Chapter 7

Salaam Baalak Trust: A Case Study

Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT) was found to be an excellent example of an organisation engaged in protection and rehabilitation of street and working children. It is also an example of how an organisation developed out of a commitment to do something for street and working children by a small group of people associated with the making of the film “Salaam Bombay” – a film made on street children of Bombay in 1988. SBT illustrates how the passion to cater to more and more population of street and working children led to taking up a number of interrelated responsibilities such as (a) setting up of more Shelter Homes; (b) initiating community works in slums adjacent to the railway tracks to prevent children dwelling in the slums from ending up joining the labour force; (c) starting AIDS awareness programme; (d) opening up of a residential school; (e) planning a ‘Door-step School’; and so on. SBT and its activities may be located in and around the New Delhi Railway Station.

Initially the Trust was catering to 25 boys with its 3-4 hours programme of non-formal education, theatrical art and some recreational activities. SBT has been evolving with time. However, according to the Trustee, there has not been any major policy change. The focus of SBT has remained the same i.e., the street children. But,
over the years with the experience gained from dealing with street and working children of the New Delhi Railway Station and learning the problems of such children, SBT has expanded into interrelated areas like working in the slums near the railway station where children just loiter around and the parents are unconcerned about their well being. It has also taken up the AIDS awareness programme for the street and working children. The street children are often sexually exploited and they know nothing about safe sexual behaviours. They are thus, prone to AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Thus, the expansion of SBT within a decade of its establishment, has overridden the desire and understanding of the founder and the Chairperson of the Trust, Ms. Praveen Nair, who told me, “we do not want to enlarge to such an extent that we loose sight and become bureaucratic and administrative, since if the project becomes large, then more administrative time is also needed”.

1. History and Progress of SBT

SBT’s history as printed in its Brochure and other literature is as follows:

“The Salaam Baalak Trust was set up after the landmark success of the film made on street children of Bombay ‘Salaam Bombay’ in 1980s...The film very simply but powerfully portrayed the lives of street children, their
traumas and their psyche. The film left an impact of a more lasting nature on a small group of people associated with its making who had decided to come together to form a social welfare organisation that could cater to millions of such children in Delhi, Bombay and Bhubaneswar— the Salaam Baalak Trust. The Trust has come a long way hence and the New Delhi Centres alone cater to a population of nearly 1500 street and working children through 7 of its Learning Centres in and around the New Delhi Railway Station.”

A more interesting account of the history of SBT is that told by its founder and Trustee, Ms. Nair.

According to Ms. Nair, in the late 1980s she was not doing much of social work because of ill health till her daughter made the film “Salaam Bombay” on street children. “Through the experiences with the street children and after seeing the tremendous talent of these children so much so that one of those boys got the National Award for the Best Child Artist, I got down to thinking of doing something for such children to provide long term services to the children who not only acted in the film but, the street children, in general”. That is how SBT was started and was registered as a Charitable Trust in December 1988. But even before its registration, Ms. Nair and her group of friends from the Theatre Action Group had
already started working in Delhi, Bhuvaneswar and Mumbai. These include Barry John, Dinaz Stafford, Inderjit Khurana and the present co-Trustee, Sanjoy Roy. According to the founder, it was the groups’ ‘commitment to do something’ for the street and working children, that made them work together and turn their dream into reality. The initial finances for the organisation came from the Premier Show of the film “Salaam Bombay” in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta.

The founder along with the core group from the Theatre Action Group began their work despite the discouragement of their friends and others. The latter used to say. “What are you doing? You are just striking your head against the wall. There are millions of them. How can you do it?” Ms. Nair and her friends would reply thus, “we do not claim to have set out to change the world, we would be satisfied if we are successful in bringing 3-4 boys out of the 25 boys into the mainstream society”.

They also faced difficulty in dealing with street boys since such children do not trust others easily because the kinds of sufferings they have had, they come to think that the people who have come to reform them are just another tool to involve them in drug trafficking or police harassment or taking them to some Children’s Homes/Juvenile Homes.
It took the founders six to eight week's time to build rapport with the street and working children of the New Delhi Railway Station. The process involved walking around the railway station and making contact with them. But eventually they were successful in getting together a group of 25 boys with whom they started with some fun programmes at the Station premises for 3-4 hours. At that time there was no fixed programme schedule. The aim was to first build a rapport with the children. Apart from playing a few fun games, the founders talked to the children about their work, their family, their homes and their villages, so that the children open up with them. Children were taken out for picnics, were given paper, pencils, coloured pens to draw and stories were told to them. Later, after the children became friendly, vocational training in Theatrical art as well as non-formal education programme was initiated.

After working for a couple of years the founder and her colleagues realised that whatever they did in those 3-4 hours is undone since the boy still go back to the same environment. It was at that time that the necessity of a Shelter Home was felt which was then started in the accommodation provided by the DDA Community Centre in Chandiwali Gali of Paharganj. The same houses the office of the SBT, which coordinates all other Centres. The Shelter Home was at that time a “hotchpotch” arrangement, since it catered to both boys and girls of all age groups. Problems developed because of boys and girls staying at the same Shelter Home and so the Shelter Home was
made exclusively for boys and the girl children, from then onwards were sent to those government and non-government agencies which catered to the needs of the uncared for girl children. At the same time, keeping together the young and the older boys at the same Shelter Home also led to problems, such as bossism of the older boys over the younger ones. So SBT started a 24 hours Drop-in-Shelter where the older boys- 15 years onwards- could come and go anytime, could avail the facility of bathing, non-formal education, counseling and vocational training.

2. About the Founder

A brief look at the founder’s work experience as told by her and according to her bio-data may be had before going on further.

The founder’s interest in the social work dates back to the 1940s when she was 16 years of age. She belongs to a wealthy family with large house and numerous servants. The servants’ children, around 15 of them, used to loiter around with no parental guidance, had no schooling, no values and no life-skills and were expected to ultimately follow their parent’s occupation. So she started teaching those children for 2 hours, which she found a very satisfying experience. Their parents started questioning her as to why she was teaching them, since they would always be in the lowest rung of the socio-economic hierarchy. So it was a challenge for her to enlighten
their parents and also a challenge as to not rock the boat in their family situation. She used her influence to get the boys part-time jobs at a tennis court as ball pickers. To the girls, she taught some arts and crafts like painting and stitching. This is how she started her tenure in social works.

