



Save the Children



Surviving

The Streets



Institute For Human Development

SURVIVING THE STREETS

A census of street children in Delhi by the Institute
for Human Development and Save the Children

Save the Children works for children's rights. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.



Save the Children

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Project Manager: Dr. Alex George

Written by: Dr. Reshmi Bhaskaran and Dr. Balwant Mehta

Reviewed by: Sarita Falcao

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Foreword

Street children constitute one of the most vulnerable groups in Delhi. At the time of forming Save the Children India, it was decided to focus our interventions on this critical group of children. However, there was a lack of data on street children, and we were requested by the Central Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) to conduct a study of street children. Therefore, in collaboration with the Institute for Human Development (IHD), Save the Children conducted a census of street children in all nine districts of Delhi in 2010.

Street children fall into three categories. The first are street-living children who have run away from their families and live alone on the streets. The second are street-working children who spend most of their time on the streets fending for themselves, but return home on a regular basis. The last category is children from street families who live on the street with their family.

Approximately 51,000 children below 18 years of age were enumerated as street children through this census. Thirty six per cent of street children belonged to the category of children from street families. Children who work on the streets and returned home regularly constituted 29 per cent and children living alone on the street constituted 28 per cent of the total street children population in the city.

Sixty one per cent of the children surveyed were 7-14 years of age. Only 20 per cent of the street children in Delhi were girls. Dalits were 36 per cent, while 17 per cent were adivasis.

In terms of what street children were occupied with; 20 per cent were rag picking, 15 per cent were street vending, another 15 per cent were begging, 12 per cent were working in roadside stalls or repair shops 6 per cent were working in dhabas/hotels and 1 per cent are employed in manufacturing units.

While every effort should be made to reunite street children with their families, the Government should also ensure that the basic rights of street children to shelter, food, clothing, education, health and protection. This should be provided in an age-appropriate manner.

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Dr. Alakh N. Sharma, Director, IHD has provided guidance and leadership in conducting this massive census exercise, which Save the Children gratefully appreciates. We thank in particular the two researchers who conducted this study viz. Dr. Resmi Bhaskaran and Dr. Balwant Mehta, faculty at IHD.

We hope that this study will be an eye opener to the multiple problems of livelihood, health, education and protection faced by street children in Delhi and that the children on the street will have their rights realised as other citizens of India.



Thomas Chandy
CEO, Save the Children



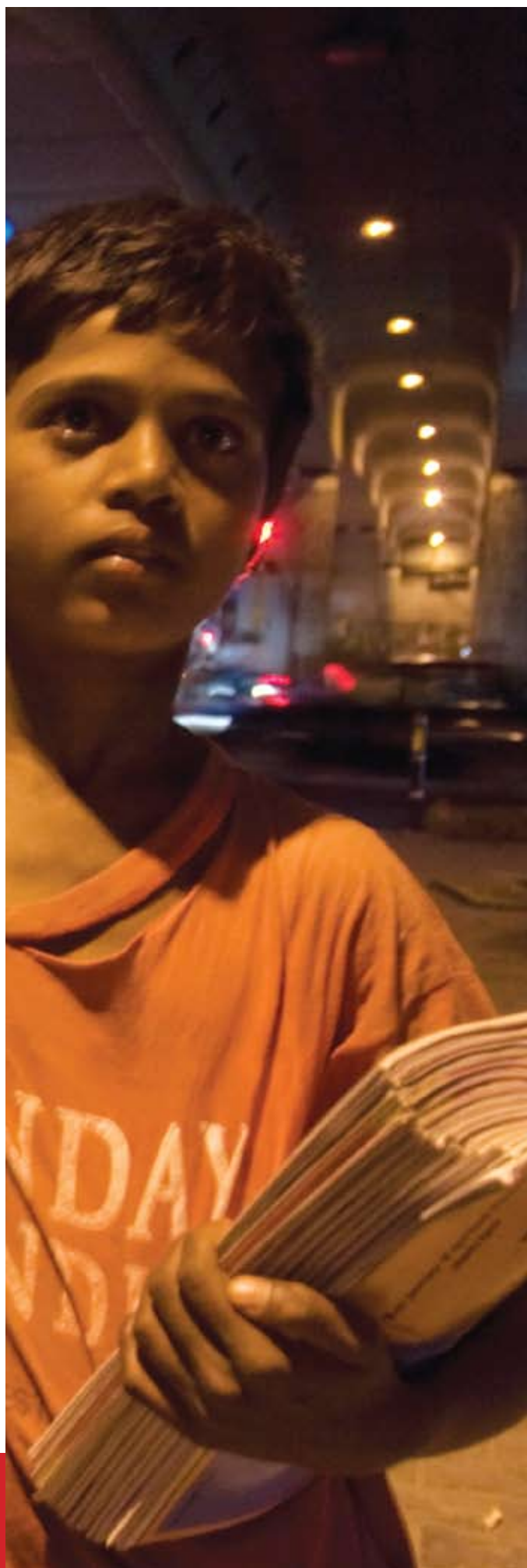


Abbreviations



AWCs	: Anganwadi Centres
CBOs	: Community Based Organisations
CMS	: Centre for Media Studies
CSOs	: Civil Society Organisations
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
HIV/AIDS	: Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)
ICDS	: Integrated Child Development Services
ILO	: International Labour Organisation
MCD	: Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NCEUS	: National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector
NCPCR	: National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
NCR	: National Capital Region
NCT	: National Capital Territory
NDMC	: New Delhi Municipal Corporation
NFE	: Non-Formal Education
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organisations
NLI	: National Labour Institute
OBCs	: Other Backward Castes
SC	: Scheduled Castes
SDT	: Sexually Transmitted Diseases
SSA	: Sarva Siksha Abhyan
STs	: Scheduled Tribes
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	: World Health Organisation

Executive Summary



The existence of a street population is an outcome of urban planning's inability to accommodate the rapid inflow of people into a city. Governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the world, including in India, have initiated a lot of efforts at the policy and programme levels to alleviate the plight of street children.

This study on the census of street children in Delhi sheds light on their numbers, concentration locations, nature, demographic profiles, and other details about the night shelters available for them. The study had two objectives: (1) To estimate the total number of street children in Delhi; and (2) To bring about an understanding of their socio-economic and related conditions. It used quantitative methods, which were supplemented by qualitative methods. Data was collected in two stages. The first was a census enumeration in which every child who fell under the UNICEF definition of street children was counted. Stage one also completed the collection of basic information on the socio-economic and demographic profile of street children. Using the census as the listing exercise, a sample survey of street children was conducted during the second stage. A semi-structured questionnaire, consisting of closed and open-ended questions, was used to collect information. The study covered all the nine districts of Delhi state (Central, East, North, North East, North West, South, South West, West, and New Delhi), which fall within the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.

Definition of Street Children

The UNICEF definition of street and working children was followed for this study. According to UNICEF, three types of children belong to the category of street children. The first is **street-living children** who ran away from their families and live alone on the streets. This includes children from households both in Delhi and outside Delhi. The second is **street-working children** who spend most of their time on the streets fending for themselves, but return home on a regular basis. The last category is **children from street families** who live on the streets with their families. In this study a child is defined as one who is below 18 years of age.

Findings of the Census of Street Children in Delhi

- **50,923 children below 18 years of age were identified as street children in Delhi during 12 July to 28 August 2010.** Street children in Delhi constitute nearly 0.4 per cent of the total population. **Street children below 18 years constitute nearly 1 per cent of the total number of children in Delhi.** North Delhi district had the highest concentration of street children at 10,091, and South West Delhi the least at 2,936 children. Of the 50,923 street children, **the sample study randomly selected 1,009 children, or 2 per cent of the total,** to understand their socio-economic and related conditions.
- A majority of the street children (36.03 per cent) belonged to the category of **children from street families. Children who work on the streets** constituted 29.05 per cent and **street-living children** constituted 27.91 per cent of the total street children population in the city.
- Only 20.5 per cent of the street children in Delhi were girls.
- Around two out of three street children, i.e., 61 per cent, belonged to the 7-14 years age group while 23 per cent were from the 15-<18 years age group.
- **Social class is a key determinant in leaving a child on the streets to work or live** because one out of three street children was a ***dalit* (36 per cent), 17 per cent were adivasis,** and 38 per cent belonged to Other Backward Castes (OBCs).
- A majority of the street children were Hindus (75 per cent), followed by Muslims (17 per cent), and Christians (1 per cent).
- **In all, 50.5 per cent of the street children were not literate, 23 per cent** had received some form of non-formal education while another almost **20 per cent** had received some kind of formal education (13 per cent up to pre-primary, 4 per cent up to primary, and 2.4 per cent up to middle school). Nearly one-fourth of all the children had received some kind of non-formal education

offered by civil society organisations (CSOs). Most of the school-going children belonged to the categories of ‘children of street families’ and ‘children working on the street’.

- One out of every five (20.3 per cent) of the street children was involved in rag picking. This was followed by street vending (15.18 per cent), begging (15 per cent), working in roadside stalls or repair shops (12.19 per cent), *dhabas*/hotels (6.24 per cent), and manufacturing units (1.22 per cent). Reasons why street children worked varied from survival, to funding healthcare for parents, sending remittances home (usually somewhere far-off), and earning something extra for personal and family use.

Children’s Condition and Life on the Street: Findings of the Sample Study

- One out of every three children (34 per cent) was on the street due to poverty and hunger. Around 30 per cent were on the street in search of jobs; they had either come by themselves (17.7 per cent) or were sent by their parents (12.6 per cent), 9 per cent were on the street after running away from home (the reasons for running away included out of curiosity, escape from abuse, and family issues), or they had been kidnapped, orphaned, or because of incidents such as riots, accidents and natural calamities, or because they had inadvertently lost contact with their parents while travelling.
- Thirty-nine per cent of the street children slept in slums, 46 per cent in open/public places, and only 4 per cent slept in shelters provided by NGOs, the government, other organisations, and individuals. A majority (63 per cent) of the street children stayed with family members such as parents (45.3 per cent), siblings (7.6 per cent), and relatives (10 per cent). Around 14 per cent stayed with friends or fellow street children, 4 per cent stayed with their employers, and 11 per cent stayed alone. Another 11 per cent of the children surveyed did not respond to this question.
- Nearly 92 per cent of the street children knew about their families and also knew where they

hailed from. The ratio of those born in Delhi and those born outside Delhi was 50:50. However, it was reported that most of the street children (around 70 per cent) had families in Delhi. As per the sample survey, only 30 per cent of the children said that their families were outside Delhi. The census found that a majority of the street children were from Bihar (21.2 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (15.3 per cent), Rajasthan (6.8 per cent), Jharkhand (4.1 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (3.9 per cent). It is important to note that a majority of them were children of migrants from these states and they never visited their places of origin.

- According to the sample survey most of the children, 88.5 per cent of the children who had left their homes had contact with their families. Only 10 per cent were cut-off from their families and were 'absolute' street dwellers. Most children (57.1 per cent) visited their homes periodically. A notable number of children (nearly 12 per cent) said that they visited their homes to deliver money because they did not have any accessible and facilitative remittance facility.
- Nearly 87 per cent were involved in some income-generation activity (88 per cent boys and 81 per cent girls), though it was also observed that some girls with street families were not involved in any income-generation work. On average, they worked six days a week, 6.6 hours per day. More details on the income-generation activities of street children are given in Chapter 4.
- Their average monthly earning was reported at Rs. 2,240. Of this, 49 per cent of their total income was given to parents (45.1 per cent children did this), to supervisors who were also some kind of gang leaders (3.5 per cent children), and to the police (0.4 per cent children). Overall expenditure on food was 37.5 per cent of the income.
- Nearly 22 per cent of the street children said that they used drugs, largely tobacco and *pan masala*. Incidence of the use of alcohol, whiteners, and thinners was also reported. Nearly 50 per cent were daily consumers, 28 per cent were weekly consumers, and 20.6 per cent were monthly consumers.
- Nearly half of those who claimed to attend school or said they had got an education had only received one to two years of schooling. Nearly 19 per cent were attending or had attended school up to Class V. The percentage of street children who had gone beyond the primary level was minimal. Overall, 64.2 per cent of the children demanded some kind of skill training, nearly 43.7 per cent wanted school education, and 17.4 per cent wanted both school education and skill training. Nearly 39 per cent wanted only skill training. More than 55 per cent preferred to attend classes in the evening while 41 per cent preferred to study in the morning.
- In the month prior to the survey, 27.7 per cent of the children had fallen sick. Most of the street children (44.6 per cent) said that they had approached a private nursing home/clinic for treatment. Children also accessed NGO-provided health services and mobile clinics. NGO involvement in providing health services to street children was predominantly visible.
- **A majority of the street children (87 per cent) paid for accessing toilet facilities in Delhi. In the case of girls, this figure was more than 90 per cent.**
- Six per cent of the street children had some disability: blindness (42 per cent), speech (19 per cent), hearing (16 per cent), and mental disabilities (8.2 per cent). The major reasons for street child being disabled were: from birth (85.1 per cent), through accidents (8.1 per cent), and intentional (6.8 per cent).
- More than 130 children reported having witnessed another child/children being abused on the street. Verbal abuse was experienced and observed by almost all the children. In the case of physical abuse more than 50 per cent of the boys had been beaten up as had 31.4 per cent of the girls. Boys were abused mostly by parents/guardians, police, and relatives/friends while the girls (nearly 63 per cent) were mainly abused by relatives/friends.
- Awareness about existing programmes, support, or help was limited to only 30 per cent of the street

children. Out of these, only 15 per cent (around 45-50 children) had received some kind of support. Among them, 74 per cent had received support from NGOs, 7 per cent from both NGOs and the state, and nearly 10 per cent from the government.

- In all, only 19.2 per cent of the children reported having some identity proof or entitlement (mainly identity cards issued by agencies such as an employer or sometimes NGOs). Twenty-three per cent of the children said that they had birth certificates, while 20 per cent had ration cards.
- Delhi's street children were found to be mobile and nearly 20 of them had shifted at least once in the

month prior to the survey. The reasons for their moving were standard: they had no permanent shelter so they moved according to the availability of a shelter or a job and also in search of food. Such decisions were sometimes taken by the family, by friends, by agents, and sometimes by the children themselves.

- Only a few children said that they would prefer to go back to their place of origin (some other state), most migrant children preferred to continue living in Delhi (46.2 per cent).



Photo Credit: Raghu Rai 2009



Recommendations

In view of these findings, this study makes some recommendations and policy interventions that would ensure the rights of street children as citizens of India.

- A programme focusing on re-uniting street children with their families should be adopted. Strategies for intervention need to consider ways of strengthening families' responsibility for their children. Children should only be placed in institutions, or given foster placements as a last resort.
- There is an urgent need of **coordination among development** agents working for the rights of street children and information sharing among all stakeholders to enhance implementation strategies. As most of the children are not in school, there is an urgent need to provide appropriate education, both formal schooling and skill training, for these children.
- **Existing or new government programmes aimed at street children need three essential components:**
 1. **Creating awareness** about government and NGO schemes/programmes for street children.
 2. **Ensuring access to basic necessities.** Street children need to be provided essential entitlements such as safe shelters, food, clothing, education, safe drinking water, and sanitation with the help of grassroots organisations, so that the benefits reach the end beneficiaries.
 3. The government must ensure that **when a slum/habitation is demolished, children get re-enrolled in other schools where their parents have shifted** and their entitlements are restored at the new address.
- Most street children are among the poorest of the poor who have migrated to urban centres as a survival strategy. **Children should be facilitated in getting identity proof, which the government accepts as an entitlement document, and**

enables them to get admitted in schools.

- **It is essential to increase the number of shelters, not only night but also day shelters for street children.** It is essential for the government and NGOs to **pay more attention to girls and women on the street.**
- Night classes and other service-deliveries can be also centered around such places. Such places can provide the children some identification and address proof.
- **Interventions are needed in rural areas to reduce migration of young children from rural to urban areas.**

Employment possibilities for adults should be increased dramatically in those rural areas from which large-scale out-migration is taking place.

Efforts need to be made to ensure that children from families that migrate on a seasonal basis are cared for in their home villages. The government and NGOs need to develop schemes to support and provide care to the children of migrant couples in their villages in poor rural areas. Some kind of **residential support** could be provided **to the children of migrant couples** in rural areas to ensure that they get education and other skill-development training.

Vocational training programmes in rural areas should be linked to NFE programmes. These programmes should be

mainstreamed with regular schools to ensure that the right to education reaches the street children in the same manner as it is to children attending schools in the mainstream education system.

Community mobilisation is needed in ensuring that duty bearers such as the Department of Education, Women and Children are 'keeping their promise' to street children.

- Duty bearers such as the Departments of Education, Women and Children; the Delhi State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, police, and civil society members need to ensure that street children are protected and work on strategies that can facilitate their rehabilitation and integration into the mainstream, starting with getting them enrolled in schools.
- Many street children get involved in drugs, sex work, and other activities and are prone to abuse. The government should ensure that appropriate services with doctors, counselors, and social workers are provided to these children.
- Finally, to bring down the incidence of street children, much larger focused interventions are needed such as better housing plans, inclusive urban development policies, and increased number of boarding schools for poor children in both rural and urban areas.

Chapter I

Introduction and Methodology

The National Capital Territory (NCT)-Delhi is a major destination for migrants from neighbouring states in north India. Though the number of slum and street dwellers is not as high as it is in Mumbai and Kolkata, Delhi nevertheless has a visible population of street dwellers, of which children constitute a significant part (SSA undated).¹ The presence of a street population, especially children, in a city is a clear indicator of the level of denial of basic rights. It also reflects on the fact that the rehabilitation efforts are either minimal or below the desired level compared to the magnitude of the street population. The rate of migration has seen an increase in the last few years which implies that the number of street children in Delhi is also increasing. The city has limited capacity to provide shelter, livelihood, and other services to all these people. Further, the lack of data on street children in Delhi at any given time proves a major hindrance to the government when it seeks to formulate effective policies.

The present study is an attempt to bridge this information gap about the number of street children in Delhi. This study is expected to shed light on their numbers, concentration locations, their conditions, demographic profiles, and details about the night shelters available to them. This understanding is critical for developing proper intervention plans; it is also expected to lead to debates on broader issues such as their rehabilitation and ensuring them rights and basic support.

I.1: Contextualisation of the Study

Growing global concern since the 1980s for the rights and welfare of children has diverted attention towards children in difficult circumstances, especially the problem of increasing numbers of street children in urban areas mostly within the developing world. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Urban Poverty Report 2009* cites the incidence of a street population as an outcome of the inability of urban planning to accommodate the rapid inflow of people into a city.

Slum and street dweller populations largely comprise of migrants who abandon rural habitats due to: (i) Natural

¹ Available at: ssa.nic.in/urban-planning/Overview%25 (accessed on October 15).

Photo Credit: Raghu Rai 2009

or man-made calamities, (ii) Socio-economic or ethnic distress, and (iii) Those who are pulled to cities in search of jobs, a better life, or are just attracted to 'bright city lights'.² Migrant children specifically end up on city streets either with families who have moved from their villages in search of livelihood, or when they have been kidnapped by criminals who send them out for begging or for other anti-social activities. Children, who have lost contact with their parents or guardians while travelling, and those who have run away from homes or orphanages due to serious or silly reasons, also end up on city streets. The core reasons for a child being on the street revolve around household poverty, sickness, running away from harsh treatment at home or in an orphanage, and due to exploitation at various levels and of different magnitudes. This then is the dark, unfortunate, and painful part of nation/city development: an amorphous floating world of untracked, often untraceable children deprived of safety, security, love, affection, and care, in addition to the denial of all basic services and facilities.

Dominique Lapierre's 1984 novel on Kolkata, *The City of Joy*, illustrates the life, joy, sorrow, struggle, and violence of the city and how it affects or influences children living on its streets/slums. Danny Boyle's 2008 Academy award-winning movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, with street children as the main actors, has also caught global attention depicting as it does the life and lifelessness of street children in Mumbai. The struggle for survival, the blatant violation of the rights of a child, and the denial of even basic support to street/slum children in these two cities – reflected in Lapierre's book and a decade later in Boyle's film – remains more or less the same. However, it is remarkable to observe that by 2008, the main protagonists are depicted as aspiring to a better life through their tough learning.

Governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the world have initiated a lot of efforts at the policy and programme levels to alleviate the plight of street children. Street children form a major area of concern for any urban planning authority which has to mainstream and rehabilitate them. As mentioned earlier, the case of most Indian cities is no different. The central and state governments have added to the Prevention of Beggars Act (1959) from time to time – street children also feature in the Act. However, any effort to control beggars, including street children, without any rehabilitation strategy

has only led to criticism from various corners (Ramanathan 2008).³ The efforts of the Government of India and various state governments often appear to be more in the direction of sanitising cities keeping aesthetics rather than the rehabilitation of slum and street dwellers in mind.

NCT-Delhi has a significant number of street children and its government has always maintained an exclusionary character towards the poor slum and street dwellers. In order to keep the core area under NCT-Delhi free of such dwellers, the government constantly sends them away by force, a case in point being the Commonwealth Games 2010, when they were sent out of city limits for the duration of the games (Kishwar 2010).⁴ This is no solution, especially for Delhi which is a growing city, a major economic centre in north India, and a magnet for migrants, including children from nearby states.

To tackle the issues of street children in Delhi, it is essential to understand the magnitude of their presence on its streets. To rehabilitate street children, both the government and development agencies require dependable information on their numbers, their socio-economic and demographic profiles, and their locations and mobility profiles. A major lacuna in developing policies and programmes is the lack of credible and comprehensive data on street children. Data available for developing policy advocacy and programmes is inadequate as it is largely cross-sectional, and city or location-specific within a city.

This study is an attempt to estimate the number of street children in Delhi by using the head counting process and also at profiling them with a sample survey.

1.2: Literature Review

Street children are basically an urban phenomenon. However, the problem of street children is becoming increasingly widespread. It is also seen as being closely linked to the problems of urban children and working children in urban areas (Blanc 1994).⁵ This perspective, traditionally predominant in research in this area, has led to overlapping and underestimation of the issue.

1.2.1: Discussion of the Definition

The definition of who is a street child is the determinant element in assessing their numbers and undertaking

² S Findley (1977): *Planning for Migration: Review of Issues and Policies*. US Bureau of Census, International Statistical Programme Centre, Washington DC.

³ Usha Ramanathan (2008): 'Ostensible Poverty, Beggary and the Law', *Economic and Political Weekly*, November.

⁴ Madhu Purnima Kishwar (2010): 'Wounded Pride or Vanity'. Available at: www.Indiatogether.com (accessed in October 2010).

⁵ Cristina Szanton Blanc (1994): *Urban Children in Distress: Global Predicaments and Innovative Strategies*. Gordon and Breach Science Publications, Switzerland.

profiling of street children. However, most global bodies appear to disagree when it comes to deciding the age at which childhood is legally over. Various agencies, both national and international, set the upper age limit of childhood differently. Literature amply reflects the vagaries that plague this subject. The UN Child Rights Convention defines all those up to 18 years of age as children. Most of the international agencies which work on child's right issues (UNICEF and Save the Children) follow this definition and they also insist that children in the 0-18 years age bracket should not be part of any kind of labour force. However, Article 24 of the Indian Constitution and the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1986) defines a child as 'a person who has not completed 14 years of age'. As a result, the law does not prohibit the involvement of children between 15-18 years in income-generating activities.

The rationale behind defining the age group till which childhood may be said to exist, is to ensure that the person getting involved in an income-generation activity is not being denied her/his rights as a child: primarily the right to education and leisure which is critical for her/his mental, physical, and intellectual growth.

In the case of street children, apart from age, their living conditions (including residential and working locations) and their links with their families also become determinant factors. Blanc (1994) and Jain (2006)⁶ elaborate upon who can be considered street children. They identify three critical conditions that make a street child. UNICEF's definition is also based on this classification. Accordingly, street children are those who:

- (1) **Keep ties with their families, they return home at night** and some of them attend school as well; a small number have actually left home and largely work on the streets;
- (2) **Live at home in urban areas or in the suburbs and contribute to the household economy through their engagement in the informal sector mainly on the roadside in places such as eateries, workshops, all kinds of vending activities, and begging.** They spend the day (some of them spend the night too) on the streets; this is a smaller but slightly more complex group; and
- (3) **Have no functional family ties, but attempt to fill this void by forming 'fictive family' relationships and**

even a strong emotional attachment to the street. These children are completely 'on their own' and although they might have some peer support, life for them is a fight for survival. They are **largely orphans, runaways, refugees, and displaced.** They also belong to the neglected and abandoned category.

These conditions very clearly capture the broad profile of a street child. Though this definition is used widely, various agencies have come up with their own definitions to deal with the issues of street children. However, overall it is clear that the approach basically centres on a certain set of working and living conditions. Regardless of the definition or category in which they are placed such as with family, without family, orphan, working, or non-working, street children tend to spend a major part of the day on the streets with other children during their adolescence. They are also widely treated as 'juvenile delinquents' by society at large and also by the authorities.

As a result, studies say that there is hardly any difference between the common characteristics of street children and their vulnerability levels. As per UNICEF, even if they live with their families on the street and only spend a few hours on the street for work, these children still belong to the category of children at high-risk.⁷ According to UNICEF, street children always live in difficult circumstances in terms of safety, security, health issues, and working and living conditions.

The constant overlap of concepts about the age of childhood, children without families, high-risk children, children in need of care and protection, and abandoned children only indicate the magnitude of the crisis that a street child deals with every moment of her or his life.

