	38.3%
Rs 50 to Rs 100	29	48.3%
Rs 100 to Rs 200	5	8.3%
More than Rs 200	3	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The above table clearly shows that 48.3% of the street children earned Rs 50 to Rs 100 in an average per day. Mostly these children were rag pickers who sold old newspapers, papers, plastic bags, bottles, milk bags to Kowari. They were 13 to 14 years children. 38.3% of respondents earned less than Rs 50 per day. These children were 5 to 13 years old and they worked as begging and looking after shoes / motor cycles. 8.3% of the respondents earned Rs 100 to Rs 200 per day. These children worked as conductor of minibuses or buses. They were from 14 years to above. In addition, remaining 5% respondents earned more than Rs 200per day. They were mostly 16 years old who were very clever and they worked as tourist guide. Some clever children who were determined in their work often earn more than Rs 200 to 500. They seem keen in their work and easily determine the potential work place to gather worn out material from junkyard. Some time when the luck favour they even earn more than Rs 500.

During research it was found that most of the street children rarely save their income. Due to lack of shelter, job insecurity, no safe place to keep money, no fixed amount of earning, exploitation by adults and deprivation from education and medical facilities, they do not care to save their income. Now a day's money also meant trouble. So that, these children were often subjected to harassment by elder street children or hooligan boys and alcoholic beggars. Their money were often stolen or looted by hooligan boys, elder and strong street children. Due to risk of keeping money, they do barely saving. Therefore, they prefer to spend all their earnings wastefully on gambling and watching video.

The other causes of not saving earnings are; their habits of watching cinema and videos based on sex and violence, alcohol, smoking, drugs, sniffing glue and other unnecessary spending. Only 5% of the respondents who worked as conductor and lived in rented room seem able to save about Rs 50- Rs 70 per day. Where as, most of they were not able to save due to lack of regular income and lack of shelter. Even if they saved earning, they seem less interest to work. So, all most 95 % were found to be without saving. Aimlessness is also the factor due to which they are not interested to save their income in productive sector.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **FAMILY RELATIONSHIP AND FUTURE HOPE**

#### **6.1 Family Relationship**

The family is the most basic unit offering provide for the basic needs of children. Protection from abuse and exploitation and emotional support. As children grew into teenage, the parents became unable to offer the necessities of them so, children start assisting families basic requirements. Therefore, children have negative impression of poverty with their duty, even their schooling.

The poverty played enemy role of the family and weak condition of it become unable to feed two times meal for a day then they turn to face toward street. So from poor and deprived family most of street children are originated .As poverty strike then the unusual behavior of parents (frequent arguing fighting alcoholic , gambling) become main factor for children to drive in street. These types of nature seem in lower status families of low caste rather than middle caste. The presence of stepmother\ stepfather, home abandoned by mother \father, being orphan also create incompatible situation in the household which lead the children to disperse from their home. These facts of family situations are tried to be shown and analyzed in this study.

Out of 60 respondents 66%, respondents were from nuclear family and very few 34% are from joint family. In most of the nuclear families, presences of stepparents (either stepfather or stepmother) were observed in this study. In a joint family after death or absence of parents, grand parents or uncles and aunts have take care their children. Children cannot get perfect nurture and love as their own parents.

In general, size of family is influenced by sociological reasons besides economic reasons. Poor families have normal sizes. The bigger family size of street children might be due to the existence of joint family or step parents. Thus, a bigger family size means many mouths to eat and many pushing needs, which might have pushed the children into the street. Thus, presence of stepparents', regular absence of father or mother has a negative impact of the social, economic and mental condition of the children. Family situation also determine the condition of the street children. Most of the children, who are in the street, come from poor and deprived family. Some of them have big compact family without enough resources and some do not have one or both parents.

Family causes are one of the prime factors, which influence children being into street. Poverty is the main enemy of these street children families. Due to lack of fulfillment of basic needs like two times meal per a day, clothes etc, they leave their families.

Parents' unusual behaviour is another aspect to create more problems such as quarrel nature of parents, alcoholic and gambling father. These types of nature mostly seem in lower status families rather than middle class family. Landlessness, sickness of parents, presence of stepmother, home abandoned by mother/father, handicapped parents, such type of position create incompatible situation in the household which lead the children to disperse from their home.

35%, respondents were in touch with their family. Only 15% respondents visited their family regularly where as 50% respondents occasionally visited their family during feasts and festivals like Dashain and Tihar to celebrate festival with family members. Among them 5%, respondents had family support and remaining 95%, did not have it. Out of 60 respondents, only 13 respondents said that they send some money to their

family. Most of Brahmin, Chhetri and Magar children did not have any contact with their family due to orphan and feeling of hatred toward their father and step mother. During survey, it was found that 85% street children did not have good relation with their family.