Details of her Social Work experience is as follows:

- Involved in Red Cross Society in Meerut and Orissa between 1950-80
- 1955-59 – Chairperson- Project Implementation Committee, Social Welfare Board for Sundergarh District, Orissa
- 1958-60 – Member, State Advisory Board, Orissa for Small Savings Campaign
- 1960-65 – Active involvement in Orissa State Red Cross for Children’s Welfare
- 1965-68 – Chief Liaison Officer for famine relief in Orissa. The programme reached out to over 20,000 families. She was awarded a Certificate of Merit
- 1969-71 – Through the Red Cross, (Orissa), did a Survey and was instrumental in starting a Shelter for Children of leper parents. Also organised crèches for children of working mothers in Orissa
- 1969-71 – Member Governing Body of DAV Public School Bhubaneswar with the Governor of Orissa, Dr. P.N. Khosla, she was instrumental in bringing the DAV educational movement in Orissa. Eventually in Bhubaneswar, she along with others set up school for children belonging to lower middle class in order to give the same quality of education that the Mission Schools were providing. The school started with 14 children and today it has a strength of 5000 children
- 1972-75 – Member, Governing Body of Deaf and Dumb Institution, Bhubaneswar
The Salaam Baalak Trust was set up to provide support services to street and working children in Delhi, Bombay and Bhuvaneswar.

- 1996-97 – Convener, NGO Forum for Street and Working Children, Delhi
- 1998-99 – Convener, Delhi Child Line Project
- Has presented paper and chaired workshops at SCERT, NCERT, Youth Reach, NIPCCD, National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences, FICCI.

3. Philosophy / Objectives

The SBT's objective is to bring about a difference in street and working children's life and try and integrate them into the mainstream, as also to give them the childhood, which they had totally lost because they have to earn their living at a tender age. According to the Ms. Nair, the philosophy of the organisation is to focus on the quality of services provided to a child and not on the number of children covered.

The basic objectives of SBT are as follows:

a) To provide basic literacy and provide facility for those children who wish, to study further
b) To provide health, recreational and counselling services to street children
c) To provide for and encourage street children to develop their potential by providing creative opportunities

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1 Source: Brochure, SBT.
d) To provide facilities whereby street children may be reunited with their families where possible

e) To propagate healthy living and sanitation amongst street children

f) To make available a secure space where street children can play and enjoy what remains of their childhood

g) To instill public awareness and respect for the rights and lives of these children.

4. Organisational Structure of SBT

Initially the staff strength at SBT was 3- a social worker, a theatre person and a health worker, which has now swelled to 50.
The top Management comprises of 2 Trustees, viz. Ms. Praveen Nair and Mr. Sanjoy Roy, who are also the founders. They do not draw any salary. The major policy and budgetary decisions are taken by the Trustees. SBT also utilises the services of a Medical Practitioner at the Safdarjung Hospital, Dr. Bittra George, who though not a Trustee, is authorised to sign the cheques. He also takes charge of the Trust in the absence of both the Trustees.

Below the Trustees is the Project Director. He supervises the staff and the working of SBT. Besides Office work, he is required to pay field visit to monitor the works being done. Among the technical staff are the accountant, the Nurse, the Project Coordinators and the Psychologist. Below them are the Social Workers or Street Educators who are out in the field educating the street and working boys as well as the slum children.

The Director painted a rosy picture that each level has specific roles and there is no overlapping of roles. However, office staff, e.g. Coordinators may be seen substituting for the Counselor or Nursery Teacher, when they are absent. In fact, one of the Coordinators told me that in a social welfare organisation one cannot have clear-cut roles and one is required to perform many roles. And the same situation persisted in SBT also.
4.1 Recruitment

The recruitment process consists of advertising the posts in leading newspapers. The applications are scrutinised and candidates are interviewed. The Selection Committee comprising of Trustees and Project In-charge are involved in the whole process. Interviews are oral as well as field based, in the sense that the selected candidates are required to pay field visits of the different Centres of SBT for a week. After the field visit the candidates are asked about 'what is being done at the Centres, what are the limitations, what more is required and what his/her contribution would be'. On the basis of their responses they are finally selected or rejected.

The basis of employment is permanent but “depends on the whims of the management”, according to the Director of SBT.

The Director agreed that the organisation faces the difficulty in recruiting qualified, experienced and dedicated people as also the problem of retaining the staff. On being probed about the problems of the staff, the Coordinator of Night Shelter summarised them as follows:

“Unlike the Government functionaries, the staff in NGOs do not have any job security, since it is run by one person and work under his/her whims. There are no Medical or any other facility for the staff. No care is provided to the workers. The staff in SBT is exposed to
circumstances, which are detrimental to their health, e.g., the workers and staff deal with children suffering from a number of infectious diseases, they have to physically touch them and talk to them. In the field the workers are not only braving the harsh working conditions of the railway station, but also some criminal elements among the children. Still the staff or workers do not get any job security. If they fall sick while working, there is no provision of medical care. This leads to non-commitment towards the organisation and workers may leave any day on getting better opportunity”.

This has adverse effect on the work since work is delayed and new staff is to be inducted who then have to learn from the scratch and may have a different way of functioning.

4.2 Rule Adherence

As far as the office staff is concerned, they have to report on time. The Office hours are from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday till Saturday. On every Saturday of the week, there is a Staff Meeting with Trustees and Director, where the week’s work is analysed, next week’s programme is finalised and field staff can talk about material requirements for the children.

However, in case of field staff working with the children living and working in the railway station, there can not be a strict adherence to the rule of starting the school on time, since such staff...
have to first fetch the children from the platform, which takes some of their time.

4.3 Decision-making

The Trustees take the decisions regarding fundraising. The Director and other staff have no role in it. Even at the time of recruitment of the staff, the final decision rests with the Trustees.

However, in the day-to-day functioning of the organisation, decision-making process is participatory. Every Saturday, after 2 p.m., management and the staff hold a meeting in which the Trustees encourage participation to find solutions to the problem of the staff or the beneficiary children. Also at this meeting, the staff may give their inputs/suggestions for improving the ongoing projects. Here, we may cite the case of children’s excursion to Nainital in Summer Vacations (June 99). The staff in on of the Saturday meetings conveyed to the Trustees the idea to take the children to Nainital that summer. It was agreed upon and the following week, preparations began to send the children to the trip. In the meeting, the staff may also put forth their requirements, mainly of the stationary items, for the week, which get sanctioned.

Unfortunately, there are no such meetings between the beneficiary children and the staff and management. They do not have a say in the decision-making process, and decisions regarding
schemes for their own welfare are taken without consulting their viewpoint. Here, I mention instance of food served in the Shelter Home. One child complained to me that he was fed of eating the same kind of food. Had the children been consulted before preparing the menu for the week, they would not have such kind of a grievance.