Agnelli (1996)⁸ and Muchini et al. (1991)⁹ argue that the definition of street children can be divided into two broad categories – children '**on the street**' and children '**of the street**'. Children '**of the street**' are homeless children who live and sleep on the streets in urban areas. '**Children on the street**' earn their living or beg for money on the street. They maintain contact with their families and some of them go home at night, whereas '**children of the street**' live on the streets and probably lack parental, emotional, and psychological support.

⁶ Mahaveer Jain (2006): *Insights on Child Labour*. Manak Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.

⁷ UNICEF (1997): '*Strategies for Eliminating Child Labour: Prevention, Removal and Rehabilitation*', International Conference on Child Labour, Oslo, Synthesis Document, UNICEF, New York.

⁸ S Agnelli (1986): *Street Children: A Growing Urban Tragedy*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London. Cited in S Mawoneke, A Sexton, and K Moyo (2001): *AIDS and Street Children in Zimbabwe*.

⁹ B Muchini and S Nyandiyi-Bundy (1991): *Struggling to Survive: A Study of Street Children in Zimbabwe*. Report to UNICEF, Harare.

Nevertheless, these categorisations turn out to be complex. If a child spends more time on the street, she/he might associate more with the street peer group than with her/his family. From the perspective of parental care and child rights, leaving a child to fend for herself/himself on the street for income-generation is totally unacceptable. Such children may also be deprived of family support in terms of emotional and personal care, and there is hardly any difference between 'children on the street' and 'children of the street'. Any debate on the definition of street children needs to consider these aspects and also provide more insights on the context of their overlapping such as when defining how they are on the street and defining the crisis that a child faces at every moment of her/his life. In other words, it is understood that the overlap has emerged due to the complexity of the situation.

Our operational definition for this study is based on the UNICEF definition and is in line with Agnelli (1996) and Muchini's (1991) definition.

1.2.2: Working Conditions

The definition of street children reported in various studies focuses on urban working children and the number of street children varies from one study to the other in the same city. An accurate estimate of children on the street is critical at the policy level as it informs on the intensity of the issue. An accurate estimate is also essential for addressing a child's need and right to survival, protection, development, and participation, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illnesses. It also includes the right to education, which is directed at the development of a child's personality, talent, and mental and physical abilities to her/his fullest potential, and the right to benefit from social security.

While the definitions dwell around working and street children, it is also true that implications of a child being on the street and at work are different. When a child belongs to both categories (street and working) the gravity of the issue of denial of child rights is wider and deeper. A UNESCO document on *Education for Street and Working Children in India* (2001) illustrates the implications of being on the street during childhood: "Street children are susceptible to drug/alcoholic addiction and to inhalants¹⁰ that offer them an

escape from reality, take away hunger and cold and give them the 'courage' to steal and engage in survival sex. As a result, they get into a lot of physical and psychological problems.¹¹ Many of these kids eventually turn into hardened criminals controlled by organized mafia for drug trafficking, prostitution and other unlawful activities, thus citing heavy burden on the law and order machinery." It is also reported that these children experience torture and atrocities at the hands of employers, the police, and often at the hands of society at large, which seeks to extract maximum labour from them.

Here it is important to state that the working conditions faced by street children in cities dominate all definitions. Street child labour has traditionally been seen as an urban phenomenon. It therefore becomes essential to verify through literature why is it that cities attract or employ child labour? Boyden (1991)¹² explains this in detail based on a primary study on 'the children of the cities'. According to him the special qualities attached to youthfulness and childish agility are major attractions for employers. He further adds that employers say that they recruit child labour due to their efficiency in activities requiring manual dexterity and speed. They are also more alert and nimble than adults and more likely to get away if captured while involved in stealing activities. However, this could well be an approach to justify the involvement of a child in work. In reality it is clear that the abundant availability of children on city streets who are largely without any sort of guardianship, is one of the key reasons that employers are able to freely recruit and exploit them. They are vulnerable because they are young, small, poor, ignorant of their rights, and often have no family members who will come to their defence; in case they do have guardians, it is more than likely that they may be incapable of defending them or of approaching/ensuring any legal help, or of generating any other kind of support.

On the other hand, working street children are prone to exploitation by employers who make them work for long hours in the same posture, without food, without providing any safety information or equipment, without informing them about the consequences of the activity, and by making them work for abysmally low wages without any social security and without any holiday or leisure, as mentioned by Wasi (2002)¹³ and Goyal (2005).¹⁴ The work is mostly too demanding in relation to their size and strength, causing

¹⁰ Like cobbler's glue, correction fluid, gold/silver spray paint, nail polish, rubber cement, permanent/dry erase markers and gasoline.

¹¹ Like hallucinations, pulmonary oedema, kidney failure, and irreversible brain damage.

¹² Jo Boyden and Pat Holden (1991): *Children of the Cities*. Zed Books Ltd, New Jersey, USA.

¹³ Jehanara Wasi (2002): *Children in Difficult Circumstances*. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi.

¹⁴ P K Goyal (2005): *Street Children and Child Labour*. Vista International, New Delhi.

irreversible damage to their physical and physiological development, resulting in permanent disabilities, with serious consequences for their adult lives. It is also reported that children and young workers often tend to have more serious accidents than adults.

1.2.3: Issues that the Street Children Face

Studies on street children (NLI 1992; UNESCO 2001; Wasi 2002; Goyal 2005) discuss the sexual abuse¹⁵ that children experience on the street and at the workplace. A visible form of sexual exploitation is commercial flesh trade. While initially only girls were thought to be vulnerable to this, now the number of boys being trafficked for work in commercial flesh trade is increasing. In addition, the incidence of sexual abuse on the streets is very high, especially during the night. The children are largely exploited by strangers, adult street dwellers, and sometimes by fellow street children. Cases of sexual abuse by the police and other authorities are also reported.

The implications of sexual abuse go deeper than is often reported. While discussing the increasing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS among children in India, Dhawan et al. (2010)¹⁶ report that the likelihood of street children getting affected by such diseases is very high. A study by Pagare et al. (2005)¹⁷ among boys at an observation home in Delhi explains the intensity of mental, physical, behavioural, and health issues that children suffer from due to sexual abuse. Nearly 20-30 per cent of the boys in observations homes are from the streets or have been abandoned/relinquished. This is a significant percentage.

These studies indicate that the difficulties, insecurities, and stresses that surround the living and working conditions of a child are beyond anyone's imagination. Moreover, their implications on a child's existing mental and physical status are deep-rooted and will adversely influence her/his mental, physical, intellectual, and behavioural health for the rest of her/his life. It is the responsibility of larger

society to mainstream these children and to provide them the rights that they are being denied. It must be recognised that they are a critical part of society, thrown on its streets largely for reasons unknown to us. It is evident that no child is on the street by choice; she/he has been forced to make that choice. Sometimes they end up on the streets due to their own ignorance. It is clear that any reason which leads a child to make that kind of choice needs to be addressed.

When we talk about the incidence of street children in different economies, it is presumed that street children are associated with developing nations. Boyden's (1991)¹⁸ work, however, shows this is not the case and that street children are also visible in developed nations. Italy is a striking example. The prevalence of an informal sector, increasing household poverty, and abandonment have led to the prevalence of a street population and also of street children. This in general is also associated with the growth of cities as well.

1.2.4: Estimation of Street Children

Estimating the correct number of street children anywhere in the world is a complicated task. All studies accept a small percentage of over or underestimation (Ferrara and Ferrara 2005)¹⁹ of the street population. It is interesting to look at historical efforts in estimating street children in India that trace back to the 1950s. The first census on street children was conducted in 1957 in Chennai (Madras) by the Tamil Nadu government, which was followed by another study in Mumbai (Bombay) in 1959 (cited in Bhattacharya 2003).²⁰ These efforts mainly sought to understand the grey areas in urban development and social welfare. These studies found that nearly 30 per cent of the street population was of children.

In 2000, a study of beggars in NCT-Delhi conducted by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS)²¹ for the Ministry of Social Justice showed that a significant number of beggars were children. They did not estimate the figure, but said that nearly 90 per cent were migrants. A study by the

¹⁵ Sexual abuse of a child is defined as, "the involvement of a child in a sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to or that violate the laws or social taboos of society," *World Report on Violence and Health*. WHO, Geneva 2002.

¹⁶ Jyoti Dhawan, Somesh Gupta, and Bhushan Kumar (2010): 'Sexually transmitted diseases in children in India', *Symposium on Pediatric Dermatoses*, Vol. 76, Issue 5.

¹⁷ Deepthi Pagare, G S Meena, R C Jiloba, and M M Singh (2005): 'Sexual Abuse of Street Children brought to an Observation Home', *Indian Pediatrics*, Vol. 42 (February).

¹⁸ J Boyden (1991): *Children of the Cities*. Zed Books, London.

¹⁹ Federico Ferrara and Valentina Ferrara (2005): *The Children's Prison: Street Children and India's Juvenile Justice System*. Available at: <http://www.careshareindia.org/Pages/OH/OHEnglishb.pdf> (accessed in September 2010).

²⁰ Sunil Kanta Bhattacharyya (2003): *Social Defence: An Indian Perspective*. Daya Books, New Delhi.

²¹ CMS (2000): *An in-depth study of problems, control and prevention of beggary and rehabilitation of beggars in NCT of Delhi*. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Centre for Media Studies, New Delhi.

²² Sneha Tandon (2007): *Survey of Beggar Population in Delhi (2006 – 2007)*. Project funded by Department of Social Welfare, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, India, School of Social Work, Delhi University, Delhi.

Delhi School of Social Work (2006-07)²² also stated that nearly 30 per cent of the beggars (street dwellers) were children. A study by Action Aid (2004)²³ on beggars in Delhi and Mumbai, also showed that a significant number of beggars were below 18 years of age and it estimated that there were around 60,000 beggars in Delhi. A study conducted by the National Labour Institute (NLI) in 1996 on working children in Delhi²⁴ revealed that 18 per cent (nearly 400,000) of the total number of informal workers in Delhi were below 14 years of age. The thrust of this study was on street and working children and not essentially on street children. These estimates of street children can be challenged as they focused on issues related to beggars or working children in the city. From this, they estimated the number of street children as well.

A conservative estimate of the number of street children in India by UNICEF with the help of its partner NGOs in 1994, though old, estimated the approximate number of street children living in Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata together between 100,000-125,000. There are also a few other studies that have analysed the number and status of children on Delhi's streets. These have largely been civil society initiatives to understand the vulnerability of such children – how at-risk they were with regard to various forms of abuse, adverse health issues, and childhood deprivation. One such study was conducted by the St. Stephen's Hospital, Delhi which found that there were 7,472 homeless children in the city among a population of 67,151 homeless people.²⁵

These studies also discuss the reasons behind the children ending up on the street: running away, losing contact with one's parents or guardians while travelling or in a crowd, being kidnapped by criminals, moving to the city looking for jobs, coming to the city to visit somebody and then deciding to stay, and moving to the city with one's family due to various reasons. The UNICEF study says that each of these children may be missing, runaway, abandoned, or trafficked. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) (2001)²⁶ noted that street children are largely visible at railway and bus stations, in market places, and near religious places.

The profile of street children depicted in these studies shows that a majority (between 70-80 per cent) were

boys. The relatively low incidence of girls on the streets is explained as they may be at an untraceable location, or may have been trafficked and may be off the streets but being sexually or otherwise exploited. Another argument is that the propensity of boys to leave dysfunctional families and abusive parents is relatively high and it is also observed that they may not prefer to be on the streets for long (Agnihotri 2001).²⁷

Literature thus shows that there has hardly been any focused attempt to estimate the number of street children in Delhi. Street children are counted either as working children or as beggars. Literature also debates the challenges and complexities involved in estimating street children. The definition, location, timing of the survey, and climate can alter the figures significantly. Efforts to study street children have largely been in the form of sample studies to understand their profiles and reasons for their being on the street. Government and development agencies have conducted such sample surveys mainly to formulate rehabilitation policies and programmes for children on the hostile streets of Delhi.

However, in order to understand the intensity of the issue and to formulate an intervention strategy to rehabilitate these unfortunate children, the state and all other stakeholders require numbers that they can depend on. This understanding is also critical for initiating evidence-based advocacy activities for the enhancement of the status of these children by civil society organisations (CSOs). This study is an attempt to strengthen the debate in this regard.

1.3: Objective

The study has two objectives:

- To estimate the total number of street children in Delhi; and
- To bring about an understanding of the socio-economic and related conditions of street children.

The sub-objectives are:

- To generate district-wise information on the concentration of street children;
- To profile the type of street children in terms of age, gender, education, religion, social class,

²² H Mander (2002): *Forgotten Lives: Public Policy and Poor People in India* New Delhi. Action Aid.

²³ V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, NOIDA (1996): *Working and street children of Delhi*. V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, NOIDA.

²⁴ Available at: http://www.4to40.com/parenting/index.asp?p=City_Homeless_Children_at_Risk&k=City_Homeless_Children

²⁶ NCPCR (2001): *Recommendations for 'Safeguarding the Rights of Children at Railway Platforms'*, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) Government of India, New Delhi.

²⁷ P Agnihotri (2001): 'Street boys of Delhi: A study of their family and demographic characteristics', *Indian Journal of Medical Science*, Vol. 55, Issue 10, pp. 543-8.

- occupation, night shelter, and link with family;
- To provide details of their socio-economic and occupational characters;
- To provide details on their mobility patterns; and
- To provide information on abuse and denial of rights.

I.4: Operational Definition

As it was observed that the definition of who constitutes a street child will have a significant impact on the estimation process, it was decided to follow the UNICEF definition of street children; this is also in line with Aginelli (1996) and Muchini et al. (1991). According to UNICEF, there are three types of children who belong to the street children category. The first is **street-living children** who have run away from their families and live alone on the streets. Here it is important to note that they are not necessarily migrants. Children of residents of the city who have run away from home and live on the street also belong to this category. The second is **street-working children** who spend most of their time on the street, fending for themselves but return home on a regular basis. The last category is **children from street families** who live on the streets with their families. It should also be clarified that a child is defined as one who is below 18 years of age and this definition thus includes newborn babies as well.

I.5: Methodology

The methodology of the study was developed based on these objectives. The study used quantitative methods supplemented by qualitative methods. Data was collected in two stages. The first stage was a census enumeration during which each child who fell under the UNICEF definition was counted. Stage one also completed the collection of basic information on the socio-economic and demographic features of a street child. Using this census as a listing exercise, the second stage, which consisted of a sample survey of street children, was undertaken. A semi-structured questionnaire, consisting of closed and open-ended questions, was used to collect information. It was administered using one-on-one interviews in Hindi. The details of the sample study are given later in the report.

In order to initiate the study, the team conducted consultation meetings with area experts from academia,

civil society, and policy-making bodies. This was mainly to get a broad understanding about the incidence of street children and their overall behaviour to develop a field survey strategy. In addition to these key informant interviews, the study also conducted focus group discussions (FGDs) and case studies.

In some locations, following Save the Children rules like photographing a child only with her/his permission, the study also attempted to visually document their activities. But this attempt was not successful as most of the children were reluctant to pose for photographs.

I.5.1: Details of Primary Data Collection

Location selection: The entire Delhi state which is also known as NCT-Delhi by NCR Planning (explained in detail later) was the field of the study. This included the city of Delhi and New Delhi. This region has the largest concentration of population in the entire NCR. District-wise data collection method was followed. Based on the district road map, the field work started from a key location in the district and moved around in all directions to cover the entire district. To ensure that the entire district was enumerated, field teams marked the covered areas on the detailed district map. Using this format, field work in each district was completed.

The identification of street children for a head count was based on their location (on the footpath/pavement, under a bridge, at religious places, in markets, parks, tourist spots, bus stands, and railway stations), and on specific displayed street-child behaviour such as begging, vending, and loitering/sleeping on the street.

Period of the survey: The census was conducted during July-September 2010.

Timing of the survey: Based on information from area experts, the survey involved the administration of interviews during the day and at night. This was because some children were mobile and could only be found at night in places where they came to sleep. The survey largely took place in the afternoon and continued till 9 pm. It also avoided rainy days.

Census enumeration: The census method was used to count all the street children. A brief questionnaire was

used to collect basic demographic and socio-economic information. As filtering criteria the children were asked certain questions such as where they slept and why they were on the street. In order to avoid duplication in counting, every child was asked whether she/he had been enumerated by anybody else with the same set of questions during the previous month anywhere in Delhi. Similarly, to get information from deaf and dumb children, the study used the support of the peer group or if that was not possible, only did a head count.

Sample survey: A sample survey of 1,009 street children was also conducted to understand the lives, living conditions, mobility patterns, and issues of street children. Head count enumeration was used as the listing process. In order to ensure the representation of at least 2 per cent of the total number of children, it was decided to select every 50th child randomly, to constitute a sample. In case of reluctance or non-response, the child was replaced by the next willing respondent. Similarly, in case a child was too small to respond, the questions were put either to the parents or guardians or to other children who could respond properly on the child's behalf. In case this was not possible, the next willing respondent was used for the sample survey.

Focus group discussions (FGDs): As part of the study, FGDs were conducted to add a qualitative dimension to it by gaining an in-depth understanding of the lives of street children. The FGDs focused on those areas where the sample survey had tagged an issue, but had been unable to provide any details. Therefore, location selection targeted: (i) An area where such an issue was tagged but the sample survey had been unable to provide any details, (ii) An area where the incidence of street children was very high, and (iii) An area where it was not complicated to organise the children in a group. Overall, general or key questions were asked to initiate the discussion and also to encourage the children to reveal their general perceptions and attitudes. Specific questions were asked to get into deeper discussions of these perceptions. These were probing questions and were aimed at getting the children involved in an interactive discussion process. Finally, though the children could answer many of the questions themselves, the FGDs also sought to involve other people in a child's environment to get a complete picture.

Structure of the field work: The field work comprised of four layers to ensure good quality of the data and also to ensure that the study covered the entire geographical area of Delhi. The researchers monitored the study with frequent field visits and cross-checked field coordinators' daily reports who contacted/visited field supervisors. Field investigators collected data from the field under the direct supervision and help of field supervisors. The entire field team was given both classroom and field training by the researchers.

1.5.2: Challenges and Limitations of the Study

First, the inability of some children to answer certain questions in the interview schedule affected the responses to some extent.

Second, children who work on the street (in *dhabas*, workshops, and as street vendors) were largely reluctant to respond and their employers restricted investigators' access in many cases. Many children blocked access by asserting that they were 19 years old, when they appeared to be in their early teens. This seems to be because they have some understanding of the legal position on child labour in India. Studies on child labour (Bhaskaran et al. 2010)²⁸ mention that even if a child between the age of 12-15 years is associated with a firm, the employer normally instructs her/him to tell whoever asks that she/he is 19 years of age or more. In many cases, they make fake birth certificates indicating the same. Hence, there is a possibility that nearly 10-15 per cent children, who fell under the study definition, would have been effectively covered up. Employers thus evade the law and also undermine the efforts of various agencies who try to rehabilitate child labour.

Third, children on the pavements who are on their own, refused to accept that they came under any of the categories that define street children, especially in those locations which report a high incidence of street children. Even if they were incapable of answering questions about their families or homes, they claimed that they were on their way home. It emerged from discussions that these children were largely used for pick-pocketing. They were also always under the surveillance of their gang leaders. The incidence of such children in Delhi is around 1 to 2 per cent (Kacker et al. 2007).²⁹

²⁸ Resmi P Bhaskaran, C Upendranath, and Dev Nathan (2010): 'Invisible workers in the Delhi Garment Sector', Paper presented at a CPRC conference.

²⁹ L Kicker et al. (2007): 'Study on Child Abuse: India 2007', Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

Fourth, the weather during the survey also turned into a challenge. During peak summer it was possible to trace the children though only in the evenings. So the study in the first four districts was successful, but by the end of July and the whole of August, rain affected field work. Locations that reported a high incidence of child labour such as railway and bus stations, and major market areas were flooded and it was difficult to trace the children.

Fifth, the decision by the city and state authorities (which includes the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), and the Delhi State government) to round up and put the children outside city limits before the Commonwealth Games also proved to be a challenge. Children were aware of this decision by public authorities, especially the police to trace and take them away from the city (Kishwar 2010). So in many locations, the moment the team started interacting with some of the children the others disappeared. This proved to be a major challenge.

Sixth, it was also observed that in order to complete the civil work for the Commonwealth Games, a lot of families were brought in from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. They came with small children. They worked and slept largely on the streets. They were in Delhi for a very short time as many of them had agricultural land in the villages and had come to Delhi to make some money. However, since these children fell under category

three of UNICEF's definition (children of street families), they were enumerated as well.

These challenges in data collection turned to be a limitation of the study as well.

1.5.3: Data Processing and Analysis

Data was verified manually in three stages, first by field supervisors during the field survey, followed by field co-coordinators, and finally in the office by research assistants. Research assistants also undertook detailed cross-verification and coding in consultation with research coordinators before data entry. After data entry, the data was corrected by generating frequency tables and by cross-verification with the hard copies of survey sheets. Data entry was done in MS-access and the final analysis in SPSS data analysis software.

1.6: Note on the Study Area: NCT-Delhi, a District-wise Snapshot

Delhi became a state in 1991 with limited powers. Before that it was a union territory. The National Capital Region (NCR)³⁰ of Delhi comprises of the National Capital Territory (NCT)-Delhi and other areas. NCT-Delhi is the central zone of NCR covering nine districts of Delhi state. Overall, NCT-Delhi has the smallest geographical area (only 4 per cent) within the entire NCR, but houses

Table 1.1: Percentage distribution of population

Districts	Total number	Rural (%)	Urban (%)	% of slum population to all population (%)	Population density (per sq. km)
Central Delhi	646385	0	100	70.9	25855
East Delhi	1463583	1.25	98.75	7.8	22868
New Delhi	179112	0	100	20.7	5111
North Delhi	781525	5.96	94.04	52.4	13025
North East	1768061	8.01	91.99	4.8	29468
North West	2860869	9.28	90.72	11.1	6502
South Delhi	2267023	7.09	92.91	11.2	9068
South West	1755041	12.85	87.15	6.5	4179
West Delhi	2128908	4.08	95.92	11.7	16503
DELHI	13850507	6.82	93.18	15.7	9340

Source: Census 2001.

³⁰ The concept of the National Capital Region (NCR) emerged from the need for spatial expansion to accommodate the administrative requirements of the National Capital of India (NCR Planning Board).

the largest chunk of population in the entire NCR (nearly 38 per cent). For the purpose of this study, we covered all the nine districts (see Table 1.1).

- **The North West Delhi district** is a combination of rural and urban areas with many resettlement colonies, shelter homes, and industrial areas. It is the most populated district in the state with nearly 90 per cent urban population and 11 per cent slum population. The major locations for the study in this district were Model Town, Azadpur mandi, Jahangirpuri, Rohini area, Narela, Ritala, Saraswati Vihar, Keshav Puram, Mundka, Nangloi, Sultanpuri, Mangolpuri, and Bawana.
- **The North East Delhi district** is also a highly populated district, with 29,468 persons per square kilometre area, and has one of the major resettlement colonies in Delhi, Seemapuri, and many areas that house low-income populations such as Nand Nagri, Yamuna Vihar, Usmanpur, and Maujpur. The major locations in this district were Shahadra, Seelampur, Naveen Shahdra, Ram Nagar, Seemapuri, Babarpur, Shalimar Garden, Dilshad Gardern, Bhagirathi Vihar, Ashok Nagar, Khajuri Khas, and Bhajanpura.
- **The Central Delhi district** is, in fact, a small district that lies between the New and North Delhi districts. Its population is 100 per cent urban with more than 70 per cent slum dwellers. It has many crowded locations and the population density shows its intensity. It constitutes of the old city areas of Chandni Chowk, Jama Masjid, Red Fort, Sadar Bazar, Indraprastha Estate, ITO, Kamala Market, Paharganj, Jhandewalan Extension, Karol Bagh, Jhandewalan, Old and New Rajendra Nagar, Daryaganj, and Raj Ghat. Many tourist and religious places fall in this district. The New Delhi railway station is also located in this district
- **The North Delhi district** is largely urban in nature with a 94 per cent urban population. The population density is also very high and more than 50 per cent of its population is composed of slum dwellers. It comprises of many highly congested and poor locations in Delhi. The Delhi University campus and Delhi's Legislative Assembly are in this district. Major locations in the district are Tis Hazari, Old Delhi railway station, Sarai Rohilla, Anand Parbat,

Shastri Nagar, Shakti Nagar, Timarpur, Sangam Vihar, Sant Nagar, Wazirabad, Kishan Ganj, and Subzi mandi. Similarly, the district has a couple of entry points for migrants from western, north-western, and northern states such as at Old Delhi and Sarai Rohilla railway stations and the Interstate Bus Terminus (ISBT) at Kashmiri Gate. This district is close to the North district which has many resettlement areas and child shelters.

