

CHAPTER IV

Data Collection Exercise

An Assessment of: Child Safety, Moral, Health, Abuse and Prostitution Among the Street Child Workers in Kathmandu, Nepal.

4.1 Introduction

Street child work is a phenomenon, not only of developing countries, but which has been experienced worldwide. There are major difficulties in trying to determine the number of street child workers and the magnitude of their problems i.e. this population is not adequately covered by national census, educational and health data (WHO, 1993). In Nepal, urban migration due to search of work has been a traditional strategy of those suffering economic and social hardship in rural areas (Baker; Panter, Todd, 1997). Literature suggests that the increasing level of poverty has been pushing the children on to the street. However, it is not the only reason why children are working on the street. The poor social services (i.e. education, rehabilitation and, the equitable distribution of the basic services) can play an instrumental role in affecting the situation of children (ILO, 1995). Thus an integrated approach need to be undertaken to reduce the 'worst form' of street child labour. To find out the variety and magnitude of the problems and their consequences, further research has to be done in Nepal.

This data exercise involves an initial exploration of problems of street child workers. It envisions exploring the practices of street child workers in Kathmandu, Nepal, and focuses on activities related to child safety, moral and health issues, abuse and prostitution. The total numbers of respondents was 32, selected from four different streets of Kathmandu. The streets have been selected by having consultation with local NGOs. The basic criteria are numbers of street child workers on the particular street and accessibility. As a result new Bus-station, New road, Thamel and CWIN common room have been selected as study sites. The CWIN common room is not a street but at that place children frequently come and go. A qualitative research approach has been used for the data collection and analysis. Observation, focus group discussion (FGD) and in depth interview (IDI) tools have been used in this study.

4.2 Literature review

It has been reported that school children are less stunted than street child workers, squatter and village children in Nepal. It has also been reported that street child workers report more health problems than school going boys i.e. 71.4 percent street child workers reported health problems whereas only 45.2 percent school going children complains about health problems (Baker, Panter and Todd, 1997). However, who are the village boys, what is their socio-economic and ethnic classification? These aspects needs to be clarified. Most of the street children who are working on the street come by poor socio-economic realities from the village (CWIN, 1998). The study could not clarify the similarities and dissimilarities between street and village children. The growth ratio may depend upon when and at what age did children come and begin to work on the street.

With regards to gender distribution, various studies have shown various results. It has been reported that in the USA 51% of the children working on the street were boys and 49% were girls (Unger, Simon Thomas, Newman, Montgomery, Susanne and, Michel 1998). However, in Nepal 96% are boys and 4% are girls (1995, ILO). The reason behind this is that Nepal is a male dominated society, which does not allow girls to do risky work. Thus, girls in Nepal are less likely to work on the street.

I have been using 3 qualitative data collection tools in this exercise. The literature states that observation has been used because it gives insights and understanding to the researcher on the problems. It provides a very strong basic framework that gives crucial credibility to the qualitative study (Singha, 1991). The importance of observation is recognized in an interventional study because it gives emotional information to the programme implementers. The observer can take information and form impression that go beyond what can be fully recorded in even the most detailed field notes (Singha, 1991)

Originally, focus group discussions were used in marketing research to gather information on consumer's feelings, opinions and reactions. Later on focus group discussions were used in various fields to get information on a specific group of people (Vong-Ek, 1991). The technique is both time saving and cost effective.

The in Depth Interview relies on the construction of interview guidelines containing open ended questions which correspond to specific categories and data items classifications (Singha, 1991). When writing the report the researcher should try to integrate quantitative information sometimes with the focus group data to make it more valid (Vong-Ek, 1991).

4.3 Methodology

Three qualitative techniques were used during the study 1) Observation, 2) Focus Group Discussion, (FGD) and, 3) In Depth Interview (IDI). Prior to the actual research a two days field visit was made to collect basic information and to have an orientation on the lives of street child workers in Kathmandu.

4.3. 1 Objectives

The general objective of this study is to explore the factors contributing to the 'worst form' of child labour and to search for a possible intervention to reduce the worst form of child labour in Kathmandu, Nepal. Following are the specific objectives.

- 1 To acquire the knowledge and experiences on qualitative data collection instruments

- 2 To test and refine the data collection instruments through practical implementation.

- 3 To explore the causes of street child workers existence on the street.
- 4 To explore the problems faced by street child workers related to safety, health and moral, child abuse and prostitution.