4.4 Networks with other Organisations

SBT networks with the NGO Forum for Street and Working Children with which regular meetings are conducted. NGO Forum for Street and Working Children is a forum for advocacy of rights of street children and pressure group for implementation of street children friendly programmes such as:

- Sensitisation of street educator
- Medical programme for street children
- Integration camp trip to Mumbai and Pune
- Training programme on HIV/AIDS for street educators

SBT is also a member of the following forums:

1. NGO AIDS Forum, part of a six member group advocating HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and upholding rights of HIV positive people

2. South Asian Fund Raising Group, which is a forum for fund raisers

3. SBT is a Coordinator of Model HIV Counseling Centre at Safdarjang Hospital which provides pre and post-test counseling, after care and support services for HIV positives

4. SBT Networks with the following national and international agencies in furtherance of its goals and objectives:

- National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO)
SBT staff also attends Seminars on being invited by like-minded organisations such as Butterflies and Prayas. On asking whether SBT is organising any seminar on the issue of child labour the Director expressed that because of scarcity of funds, SBT cannot conduct Seminars.

Although, there may be cooperation between SBT and other like-minded organisations\(^2\), (e.g., during my research 5 children from GRP Centre were invited to a Tea Party by the Prayas Chairman), there do exist rivalry between them. For instance, the Director stated

\(^2\) For instance, Butterflies, Prayas, Delhi Brotherhood Society and the like.
that Butterflies is able to conduct seminars since they have lots of foreign funds pouring in. This was stated to prove that SBT is more genuine while the Butterflies is spurious. Similarly, the SBT staff tries to underplay the functioning of other like-minded organisations. E.g., Butterflies also has a Platform School at the railway station. The Supervisor of GRP Centre took me there and commented that the lady teacher was doing nothing with regard to imparting education to the station boys and comes here only for the sake of it. He opined that it is SBT, which is doing genuine work.

4.5 Project Selection

I was informed, by the Director that the projects are decided on the basis of the need of the community. Here I describe the selection process of one of the SBT's projects. The most recent project of SBT is the project on slum dwellers of Nabi Karim situated near the railway station. The project aims to educate the children of slums, around the railway tracks, so that they do not land up at the railway station for working. Hence, it is a preventive programme. Before initiating any action, survey was carried out and on its basis, project site was decided. The criterion that was followed was to reach a large number of beneficiaries. Also resource availability at the disposal of SBT was checked. Thereafter, community participation was sought. This included talking to the residents of the slum, Pradhan and Municipal Authorities. Women residents, who were willing, were made teachers
of the proposed NFE School. A one room hut was constructed and the school, thus, started functioning.

5. Finances

The founder/Trustee of SBT informed that in the initial years fund raising used to take up much of her time, but not now. She also apprised that SBT do not have any international funding like from the UN. “Only 1/3rd or 1/4th of SBT’s funding is from abroad”. She believes, “once you start a project and if you are doing good work, funds will automatically pour in”. She gave the following account of SBT’s funders:

- Grant from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for Street Children (amount received Rs. 621,350/- in 1998-99)

- Drop-in-shelter of SBT was initiated without any commitment from anyone but one organisation – British High Commission- gave SBT some money and the shelter was started

- One of the funding agencies, viz. Trees for Life came into SBT’s contact rather accidentally. At one of the SBT Children’s Programmes at the India International Centre prepared by the famous theatre personality Dadi Padamjee, a gentleman for this American organisation got very much inspired by the performance of the children and the organization. He came forward and offered funds to SBT. Thus Trees for Life started the Sponsorship Programme for the Children’s education. (The amount received from Trees for Life in 1998-99 was Rs. 597,600/-).
• SBT started AIDS awareness and counseling programme for which NACO gave funds (Rs. 282,480/- in 1998-99).

• SBT also gets some foreign donations of not more than 1000 dollars in a year, which is again from individuals and not from any funding agency. And it is through people coming to SBT, seeing its work and somehow believing in it. For instance, a few years ago some people from Netherlands had come to Delhi to attend a Conference. They heard of SBT’s work and so they called the Trustee and wished to take them to its different learning centres, which was fulfilled. In Netherlands, they organised a group of people and sent back some money to SBT.

• SBT receives funds, around Rs. 10-12 lakh each year, in terms of small donations from individuals in remitting amounts ranging from Rs. 100/- to Rs. 5000/-. 

In the financial year ending March 1998, SBT received funds from the Ministry of Welfare, donations from Trees for Life, by interest on saving account, by HIV Counseling Centre Donation, by donations from British High Commission, voluntary donations and by interest on FD with SAIL, which totalled to Rs. 2,81,765.40.

The funders ask details of how their money has been spent, visits SBT’s centres to see the progress of the beneficiaries, to ensure accountability. SBT submits Progress Reports every six months or whenever asked for. Apart from this, SBT also submits its Annual Reports to its funders.
The Director agreed that there are "strings attached in aid disbursement". According to him, getting the funds released from government departments involves numerous problems and struggles. Processing of funds take a minimum of 6 months. There are unnecessary inquiries, irrelevant questioning. The persons, deputed for the task of processing of funds, are not suitable for the post and that's why there are problems. This delay has adverse affect on the work since the workers loose enthusiasm and zeal. SBT has to sometimes make changes in its project proposal to the government since the government demands a classification between street and working children as in the government's scheme there are programmes for working children and not for the street children. Accordingly, SBT has to change its way of working SBT wants to become self-sufficient in funding so that it does not have to depend on outside or institutional sources for funding.

6. Activities of SBT

Keeping with the objectives and goals of the organisation, SBT has undertaken the following activities:\3

6.1.1 Shelter: The younger children (aged below 14 years) from the railway station who have no anchor, are vulnerable and exposed to the vagaries of nature and anti-social elements, are provided shelter.

\3 Source: Brochure, SBT.
at the Night Shelter of SBT. The maximum capacity of the Night Shelter is 50 children.

6.1.2 Provision of Drop-in-Shelter: Since the Night Shelter is only for children, below the age of 14 years, in order to provide shelter for older children, a 24 hours Drop-in-Shelter has been started where the children especially the older ones could drop in anytime, take rest, have a secure place to keep their belongings in, undertake some kind of vocational training if they wished so and avail of the free medical services of SBT.

