PART II

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

3.7 Introduction

Street children as a social problem or menace are the result of extreme poverty at household level that often leads to children running away from home, unable to bear the starvation and associated deprivations. Despite several decades of efforts to alleviate poverty, through a number of anti-poverty programmes, success seems to be still elusive. Karnataka continues to have a high incidence of poverty, especially in its rural areas. More than the others, members of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities are the most poor and deprived people among all other sections of society, for historical reasons of discrimination and oppression. This has long been identified and several programs designed targeting these communities in particular. As is well known, the earlier approach depending on ‘growth acceleration’ for ‘poverty alleviation’ was replaced by a combined strategy of both growth acceleration and targeting benefits to the poor’ (Sudhakar, 2013).

3.8 Development Programmes for Poverty Eradication and Social Equality in the State

3.8.1 Integrated Rural Development Programme

As far back as in 1979, the IRDP was initiated as a national programme implemented in all the states and union territories, to assist rural households living in extreme poverty to come out of it and escape deprivation and vulnerability. This was meant for households with less than Rs.3500 as annual income (1977-79 prices). Bank loans were offered at 10 per cent interest, besides also offering a government subsidy, varying from 25 to 50 per cent of the assisted item (not cash) depending on the
economic condition of the beneficiary. Economic assets such as milch animals, goats, sheep, irrigation inputs etc were distributed; assistance was also provided to help the poor to engage in self-employment like owning cycle repair shops, petty shops, trading in vegetables, fruits etc.

Research and evaluation studies on the programme (IRDP) have pointed out that it was successful in addressing important components of the poverty alleviation programme. But excluded sections like the women could not benefit directly from it. In fact, it was the time when women’s empowerment was on the popular edge among the World Bank projects in developing nations. It had excluded the rural youth too. As a result, the Indian government drafted two subsidiary programmes of the IRDP, viz., TRYSEM and DWCRA, with the objective of helping the youth and the women, respectively; and to enable them to engage in self employment activities, with assistance from the state. Under TRYSEM (Training Rural Youth in Self Employment), the capacity of the rural youth was proposed to be developed or built so that with upgraded skills, the youth could obtain ‘assured employment in rural areas as well as in trades, which enable them to take up wage employment in towns and cities’ (Sudhakar, 2013).

As noted earlier, women’s empowerment was heralded vehemently by the feminists. By 1980s, the feminist movement was quite advanced in the country. The programme DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) was introduced to enable women to empower themselves economically. Under the programme, women were provided with specific skills; and/or their existing skills were upgraded. They were also provided with financial assistance to take up income generating activities.
There were several efforts made to further improve the rural unemployment and underemployment situation. One such was the National Rural Employment Programme. It was (NREP) also called as Food for Work Programme initiated in the year 1980. The programme gave work to the rural poor during the agriculturally slack season. Durable assets were created using wage labour compensated both in cash and kind (food grains).

As an offshoot of the NREP, the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was launched in 1983. It was also a novel scheme to address rural unemployment by providing employment to at least one member of the household in rural areas for 100 days in a year. In 1989, again, the government at the centre introduced another programme, which merged the above two programmes and was called as the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY).

By then the 72\textsuperscript{nd} constitutional amendment Act had been promulgated and the decentralization system was introduced to bring about local governance at rural level. The panchayats took up the task of implementing the programme that aimed to give employment to the rural poor by initiating the construction of durable assets in the villages, such as school buildings, roads, culverts, hospital buildings, hotels, residential houses, sites and social forestry programmes. The panchayats prepared muster rolls including the names of eligible workers from the most poor and vulnerable households in the village. Such selection was based on the guidelines given by the government. These men and women were given work during off-season on a daily wage basis given in cash and kind forms. Fifty per cent of the workers hailed from the SC and ST communities and 30 per cent had to be women.
3.8.2 Programmes to Improving Quality of Livelihood

In addition to the above mentioned employment generation programmes of the centre and the states, provision was also made to design and implement a number of programmes aiming to bring about an improvement in the quality of life of people in society. These were the result of a shift in emphasis in the planning process from growth to development and further to human resource development. Sectors of education, health, nutrition, sanitation, drinking water, housing, electricity, roads and public distribution of essential food grains and other such commodities through regulated outlets (ration shops), etc., were given emphasis to enable the poor to access better livelihood options.

