CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the findings of the research are presented. The research is in the field of childcare and it is about deprived children. It assesses children who are in street habitats and it has brought to the limelight many ideas that can assist society for better care of such children. It analyses the situation of children in the street contexts with their past, present and possible future. The study is on children living in the street and children who have been in the street who joined the mainstream society. It has looked into the general characteristics of children in street habitats, the situation of the society that rejects them and the group that assist them for the mainstream. The push and pull factors of children of the street are well described. The children are part of the research. Together with children, the key informants, care-givers and the secondary data available in terms of books, journals and other publications are part of the research process.

The methodology used is phenomenological and ethnographic. The researcher having 15 years of live-in experience with deprived children in street situation and accompanying many to the mainstream enhances the process of the research. Besides, his work with mainstream children of the middle and upper middle class for 10 years in the field of education and training adds value to the findings. Children’s presence with their effective participation all through the research enriches the study. After the collection, the data is analysed thematically. Key informants are interviewed to get more details and to verify the findings from the data. The present chapter states the findings of the research and proposes recommendations.
6.2. RESEARCH FOCUS

The research has seen in details the children living in street situations. It has explored the causes for their coming to the streets, the way they live their life, the wounds they develop while being in the street and the procedures that heal them to be mainstreamed. It explains psychosocial interventions with its results of healing and empowering children deprived of their rights as envisaged in the conventions on the rights of the child.

Abraham Maslow talks about need fulfilment (Harper & Guilbault 2008). He places the different needs in a hierarchical order. Every basic need satisfied takes the person to the higher level of needs until the person reaches the stage of actualization and it is the dream of every human person. The researcher kept the objectives, focussing on care for deprived children to safeguard their rights and work for self-actualization (Francis & Kritsonis 2006) which assists them to become responsible and contributing members. The researcher analyses the various steps that have helped children for rehabilitation. They are termed as psychosocial interventions to repair and enhance their life. It has assessed deprivations of children that led to poor mental health in pre-street and street situations, the skills that they developed while being in the streets and the interventions that assisted emotional wellness of children with life skills leading them to the mainstream society.

6.3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings are in three key areas which can be considered as three phases of deprived children’s growth: pre-street life, street life and mainstreamed life. Pre-street life explores the family and the village that have had their negative impact on children. Street life brings out the broken relationships of children from the society and the survival strategies they evolved which affected their physical, mental and emotional growth. Though street life is seemed negative the skills learned are proved positive as they enhance their mainstream living. Mainstreamed life highlights the interventions that healed and empowered them.
Many began their life in the villages but the negative factors pushed them out on to the streets.

6.3.1. Pre-Street Life
Children in the street have a painful past. Those who are born in the villages go through cruel situations that affect their physical and mental growth process. In the villages many families suffer and live with poverty and its consequences. Children who are fruits of passions, revenge, rape, anger or such negative passions are affected at their origins itself regarding mental health.

Social life is very much part and parcel of every human being. Once mentally affected the person normally becomes a misfit in society. The person finds difficult to forge ahead in his life. He becomes unwanted, unaccepted, unprepared and under great stress as his life is affected in many adverse ways.

1. Children suffer physically and mentally due to the poverty that is experienced in the family and in the village.
2. Dysfunctional families hamper healthy growth of children. They not only force them to leave homes but leave them wounded in mind due to rejection, hatred and lack of basic necessities.
3. Educational facilities and systems do not offer sufficient facilities and absence of trained personnel to assist children to develop mentally, intellectually and socially.
4. There are families where parents die very young due to lack of care and facilities. Once children face parental deprivations they suffer rejection, loneliness and harassment by the others who fail to take the role of parents in their life.
5. In many of the villages children become victims of class and caste struggles. Children of the poor families face discrimination in the various spheres of their life. The rich at times consider poverty as a punishment from God for their past. Caste system that is prevalent adds to the problems of children of the lower castes.
6. In the different interviews children mentioned about the hard work that they have had without having sufficient to eat. Often children suffer abuses of various kinds in families: physical, sexual and emotional.
6.3.2. Street Context with Children

Children in the street have a past that is very sad and difficult. Most of them have the poor rural setting. They struggle in the initial days of street life. Many of them get into the street life with the assistance of senior children or alone. They find various means of survival and they try to live forgetting their sad past. They are abused by the senior children, vendors, petty shops, coolies and even by families living in street situations.

They get used to all sorts of addictions; alcohol, dendrite and other drugs. They love seeing films. They earn and enjoy their life in the streets in their own ways. They look forward to good future and wait for opportunities. Some give up and live miserably being used and abused by others. They lose all hopes for a future. They feel estranged. They suffer rejection and neglect. They do suffer the absence of basic needs. In the field study the girls said that they suffer more and that they feel more vulnerable. Many of them get the protection from boys but they do develop unhealthy relationships and end their life in misery.