6.1.3 Health Services: Street and working children are provided basic medical assistance through a doctor, a nurse and a medical social worker. Serious cases are provided health care through various government hospitals. As a preventive measure, a nutritious supplementary snack is prepared at the base kitchen and supplied to the children. Briefly, the various health related activities are: organisation of medical camps and awareness camp; strengthening of the medical centre; early detection and treatment of diseases; health education and health promotion; immunisation programmes; provision of nutritious supplementary snacks and meals and conducting health related surveys, collection and tabulation of data.

6.1.4 Income Generation Activities: The street and working children are taught and motivated to produce small saleable items
like painted and wax filled *diyas* (lamps), greeting cards, birthday return-gift packets, decoration packets, etc. These things are put up for sale in the annual Diwali Fete. The collections are used for children's welfare activities. The working children who earn doing various jobs are encouraged to save their money with the social workers who in turn maintain a savings book. The children are given Rs. 10 for every Rs. 100 saved by them in a month as interest on their savings. Children are also given credit for income generating programme.

**6.1.5 Education:** The main thrust of educational activities at the various centres of SBT has been on school enrolments. However, it has realised that the formal education system is inadequate to meet the educational needs of these children. Therefore, the basic non-formal education initially provided by SBT at its centres was tailored/altered to suit and meet the educational demands at schools. SBT organised training programmes for field level functionaries and other staff members, in order to facilitate better transfer of learning and an improvement in the content in a multi-graded teaching environment in its centres.

**6.1.6 Vocational Training:** Vocational training programme of SBT includes training in screen-printing, bookbinding, music and cutting and tailoring, for the older children. For the younger children, activities such as music, paper craft and clay modeling are taught
which are therapeutic in nature. Apart from its regular vocational training courses, a Community Polytechnic scheme of the Delhi State Government has been launched through active networking with the concerned departments. Along with vocational training activities, children are also placed in jobs or are apprenticed where they earn and learn.

6.1.7 Recreation: Educational tours, picnics, audiovisual media, indoor and outdoor games are encouraged since they provide adequate opportunities for recreation to the street and working children and help in channelising their energies constructively. Children are also encouraged to prepare skits, songs, dances etc. for various celebrations and festivals. Theatre and puppetry workshops are organised which have proved to be of therapeutic value to the street children while providing constructive activities during leisure.

6.1.8 Counselling: SBT attempts to identify the psychological profile of the child through the CAT/TAT (psychological tests) and other tests and counseling is provided to them accordingly.

6.1.9 Rehabilitation: The term rehabilitation at SBT is taken to mean either reuniting the working child with his family, enabling him to become self-dependent or the migration of a family from the slum cluster either to his native village or to a pucca (well-built) settlement. Making a street and working child self-dependent means undertaking
a series of activities such as vocational training, job placement, ensuring job satisfaction and finally the child's separation from the Night Shelter into a lodging of his own which would imply rehabilitation in the society.

6.1.10 **Advocacy:** SBT has a well-structured programme of utilising the medium of theatre to advocate the cause of street and working children. Participatory plays are evolved and staged in public schools, other organisations and institutions. SBT has also appeared in newspapers several times and programmes have been featured in AIR and Television. Various functions and competitions are organised in which, people from all walks of life are invited.

6.1.11 **Assistance to Families of Street Children:** Counseling, medical services, family planning and income generation are some of the various forms of assistance provided to the families of street children.

6.1.12 **Sponsorship Programmes:** In order to mobilise funds for its corpus, SBT has three kinds of sponsorship programme- 'Sponsor a Child', 'Sponsor Income Generation Schemes', 'Make an Individual Donation'. The donations are also accepted in kind, for instance, in the form of sweaters, blankets, dry rations, toys and games, educational aids, stationery, medicines, etc.
In addition, SBT expects and request the general public to spend time with its children as a counsellor, friend, teacher, or a doctor.

SBT also expects people to provide employment to its beneficiary children since, according to it, the children can be successful carpenters, gardeners, tailors, artists in design studios, factory apprentices etc. But their only limitation is the lack of opportunities for them.

Recently, SBT has worked out a Sponsorship Programme in close collaboration with a USA based NGO. The scheme requires children to maintain a link with their sponsors through correspondence. The children also receive small interesting gifts from their sponsors like small toys, pencils, stamps, stickers, chocolates etc. and somewhat larger gifts like umbrellas and school bags.

6.2 SBT's Learning Centres

The children working at the railway station work either as illegal porters or are rag pickers, picking up iron or plastic materials and selling it off. They work in and out at this tender age when they should be studying, playing and enjoying life. They work in harsh conditions and are prone to cuts, bruises and infections. With no shelters, when they sleep, they are vulnerable to sexual exploitation.
by perverts. They also may get caught in the web of anti-social elements who use them for thefts and drug trafficking. These children also become addicted to drugs, cigarettes and the like.

In order to mainstream such children with the society, to facilitate their learning process and to provide them with some recreational opportunities, SBT is running the following learning centers for their benefit.

**6.2.1 Nukkad 1:** Nukkad 1 is a Drop-in-Centre for all the street and working children of the railway station. It is situated amidst the hustle and bustle of the New Delhi Railway Station on platform No. 1, above GRP Police Station

**6.2.2 Nukkad 2:** It is situated on the other side of Nukkad 1 and is a comparatively new centre and aims to serve as a catchments for children not registered at Nukkad 1. Nukkad 2 better known as Platform School was started subsequent to the discovery that children working on the other platforms of the New Delhi Railway Station were not attending Nukkad 1 due to the fear of police, to some extent and due to the distance, to a large extent.

**6.2.3 Night Shelter:** The younger children who are more vulnerable to vagaries of nature and to the anti-social elements of the Station are transferred to the Night Shelter, which is a home for them. These
children spend all their time at the Night Shelter and are dependent on SBT for all their physical, emotional and psychological needs.

6.2.4 The 24 Hours Drop-in-Shelter: The older children who, for various reasons, are compelled to work can find a secure space at the 24 hours Drop-in-Shelter. They can keep their belongings safely and can get a night’s peaceful sleep. During the day, they can avail of medical services and can also take up some vocational training.

6.2.5 Outreach Centres: The Outreach Centres of SBT are Akansha, Nabi Karim and Roshni situated at Jhuggi settlements along the railway tracks. These children are slightly fortunate since they have a shelter where they can go back and have a night’s rest. Nevertheless, living conditions and other amenities need improvement. Family disputes need to be solved and interpersonal relationships need to be improved which these Centres endeavours to achieve since SBT considers all these factors as affecting the overall development of the child.