3.8.3 Access to Schooling

With a view to improve the schooling of children and to arrest child labour, primary education was given the utmost importance. Emphasis was also laid upon reducing and gradually arresting school dropout rate. One such is the Akshaya programme that helped children from weaker sections of society to access schooling even with 80 per cent of attendance during a month by receiving Re one per day as an incentive. The Vidya Vikasa programme gave provision for distribution of school uniforms and textbooks to children from BPL HHs. The noon meal programme is yet another milestone in popularizing education among the poor by providing food to the children up to middle school education. The state has also taken steps to address the issue of adult illiteracy by introducing total literacy and adult literacy campaigns.

3.8.4 Access to Health and Social Security

Regarding the Health Issues, or provision made by the government for promoting better health and livelihood safety, the arrangement of the government for
institutional deliveries is of significant reference here. The Primary Health Centres (PHCs) located in the hoblis provide ample facility for the pregnant woman to receive medical help during pregnancy and after childbirth. The anganawadi centres and the staff of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) are associated with this work. Nutrition programmes for the mother and the child, immunization of the child to prevent infant mortality and mortality of mothers at child birth are implemented from many decades. The Supplementary Nutrition Programme for children below 6 years offered at the anganawadi centers is continued in the school in the form of mid-day meal scheme for children of 6-11 years. The nutrition programme covers the mothers in order to protect them from deadly diseases such as anemia, etc.

The government programmes also exist to help the rural poor to access one of the basic necessities, viz., Housing. Since the past 40 years, there are separate housing schemes to enable the poor to own house sites and build houses. As far as the other vulnerable communities such as the STs are concerned, the government has allocated separate programmes and plans to bring them up on par with others in society. Known as the integrated tribal development plan, it envisages helping tribals to live a life of equality and development like others in the plains. They also benefit from the housing programmes. ‘Indira Awaz Yojana’ under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana funds and the Ashraya scheme from 1991-92 merged the existing programmes on site distribution and house construction by weaker sections of society in both rural and urban areas.

More than anybody else, the destitute and physically disabled have a number of programmes to come to their rescue. Being highly vulnerable groups, they have no one to support them. The state and central governments have come forward to help them by designing social security schemes. Widows and the old receive pension of Rs. 50 and
75 respectively. Maternity allowance is provided to the agricultural wage labourers in order to help them to eat nutritious food and improve their health condition during both pre and post natal periods.

Thus, the government has been doing a lot and striving much to eradicate poverty of the masses. Besides the old programmes, it has introduced a number of new programmes in response to the changing social and economic situation in the country in the post globalization era. A number of innovative programmes have been launched such as SGSY that was created by merging IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, TOOLKITS, GKY and MWS. Evolved in the year 1999, this integrated programme made allocations for training, revolving fund, infrastructure development and for undertaking. Loans were extended to suitable men and women by offering low rates of interest and subsidies. The panchayats were entrusted the responsibility to select suitable beneficiaries for the scheme with an eye on transparency and accountability through holding grama sabhas. The programme’s highlight was that it helped women to acquire productive assets. Because of the programme, the rural poor and vulnerable sections received a lot of support so as not to feel distressed and engage themselves in suitable self-employment activities. A number of SHGs were formed by the SGSY programme and many families received crores of rupees of financial support under the programme.

Besides these, the government has further explored into the possibility of completely stopping the incidence of distress migration of families from rural areas by undertaking improvement measures. As recently as in 2006, the government introduced a notable programme called as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). It aimed to enhance the livelihood security of rural masses by ensuring 100 days of wage employment per year to a rural household to
enable its adult members to engage in unskilled manual labour. The responsibility is entrusted to the grama panchayats as it is a demand driven programme and not a target oriented one.

