Chapter 4

Methodology of the Study

The methodology section describes the basic plan and steps adopted to enquire, comprehend and interpret problems and statements used in the research. After formulating study objectives, the researcher made an attempt to define key terminologies used in the research to avoid ambiguity for the readers. This chapter describes the universe, sampling techniques used considering the research objectives and feasibility. Different tools were used by the researcher to recognize different forms of abuse that children of families living on the streets face and socio-economic conditions that build insecurities within the children and their families. The researcher has also made an attempt to understand the implementation of Juvenile Justice System for the protection of these children. To understand these factors, qualitative and quantitative tools were used to capture the views of the children and their families towards their own rights; different abusive experiences that the children face; various protective mechanisms that children and their families adopt.

To achieve the set objectives of the study, the following steps were used:

- Review of secondary resources:
- Direct observation of the situation of the street living families.
- Discussion with children and their parents living on the streets.
- Discussion with the personnel and organizations working with street children.
- Preparation of research design.
- Identification of basic tools and pilot testing within the targeted respondents.
- Finalization of tools.
- Collection and cross validation of data.
- Analysis of data.
Operational Definitions:

For the purpose of the study, the researcher made an attempt to review and analyze definitions used by other international agencies. But, it was observed that there are wide discrepancies in the use of terminologies among different agencies. Thus, the terminologies referred for this study have been operationally defined. And this was done with the participation of the street children. The following are the operational definitions for the terminologies used in this study.

Definition of ‘child’

A child was defined as a person not having completed 18 years of age. The sample for this study constituted children in the age group of 12 to 16 years. Children were divided into two groups according to their gender.

Definition of ‘Street Children’

The street children are defined as children living with their families on the streets / pavements.

Definition of ‘Parents’

Parents in this study mean either the biological parents and / or the step parents, whosoever was staying with the child and had taken the responsibility of guardianship of the child.

Definition of ‘child abuse’

Child abuse refers to the intended, unintended and perceived maltreatment, whether habitual or not, of the child, including any of the following:

- Any act, deed or word which degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being.
- All forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO, 1999).

There are many forms of child abuse and they vary according to the cultural and geographical settings. The present study, however, focuses on the following three prominent forms of child abuse.

- **Physical abuse** is an injury resulting from physical aggression. Even if the injury was not intended, the act is considered as physical abuse. It includes beating, slapping, shaking, kicking, pinching, biting, choking, hair-pulling, burning with cigarettes, scalding water, or other hot objects, severe physical punishment, or otherwise harming a child.

- **Sexual abuse** refers to the use of a child for the sexual gratification of an older adolescent or adult and involves the exposure of a child to sexual contact, activity or behaviour. It is important to note that sexual abuse can occur between children. The key to defining an act as abusive is the difference in age and power between the victim and the offender. This may include the following:
  - Fondling: touching or kissing a child's genitals; or making a child fondle an adult's genitals.
  - Violations of bodily privacy: forcing the child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom.
  - Child pornography: using a child in the production of pornography, such as a film or magazine.
  - Exposing children to pornography (movies, magazines, or websites) or enticing children to pornographic sites on the Internet.
  - Luring a child for sexual liaisons, through the Internet or by any other means.
• Exposing children to adult sexuality in any form (showing sex organs to a child, forced observation of sexual acts, telling "dirty" stories, group sex).
• Child prostitution or sexual exploitation (using a child to perform sex with others).
• Sexual acts with a child: penetration, intercourse, incest, rape, oral sex, sodomy.

- **Emotional abuse** is also known as verbal abuse, mental abuse, and psychological maltreatment. It includes an act or failure to act by parents, caretakers, peers and others that have caused or could cause serious behavioural, cognitive, emotional, or mental distress / trauma. It can range from a simple verbal insult to severe form of punishment. It includes ignoring, rejection, lack of positive reinforcement, yelling or screaming, threatening, negative comparisons to others, belittling; telling the child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake", shaming, humiliating, or name-calling, habitual blaming, using extreme forms of punishment, such as confinement to a closet or dark room, tying to a chair for long periods of time, or terrorizing a child, child exploitation, such as child labour, witnessing the physical abuse of others, use of abusive language and forcing the child to be involved in illegal activities.