- **The New Delhi district** lies in the central part of Delhi which comes under the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) area. It is 100 per cent urban. Though the Parliament, Rastrapati Bhavan, and most of the central government departments are spread across this district, nearly 20 per cent of its population is composed of slum dwellers. The major locations in this district are India Gate, Pragati Maidan, Connaught Place, Gol Market area, Bangla Sahib, Hanuman Mandir, Khan Market, Safdarjung Airport, and Chanakyapuri. In this district, children are largely located around religious places, tourist spots, traffic lights, and areas near the New Delhi railway station.
- **The East Delhi district** is located in the trans-Yamuna area and is another highly populated district. It has many crowded market places and a rail junction (Anand Vihar) as well as an interstate bus terminal (Anand Vihar). The major locations in the district are Ganesh Nagar, Pandav Nagar, Mandavalli, Inderprastha Extension, Shakarpur, Preet Vihar, Geeta Colony, Shastri Nagar, Chandra Nagar, Krishna Nagar, Silampur, Savita Vihar, Jhimli, Anand Vihar, Gazipur mandi, Kalyanpuri, Gandhi Nagar, Vivek Vihar, Mayur Vihar, Patparganj, and Laxmi Nagar.
- **The South Delhi district**, the second highest populated district in Delhi, is surrounded by the states of Uttar Pradesh (Gautam Budh Nagar) and Haryana (Gurgaon and Faridabad districts). The major locations in this district are Nizamuddin, Lajpat Nagar Market, Okhla Extension, Nehru Place, Kalkaji, INA, Kotla, Khanpur, Jamia, Hamdard, Madangir areas, and Saket. The Nizamuddin railway station also falls in this district.
- **The South West Delhi district** constitutes a wide area, but a major chunk of this district is

occupied by the airport, cantonment area, and farm houses. In addition, the South West Delhi district has a varied character since the Najafgarh sub-division is predominately rural, the Delhi cantonment sub-division is mostly urban, and the Vasant Vihar sub-division is a mix of both urban and rural. Mehrauli, RK Puram, Sarojini Nagar, Safdarjung Enclave, Dhaula Kuan, Moti Bagh, Vasant Kunj, Vasant Vihar, Madhu Vihar, Palam Village, Dwaraka, and Najafgarh areas are located in this district. This district has some high-security areas and also many middle class settlements.

- **The West Delhi district** is a major centre of residential colonies with market places such as Rajouri Garden, Janakpuri, Punjabi Bagh, Nehru Nagar, Patel Nagar, Uttam Nagar, Mohar Garden, Sunder Vihar, Amar Colony, Mundka, Birral, and Vikas Puri. Many bus depots, metro stations, religious places, and industrial areas are located in this district (see Map 1.1).





Chapter 2

Street Children Census—An Eye-Opener

Eighteen-year-old Jamal's story is narrated through sequences in the movie Slumdog Millionaire. We watch as he and his brother Salim come to the streets from the slums of Mumbai and how Latika joins them. We see the distress, violence, and work conditions that they face over the years to reach the humble position of tea supplier[s (?)] in a BPO. An earlier narrative, written in the form of a book in 1985, The City of Joy, also caught global imagination as it explored the plight of the poor and marginalised in their daily fight for survival in cities. These two stories highlight and re-emphasise the causes, conditions, and status of the life of a street child – separated from her/his parents forever due to some calamity (man-made or natural) or due to any of a hundred other horrible reasons: poverty/hunger, kidnapping, trafficking, search for food, shelter and work, forced prostitution, the list can go on. The story of street children remains more or less similar across cities and periods.

This chapter is an outcome of a census enumeration exercise undertaken in Delhi. It gives the estimated number of street children in the city and provides a broad profile based on information collected by way of the census enumeration. The methodology followed was basically of a head count enumeration. But to know more about the children and the locations in which they are concentrated, we included consultations with policy officials, local people, and social workers. In order to get more details the study team also conducted brief discussions with the children.

2.1: The Number of Street Children in Delhi

The study identified 50,923 children below 18 years of age as street children in Delhi during 12 July 12 to 28 August 2010.

How did we come to this figure? We used a census to head count a defined population of children of the streets and children on the streets in Delhi. As explained in Chapter 1, the age of a child was defined as up to 18 years. Those children who met the following three UNICEF-identified conditions were defined as street children for the purpose of this study: (1) **Street-living children** who had run away from their families and lived alone on the street; (2)

Street-working children who spent most of their time on the street, fending for themselves but returned home on a regular basis; and (3) **Children from street families** who lived on the street with their families.

Based on this definition, and using conservative estimates of the total population,¹ our census showed that street children in Delhi constituted nearly 0.4 per cent of the total

population. The fact that nearly 32.4 per cent of Delhi's population falls in the 0-14 years age group, nearly 1.14 per cent of the children (0-14 years) in Delhi are street children. Once we include children in the age group of 15-18 years, this figure might be around 1 per cent.

Though street children are visible across the city, districts with more than 90 per cent urban population reported

Table 2.1: District-wise distribution of street children

District	Street Children in Delhi		Population of Delhi		
	Number	Percent	Total Population	Rural %	Urban %
Central Delhi	5862	11.5	646385	0	100
East Delhi	7325	14.4	1463583	1.25	98.75
New Delhi	5629	11.1	179112	0	100
North Delhi	10091	19.8	781525	5.96	94.04
North East Delhi	5416	10.6	1768061	8.01	91.99
North West Delhi	3581	7	2860869	9.28	90.72
South Delhi	4314	8.5	2267023	7.09	92.91
South West Delhi	2936	5.8	1755041	12.85	87.15
West Delhi	5769	11.3	2128908	4.08	95.92
Total	50923	100	13850507	6.82	93.18

a slightly higher incidence of street children, with the exception of South Delhi district.² A relatively low incidence of street children was observed in districts where the rural population is more than 10 per cent of the total

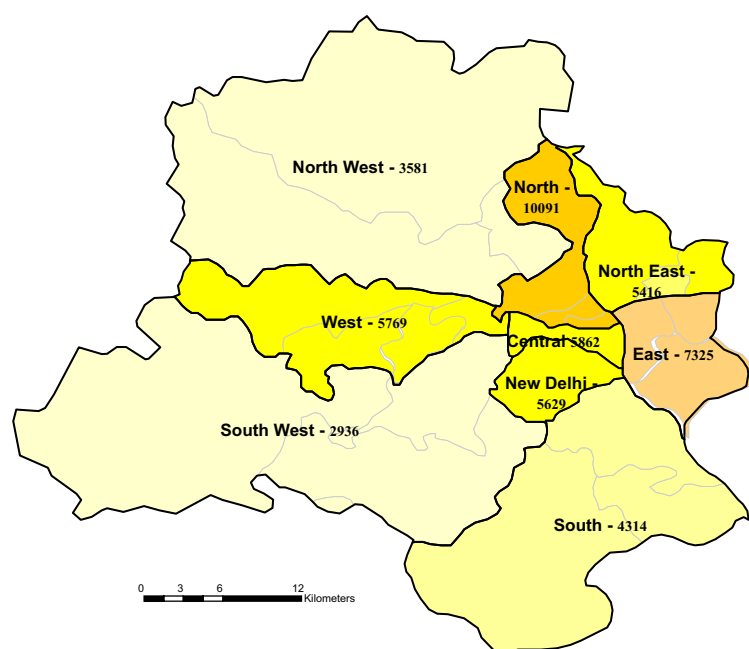
population (Table 2.1).

The North Delhi district reported the highest concentration of street children at 10,091, followed by East Delhi (7,325), Central Delhi (5,862), West Delhi (5,769), New Delhi (5,629), and North East Delhi (5,416) districts (Map 2.1). Thus all the districts that are either 100 per cent urban, or near to that reported a higher incidence of street children. Street children in these districts were mainly found near bus, railway and metro stations; a lot of working children were found in *dhabas* around the markets and on the roadside.

South Delhi (4,314), North West Delhi (3,581), and South West Delhi (2,936) districts reported a relatively low incidence of street children. The presence of a rural population and the low density of population in these districts account for these figures.

2.2: Who are they? Classification Based on Definition

According to UNICEF, three categories of children on the street are considered street children. In this study, a



³¹ Assuming that there were almost 13.8 million people in Delhi in 2010.

³² This may be due to the fact that there was a lot of street child removal activity in South Delhi district that was the main venue of the Commonwealth Games.

majority of the street children (36.03 per cent) belonged to the category of **children from street families** (Graph 2.1). They were found on roadsides with parents and family members. North Delhi and South Delhi districts had high incidences of children from street families. It was reported that some of them were slum dwellers and when the slum was demolished, the entire family was thrown out on the streets. Another reason for living on the street was the saving on rent; these families only had to pay some money to authorities whenever they came to shoo them off the pavement. These families normally slept under flyovers and on roadsides. Lack of housing, thus, seems to be a major reason for many becoming street children.

The second highest category was of **children who work on the street** (nearly 29.05 per cent). According to field reports, a majority of these children went back home at night. East Delhi and New Delhi districts had the highest number of children working on the street. On the other hand, this number was low in South Delhi, South West Delhi, and North West Delhi districts.

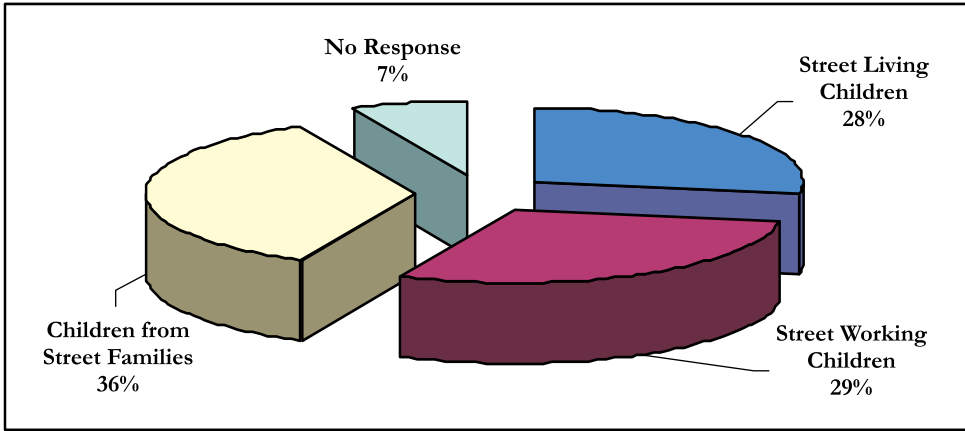
Graph 2.1: Distribution of type of street children

The children on the street, the third category, constituted

Yamuna district of East Delhi, and in North East Delhi, North West, and South West Delhi districts. These districts also house resettlement colonies, slum locations, railway stations, and inter-state bus stations.

In Delhi, nearly 65 per cent, or two out of three children, belonged to the category ‘children of the street’. Only one out of three children belonged to ‘children on the street’ category. This indicates that as per the definition, a majority of the street children might have families or be in contact with them. The probability of those who were completely left alone on the streets of Delhi was relatively low. It is important to note that there was hardly any gender differentiation observed in this regard. However, the ratio of girls on the street was relatively high in ‘the children of street families’ category as compared to the other categories.

It thus becomes clear that an intervention strategy for addressing the issue of street children requires different types of treatments. Those who belong to the ‘children on the street’ category need a totally different approach and those who belong to the ‘children of street families’ category require a larger intervention plan that may even extend to their far-off, poor, areas of origin.



Note: See Tables 1 and 2 in the Annexure.

27.91 per cent of the total. According to the definition, they might belong to the orphaned, run away, or trafficked children categories and may also be children on the street, but without any family. They were largely seen in the trans-

children were male, as the percentage of girls found on Delhi’s streets in all the categories was only 20.7. Across

2.3: Profiling Street Children

To profile street children, the study analysed gender combinations, age, literacy status, occupation, religion, and socio-economic status.

2.3.1: Gender

The gender-wise combination showed that the present data also follows the findings of other studies that a majority of the

districts, West Delhi reported nearly 24 per cent girls among all categories of street children; this figure was the lowest in South West Delhi at 17.3 per cent (Table 2.2).

What happens to these girls once they grow up needs to be studied in-depth.

Table 2.2: Age and gender-wise distribution (percentage)

District	0-3 yrs			4-6 yrs			7-14 yrs			15-<18 yrs			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Central Delhi	4.31	8.57	5.12	9.71	17.89	11.25	63.58	64.68	63.79	22.39	8.85	19.85	81.20	18.80	100
East Delhi	6.52	16.13	8.31	8.15	11.86	8.84	63.96	59.28	63.09	21.37	12.74	19.77	81.45	18.55	100
New Delhi	9.48	14.40	10.47	9.09	19.08	11.11	54.79	57.97	55.43	26.64	8.55	22.99	79.80	20.20	100
North Delhi	8.21	13.67	9.33	8.25	14.64	9.56	59.49	59.19	59.43	24.05	12.50	21.67	79.43	20.57	100
North East Delhi	3.10	13.94	5.60	3.82	13.94	6.15	58.94	58.65	58.87	34.15	13.46	29.38	76.95	23.05	100
North West Delhi	5.11	10.75	6.33	9.12	13.99	10.17	67.53	62.95	66.54	18.24	12.31	16.96	78.36	21.64	100
South Delhi	6.52	9.29	7.13	11.04	23.54	13.78	56.52	56.70	56.56	25.92	10.48	22.54	78.08	21.92	100
South West Delhi	4.99	5.71	5.11	8.08	12.40	8.83	63.71	69.88	64.78	23.22	12.01	21.28	82.68	17.32	100
West Delhi	2.35	10.53	4.31	5.57	10.75	6.81	58.75	65.80	60.43	33.33	12.93	28.45	76.09	23.91	100
Total	5.92	12.17	7.21	8.02	15.12	9.49	60.55	61.02	60.65	25.51	11.69	22.65	79.32	20.68	100

Note: See Table 3 in the Annexure for the absolute number of street children and Table 4 for the total number of male/female children.

2.3.2: Age group

The age group of street children in Delhi showed that around two out of three children (61 per cent) were above 6 years but were less than 15 years of age, 23 per cent were between 15-<18 years, and the rest of them were below 5 years of age. According to the Child Labour Prohibition Act (1986), a majority of these children were outside the purview of law, even if they worked in roadside ventures or enterprises. Only one out of ten children belonged to the below 5 years age group.

A gender-wise analysis of age groups indicated that as girls grew up they left the street. With boys it was the opposite, more boys were seen on the street in the above 15 years age group and, compared to girls, fewer boys were seen in the very young age group, i.e., less than 4 years of age.

2.3.3: Social class

To our surprise, more than 90 per cent of the children knew their social class, indicating close links with their families and origins. An analysis of the social class of street children showed that one out of three street children (36 per cent) was a *dalit* (scheduled caste). A majority of the street children (38.8 per cent) belonged to the Other Backward Castes (OBCs), while 16.7 per cent were from Scheduled Tribes (STs), and less than 1 per cent belonged to the 'others' category, which means that **the likelihood of finding a so-called 'upper caste' child on the streets is minimal. This is in agreement with the caste based economic status that exists in society.** The high incidence of poverty among *dalit* communities and other backward communities translates into the higher incidence of street children from these social classes (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Social group-wise distribution (percentage)

District	OBCs	SCs	STs	Others	Do not know	NR	Total
Central Delhi	27.0	44.9	14.8	1.1	1.5	10.8	100.0
East Delhi	36.5	41.2	22.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	100.0
New Delhi	27.7	31.2	25.2	2.7	8.0	5.2	100.0
North Delhi	36.2	37.4	14.2	0.3	1.4	10.5	100.0
North East Delhi	47.4	34.7	17.2	0.3	0.4	0.0	100.0
North West Delhi	54.6	24.1	9.6	0.2	1.6	9.9	100.0
South Delhi	33.1	38.8	12.6	0.1	0.5	14.9	100.0
South West Delhi	56.2	22.8	10.4	0.0	1.2	9.4	100.0
West Delhi	43.4	35.9	18.0	0.2	1.7	0.9	100.0
Total	38.8	36.3	16.9	0.6	1.8	5.6	100.0

Note: See Table 5 in the Annexure for absolute numbers.

It can be noted that social class is a key determinant in leaving a child on the streets to work or live.

Only about 7 per cent of the children either did not respond or were unaware of their social class. These children were orphaned, had left their families at very young ages, or had moved away with a group at very young ages. Children who had any links with their parents normally knew their social class due to the connection that society attributed to their caste occupation. Even if they were not engaged in their family occupation per se, they were still identified by the local community on the basis of their caste occupation, which reinforced the caste status for the children. Most of the children were able to give their caste occupation or surname in case they were not able to identify their caste. It was also noted that there was a kind of clustering of social classes among street children in various locations. Often many children talked about caste discrimination on the roadside. *For example, when the researchers were interviewing*

a child in South Extension in South Delhi, they had to ask his name twice. The child's response was spontaneous. He replied that he was Munnu Ram and he was a mushair (an SC community). The researchers were not expecting this reaction and enquired as to why he mentioned his caste name. He then replied that whenever people asked his name twice, it meant that they wanted to know his caste and that whenever he approached anybody for a job, people asked his caste name and he was even denied a job in a dhaba due to his SC status.

2.3.4: Religion

The religion-wise classification of street children showed that a majority were Hindus (nearly 75 per cent), followed by Muslims (17 per cent), and Christians (1 per cent), while the remaining nearly 7 per cent did not answer this question. The proportion of Muslim street children was higher in East Delhi, North East Delhi, West Delhi, and North Delhi districts (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4: Religion-wise distribution (percentage)

District	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Do not know	No Response	Total
Central Delhi	72.02	16.29	0.24	0.02	0.17	11.26	100.00
East Delhi	76.66	22.72	0.55	0.01	0.00	0.07	100.00
New Delhi	84.97	8.79	0.68	0.30	0.20	5.06	100.00
North Delhi	69.89	18.21	0.25	0.03	1.09	10.52	100.00
North East Delhi	71.23	24.32	4.28	0.06	0.04	0.07	100.00
North West Delhi	75.09	13.71	0.11	0.08	1.17	9.83	100.00
South Delhi	72.86	11.03	0.19	0.14	0.07	15.72	100.00
South West Delhi	81.71	7.83	0.00	0.03	1.02	9.40	100.00
West Delhi	73.63	21.63	2.96	0.85	0.00	0.92	100.00
Total	74.64	17.11	1.04	0.16	0.41	6.63	100.00

Note: See Table 7 in the Annexure for absolute numbers.

Photo Credit: Raghu Rai 2009



The percentage of Muslim children among street children was lower in areas where a greater number of Muslim families lived, for example, in Mehrauli. The interview team realised that in many places the street children were reluctant to disclose their religious identity. Such behaviour was very common among female part-time domestic workers who used names that did not reflect their religious identity to access work.

2.3.5: Education

Understanding the educational levels of street children is critical for providing them appropriate basic education and skill training. While 7 per cent of the children in our survey did not respond to this question, the study revealed that up to 50.5 per cent of the street children were not literate. In all, only 23 per cent had received some form of informal education; another almost 20 per cent had received some kind of education (13 per cent pre-primary; 4 per cent up to primary; and 2.4 per cent up to middle school). Here, it is important to note that for the analysis we took only children above 5 years of age. **Among the 50,923 street children enumerated by our census in Delhi, there were 100 children who remained on the street even after being educated till the secondary and above level** (Table 2.5).

people who belonged to the *sarkar* or government, and some children mentioned names of NGOs. It was also noted that only a few attended whatever classes had been offered regularly.

The study also found many school-going children who mostly belonged to the categories of ‘children of street families’ and ‘children working on the street’. These children said that after school hours they worked as street vendors for money for their families and a little for their own needs which they said were clothes, cosmetics, and entertainment.

While a micro-minority expressed interest in attending school regularly and wanting to perform better in class, a bulk of the children displayed little to no interest or enthusiasm in going to school. Many were on the verge of dropping out and cited sickness and the inability to match school and work timings as the reasons. However, the attitude of the school authorities may have had something to do with this too. Teachers were reported to be unsympathetic to the children’s inability to buy books and other study material, and appeared to pay little attention to them in class. We asked a Class V child in school uniform selling *bhutta*³³ on the roadside, if her teacher knew the little girl’s name; she said she was not sure if she did.

Table 2.5: Distribution of education profile of street children (percentage)

District	Illiterate	Informal	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary and above	No Response	Total
Central Delhi	48.9	22.0	13.4	4.5	0.6	0.0	10.7	100.0
East Delhi	64.8	24.8	5.5	2.0	2.5	0.2	0.3	100.0
New Delhi	45.9	19.2	19.3	6.2	3.5	0.7	5.1	100.0
North Delhi	48.2	22.4	13.5	3.0	2.3	0.3	10.4	100.0
North East Delhi	46.5	34.4	14.6	2.7	1.7	0.1	0.1	100.0
North West Delhi	39.7	16.6	21.8	9.5	2.7	0.0	9.8	100.0
South Delhi	56.8	10.9	10.3	3.5	3.2	0.3	15.0	100.0
South West Delhi	45.0	22.4	12.4	7.2	3.6	0.0	9.4	100.0
West Delhi	51.1	31.3	11.7	2.5	2.5	0.0	0.9	100.0
Total	50.5	23.2	13.1	4.0	2.4	0.2	6.5	100.0

Note: See Table 8 in the Annexure for absolute numbers.

The study also probed and learnt that nearly one-fourth of all children had received some kind of informal education. Many had attended classes offered by CSOs and religious organisations. Some mentioned the word ‘*sanstha*’ which meant that the classes may have been run by an institution, others said that they had been taught by

2.3.6: Occupation

Most street children, including small children, were either self-employed (rag pickers, beggars, and street vendors) or worked for others. Their occupations varied according to location, season, and availability of work.

³³ *Whole corn lightly roasted over charcoal and served salted.*

The same child might have been involved in more than one activity, but overall the trend was that those who worked as rag pickers continued in that line; street vendors too were also more or less able to stick to the same kind of jobs.

Rag picking was the most popular occupation among street children (one out of every five or 20.3 per cent).

It was one of the easiest jobs to get and it was reported that many street children who had started life as rag pickers

and street vending, **one out of five children worked in roadside stalls or repair shops (12.19 per cent), dhabas/hotels (6.24 per cent), and manufacturing units (1.22 per cent).** The likelihood of finding a working child in roadside enterprises was low in the New Delhi district (less than 10 per cent). Overall, nearly 8 per cent of the children said that they earned an income by cleaning cars and two-wheelers, while 9 per cent said that they took up any work available. Around 10.5 per cent did not respond (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: District-wise occupational distribution (percentage)

District	Begging	Rag Picking	Street Vending: Selling flower, newspapers, fruits etc.	Cleaning cars & two wheelers	Working at roadside stalls or repair shops	Working in small hotels / tea stalls	Whatever available	Working in manufacturing units	Others	NR	Total
Central Delhi	6.91	20.49	18.42	9.67	14.04	4.03	7.22	0.58	1.02	17.62	100.00
East Delhi	21.73	25.94	11.48	7.11	11.30	6.36	14.24	0.42	1.27	0.14	100.00
New Delhi	12.84	17.32	21.78	5.21	8.21	0.60	6.00	0.85	16.15	11.03	100.00
North Delhi	10.60	17.39	16.77	7.63	11.55	4.31	6.65	0.94	6.04	18.11	100.00
North East Delhi	24.11	23.39	11.85	5.93	14.57	6.50	11.30	1.74	0.24	0.37	100.00
North West Delhi	16.14	21.22	12.68	8.85	11.45	0.95	8.46	0.84	9.58	9.83	100.00
South Delhi	4.29	13.51	15.86	6.68	15.46	3.36	6.51	0.28	9.06	24.99	100.00
South West Delhi	14.78	18.94	13.73	11.04	11.58	0.78	8.72	3.24	7.77	9.43	100.00
West Delhi	20.56	23.52	12.24	7.57	12.19	6.24	12.17	3.15	0.94	1.42	100.00
Total	14.69	20.33	15.18	7.54	12.15	4.09	9.09	1.22	5.30	10.41	100.00

Note: See Table 9 in the Annexure for absolute numbers.

had moved on to other activities, or made progress as it were. The incidence of rag picking was very high among children from East Delhi, North East Delhi, and West Delhi districts – possibly one out of every four street children.

The second most popular occupation (nearly 15.18 per cent) was street vending, especially selling flowers, newspapers, and other items at traffic lights. The highest percentage of street-child vendors was in the New Delhi district. The third most popular profession was begging (nearly 15 per cent); one out of every four children from North Delhi, East Delhi, and West Delhi districts was engaged in begging. The fewest number of street-child beggars were seen in Central and South Delhi districts.

Other than those children who had taken to rag picking

The findings of this study match the findings of other studies on street-child occupations in Delhi. It is also important to note that this study came across children involved in criminal activities such as pick-pocketing and stealing in some parts of the city. Some of them openly said that they were involved in mafia activities and in illegal operations that they refused to give details of.

During the enumeration process the study also captured the process of how they got jobs/got involved in any activity through qualitative information.

(i) Working under agents

Many street-child vendors were found to be working under agents who handed over products for sale (like newspapers and flowers) every morning in return for a fixed amount to be paid by the street-child vendor every evening. The

agents made a profit from the margin that they built into the fixed rate. The children made a profit if they were able to sell their products at a higher rate, and many did so. We also learnt that any child who sold-off his stock would then help others finish their daily sales. The children we spoke to had worked under their agents for some time.

The speed and dexterity of these children was critical for ensuring sales, especially at red lights. Their major problem was fairly frequent abuse by the police.

(ii) Working with parents/family members

It was also seen that parents of street children received supplies of vegetables, fruits, and flowers from an agent and gave these to their children to sell. In this case, the children were involved in sales as well as in arranging, cleaning, and other activities that facilitated sales. But the child might not earn anything specific.

(iii) School-going street vendors

The study also found many children engaged in street vending after school hours. Regardless of gender, it was found that children sold *bhuttas* (corn), *chaat* (a savoury snack popular in north India), and stationery items near bus stops, metro stations, and in market places. It was *bhutta* season during our field work, and we learnt that the street children purchased *bhuttas* and charcoal from a wholesaler at Rs. 100-150 and also bought other items such as lemon and black salt. They had to pay for the material delivered by the wholesaler by the end of the day. They normally earned Rs. 50-100 in a day. In most cases, such as with the *bhuttas*, street vending became a seasonal activity.