Children in the streets are of different types: children who stay alone in the streets; children who come from families to work due to poverty; children who live in street situations with families and children who live in groups or gangs. They spend most of their time in street situations. As a general practice children living in the streets are concerned about each other and they do help each other. Life in the street is with many risks and it does not help positive growth. Childhood spent in street situations endanger their development. Many of them suffer and struggle so much and eventually demean themselves.

While living in street situation children get involved in risky activities. They lose respect for their life as well as the life of others. They develop unacceptable behaviours and consent to anti-social jobs: begging, stealing, rag-picking, child labour, violence, addictions, substance abuse, alcohol, abuse of different kinds. They take to addictions to assuage the impact of adversities. Many like to remain on ‘high’ to face the various difficulties of hunger, stress, cold weather, hopelessness, mosquitoes, rain, dirt and filth. They need to face rejection from the mainstream society which can be cruel at times. Many of them take to anti-social activities. Their negative mind becomes a threat to society. They
engage themselves in stealing, robbery, fighting gender-based violence, fighting, raping and harming them even with life threatening drugs.

In the streets many try to survive. They are not in a position to take care of personal hygiene as they wear dirty clothes; they get degenerated and even reach to the extent of self-harm. The street environments affect their psychological and social development.

Ill health of children is clearly seen in the study. The root cause of illness is in the family and for many it is in the pre-street stage. Physical health is treated by physicians and it is not very difficult in most cases. However mental wounds need more time and programmed interventions. These interventions are required in the street life stage and post street life stage as they go through the process for mainstreaming. Those that heal and empower are termed as psychosocial interventions.

6.3.3. Wounded Experiences of Children in the Street habitats

Children in street situation perceive members of the mainstream society as their threat though they have to depend on them in one way or other. Children suffer at the hands of the general public and law keepers. Society feels threatened about their presence. They do not respect them and do not look kindly on them. They suffer insecurity. Children suffer hunger as the first problem and often they do not have the means to appease their hunger. Many leave home due to the miserable situation and they struggle to get food in a strange world.

1. Children suffer hatred and rejection from the mainstream society. They need to take to a life with menial jobs and the society rejects them.

2. They become victims of various street vulnerabilities such as mosquitos, susceptibility to sickness and accidents, victims of different types of abuses and probably the worst is denial of respect as a human being.

3. Irregularity in food is a serious issue as they need to fend for themselves each time they need food. Often they survive on left overs in hotels, trains, dustbins and even stale food. All these affect the nutrient requirements and affect their growth and make them prone to sicknesses.
4. Children suffer the absence of affection of their parents and relatives. They long to be loved and to love. They find substitutes for such affections and get into unsafe and unwanted relationships as they do not find responsible adult presence.

5. Children living in the street situation notice children from the mainstream with all their needs met, receiving attention and affection. This adds to their mental agony and that in turn affect their emotional development.

6. They need to face street violence. ‘Might is right’ is the street norm among children who live in the street situations. Children easily become victims of violence that is prevalent among the different groups who beg, work, access addictive drugs or alcohol and even be accused for any street crimes.

7. Begging is considered a social evil. But sometime or other every child in the street takes to begging when other possibilities fail to meet their survival needs.

8. Child labour is another common feature seen in the streets as it becomes more economical and viable. Many children work in hazardous situations without having proper food, sleep and rest. They are denied of childhood requirements of play, education, safety and recreation.

9. Children are meant to live in families enjoying rights. As they are excluded from family circles and taken to street life they develop deviant behaviors as part of their survival strategies.

10. Children in street situation denied of kith and kin are deprived of emotional nutrients and they grow emotionally misbalanced. Children suffer as they are deprived of a home situation; they long to be in a home.

11. Being excluded from family and society they suffer wounds of rejection. They suffer as they face the unjust criticism of people from the mainstream without understanding them that they took street life as they lacked possibilities in the mainstream society.

12. Children being rejected and harassed as they spend their days in street life grow in negative feelings about the mainstream society. As they cannot become part of it they hate it and they live in fear due to the possible harassment. They look for opportunities to earn which in turn is not welcomed by the mainstream society.
6.3.4. Skills Development

Children learn to survive in challenging situations and they develop various skills of survival as they face their group and the society for an existence being part of the ‘street society’. The skills that they develop can be turned to life skills through proper guidance.

1. They develop smart ways as the street is a place of hectic activities. They need to make hasty decisions and be swift in all that they do to survive. The hurried movements as they fend for themselves through work, begging or rag-picking help them to fare well in the mainstream life.

2. Children struggle to survive. As they are paid less for jobs they need to work more. The rag pickers live on the waste of the society and they need to collect a lot for a meager living. Many of them start to work in the early hours of the day. There are many who work late into the night. They become laborious and that helps them in the mainstream life.

3. Children in the streets live with their peer groups and some with their own family members. They develop a lot of concern for each other as they struggle together. Their human relationship becomes strong and they are ready to suffer for the other and that helps them for their future living. They grow in empathy. They learn to care for the younger and weaker members of the group which becomes their character trait.