7. SBT and the State

The activities of SBT involve protecting and rehabilitating street and working children. It does not go about conducting raids in child labour concentrated areas and holding demonstrations against child labour. Hence SBT has harmonious relations with the government, although it complains of the bureaucratic delays in disbursement of
funds and the like. For instance, the Director of SBT complained that they are not getting the type of cooperation that they expect from the Delhi Municipal Corporation. He gave the example of the problem of a broken wall in the office, which they wanted to be repaired. But the concerned persons were delaying the repair work by not coming when asked for. The same, according to the Director, is the case with the Sanitary and Electricity Departments.

8. Dealings with Police

SBT has to continually deal with the police. Though, the relationship is more of cooperation, there are sometimes frictions between the two. The General Railway Police (GRP) often nabs the boys working in the railway station. The social workers talk to the police, motivate them and even show them SBT’s activities for street children. The police complain that these boys create problems, but they are made to realise that the street children is a major social problem and had dealt as such. However, police constables, not being highly educated, cannot often appreciate, understand and empathise with the objectives and intentions of the social workers. At the railway station, the terrace of GRP Police Station has been provided to the SBT where such boys come and study. During my field visits there, I often saw police staff asking some of the boys to run errands for them. Those boys being scared of the police oblige and the social workers do
not intervene since they think that pdice are obliging them by providing the street children some space to study and play.

9. Strategy of Cooperation with the Government

On asking about the pressure SBT intends to apply on the government to solve child labour problem, the Chairperson’s/Trustee’s response was that instead of any pressure, SBT is working alongside with the Government, especially, with its Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It is satisfied with 2-3 officials of this Ministry with whom it has dealings although it is not sure whether other officials, who would replace them in the time to come, will have the same level of commitment to the cause of the working children.

The Government is reviewing at its own scheme on street and working children because in the scheme there is no provision for shelter for these children. Most NGOs are working with the slum children and not street and working children. According to the Trustee, learning from SBT’s experiences, the government has realised that shelter is an important component of any programme meant for the street and working children.

The Delhi government, on seeing the kind of work the NGOs are doing, is now requesting the NGOs to intervene in their Children’s/Juvenile Homes. CRY, Samarth and Prayas are doing such
intervention. SBT has also been asked by the Delhi Administration to look after the Children’s Home in Lajpat Nagar. SBT has not taken over the Home since the entire programme is yet to be finalised but it has already started its intervention.

According to the founder till 1992 Government had no programme for street children. It only had programmes for child labour and children, who are handicapped, dumb, orphans, and so on. But street children did not come under any of these categories. So the fact that the government has introduced the scheme of shelter for street children shows that there must have been some pressure from NGOs.

10. Learning Centres of SBT

Based on the interviews with the staff and observation on the field (during May 1999), the activities in the different learning centres of SBT are as follows:

10.1 Night Shelter: Night Shelter is accommodated in the second floor of the DDA Community Centre in Paharganj. It caters to the educational, recreational and shelter needs of 40 run-away boys in the age group of 4-16 years. In a way it is a home away from home. But there are hundreds of children at the railway station compared to which Night Shelter fulfills the needs of just a miniscule population. The boys staying here usually come from SBT’s GRP contactpoint at
the New Delhi Railway Station, where the social workers go to the platforms and ask the errand boys to come and study at the centre. Those boys who become regular at GRP centre are either asked to join Night Shelter or Drop-in-Shelter according to their age groups. However, during my research I saw some small boys (aged between 5-10 years), who were regular at GRP centre but did not like to go to the Shelter Home because they did not like the disciplined life of the Shelter. At the same time, I saw some other boys (aged 8-9 years), who wanted to be in the Shelter Home but could not be accommodated there due to its limited capacity.

While most of the boys at the Shelter come through GRP centre, with the initiation of Child Line (a free phone line service for children in distress), a number of younger boys come to the Shelter through this Child Line Free Telephone service. For instance, a 6-year-old boy was found on the street. A well wisher contacted SBT at the Child Helpline Service. At that instance SBT Child Line coordinator went to the spot and brought the boy to the Shelter Home.

Sometimes, even the police bring the boys to SBT instead of taking him to the Government Remand Homes, since getting them admitted there takes lots of time due to bureaucracy prevalent there.

When a boy is brought to the Shelter he is asked about his whereabouts and reasons for leaving his home. His relatives are
informed by sending a letter at the address provided by the child, which sometimes prove wrong since the child does not reveal his true story. Some older children, who, on counselling agree on going back to their villages, are sent back by providing them with sufficient money for the journey. There are instances where parents of the run away child have come to take the child with them.

The boys follow a disciplined life at the Night Shelter and follow a set routine everyday. They wake up at 5.30 a.m. Between 5.45 a.m. to 7 a.m., they are required to bathe and wash. They watch T.V. news till quarter past seven. Breakfast is served between 7.15 a.m. to 7.45 a.m. Those boys who are in the school going age group attend their respective schools in Paharganj. They have been admitted to the three Municipal Corporation run Government Schools situated there, viz. at Chuna Mandi, Chandiwali Gali, Mantola and also at the DAV Public School, nearby. Realising that the standard of education in Government Schools is poor, SBT is trying to get its boys admitted to the Ramjas School.

The very young boys, who are to be rehabilitated or reunited with their families or who are yet to be admitted to the schools, attend class for non-formal education at the Shelter itself between 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. In the Summer/Winter Holidays, boys spend their time in the Bal Bhavan, a government run institution for children, which imparts training in arts and crafts, music, martial arts, sports as well as
science through practical works. The organization pays the fees for it, however, the fees for such children in Bal Bhawan are nominally charged for such children.

Lunch is served between 1.15 p.m. to 2.00 p.m., after which boys either take rest or are free to watch T.V. for half an hour. For two hours, i.e., till 4.30 p.m. they are required to study. However, there is no qualified trained graduate teacher at the Night Shelter to help these children in solving their difficulties in studies. Boys are provided evening snack after which till 7 p.m. they are free, to either play, wash clothes, clean the premises, etc. The Dinner is between 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. After Dinner till 9.30 p.m., boys are required to study. From 9.30 p.m. to 10.30 p.m., they can watch T.V. or can study. They have to be in bed by 10.30 p.m. sharp.