(iv) Working children in street enterprises

Most of the child employees in street enterprises (mainly near market places, metro stations, and bus stops) had approached their employers for jobs. We found that their lives were tougher than those of children in the other categories, as they had to work from morning to night without any break, and payment in some cases was limited to food and accommodation. If they did receive any cash payment, it was at an abysmally low rate. One child who worked part-time in an automobile shop told us that he was an apprentice and was given only two cups of tea a day and no cash payment. He worked from morning till noon, nearly four hours a day, then went home (he lived with his family in

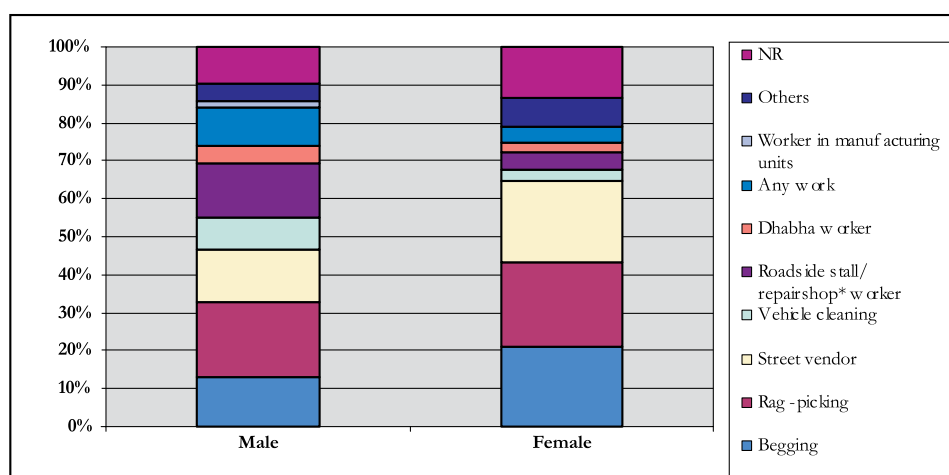
a nearby slum) got ready and attended school in the second shift. He hoped to learn a skill to get more money.

Many children who worked in street enterprises were offered monthly payments. The employers hardly ever paid them in full and always kept part of the promised salary to ensure that the children did not run away. This was a very common practice across the city and in many cases led to various kinds of exploitation by employers. In such cases, the child was rendered helpless in two ways: one, there was no elder to come and demand the remaining payment on her/his behalf; and two, she/he did not have a safe place to keep the money.

It is also important to note that we quite often received contradictory information from the child and the employer about the child's age, schooling, and family details. It was often mentioned that the child was related to the employer ('own child', 'nephew', and 'distant relative'). In many cases, we were told that the child was visiting and would soon be on the way back home. However, quite often the children had a different story to tell.

Finally, it was observed that many working children who seemed to be in the 13-17 years age group said that they were above 18 years and so the study could not cover them. The incidence of street workers above 18 years, but less than 20 years was very high. It appeared to indicate that they/their employers were perhaps using this method to bypass the law. There is definitely awareness about the prohibition of child labour in workplaces, but it would seem that the employers bypassed the law by lying about their employees' ages. Child workers were helpless in this case since they needed the jobs to feed themselves, and sometimes also to feed their families in Delhi, or to send money to some far-off region.

Graph 2.2: Gender-wise occupation distribution



Note: * Repair shops are largely automobile, but we found electrical, welding, and furniture repair shops on the roadsides.

Note: * Repair shops are largely automobile, but we found electrical, welding, and furniture repair shops on the roadsides.

The study also analysed the occupation pattern of girls and boys (Graph 2.2). It was found that rag picking was popular among girls (22.4 per cent), followed by street vending (21.3 per cent), and begging (21 per cent). On the other hand, though rag picking was a major activity for boys (nearly 20 per cent were engaged in it), a good number of street boys worked in repair shops, while others worked as street vendors (12 per cent). Only 13 per cent (mostly

the small boys) were engaged in begging. As they grew up, they started looking for jobs rather than continuing with begging.

2.3.7: Why do they work?

Discussions with children revealed the different reasons for why they work. These varied from survival, a fund for parents' healthcare, remittances to be sent home (usually somewhere far-off), and earning something extra for personal and family use. But Anita's case illustrated a totally different need (see Box 2.1).

Why do they work?



Photo Credit: Raghu Rai 2009

Anita is 13 years old. She sells bhuttas at a traffic light near the Uttam Nagar metro station after school hours. She lives with her parents and six siblings. She said that the extra income earned by her was not used for food or rental purposes, but to meet her personal needs and those of her four sisters. When asked why her income was not used for household spending (for example, on food), she asked a question in return, one that had not struck any of us: “Where do we get money to go to the toilet at least twice a day (because they depended on sulabh and other paid toilet facilities) and to buy sanitary napkins for me and my sisters?”

The financial requirements of a street child thus not only revolve around food security, but the money is also used to maintain basic personal hygiene. This requirement might not feature in the case of a boy. This interaction also shed light on the fact that people in the slums get only paid services and that too at the market rate instead of at government subsidised rates. In other words, they buy drinking water at a higher rate, electricity is also expensive, and the toilet facility has to be paid for, in addition to the rental for a small katcha habitat in a slum or in another insecure location.

Migrant boys largely in the 15-18 years age group, remit money for household needs such as food security, agriculture activities, marriages and other social functions at home, healthcare, and education of siblings.

Another aspect highlighted by this study is that begging was taken up as an activity by weaker people like small children, females with young children, and old and physically weaker groups. Others preferred to work and earn.

2.4: How They End Up on the Street

The face of a street child with dirty clothes and a hopeless face, the scene of running behind a car to sell something, a child with a pitiable face begging for a meal, and a child who works like a robot are clear reflections of why they are on the street. But how they get into this situation differs from child to child. At the macro-level, household poverty, deprivations, homelessness, and other family and personal problems lead a child to the streets. A micro-level enquiry provided details about these stories.

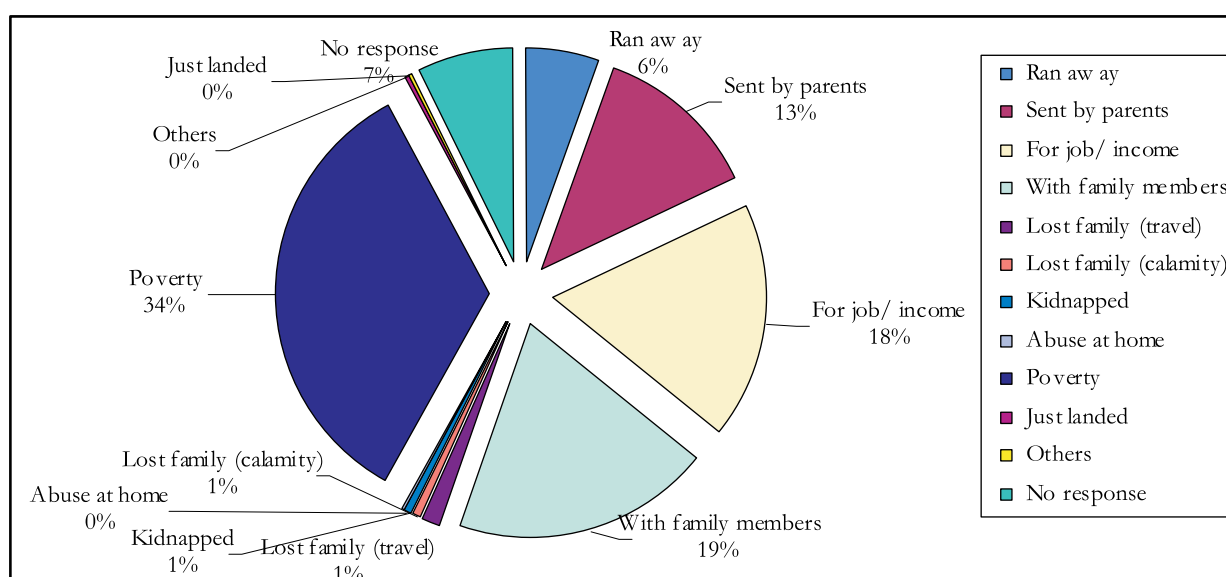
The findings of this study also revealed the prevailing macro pattern—that one out of three children (34 per cent) reached the street due to poverty and hunger. They were on the street in search of jobs or money to feed themselves, and in many cases for feeding their families, living either in Delhi or in far-away places. Their personal stories revealed that if there was any supportive system to address hunger, many of them would never get on to the street.

The conditions were so grave that nearly one out of every five children (19.4 per cent) had ended up on the street

with his or her family. There were some children who belonged to street families, but most of them belonged to families who had migrated to Delhi for survival. Migration studies state that the incidence of family migration from rural to urban areas is very high among landless and *dalit* households. Migration is the only available option for survival for these people. They are among the more vulnerable groups on the street due to their migrant status. Our study also found families who were thrown on the street because of the government's slum demolition programmes taken up from time to time. Slum demolition mostly occurs without any rehabilitation plan. As a result, slum dwellers become street dwellers who are largely on the move for work. Their children, hence, fall under the street children category and even if they attend school, they eventually drop out and become working children on the street (Graph 2.3).

In addition, since our field work took place at the time when civil work for the Commonwealth Games was in the final stages of completion, many labourers had been brought from villages in neighbouring states with their families, including children. These children were on the street and were counted by us. Many of them said that they were in Delhi for a short period and would return. But many migration studies report a high incidence of seasonal family migration from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh to Delhi. After all, it is true that a family's incapability to meet its economic needs makes it migrate with children and to eventually put them to work on city streets.

Graph 2.3: Distribution of reasons—Why the children ended up on the streets



Note: See Tables 10 and 11 in the Annexure for absolute numbers and percentage distribution.

Finally, around 30 per cent of the children had reached the streets in search of jobs, either by themselves (17.7 per cent) or were sent by their parents (12.6 per cent). The search for jobs by the children was also an indicator of household poverty and distress. In case a family was capable of meeting its food and other basic requirements without income from a child, the child would have never reached the streets of Delhi searching for work.

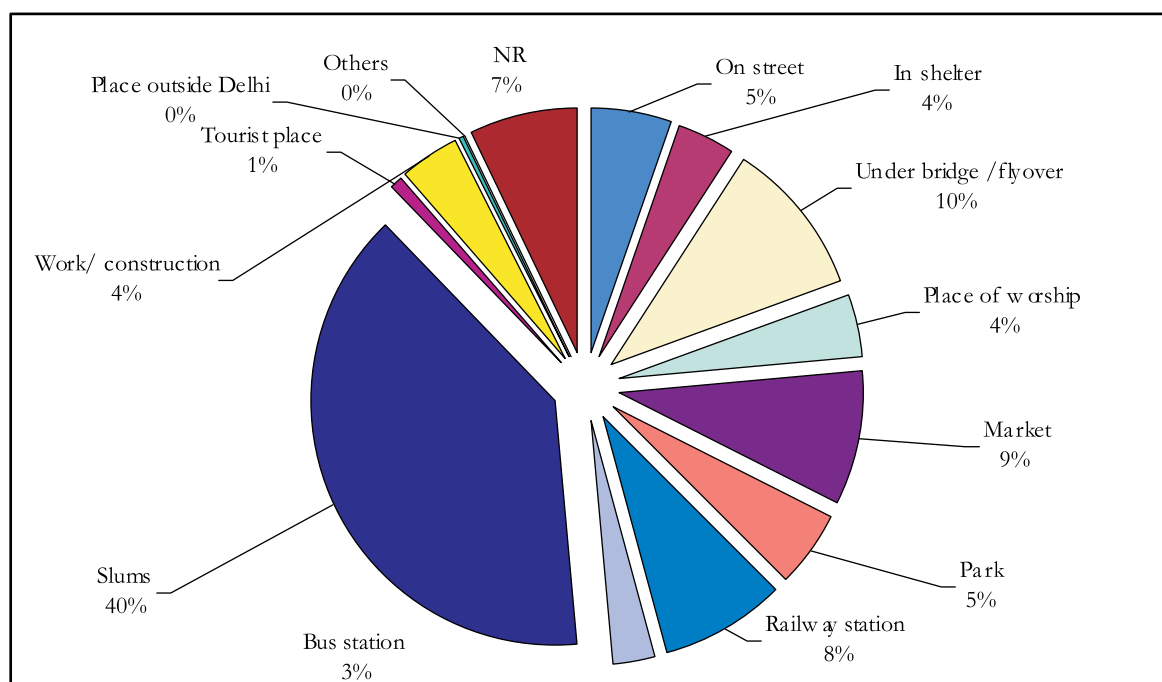
The study also found children who had run away (just for curiosity, to escape from abuse, and because of some family issues), kidnapped children, orphaned children, and those who had come here because of incidents such as riots, accidents and natural calamities or had lost contact with their parents while travelling. These children constituted 9 per cent of the total number of street children. Their conditions were depressing because they had been deprived of emotional and parental care, along with having to face poverty and other distress-causing factors.

In brief, it can be noted that the reasons for a child being on the street reflect economic and social distress. If there was a proper social security system available, a significant number of the street children we found would never have come to the streets. A child on the street is a reflection of the complete lack of social, economic, and emotional security.

2.5: Character of Night Shelters

A night shelter (a place to sleep) and with whom they stay can be an indicator of the children's vulnerability (safety) and probable link with their families. According to data, 39.22 per cent of the children went back to their place or shanty in the slums to sleep. Nearly 46 per cent slept on pavements, under flyovers/ bridges, in parks, markets, and religious places, and in railway and bus stations. Among these locations, a higher concentration was observed in market places and railway stations, and under bridges/ flyovers (Graph 2.4).

Graph 2.4: Distribution of locations of night stay



Note: See Tables 12 and 13 in the Annexure for absolute numbers and percentage distribution.

Only 4 per cent of the children said that they slept in the shelters provided by NGOs, governments, other organisations, and individuals. The share of shelter-dependents was very high in the New Delhi district. East Delhi, North West Delhi, South West Delhi, and West Delhi districts also reported children dependent on shelters. Based on information from the Delhi Police and various NGOs working with street children, these findings also corroborated with the spread of shelters operated by various agencies in the districts of Delhi. However, there were hardly 30 centres across the city, which had a capacity of around 2,500-3,000 inmates.⁴ This is far below the desired number of shelters.

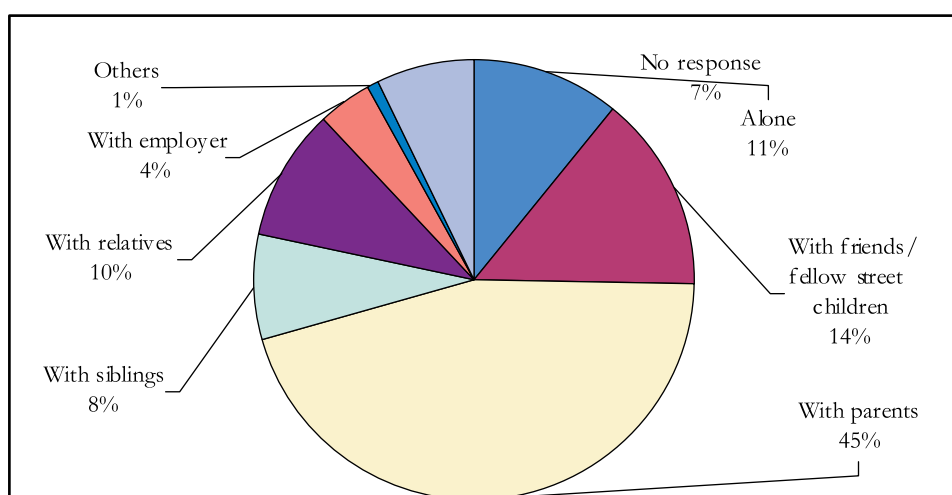
There were differences in the night shelters used by girls and boys. Nearly 50 per cent of the girls slept in a place

the fact that Delhi has more shelters for men and boys, than it has for women and girls. In fact, girls and women needed night shelters more than the men due to security reasons. This issue has been raised by NGOs and various agencies work on it from time to time.

The data on whom the children stay with revealed a high incidence of close contact with family members. A majority of them (63 per cent) stayed with family members such as parents (45.3 per cent), siblings (7.6 per cent), and relatives (10 per cent). Around 14 per cent stayed with friends or fellow street children.

Only 11 per cent said that they stayed alone (see Graph 2.5). However, the meaning of alone needs to be clarified because it was found that children on the street largely moved and lived in groups. This was essential for their safety and security. Those who said that they lived alone were largely those who slept in a group at night with unknown persons or co-workers and not with their family members. Working children largely fell into this category. Similarly, many working children also used the premises of a shop or a *dhaba* which they could shut down and sleep safely. Since the magnitude of abuse that these children have to face is beyond imagination it was quite natural for them to look for some peer group or family/relative support for safety, especially at night.

Graph 2.5: Distribution of persons with whom the children stay



Note: See Table 14 in the Annexure for absolute numbers.

in the slums, indicating that they looked for some kind of security. The share of girls who slept in open places like streets, places of worship, markets, parks, tourist spots, and work sites constituted 18.9 per cent; whereas more than 30 per cent of the boys slept in such places. It is also important to note that there was a slight difference in the figures for shelter usage between boys and girls (Table 2.7). This might be due to

³⁴ Conservative estimate based on the information provided by the Delhi Police, Ministry of Social Welfare, and on the websites of various NGOs working with street children.

2.6: Residence/Migration Status

Literature on urban studies has constantly highlighted the role of a large inflow of people into cities in the process of urban development. Migrants (specifically those who have migrated due to economic distress and for survival) often live on the streets before getting into any slum settlement.

An enquiry about where the children hailed from elicited responses which showed that a significant number of them were second-generation migrants. Around 32 per cent reported that they were born and brought up in Delhi and lived with their parents. Around 23 per cent were in-migrants with families in Delhi. Altogether, 61 per cent said that they lived with their families and only 13.5 per cent said that they did not have any idea about their families or about where they came from. These children were orphans. Many of the children who said that they had lost touch with their families were reluctant to share any more information about their families (Table 2.8).

coming to Delhi from other states. Delhi is increasingly a preferred destination for poor people, including children from the poorer regions in northern India.

2.7: Conclusion

Delhi streets are occupied by 50,923 street children. The existing rehabilitation efforts and the number of street children reveal the mismatch between supply and demand of services. More efforts are required to mainstream these children.

The gender and age-group profiles of street children show that any effort in this direction needs a multiple-level intervention strategy which needs to begin with the rehabilitation of street families. They must be provided with social security to stop children from working for incomes; night shelters must be provided for boys and girls, and their health and education requirements must be addressed. More than 60 per cent of the children belong to the 15-18 years age group and they are largely working street children. They are on the street due to household

Table 2.8: Distribution of place of birth (percentage)

District	Born/ brought up in Delhi, live with parents	Born/ brought up in Delhi, but left home	Born outside Delhi, but brought up in Delhi and live with family	Born outside Delhi and without family	No idea about family/ origin, live in Delhi	No response	Total
Central Delhi	23.5	8.1	27.3	4.3	24.1	12.8	100.0
East Delhi	28.1	29.1	41.4	0.3	0.7	0.4	100.0
New Delhi	26.4	20.1	28.8	5.8	13.0	6.0	100.0
North Delhi	32.5	8.4	27.8	2.4	17.1	11.8	100.0
North East Delhi	39.8	23.0	31.8	4.3	0.6	0.6	100.0
North West Delhi	38.5	7.4	10.1	3.4	28.9	11.6	100.0
South Delhi	33.9	2.7	20.1	2.7	25.9	14.7	100.0
South West Delhi	31.6	5.1	25.9	4.5	21.7	11.1	100.0
West Delhi	37.2	22.6	31.9	4.9	2.1	1.3	100.0
Total	32.0	15.1	28.7	3.4	13.5	7.4	100.0

As mentioned earlier, most of the street children were second-generation migrants, especially those who lived with their parents. **In all one out of every five street children (21.2 per cent) was from various districts of Bihar, followed by Uttar Pradesh (15.3 per cent), Rajasthan (6.8 per cent), Jharkhand (4.1 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (3.9 per cent).** In all, the study found children from almost 18 states of India on the streets of Delhi. This migration pattern, in fact, substantiates the findings of studies on the migration pattern of people

poverty or due to some other cause of extreme distress/deprivation. Since most of the street children are illiterate, or near-illiterate, efforts to provide them with basic education need to spread their net much wider than they do at present.

Knowledge of the district-level distribution of these street children provides a useful tool for enhancing service delivery to these children, especially night shelter support, to ensure some safety and security.

To address the issue of street children in Delhi, it is essential to have an integrated programme to trace them back to their villages in other states. The distress and deprivation faced by those in rural locations (in terms of income and employment) triggers the flight of people, including children, to cities for survival. A detailed analysis of their plight and identification of the locations of their origin could be used to bring about some useful changes for reducing their vulnerability, perhaps even taking the children off the street. Many children were found to migrate from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to support their families. They worked and saved money to send to their villages. They came to Delhi's streets either with fellow villagers or with some relatives at very young ages, sometimes when they were even less than 10 years old. Over time, they brought their male siblings and started remitting money for household requirements. These were seasonal migrants many of whom went back to their villages during winters.

The 'success-stories' of migrant child workers who lost their childhood to earn and send money home must not become the 'role model' for the survival of other rural children in distress. As recent studies on child labour and migration (Datta and Rustogi 2010⁵ and Bhaskaran et al. 2010) show, children from rural locations migrate with other children with the consent of their families. The families do not realise or turn a blind eye to the condition of these children on city streets. There is an intense need for awareness-creation and supporting programmes that provide education and employment (skill training) to children in rural locations. In the urban context, as the National Commission on Child Rights reported, government and non-governmental agencies need to intensify their efforts at railway and bus stations to identify and look after these children at the entry point itself and take necessary actions which may vary from counseling in case of a runaway child and providing guidance to underage employment seekers.

³⁵ Amrita Datta and Preet Rustagi (2010): *Status of Women in Bihar: Exploring Transformation in Work and Gender Relations*. Institute for Human Development, New Delhi, mimeo.

Chapter 3

Life On The Street– Reflections from a Cross-Section of Street Children

3.1: Introduction

The census of street children in Delhi explained who they were, what they were doing, and where they were located. A sample survey was conducted to gain a deeper insight into their lives, especially to find out how they lived. The sample survey also covered individual case studies and information gathered in FGDs. While the insights from these analyses were used to elaborate on the findings, it is important to report that the findings were very generic in nature. We undertook frequent visits to ensure that the children felt comfortable and opened up in greater detail on some of the sensitive issues. However, the study mainly focused on identifying broad issues and looked for cases to elaborate on these. To gain specific insights, we need to interact more closely with children rather than relying on structured interviews and FGDs.

From the 50,923 street children, the sample study randomly selected 1,009 children (2 per cent). According to the sampling methodology explained in Chapter 1, every 50th child enumerated was taken as the sample unit and was subjected to a detailed interview using a structured questionnaire. The number of district-wise samples varied according to the number of children in each district (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: District-wise street children sample distribution

District	Number	Per cent
Central Delhi	117	11.6
East Delhi	147	14.6
New Delhi	124	12.3
North Delhi	181	17.9
North East Delhi	108	10.7
North West Delhi	72	7.1
South Delhi	86	8.5
South West Delhi	59	5.8
West Delhi	115	11.4
Total	1009	100

Photo Credit: Raghu Rai 2009

3.2: Demographic Profile

An illustration of the sample's demographic profile was used for an understanding of the probable variations or divergences that may appear between the sample and the total population. Therefore, the sample survey also followed the findings of the census that nearly 79 per cent of the street children were boys. Girls constituted only one-fifth of the total street children population (Table 3.2). Considering the very low incidence of girl children on the streets, the rest of the analysis was only done for the total sample. Finally, the age-wise classification showed that nearly 62 per cent of the street children belonged to the 6-14 years age group and this critical mass also came under the purview of the Right to Education Act. This indicates the scale of education intervention that is required to mainstream street children.

Table 3.2: Demographic profile of the sample population (percentage)

		Male	Female	Total
Age Group	0-3	60.32	39.68	6.24
	4-5	65.00	35.00	5.95
	6-14	79.97	20.03	61.84
	15-<18	82.82	17.18	25.97
Social Group	OBC	76.92	23.08	43.81
	SC	80.21	19.79	37.07
	ST	79.33	20.67	17.74
	Others	90.00	10.00	0.99
	Do not know	50.00	50.00	0.40
Religion	Hindus	78.09	21.91	85.03
	Muslims	81.08	18.92	14.67
	Christians	100.00	0.00	0.30
	Total	78.59	21.41	100.00

The percentage of small children on the streets was very low. Children under 6 years of age constituted one-tenth of the total number of street children while 26 per cent belonged to the 15-<18 years category.

A social class-wise analysis of street children reinforced previous findings on the vulnerability of *dalit* (SCs) communities. Overall, 37 per cent of all the street children in Delhi belonged to *dalit* communities. Hardly any child from upper caste communities was a street child. A majority of the street children were Hindus (85 per cent), followed by Muslims (14.7 per cent), and others.

The vulnerability of street children was primarily related to three factors: (i) To their being street children; (ii) To their access to a safe saving and remittance mode for whatever little they earned; and (iii) To where they slept at night.

To gain an insight into the first factor, the study analysed the family and background of Delhi's street children in detail.

3.3: Family/Origin Details of Street Children

Why is it important to know the family and origin details of a street child? Street children in Delhi belonged to different categories (as per the UNICEF categorisation). The background that led them to the street varied, and this influenced their link (contact or association) with their families. Queries related to awareness about their families of origin and contact and level of interaction with families provided insights into questions such as what conditions led them to the streets, why they were continuing on the streets, and what intervention strategy could rehabilitate them.

Similarly, this understanding would also shed light on the percentage of those who were absolutely orphaned or otherwise alone on the streets. It was observed that most children belonging to the categories of 'children of the street' and 'working children on the street' were in touch with their families.