4. Life in the street is challenging and it takes a lot of their mental and physical strength. They grow in stamina to resist or to cope with situations that are difficult and stimulating. They grow in endurance.

5. Resilience is another trait that they develop. They are able to face adverse situations and proceed on. They are prepared to face puzzling situations of mainstream life.

6. They learn to act and exaggerate their problems for survival. They cry, act violent, look depressed and express different emotions as per need of the time to get the sympathy of people while begging or to escape when caught for petty or serious crimes. They also get training in soft skills which can enhance their social life.

7. Children in the street are generous in sharing their resources with their peers. They have more concern for those who are suffering and those who are weaker. They grow in concern and it is noticed in their generosity especially once their basic necessities are fulfilled and when they do have essential requirements which are mostly limited to set of clothes and food to ease their hunger.
8. Children work in groups and they also move in groups. They feel the support of each other as they feel weak as individuals but strong as a group. They learn various democratic skills to belong to the group and to build the group.

9. There is an inner desire in every child to look forward to their home or for a homely living. Some of them earn and visit their home with money or things and slowly they grow in concern. They understand family problems and as they ease the problem of their families they get motivated to work for a family that can sustain itself and care for its children.

Once they stay and survive in the street they grow more flexible as it is necessary for them. They turn out to be more successful in pursuing education and vocational training. They develop internal locus of control and resilience. They develop adaptive and creative abilities.

6.3.5. Needs of Children

Children being deprived of basic necessities take to street life which is the beginning of their decadence or ebb and flow of humanness. Children eat without taking care of their safety. They take addictive substances and they become victims of violence. They suffer due to the push factors that took them to the street. The pull factors do not reward them as expected. They need to have their basic needs fulfilled to take care of their higher needs.

Children are able to adapt to different situations. They are able to face problems that look totally inhuman like spending days and nights in the streets even with open sky. They continue their fight for essentials or basic needs. This fight blinds them from value based life or socially acceptable behaviours. They lose respect for life. They own the streets and they are dependent on the streets. Many children are not keen to go back to the villages as they feel their needs are met in street situations. They eventually cope with street challenges by appropriating urban niches within the city. They earn money and get into group systems and feel safe within it and find enough enjoyments to continue their lifestyles. They eventually create collective solutions for the dilemmas. Many fear reunifications as they recall their difficult past. Some keep their links with the families and they support them as they know that poverty caused them to leave the families. They
become compassionate for the other members. Some of them are genuine orphans or become orphans by losing their contacts with their relatives.

Some of them go home when everything fails or when they are absolutely sick and helpless. They need to be helped. Children accept assistance offered in terms of having an identity as child in the mainstream and to fulfil their human desires for inclusion, control and affection.

6.3.6. Needs Fulfillment Assistance
Street is not a place for children. They happened to be there as they did not have other opportunities. They need to fulfil their basic necessities: food, shelter and clothes. There is need for child-friendly society with stakeholders trained to care for children. General awareness to public regarding needs of children helps better relationships. They need legal advice especially if they are in conflict with law. Career planning too is welcome. There is need for peer educators, psychologists and other trained personnel to assist children.

Children need support to feel that they are wanted, loved and cared for. Once they begin to trust the mainstream they need academic and vocational choices. Children seek opportunities offered and they get qualified in various fields according to their capacities. Some have become officers, hotel staff and self-employed. The survival skills developed help them to take on to different roles in the society. Children need participatory style of development. Every step must be in discussion with them respecting their human status.

Children develop trust in God. They see the assistance received as blessings from God. This faith in God helps them to accept their past and present and venture into the future life. Those who are not able to develop faith in God can take to self-destructive activities while others take to self-enhancing behaviours.

They lack moral guidance. They do not have enough models to follow. Children need to be trained in coping skills for stress and to develop interpersonal relationships. They should not be deprived of treatment due to lack of identity or guardians. They need understanding and empathy. Trained mental health workers can assist them better.
6.3.7. Psychosocial Experience Exposures that Heal

Children in the street situations are found sick physically and mentally. They need assistance for mental and physical health. The researcher finds that most children need simply ordinary human interventions which he terms as psychosocial to get them mainstreamed. Psychosocial interventions, which can be explained as positive human experiences are found to heal the mind and to assist social integration.

1. Children in the street miss responsible adult human presence. They welcome healthy adult friendship and they love to be cared for. They appreciate the presence of adults which frees them from their lonely and risky life in the streets. While leaving home situation for street life children suffer as they break from all their emotional attachments. They develop new attachments and grow strong in them.

2. When children are able to talk freely about themselves, their life in the streets and yearnings of their heart they feel comforted. They love the presence of an adult who listens with compassion. They begin to enjoy positive feelings of acceptance which takes care of the need for inclusion.