• **Physical detachment/detention includes** child kidnapping, parental child abduction, or child stealing, arrest by the police and being detained in the police station or detention in any institution.

**Definition of ‘perpetrators of abuse’**

The study defines perpetrators of abuse as any person involving directly or indirectly in the act of exploitation or abuse of the child. The perpetrators of abuse can be grouped as under:

• **Parents** can be any of both of the biological and / or step parent/s with whom the child stays.
- **Relatives / Family friends** are persons closely associated with all of the family or an individual family member.

- **Employer** is an individual or institution where the child works, ranging from few hours to months / years.

- **Service Providers** are Governmental or Non Governmental agencies involved in the provision of services for the children and their families living on the streets.

- **Legal Machinery** is a system developed by the government to maintain law and order in the society. This includes police officials, railways security forces, lawyers and officials of Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and members of Juvenile Justice Board (JJB).

- **Local Leaders** includes any influential person of the area. He / she may be involved in politics, labour union activities, leader of children’s group or welfare activities in the area.

- **Stranger** is any person unknown to the child and it includes floating people and passers by.

**Definition of ‘Offence’**

The offence is an act that is punishable under any law for the time being in force.

**Definition of ‘child friendly approach in juvenile justice system’**

It is an approach that makes children comfortable to participate in the affairs of the justice system to protect their interest. For the purpose of the study, opinion of children was sought regarding legal procedures adopted by law and order machineries, behaviours of the personnel involved in the system, physical appearance and accessibility of the system, and processes adopted during negotiation and interrogation and time taken for the adjudication and disposition of cases.
Type of Research:

This is mainly a combination of diagnostic and exploratory research. The diagnostic research is basically concerned with an existing social problem, its basic nature and forms. It also helps in discovering and testing certain variables with respect to their association or disassociation. A diagnostic study is also concerned with the case as well as with its treatment. Whereas, the exploratory research tries to discover the facts and gives insight of the issue studied. Exploratory research is necessary to be familiar with the subject and the scope and limit of the research study. It can help to clarify concepts and formulate the hypothesis.

This research study can be called as diagnostic research as it deals with abuse of children living on the street, which is not a new phenomenon. It tries to find out the causal relationship between the socio-economic conditions of the street living families and various forms of abuse perpetrated against their children. The researcher also describe this study as an exploratory research as it seeks to find out how people get along in the street life, what meanings they give to their actions, and what issues concern them. The goal is to learn ‘what is going on here?’ and to investigate social phenomena without explicit expectations. The study intends to capture the practical experiences of children and parents regarding various forms of child abuse and protection mechanisms they adopt within their environment. It also tries to discover ideas and insights of children and their parents regarding child friendly approaches that legal machineries should adapt to protect the best interest of children. This study also intended to develop a working hypothesis from an operational point of view regarding the friendly way of dealing with children living on the streets by the law enforcement bodies, especially police personnel. This study identifies the views of children and their families regarding the operational protocols that police personnel should follow to help children to speak up their problems and to get required legal assistance for protection within their own environment.

Universe of the study:

Children of families living in the streets of Kolkata were selected as a universe
for the study. The population residing on the street in the city was highly mobile and hence it was difficult to get a close estimate of the number of children living with their families on the streets of Kolkata. Both the government and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) claimed to have programmes running for children and their families living on the street, but none of them had a comprehensive data of the beneficiaries. This study was designed with purposive sampling method covering 5 zones of Kolkata city.

**Sampling Design:**

**Selection of zones**

For the purpose of the study, 5 administrative zones of Kolkata police jurisdiction were selected: North, South, East, West and Central. From each of these zones, areas were selected where more than 10 families were residing in a cluster. Support was taken from local NGOs or CBOs to establish rapport with the families living on the street.

**Designing an empirical Map:**

The areas where children lived with their families were identified through regular visits. Once the area was selected, it was plotted on the city map of Kolkata. The reference clusters were identified on the map and marked accordingly. During this process, NGO functionaries, taxi/auto drivers, and local shop owners were consulted. Transact walks were also conducted in the identified areas to get an idea of the selected zones.