3.3.1: Awareness about origins

The first step in answering this question lay in enquiring whether the children knew about their families of origin and locations of origin (i.e., the family/village location from which they had come to the streets). Ninety-two per cent of the street children were aware of their families and also knew where they hailed from. Most of them had first-hand information about their families. For a small percentage, knowledge about their location of origin was based on information shared by parents or guardians. Interestingly, gender division was observed in case of knowledge about the families of origin: 96.3 per cent of the girls were aware about their families of origin as compared to 90.4 per cent boys (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Distribution of awareness about family (percentage)

Gender	Yes	No	Total
Male	90.4	9.6	100
Female	96.3	3.7	100
Total	91.7	8.3	100

The question on where they came from specifically indicated whether they hailed from Delhi or not. Two out of three children (67.6 per cent) belonged to Delhi and their families also lived in the city. This was inclusive of children of families who had been living in Delhi and also of migrant families. Nearly 85 per cent girls said that they had families in Delhi as opposed to only 62.8 per cent boys. Considering the high incidence of ‘survival migration’ to Delhi from neighbouring states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan,

was 50:50. Here we would like to clarify that the share of migrants among street children is significant. A number of people who have their families in Delhi, might have been born outside the capital. However, it was reported that most street children (around 70 per cent) had families in Delhi. Only 30 per cent said that their families were outside Delhi. This was, in fact, more prevalent among boys, 35.5 per cent of whom lived alone since they had families outside Delhi. On the other hand, only 14.6 per cent girls were migrants (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Distribution of residential status (living with family or not)

	Born and brought up in Delhi and live with family	Born and brought up in Delhi, but left home	Born outside Delhi, but brought up here, live with family	Born outside Delhi and live alone	Others	Total
Male	36.8	7.5	18.8	35.5	1.4	100.0
Female	55.6	10.2	16.6	14.6	2.9	100.0
Total	40.9	8.1	18.3	30.9	1.7	100.0

and also relatively far-off places like Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra for the last few decades, it is quite natural that migrants’ children constitute a significant portion of street children in Delhi. They migrated to improve their lives, but due to the prevailing inter-generational poverty they were unable to break the survival trap and remained in the category of street dwellers and sent their children to work so that they could contribute to the survival of the household.

3.3.2: Residential status and link with family

To gain more insights into their links with their families the following information was required: Did they live with their families or not? If not, were they in contact with them? If so, what was the frequency of contact or visit? (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Distribution of location of family in (percentage)

	In Delhi	Outside Delhi	Total
Male	62.76	37.24	100
Female	84.13	15.87	100
Total	67.57	32.43	100

To answer these questions, the issues covered were where they were born and where and with whom (if anybody) they lived at present. Ninety-three per cent of the street children knew details about their origins. Out of these, the ratio of those born in Delhi and those born outside Delhi

Most street children were able to speak about which Indian state they hailed from. However, it was interesting to note that most of these children also mentioned that they lived with their families in Delhi, indicating that they belonged to migrant families. Those who said that they were born in Delhi, but belonged to migrant families, were largely second or third generation migrants. Some of these street children visited their villages, but many had only heard about them from their parents as they had never gone back.

When a child said that she/he lived alone it meant that she/he was no longer living with her/his family and could be living with a friend or a relative. During the course of the study we hardly found any child left completely alone on the street. But cases where a child had left home or had been abandoned by her/his family due to various circumstances were reported in many of the locations. In all, 59.2 per cent of the children lived with their families (nearly 72 per cent girls and 55 per cent boys).

Interestingly, though the percentage of girls who said that they had left their homes in Delhi was higher than that of boys, in absolute numbers it was very less. Based on FGDs and case studies the study gathered some details of situations that led a girl child to leave home. The study found three reasons: (i) Adolescent girls who eloped and unfortunately ended up on the streets; (ii) We learnt that many girls lost contact with their families while travelling from their homes in villages both in Delhi

and outside Delhi. Such cases largely seemed like those getting accidentally lost. But considering the prevailing discrimination against girl children, we cannot ignore the possibility of families abandoning girls; and (iii) Girls who moved out with someone known like neighbours and/or relatives, but eventually were not in touch with their families. This is largely linked to a sort of kidnapping and also trafficking. But the study does not have a specific case to prove this, other than the FGD points. These cases were largely associated with very young children. Though the discussions provided broad information about cases of kidnapping, the study could not collect details of such cases which need long and frequent interactions with victims and communities.

The study asked those who said that they had left their homes whether they kept in touch with their families. **Most children (88.5 per cent) had contact with their families; only about 10 per cent were cut-off** and turned out to be absolute street dwellers which meant that they were ‘children of the street’ as per the UNICEF category.

3.3.3: Status of contact with family

To verify their information on contact with families, enquiries were made regarding the visit or contact pattern. Of all the children who said that they were in touch with their families, **50 per cent visited them at least once a year and 33 per cent twice a year** (Table 3.6). This finding also follows the migration and return of migration pattern reported in migration studies that cover Delhi migrants.

Table 3.6: Distribution of frequency of visits per year (percentage)

	Monthly	Quarterly	Half-yearly	Yearly	Others	No response	Total
Male	13.2	4.3	32.5	49.6	0.0	0.4	100.0
Female	0.0	3.7	37.0	55.6	3.7	0.0	100.0
Total	11.9	4.2	33.0	50.2	0.4	0.4	100.0



The pattern of contact with their households of origin showed the children's emotional and economic links with their families. Most children (57.1 per cent) visited their homes periodically. We gleaned that a periodic visit in this case meant that a child visited her/his home at the end of the 'season' which is normally the end of summer or when they did not have much work. This seasonal movement is also a strategy to escape from the cold wave conditions in Delhi. Girls reported more frequent periodic visits than boys. Like the elders, the children also visited their families to attend family functions

such as marriages, festivals, and other cultural functions (about 25.7 per cent) and also during their holidays (those who had a job, and/or were in school).

A notable number of children (nearly 12 per cent) said that they visited their homes to deliver money because they did not have any accessible and facilitative remittance facility. Visiting home to remit money clearly indicates the dependence of the family of origin on a child's income (Table 3.7). The case of Anish (18) a water seller, reveals this (see Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Anish – A young bread earner on the streets of Delhi since 2003

Anish came to Delhi seven years ago from Cooch Behar in West Bengal with his uncle when he lost his father because he had to support a family of five, including his mother. Initially, he helped his uncle, a vendor in the Azadpur mandi, but eventually started working as a water vendor in Model Town under a contractor. Soon he set up a visitation pattern which had continued until the time we met him: during the summer he worked as a water vendor and during the winter he returned with goods for sale such as clothes, stationary, and toys from the markets of Sadar Bazar and Chandni Chowk to sell in his village.

As a water vendor, Anish earned Rs. 3,000 to 5,000 a month as he also sold pan masala. He preferred to send money home monthly. He sent it through someone else who was going to the village, and took it himself when he went to the village at which time he also took back money for others. He agreed that it was unsafe to keep money with him and to remit it in this fashion, but his incapability in accessing any dependable saving and remittance scheme restricted his options, compelling him to follow this 'human remittance' model. Most street children who remitted money thus did not have access to a safe place to keep their meager earnings till they were able to remit these to their origin because they were working in Delhi to support their families in far-off regions. For example, in Anish's case, his remittance was the only means of supporting his family of eight members.

The salary pattern of street children varied. Most street vendors who constituted 12.5 per cent of the total, received daily payments; many working in street enterprises such as *dhabas*/restaurants, workshops, and stalls got weekly payments while some received monthly payments. Despite earning, the money actually increased their vulnerability. As mentioned earlier, the vulnerability of street children was primarily related to three factors: (i) To their being street children; (ii) To their access to a safe saving and remittance mode for whatever little they earned; and (iii) To where they slept at night. We now examine the second reason.

3.3.4: Location in Delhi

The third primary factor in the vulnerability of street children is related to where they sleep at night. Normally a night shelter, their home, also needs to be a place of safety that these children look for. Nearly 80 per cent of the street children reported having made some staying arrangements in slums. Though in terms of absolute numbers, girls were much less, their percentage share as slum and street dwellers varied from that of boys. This may be due to the fact that the number of young girls was very high (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Distribution of residential status (location)

	Slum	Roadside	Open space	Rental in village*	Others	No response	Total
Male	81.8	8.4	3.8	2.0	2.4	1.6	100.0
Female	73.7	12.0	3.4	1.7	7.4	1.7	100.0
Total	79.5	9.4	3.7	1.9	3.8	1.6	100.0

Note: * An urban village is a unique concept in Delhi. These villages are no longer surrounded by farm land. They also have a Panchayat structure of the community though living within the Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

Whatever be the mode of payment, it is a fact that street children do not have a safe place to keep their money. The children we interviewed either kept the money with themselves, with some elders in the group, or left it in their employer's safe-keeping. All these modes are unsafe since they lead to exploitative conditions and increase vulnerability. A street child becomes dependent on employers or other older street people for her/his own income. Immediate remittance through any possible mode would be the most appropriate option for children to safeguard their incomes. Moreover, it was noted during the study that whenever working children kept their money with their employers, they ended up receiving partial payments because the employer kept some amount back to ensure that the child did not run away. In cases where abuse was high, or payment abysmally low, or both, it was seen that the street child ran away without the money to work elsewhere. This was found to be a very common scenario.

An analysis of family/origin showed that most of the children knew about their families and only a few were cut-off from their families of origin. Though most belonged to migrant families, two-third had families in Delhi. In the case of boys, the incidence of living alone or staying away from families was high. The study also showed that most migrant children on the street visited home periodically. They also visited to remit money. The residential status of these children showed that they were largely slum dwellers rather than street dwellers. All these findings indicate that **the children were on the street to earn and at night they might go back to their habitats to sleep**. Therefore, the following discussion aims to provide some understanding about their involvement in income-generation activities.

3.4: What Do They Do on the Street?

The previous chapter illustrated the macro picture of the work and lives of street children, while this chapter

Table 3.7: Distribution of reasons for visiting home/place of origin (percentage)

	Attend family function	Visit sick relative	Visit periodically	To give money	Others	Total
Male	26.1	3.0	56.0	12.0	3.0	100.0
Female	22.2	0.0	66.7	11.1	0.0	100.0
Total	25.7	2.7	57.1	11.9	2.7	100.0

provides a micro-level perspective. Therefore, there might be slight variations in the percentage share of findings. Moreover, the study does not attempt to compare the macro picture, which is the census data and the micro picture, which is sample data.

In case of income-generation activities, nearly 87 per cent of the children were involved in some income-generation activity (88 per cent boys and 81 per cent girls). It was also observed that some girls with street families were not involved in any income-generation activities. This group included school-going and adolescent girls who lived in homes or shanties. The latter did household chores and looked after the younger ones. The study also observed very young wives (between 13-18 years, forming 2 per cent of the total sample) among the street families. They did not directly engage in any income-generation activities (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Distribution of earning and non-earning children (percentage)

	Yes	No	Total
Male	88.02	11.98	100.00
Female	81.02	18.98	100.00
Total	86.52	13.48	100.00

3.4.1: Economic activities of a street child

We found that a majority of the children were involved in some income-generation activity. **Rag picking was the most popular income-generation activity (21.5 per cent), street vending the second most popular (18.2 per**

cent), while working in roadside workshops provided employment to 17.4 per cent of the children. This was followed by begging (15.7 per cent). In fact, 35 per cent of the children were employed in some kind of roadside enterprise, while half of the street children (nearly 49 per cent) were self-employed and worked as street vendors, rag pickers, and vehicle cleaners.

A gender-wise analysis of the economic activities of the street children revealed remarkable differences between boys and girls. Only 5.7 per cent of the girls worked in roadside workshops. Girls worked largely as street vendors (nearly 35 per cent), beggars (25.7 per cent), and rag pickers (20 per cent). Though begging was the second most popular activity with one-fourth of all the girls engaged in it, it was only preferred by 13 per cent of the boys. Twenty per cent of the boys were employed in roadside workshops. This indicated that the girls were engaged in slightly more flexible activities, which they could finish and leave as early as possible. But the boys worked under somebody. This could be either in anticipation of getting trained or for a more regular or continuous employment with assured payment. This behaviour needs an in-depth analysis. However, what the study observed during discussions was that employers preferred only boys; girls were hardly welcomed as workers in most of the workshops. The hazardous nature of the job requiring long hours even at night could be the reason why girls were not seen in such street enterprises. It is also important to note that girls mostly worked in enterprises owned by parents/guardians or relatives. There were hardly any cases of girls working outside social and family networks (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Distribution of economic activities (percentage)

		Begging	Rag- picking	Street vendors	Vehicle cleaners	Workers in road side workshops	Workers in dhabas/ hotels	Any work	Workers in manufacturing units	Total
Gender	Male	13.2	21.9	14.0	10.3	20.3	8.7	8.9	2.6	100.0
	Female	25.7	20.0	34.9	4.0	5.7	2.3	4.6	1.1	100.0
Age group	0-4	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.00
	5-9	39.8	28.3	8.0	9.7	6.2	2.7	3.5	1.8	100.0
	10-14	8.7	26.7	23.3	8.5	17.8	6.5	7.6	0.9	100.0
	15-<18	3.1	12.9	16.8	11.3	24.6	12.5	12.1	5.5	100.0
	Total	15.7	21.5	18.2	9.0	17.4	7.4	8.0	2.3	100.0

An age-wise analysis indicated that young children (less than 5 years old) were engaged only in begging, which was understandable as begging does not require any skills and a child beggar elicits more sympathy. **Begging was not a preferred engagement for a child above 10 years of age. In that category, they were mainly either self-employed or worked in street enterprises. In the 15-18 years age group nearly 55 per cent of the children were child workers,** which means that they worked in roadside workshops (24.6 per cent), *dhabas*/hotels (12.5 per cent), in any other work (12.1 per cent), and in roadside manufacturing units (5.5 per cent).

3.4.2: Working profile of a street child

(a) The length of a working week

It was quite natural for us to wonder whether a street child worked all seven days of the week. The general perception is that because their living depends on income from work, they would do so. It was also felt that they would not have any support on a non-working day. How far did this perception hold good for Delhi's street children? Our data showed that, on average, the children were engaged in some income-generating activity for six days in a week. This was the same across all UNICEF categories of street children. The following observations on the street supported this finding:

- (i) All markets in Delhi are closed for one day in a week.
- (ii) A weekly off is common in all shops even if they operate for seven days a week.
- (ii) Street children with families in Delhi go back home at least once a week to remit money.
- (iii) The children spend time off work at least once a week to take a bath, wash clothes, and seek out some entertainment.
- (iv) It was also observed that these children work only to make a living. Saving in hand makes them insecure. So they are mostly irregular workers on the street, and hence can take a day off if they decide to.
- (v) Only migrant and working children without families in Delhi preferred to work all possible days and earn the maximum. Therefore, on an average, street children in Delhi worked for six days in a week (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Gender and age-wise distribution: Average number of working days per week and working hours per day

		Average working days in a week	Average working hours per day
Gender	Male	6	6.7
	Female	6	6.4
Age group	0-4	6	5.0
	5-9	6	6.1
	10-14	6	6.5
	15-<18	6	7.1
	Total	6	6.6

(b) The length of a working day

The study calculated the average number of working hours in a day going by the number of working hours per day during the week prior to the survey. Accordingly, it was found that a child worked an average of 6.6 hours in a day. It became clear that as they grew up, the children worked more hours to earn because data showed that where young children spent five hours per day working, a 15-17 year old spent 7.1 hours.

The international child rights norm propagated and practiced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) norms categorically disapprove any form of child labour. However, considering household poverty concerns, ILO Convention 138 discusses the norms on working age and weekly working hours for children, which in fact is not to support, but to develop intervention strategies to systematically eliminate child labour. Based on these norms, we analysed the challenges that open up in the present context:

- First, ILO norms permit no child under 5 years to work. However, our study clearly brings out that in Delhi even children under 5 years were engaged in some economic activity such as begging.
- Second, though ILO suggests that working children in the 5-11 years age group need to be eliminated from the workforce, it permits them light work for less than 14 hours a week. In the locations covered by our study, a child in that age group undertook regular work for 36 hours per week, on average.
- If any child works more than 43 hours a week and is less than 18 years of age, this is considered hazardous for the mental, physical, and emotional

growth of the child. Therefore, from the perspective of working hours even by ILO's norms, most children were either on the fringes of or were absolutely involved in hazardous working conditions.

3.5: Income and Expenditure Status

It is clear that street children in the area under study engaged in longer hours of work than what is unwillingly agreed to by ILO; they also engaged in regular rather than light work (with regard to ILO-suggested age-limitations) and also undertook economic activities at levels that ILO defines as hazardous. Did so much hard work help them earn a decent living? The findings were interesting. Their monthly earnings were reported at Rs. 2,240 on an average. (We asked them their total daily income for a week and made calculations based on this). The average weekly income of a child in North Delhi district was Rs. 2,520, the highest among all the districts while it was only Rs. 1,900 in the North West Delhi district (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Distribution of average weekly income

		Monthly income (Rs.)
District	Central Delhi	2396
	East Delhi	2160
	New Delhi	2436
	North Delhi	2520
	North East Delhi	2072
	North West Delhi	1900
	South Delhi	2392
	South West Delhi	2108
	West Delhi	2016
Gender	Male	2256
	Female	2172
Age group	0-4	1880
	5-9	2088
	10-14	2200
	15-<18	2488
Total		2240

There were hardly any gender differences observed in income. The difference was with regard to the age group, i.e., as the children grew up they earned better (from Rs. 1,880 for 0-4 years old, to Rs. 2,088 for 5-9 years old, then Rs. 2,200 and Rs. 2,488 for 10-14 and 15-<18 years old respectively). Average gender and age-wise daily income of street children was also calculated and can be seen in Table 3.13. The average monthly income of a child, hence, fell between Rs. 1,700-2,500 which is somewhat close to the monthly income of most adult informal sector workers

(NCEUS 2006).¹ So the danger is that a better income (relative in comparison with an adult worker in an informal sector enterprise) would lead to the outflow of child labour to work on the streets or anywhere else in the city, but their income over the period would remain the same. Their capability would restrict their income growth from a child to an adult. It is important to note that there is hardly any understanding of the increasing mismatch between income and expenditure when a street child grows up to be an adult and its implications on her/his social/economic life later. Rather than merely profiling their expenditure patterns, it is also essential to know their perspective on both income and expenditure in the absence of any guidance on spending or saving patterns. Better earnings and a sort of unguided life on the street might lead them to spend on alcohol, drugs, and other anti-social activities at very young ages. This study is unable to provide a clear picture of these aspects of income-expenditure of street children. Finally, lack of safe places to store savings also led the children to spend whatever they earned. A debate on expenditure is essential to complete this discussion.

Table 3.13: Distribution of average daily income

		Avg/ day income (Rs.)
Gender	Male	88
	Female	85
Age group	0-4	77
	5-9	71
	10-14	86
	15-<18	98
Total		87

Whether it be an adult or a child, all income is earned to meet some payment or expense. The expenditure basket in our study varied from food, entertainment, and clothes to shelter, medical costs, payment to parents and agents/supervisors (gang leaders)/police, and for drugs or addictive materials. The children mainly spent on food.

In all, 33 per cent of their total income was paid to parents, 2.53 per cent to supervisors, and 0.53 per cent to the police. The incidence of payments to the supervisor/agent was very high in South Delhi district. Overall expenditure on food was 47.3 per cent of the income. The ratio spent on drugs was different between districts. According to data, the income-expenditure pattern of street children showed that nearly 63 per cent of their income was allotted for own expenses (food, entertainment, shelter). Their second highest expenditure was on food. Drug and

³⁶ NCEUS (2006): 'Social Security for Unorganised Workers', National Commission on Enterprises in Unorganised Sector, New Delhi.

tobacco use was also very common among these children (Table 3.14).

Delhi railway station. The whiteners bought by one child were shared between four other children. We even found

Table 3.14: Percentage distribution of average monthly expenditure pattern

District	Food	Entertainment	Clothes & others	Shelter	Medical	Drugs	Pay to supervisor	Parents	Police	Total
Central Delhi	41.43	1.53	8.27	0.28	0.60	5.52	1.28	40.71	0.39	100.00
East Delhi	51.44	3.04	3.89	1.65	0.88	3.23	4.35	30.44	1.07	100.00
New Delhi	65.69	2.00	7.09	4.70	1.28	1.22	1.71	15.50	0.80	100.00
North Delhi	45.53	1.80	12.24	0.97	1.91	2.93	0.02	34.10	0.50	100.00
North East Delhi	50.56	3.64	4.97	0.91	1.43	3.85	5.94	28.48	0.22	100.00
North West Delhi	43.42	2.84	12.06	7.10	1.59	1.35	0.43	31.01	0.20	100.00
South Delhi	31.82	1.55	6.99	1.20	1.73	2.03	2.05	52.54	0.08	100.00
South West Delhi	41.11	3.46	5.16	1.45	4.18	2.77	3.85	37.06	0.97	100.00
West Delhi	44.43	2.60	6.31	1.60	3.77	2.00	2.57	36.48	0.25	100.00
Total	47.29	2.51	7.38	1.99	1.84	2.85	2.53	33.08	0.53	100.00

The discussions also covered details of expenditure patterns. The children ate from roadside food vendors and reported that whenever possible they bought *chowmein* (noodles with vegetables), ice cream, water and ‘cheap food’, meaning fruits which were sold at a low price. They also ate from *langars* (free food distributed by people and religious groups, especially by Sikhs) and at some places the children said that they ate at *Apna Rasoi* (a common kitchen run by the Government of Delhi for underprivileged people).

3.6: Incidence of Drug Use

Since expenditure on drugs featured in the list, the study enquired deeply into this aspect of street children’s lives. **Nearly 22 per cent (231 children) of the street children said that they used drugs, largely tobacco and *pan masala*** (we consider tobacco and *pan* also as drugs, as they also lead to addiction). Incidences of the use of alcohol, whiteners, and thinners were also reported. Cases of children losing control due to alcohol intake were witnessed by researchers in Mayapuri, Pitampura, Daryaganj, and Nizamuddin areas and also at the New

a drunk street-child water vendor. Other street children in the vicinity said that he was an addict and spent all his money on alcohol. (The study used others to get basic information about this child).

The research team also found a gang of seven children in a hallucinatory state sitting and smelling some powder in a park in Pitampura. When the male investigators approached them, they got violent. So we just identified them and then left. In Central and North West Delhi districts, one out of three children spent money on drugs.

The study also enquired into the frequency of intake of some addictive materials, including *pan* and tobacco. We found that nearly 50 per cent of the 231 children who consumed drugs were daily consumers of tobacco, *pan masala*, or some addictive drugs (whitener, other intoxicating drugs), 28 per cent were weekly users, and 20.6 per cent were monthly users. The daily drugs of choice were mainly tobacco and *pan masala* while alcohol was largely consumed on a weekly and monthly basis. The children said that they could afford *pan* or tobacco on a daily basis, but other drugs, including alcohol, were



expensive. The study also found children consuming whiteners and other drugs (Table 3.15).

number of children who fell under the 5 plus age group in the sample was 932. Out of this, around 50 per cent

Table 3.15: Distribution pattern of drug use* (percentage)

District	Yes	Interval				
		Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Total
Central Delhi	33.33	17.9	46.2	7.7	28.2	100.0
East Delhi	29.93	72.7	15.9	0.0	11.4	100.0
New Delhi	7.26	11.1	66.7	0.0	22.2	100.0
North Delhi	16.57	23.3	36.7	13.3	26.7	100.0
North East Delhi	34.26	70.3	8.1	2.7	18.9	100.0
North West Delhi	13.89	10.0	70.0	10.0	10.0	100.0
South Delhi	17.44	33.3	26.7	6.7	33.3	100.0
South West Delhi	16.95	60.0	20.0	0.0	20.0	100.0
West Delhi	20.87	66.7	12.5	4.2	16.7	100.0
Total	21.61	46.3	28.0	5.0	20.6	100.0

Note: * N=231.

3.7: Education and Schooling

Every child has a right to education. It is the most important capability enhancement that a child needs to earn a living in her/his future. Street children were largely deprived of many things, including access to school and educational support. Their condition of life such as having to live on the roads, moving from one place to other, the lack of an address/identity, and lack of family or parental support to get educated, did not leave them with any option other than to work to ensure food security which limited their access to school and education. Considering these factors, there are various initiatives, mainly from NGOs and the government, to mainstream street children by providing basic educational support.

Our data findings with regard to the schooling or educational status of street children is highly promising as half the children in the school-going age (5 years plus) had access to education or had an orientation towards it thanks to the various initiatives in this regard. The total

reported that they had been exposed to some form of education at some point of time.

The study tried to capture details of the type of education and other related aspects, including their perspective on education and skill training (Table 3.16).

Table 3.16: Distribution of educational status (percentage)

		Yes	No	Total
Districts	Central Delhi	44.8	55.2	100.0
	East Delhi	56.0	44.0	100.0
	New Delhi	49.5	50.5	100.0
	North Delhi	42.0	58.0	100.0
	North East Delhi	63.7	36.3	100.0
	North West Delhi	57.1	42.9	100.0
	South Delhi	22.4	77.6	100.0
	South West Delhi	49.2	50.8	100.0
	West Delhi	62.2	37.8	100.0
	Male	52.3	47.7	100.0
	Female	40.3	59.7	100.0
Age group	5-9	27.9	72.1	100.0
	10-14	52.4	47.6	100.0
	15-17	60.7	39.3	100.0
	Total	49.9	50.1	100.00



3.7.1: Types of schools

The various initiatives discussed here largely refer to informal interventions such as those by NGOs, mobile schools, better-off people in the neighbourhood teaching them, and night schools. District-wise data showed that access to NGOs, mobile and night schools

differed according to the level of presence of NGOs or CSOs working in these districts. It also revealed the limitations of the present level of intervention to address the requirements. Government schemes for providing nutritional and elementary education support such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)/anganwadi centres (AWCs), and support to working mothers through crèche facilities were accessed by some, especially girl children and very young children (see Table 3.17). The level of access indicated that it was minimal and far below the desired level. Interaction with young mothers and other people on the street revealed that it was very difficult for them to access these government schemes. First of all, they shifted their sleeping locations periodically. Second, many of them belonged to the seasonal migrants category. Anganwadis/ICDS centres are largely located in urban villages or notified JJ (*juggi jopdi*) colonies in Delhi. Third, they had very limited awareness about such schemes and the process involved for accessing them. Therefore, street dwellers were predictably excluded from accessing these schemes.

