3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the status of Street Children of the World, India and the state of Andhra Pradesh on the one hand and major cities like Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada and Guntur on the other. Special emphasis is laid on Indian scenario making references to the Acts and Amendments to the Indian Constitution. This chapter is divided into two parts; part one explains the scenario of street children in around the world and India, where as part two reveals the status of street children in Andhra Pradesh and selected areas of study. This lays emphasis on a basic social and economic activity that reflects individual’s collective attempts to deal with the scarcity of economic resources. Deterioration of family bonds, lack of proper recreation and education, attraction to city life and peer group influence have figured as prominent problems from these scenarios. One surprising scenario that would be observed by the readers from the following sections is that the research on street children abruptly ends by 2000 AD. However, there are scanty studies afterwards at scattered locations across the World.

3.1 Overview of Indian Context

As articulated in the National Policy for Children (NPC) 1974, children are an utmost significant asset of our country. Children constitute more than 42% of India’s population. However, for a variety of reasons, children constitute the most vulnerable section of society. This is evident from the persistent presence of vulnerable groups like street children, trafficked children, abused children, children from family at risk, abandoned children, destitute children, orphaned children, mentally ill children, missing children, children engaging in substance abuse, children affected by conflict and disasters, working children, differently disabled children, HIV/AIDS affected/infected children etc. Therefore, realizing
their rights, and offering care and protection continues to be a distant dream for millions of children in India.

The Street Children is fairly an urban phenomenon in recent times. The growth of street children is a potential threat in urban areas. India ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992 and enactment of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children). Government of India took cognizance of the problem and evolved a central scheme of welfare of street children in 1994 for taking up the street children programmes by the voluntary sector. Government of India provides 90% of the grant and 10% is to be borne by the voluntary organization. The Assembly has also constituted a House Committee on Rehabilitation of Street Children. The committee in its report has emphasized the need for comprehensive survey of street children and adequate budgetary support. It was also felt that not only Non-Governmental Organizations, but Government Organizations also should take up the street children projects.

Act 2000/Amendment 2006 are two important milestones in India’s child rights movement. One of the key purposes of JJA 2000/Amendement 2006 is to protect rights of children in need of care and protection (CNCP) in realizing the above; provision for constituting Child Welfare Committees (CWC) in every district has been made. Progress, functioning and conceptual understanding of CWCs are at different levels in different states.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2000 is the primary legal framework for Juvenile justice in India. The Act provides for a special approach towards the prevention and treatment of Juvenile delinquency, and provides a framework for the protection, treatment and rehabilitation of children in the purview of the juvenile justice system. This law, brought in

JJ Act is considered to be an extremely progressive legislation and Model Rules 2007 have further added to the effectiveness of this welfare legislation. However, the implementation is a very serious concern even in year 2010.

A) History

The first legislation on juvenile justice in India came in 1850 with the Apprentice Act which required that children between the ages of 10-18 convicted in courts to be provided vocational training as part of their rehabilitation process. This act was transplanted by the Reformatory Schools Act, 1897, the Indian Jail Committee and later the Children Act of 1960. The Juvenile Justice Bill was first introduced in the Lok Sabha on 22nd August 1986.

b) Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000

This Act further amended in 2006 and is now known as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000. Section 21 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 (56 of 2000) as amended by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2006 (33 of 2006), states that: “Prohibition of publication of name, etc., of juvenile or child in need of care and protection involved in any proceeding under the Act-(1) No report in any newspaper, magazine, news-sheet or visual media of any inquiry regarding a juvenile in conflict with law or a child in need of care and protection under this Act shall disclose the name, address or school or any other particulars calculated to lead to the identification of the juvenile or child shall nor shall any picture of any such juvenile or child shall be published: Provided that for any reason to be recorded in writing, the authority holding the inquiry may permit such disclosure, if in its opinion such disclosure is in the interest of the juvenile or the child, (2)
any person who contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1), shall be liable to a penalty which may extend to twenty-five thousand rupees”.

While provisions relating to the Juveniles in conflict with law are very important from jurisprudence point of view, this Act becomes very crucial for Children in Need of Care and Protection, as they are very large in number. Section 29 of the Act provides constituting five members District (Administrative unit in India) level quasi-judicial body “Child Welfare Committee.” One of the members is designated as Chairperson. At least one of the members shall be woman. The Committee shall have the final authority to dispose of cases for the care, protection, treatment, development and rehabilitation of the ‘Children in Need of Care and Protection’ as well as to provide for their basic needs and protection of human rights.