3. Children long for regular and good food. A meal shared makes a child feel happy. The joy is furthered with simple experiences of love and that eventually changes their attitudes to themselves and the society. It can be in terms of medicine or recreational facilities besides amenities to fulfill basic needs.

4. Children in street habit are shabbily dressed. When they get an opportunity they dress well and look decent and like to be acknowledged and appreciated. When their dignity is upheld and respected they grow in self-esteem.

5. Well guided peer relationship can be one of the best ways to get children in street habitat to the mainstream. Children who have left the streets can inspire better and can become models for them to follow. Success stories inspire them as they believe more in experiences of others especially if they are known to them.

6. In the street, children live in groups. They have unwritten laws and they abide by them. The laws are evolved through democratic ways. When adult presence can help them as democratic persons they appreciate and accept mainstream life. Children accept and welcome meetings in their own setting. In meetings conducted in a democratic style they feel wanted and respected. Street corner meeting, open shelter meeting and foster care home meeting to discuss issues that confront their life can motivate them to proceed on to mainstream life.
7. Once basic needs are met they begin to enjoy their street life. They look for various possibilities to enjoy. Whatever opportunities they get in terms of playing, swimming, watching movies and similar recreation activities they enjoy without limits. If an adult can motivate them with varied activities they can easily be helped towards moderation in all that they do and focus on building their future which can offer them a life of satisfaction which is socially acceptable.

8. Every human being love celebrations. Deprived children enjoy celebrations as they find that as an opportunity to go beyond basic needs fulfillment. Healthy celebrations of different types in a social set up can trigger their deep rooted longing for the mainstream life.

9. Children living in the streets are skilled in many ways. They manage their life in different situations. Recognition and timely guidance can transform many of their skills into life skills. Soft skill training can help in building social capital. It can enhance their life and life of the society in which they are members.

Basically it is a right based and sympathetic accompaniment that heals and empowers. The adult support with love and compassion heals their emotional wounds and develops healthy bonds which lead them to the mainstream society. Children who are marginalized and disowned need to be owned up. The ownership can be experienced by the child through the various opportunities and interventions. Empathy is expected from the adult presence by every child. Once trust is built up they welcome opportunities for self-development which eventually help them for mainstream life.

6.3.8. Successful Interventions of Empowerment

Children in the streets need a gradual process to get them in the mainstream as empowered persons. They are smart and they manage their life in their own efficient ways. Their ways are street ways that are not acceptable in the mainstream society. However, planned interventions wean them of the streets and train them to socially accepted jobs and make their life socially meaningful. The different interventions that empower children in street habitat are discussed.

1. Children who take to street life have great potentials. They develop them in the context to meet their survival needs. Therefore they love talent hunt competitions or programmes as they get opportunities to exhibit their talents. Social programmes
that gives opportunities for talent search and development can promote creativity and lead children to the mainstream.

2. Camps are opportunities for enjoyment and learning with varieties in daily time table. They are exposed to cultural, esthetic, athletic, artistic and varied personality development programmes. These help children from the street habitat for self-development which can help them to be socially contributing persons.

3. Picnics offer opportunities for enjoyment through good meals, seeing new places and healthy interactions through various activities. Through these children’s hidden emotional wounds are dissuaded and talents are addressed.

4. Participation in public exhibitions with children’s craft items brings them recognition in the mainstream society. Children develop self-confidence and competitive spirit which places them on a progressive path to get mainstreamed.

5. Every human being has stages of development and places of progress. Children go from classes one to ten and further on to other spheres. An organized dynamic life is challenging and helps a person to develop according to age, experience and effort. When children are accompanied from street life to open shelter, to foster care home and keep shifting as they progress through different phases of learning or training they get easily merged into the mainstream.

6. Children always love group living. When children are offered right based principles for group living they grow well to be socially integrated.

7. The biggest deprivation children feel in street situation is that of being ostracized from the main stream society. When they experience social compassion through the presence of care givers, teachers, companions, sponsors, foster care parents and other people from the mainstream society children get healed and empowered.

8. Children living in street situations lack guidance. They develop anti-social behaviour patterns. They get habituated to practices that are socially unacceptable. Once they accept people from the mainstream as their own they accept mild forms of disapproval especially when it is conducted with ease, comfort and concern. Group interactions on issues and problems can turn out to be corrective measures to get them groomed for social living.

9. Healthy peer interactions in offering training are better accepted by children from street situation. They feel comfortable in their presence and they happily get motivated to progress in the job training towards a career. They follow role models.
10. Once children get used to street life it is difficult for them to leave the streets. It becomes a comfort zone for them. However they accept learning opportunities provided they do not clash with their street life programs. Various classes offered in street situations can initiate the process of weaning them away from the street.

11. A craft centre that displays multiple talents or skills such as book binding, candle making, painting, screen printing, envelope making, embroidery, tailoring and production of different toys and art related items tickles creativity in any visitor. Children from the streets get enthused as they realize that their creative energies can find socially accepted channels. They further are motivated due to the monetary benefit. As they notice their companions involved in producing different handicraft items they feel welcomed to give up street life for the mainstream life.