**Selection of NGOs & CBOs**

Frequent and repeated visits were conducted in the identified localities to gain better understanding of the areas. During the study, 18 key locations were identified from 5 administrative zones, where a cluster of more than 10 families were living on the streets. To identify reputed NGOs and CBOs, the local government authorities and international development agencies working in the area were contacted. The NGO directory published by UNICEF, in coordination with Government of West Bengal, was also very useful to identify NGOs working in those selected areas. Of all the NGOs and CBOs identified in the area, few active organisations were short listed based on the feedback received from the community. Finally, one NGO/CBO was identified for the
purpose of this study based on the organisations’ willingness to participate in the study and their rapport with the children and their families living on the street of a specific locality. The following are some of the major NGOs and CBOs consulted during the span of this study.

**Table 4.1-List of NGOs, CBOs consulted**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>NGOs/CBO consulted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kolkata</td>
<td>• Narkeldanga Main road</td>
<td>CINI Asha</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shobhabazar Metro</td>
<td>Zahid Sporting Club</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Madan Mohan Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Kolkata</td>
<td>• Lebutala Park, Santosh Mitra Square</td>
<td>CINI Asha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Taltala, S.N Banerjee Road</td>
<td>Saraswati Club</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maulali Crossing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• AJC .Bose Road, Near</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sealdah Railway Station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Kolkata</td>
<td>• Kasba</td>
<td>DAS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Garihat fly over</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Kolkata</td>
<td>• Taratala fly over,</td>
<td>BLC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Babu Ghat</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hastings</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Kolkata</td>
<td>• Rash Behari Avenue Cenla Road</td>
<td>Children’s Paradise ( A religious Organisation)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Netaji Subhash Road</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Selection of children and parents**

Numbers of families living on the street in their coverage area was enumerated with the help of the team members of the NGO / CBO and or local leaders. About 920 children and their families were identified from the field visits. Of the total, 230 children in the age group of 12-16 years living with their families on the streets of 5 zones of Kolkata were short listed. From that list, only 40
children were selected from each zone through the process of purposive random sampling method and availability of children during time of data collection. And of these 200 children, 50 parents living in and around the area for at least more than one year were selected for FGD. For the purpose of this study, equal number of boys and girls were selected from each zone.

**Tools and techniques of data collection:**

The tools were used for identification, cross verification and analysis of the information in the context of the set objectives of the research. Qualitative research methodologies were aimed at gaining a deep understanding of specific vulnerability factors, psycho social dynamics of the families living on the streets, and their self protection mechanisms. During the course of the study, the researcher intended not to impose the researcher’s operational definitions on the participants but rather, tried to use different qualitative tools to explore ideas from the participants. The core intention behind the study was also to have a voice for children living with their families on the streets through ensuring their active participation to identify problems and its solution. The concept of participation is still a subject to debate and practicability and has its own critical connotations. Moreover, the concept of child participation is further unevaluated. The researcher has made conscious efforts to ensure participation of children and their parents to foster open dialogue to obtain information considering their local context. Thus, the researcher also tried to maintain flexibility in using tools to adjust to the setting of the respondents, modified the use of existing tools to make them friendly and interesting for children.

Keeping in mind the sensitivity of the issue, child friendly tools and techniques were used to create an enabling environment for the children to respond with ease and share their experiences on different forms of abuse. The following tools and techniques were used:
Interview with children:

One to one interaction with the children living on the streets of Kolkata was conducted using the structured interview schedule (ANNEXURE I). This was conducted to elicit specific information from them and was conducted on the basis of guidelines developed for this study. Before designing the interview schedule, a series of group discussions were conducted with children to understand the field situations. Based on that, an interview schedule was designed and field tested. Accordingly, necessary modifications were made. The researcher interacted with individual children and elicited their responses on the items given in the questionnaire through a child friendly dialogue. The responses of the street children were written down by the researcher on individual interview schedules of each child respondent separately. The one to one interactions with children were conducted in Bengali and Hindi languages.