### 6.1.1 Alive or Death of Parents

Death of parents is also an important factor to link children to the street. Within the sample of street children, some of them had both (father and mother) alive, some had only father or mother and some of them had none of them. It is simply shown in table below.

**Table 14: Status of Parents (Alive or Death) of Respondents**

Status of parents alive or death	Girls	Boys	Total	Percentage
Both Alive	2	33	35	58.3%
Father only	1	11	12	20%
Mother only	0	9	9	15%
None of them alive	0	4	4	6.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

Above table demonstrates that majority of the street children 58.3% had both parents. However, this does not mean that the parents are living together as a family .They could be remarried or separated .But, it support the argument that parental neglect is one of the reason that's why children

are leaving their homes and opting to live in the city streets .It also disproves the popular assumption that street children are orphans. 20 % had only father and 15% had only mother. Remaining 6.7% were orphan. It is obvious that death of a parent bring stress / strain. In course of management of the child, the family dissolution may isolate the child and drive him/her away from the family sanctuary.

### **6.1.2 Link with Family**

Children normally leave their family either due to poverty or maltreatment of their family members. Due to hard work, unfulfillment of their needs and desires to see city also children run away from their home through different medium. Some of them were sending to the city by their parents or family to earn money also. Most of the street children do not want to go back to their house after spent an independent, free life without any bondage and adventurous life in comparison to the restricted lives at home. Some do not keep link with their families as they felt humiliated and embarrassed to let the families know about their street life style. To find out the linkage touch with family of the respondents researcher asked to them and ambiguous answer were given by them. These are shown in the table below.

**Table 15: Linkage with Family of Respondents**

<b>Touch with family</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	21	35%
No	32	53.3%
Don't know	7	11.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007



This above table demonstrates that 53.3% respondents were not in touch with their to lack of fulfillment of their basic needs, regular argument with their parents' hatred feeling toward their parents. While some had lost contact with the families, some had no families or homes, some had abusive and alcoholic parents, some had deep resentment toward their stepparents etc.

35%, respondents were in touch with their family. Some of these respondents visited their family once or twice a year, some were more often and some were living with their parents at night only. Mostly these respondents visited their family during festival times such as Dashain. Remaining 11.7% respondents did not want to say anything relating their family relationship. This may be due to abandon by their parents in small age, orphan or hatred feeling toward them.

Those children who said that they did not have any contact with their family were Brahmin and Chhetri, who come in Kathmandu five years before. They did not know the address of their parents and did not know whether they were alive or death. They said that they came in Kathmandu with their village friends to see city.

Out of 60 respondents, only 21 had contact with their family. They often visited their home to give earned money and to know their condition.

## **6.2 Future Aspiration**

The children are facing different level of risk and their future is completely void. As country like Nepal whose socio-economic condition is very poor due to poverty, illiteracy, traditional creed and social environment, children are deprived of education and forced to work as labour. Therefore, they do not have better aspiration to be a prestigious person. However, children's desire to make radical changes in their lives can be understood in the light of their apprenticeships to street life. Some

of them are not only deprived from minimum basic requirement but also from the love, affection, discipline, manner and many more. So, they feel comfortable in the street because they do not have any idea for the prosperity of their life and due to social and family problem, they are compelled to live in the street. To find out the future aspiration a question asked with them and found the diverse response. These are shown in the following table.

**Table 16: Future Aspiration of Respondents**

<b>Aspiration</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Continue the present life	11	18.3%
Study	13	21.7%
Back to the home	27	45%
Do not know	9	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

This table shows that 45% respondents wanted to return to their home. These respondents were mostly Biswokarma and Magars who came from Makawanpur. They said that street life was not easy and good as they thought so they wanted to go back to start new good life. 21.7% respondents had positive view about education and understood about its importance. These children are mostly Brahmin and Tamang who had studied before in their village. They wanted to rejoin school for better future. 18.3% replied to give the continuity of their present street life. These children were above 15 years and stayed in street more than five

years. They were mostly Biswokarma, Chhetri and Tamang. They were influenced by bad street atmosphere and had learnt all types of bad habit. They were involved in various unsocial things such as stealing, gambling, smoking, pick pocketing, using drugs, alcoholic and video watching (violence+sex). These children generally have grown up in neglected and poor environment in street. Remaining 15% still did not have any idea regarding their future life. They were mostly Chhetri, Lama and Tharu. These children were mostly addicted and had rude behaviour, and confused about their future life. They were above fourteen years old and mostly new comers. They also said that they liked street life because they were free and independent.