4.3.2 Study venue

For the purpose of this data collection exercise four places were selected from Kathmandu: New Bus Park, Thamel, New-Road and CWIN Common Room. The places were selected by consulting with the local NGOs who are working for street child workers in Kathmandu. All selected areas are accessible and can be reached by public transportation even at mid-night. Telephone facilities are available during nighttime also. Observation was done until mid-night. Although CWIN common room is not a street it was selected because street child workers frequently come and go to this place and it is a good place to maintain the confidentiality.

- CWIN : FGD (8 respondents) and IDI (4 informants)
- New Bus Park : FGD (9 respondents), IDI (5 informants) and observation.
- Thamel : IDI (3 informants) and observation
- New Road : IDI (3 informants)

4.3.3 Field preparation

Prior to my study at the College of Public Health I have gained working experience in above-mentioned areas. I know that these places are common places where street workers gather and work. Although street child workers frequently move

from place to place, we can find approximately 20 to 30 children in each of those areas. Before going to the field secondary data about street child workers were collected by consulting the local NGOs i.e. CWIN Kathmandu, and CONCERN Kathmandu. Then I made an informal field visit to explain the socio-economic conditions and individual practices of street child workers. During that visit I had informal discussions with community members and street child workers that gave me insights on the problems being faced by street child workers (SCW) in the study areas.

4.3.4 Sampling

The use of proper sampling units in research is a key issue because it affects the results of the study (Kaewsonthi and Harding 1992). For the purpose of this study non-probability sampling has been used. The non-probability sampling is used in particular, for pilot studies where the objective is to determine nature and distribution of variables in a population (Kaewsonthi and Harding, 1992). Under the category of non-probability sampling purposive sampling tool was used to determine the place and respondents. 'Purposive sampling is the selection of a number of elements of the population in an attempt to achieve a sample that represent the population under study' (Kaewsonthi and Harding, 1992).

All together 32 respondents (street child workers) were involved in the in depth interview (IDI) and focus group discussion (FGD). Observation has been done in new Bus park and Thamel, FGD has been done in CWIN Common Room and new Bus park and IDI has been done in new Bus park, Thamel, Kalimati and New-Road of

Kathmandu. There are different children in IDI and FGD. The selection of respondents and sites has been done based on the selection criteria.

4.3.5 Selection criteria

Participants for the FGD and IDI have been selected by using following basic criteria.

1. Working more than 6 hours per day.
2. Age group 5 to 14 years.
3. Gender; including girl children as per availability.
4. Similar kinds of work.
5. Preference for children who migrated from villages.

Recommendations, made by street child workers with regards to the selection of respondents, have been adopted. Street child workers suggested to involve some children from Kathmandu who are sleeping on the streets.

4.3.6 Data collection tools

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, qualitative research methods have been used for the data collection and analysis. Observations, focus group discussions (FGD) and, in depth interviews (IDI) have been used in this study. More sophisticated and structured questions may not be answered by children, thus group focused and open-ended questions would be better when working with children (WHO, 1993).

4.3.6.1 Observation:

Participant observation has been done in selected sites, in new Bus park and Thernal of Kathmandu. To identify the appropriate time and venue, assistance was obtained from local NGO's. Informal talks with children took place while walking around working and sleeping area. Field notes were used during the observation. Health, personal hygiene, kind of work, work places, sleeping places, entertainment and group work has been observed. Field notes and reflections were used for analysis and report writing.

Two time frames have been set to acquire different occupations of street child workers (1) evening 6 to 9 pm and, (2) morning 5 to 9 am. Due to the diversity of work, work places and time tabulation of findings from the observation could not be applied

4.3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion

In this study two groups have been selected for focus group discussion. 'Usually more than one group session is held, using different members, to assure adequate coverage (Vong-Ek, 1991). The members have been selected as per selection criteria. However, participants were selected on the basis of their commonalties. The street child workers from New Bus Park and CWIN common room have been invited for FGD. In the Bus Park, 9 children including 2 girls were invited and from CWIN common room 8 children (only boys, because there were no girls) were invited. The

guiding questions were asked by insuring confidentiality to the children. The FGD place was safe for children because it was in a separate room. Sophisticated instruments i.e. camera and tape recorder were not used during FGD because such equipment might have distracted participants. As compensation for their time all participants (17) were invited for a dinner. For the purpose of a smooth and accurate process one moderator (M), one reporter (R) and one observer (O) were appointed. To finalize a report on the findings a joint meeting of moderator, reporter and observer was organized. The MRO developed the report from compiling notes and memory.

4.3.6.3 In Depth Interview

The same guiding questions were used as for FGD. The respondents' selection has been done as per selection criteria. Total 15 children including 3 girls were interviewed. Confidentiality has been maintained. The respondents proposed not to publish their name in any report, which was agreed upon. The interview place was away from the children's work places. Flexibility during the interviews has been maintained. The low cost gifts were given to respondents as compensation.