3.8.5 Slums

Yet, despite such useful and targeted programmes for addressing rural problems and protecting the poor and the depressed categories, there are families or individuals continuing to migrate to the urban areas in search of employment or livelihood. Slums are the cancer of the city (Venkatarayappa 1978). The urban areas in every state are overflowing with slums. For example, in Karnataka according to an estimate, there are more than 3000 recognised slums with an estimated population of 43.78 lakhs. The advantage is that slums offer protection to people who leave their native homes in villages and enter into the unknown city with the intention of finding a suitable occupation, usually wage labour that too in the unorganized sector. This process has been going on from several decades. The cities where they come to reside are the dark spots of cities.

Along with the poor and distressed adults, a number of destitute and runaway children also migrate to the city seeking temporary or even permanent shelter. There are two types of such destitute children: those who work on the streets and return to the slum areas to spend the night. They return to the city roads by morning again. The attraction for the children to run away to the cities is availability of unorganized labour and unanimity. In order to address the problems of the children and adults living in slum areas, programmes such as the Nirmala Jyothi Programme, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP); and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHGSDP) were introduced. Many of these are directed to reform the slums by providing basic amenities, using the funds available under the schemes.
3.8.6 *Street children from women headed households*

It is well accepted that mother is the main source of good learning and personality development of a child as she has a significant role in personality development. However, the mother also needs the support of her husband and other family members in accomplishing this task, particularly in a patriarchal family set up. Increasing impoverishment of families has led to increased migration to urban areas by distraught men and women. Once in the city and forced to stay in the slums and low lying areas, the families are further made to suffer if the husband deserts the wife and marries again. In a few other cases, he is alcoholic and deserts his wife or depends on her earnings to manage household expenses and harass her to finance his alcoholic habit. Separation from husband lands the woman in the situation of managing the household and children, old and sick members. Thus, she is made to take the load that is much beyond her capacity. Lacking education and other skills to make a living (by taking up decent employment), she is forced to undertake work in the unorganized sector with long hours of work and with paltry wages. Such women often become victims of rape, sexual assault at work place and home, domestic violence etc. Most often, children are also affected due to poverty at home and mother struggling to make two ends meet. This becomes a perfect situation for children to turn to the streets.

To address such a situation, the government has designed programmes that aim to help women who are affected by violence and assault on them. Santhvana is one such programme launched in 2000 by the Government of Karnataka that aims to provide legal and financial relief and temporary shelter to women affected from atrocities. There were 121 Santhvana centres in the state in 2009 with helpline to help such women.
3.8.7 **Devadasis**

Another potential source of children turning out to the street is the system of devadasis. These stigmatized women have no economic support or assets and depend on the professional income to fend for the family. The children born to such women will definitely be losing out on all the benefits of a family life, stigmatized and exploited. They stand every chance of deprivation of schooling, nutritive food and residence security. They are the potential street children in every sense of the term. The government undertook both legal and social measures to check the practice of devadasi system. Yet, the practice continues clandestinely in many districts of north Karnataka. Former devadasis are provided with pension and other social security benefits, so that they can live with dignity and economic security.

3.8.8 **Girl Street Children**

In patriarchal societies, girls are considered to be a burden and are unwanted. Society has been discriminating against them in various ways. Girls were disliked even in the past and the feeling has only increased in the recent years heightening the practice of female infanticide. Although it is banned, it continues to be practiced in several parts of our state due to traditional belief in its importance and prevalent superstitions. In addition, advancement in science and technological discovery in the realm of offering medical treatment have unfortunately led also to sex detection tests that are open to the public. These were mainly oriented to protect the foetus from any deformities or complications during delivery to protect the mother and enable safe motherhood. But, the same was utilized to detect the sex of the child and conduct abortion if found to be a female!
Even when a fetus is saved and allowed to be born, it can be killed in a short span like 5 years of its life. This is called as child survival ratio or infant mortality rate (IMR). Despite the efforts by the government through its programmes like ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme), child mortality is rampant in both rural and urban areas. This is particularly true of the girl children who also suffer the discrimination of being underfed and deprived of nutrition as compared to the boys (Vani, 2012; Syamala, 2013; Subaiya, 2013). The failure of the programmes to protect the girl child has not yielded good results as is evident from the increasing fall in the child sex ratio. This is particularly in the age group of 0-6 years that has declined from 960 in 1991 to 949 in 2001. The recent addition to address this anomaly in child sex ratio and to improve the situation as regards a number of problems affecting women and the poor such as child labour, female feticide, child marriage, child trafficking etc., and to promote overall development of the girl child as far as its health, education, nutritional care etc., is the Bhagyalakshmi programme. Introduced in 2006, this programme encourages families to ‘tolerate’ the girl children by allowing them to be born. The programme provides financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- to every mother hailing from the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and up to two girl children even if both are girls (first beneficiary Rs. 19,300 and the second will get Rs. 18,350/-).