### **6.2.1 Aims of Respondents**

Everyone has an aim in life. Person without aim is hopeless and cannot get success in her/ his life. Aim is the driving force to be a successful person. Most of the street children are from very poor economic background and deprived family. Therefore, they do not have better aim to be prestigious person. At least they desire to make a radical change to get prosperity in life. Some of them 35% are not only deprived from minimum requirement but also from the love, affection, manner, social customs, prediction and many more. Therefore, they are happy with their street life. No one children may have such aim to be a good street children but they are compelled to live in street due to poverty, maltreatment of family member (may be step father/step mother), death of parents etc. An attempt had been made to find out the aims of life of street children, which is shown in following table.

**Table 17: Aims of Respondents**

<b>Aim of the Respondents</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Driver	11	18.3%
Guide	7	11.7%
Army	3	5%
Police	2	3.3% %
Businessman	7	11.7%
Teacher	5	8.3%
Social worker	10	16.7%
Mechanic	3	5%
Carpenter	2	3.3%
Painter	2	3.3%
Don't know	8	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

This table shows that out of 60 respondents 18.3% of the respondents were interested to become driver. They choose to be driver in future because mostly they are working as conductor and slightly knew about driving profession. Traveling different places and they desired to earn enough money. 16.7% of the respondents were inspired to be involved in social works. They said that they liked to help poor, old and handicraft people. 13.3% had not expressed their future aim. It might be due to

satisfaction with their present work. 11.7% were interested to be guide and businessman. Mostly those children who worked as tourist guide and begging wanted to be good guides in their future. Moreover, those children who wanted to become rich replied that they would like to be successful businessman. 8.3% were interested in teaching profession 5% were inspired to be army and mechanics. And 3.3% were interested to be police, carpenter and painter. Only few children had shown their aims in this field.

### **6.2.2 Knowledge about Child Right**

Child right is the right of children which is declared by the constitutional law of nation, which concerned with all the rights and facilities of children. During research, it was observed that only 2% young children between the ages of fourteen to sixteen years knew about child right whereas 98% children between the age of ten to thirteen years and above fourteen years do not know anything about child right. This is the group who are easily influenced and motivated by political parties, students group and any other organization. Actually, they are the front liner of the activities organized by the above-mentioned parties. Some children proudly said that they took part in Jaan-Andolan II (April Movement). This indicates that even the activities they are performing these days reveal that they know little bit about child right and government commitment. They are ignorant and innocent.

### **6.2.3 Know about Child Related Organization**

Street children were also asked about child related organization open for street children. Most of all street children 59% responded positively about child related organization. They knew three or four children related organizations run in Kathmandu by NGOs and foreigners like APC,

CPCS, CWIN, Bisaune, Chandradaya, Sath Sath etc. The result obtained during research is tabulated in below.

**Table 18: Knowledge about child related organization**

<b>Knowledge about child related organization</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	59	98.3%
No	1	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2007

The above table shows that 98.3% respondents new about child related organization while as only 1.7% do not know about it. The table reveals that most of street children stayed for a long period in these kinds of organizations where they got shelter, food and medical treatment as well as informal education. Most of street children responded positively about child organization where as some responded negatively about the management of this kind of child related organizations.

On the based of above table presentation it is concluded that, the problem of street children is hiking day by day due to different types of domestic violence, household conflict, maltreatment by family members, poverty , illiteracy and others. If the problem of street children is rapidly increasing like now, in future it might have very negative impact in society. So it must be controlled managed and minimized in time being. To control, manage and minimize these problems, responsible authorities must be seriously dedicated for implementing actions to improve socio- economic condition of poor and marginalized people. This action must be implementing from grass- root level and should maintain peace and security in the country by the government

The problem of street children in Kathmandu is increasing daily. There is still a lack of a comprehensive and detailed program for dealing with the needs and addressing the issues of these children. If the problem continues to be ignored or accepted with indifference then we shall soon see the problem approach the levels of severity already present in India, Thailand and Philippines. As children are the future adults and leaders of Nepal, their basic needs and rights of food, clothing, security, shelter, health and education should be guaranteed.

Criminal environment influences most of the children in the streets. Therefore, sooner or later these children get motivated to involve themselves in thefts. If not controlled or educated, these children are a serious threat to future well being of the society and for their own lives.