The results of the section on demographic characteristics of FGD and IDI have been compiled and presented in a quantitative manner first. The guiding questions asked in FGD and IDI were the same (see annex 'I') thus it was possible to compile results. It is recommended that focus group tool not be used alone but as a complementary method (Vonge-Ek, 1991). Secondly the results from observation, FGD and IDI were subject qualitative analysis.

4.3.7 Data analysis

Simple quantitative and qualitative descriptive analysis was done for this study. Using qualitative techniques data were collected on socio demographic and health-related information from street child workers at the study sites.

4.3.8 Reliability and Validity of data

Triangulation of findings has been done to crosscheck reliability and validity of data. Participatory observation was used to obtain clear information and accurate interpretation.

FGD has been done in two places. An Independent reporter and observer were appointed to avoid bias of the researcher. The venues of the interview were away from the work places or public places to provide an environment that made respondents feel at ease. Moreover interviews were done in the 4 places that facilitated in cross-check the results among different places.

4.4 Limitations of the Study

The time factor is the most prominent limitation of this study. The study has done in the winter season, the results acquired may not cover the problems faced by street child workers throughout the year.

The investigation could not reveal the information regarding prostitution. In the Hindu culture prostitution is a taboo thus it is hard to get information easily.

Children are anxious to answer questions on sex work because of its illegal character and the social taboo.

There were very few guidelines to assist in analysis of qualitative data, which has created a problem to arrive at findings. Finally due to time and distance, verification of in depth interviews could not be done.

4.5 Results

The results from the study have been presented in two parts, observation, FGD and IDI have been presented in qualitative descriptive manner where as the compiled results on demographic characteristics FGD and IDI are presented in a qualitative descriptive form. Analysis was done per tool as well as compiled (1) results from observation, (2) results from FGD, (3) results from IDI and, (4) results compiled from FGD and IDI.

4.5.1 Results of Observation

Observations were done in two sites, one in new Bus park and other in Thamel. Following are the results obtained from observation.

4.5.1.1 Health and Personal Hygiene

All street child workers had poor clothing. Their body was unwashed and they did not wash their hands before eating. Observation was done in December 1999, the season was cold but children did not have warm clothing to wear. If they go for

work late in the morning the municipality will take away all the garbage. They walked with barefoot. Common cold, dirty clothing, playing in the dust, smoking, long hair, unwashed body and eating cookies without washing hands were observed.

4.5.1.2 Work and work places

Most of the children were working on the garbage sites. To collect the recyclable garbage they walk around the residential areas, along the roads and dumping sites. In addition, the street children work in the car parking area, Bus park, side walks and nearby the tourist hotels. Where they carry luggage, washing vehicles, doing employed vending and pushing cabs and tuk-tuk in above mentioned working places.

4.5.1.3 Entertainment

Street child workers enjoy with the group by cutting jokes, firing rubbish, and listening to the music along the road.

4.5.1.4 Group work

Most of the children share information among the groups. The following were seen during the observation; elderly boys sharing food with younger, sleeping at the same places, talking and sharing the problems and quarreling. For more information about observation please see appendix 'J' Report of Observation.

4.5.2 Results of Focus Group Discussion

The moderator, the reporter and the observer jointly compiled findings of FGD. Analysis was facilitated by compiling and describing the findings. The mind-mapping technique was used during analysis

Girls' involvement in street work was found lowest compared to boys. Only two girls participated in the FGD. Most of the street child workers responded that they work long hours 8 to 16 hours a day, facing threats from police and adults and facing the problems of fever and common cold. The finding of common cold and fever may rely to the season because the study has been done in the month of December 1999. Another important result of FGD is that the significant numbers of children come on the street due to lack of food. However, more than two third of the street child workers were facing problems of food on the street.

4.5.3 Results of the In Depth Interview

In depth interviews among street child workers have been done in new Bus station (park), New road, Thamel and CWIN common room. Field notes were used to memorize responses from street child workers. Responses were reviewed and compiled and mind mapping was used to facilitate analysis. Response reports were prepared but due to time and geographical constraints verification with respondents could not be done.

The major findings from IDI were: A minority of girls are working on the street, most of the street child workers are working on the dumping sites where they collect recyclable garbage and many of them were facing problems of fever and common cold. A detailed report 'responses of in depth interview' is presented in appendix 'K'.