Sarai in South Delhi district. She had converted her balcony into a classroom. Classes started in the afternoon and continued till 8 pm and were attended by children of housemaids and those from families that took in household ironing to make a living, child vegetable vendors, and also children who worked in petty shops and at traffic lights. Many of the children who did not work for a living attended the classes as well. The lady running the classes said that most of the children who attended school were regular, but working and street children were not. The lady also provided some snacks to her students who came directly from work. It was purely self-funded and it helped to keep her occupied. A similar case was observed in West Delhi (see Box 3.2). But these two cases also indicated their limited sustainability. They largely operated on their convenience and interruptions led to children dropping out of classes.

NGO-intervention in the form of mobile classes reported enthusiastic attendance coupled with a constant query from street children as to whether such learning would help them improve their earnings. The children said that

Table 3.17: Distribution of types of schools

		Mobile	Crèche	Run by NGO	Neighbour	Night School	ICDS/ Anganwadi	Others	Total
District	Central Delhi	36.2	8.5	31.9	21.3	2.1	0.0	0.0	100.0
	East Delhi	8.0	8.0	10.7	28.0	9.3	12.0	24.0	100.0
	New Delhi	14.8	11.1	24.1	24.1	7.4	3.7	14.8	100.0
	North Delhi	35.2	7.0	35.2	12.7	5.6	4.2	0.0	100.0
	North East Delhi	16.9	6.2	12.3	23.1	21.5	7.7	12.3	100.0
	North West Delhi	20.0	7.5	32.5	25.0	7.5	0.0	7.5	100.0
	South Delhi	17.6	17.6	29.4	17.6	5.9	11.8	0.0	100.0
	South West Delhi	24.1	10.3	17.2	17.2	13.8	6.9	10.3	100.0
	West Delhi	24.6	5.8	23.2	18.8	14.5	1.4	11.6	100.0
Gender	Male	23.0	5.4	23.7	21.4	10.5	4.6	11.5	100.0
	Female	16.0	22.7	20.0	20.0	9.3	8.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	21.8	8.1	23.1	21.2	10.3	5.1	10.3	100.0
Age group	5-9	9.8	74.5	11.8	0.0	0.0	1.2	3.9	100.0
	10-14	21.8	0.0	28.0	21.0	16.7	0.0	11.3	100.0
	15-17	25.8	0.0	18.9	28.3	3.1	0.0	23.9	100.0
Total		21.8	8.1	23.1	21.2	10.3	5.1	10.3	100.0

(a) Classes run by people in the neighbourhood

Classes had been initiated by college students, religious groups (especially the church), and by educated housewives and retired women. The study found a class run by a housewife in a middle class residential colony in Sheikh

if a child did not see any improvement, she/he slowly withdrew from the classes. Similarly, these children had less capacity to withstand pressure from peer groups, family/relatives, and agents not to attend classes regularly. Once they turned irregular, they eventually stopped coming to the classes.

Box 3.2: Volunteer to make change – Self-initiative by a housewife

Near Mahavir Enclave in West Delhi district, a trained teacher who is also a housewife runs a training centre in the premises of a religious building. She started the classes in May 2009 after having a discussion with a street-child vendor who showed interest in learning and also told her that some of his friends too wanted to learn. Since she did not have space at home, she spoke to a religious group for permission to use their space. Apart from basic literacy, she also covered toilet training and hygiene practices. She had managed to admit three of her students to a nearby school run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).



Apart from government and state initiatives, classes run by neighbourhood volunteers also face this problem. Since such initiatives are based on personal interest, once these people move away from the city (say for a holiday, even if not permanently), or find it inconvenient to hold the classes regularly, it affects continuity and the students eventually drop out.

3.7.2: Level of education

The level of education attained by the children varied. Nearly half of those who claimed to attend school or said that they had got an education (47.3 per cent or 467 children) had only received one to two years of schooling. Nearly 19 per cent were attending or had attended school up to Class V. The percentage of street children who had gone beyond the primary level was minimal. Nearly 2 per cent (20 children) were attending MCD schools regularly at the time of the survey. It is also important to note that 28.3 per cent of the children who had attended schools or had received some form of education (a few classes for a few months) did not continue with their studies (Table 3.18). Students in informal classes might belong to this category.

3.8: Skill Training Requirements

Though half of all the street children surveyed had not received any kind of education or training, enquiries were also made with regard to the need for skill training. The advantage of skill training is that it is largely a capacity-enhancement activity which also provides improvements in basic literacy skills. The reason that many children work in workshops and in households is to gain such training. Therefore, such skill enhancement by a professional agency might reduce the number of children working in roadside enterprises.

3.8.1: Demand for skill training

When the study delved into the need and interest for gaining access to skill training programmes, 64.2 per cent of the children responded positively. Most of the girls demanded some skill enhancement because they did not engage in any skilled activity on the roads, whereas the boys worked in specialised enterprises like workshops. The demand for skill training reduced with age (see Table 3.19). This might be due to the fact that young children were engaged in unskilled activities or worked as apprentices.

Table 3.18: Distribution of level of schooling* (percentage)

		Level of schooling								
		Few months	One-two years	Fifth class	Eighth class	Tenth class	Informal	Irregular informal	Regular formal	Total
District	Central Delhi	32.6	32.6	28.3	4.3	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	100.0
	East Delhi	35.1	55.8	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	100.0
	New Delhi	37.5	39.3	17.9	1.8	0.0	1.8	1.8	0.0	100.0
	North Delhi	17.9	37.3	32.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.9	100.0
	North East Delhi	33.8	49.2	13.8	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.5	0.0	100.0
	North West Delhi	17.1	61.0	14.6	0.0	0.0	4.9	2.4	0.0	100.0
	South Delhi	18.8	31.3	37.5	0.0	0.0	6.3	6.3	0.0	100.0
	South West Delhi	20.7	62.1	10.3	3.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	West Delhi	27.1	51.4	18.6	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Gender	Male	27.5	46.7	19.9	0.8	0.5	1.5	1.0	2.0	100.0
	Female	32.4	50.7	12.7	1.4	1.4	0.0	1.4	0.0	100.0
	Total	28.3	47.3	18.8	0.9	0.6	1.3	1.1	1.7	100.0
Age group	5-9	55.6	35.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.9	100.0
	10-14	27.2	51.7	18.1	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.1	1.1	100.0
	15-17	22.3	43.3	25.5	2.5	1.9	2.5	1.3	0.6	100.0
	Total	28.3	47.3	18.8	0.9	0.6	1.3	1.1	1.7	100.0

Note: * Percentage is derived from 467 children who reported that they had got some form of education.

By the time they were 15-<18 years old they would have acquired some skills or got trained in some activity as apprentices for three to six years.

Table 3.19: Distribution of need expressed for skill training* (percentage)

		Yes	No	Total
Districts	Male	62.3	37.7	100.0
	Female	72.2	27.8	100.0
Age group	5-9	80.8	19.2	100.0
	10-14	62.7	37.3	100.0
	15-<18	56.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	64.2	35.8	100.0

Note: * N=888.

3.8.2: Type of skill training sought

Street children largely looked to a school education for essential skills to enhance their future capability as labourers. But 570 of the children demanded some skill education. Out of this, 43.7 per cent demanded a school education and 17.4 per cent wanted both school education and skill training. Nearly 39 per cent wanted only skill training. Indeed, almost all the children looked for some kind of training to improve their skills whether literary or job related. More girls demanded school training, while boys found skill training to be more important. Whereas the age-wise classification showed that young children wanted school education, skill training with a school education was high priority for those in the 15-17 years age group (Table 3.20).

Table 3.20: Distribution of types of skill training demanded*

		School education	Skill training	Skill training with education	Total
Gender	Male	41.5	39.7	18.8	100.0
	Female	51.6	36.1	12.3	100.0
Age group	5-9	48.9	39.3	11.9	100.0
	10-14	43.5	38.4	18.0	100.0
	15-17	39.0	39.7	21.3	100.0
	Total	43.7	38.9	17.4	100.0

Note: * N=570.

Any intervention strategy to enhance the educational levels of street children needs to cater to their needs; for young children it could be school education alone, and for the senior age group, it could be school education with skill training, which would not only improve their skills but also enhance their interest in attending classes. The monotony would reduce and they would learn something that would improve their earning capacity.

Since there was a positive response towards the need for skill training we asked the children about what time would be convenient for them to attend such training programmes. More than 55 per cent said that they would prefer attending classes in the evening. Morning classes were demanded by 41 per cent and only 4 per cent wanted night classes. Boys wanted evening or night classes but only a few girls wanted night classes. Age-wise classification showed that the demand for evening and night classes increased with an increase in age, which meant that the older children wanted to study or engage in some skill training only after work (Table 3.21).

Table 3.21: Distribution of time of training demanded* (percentage)

		Morning	Evening	Night	Total
District	Central Delhi	35.8	55.2	9.0	100.0
	East Delhi	45.1	53.5	1.4	100.0
	New Delhi	52.3	45.5	2.3	100.0
	North Delhi	30.1	65.5	4.4	100.0
	North East Delhi	47.4	50.9	1.8	100.0
	North West Delhi	49.1	50.9	0.0	100.0
	South Delhi	34.0	50.9	15.1	100.0
	South West Delhi	42.5	57.5	0.0	100.0
	West Delhi	44.3	54.3	1.4	100.0
Gender	Male	38.8	56.5	4.7	100.0
	Female	48.4	50.0	1.6	100.0
Age group	5-9	43.0	54.8	2.2	100.0
	10-14	42.9	53.7	3.4	100.0
	15-<18	34.8	58.2	7.1	100.0
	Total	40.9	55.1	4.0	100.0

These findings show that a number of street children wanted to get educated and trained properly. They were, in some sense, disabled as they were not educated and trained. Though interventions would not be able to mainstream all the children, a majority might want to be mainstreamed and get educated/trained in some skills.

3.9: Health and Sanitation Status

It is an accepted fact that street children live in highly vulnerable conditions. They are deprived of access to sanitation facilities and drinking water. They are exposed to extreme climates in cities like Delhi and live in unhygienic and unhealthy conditions without proper food, nutritional care, and even clothing. All these factors enhance their vulnerability to unimaginable levels.

To understand their health status, we enquired whether any child had fallen sick in the last six months; 27.7 per cent said that they had fallen sick. Falling sick for them did not mean coming down with a cold or fever; it meant problems with heat such as painful heat boils and chickenpox. They also classified falling sick as being bedridden. In that case they normally withdrew from the streets. Also, it was noted that the children did not report any skin-related problem as a health issue or a condition of sickness, because it was very common among them.

3.9.1: Place of treatment

Out of the 280 children who reported that they had fallen ill during the last six months, 45 per cent said that they had approached a private nursing home/clinic for treatment. In South Delhi and Central Delhi districts, more than 80 per cent of the children had approached private clinics. This could be due to easy access to such facilities in

Table 3.22: Distribution of types of health facilities accessed by street children* (percentage)

	NGO run facility	Family planning centre	Maternity and child welfare centre	Govt. hospital	Private nursing home/ clinic	Mobile services	Health camp	Didn't go anywhere, no treatment	Others	No response	Total
Central Delhi	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0	82.6	0.0	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
East Delhi	12.5	8.3	0.0	4.2	31.3	4.2	25.0	6.3	8.3	0.0	100.0
New Delhi	10.8	10.8	5.4	2.7	29.7	2.7	21.6	8.1	8.1	0.0	100.0
North Delhi	9.3	7.0	0.0	0.0	67.4	2.3	11.6	0.0	2.3	0.0	100.0
North East Delhi	9.1	9.1	3.0	9.1	33.3	6.1	21.2	3.0	6.1	0.0	100.0
North West Delhi	18.8	25.0	0.0	6.3	25.0	6.3	6.3	0.0	6.3	6.3	100.0
South Delhi	0.0	12.5	0.0	6.3	81.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
South West Delhi	8.3	8.3	0.0	0.0	37.5	8.3	33.3	0.0	4.2	0.0	100.0
West Delhi	15.0	12.5	0.0	5.0	35.0	12.5	10.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	100.0
Male	9.3	8.8	0.9	3.5	44.5	5.3	18.5	3.5	5.3	0.4	100.0
Female	15.1	15.1	1.9	3.8	45.3	3.8	7.5	3.8	3.8	0.0	100.0
Total	10.4	10.0	1.1	3.6	44.6	5.0	16.4	3.6	5.0	0.4	100.0

Note: * N=280.

these two districts. Health camps were the second most popular source of treatment for street children. Children also accessed NGO-provided health services (high in North West Delhi and West Delhi districts). Mobile health services were accessed by some (high in West Delhi district). NGO involvement in providing health services to street children was visible; health camps, NGO services, and mobile services constituted nearly 32 per cent of the health services provided. This indicates that one out of every three children received NGO support for treating health issues. Though government agencies also provide mobile health services, the street children said that they

preferred approaching NGOs (Table 3.22). Government intervention was mainly slum based and it hardly covered street dwellers.

3.9.2: Types of drinking water

Access to drinking water is a major issue in an urban scenario. In many places, the children asked us for drinking water while we were talking to them and they also collected the bottles to fetch water. We also saw that while begging if they saw a water bottle, the children begged for water as well. The children said that in many places they did

Table 3.23: Distribution of types of drinking water sources accessed by street children (percentage)

		Community Tap	Hand Pump	Other	Total
District	Central Delhi	90.6	8.5	0.9	100.0
	East Delhi	35.4	50.3	14.3	100.0
	New Delhi	46.0	38.7	15.3	100.0
	North Delhi	80.1	19.3	0.6	100.0
	North East Delhi	50.0	44.4	5.6	100.0
	North West Delhi	76.4	20.8	2.8	100.0
	South Delhi	82.6	8.1	9.3	100.0
	South West Delhi	33.9	54.2	11.9	100.0
	West Delhi	53.0	40.0	7.0	100.0
Gender	Male	62.4	30.9	6.7	100.0
	Female	58.3	32.4	9.3	100.0
	Total	61.5	31.2	7.2	100.0

not have access to water. During summer, water pots at taxi stands were one major source of drinking water for them (Table 3.23). Otherwise, in slums they had access to

toilet services and drinking water to some extent. This emphasises the fact that they were not free riders, at least not on Delhi's roads.

Table 3.24: Distribution of types of toilets accessed by street children (percentage)

		Paid	Mobile Toilets	Other	Total
District	Central Delhi	83.8	6.8	9.4	100.0
	East Delhi	96.6	3.4	0.0	100.0
	New Delhi	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	North Delhi	78.5	20.4	1.1	100.0
	North East Delhi	92.6	7.4	0.0	100.0
	North West Delhi	62.5	33.3	4.2	100.0
	South Delhi	83.7	5.8	10.5	100.0
	South West Delhi	98.3	1.7	0.0	100.0
	West Delhi	85.2	14.8	0.0	100.0
Gender	Male	86.1	11.3	2.5	100.0
	Female	90.7	6.9	2.3	100.0
	Total	87.1	10.4	2.5	100.0

community taps and hand pumps. But they agreed that many community taps did not work and MCD/NDMC had shut off supply in many places. That was why they asked people for water on the road. Many children said that they often drank water from water vendors by paying one rupee per glass.

3.9.3: Types of toilets

Access to a toilet is another important facility that street children require. A majority of the street children (87 per cent) paid for accessing a toilet facility in Delhi. In the case of girls, this figure was more than 90 per cent (Table 3.24). Contrary to the prevailing assumption in Delhi about the toilet behaviour of street dwellers, that their open defecation dirties the roads, what we observed was that most of the children accessed paid services such as *Sulabh Shouchalayas* and mobile toilets provided by MCD (also based on payment).

These findings explain how street children accessed healthcare needs and sanitation facilities. Children accessed private clinics, obviously paying for a service; whenever they could, they accessed free health services such as mobile clinics, NGO services, and health camps. Similarly, many street children used paid services for accessing toilet facilities and drinking water. This indicates that though they may be nobody's children, they hardly received free services. They even had to earn to pay for accessing

3.10: Disabilities and Handicaps among Street Children

The Persons with Disability (PWD) Act (1995), defines disability as blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, loco motor disability, mental retardation, and mental illness. The International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF) considers disability at multiple levels of functioning of a person

Table 3.25: Distribution of disabilities reported (percentage)

	Hearing	Speaking	Visual	Physical	Mental	Total
Male	19.6	18.6	43.3	10.7	7.8	100
Female	15.4	15	38.6	20.1	10.9	100
Total	16	19	42	14.8	8.2	100

such as at the body level, personal level, and societal level. Disability denotes all of the following: (a) Impairments in body functions and structures, (b) Limitations in activity, and (c) Restriction in participation. Disability has to be seen as a result of an interaction between a person (with a health condition) and that person's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors). Broadly, we can perceive disability/handicap as a health status which prevents execution of some class of movement or the picking up of sensory information of some sort, or the performance of some cognitive function that unimpaired humans are able to execute or perform; while a handicap is an inability to accomplish something one might want to

do that others can do, it is not necessarily linked to health status. Medically, a disability may be directly or indirectly related to an inability or a handicap. A handicap and/or disability are conditions that draw sympathy from others.

As per media reports and various earlier studies on street children, they often had a disability/handicap following torture by the agent or kidnapper who wanted them to earn for him through begging. The handicap/disability would also ensure that the child would not be able to run away. This study too enquired about the disability status of children. It was found that 6 per cent of the street children

were disabled.² Among them it was found that 42 per cent had eyesight disability (mostly complete blindness). Regarding speech (19 per cent), hearing (16 per cent), and mental disabilities (8.2 per cent), we were not able to collect details, including names from these children and sought the help of their parents, siblings, or friends (Table 3.25).

The major reasons behind a street child being disabled were: (i) From birth (85.1 per cent), (ii) Through accidents (8.1 per cent), and (iii) Intentional (nearly 7 per cent) such as various kinds of abuse by parents and agents or other people (see Box 3.3).

Box 3.3: Abuse led him to fly away...

Thirteen-year-old Mahesh explained that he left home (Mewat in Haryana) because of constant physical abuse by his father. His father, a drunk, would beat him and his siblings over trifle issues. Once he twisted Mahesh's hand. Mahesh was in severe pain for many days and thereafter found that he could do nothing with that hand; it had no sensation. When we met him, more than two years had passed since the incident, but he was still not able to move that hand. He told us how his father had started beating him. So last year he left home and came to Delhi. He begged for a living at Ritala railway station and never returned home.

The study was, however, not able to collect details about cases of abuse by agents. Mahesh's experience shows that what he suffered from was much more than abuse; it was physical torture and harassment that led to the handicap and disability.



³⁷ According to Census 2001, 1.8 per cent of the total population suffered from various disabilities.

Detailed enquiries from those who said that they had got disabled due to accidents revealed that the accidents occurred at home as small children, or the child had been in a road accident, or in an accident at the workplace (this included accidents that occurred at the parents' workplace). From the discussion it emerged that if the children had received proper medical care, the disability rate could have reduced significantly (Table 3.26).

Table 3.26: Distribution of nature of disabilities (percentage)

	By birth	Accident	Parental abuse	Abuse by agent	Total
Male	82.6	9.2	3.1	5.1	100
Female	100	0	0	0	100
Total	85.1	8.1	2.6	4.2	100

3.11: Incidence of Abuse or Unsafe Life on the Roads

One of the major threats that street children experience is abuse. The term abuse from the perspective of a child is defined as an act that causes or permits any harmful or offensive contact with her/his body and any communication or transaction of any kind which humiliates, shames, or frightens the child. Abuse is also defined as any act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm to a child (WHO 1999).³⁸ There are many studies that

have looked in detail at various kinds of abuse a child on the street has to undergo. Drug abuse, sexual abuse, and verbal abuse have been constantly deliberated upon.

Considering the sensitivity of this issue, this study approached it in a slightly indirect manner. We asked each child interviewed whether she/he had ever heard or seen any other child in the peer group being abused. The question was framed like this to avoid any kind of discomfort among the children on the one hand and also to get some understanding of their insecure lives on the streets. Experts' comments were obtained to collect information about abuse without offending the children. Similarly, the field staff was specifically told that if any child expressed any discomfort towards this question, further enquiry should be avoided.

One hundred and thirty-five (13.4 per cent) children said that they had witnessed such situations which means that a large number of children undergo some kind of abuse everyday on the streets (Table 3.27).

Table 3.27: Distribution of status of abuse witnessed on the roads by street children (percentage)

	Yes	No	Total
Male	13.6	86.4	100.0
Female	12.5	87.5	100.0
Total	13.4	86.6	100.0

To understand the intensity of abuse or torture that a child undergoes on the street, we began by classifying it as



Photo Credit: Raghu Rai 2009

³⁸ World Health Organisation (1999): 'Report of the Consultation on Child Abuse Prevention', Geneva. Available at: http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/neglect/en/ (accessed in November 2010).

physical and verbal abuse. Again, it is important to report that this methodology was followed to reduce the degree of discomfort that a child would experience during the interview. We sought to understand the kind of abuse, the gender of the child who was abused, and the person who had abused the child. Verbal and physical abuse was largely reported. Verbal abuse was experienced and observed by almost all the children. They even laughed when we

asked them about it saying, “*gaali to hum bar bar sunthe hai*” (they curse us all the time). This form of abuse was very common and the children seemed to bother less about verbal abuse, but the case of physical abuse was different and they appeared seemingly scared about explaining such situations. Boys were largely abused by the police and it was relatives/friends in the case of girls (Table 3.28).

Table 3.28: Gender and age-wise distribution of various people who abuse street children verbally* (percentage)

		Sex of the children abused												
		Male						Female						
	Abused by	Guardians	Agent	Police	Relative/ friend	Other street child	Total	Guardians	Agent	Police	Relative/ friend	Other street child	Other	Total
Female	Male	25.9	24.1	42.6	18.5	7.4	100.0	21.4	14.3	21.4	46.4	28.6	3.6	100.0
	Female	35.7	21.4	21.4	28.6	14.3	100.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	100.0
Age group	0-4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
	5-9	0.0	0.0	57.1	42.9	14.3	100.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
	10-14	32.6	14.0	46.5	14.0	9.3	100.0	19.0	14.3	28.6	42.9	23.8	4.8	100.0
	15-17	27.8	55.6	11.1	27.8	5.6	100.0	25.0	25.0	8.3	50.0	33.3	0.0	100.0
	Total	27.9	23.5	38.2	20.6	8.8	100.0	23.7	15.8	23.7	39.5	28.9	2.6	100.0

Note: *N= 87.

This study classifies physical abuse as: (i) Punishment (making the child stand/sit in a particular painful position, (ii) Pouring water and throwing things on the children, (iii) Denying the children something that they need such as not allowing them to go the toilet, (iv) Depriving them of food, and (v) Beating and physical torture. Physical abuse

differed between girls and boys. More than 50 per cent of the boys were beaten up as were 31.4 per cent of the girls. Various punishments, other than physical torture, were commonly meted out to girls (74.3 per cent). We observed gender differences in the type of physical abuse rather than age group related differences (Table 3.29).

Table 3.29: Gender and age-wise distribution of nature of abuse witnessed by street children* (percentage)

		Sex									
		Male					Female				
	Type	Physical punishment	Beating	Food denial	Physical exploitation	Total	Physical punishment	Beating	Food denial	Physical exploitation	Total
Gender	Male	44.4	55.6	11.1	11.1	100.0	83.3	33.3	16.7	8.3	100.0
	Female	42.9	57.1	28.6	0.0	100.0	54.5	27.3	18.2	18.2	100.0
Age group	0-4	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	5-9	37.5	62.5	0.0	12.5	100.0	60.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	10-14	47.8	47.8	8.7	17.4	100.0	100.0	7.1	14.3	14.3	100.0
	15-17	45.0	60.0	25.0	0.0	100.0	53.3	46.7	26.7	13.3	100.0
	Total	44.2	55.8	13.5	9.6	100.0	74.3	31.4	17.1	11.4	100.0

Note: *N= 87.

Who were the people who physically abused a child on the street? The abusers varied from guardian/parents to agents, police, relatives/friends, other street children, and car/other commuters. The study found a major gender difference here too. Boys were abused mostly by parents/guardians, police, and relatives/friends while girls were mainly (nearly 63 per cent) abused by relatives/friends (Table 3.30). This needs a more detailed enquiry as it was found to be true across all age groups as well.