To minimize the problem of street children important thing are to build up public consciousness to love and respect street children, formation of Action Oriented productive projects for street children and working children. And prepare social workers or field workers to work with street children.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter includes the summary and conclusion of street children.

#### **7.1 Summary**

The study on “Street Children in Kathmandu Valley” was done to analyze the major problems of street children like the force behind them to live in street and to find out the solution in order to minimize the number of street children in Kathmandu valley. The study is strictly limited to Kathmandu valley. In Kathmandu valley the following places Thamel, Kingsway, Basantapur, Swoyambhu, Patan, Boudha, Ratna Park, Jamal etc places were chosen for study. These are the main street where these street children are mostly available. 60 respondents are selected based on of non-probability and accidental sampling technique. The researcher used observation technique to analyse respondents’ behaviour and to acquire relevant information about them semi-structured questionnaires were prepared and asked to make study more flexible and rational.

Required information were also taken from different related working organization of this field as well as various knowledgeable personals, curio shopkeepers and other shopkeepers of different areas are also included. As well as both primary and secondary data are used in the present study.

The problem of street children is universal. In Kathmandu, it is believed that the numbers of street children are rapidly increasing day by day. Several reasons along pull and push factors are associated with the lives of a large number of street children. Temptation to earn more and influence from movies or media to with the dream of a better life with



modern facilities in the city are the main pull factors. While lack of enough food, hard domestic work at home, peer influence maltreatment at home and abusive and alcoholic parents are the main push factors.

Street children have been increasing every year as a part of our urban social tragedy. With the growing urbanization problems, the issues of street children have been increasing migration, unemployment problem, increasing trend to landlessness in village, poverty, family breakdown and the expectation of better life are found to be the main influencing factors of street children in big cities as small towns. The other reasons of increasing street children are due to widespread recessions, political turmoil and natural disaster.

Street children are the reflection of a growing social tragedy in the world. In courses of study and fieldwork researcher found that, still children are surviving as vagabond life in plightful situation deprived of basic needs. Their vagrancy natures kept them endanger and vulnerable to illness and top level crime for society. Their autonomous life pattern slowly push them toward marginalized life from social mainstream and denied from basic human rights that is access to education, love, affection from parents, protection, health care etc. They were victimized by different accuses without justice. So the study focus and attempt to address the issues and recommendation likewise situation of nation, government should take the consideration about their rights and avoid the violence and exploitation in every sphere of their surrounding.

Migration is a demographic phenomenon, which has a strong relation to the social and economic aspect. Development of road and facilities of transportation services have given further access to easy movement for the children from rural to urban areas and between cities.

Gender, which is a social and cultural difference between male and female also play significant role of street children lives. Street children are mostly boys who are socially acceptable to leave home for work.

The surviving strategies applied by of street children are varied as according to place. Some are engaged in rag picking, some are begging, some work in hotels, some are as guide in tourist junkyards etc. However, they are engaged in various works from early morning to late night, most of innocent children rarely earn enough money to meet their basic needs.

They are mostly exploited directly or indirectly from different person. Despite the problems, some still prefer to stay in the street because of autonomy, freedom access to quick discretionary cash and entertainment. According to experience of street children on various NGOs' training, it was revealed that, they had great capacity for learning and extra ordinary adaptability to various situations and environments their surrounding which indicates positive attitude toward the future. Moreover, the public should accept street children as normal children and treat them accordingly. If society act being flexible in accepting them and provided them with proper help/care, and education, they can be also converted as one of the responsible person of the society if society provide them unconditional affection and care they can also become a productive human of the country.

## **7.2 Conclusion**

Street children are the common burning problem that has been occurring throughout the world. In Kathmandu Metropolitan City this problem is increasing day by day because of increasing poverty, family breakdown, abuse of stepparents etc.

Illiteracy and hope to cope with easy life at city are also the main causes to increase street children in Kathmandu Valley. With growing

urbanization problems and squatter homes, the issues of street children are increasing in Kathmandu Metropolitan City as urban tragedy.

Poverty and poverty related causes, uncontrolled population, political instability, civil war, natural disaster domestic violence and social evils are the push factors to become street children where as urban facilities, influence from videos\movies, magazines and hope to live easy life with modern facilities are the pull factors to become street children.

Street children are those who are totally displaced from their home, spending majority of their time in street doing whatever necessary for their own day-to-day survival. The nature and characteristic of street children differ from normal children. They have been much influenced by the street culture, which is reflected in their daily life like rude behaviour, using bad words while talking, no hesitation to beat and scold their friends badly in public, vulgar gesture etc.