12. Drawing is a way of expressing inner energies and feeling. Once children are offered possibilities to draw they can be led to reading and writing. Once they become literate they develop confidence to belong to the mainstream society. They feel included in the mainstream as they are able to communicate effectively.

13. Children love to visit factories. They are thrilled to see the machines and the various production processes. When they find that people like them are part of the production process they feel inspired to go for job training. Thus, industrial visit opens their life to the world of work, earning and social living.

14. Right based approach enables them to learn on their own. Children are respected as persons having their own rights and their own places in the society. They plan and execute various activities of their life where they get involved. As they participate and organize they understand and learn skills for social living. Those skills build their confidence and acceptance which help them in the work places.

15. Exposures in different training fields open their world to the job market. Vocational guidance assesses their aptitudes and interest which lead them to the job that brings them satisfaction and means for livelihood.

16. Children in the Indian context have within themselves the sense of the divine. Regular prayers deepen their awareness of the presence of the Divine in the world and in their life. It helps them to accept their past, present and the possible future with serenity. Through prayer and meditation they learn to accept things that are beyond reason.
17. Street classes conducted with varieties initiate them to the world of learning. Though they begin with non-formal education many enter to the formal education. Many of them make lots of efforts to understand the lost years and they are able to get promoted with multiple promotions. Initially age and class do match but they are able to work hard and bridge the gap.

18. Life skill and soft skill training empower them to manage their lives in situations. They find a job, a place to stay and manage all their household activities. Soft skills make them socially competent enabling them to get along with different hierarchies of people in their place of stay and work.

Every intervention for empowerment respecting the rights of children and not infringing them can bring about positive results. The interventions are more effective when various groups work collaboratively: the governmental (both central and state) non-governmental organization, corporate sector, private business agencies, educational institutions which include academic and vocational to mitigate the plight of the children living and working in street situations. Assistance offered to children in various ways is as an exercise in nation building.

6.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

After having elaborated on the problems of children living in street environments, skills that they develop in deprived situations and having seen children who are mainstreamed as responsible members of the society, proposals are made for a better society that promote the growth of children.

A holistic approach, taking care of children’s needs is required for healing and promoting mental health. Right based approach is envisaged following the convention on the rights of the child. It is recommended that responsible authorities organise proactive, multi-systemic and multi-pronged strategy encompassing medical, vocational, educational, social, spiritual, financial and legal interventions. Every intervention for healing and empowerment must be multi-sectorial and child friendly. Solutions need to surface through combined efforts of different stakeholders of the society.
Vocational skills can inspire many children to give up their street life and get into the mainstream life. There could be printing, agriculture, candle-making, sewing, carpentry, craftwork, knitting, computer literacy and programming, welding, sporting activities and car mechanics. They must take care of teaching, reading and writing skills besides training in life skills. The teaching and training methods should move away from traditional ways. The training programme takes care of need, interest and aptitudes of children. They must be life centred and adult oriented respecting their quality and receptive capacity. Anything they take up should cater to the needs of the society and to enhance children’s economic self-sustenance.

In this context it is suggested that rehabilitated children from the street can be more effective in assisting children in the streets as they have gone through the full course of negative past in the society, aggressive and challenging life in the streets and gained ability to cope with life through offered interventions for mainstreaming.

Children who are in the street context need curative support to heal them of their wounds. They require training or education to get back to the mainstream to live as responsible members in the mainstream society. People at large need to understand children in different contexts and accept them as resources which require protection, care and investment. In the context of children in street situation the society needs to build on the strength and skills of children that they have acquired even with negative environment.

Children require individualized care as each one is unique with his or her upbringing and environment. Children in deprived situation can become a pull factor for the children in the villages who suffer deprivations. The resources in the society are meant to assist children to have sufficient opportunity for all irrespective of their environment as urban or rural. As dysfunctional families push out children it is important to assist them with counselling, finance and emotional support.

Every public institution together with local administration need to initiate programme for children through a community centred approach. The facilities of schools and other public institutions could be utilized to cater to the needs of children. Children’s talents can be
developed through the existing facilities in the village and in the towns. There is need for community resource centres as it can offer various facilities and empower children to avoid them being pushed in to the street situation or any other forms of abusive situation.

The children in street habitat obviously lack proper mentoring. Their immediate family members may have deserted them and they need a place to call home. Though resource centres cannot function adequately as a home they have to maintain homeliness. The researcher specifies areas where children face problems and proposes recommendations to mitigate problems to place children on an upward mobility in terms of physical and mental growth. All the recommendations suggest psychosocial interventions that lead to mental health and social integration.