4.5.4 Results of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and In Depth Interview (IDI)

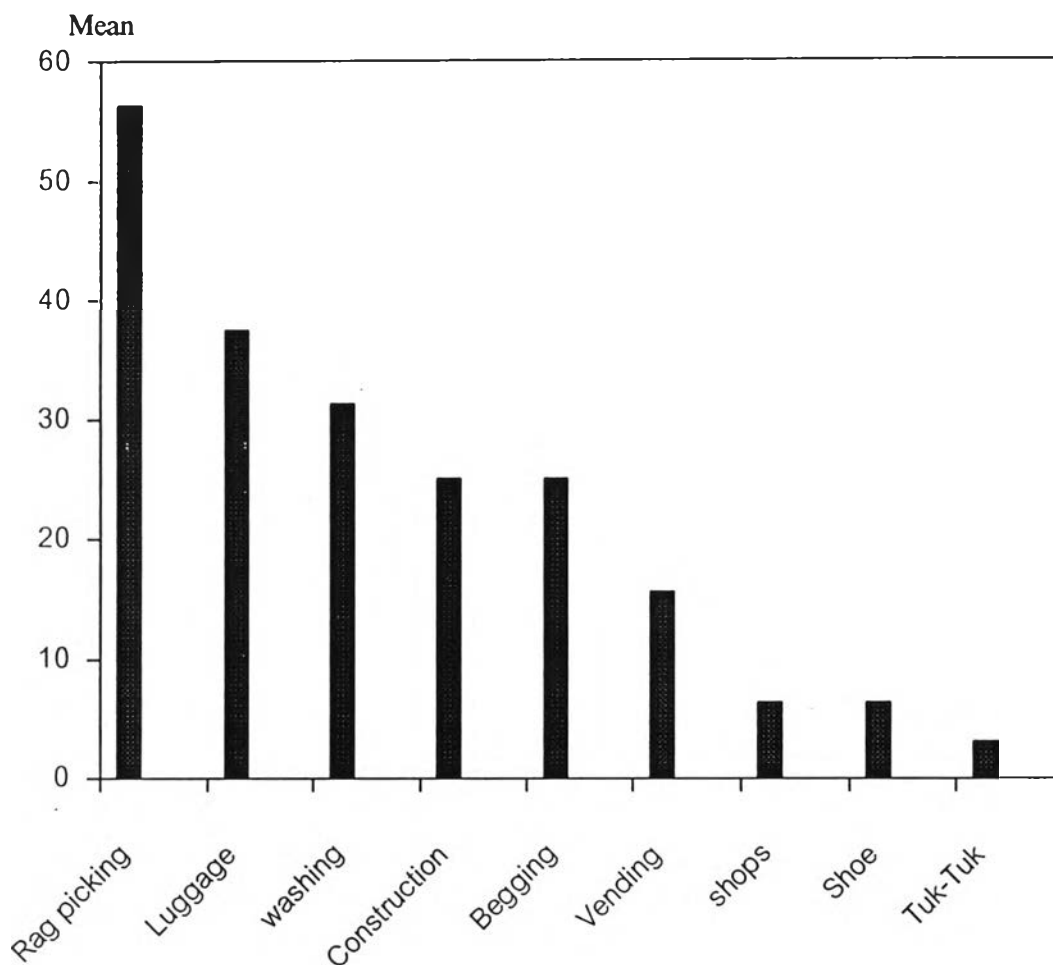
Since the same guiding questions were used for FGD and IDI findings were compiled and using quantitative and qualitative analysis.

4.5.4.1 Quantitative description

(A) Work of street child workers in Kathmandu, Nepal

The total number of respondents was 32. Many of the respondents stated to do more than one job because the same job is not available at all times. Close-ended questions were asked in both IDI and FGD regarding their works. The number of responded have been counted and presented in the figure 4.1. Figure 4.1 shows that the majority of street child workers have been involving in the rag picking (56.3 percent). Only 3.1 percent are being involved in tuk-tuk helping. All work is time consuming and provides exposure to accidents. Most importantly among the children working at the garbage dumping sites where people through broken glass, metal and even sometimes syringe that directly injures the children and can cause wounds and infection.

Figure No.: 4.1 Works of Street Child Workers



(B) Demographic Characteristics of the Street Child Workers

In terms of age, children between the age of 8 to 14 were found to be working on the street, with more than 1/3 under the age of 11 years. The age of street child workers has been asked in the introductory part of both IDI and FGD (32 total respondents). Following chart will help to understand the number of children according to the age.

Table No.: 4.1 Age distribution

| Age in years | Mean |
|---------------------|-------------|
| 8 | 21.9% |
| 9 | 12.5% |
| 10 | 3.1% |
| 11 | 3.1% |
| 12 | 37.5% |
| 13 | 15.6% |
| 14 | 6.3% |

The table shows that there are more children aged 12 working on the street. In Nepal children under the age of 14 is not legally allowed to work.