Critical Incident Techniques:

Critical incident technique was a helpful technique used to examine a number of issues pertinent to a particular problem. It allows respondents to understand the dimensions of their role and their interactions in different social settings. Critical incident techniques were used during one to one interview to facilitate children to narrate their experiences of abuse. The researchers narrated some stories that facilitated children to relate and recall their experiences of abuse that they may have faced in the recent past. This enabled the researcher to understand and relate different experiences of children with most frequently occurred forms of abuse and their reactions.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus group discussion technique was used to produce good conversation on a given topic. A group was formed with typically 7 to 10 volunteers who meet specific demographic needs. The purpose of focus groups was to gain information and insight as to how the target audience would react to the topic of discussion. The purpose of focus groups was to find information about how specific demographic group feels about a particular topic. It also allows direct
interaction and clarification, allows participation of children or people who may not be able to communicate in written form and are less expensive than conducting individual interviews.

In this research, it was used to ensure participation of the respondents to elicit information that paints a portrait combined local perspectives about child abuse. Through the discussion, the researcher motivated the group of children and their parents to think deeply and develop new ideas. Focus group discussion technique in combination with other quantitative and qualitative methods can be used to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within the socio cultural environment of the street living families. Effort was made to ensure a true partnership of the respondents in identification and assessments of their own problems. Informal FGDs were also conducted with the children and their parents during the initial stages of the study to generate and pilot test the survey questionnaire. Later, the formal FGDs were conducted after the compilation of the survey questionnaire to gain in-depth understanding of the various issues identified during survey method. Guidelines for conducting FGDs were developed (ANNEXURE II) for the group of children and parents (ANNEXURE III). FGDs were conducted amongst homogeneous groups of 10-12 children (all boys or all girls) using a range of activities, viz. ice breaking, story telling, songs, games, drawings/paintings, etc. These techniques were used to establish rapport and to introduce the subject matter of the study in a subtle manner. In total, 10 FGDs (5 for boys and 5 for girls) were conducted for children and 5 FGDs for parents to obtain information from children and their parents. Open ended questions were used that had a logical flow and progression. Efforts were made to put the participants at ease, and keep the discussions relevant to the study topic. Through probing questions, the researcher facilitated the participants to think deeply on the topic and generate new ideas. To explore ideas on the topic, the researcher oriented the group about the topic and the purpose of the study and then led and guided the discussion in a focused way. The recording was done by an external person, which was later transcribed in form of a document. Case studies were collected during the process of data collections and were discussed to facilitate the process of discussion during FGDs. The ethics of confidentiality was maintained while narrating the case studies.
Other Participatory Exercises:

a. Ranking and scoring exercise:
Ranking and scoring techniques was one of the acknowledged tools for participatory rural appraisal. It helps to activate respondents to undertake ranking exercise and leaves more room for discussion as to what should be ranked/ scored. Therefore, ranking exercises are relevant for participatory identification of indicators.

It is important to note that obtaining information regarding sexual abuse was difficult as it was a very sensitive issue and there was a social stigmas attached to it. For this reason, the quantitative data may not reflect the actual incidence of sexual abuse of the children living on the streets. For this reason, the researcher used the qualitative tools to supplement and complement the data revealed from the one to one interview method. The researcher used this technique to quickly identify types of abuse perpetrated against children, perpetrators of abuse and the self defence mechanisms. From this exercise, the researcher tried to find out most commonly occurred abuse and their perpetrators. The children were provided with assistance, if needed to enlist the types of abuses other children or their friends faced in similar living environment. It was conducted separately with both the boys and the girls and the findings were grouped as per the gender. Based on this group work, children identified 37 forms of maltreatment or abuse that were perpetrated against them or other children living on the streets like them. Further, the types of maltreatment and abuses faced by the children were grouped in five different categories with the help of children’s inputs. The categories were physical abuse, mental or emotional abuse, sexual abuse, economic exploitation and legal abuse. Similarly, they identified the perpetrators according to the social settings and stated their self defence mechanisms.

b. Case studies and stories:
Case study, as name indicates concentrates on special cases. The case study places more importance over the full analysis of the limited social unit in depth. The objective of this method was to locate the factors that account for the behavioural pattern of the given unit as an integrated totality.
For the purpose of the study, the researcher identified the children during the one to one interview for the purpose of the case study. Against each type of abuse, one child from each gender was selected for the purpose of the case study. Those children were studied intensively to gain a holistic understanding of the problem. The researcher tried to understand the complex of factors that were operative within the street living environment and the reaction of those children to those stimulants.

c. Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram is an illustration of the relationships between and among sets, or groups of objects that share something in common. This was used in Participative Research Exercises, also called as Chapatti diagram (Indian pan caked shaped bread). The respondent places circles of different shapes of bread in a symbolic relationship with each other. This technique was used with the children to sense relations among different support groups or institutions within the social settings of the respondents. Children drew circles of different sizes to depict their reliability on different social groups and institutions or services. Children were also facilitated to depict their ideas in the form of colourful circles. Children identified various institutions like local youth groups, local party people, and police stations as machineries available for their protection and ranked them with size as per their scope to access those.