6.4.1. Government

**Problem:** Government of India has in place, policies and project for its children. But in practice they have not reached the huge numbers of deprived children. The thousands of children living in street habitat is an indication of the lacuna in planning or implementation of the projects of children. Children in the street habitat are on the increase which brings to light the degeneration of children’s lives in the context of development. India is home to the largest number of children in the world (Hulshof 2011) and ICPS set up by the government of India is to cater to the needs of children realising the lacuna in the care offered to children (ICPS 2014). New measures are in the pipeline but it has not reached the masses of children. With such a developed economy government has not succeeded to cater to its children and it is evident in every major city of the country with so many of them living and working in street situations.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the government makes clear, holistic and child friendly policies to take care of implementation of its plans and programmes. More trained and socially motivated people are wanted to cater to the large numbers of children who have deviated from the mainstream society. There is need for child-friendly officers and grass-root level staff members who are dedicated for the cause of children. The implementation of the various programmes of the government needs to reach out to children who are marginalized or on the verge of marginalization. It is suggested by the
researcher that every child be in the list of the government with regular follow up to protect them and to promote them.

Children need acknowledgement and acceptance. They need to be assisted to get ID cards, DOB certificate and other documents which are essential for mainstreaming. Legal support need to be offered to them. Government must ensure a child friendly environment for every one as its children. As the country has large numbers of children it is only the government that can form systems to reach out to every child.

It needs to offer safety and security to families so that they can contain their children to form them as mentally sound and physically healthy individuals. The legal persons need to assist children and families in moments of conflicts. Children who are deprived of their own home setting need foster care home experience. Government need to motivate families to accommodate homeless children. Encourage NGOs to open more foster care homes where children can experience homeliness. There is also need to open more outreach centres for deprived children to offer them comfort and security.

It is highly recommended that child care institutions need to move away from traditional ways to take care of modern situations. Awareness must be created regarding the wealth of the country as a right for all especially children. Funds need to be spent to give priorities to the needs of children. The various departments that cater to welfare of children need to work together to promote the rights of children respecting their roles in the society. It is the primary duty of the government to offer survival provisions for the needy children.

The centres for children need to take care of teaching, reading and writing skills. They need to get various training in vocational skills and life skills. Children need to experience professionalism in everything. The trainings should be more life oriented, adult oriented and with less restrictions respecting their qualities and skills. Social inclusion and social education need to form part of the process of mainstreaming.

6.4.2. People in the Mainstream and Stakeholders

Problem: Many of the respondents have expressed their anxiety about meeting people from the mainstream. Children seem to be a threat to them as they at times harass them for
survival. The people at large having the busy schedule life do not have the mental space to accept and understand deprived children. The masses in the villages are engrossed in their struggles for survival and they make use of children without realising the rights of children. Often they do not have the capacity to care for them. The main stream society is not able to understand that children have not made a choice to be in street situation.

Deprived or marginalised children are considered as intruders in a city. In fear urban people reject and even harass children who go to them for assistance as beggars or seeking work. Thus children in street habitat face an unfriendly mainstream society. The mainstream as a whole consider them as a nuisance. Public at large do not look up kindly at them. A small group seems caring while the majority do not have any concern for them. Children in the street habitat are a world phenomenon. They may have similar reasons for being in the street in the developing nations. Many spent their time in the city eking out a living from the streets environment. They live in shanties and open places without protection. Being deprived of family, their existence is inhuman. They lack care and protection for their physical growth and mental development.

**Recommendations:** Public awareness is needed to understand the role of children in the society. Training programmes are required at various levels to know more about the right of children which can lead to acceptance and assistance extended to children in distress. People need training to understand the feebleness of children. Children must be seen as assets and strength of the society as the future depends on them. They should not be ostracized but be part of the mainstream having a role in the society.

Children in the street habitat should not suffer stigmatization for being poor and when being rehabilitated after street life. People need to grow in social concern and get trained in social responsibility. Society should not neglect its children but own them. Awareness need to be created to respect every child as a human being going beyond any systems of class or caste that segregate or lower their human status. Class discriminations are absolutely unjust and people need to work for equality. Social education and social capital promotion can enlighten the mainstream society to accept and promote child friendly environment in the rural and urban settings.
Every city should have space for its deprived children. Alternate care is needed to care for children in slums, *shanties* and in street situations. Cities must be equipped with infrastructure and systems to care for children who land up in the city in search of jobs, food or as an escape route from families due to various issues that suffocate them in their environment. Children have the right to survival, participation and development besides other rights as envisaged in the convention of right of the child. As proposed by ICPS, foster care is to be made a possibility for every child deprived of its family. Sensitize the various stakeholders in the cities to nurture and endorse rights of children. Promotion of civil society groups can enhance care for children (Xavier 2008)

6.4.3. Villages

**Problem:** The researcher finds that children in the street habitat have their origins in the villages. They express their negative past with lots of hurt feelings. For most children the basic reason for being in the street is poverty with its stings that is so prevalent in the villages. Poverty and dysfunctional families are the main reasons. All the other causes are attached to poverty. The villages are not developed sufficiently to offer children the required space for their basic and developmental needs. People do not have the basic requirements in terms of a habitable home, sufficient work and other social facilities. There is great need for a preventive approach