Every year, up to 2 lakh beneficiaries are selected under this programme. The amount will be deposited in the name of the girl child. It will mature when the girl attains the age of 18 years along with accrued interest. Not just this, the programme has another enchanting benefit to offer and this is to encourage education of the girl beyond matriculation. The girl beneficiary, after attaining 15 years of age, can mortgage the bonds issued to her under Bhagyalakshmi scheme, in a recognized bank. Upon doing so, she will be eligible to avail educational loan up to Rs.50,000/-. This programme has
done much to protect the girls from being killed at foetus stage or after birth during infancy. It has also contributed richly to the quality of life of these girls by way of offering benefits towards their nutritional status, health, education and economic empowerment.

If all these programmes are working well, then why do we still have street children? What is the contribution of all the above programmes towards poverty of the households? How far have the schemes enabled empowerment of the mother? Ideally, they should have arrested the incidence of poor and vulnerable to migrate to cities out of distress. The failure of these programmes has, obviously, led to collapse of security to children and driving them to the streets.

### 3.9 Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes among Street Children

Poverty and vulnerability in India are highly caste-based. More than the impact of class–based divisions, caste hierarchies render a person to suffer poverty and indignation, misery and alienation from resources and opportunities. Several studies have proved that a large majority of the poor are those hailing from the marginalized sections of society. This is especially true of the SCs and STs who form the bulk of the poor in both rural and urban areas.

The government, both at the central and state levels, has done much in the last 7 decades to the cause of these downtrodden sections of our society. A number of programmes and policies have been planned and implemented to bring the SCs and STs on par with the rest of the population. The practice of untouchability has been abolished by law in the fifties itself but its traces are still to be found in many villages. Reservation of seats in educational institutions, government jobs and amenities for
housing, sanitation, drinking water, etc are the other forms of assistance to help the communities to come out of poverty and lead a quality life.

The programmes are particularly interesting as far as children’s education is concerned. For example, besides assistance in primary and secondary education, the students from the two communities are also offered financial assistance to pursue higher education, such as graduation, post-graduation, M. Phil or Ph. D courses. Incentives are offered to those studying in national institutes like IITs, IIScs, and IIMs. To encourage students to pursue higher studies abroad, an amount is earmarked to be spent on such meritorious students. On the whole, lakhs of rupees have been spent on these programmes in the last few decades enabling many of the students from the communities to develop their career. There is also a merit scholarship offered to those in the 10th Standard and for those scoring more than 60 per cent marks in the annual examination.

A further assistance in the path of encouraging the students from SC and ST background to pursue education is the provision made for hostels and free boarding and lodging facilities, available for students at pre-metric level. They also receive books, dresses and other requisites, in addition to the boarding expenses. Within SCs, these scholarships are available to those students whose parental income is less than Rs. one lakh. Named as Morarji Desai residential schools and Navodaya schools, some of these are operated or run by the Social Welfare department. The inmates of these residential schools are supplied, free of cost, almost all their needs such as books, uniforms, bed, oil, soap, medical and washing expenditure, in addition to their boarding and lodging facilities (Sudhakar, 2013). Likewise, under the other programmes, deserving children
from the vulnerable categories are eligible for noon meal provision. In just one year (2009-10) nearly 230 lakh rupees have been spent on this programme.