Sleeping time is not always so peaceful for these boys. During one of my visits, I saw the children explaining themselves to the Counselor and Coordinators. On probing, I was told that two-three boys, who were new entrants, had indulged in homosexuality the following night, which was discovered by the social worker on duty. Upon questioning the children, it came to light that this kind of activity was going on for quite sometime. This shows laxity on the part of the entire SBT team since it is a known fact that the runaway children who spend life on streets are exposed to these facts of life very early. They are sexually exploited and are also habituated of
other evils like smoking, drugs and other addiction, which have very harmful effects. Thus such children need extra care and attention.

The inmates of the Night Shelter are generally happy being part of SBT family, since they prefer this sheltered/protected life to the free but lonely and difficult life of the railway station. However, there is discontent over some trivial issues. For instance, some boys have problems regarding the food being served. The boys’ education is sponsored by an American NGO, which sends money, gifts and letters to the sponsored child. The children feel that SBT cheats them by giving them only the gifts etc. and not the dollars sent by their sponsors. This kind of misunderstanding shows lack of transparency between beneficiaries and the benefactors. That the children did not air this grievance to the authorities with whom they come into contact everyday but to an outsider (i.e. me), shows their lack of trust. But whatever their grievances might be, they fully realise that their future is secure at the Shelter and not in the streets and hence they rightly continue to stay put here.

10.2 GRP Contact Point and Schools on Railway Platforms: GRP Contact Point was earlier called ‘Nukkad’. It is a contact point nearest to the railway station. It is situated at the terrace of GRP Station, i.e., police have accommodated the street children so that they may also get an opportunity to study and enjoy whatever is left of their childhood. The social workers survey the railway station and on
contacting any child they persuade him to attend classes either at GRP centre or at the Platform Schools of SBT. Younger boys are sent to the Night Shelter since they are vulnerable to exploitation of all sorts not only by senior boys and criminal elements but also by the police and army jawans, at the station. Efforts are also made to send those to their homes who realise that they were wrong in leaving their homes. But some boys do not want to go back home since they have left because of adverse family atmosphere or due to poverty. Some boys keep contact with their family and whenever they go home they take money for their family.

The activities of GRP Centre include teaching children basic literacy and numerals, developing their potential through recreational activities like drawing, painting, plays and poems, indoor games, viz., ludo, snakes-ladder, carom etc. This is one effort towards giving back their childhood, which is lost due to their daily struggles for survival. The children are also taught good hygiene habits, but the circumstances in which they live day in and day out there is no benefit of such training for them. Children coming here are also served free lunch.

The timing of GRP centre is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Although some children come regularly at the centre, there are some, who have to be persuaded to come to the centre everyday. The main attraction for children here is free lunch and the opportunity to play. But some
boys are really serious to study and have progressed so much that they are now able to read sign-boards in English compared to the times when they did not know reading and writing. The weekly timetable followed at the Centre is as given below. However, it is not very strictly followed and some flexibility is allowed.

Monday – Report of the Activities of the Week

Tuesday – T.V. Show.

Movies and Documentaries are shown. These may either be just for entertainment or may have patriotic and educational contents, e.g., the documentaries may raise awareness regarding Child’s Rights, AIDS, etc.

Wednesday – Medical Day.

Dr. George Bittra visits the Centre to check up the children’s Medical Reports and to attend to the children’s medical requirements.

Thursday – Outing/Picnics.

Children are taken out to picnics or educational tours to historical places. In one of my visits children were being taken to the Zoological Park.

Friday – Sports Day.

On being asked where do the children play, since the New Delhi Railway Station is a congested place and there are no parks nearby, I was informed that they are taken to India Gate lawns or to the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

Saturday – Children’s Day.
On Saturdays, children are free of studies and they recite poems, songs and stories to the class, or play ludo and carom among themselves.

A typical day at GRP centre begins with enquiring the children whether they have had a bath or not. Those who haven’t are asked by the teacher/social worker to go the public bathrooms of “Sulabh”, at the railway station. The accessibility to the “Sulabh public bathrooms” is through a chit issued by the concerned social worker of GRP Centre to the child, which bears the name of the child and the signature of the social worker. Children are given soaps for bathing and washing clothes. Those who have long nails are given nail-cutters. Children, who have some cuts/bruises or mild headaches/stomachaches, are provided medicines. This is important since these children work in rough circumstances and cuts/bruises are part of their daily lives.

Later, the children are taught with the help of charts. However, since GRP staff keeps on coming and going to their offices situated near the place where children study, there is much disturbance. At the same time, some boys keep on playing carom in the class even on repeated pleas by the teacher and thus disturb the other boys who wish to study.

The children working at the Station are illegal porters and sometimes the police round them up to be sent to the Remand Homes. Thereafter, the social workers request the police that SBT is
taking care of these boys and hence they should not be sent away. However, sometimes children are taken away without the notice of the social worker.

Thus, GRP Centre caters to a floating population of children who come and go.

The same is the case with the SBT's other Platform Schools, viz., Sunrise at platform No. 12 and Dreams at platform No. 5, the timings of which are from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Children can attend any of these Platform Schools. It is not necessary that children of one particular Platform School would attend the same school. However, due to their rapport with one particular social worker/teacher, they might like to come at the same school everyday.

All such children, i.e., those at the Night Shelter, GRP Centre or Platform Schools are either working as porters, vendors, ragpickers or are shoe-shine boys. They have left their homes due to poverty, drunkard fathers, ill-treatment by step-mother/fathers or other guardians, on losing one's parents or on failing in the school. Some run away on not finding schools interesting since teachers beat them up or do not teach or make them do their personal works. Some children do keep contact with their families and pay a visit to their homes once they start earning at the Station. Some children who go away do not necessarily come back to Delhi, they might go to other cities or towns. Even in Delhi it likely that they may not come back to avail the benefits provided by SBT and they may go elsewhere. So,
SBT tries to help children who are then and there so that the children may learn something till the limited time they are with SBT. However, since SBT is working right at the railway station, it has not been able to give the atmosphere that is required for studies. At the Platform Schools, there is too much of a noise due to the trains so much so that children and teacher are not able to make each other heard. Disturbance caused by GRP staff at GRP Centre has already been mentioned. Due to all this children are not able to concentrate. Even the social workers there complain of the bad working conditions. All this affects the good efforts being attempted by the SBT. This, however, do not deter children from attending the various Centres because it is here they feel they are wanted and that there is somebody to take care of them.