The children were scared about: (i) Danger to their lives from the police, (ii) Of physical abuse (including sexual abuse), (iii) Kidnapping, and (iv) Theft of their meager income/savings. Since, most of the children (63.7 per cent) said that their lives were in danger on the street, this was probed further. The responses illustrated their insecurity-level on the streets. They feared that they might get kidnapped by anybody for anything and even if there was family and community around, they would not get

Table 3.30: Gender and age-wise distribution of people who abuse street children – physical abuse* (percentage)

		Sex												
		Male							Female					
		Guardians	Agent	Police	Relative /friend	Other street child	Car/other commuters	Total	Guardians	Agent	Police	Relative/ friend	Other street child	Total
Gender	Male	46.7	15.6	22.2	24.4	11.1	2.2	100.0	29.2	8.3	16.7	75.0	12.5	100.0
	Female	0.0	42.9	42.9	28.6	14.3	0.0	100.0	18.2	27.3	0.0	36.4	36.4	100.0
Age group	0-4	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
	5-9	25.0	12.5	25.0	0.0	37.5	12.5	100.0	40.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	100.0
	10-14	43.5	21.7	30.4	26.1	0.0	0.0	100.0	28.6	14.3	0.0	85.7	7.1	100.0
	15-17	40.0	20.0	20.0	35.0	15.0	0.0	100.0	20.0	13.3	20.0	53.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	40.4	19.2	25.0	25.0	11.5	1.9	100.0	25.7	14.3	11.4	62.9	20.0	100.0

Note: * N= 87.

Since the children mentioned abuse and the people who abused them, they were asked whether there was any danger to their lives on the street. Two out of three children (63.8 per cent) said that they were scared about some kind of danger, indicating the vulnerability of a child with regard to her/his life (Table 3.31).

Table 3.31: Distribution of status of insecurity in life* (percentage)

	Yes	No	Total
Male	63.4	36.6	100.0
Female	65.3	34.7	100.0
Total	63.8	36.2	100.0

Note: * N=644.

much help. The children had heard a lot of stories about other children who had been kidnapped and misused. Police was a hated lot on the streets. During the survey we learnt that the children were really scared of the police, as many children were aware that the police was going to evacuate them from Delhi as part of the beautification drive for the Commonwealth Games. Theft was another danger that these children faced. **They feared that not only their incomes, but their small belongings such as clothes and utensils, which they cherished, or some other items that they had collected could be stolen. It was not only theft, but the forced removal or unexpected cleaning up and demolition of their**

habitat that could also lead to the loss of their meager assets and earnings (Table 3.32).

Table 3.32: Distribution of types of insecurities (percentage)

	Police	Physical	Life	Theft	Total
Male	54.5	47.9	63.0	41.9	100.0
Female	53.2	51.1	66.0	47.5	100.0
Total	54.2	48.6	63.7	43.2	100.0

The children said that they faced more danger at night than during the day. They mostly considered their place of night stay as unsafe. More than 84 per cent of the girls said that nights on the street were unsafe so they preferred to move to some shelter before it got dark (Table 3.33).

Table 3.33: Distribution of time/place that is insecure (percentage)

	Day on road	Night on road	Place of sleep at night	Other	Total
Male	59.6	78.1	70.8	2.0	100.0
Female	55.3	84.4	71.6	0.0	100.0
Total	58.7	79.5	71.0	1.6	100.0

3.12: Conclusion

Street life is different and childhood on the streets as 'nowhere children' is the worst. Most of the children were aware of and also had contact with their families. The incidence of second and third-generation migrants was very high, and they were largely from families that continued to be Delhi-based. The ratio of migrant street children was higher among boys than among girls.

These children were on the street mainly to earn. They engaged in various income-generation activities. Begging was popular among young children and girls. As they grew up they preferred to work and earn. The income and expenditure pattern showed that they earned almost as much as adult workers in some cases, but their spending was not that high. Nearly half of their income was remitted to their families and they largely spent the rest on food. Since there were incidences of consumption of drugs, the study enquired into and found that one out of every five children was under the influence of some addictive and unhealthy habit such as tobacco consumption.

Despite the educational status of these children being poor, they revealed their aspirations and eagerness to learn. Half the street children were oriented to some form of education. They largely attended classes organised by NGOs and other organisations. But the level of schooling was not that encouraging, as a number of children left the classes within a few months of joining them. The children demanded skill training. In fact they required both school education and skill training.

The street children accessed paid services such as treatment for illnesses, drinking water, and toilets. When they fell sick, they sought treatment which was largely a paid one at private nursing homes. They also sought treatment at NGO clinics, mobile health services, and health camps. Though they got drinking water from community taps, they also bought water from water vendors. The finding that they accessed paid toilets showed that that they needed to earn to even drink water and access toilets.

The incidence of disability among street children was 6 per cent. Eyesight disability was the most largely reported one. The study also found that children on the street were abused both physically and verbally by various people. The gender differences indicated that it was largely relatives and friends who abused girls but in the case of boys it was mainly guardians, police, and agents who abused them. The children were scared for their lives on the street and at night the places they slept in were a cause of great insecurity for them.

The gender and age-wise approach that we used to examine various aspects of their lives revealed that any intervention strategy should have such an approach. The demands of a young child were different from that of a child in the senior age group. Similarly, it is essential to communicate to larger society that though these children appeared to be unclean, begging was the only option for them when they were not able to do anything else due to health problems or other disabilities. They earned by working and even accessed paid toilet services. Enhancement of access to such services, including access to shelters, would be utilised properly by these children. If a shelter was safe and secure with basic facilities, the child would pay and use it. Such shelters could be training centres as well.



Chapter 4



Improving the Lives of Street Children – The Scope of Interventions

4.1: Introduction

The census and the sample study of street children in Delhi have opened up further challenges in mainstreaming them. Distress and poverty have for long been seen as key reasons for a child being on the streets. Realising this, the government and various other agencies have formulated intervention strategies to mainstream them. These interventions cater to different aspects of the life of a street child. Some are aimed at educational development, some seek to provide shelter, some to provide food support, clothing and medicines, and finally there have been various kinds of campaigns to reduce the diseases and infections that these children are prone to. These programmes have been implemented by both government and non-governmental agencies.

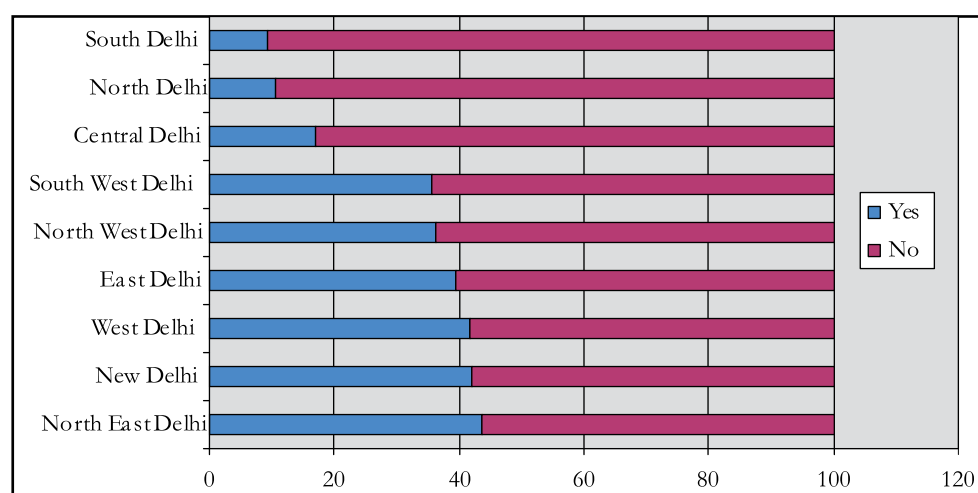
The findings of the previous two chapters clearly reveal that the scope and execution of the interventions have been insufficient to cover the street children in Delhi.

This chapter attempts to bring out the level of exposure that these children have had to support programmes and projects. It also tries to understand the mobility pattern of street children within the city. If the children move constantly, it limits the impact of such programmes. Therefore, such understanding is critical for developing programmes for street children.

4.2: Awareness and Access to Support Programmes among Street Children

Awareness about existing programmes, support, or help was limited to only 30 per cent of the street children. They mentioned state-run programmes, NGO interventions, and private initiatives. Awareness had largely emerged from their association with these programmes or from some campaigns or information about such programmes shared in peer group discussions. A major difference in awareness levels was visible between districts. This again might be due to the presence of such activities at the district level (Graph 4.1).

Graph 4.1: Distribution of awareness-level about support programmes



Out of the 300 children who said that they were aware of support programmes for street children, only 15 per cent (around 45-50 children) had actually received some kind of support. A detailed analysis of who received such support indicated that it was mainly boys and older children who had received it (Table 4.1).

Seventy-four per cent of the children said that they had received support from NGOs. Another 7 per cent said that it was both NGO and state support that they had got and nearly 10 per cent said that they had received support from the government. This indicated that with regard to service-delivery for street children, NGO access to the

Table 4.1: Distribution of status of access to support programmes* (percentage)

		Yes	No	Total
District	Central Delhi	15.0	85.0	100.0
	East Delhi	5.2	94.8	100.0
	New Delhi	11.5	88.5	100.0
	North Delhi	10.5	89.5	100.0
	North East Delhi	2.1	97.9	100.0
	North West Delhi	73.1	26.9	100.0
	South Delhi	0.0	100.0	100.0
	South West Delhi	33.3	66.7	100.0
	West Delhi	10.4	89.6	100.0
Gender	Male	17.9	82.1	100.0
	Female	8.0	92.0	100.0
Age group	0-4	8.7	91.3	100.0
	5-9	6.0	94.0	100.0
	10-14	18.8	81.2	100.0
	15-<18	17.0	83.0	100.0
Total		15.4	84.6	100.0

Note: * N= 300.

public at the grassroots level and less rigid criteria would facilitate the intervention better, whereas in the case of the government, a child had to first comply with eligibility criteria and also produce supporting documents, which in a normal situation most of them would not have. Given such a scenario, it was quite natural for NGO interventions to be more successful than government interventions (Table 4.2).

Access to help/aid programmes by street children revealed that only a micro-minority received some support. It is also important to note that in some areas where more than one NGO operates the same child was reported to be attached to more than one agency. Therefore, it is not only the programmes, but also their geographical coverage, that is essential for all children to be able to reach them and at the desired magnitude.

Table 4.2: Delivery of support by providers (percentage)

District	Government	NGO	Government and NGO	Others	Total
Central Delhi	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0
East Delhi	0.0	33.3	0.0	66.7	100.0
New Delhi	33.3	50.0	16.7	0.0	100.0
North Delhi	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
North East Delhi	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
North West Delhi	5.3	89.5	5.3	0.0	100.0
South Delhi	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
South West Delhi	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
West Delhi	0.0	80.0	0.0	20.0	100.0
Total	10.9	73.9	6.5	8.7	100.0

There were various programmes for mainstreaming and helping street children. The various kinds of support that emerged were supply of clothes, health camps and medicines, educational support, shelter, and counseling on various issues. However, this study reported only the tangible ones. Counseling, a major service offered by many NGOs on various accounts has not been reported in this study. The children said that they normally received sufficient warm clothes during winter. Medicines were the second highest support that they received (Table 4.3).

4.3: Access to Entitlements

In order to access services/support provided by the government and non-government agencies, entitlement proof is essential. The entitlement reflects the socio-economic level and also identity proof. Though entitlement proof is not essential to access NGO-provided services, nevertheless the lack of it was also a deprivation as it could deny a street child access to various services provided by the government.

Table 4.3: Distribution of types of services accessed by street children from support agencies (percentage)

		Clothes	Medicines	Education	Shelter	Total
District	Central Delhi	0.0	66.7	0.0	33.3	100.0
	East Delhi	66.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	100.0
	New Delhi	66.7	33.3	0.0	16.7	100.0
	North Delhi	50.0	50.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
	North East Delhi	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	North West Delhi	42.1	47.4	0.0	10.5	100.0
	South Delhi	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	South West Delhi	28.6	71.4	0.0	0.0	100.0
	West Delhi	40.0	40.0	0.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	43.5	45.7	4.3	13.0	100.0
Gender	Male	37.5	50.0	5.0	15.0	100.0
	Female	83.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	100.0
Age group	0-4	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
	5-9	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	100.0
	10-14	53.8	46.2	0.0	3.8	100.0
	15-<18	26.7	46.7	13.3	26.7	100.0

In the present sample, 19.2 per cent of the children reported that they had some identity proof or entitlement. However, it is important to mention here that some of the identity proofs produced by the street children were invalid. The reasons for invalidity could be: (i) Carrying a copy of the ration card that they used in the village. It was only an identity card and it would not help them in Delhi, and (ii) Some people showed a Delhi ration card which had expired or had been cancelled as it was not renewed or because they had shifted residence and the address did not tally. That residence relocation in many cases was due to the demolition of the slum or habitat by the state authority without any proper rehabilitation did not seem to matter to the authorities. So, in fact, most of the time, even if they claimed that they had identity cards, this would not help the children get access to any government schemes or programmes (Table 4.4).

An enquiry into the nature of the entitlements/identity proofs revealed that it was mainly identity cards issued by agencies such as an employer and sometimes NGOs. We largely found these to be an entry ID card for use at the work site. Nearly 23 per cent of the children said that they had birth certificates and 20 per cent had ration cards. They also had educational certificates such as their school identity cards and transfer certificates. We could verify the cards with some of the children, but in most of the cases we had to accept the children's statements that their families had the entitlements. Cross-verification could not be done in most of the cases. Therefore, the ratio of access to entitlements would be lower than what we found in the study (Table 4.5).

Access to entitlements illustrated that only a few street children had such entitlements. Hence, the likelihood

Table 4.4: Distribution of status of access to entitlements* (percentage)

		Yes	No	Total
District	Central Delhi	6.0	94.0	100.0
	East Delhi	38.8	61.2	100.0
	New Delhi	28.2	71.8	100.0
	North Delhi	7.7	92.3	100.0
	North East Delhi	35.2	64.8	100.0
	North West Delhi	2.8	97.2	100.0
	South Delhi	2.3	97.7	100.0
	South West Delhi	25.4	74.6	100.0
	West Delhi	20.9	79.1	100.0
Gender	Male	16.6	83.4	100.0
	Female	28.7	71.3	100.0
Total		19.2	80.8	100.0

Note: *N=1,009.

Table 4.5: Distribution of types of entitlements/identity cards

		Birth Certificate	Educational certificate	Ration card	Other identity*	Total
District	Central Delhi	28.6	14.3	57.1	0.0	100.0
	East Delhi	22.8	12.3	21.1	43.9	100.0
	New Delhi	25.7	14.3	25.7	34.3	100.0
	North Delhi	0.0	0.0	28.6	71.4	100.0
	North East Delhi	26.3	15.8	13.2	44.7	100.0
	North West Delhi	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	100.0
	South Delhi	0.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	100.0
	South West Delhi	13.3	20.0	6.7	59.0	100.0
	West Delhi	33.3	12.5	12.5	41.7	100.0
Gender	Male	24.2	14.4	20.5	40.9	100.0
	Female	19.4	12.9	19.4	48.4	100.0
Total		22.7	13.9	20.1	43.8	100.0

Note: *Other identity includes formal, informal school identity and some document provided by NGOs.

of their accessing services which needed entitlements or identity proof would be lower. Government schemes normally demand such identity proof and the lack of identity proof eventually leads to the elimination of such children from the purview of the schemes.

4.4: Mobility Pattern of Children

Delhi's street children were found to be mobile and were similar to shelter-less people. They moved according to opportunity and according to pressures from authorities and neighbours (vacating and moving from one place to another and moving due to the demolition of their colonies). This mobility pattern was more visible among beggars, those working at construction sites, some street vendors, and rag pickers. Those who were employed with some street/roadside enterprise hardly moved.

To understand their mobility pattern within Delhi, the children were asked whether they had shifted their working or residential location in the last month. Interestingly, a majority of the children chose not to answer this question. It was a slightly intimidating question as the authorities were evacuating street people to make the city clean

and neat for the 19th Commonwealth Games when we conducted the field survey. Among those who responded, 4.4 per cent said that they had never shifted. **Nearly 20 per cent said that they had shifted at least once in the last month.** So it was evident that some of the street children were on the move within the city. Most children reported that they wandered around Delhi, but in the evening came to a particular place where they lived or gathered in the evening. Therefore, they moved for work but returned to one place by the evening (Table 4.6).

The reasons for their movement were also standard: no permanent shelter, so move according to the availability of shelter, or job, and also in search of food. Such decisions were sometimes taken by the family, by friends, by agents, and sometimes by the child herself or himself.

Since the study found a number of migrant children, they were asked whether they would like to continue living in Delhi or not. The response was interesting. Only 4.4 per cent said that they preferred to go back to their place of origin. A majority (46.2 per cent) said that they would like to stay in Delhi. Many street children made a decision according to the opportunity, and hence these children did

Table 4.6: Distribution of mobility patterns of street children within Delhi (percentage)

		Once	Twice	Thrice	More than thrice	Never shifted	No response	Total
District	Central Delhi	11.1	4.3	0.0	3.4	8.5	72.6	100.0
	East Delhi	11.6	11.6	0.7	2.0	0.7	73.5	100.0
	New Delhi	6.5	9.7	0.8	0.8	10.5	71.8	100.0
	North Delhi	7.2	5.0	3.9	2.2	4.4	77.3	100.0
	North East Delhi	12.0	7.4	0.0	3.7	0.0	76.9	100.0
	North West Delhi	2.8	2.8	0.0	1.4	5.6	87.5	100.0
	South Delhi	8.1	3.5	0.0	1.2	7.0	80.2	100.0
	South West Delhi	5.1	10.2	11.9	3.4	3.4	66.1	100.0
Gender	West Delhi	16.5	7.0	0.9	1.7	0.0	73.9	100.0
	Male	9.2	7.8	2.0	2.4	3.8	74.8	100.0
	Female	10.2	3.7	0.5	1.4	6.5	77.8	100.0
Age group	0-4	9.5	9.5	2.7	0.0	1.4	77.0	100.0
	5-9	7.7	6.0	0.5	2.7	6.0	77.0	100.0
	10-14	9.2	6.7	2.0	2.4	3.9	75.7	100.0
	15-17	11.1	7.3	1.5	1.9	5.0	73.3	100.0
Total		9.4	6.9	1.7	2.2	4.4	75.4	100.0

not have any plan of moving back at that point. Age-wise it was seen that the older children were clear about their future moves (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Distribution of future mobility plans (percentage)

		Continue in Delhi	Will return to place of origin	Depends on opportunities	Right now, no plan	Others	Total
District	Central Delhi	26.5	4.3	8.5	60.7	0.0	100.0
	East Delhi	72.1	7.5	6.8	13.6	0.0	100.0
	New Delhi	67.7	8.1	3.2	21.0	0.0	100.0
	North Delhi	21.5	4.4	11.0	62.4	0.6	100.0
	North East Delhi	63.9	1.9	13.9	20.4	0.0	100.0
	North West Delhi	40.3	1.4	13.9	44.4	0.0	100.0
	South Delhi	29.1	0.0	18.6	50.0	2.3	100.0
	South West Delhi	52.5	0.0	18.6	28.8	0.0	100.0
	West Delhi	45.2	6.1	18.3	30.4	0.0	100.0
Gender	Male	44.9	4.7	12.7	37.5	0.3	100.0
	Female	50.9	3.2	7.4	38.0	0.5	100.0
Age group	0-4	56.8	4.1	8.1	31.1	0.0	100.0
	5-9	44.8	2.2	5.5	46.4	1.1	100.0
	10-14	43.9	3.9	11.0	41.0	0.2	100.0
	15-17	48.5	6.9	17.9	26.7	0.0	100.0
	Total	46.2	4.4	11.6	37.6	0.3	100.0

4.5: Conclusion

There are many programmes, schemes, and intervention efforts for mainstreaming or supporting street children. Both government bodies and NGOs are involved in the delivery of such programmes. To access such programmes, street children need awareness. The present study shows that nearly one out of three children was aware of such programmes, but only a few accessed them, and that too mainly for clothes, medicines, and educational support. Most of the street children hardly had any entitlements, the essential criteria to access most of the services offered by the government.

The children's mobility pattern within the city could be a hindrance to accessing services on a constant basis over a period of time, which is essential if the children are to bring about some changes in their lives. So, intervention programmes for street children need to limit their mobility within the city, with some provision for shelter and earning. This would eventually assure some entitlements for the children.



Chapter 5



Conclusions and Recommendations

The study fulfilled the objective of estimating and profiling the street children in Delhi. Accordingly, 50,923 children were found to be surviving on the streets of Delhi. They concentrated around North Delhi and North East Delhi districts. The findings of this study also provide empirical evidence with regard to the following facts on street children.

- (1) Only 21 per cent were girls.
- (2) More than 60 per cent belonged to the 7-14 years age group and were largely working.
- (3) They were mainly migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, either with their families or were in Delhi with the consent of their families.
- (4) They were engaged in rag picking, working with street vendors, and begging.
- (5) They earned mainly to support their families and to meet their own food consumption needs.
- (6) One out of five children was found under the influence of tobacco, *pan masala*, and drugs/alcohol.
- (7) They aspired for an education, were eager to learn, and demanded a school education as well as skill training. Half the street children were oriented to some form of education which was largely provided by NGOs and other organisations.
- (8) They accessed paid services such as healthcare, drinking water, and toilets.
- (9) In the case of abuse, gender differences were visible; it was largely relatives and friends who abused girls and it was mainly guardians, police, and agents who abused boys. Children were scared of life on the street, especially at night given the insecurity of their sleeping places.
- (10) Awareness levels about the existence of programmes, support, or help for street children was very limited (only 30 per cent) and out of this, 74 per cent had received the information from NGOs. They availed mainly medical support and free provision of clothes; only 4 per cent received some educational support.

(11) Unavailability of any identity proof was a major hindrance in accessing government support.

(12) Some street children were mobile such as those who had taken up begging, vending, rag picking, and working at construction sites. Those who were employed with street/roadside enterprises hardly moved.

(13) Most of the migrant children preferred to continue living in Delhi (46.2 per cent), rather than returning home.

Recommendations

In view of these findings, this study makes some recommendations and policy interventions that would ensure the rights of street children as citizens of India.

- A programme focusing on re-uniting street children with their families should be adopted. Strategies for intervention need to consider ways of strengthening families' responsibility for their children. Children should only be placed in institutions, or given foster placements as a last resort.
- There is an urgent need of **coordination among development** agents working for the rights of street children and information sharing among all stakeholders to enhance implementation strategies. As most of the children are not in school, there is an urgent need to provide appropriate education, both formal schooling and skill training, for these children.
- **Existing or new government programmes aimed at street children need three essential components:**

1. Creating awareness about government and NGO schemes/programmes for street children.

2. Ensuring access to basic necessities. Street children need to be provided essential entitlements such as safe shelters, food, clothing, education, safe drinking water, and sanitation with the help of grassroots organisations, so that the benefits reach the end beneficiaries.

3. The government must ensure that when a slum/habitation is demolished, children get re-enrolled in

other schools where their parents have shifted and their entitlements are restored at the new address.

- Most street children are among the poorest of the poor who have migrated to urban centres as a survival strategy. **Children should be facilitated in getting identity proof, which the government accepts as an entitlement document, and enables them to get admitted in schools.**
- **It is essential to increase the number of shelters, not only night but also day shelters for street children.** It is essential for the government and NGOs to **pay more attention to girls and women on the street.**
- Night classes and other service-deliveries can be also centered around such places. Such places can provide the children some identification and address proof.
- **Interventions are needed in rural areas to reduce migration of young children from rural to urban areas.**

Employment possibilities for adults should be increased dramatically in those rural areas from which large-scale out-migration is taking place.

Efforts need to be made to ensure that children from families that migrate on a seasonal basis are cared for in their home villages. The government and NGOs need to develop schemes to support and provide care to the children of migrant couples in their villages in poor rural areas. Some kind of **residential support** could be provided **to the children of migrant couples** in rural areas to ensure that they get education and other skill-development training.

Vocational training programmes in rural areas should be linked to NFE programmes. These programmes should be mainstreamed with regular schools to ensure that the right to education reaches the street children in the same manner as it is to children attending schools in the mainstream education system.

Community mobilisation is needed in ensuring that duty bearers such as the Department of Education, Women and Children are 'keeping their promise' to street children.

- Duty bearers such as the Departments of Education, Women and Children; the Delhi State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, police, and civil society members need to ensure that street children are protected and work on strategies that can facilitate their rehabilitation and integration into the mainstream, starting with getting them enrolled in schools.
- Many street children get involved in drugs, sex work, and other activities and are prone to abuse.

The government should ensure that appropriate services with doctors, counselors, and social workers are provided to these children.

- Finally, to bring down the incidence of street children, much larger focused interventions are needed such as better housing plans, inclusive urban development policies, and increased number of boarding schools for poor children in both rural and urban areas.