As far as basic amenities are concerned, under the Special Component Plan, eligible SC families are provided housing benefits. The programme for the SC families from BPL background is implemented by the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation. Besides this, there is the Ambedkar Housing Scheme. Empowering SC women through skill formation and capacity building is also a positive approach to arrest child labour and incidence of street children. Similarly, the SC youth are imparted training to pursue trade and also computer enabled services under the Navachetana scheme.

A further important step in addressing the problem of poverty induced street children is to provide land ownership as support to the landless agricultural labourers in rural areas. A certain sum is earmarked by the government to purchase land to be distributed to deserving SC households, which do not possess any land. The SC Development Corporation has spearheaded several of the programmes for the amelioration of the SCs in the state including such land purchase scheme. The households with no avenues for irrigation facilities to cultivate productive commercial crops are further assisted by arranging for loans under the National Finance and Development Corporation (NFDC). Ganga Kalyana Programme is another programme that facilitates the poor landowning households from SC background to obtain loan to dig individual irrigation bore wells on a collective basis.

Besides the above, there are several other programmes that strive to arrest migration, impoverishment and misery\textsuperscript{34}. All the above programmes are equally

\textsuperscript{34} Land purchase scheme, micro-credit, rehabilitation of safai karmacharis etc are a few in this direction. Training and skill imparting programmes in technical and non-technical products like air conditioning, refrigeration, fashion design etc., have also been initiated. Unemployed youth are trained
applicable to the households of scheduled tribes who suffer similar problems in society. Additional allocations are made to tribal girl children to encourage their higher education both by providing financial assistance as well as hostel or residential schools. Even parents of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are provided an encouragement amount of Rs.200/- per annum, to encourage them to send their daughters to schools particularly pre-metric education. Likewise, to support the unemployed youth among the tribals, a programme (especially for professionals like law graduates) giving financial support till they get into formal jobs or are able to develop their professions has been instituted. Poor parents among the STs are offered post metric scholarships to their sons, if their income is less than Rs. 1,08,000/-. Besides these, ST students who secure good marks in SSLC and PUC are eligible to receive incentive amount.

3.10 Backward Classes and Street Children

The backward classes category has been considered for similar provisions to encourage the students to get education and obtain suitable jobs. Financial incentives, residential schools, hostels with boarding and lodging facilities, fee concession, vocational training and job-oriented courses are a few programmes initiated by the government in this direction.

These benefits are also extended to the children from minority communities. Incentives for education, self employment schemes for unemployed boys/girls, nursing, computer training and also imparting different training programmes through the Central Institute of Plastic Engineering Technology, Mysore, KEONICS, NIIT, post Graduate Diploma in Banking and Financial Services and Infrastructure, etc. job oriented through the Vocational Training and Skill Development Corporation for purposes of placement and self employment.
trainings are given to the deserving youth by the Development corporations, in Naturo-therapy, fashion design, Food processing, Tourist Guide, Hotel Management etc., through Rural Development Self Employment Training Institute (RUDSETI) and other Governmental Organizations. The programmes are open to skilled and unskilled persons in rural, semi-urban and urban areas. They help them to start small business activities such as petty trade in vegetables, fruits, household small goods, repair shops, carpentry, tailoring etc. A number of traditional occupations are encouraged and the artisans are provided with monetary and other forms of aid like subsidy, loans, etc. The government has further assisted the nomadic and semi-nomadic people through a scheme evolved in 2006 to economically uplift them. Self employment programmes are evolved with subsidy component for the same purpose of providing assistance. Besides all these above, government has made provisions for helping the disabled and handicapped persons, old and widowed persons so that their children and families dependent upon them are not put to hardships.

3.11 Programmes for Women and Children

Women are the worst sufferers of all forms of injustice, harassment and discrimination, the state has made a number of important policy and programme based initiatives with a gender focus which have implications on the levels of human development. As far as children are concerned, there are a number of programmes that help them to improve their educational level. Programmes such as mid-day meals scheme have improved retention rates in the schools. SDMCs and Balavikas samithis are helpful in planning, monitoring and improving the quality of services.