Key Principles:

For this study, detailed ethical guidelines were developed to safeguard the child's right and to protect the child from potential trauma.

- The researcher tried professional use of value based, ethical standards and principles of social work during exploration, data collection and documentation. Though, participation of children was still tentative and relatively unevaluated but, the researcher strongly feels that given an opportunity, children can equally participate in problem identification and decision making process. Thus, the researcher made purposeful effort to engage children as partners in the whole initiative and tried to capture their
understanding and views as they themselves described.

- Created enabling environment by use of different qualitative tools to foster participation of children in the study.

- The researcher made conscious effort not to impose her opinion on children during the facilitation process and maintained a non judgmental and unbiased attitude.

- Prior to the interaction, the researcher obtained consents from the children who were interested to participate in the study. The researcher sensitized them about the research objectives and obtained permissions from their parents and the local community leaders.

- Time of data collection was mutually agreed with the children and their parents.

- The researcher spent quality time with the children to earn their trust. It was mutually agreed with children that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and will not disclose or discuss their confidential issues with their parents and other members in their community.

- To ensure confidentiality, the researcher did not maintain the original name and address of any child in the research document.

Data Analysis and Report Writing:

After the data was collected, the same was coded and entered into the computer using an excel worksheet. The data was complex and multi-dimensional, which was later converted into frequency tables and charts / graphs to undertake the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Limitations/challenges of the study:

- This study was unique and had little information base to build upon especially for developing countries. The universal definition of child abuse in the Indian context was lacking and little understanding of the extent of the different forms of abuse was available. The study
also had difficulty in defining some of the terms due to lack of well defined indicators.

- Only few studies were available on abuse of street children and implementation of Juvenile Justice Act. Also, it was difficult to find any comprehensive research documentation on the same issue.

- The definition of street children was not uniform. Different agencies use their own definitions to describe street children. There were some studies conducted by different agencies which gave an idea of the problems of street children but did not provide any segregated data on children living with their families on the streets.

- It was very difficult to apply the random sampling method because of the mobility of the population.

- It was observed during the data collection that though many of the organizations were working for street children but none of them had a compressive data base of children living on the streets.

- Collection of data during the day time was very difficult; as the street living families do not return to their place of stay before the evening. Thus, the researcher had to collect data during evening hours.

- Because of the sensitivity of the research topic, the researcher used various qualitative tools to establish rapport and collect their opinion. These processes took longer time than it was expected. The researcher had to make repeated visits to complete the data collection process.

- Obtaining data regarding sexual abuse was difficult as it was very sensitive and social stigmas were attached to these. The researcher facilitated interviews and FDG processes with similar case studies to help children to associate their personal life experiences. A few children narrated some of the incidence of sexual abuse. Those experiences have been narrated in the form of case study in this document. Thus, the quantitative data will not reflect the actual incidence of sexual abuse of children at street environment.

- Because of the environmental distractions, it was difficult to attract children for long time. Normally attention span of all these children
was found to be low. Moreover, the environmental disturbances, made it difficult to complete whole set of questionnaire at a stretch.

- The researcher also faced problems during one-to-one interviews and FGDs process because of the curiosity of local community people and other passers by.
- Though the researcher used different tools to establish communication with children regarding abuse and law enforcement systems; still the researcher experienced her own limitations in describing various terminologies to children.
- The researcher felt that a lower number of sample and in-depth qualitative study would have been a better approach for this study.
- Interaction with police personnel of different rank and informal interviews to record the perception of police personnel towards children was conducted during this study. It was felt that a face to face interaction with children and police personnel would have been a better strategy to design a child friendly police system.
- For future studies, the researcher found that there was a scope to work on the gaps in implementation of Juvenile Justice System in the State of West Bengal.