10.3 The 24 Hours Drop-in-Shelter: Night Shelter catered to children below the age of 14 years and the older children of the railway station had no recourse to any Shelter. So in 1997, 24 Hours Drop-in-Shelter was started where such children could drop in anytime, take rest, have a secure place to keep their belongings in, undertake some kind of vocational training if they so wished and avail of the free medical services of SBT. It is situated near the railway station so as to be proximate to the children’s place of work. Boys either come through GRP Centre, Platform Schools or from the Night Shelter (i.e., those boys who have become over-age in the Night Shelter are transferred to the Drop-in Shelter). The boys coming here
are observed for one month after which depending upon their regularity, they are registered in the Shelter and provided a locker to keep their belongings. The Shelter takes care of the educational needs of the boys making them at least capable to read and write. At the same time, medical needs of the boys are also taken care of. Those boys who are sick are provided free meals. The boys coming here are required to deposit Rs.5 of their earning at the Shelter, daily. The boys who wish to study further are helped by SBT in getting them admitted to the National Open School. SBT also helps them in getting training in different trades and crafts such as tailoring, automobile training, air-condition repair work, painting, typing and computer training. SBT has a tie-up with ‘Shramik Vidyapeeth4’ where boys are sent for training. The vocational training is provided after consulting with the boys and after knowing their interests. Boys are also helped by SBT in job placements. Those boys, who wish to start small business, for instance, selling ice creams, are provided necessary help and investment. Since most of the boys availing the services of the Shelter are working, some even doing the night shifts, the timing of the studies is from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Recreational activities are also encouraged here. Nothing is forced here since the boys are mature enough and know for them what is right. However, proper knowledge and guidance is given to them. Boys are also encouraged to save their money and those who open an account with the help of SBT are given an interest of Rs. 10/- on every Rs. 100/- saved. SBT also helps those

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4 The Government run vocational training institute,
boys who on getting a secure job wish to stay somewhere else. They are helped in finding a rented place and in getting some necessary household items.

10.4 Child Help Line: Child Line was initiated in Mumbai in June 1996 by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences as an experimental project in collaboration with the Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd., and 14 organisations working with children and was targeted specifically at street children. On October 1998 Child Line was launched on a national level. Impressed by the data, the government decided to take the project under their wing and promised to sponsor its implementation.

Child Line is a phone outreach service committed to responding to children who need emergency assistance. This telephone service is free i.e., anyone can call at the telephone number 1098 to help a child in distress. For the proper functioning of this service Delhi has been divided into 5 zones North, South, East, West, Central, each handled by respectively Prayas, Butterflies, Delhi Brotherhood Society, Don Bosco and SBT. The areas coming under Central zones include: Paharganj, Connaught Place, ITO, Half of the Karol Bagh, Patel Nagar, Naraina Vihar, Tis Hazari, Red Fort, Subzi Mandi (Malka Ganj), Goldakhana, areas of Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital and India Gate. Since in the Central Delhi region, there are more of street children, whose primary requirement is of medical care, hence SBT deals with
more cases regarding medical help. SBT has employed two of its Night Shelter boys, who have completed their education, to handle the Child Line for one year. These two boys are also being provided vocational training. After the expiry of their term, another set of SBT boys will be given the charge of Child Line. This arrangement not only helps to rehabilitate the boys but also in sympathetic handling of the calls of street children and in solving their problem since the former have gone through the vagaries of street life and can understand the latter’s problems much better. Since the initiation of Child Line in October 98 till May 99, SBT has received around 5000 calls, out of which only 1500 were genuine calls. Mostly the calls are for medical help, for shelter, food, counseling, missing child and for repatriation/rehabilitation. There were nearly 400 medical calls. SBT has got admitted 15-16 distressed children in hospital who are undergoing long-term treatment there. It has rehabilitated 20 such children, whereas it has placed 15-20 street girls in different NGOs of Delhi, which takes care of the girl children. The Coordinator of Child Line told me of an interesting incident. SBT Child Line received a call from Chandni Chowk, (Balli Maran, Kaptan wali gali), informing that 2-3 children have been kept like slaves in the nickel factory there. The children were engaged in polishing nickel over iron. SBT team went there and sought the help of police at the Police Station there. But the police did not take any action till four hours. In the mean time the children were hidden away, so that on reaching the Nickel Factory, no
child was found. It seems Police had a nexus with the factory owners. SBT has submitted this report to the Labour Ministry and has also questioned the inaction of police.

1. Some Case Studies of Beneficiaries

11.1 Gulab Singh: Gulab Singh’s is a story of a boy who would have died but for the timely medical help by the SBT. Gulab Singh has been a beneficiary of SBT since he was 11-years old. Right now he is 21 years old. He hails from Lucknow, has 2 brothers and 2 sisters and his father is a farmer. He ran away from his house when he failed in the exams in Class V and was afraid to face his father. He came to New Delhi Railway Station and started working as a coolie. There he met Barry John, one of the founders of SBT. Gulab Singh was persuaded to join Theatre and thus he started going to Mandi House for theatre education and used to get Rs. 15/- as stipend. This continued for 6 months. One day he was caught by the police and was taken to the Children’s Home at Delhi Gate, there he stayed for 2 years but he ran away from there and again started to live at the Station. But now he was spoilt in bad company and started taking too much drugs so much so that both his lungs failed. He was brought to the SBT at the critical stage of lung failure. He was admitted to the Hospital at that stage where he underwent treatment. On getting discharged he joined SBT learning Centre. Working as a peon in a
nearby office in Paharganj, till today he is undergoing treatment for his lung failure from the SBT Doctor.

11.2 Riyaz Ali: Riyaz Ali is 14 years old boy staying at the Night Shelter. He lost his parents when he was 7-8 years old and was being looked after by his brother and Mausi (sister-in-law) in Assam, when his mother’s sister took him to Delhi in the Motia Khan slums. He was asked to work in a Dhaba, which involved backbreaking work from 5.30 in the morning till 5 0’ clock in the evening, for a paltry sum of Rs. 300/- per month. He worked there for 6 months. Then he came into contact with an NGO named Jagriti, which works, for the education of slum children of Motia Khan. There he studied till Class III. Riyaz Ali came to know about SBT from one of his friends at Jagriti and so he joined SBT since he wanted to stay away from his Mausi. Since then he is with SBT Night Shelter. Presently, he is in Class VII and aspires to be a motor mechanic. He likes the sheltered life at SBT. He also goes to meet his brother in Assam during school holidays.

11.3 Shamshad Alam: Shamshad Alam is a 12 years old boy who has come to Delhi 6 months back from Bihar. At home he has left behind his father, mother and two elder sisters. He has learnt from his friend, hailing from the same village, that his parents have sold their land and moved away and now Alam desperately wants to know where his family is. He repents leaving his house but of no avail since he cannot
go back to his family. When I was interviewing him, he asked me to write a letter to his grandmother asking her to inform him, at the SBT address, about the whereabouts of his parents.