A pioneering programme viz., Karnataka Mahila Abhivrudhi Yojane has earmarked one-third of its plan outlay for women in individual benefit oriented and
labour intensive schemes of different departments. A separate cell has been created to monitor the implementation of various programmes under KMA
Y. Under the Stree Shakti Programme, launched in 2000-01, women’s empowerment received an added impetus with the emphasis upon formation of self-help groups (SHGs) of women in rural and urban areas. These are created by the anganawadi workers and self-help groups to mobilize savings and open bank accounts. They also receive training in credit management, book keeping and on social issues. The groups receive revolving fund spent for various activities. The Urban Stree Shakti Scheme started in February 2004, is also popular in towns and cities of 175 taluks in the state.

The support for school-going children is further extended to provide better access and continue ones’ education. This is especially for children belonging to BPL families. Bicycles to boys and girls studying in 8\textsuperscript{th} standard, and both in government and grant-in-aid schools, are provided. The backward districts receive a further assistance to rise above poverty level. This is as per the recommendations of the High Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances (popularly known as Prof. D M Nanjundappa Committee). It has formulated special eight year development programme commencing from 2007 and covering 114 backward taluks of the state. The allocated amount is distributed among the most backward, more backward and backward taluks in the ratio of 50:30:20 (Sudhakar, 2013).
### Table III.11: 11th Plan Target and Millennium Development Goals – Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Year of Reference</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
<th>XI Plan target</th>
<th>MDGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>SRS, RGI</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Under the five mortality rate to be reduced by two-thirds during 1990-2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)</td>
<td>2001-03</td>
<td>Special Survey of deaths using RHIME Method, RGI, GOI</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Reduce Maternal Mortality Rate by three quarters by 1990-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malnutrition of children 0-3 years</td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>NFHS 3</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anemia among women (15-49 years)</td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>NFHS3</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio (0-6 years)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>954 (2011-12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fertility Rate</td>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>NFHS 3</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty ratio</td>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>12.4 (2011-12)</td>
<td>The proportion of people whose income is less than a dollar a day to reduced by half between 1990-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy 2001</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>66.66</td>
<td>89.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Literacy 2001</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>56.87</td>
<td>85.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sudhakar, 2013.

Besides all these problems that directly affect the society and lead to street children, children are also threatened by the other demographic impairments such as infant mortality, child mortality and maternal mortality rates. These are important demographic indicators. The state is below the All India average. Anemia among
children is found to be nearly 80 per cent of the total children in the state which is almost closer to the national average. About 40 per cent of the children below 3 years have stunted growth. There are still districts particularly in north Karnataka where immunization coverage is less than 50 per cent and percentage of women receiving 3 or more antenatal care visits is around 60 per cent. Institutional deliveries in the state, accounting for 67 per cent, are the lowest among the southern states’.

3.12 Conclusions

The forgoing analysis clearly reveals that the state government has designed/established and implemented various kinds of poverty eradication measures spending lot of resources –human and financial – to end or for eradication of poverty and to achieve human development. We have achieved very little in this direction of eradicating poverty in the State and in spite of our efforts, still this social evil persists.

Why do the rural poor remain poor and why do they resort to extreme steps of deserting their children to turn them to become street children? Who are the street children then? Are they from the rural areas? Are they from very poor and vulnerable HHs? How does the society allow them to get to the streets? Why do they come out of homes, instead of living in families with one’s parents and siblings?

Chapter IV takes us from this background note about the study area or universe of study and the various developmental programmes instituted by the government for the benefit of the poor in the rural areas, to progress to see what the study findings are in the direction of who the street children are? Despite the aforesaid efforts of the state and central governments, how are the families living in such abject poverty that they abandon their own children? The chapter presents and discusses about the social and demographic profile of the respondents covered by the study
carried out in Bangalore city. It provides the base for understanding the circumstances in which the street children live in the cities and towns. The demographic features of the children in terms of their gender, age, education, family background and household particulars are discussed with a view to realize the problems of the respondents to survive in the orphaned life.