4.5.4.2 Qualitative Description

The nature of the IDI and FGD is different thus we can not combine and present them in any single way of expression and figure. However the same guiding questions were asked in this study, that facilitates to analyze some common findings i.e. the majority of children responded that due to violence and lack of food at home they come to street labour. The majority of children are facing problem of not having food on the street and majority of children have similar perception about health care providers where they feel unwelcome.

4.6 Discussion

Due to limited research on street child labour and different work definitions applied in the studies it is difficult to compare the findings of this data collection exercise. Difficulties become more apparent when comparing outcomes from a qualitative study with quantitative literature.

Similarity can be found in working places. Most of the study group work on the garbage sites. Two third (2/3) of the children were rag pickers (Baker, Panter and todd, 1997). This exercise majority of respondents are involved on the rag picking.

Globally, health of street children has been reported to be poor. In Kathmandu 37.7 percent children responded to have infectious diseases (Baker, Panter and todd, 1997).

In California 43 percent engage in illegal activities (prostitution and pornography) and 20 percent reported druggies (Unger et. al., 1998). However, in Nepal there are no reliable records available on this issue. Due to the time and cultural limitations this exercise could not yield findings on this issue. The problem of child prostitution needs to be dealt very sincerely, thus an extensive research is needed.

The presence of girl child on the street is reported lower world wide. In California 51 percent boys and 49 percent are working on the street, that is highest proportion in the world (Unger et. al., 1998). In Nepal it has been reported that 96 percent boys

were working on the street (ILO, 1993). In Nepal girls are not free as in other cultures and religions therefore they are less likely to work on the street.

It has been reported that 83 percent children are on the street because of neglect and abuse at their home (CWIN, 1999). Other research showed that 42 percent are on the street due to economic hardship (Baker, Panter and todd, 1997). This report shows that most of the children comes on the street due to lack of food in their home. Thus it can be said that economic factor is rather an important factor.

One-fourth of children have not regular contact with their parents (Baker, Panter and todd, 1997). This exercise shows that majority of the children have not had family contact. Most of the children come on the street due to family disruption and violence at home thus they do not have interest to reunify with their family.

In conclusion many street children are below the age of 14, lost contact with parents or do not have guardians, do not know adults they can trust who could accompany them for treatment, and do not have the necessary documentation on their problem. Although these obstacles relate particularly to accessing health services, similar problems exist for street children in trying to access housing, welfare benefits, educational opportunities and employment. After being turned away from different services on numbers of occasions, and not having adults to advocate on their behalf, these children consider it pointless to try again, even when they are in great need. Thus an advocacy programme by involving the children in planning, implementation and evaluation is required to deal with the problem.

4.7 Lessons Learned

The qualitative research tools were found to be useful to explore the situation of the target population in the community. It has provided insights and better understanding of the problems of street child workers in Kathmandu. Observation carried with it the emotion and feeling related to living conditions, working, and socializing. During the focus group discussions children were very much interested to hear each other's problems. FGD could be useful to empower street child workers. During the in depth interviews children told that they felt comfortable to share their painful life story to an outsider. This research tool provided them with an adult listening to them and their stories.

The most encouraging lesson during this exercise is that children can express themselves properly. The cooperation received from street child workers were encouraging i.e. straightforward and dramatic. A lesson learnt is that it is better to have an assistant investigator from the local community, because they know the time schedule of children's work and can help to gather the children for both FGD and IDI. Another lesson learned from this exercise was that, only elder children tried to speak in FGD, it needs facilitation skills to deal with this. Another encounter in IDI was that children tried to impress the interviewer by dramatizing their problems. Replicability has been found complex while using qualitative research tools. We can not repeat exactly the same study using the same set of methods. However, such a replication may be necessary to verify the findings of study. Finally, further research through cross-sectional and longitudinal studies on life paths of children when they grow-up would be useful.

4.8 Conclusion

The study was able to reach its objectives. It explored the problems experienced by street child workers. It indicated an opportunity on possible intervention to address the problem because the majority of children showed their interest in being involved in a child advocacy project. However, before conducting a child advocacy project, a feasibility study needs to be done in the project area. It has found that the majority of the children have been suffering by lack of food, ill health, threats and violence on the street. Most of the children suffer from more than one problem in study sites. Due to time and resource constraints the study could not collect the data regarding child prostitution thus further study has to be done to explore the extent and nature of the problems related prostitution among street child workers in Kathmandu, Nepal. Finally the study could indicate causes, consequences and the magnitude of problems among street child workers in the study sites.

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