**Recommendation:** Children in poor villages need supportive systems in place to retain them in their own home environments. Every village need to have a system with sufficient infrastructure to take care of its people. Children need special care as they form part of the weakest group in a village. Children are the biggest and the best asset in a village. Keeping these premises the villages need reorganising to take care of its children to prevent them from leaving their village environment. Basic facilities must be enjoyed by them. They require child friendly atmosphere to grow up. The village administration needs to take care of their health and literacy requirements. Parents who are not equipped to guide children need assistance. Preventive measures can reduce children reaching street or other unwanted situations. ‘Child safety net’ in which every child is cared for personally could be implemented in every village.
6.4.4. Guardians of Law and Order

**Problem:** Legal guardians assist the society to have order and discipline. They remain responsible to the general public for smooth functioning of the various institutions of service. One of the major concerns of the people in the city is the presence of deprived children. They work, steal, beg, and do anything that can bring them a survival. As they are demeaned due to the way they live, society do not look kindly on them. They are targeted for most petty crimes in the city. They do not have a voice in public life. As they form the weaker section of the city they suffer unjustly. For the guardians of law and order, children become easy targets for the various problems and they are held responsible. They suffer arrest and other types of punishments that wound them physically and mentally. It could be due to large numbers of children or lack of training to deal with them. They do not have sufficient mechanisms to deal with children who are wounded physically and mentally.

**Recommendations:** Prevent children from reaching the street situations. NGOs could be empowered further with support systems of place, finance and legal support to assist children. People who take care of law and order need special training to help children. Presence of child-friendly adults can help children with their traumatic situations and lead them to the right places where they find care and protection. The guardians of law and order in a city need to work in collaboration with the larger population to assist children who become the victims of street hazards. They must be assisted to avoid getting into street ways for survival. Awareness regarding the feebleness and plight of children in street habitat can elicit positive responses from the mainstream society with its hierarchical structures.

6.4.5. Educational Institutions

**Problem:** Educational institutions in the villages mostly have poor infrastructure. They do not have sufficient staff members. Often they are not trained to assist children to cope with their emotional issues. The ordinary schools are not sufficiently challenging the calibre of the modern generation. Educational systems are mostly old fashioned and not able to cater to the needs of modern youth. Care is not offered to children to take their holistic development. The schools that are with high fees are better equipped and it is not accessible to the larger population.
Recommendations: It is important that the institutions have sufficient infrastructure. The teachers and care givers need to have knowledge of child psychology to understand and assist children. The programme must take care of the holistic development of a child. Policy makers or curriculum planners need to include children and their welfare in planning the curriculum. Discriminations need to be avoided and offer more facilities to the more deprived. Healthy interactions must be maintained among the children irrespective of their background. Needy students must be offered financial assistance so that they do not become drop outs. Children must get the joy of learning. Schools need to take care of the students’ physical and mental development. Social workers and counsellors work to sustain children in their born environments.

All educational institutions need to enroll children irrespective of their personal status. Children are to receive opportunities basing on their interest and progress. In the curative process it is important to know that children from the street situation have the capacity to work more than the average children in the mainstream as they are better equipped with skills and abilities learned in the streets. Such children should not be discriminated considering their past. There is need for child-friendly teachers and care givers.

6.4.6. NGOs

Problem: City of Kolkata has many NGOs and many of them play a role or other for children. Some of them are meant only to assist children partially. Many of them do not have the facility for a holistic package to assist children in street situations. They do not find sufficient funds and trained personnel to deal with children’s requirements. They do not get enough support system to care for children who are sick, conflict with law and who need counselling facilities.

Recommendations: NGOs need to get more focused regarding their approach areas. There is need for coordination to offer children the professional support that can lead them back to the mainstream society. Right based approach is the need of the time to assist children’s development. Responsible citizens with NGOs need to organize funds to support children. NGOs and GOs need to work in collaboration to be more effective for the cause of children. The different departments of the government need to work together to reduce the
strain on the private agencies and to be of assistance to larger groups of children. Social service exchange promoted among the NGOs can avoid duplication of services and reach out more people. Training of trainers, in-service training programmes and professional courses are to be promoted for the different groups of people that assist children in street situations and those who accompany them to the mainstream society.

6.4.7. Corporate Institutions

Problem: Corporate institutions and business centres help the development of the country. They experience the presence of the rich people more as wealth is essential for corporate progress. The poor are left out or are made to work to make the rich, richer while the poor remains poor or grows poorer. Children are affected the most in such a competitive world especially when they belong to the poorer class.