Street children are also the most neglected group of children in our very society. They are deprived children, denied not only their rights as children but also their childhood. Without guidance, education and security, they are heading toward obscure future.

Street children are the common burning problem that has been occurring throughout the world. In Kathmandu Valley this problem is increasing day by day due to increase of family breakdown, abuse of stepparents, poverty etc. The problems of street children are also increasing as the trend of migration to urban areas. The fact is that Kathmandu does not have a long history of problems with street children, the number of street children and the magnitude of the problems involved along with the number of squatter settlements have been growing at an increasing rate since the opening of new highways linking Kathmandu with rural areas

Out of 60 respondents, 80% the street children are migrated the aged between eleven to thirteen years in Kathmandu for survival and being street children in the street. There are 95% male street children, which is more than female street children 5% in the street of Kathmandu. Most of the 75% children are coming to Kathmandu from nuclear and only 25% come from joint families due to misbehave of their stepmother and alcoholic father. The other causes are rapidly increasing unplanned urbanization, uncontrolled media, and poverty children are coming in the street. Most of the children 23.3% are coming from a caste of Brahmin followed by untouchable caste 18.3% Biswokarma. Due to caste discrimination, most of children changed their caste and put higher caste such as Karki instead of Sarki, Pradhan instead of Poda etc.

Due to poverty, uneducated family and not getting schooling opportunity most of these children are illiterate and also not serious about education. Mostly 35% parents of these children are farmers in the village and only few have their own land for working. Out of 60 respondents 41.7% are working as a beggar followed by tourist guide , rag-picking and micro-bus conductor, and they are getting less money and exploited by owners. .

Based on direct field survey with street children it can be concluded that children in the street have gradual deteriorating socio-psychological condition with numbers of hurdles due to which they are passing aimless and neglected life. Therefore, concerned people and authorities should seriously pay on this problem on time. Otherwise, it will slowly jeopardize the nation and invite heinous problems in society.

Mostly, they need to be steered back to the mainstream of social life through proper education opportunities, reforming caring rehabilitation, provision of skill training and employment opportunities As well as social awareness must be increased by providing required tools to reintegrate them into society and advocacy on the rights of the child may be motive tool for the solution of this problem.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

#### 1.) Respondents Personal Profile :-

- a) Name :
- b) Age :
- c) Sex : male (     ), female (     )
- d) Originally from (Birth Place) :
- e) Religion :
- f) Since how long have you been living in Kathmandu? Do you know about any organization about street children? If yes, do you think that they are working for the welfare of street children?
- j) Do you know about child right?

#### 2) Educational Status:

- a) Are you literate? Yes (   ), No (   )

If yes, up to which grade?

If no, why?

- b) Why did you leave the school?

- c) Do you want to rejoin school?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

#### 3) Family Background:

- a) How many family members did you have?
- b) Are you in touch with your family? Yes/No. If no, why?
- c) What is the occupation of your parents?
- d) Do your parents earn sufficiently for your family?



**4) Reasons of leaving home:**

- a) Why did you leave the family?
- b) Who brought you here?
- c) Why you became street children?

**5) Working conditions:**

- a) Do you work?

If yes, where do you work and what kinds of work do you do?

If no, how do you collect food / money for survive?

- b) Are you satisfied with your present job?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

- c) How many hours do you work per day?

**6) Earnings:**

- a) How much do you earn per day from the job? How do you spend the money you earn?

- b) Is your income support you to fulfill your everyday needs?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

- c) Are you saving the earning also?

If yes, why?

If no, why?

- d) How do spend your income?

**7) Food , Shelter ,Health and Hygiene:**

- a) How many meals per day do you have?

- b) Where do you take your meal?

c) Where do you sleep usually?

d) Have you ever been sick? If yes, how long?

e) Where do you go if you need medical treatment?

f) Do you smoke? Yes ( ), No ( )

If yes, how many cigarettes a day?

g) Have you ever taken drugs? Yes ( ), No ( )

If yes, what kind of drugs?

How often?

**8) Abuses and Harassment:**

a) Have you suffered from any kind of abuses and harassments?

If yes, what kind?

By whom?

b) How do people behave you ?

**9) Future Life:**

a) What are you want to do in future to bring change in your life?

b) What is your aim of life?

**10)** Finally, do you want to say anything for betterment of street children's life?

## Check List for Observation

The following points are noticed while observation

- ) Street children behaviour.
- ) Their life style and getup
- ) Their relationship with their friends and their habit
- ) Their working place.

**“Thanks for your kind cooperation.”**