Annexure Tables

Table 1: Distribution of types of street children

District	Children on road/street	Children on road/street and working	Children of road/street people	No Response	Total
Central Delhi	1324	1789	2057	692	5862
East Delhi	2520	2717	2084	4	7325
New Delhi	676	2975	1688	290	5629
North Delhi	2293	1706	4914	1178	10091
North East Delhi	2109	1878	1427	2	5416
North West Delhi	1539	778	864	400	3581
South Delhi	767	574	2357	616	4314
South West Delhi	1174	489	961	312	2936
West Delhi	1812	1887	1998	72	5769
Total	14214	14793	18350	3566	50923

Table 2: Distribution of types of street children

District	Street Living Children			Street Working Children			Children from Street Families			No Response			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Central Delhi	23.58	18.22	22.59	31.36	26.83	30.52	33.67	41.30	35.09	11.38	13.64	11.80	100.0
East Delhi	34.90	32.23	34.40	36.79	38.41	37.09	28.26	29.29	28.45	0.05	0.07	0.05	100.0
New Delhi	11.66	13.43	12.01	53.44	50.49	52.85	28.77	34.91	29.99	6.14	1.16	5.15	100.0
North Delhi	25.55	11.70	22.72	18.40	11.07	16.91	44.90	63.50	48.70	11.14	13.74	11.67	100.0
North East Delhi	39.84	35.95	38.94	34.85	34.11	34.68	25.27	29.94	26.35	0.05	0.00	0.04	100.0
North West Delhi	45.45	33.90	42.98	21.61	22.16	21.73	23.21	27.51	24.13	9.74	16.43	11.17	100.0
South Delhi	19.75	10.62	17.78	15.94	3.76	13.31	50.38	70.06	54.64	13.93	15.56	14.28	100.0
South West Delhi	41.49	32.81	39.99	18.34	8.64	16.66	31.19	40.08	32.73	8.98	18.47	10.63	100.0
West Delhi	32.35	28.40	31.41	34.38	27.38	32.71	32.01	42.99	34.63	1.25	1.23	1.25	100.0
Total	29.21	22.88	27.91	29.99	25.42	29.05	34.03	43.79	36.03	6.77	7.91	7.00	100.0

Table 3: Age-wise distribution (absolute numbers)

District	0-3 yrs			4-5 yrs			6-14 yrs			15-<18 yrs			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Central Delhi	200	92	292	450	192	642	2947	694	3641	1038	95	1133	4635	1073	5708
East Delhi	389	219	608	486	161	647	3813	805	4618	1274	173	1447	5962	1358	7320
New Delhi	416	160	576	399	212	611	2404	644	3048	1169	95	1264	4388	1111	5499
North Delhi	652	281	933	655	301	956	4723	1217	5940	1909	257	2166	7939	2056	9995
North East Delhi	129	174	303	159	174	333	2456	732	3188	1423	168	1591	4167	1248	5415
North West Delhi	143	83	226	255	108	363	1888	486	2374	510	95	605	2796	772	3568
South Delhi	215	86	301	364	218	582	1864	525	2389	855	97	952	3298	926	4224
South West Delhi	121	29	150	196	63	259	1545	355	1900	563	61	624	2425	508	2933
West Delhi	103	145	248	244	148	392	2575	906	3481	1461	178	1639	4383	1377	5760
Total	2368	1269	3637	3208	1577	4785	24215	6364	30579	10202	1219	11421	39993	10429	50422*

Note: * The total number of children who responded to the question on their age was only 50422. Rest, 501, children didn't respond to this question

Table 4: Gender-wise distribution

District	Male	Female	Total
Central Delhi	4770	1092	5862
East Delhi	5966	1359	7325
New Delhi	4512	1117	5629
North Delhi	8031	2060	10091
North East Delhi	4167	1249	5416
North West Delhi	2814	767	3581
South Delhi	3382	932	4314
South West Delhi	2427	509	2936
West Delhi	4392	1377	5769
Total	40461	10462	50923

Table 5: Social group-wise distribution

District	OBC	SC	ST	Others	Do not Know	NR	Total
Central Delhi	1580	2631	870	65	85	631	5862
East Delhi	2670	3020	1622	3	5	5	7325
New Delhi	1558	1756	1416	152	453	294	5629
North Delhi	3651	3775	1436	27	144	1058	10091
North East Delhi	2567	1880	929	17	23	0	5416
North West Delhi	1954	864	342	8	59	354	3581
South Delhi	1428	1675	542	6	21	642	4314
South West Delhi	1649	670	304	0	36	277	2936
West Delhi	2503	2071	1036	9	99	51	5769
Total	19560	18342	8497	287	925	3312	50923

Table 6: Age and social group-wise distribution

Age Group	OBC	SC	ST	Others	Do not Know	NR	Total
0-3 yrs	38.77	29.64	24.99	0.41	1.18	5.00	100.00
4-6 yrs	36.89	33.73	18.22	0.25	1.86	9.05	100.00
7-14 yrs	37.73	38.15	15.67	0.52	1.89	6.05	100.00
15-<18 yrs	42.45	34.89	16.85	0.89	1.86	3.06	100.00
Total	38.79	36.38	16.85	0.57	1.83	5.58	100.00

Table 7: Religion-wise distribution

District	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Do not Know	NR	Total
Central Delhi	4222	955	14	1	10	660	5862
East Delhi	5615	1664	40	1	0	5	7325
New Delhi	4783	495	38	17	11	285	5629
North Delhi	7053	1838	25	3	110	1062	10091
North East Delhi	3858	1317	232	3	2	4	5416
North West Delhi	2689	491	4	3	42	352	3581
South Delhi	3143	476	8	6	3	678	4314
South West Delhi	2399	230	0	1	30	276	2936
West Delhi	4248	1248	171	49	0	53	5769
Total	38010	8714	532	84	208	3375	50923

Table 8: Educational status

District	Illiterate	Informal	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Secondary and above	NR	Total
Central Delhi	2867	1288	783	262	34	2	626	5862
East Delhi	4744	1814	402	146	186	13	20	7325
New Delhi	2586	1080	1086	350	198	41	288	5629
North Delhi	4861	2257	1359	303	228	29	1054	10091
North East Delhi	2519	1863	790	146	92	3	3	5416
North West Delhi	1420	594	779	339	96	1	352	3581
South Delhi	2451	472	445	150	138	13	645	4314
South West Delhi	1322	657	363	212	105	0	277	2936
West Delhi	2946	1804	675	146	145	0	53	5769
Total	25716	11829	6682	2054	1222	102	3318	50923

Table 9: Occupational distribution

District	Begging	Rag-picking	Sell flower, newspaper, fruits & other item on the road	Cleaning cars & two wheelers	Working in roadside stall or repair shop	Working in small hotel or tea stall	Whatever available	Working in manufacturing units	Others	NR	Total
Central Delhi	405	1201	1080	567	823	236	423	34	60	1033	5862
East Delhi	1592	1900	841	521	828	466	1043	31	93	10	7325
New Delhi	723	975	1226	293	462	34	338	48	909	621	5629
North Delhi	1070	1755	1692	770	1166	435	671	95	610	1827	10091
North East Delhi	1306	1267	642	321	789	352	612	94	13	20	5416
North West Delhi	578	760	454	317	410	34	303	30	343	352	3581
South Delhi	185	583	684	288	667	145	281	12	391	1078	4314
South West Delhi	434	556	403	324	340	23	256	95	228	277	2936
West Delhi	1186	1357	706	437	703	360	702	182	54	82	5769
Total	7479	10354	7728	3838	6188	2085	4629	621	2701	5300	50923

Table 10: Distribution of reasons - Why the children ended up on the streets (absolute numbers)

District	Ran away from home	Parent sent me away	In search of jobs/ income	Came with family members	Lost family while travelling/ visit	Lost family during calamity	Kidnapped	There was abuse	Poverty/hunger	Just landed here	Others	NR	Total
Central Delhi	61	346	1825	595	41	11	5	16	2270	1	17	674	5862
East Delhi	579	1344	969	1278	93	23	36	42	2932	11	6	12	7325
New Delhi	243	989	1252	1159	39	31	14	9	1333	145	114	301	5629
North Delhi	255	951	1952	1941	32	3	10	2	3731	3	23	1188	10091
North East Delhi	514	1006	584	767	50	16	22	73	2360	3	4	17	5416
North West Delhi	337	373	341	1002	171	96	14	8	823	4	8	404	3581
South Delhi	36	113	839	1130	7	9	3	7	1533	0	9	628	4314
South West Delhi	261	324	241	1137	72	45	9	0	520	1	12	314	2936
West Delhi	497	963	998	894	218	75	143	53	1821	23	9	75	5769
Total	2783	6409	9001	9903	723	309	256	210	17323	191	202	3613	50923

Table 11: Distribution of reasons - Why the children ended up on the streets (per cent)

District	Ran away from home	Parent sent them away	In search of jobs/ income	Came with family members	Lost family while traveling/ visit	Lost family during calamity	Kidnapped	There was abuse	Poverty/ hunger	Just landed here	Others	No Response	Total
Central Delhi	1.0	5.9	31.1	10.2	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.3	38.7	0.0	0.3	11.5	100.0
East Delhi	7.9	18.3	13.2	17.4	1.3	0.3	0.5	0.6	40.0	0.2	0.1	0.2	100.0
New Delhi	4.3	17.6	22.2	20.6	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.2	23.7	2.6	2.0	5.3	100.0
North Delhi	2.5	9.4	19.3	19.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	37.0	0.0	0.2	11.8	100.0
North East Delhi	9.5	18.6	10.8	14.2	0.9	0.3	0.4	1.3	43.6	0.1	0.1	0.3	100.0
North West Delhi	9.4	10.4	9.5	28.0	4.8	2.7	0.4	0.2	23.0	0.1	0.2	11.3	100.0
South Delhi	0.8	2.6	19.4	26.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	35.5	0.0	0.2	14.6	100.0
South West Delhi	8.9	11.0	8.2	38.7	2.5	1.5	0.3	0.0	17.7	0.0	0.4	10.7	100.0
West Delhi	8.6	16.7	17.3	15.5	3.8	1.3	2.5	0.9	31.6	0.4	0.2	1.3	100.0
Total	5.5	12.6	17.7	19.4	1.4	0.6	0.5	0.4	34.0	0.4	0.4	7.1	100.0

Table 12: Distribution of location of night stay (absolute numbers)

District	On the street	In a shelter	Under a bridge/ flyover	At place of worship	Market	Park	Railway station	Bus station	Slums	Tourist place	Work/ construction site	Place outside Delhi	Others	NR	Total
Central Delhi	58	49	709	176	747	267	292	237	2020	151	433	3	24	696	5862
East Delhi	615	404	730	416	440	381	1080	343	2821	8	44	26	7	10	7325
New Delhi	477	1036	551	384	291	154	88	159	2031	23	61	50	23	301	5629
North Delhi	221	65	758	187	1157	497	761	252	4401	2	593	0	15	1182	10091
North East Delhi	449	105	803	116	382	414	829	96	1999	33	163	0	6	21	5416
North West Delhi	185	143	426	240	264	150	191	25	1498	8	40	4	6	401	3581
South Delhi	140	7	254	37	369	46	117	80	2246	2	394	0	1	621	4314
South West Delhi	102	86	245	219	258	201	108	35	1222	41	105	0	0	314	2936
West Delhi	382	176	683	353	651	506	698	179	1735	86	244	0	5	71	5769
Total	2629	2071	5159	2128	4559	2616	4164	1406	19973	354	2077	83	87	3617	50923

Table 13: Distribution of location of night stay (per cent)

District	On the street	In a shelter	Under bridge /flyover	At place of worship	Market	Park	Railway station	Bus station	Slums	Tourist place	Work/ construction	Place outside Delhi	Others	NR	Total
Central Delhi	0.99	0.84	12.09	3.00	12.74	4.55	4.98	4.04	34.46	2.58	7.39	0.05	0.41	11.87	100
East Delhi	8.40	5.52	9.97	5.68	6.01	5.20	14.74	4.68	38.51	0.11	0.60	0.35	0.10	0.14	100
New Delhi	8.47	18.40	9.79	6.82	5.17	2.74	1.56	2.82	36.08	0.41	1.08	0.89	0.41	5.35	100
North Delhi	2.19	0.64	7.51	1.85	11.47	4.93	7.54	2.50	43.61	0.02	5.88	0.00	0.15	11.71	100
North East Delhi	8.29	1.94	14.83	2.14	7.05	7.64	15.31	1.77	36.91	0.61	3.01	0.00	0.11	0.39	100
North West Delhi	5.17	3.99	11.90	6.70	7.37	4.19	5.33	0.70	41.83	0.22	1.12	0.11	0.17	11.20	100
South Delhi	3.25	0.16	5.89	0.86	8.55	1.07	2.71	1.85	52.06	0.05	9.13	0.00	0.02	14.39	100
South West Delhi	3.47	2.93	8.34	7.46	8.79	6.85	3.68	1.19	41.62	1.40	3.58	0.00	0.00	10.69	100
West Delhi	6.62	3.05	11.84	6.12	11.28	8.77	12.10	3.10	30.07	1.49	4.23	0.00	0.09	1.23	100
Total	5.16	4.07	10.13	4.18	8.95	5.14	8.18	2.76	39.22	0.70	4.08	0.16	0.17	7.10	100

Table 14: Distribution of relationship (with whom they stay)

District	Alone	With friends/ fellow street children	With parents	With brother/ sisters	With other relatives	With employer	Others	No Response	Total
Central Delhi	6.58	24.12	37.51	5.85	12.16	1.35	0.51	11.91	100.0
East Delhi	10.55	9.05	47.75	13.98	12.48	5.79	0.29	0.11	100.0
New Delhi	10.18	17.89	46.90	3.75	6.73	6.68	2.52	5.35	100.0
North Delhi	7.42	17.63	48.84	4.42	9.04	0.70	0.24	11.71	100.0
North East Delhi	22.49	8.86	37.85	14.20	12.85	3.05	0.57	0.13	100.0
North West Delhi	13.43	8.18	51.83	4.02	4.27	6.12	0.89	11.25	100.0
South Delhi	1.02	18.98	55.22	3.52	6.56	0.21	0.14	14.35	100.0
South West Delhi	11.65	6.23	52.38	5.86	6.57	6.54	0.00	10.76	100.0
West Delhi	17.00	12.34	34.37	10.30	14.27	8.08	2.34	1.30	100.0
Total	10.89	14.43	45.31	7.57	9.95	3.93	0.83	7.09	100.

SURVEY OF STREET CHILDREN IN DELHI
(Interview Schedule - only for street children below 18 years)

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. District: _____ 1.2. Locality/ Place _____

1.3. Location of Interview _____

Footpath/ Pavement: 1, In a shelter: 2, Under a bridge/ flyover: 3, Religious place: 4, Market: 5, Park: 6, Railway station: 7, Bus station: 8, Slums: 9, Tourist place: 10, Construction site: 11, others (specify) _____

1.4. Respondent's Name: _____

1.5. Relationship status in case of child less than 5 year old: _____

(Self: 1, Father/Mother: 2, Brother/Sister: 3, Grand-father/Grand-mother: 4, Uncle/aunt: 5, Friend: 6, Contractor: 7, Fellow village men: 8, No relation:9)

1.6. Sex: _____ 1.7. Age (in Completed Years): _____
(Male: 1, Female: 2)

1.8. Marital status

(Never married: 1, Currently married: 2, Widow/ widower: 3, Divorced/ separated: 4, Abandoned: 5, Others (specify).....)

1.9. Caste:
(OBC: 1, SC: 2, ST: 3, General: 4, Don't know-5)

1.10. Religion:
(Hindu: 1, Muslim: 2, Christian: 3, Sikh: 4, Don't know-8, Other Specify) _____

1.11. Investigator's Name _____

1.12. Signature and Date of Survey: _____

1.13. Supervisor's Name: _____

1.14. Signature and Date of Survey: _____

2. BACKGROUND: FAMILY/ ORIGIN DETAILS

2.1. Why are you on the street?

(Ran away from home: 1, Parent sent me away: 2, In search of jobs/income 3, Came with family members: 4, Lost family while travelling/ visit: 5, Lost family during calamity: 6, Kidnapped: 7, There was abuse: 8, Poverty/hunger: 9, Just landed here-10,, no response-11, others (specify.....))

2.2. Do you have any idea about your family (Yes: 1, No: 2, Don't know: 3)

If YES, kindly answer the following

2.2.1. Where is your family? (In Delhi-1, outside Delhi-2)

2.2.2. If they are in Delhi, where do they stay

(Slum-1, Road side: 2, Open space:3, Rented room in village: 4, Others (specify.....))

2.2.3. Do you stay with your family?

(Yes: 1, Not stay with the family but in contact with them: 2, Not stay with family and no contact:3, No response: 4, Others (specify.....))

2.2.4. If YES, kindly provide following details

	Number	
	Male	Female
Adult		
Children below 18 years		
Total		

2.2.5. If you are not staying with your family members, do you visit them?

(Yes: 1, No: 2, Not response: 3)

2.2.5.1. If YES, how frequently (Monthly: 1, Quarterly: 2, Half Yearly: 3, Yearly: 4)

2.2.5.2. Reasons for visit

(Holiday/festival/marriage:1, Visit sick relative: 2, Visit periodically: 3, To send money: 4, Agricultural season starting: 5, Others (specify))

2.3. Do you know, where is your origin place? (Yes: 1, No: 2, No idea-3)

If answer is YES, Specify 2.3.1, where is it?

(Born and brought up in Delhi and live with family: 1, Born and brought up in Delhi, but left the home: 2, Born outside Delhi, but brought up here, live with family: 3, Born outside Delhi and live alone: 4)

3. OCCUPATION, INCOME AND FOOD:

3.1. Are you engaged in any income earning activity (Yes: 1, No: 2)

If answer is YES, kindly specify the following

3.1.1. Specify to main activity that you engage in last one month

(Begging: 1, Rag Picking: 2, Sell flowers, newspaper/ magazines/ books, fruits & other items on road: 3, Cleaning cars & two wheeler: 4, Working in road side stall or repair shop: 5, Working in small hotel or tea stall -6; Whatever available: 7; Working with manufacturing unit-8, Not working-9, No response-10, Others (specify)_____)

3.1.2. Average hours of engagement (per day in the last one week)

3.1.3 Total number of days engages in it last week

3.1.4. Total income/earning last week (Rs.) _____

3.2. Kindly specify, how do you spend your money (last one week)

		Rs. (Approximate)
3.2.1.	Expenditure on Food Items	
3.2.2	Entertainment – Cinema	
3.2.3	Clothing, cosmetics	
3.2.4	Shelter	
3.2.5	Health supports – medicines	
3.2.6	Consumption on tobacco (1), alcohol (2), whitener (3), drugs (4) (.....)*	
3.2.7	Give to supervisor/ Leader	
3.2.8	Give to parents/ guardian	
3.2.9	Police and others (per cent)	

* Use code in the bracket and if it is others use 5 as code.

3.3. Did you miss any meals in a day in the last one week (Yes: 1, No: 2, No response: 3)

If YES, 3.3.1, specify the reason _____

4. HEALTH & SANITATION:

4.1. Did you fall sick/ill in the last six month? (Yes: 1, No: 2)

☐

4.1.1, If YES, Place

☐

(NGO clinic: 1, Family planning center: 2, Maternity and child welfare center: 3, Tuberculosis clinic: 4, Govt Hospital: 5, Private Nursing home/ clinics: 6, Mobile services: 7, Health camp: 8, Didn't go anywhere, no treatment: 9, Others (specify) _____)

4.2. Do have any kind of disability (Yes: 1, No: 2)

☐

If answer is YES, 4.2.1 specify type of disability (multiple answer specify it)

☐☐

(Hearing: 1, Speaking: 2, Eye sight related: 3, Disability in Walking: 4, Mental disability: 5, Other (specify).....))

4.2.2. Nature of disability (multiple answer specify it)

☐☐☐

(By birth: 1, Accident: 2, Abuse by parents/ guardian: 3, Abuse by agents/ goons: 4, Abuse by police: 5, Abuse by unknown people: 6, Sickness, but not able to treat: 7, Others (specify))

4.3. What kind of toilet do you currently use?

☐

(No toilet: 1, Public Toilet: 2, Sulabh Sauchalay (paid):3, Mobile toilet-4, Others _____)

4.4. What are your main sources of drinking water?

☐

(Community wells:1, Community taps:2, Hand pumps:3, Others (specify)_____)

5. UNCOMFORTABLE EXPERIENCES IN THE STREET

5.1. Have you ever seen/ heard anybody abuses a street child? (Yes: 1, No: 2)

If YES, please answer

		Type *	Sex of the affected child	Who abused** (multiple answer specify it)
5.1.1	Physical abuse*			
5.1.2	Verbal abuse			
5.1.3	Others (specify.....))			

* (torturing: 1, beating: 2, forced starving: 3, Sexual: 4),

** (Parents/ guardian: 1, Agents/ contractors: 2, Police: 3, Relatives/ friends: 4, Other street people: 5, Other people who comes in car and other vehicles: 6, Others (Specify).....)

5.2. What are the major risks (multiple answer specify it)

(Police harassment: 1, Sexual Abuse: 2, Threat to life: 3, Thieves: 4, Others (Specify).....)

5.3. Which is the place you face more threats? (multiple answer specify it)

(On the road in day time: 1, On the road in night: 2, On the sleeping place in night: 3, Others (specify.....))

6. EDUCATION DETAILS

6.1. Did you ever attend school? (Yes: 1, No: 2)

If answer YES: 6.1.1, Specify the kind of school/ education

(Mobile school: 1, Mobile crèche: 2, Informal school offer by NGO: 3, Informal education offer by neighbours: 4, Night school: 5, ICDS/ anganwadi: 6, Other (specify).....)

If YES, 6.1.2, Specify the level of schooling

(Pre-school age: 1, Attended only for few months: 2, Attended for 1-2 years: 3, Attended upto middle school (5th class): 4, Attended upto secondary school (upto 8th class): 5, Attended above secondary class: 6, Attending informal school: 7, Attending formal school irregularly: 8, Attending formal school regularly: 9, Others (specify).....)

6.2. If given the opportunity to attend school or skill training, will you attend? (Yes: 1, No: 2)

6.2.1. If YES, kindly specify the type of education/ skill training

(School education: 1, Skill training: 2, School education and skill training: 3)

6.2.2. Kindly specify the preferred time for education/ skill training

(Morning/ Pre-noon: 1, Post lunch/ Evening: 2, Night: 3)

7. SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT AND ENTITLEMENT STATUS

7.1. Are you aware of any assistance for street children? (Yes: 1, No: 2)

☐

If YES, 7.1.2. Have you received any assistance (Yes: 1, No: 2)

☐

If YES, 7.1.3. who provide it?

☐

(Government:1, NGO:2, Both Government and NGO: 3, Others (specify)

☐

If YES, 7.1.4. Type of assistance (if multiple answer specify it)

(Money: 1, Clothing: 2, Medicines: 3, Education or Training: 4, Shelter-5, others (specify)_____)

7.2. Do you have any identification document? (Yes: 1, No: 2)

☐

7.2.1. If YES, type of document

☐

(Birth/ Age certificate: 1, Education Certificate: 2, Copy of Ration card: 3, Other Govt. identity Card: 4, Others (Specify)_____)

8. MOBILITY WITHIN DELHI

8.1. How many times you have shifted your locations in the last one month?

☐

(Once: 1, Twice: 2, Thrice: 3, More than that: 4, Never shifted: 5, No response: 6)

8.1.2. Why do you move around? _____

8.1.3. How do you decide which part of the city to move to, explain _____

8.2. Future Plans of stay

☐

(Will stay in Delhi: 1, Will go back home: 2, Depends on job:3, Did not think:4, Others (Specify)_____)

(Code1: Male: 1, Female: 2)

(Code2: Self: 1, Father/Mother: 2, Brother/Sister: 3, Grand-father/Grand-mother:4, Uncle/aunt: 5, Friend:6, No relation:7)

(Code3: OBC: 1, SC: 2, ST: 3, Others: 4, Don't know- 5)

(Code4: Hindu: 1, Muslim: 2, Christian: 3, Sikhs: 4, Other (Specify), Don't know- 5)

(Code5: Illiterate: 1, Below Primary: 2, Primary: 3, Middle: 4, High School & above: 5)

(Code6: Begging: 1, Rag Picking: 2, Sell flower, newspaper, fruits & other items on road: 3, Cleaning cars & two wheeler: 4, Working in road side stall or repair shop: 5, Working in small hotel or tea stall -6; Whatever available: 7; Working in manufacturing units: 8, Others (specify)_____)

(Code7: Born/brought up in Delhi & live with family: 1, Born/ brought up in Delhi, but left home: 2, Born outside Delhi, but brought up here, live with family: 3, Born outside Delhi & no family around: 4, No idea about family/ origin, live in Delhi: 5, Others (specify.....)

(Code8: Andhra Pradesh: 1, Arunachal Pradesh: 2, Assam: 3, Bihar: 4, Chhattisgarh: 5, Goa: 6, Gujarat: 7, Haryana: 8, Himachal Pradesh: 9, Jammu & Kashmir: 10, Jharkhand: 11, Karnataka: 12, Kerala: 13, Madhya Pradesh: 14, Maharashtra: 15, Manipur: 16, Meghalaya: 17, Mizoram: 18, Nagaland: 19, Orissa: 20, Punjab: 21, Rajasthan: 22, Sikkim: 23, Tamil Nadu: 24, Tripura: 25, Uttar Pradesh: 26, Uttarakhand: 27, W. Bengal: 28, Don't know: 29, Others (specify.....)

(Code9: Ran away from home: 1, Parent sent me away: 2, In search of jobs/income 3, Came with family members: 4, Lost family while travelling/ visit: 5, Lost family during calamity: 6, Kidnapped: 7, There was abuse: 8, Poverty/hunger: 9, Just landed here-10, Others (specify.....)

(Code10: On the street: 1, In a shelter: 2, Under a bridge/flyover: 3, At place of worship: 4, Market: 5, Park: 6, Railway station: 7, Bus station: 8, Slums: 9, Tourist place-10, Work/ construction site-11, Place outside Delhi: 12, Others (specify)

(Code11: Alone: 1, With friends (other street children): 2, With parents: 3, With brother/sisters: 4, With other relatives: 5, With employer: 6, Others (specify)

(Code12: With friends: 1, Employers: 2, Parents: 3, Brother/sisters: 4, Other relatives: 5, Contractor/ agent/ leader-6, Others (specify)

Code13: Street Living Children: 1, Street Working Children:2, Children from Street Families:3, No response:4)

Sl No	Name	Sex ¹	Age (completed years)	Respondent ² (relationship)	Social group ³	Religion ⁴	Education ⁵	Occupation ⁶	Origin status ⁷	State of Origin ⁸	Reason for being in the street ⁹	Duration of stay (years & months)	Place of stay at night ¹⁰	Staying with ¹¹	With whom do you keep belongings ¹²	Type of street child ¹³
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