Recommendations: The people in the management need to have awareness and motivational programmes to sensitise them on their social responsibility. Investing on or for children must be mandatory as it is the best part to build the nation. They should promote human progress. They can offer training programmes, support centres that cater to children in street situation and offer job possibilities with respect and concern. They need to promote establishments that cater for the needs of the children especially deprived or marginalised children. As they take lead in the progress of the nation they can be champions to instil hope into the younger generation for their brighter future.

They could organise resource centres for children especially for those who have suffered the onslaughts of street life. These resource centres need to function to develop talents in children which can enhance their living. Local administration, corporate houses and NGOs need to work hand in hand to initiate programme for children through resource centres.

6.4.8. Families

Problems: Dysfunctional families push many children to street situation. The causes are mostly concerned with poverty, illiteracy, lack of preparation for family life and social class and caste systems. The problems that affect family life have their immediate and direct effect of children as they are the weakest as human beings. Many parents unable to offer to their children sufficient growth possibilities: schools, playground and other
recreational facilities besides basic needs fulfilment. Deprivations reach an extreme situation to push them out of their environment. The pull factors through mass media, child traffickers and other deprived children add to the problems of children to take them away from the family situations.

**Recommendations:** Families are the cradles where children grow. The senior members of the families need guidance to cater to the needs of children. Poverty being one of the major concerns many of the families require financial, infrastructural and emotional support in poor village situations. There is great need for better networking with people of good will who can offer assistance to many more children.

As a preventive measure families need support to meet their basic necessities. They need counselling to reconcile issues that lead to disunity which affect the children to the maximum. Families need support to accept and promote their children. Since many children are homeless families need to accept children in foster care. They need medical, educational, material, financial and psychosocial support.

**6.5. FURTHER RESEARCH**

From the findings the researcher has come to the realization that children in street habitat can be helped. There is need for further research to understand the different groups of children that live in street situation which can help in appropriate measures as per their problems and possibilities. Researches regarding the way children are affected in different street environment, background of children from different villages and families, rural poverty and need for alleviation and alternative education can add on to knowledge and enhances services offered to children. Research into the promotion of social responsibility, social concern, social transformation and participatory approach can assist the policy makers to offer better responses to the needs of deprived children.

Study could be organized regarding child friendly environment in a developing nation and more in villages that are far from development. A study on families that pushes the children can benefit children and the society at large. The pull factors need to be studied
for better understanding and to take the necessary steps to contain children in the families and in the villages.

Research on cooperation, collaboration and networking among various child oriented organisation enhance united efforts for the cause of children living in street habitat. There is a great need to share information regarding children. It can help to avoid duplication. Indian context has many children and any expansion can accommodate more children and as the problem is huge it need not have space or area restrictions. Networking among NGOs can lead to efficiency and quality of service and avoid duplication.

Emotional wellness, environment and heredity are topics that need further study. These children obviously lack mentorship. Their immediate family members may have deserted them, but there is still a place to call home. Understanding the children with their environment and heredity makes the support system more professional. The problems that affect the mind have grave consequences and they need further study to propose support system for such vulnerable groups.

Community care and growth of children in rural areas could be another topic of study as most of the children living in street situations come from the rural areas. Community support system can be developed to reduce poverty and to protect children. These community resource centres could also be avenues for the training of children in employable skills, at the expense of the local governments and the communities. Families need to be assisted to accept the challenges of the time and be responsible parents. Community needs to take care after school activities

A study on the prevailing social security system and possible improvements could help the care of children in deprived situation as they do head for the streets. Social security is something which is very important when an individual is taken care of in dire need. The individual feels confident and happy to belong to a human group as he/she knows the care that is possible in difficult time.

It is strongly recommended that efforts be made to understand children from their perspective. There is need for further investigation and study regarding different types of
deprivations. The study has to assess how deprivations affect their growth. Preventive methods include study of rural poverty and alleviation programmes. Protective measures can look into the changes in the family and society and take care of the problems faced by children. Promotional activities are those in which children are offered various possibilities for development. Be progressive by offering children education and training according to their capacity. Understanding of deprivations with their consequences can enhance services offered to them. In every programme children have to be respected by freeing them of their deprivations which can draw out the power in them to trigger progress and growth.

6.6. CONCLUSION

This research brings to light new insights to understand the less researched group of people. This offers intellectual basis to the practical interventions offered for the empowerment of children living in street habitat. Children are in various categories and each group needs specialized study. However, they do have common reasons for being in the streets and common ways of surviving and possible rehabilitation. Hence this study can be used in different contexts in different countries where we find children in street situations, especially in the developing nations. This study offers assistance to academicians to empower many more to work for the cause of children. It offers assistance to grass root level workers as it offers scientifically proved methods and interventions to assist children in street habitat.

Many of the findings can be applied to children facing problem in different environments. The current study is unique as the researcher has experience of twenty five years with different types of youth and as he is able to involve the children themselves to elicit knowledge based on their experiences. The phenomenology and ethnography combination compliment the study and the findings become relevant and scientific.