His story goes like this. At the age of 6, he was admitted to the ‘madarsa’ (Muslim learning centre), but he had hardly finished six months there that his father took him out of it since the teacher used to beat the children. Later he started learning the trade of repairing decks (music system) from his mother's brother. He also used to rag pick due to poverty in the family. On being persuaded by one of his friends, he ran away from home to Delhi by train. On reaching Delhi, for 2-3 days he was totally lost as to what to do. On feeling hungry he used to ask for the leftovers from the attendants of the Rajdhani Express. He was also watching how other boys are surviving. One fine day, on being extremely hungry, he took out a big iron piece from the railway track and went to the trader to whom other rag picker boys were going. He sold the iron bar to the trader and earned Rs. 60/-.

Since then, he is working as rag picker and earns by selling bottles. He came into contact with SBT through one of his friends at the station and now regularly attends GRP Centre. Though he likes reading and writing and to paint, he has a deep yearning to be with his family.

11.4 Sunny: Sunny is a 9-year-old bright young boy. He is in Delhi since 10-12 days. He left his home in Badarpur as his father used to
beat him up. He took a bus to the New Delhi Railway Station and came here. Though his life is very difficult, sleeping at the Station, eating the leftovers, he is not interested to go back home. He is very eager to study and learns very fast. I saw him studying at not only GRP Centre but also at the Platform School, which shows how eager he is to learn.

11.5 Santosh: Santosh is a 23-year lad hailing from Deoghar, Bihar. He is the youngest among his 4 brothers. He ran away at the age of 12, since his guardian (father's brother), used to beat him. From his village he went to Calcutta, from there on to Ludhiana and then to Delhi. He has been lucky to get jobs wherever he went and faced no problems anywhere. At Delhi, he came into contact with Barry John of SBT who took him to Mandi House and taught him theatre art. There he did many plays. He boasts of knowing Manoj Bajpai, a T.V. and Cinema artist, very closely. On completing his education at the Night Shelter, he did many jobs. Nowadays, he is handling the Child Line and also getting trained in motor driving. He aspires to go to Bollywood but first he wants to save a lot of money so that he may be able to survive during his days of struggle in Mumbai.

11.6 Pappu: Pappu came to Delhi from Calcutta when he was 13 years old. At home he has his parents, 4 brothers and 3 sisters, he being the eldest. His father is a Railway Guard. He went to school till he was 8 years old, but lost interest in studies when his younger
brother, whom he loved very much, died. He has tried his luck in a number of activities, including theatre, and often shuttles between Delhi and Mumbai. Right now, he is in the Drop-in-Shelter and is undergoing training in motor mechanics with a stipend of Rs. 400/- per month.

12. Future Plans of SBT

The perspective of SBT for the future is as follows:

1. To initiate a programme for the working children in the Paharganj market area.

2. To enable the children working in dhabas and other interested working children to establish and run a restaurant of their own.

3. To establish a Boarding School for rehabilitation and education of the runaway working children.

4. To initiate a project for the girl street child on the same lines as the boys project.

5. To increase the scope and coverage of the programmes and to strengthen the existing programmes.

6. To improve the availability of the medical facilities to the street and working children.

To this list the Trustee, Ms. Nair, added two more plans:

7. SBT plans to start Door-step Schools. The concept of Door-step School is to reach out to the slum children at their slums with a special bus with no seats, with a black board and 2 volunteers.

Source: Brochure, SBT.
This bus will go from one slum to the other and teach the children so that they get accustomed to the idea of school and that later they might be admitted to regular schools.

8. SBT is also planning to initiate a project on entrepreneurship development for boys in the age group of 16-21 years in the slums where it is already working. Along with it, it will also teach them facts on their sexuality like when to marry, how to space their children and other health aspects.

13. Achievements

SBT has been able to, in the course of 10 years, bring in 200-300 boys into the mainstream of life as drivers, computer programmers, tailors, export house workers, as courier boys and in theatres.

One of the SBT's boys, Harish, who has been with SBT since 1989, has been teaching theatre education in National School of Drama and is on Sanjoy's staff, showed a lot of interest in the Theatre. SBT has got him roles in T.V. Serials, in Films such as "Patanga" and "Bandit Queen". He has been trained through theatre workshops in the National School of Drama, Delhi.

According to the founder, "at least 50 human lives have been saved in all these years from Drugs, AIDS, anti-social activities. If we had not done the intervention, they could have become hardcore criminals. All boys of Shelter Home are going to the school. We want
to start more shelters as soon as the local government gives space for accommodation”.

14. Limitations

The Trustee of SBT, Mr. Sanjoy Roy, summarised the limitations or the difficulties in the progress of SBT’s work as:

1. One most important limitation for SBT is the societal apathy for the street and working children. Street and working children are most affected from the environment, in which they work and live. They suffer from character-disorder, it is a disability, which cannot be seen visually, and hence there is not much sympathy for them, as is the case with, for instance, the disabled children. Out of the 27 priority areas of work in the field of children, street children ranks at 23rd position (a very low priority). The work for helping these children requires sensitivity from the police, employers, government, social workers and the general public, which is rarely achieved. All runaway’s children have the basic requirement of secure spaces and a secure childhood. Neither the NGOs perceive these needs and work in this area, nor do they have the required infrastructure to cope with the needs of street and working children. For instance, one very important need of children is proper places to play but there are not many spaces for that.
2. Another important problem is of the shortage of efficient staff. It is generally the case that grassroots level social workers who are responsible for improving the lives of so many children, are worst paid. Due to this reason, such activities are not attracting the best people. Those who do not find any other work in the job-market generally take up such works.

3. There is also a lack of support staff, i.e., persons who are experts in the field of arts and crafts and who can voluntarily teach the children and thus help them in finding a meaning for the childhood.

SBT has not been able to strike at the root of the problem of child labour nor is there any attempt towards it. As opposed to BMM, which is working towards banning child labourers of every category and want to usher in an equal social structure, SBT is focussed on one particular segment of child labour- the street and working children and is providing them help within the existing social structure. This has to do with the ideology adopted by the head of the organisation. In the next chapter, which presents the summary and conclusions, I have, by taking the instances of SBT and BMM, illustrated how the ideology of the organisation towards an issue affects the strategy adopted by it to deal with the issue. I have also shown in the forthcoming chapter how the very ideology limits the organisational ability to deal with the problem.