3.2 Status of Children Across the World

Majority of the few investigations which have explored the phenomenon of street children make a mention of the social and economic conditions such as extreme poverty, marital discard, family breakdown resulting in the homelessness of the child, and the arrival of step parent, etc. Other factors such as marginalization of families, social and regional inequalities impinging on individuals, communities and families at local levels, and natural calamities are also found responsible for the swelling numbers of street children in our society (UNICEF, 2006). It is aptly said that “Children are our future.” If they are subjected to problems, it will seriously affect the future of our world. In this context, comprehending the status of children, who are in need of care, is also the need of the hour. Majority of the investigations which have explored the phenomenon of street children make a mention of the social and economic conditions such as extreme poverty, marital discard, family breakdown resulting in the homelessness of the child, arrival of step parent, etc., Other factors such as
marginalization of families, social and regional inequalities impinging on individuals, communities and families at local levels and natural calamities are also found responsible for the swelling numbers of street children in our society.¹

Of the above factors – deterioration of family bonds, lack of proper recreation and education, attraction to city life and peer group influence – have figured as prominent in the problem. In the following pages an attempt is made to review the empirical investigations taken up to study the problem of street children both in India and abroad. It is observed that different studies have adopted different age limits with regard to street child. For instance, some studies put the maximum age at 18 years.²

Studies on the problems of street children are voluminous all over the World. However, there are similar lessons prevalent in Asia. Some of the most significant studies have been classified and reviewed in the following section.

3.2.1 Afghanistan

Highlighting the critical situation in Afghanistan due to a decade of civil War, Hamidullah Simab and Beulah Pallana (1994)³ mentioned that a sizeable proportion of the country's economically productive manpower had been lost. Young persons had to take over economic responsibility of the family. Street children who support their families due to death, disability or a missing parent fall into this category. Since schools have been closed for months even children from middle class families spend time hanging around the streets (Dawn 2002, Kaufman 2003). Focusing on the work of a drop-in-centre sponsored by UNICEF


³ Beulah E Pallana and Hamidullah Simab (1994), Street children in Afghanistan
and the International Federation of Red Cross Societies, Kabul, highlighted the services offered through this centre, such as health, nutrition, recreation, vocational training and washing facilities for children. Significantly, mothers of street children are involved in running this drop-in centre (UNICEF, 2005).

3.2.2 Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the unemployment rate is estimated to be 70% on average, and as high as 90% in particular neighbourhoods. It is thought that the depressed socio-economic status of this country coupled with inadequacies in the Bulgarian educational system that is responsible for the sad situation of children living on the streets. A study done in 2006 by the HRW found that many street children come from large families and report leaving home because of parental unemployment, family relationship problems, single-headed households, lack of parenting supervision or care at home, and sometimes even hunger (HRW, 2006). HRW also reported that, once on the street, children were often subjected to abuse by the authorities. Many of these children had reported being thrown in prison, sexually abused by police, forbidden food or not given access to toilet facilities for lengthy periods of time. These youths also reported often being beaten with electric shock batons, chains, clubs or metal rods, or their heads were frequently dunked in water, while applying electric shocks to their feet.\(^4\)

3.2.3 Colombia

Most literature on street children has come out of Colombia. In Colombia, street children are judged with contempt, and are often viewed as nuisance who should be put to death. In 1994, statistics published by Colombia’s National Statistical Bureau DANE, found that 2,190 street children were murdered in 1993. It was also reported that the torture of these children in this country appears to be the norm, often falling under a banner of the so-called ‘social cleansing’ (\textit{limpieza}\(^4\)

\(^4\) Human Rights Watch (HRW)(2006)
socio-economic) (Human Rights Watch, 1994). Colombia’s unstable political and economical situation linked to the prevalence of uprising, drug cartels, overpopulation and poverty is largely contributing to the existence of street youths in this country.

3.2.4 Guatemala

Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2007) reported that there are between 1500 to 5000 street children in Guatemala, 65% of whom is between the ages of 10 and 17 years, with 3% being below the age of 10 years. Approximately 90% of these children are addicted to chemical inhalants. Begging, stealing and prostitution is their main source of income. The rate of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and infections is also reported to be on the increase. In a study conducted in 2002 on 143 Guatemalan street children it was found that many of the children had left home because of sexual abuse. Many of them are sexually active with multiple partners, and there is a minimal contraceptive use.

3.2.5 India

Despite information technology revolution and the transformation of Indian economy, there have been myriad of social realities that continue to serve face challenging all the developmental efforts. Rane and Shroff (1994), based on the UNICEF sponsored research studies in seven major cities, and their practical experiences of working with street children, presented a profile of street children in terms of age, gender, family background, living and working conditions, and health conditions. The major problems encountered by street children in India include harassment by the municipal authorities and the police, exploitation by

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5 Human Rights Watch, (1994)


7 Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2007)
employers, and lack of recreational facilities. NGO forums have been established in thirteen cities in India with about sixty organizations working with street children. Various intervention strategies and existing programmes have been developed by NGO (Stuart, 2003).\textsuperscript{5}

3.2.6 Nepal

Nepal has at last made a final transition from monarchical government to the democrat government. The new challenges before the elected government are multifarious. One such challenge is the problem of children. Manandhar (1994), describing the situation of street children in Nepal, reported that 60 per cent child population in the country was employed, while 16.7 per cent children were born into families of bonded labourers and 35 per cent were in a semi-bonded state. The Government sponsored residential institutions provide care for over 3,000 children. The practice of offering female children to the temple goddess, that is Devkis, was reported to have been banned. Only a handful of NGOs functioning under the Nepal Children’s Organizations are really active in this area.

3.2.7 Pakistan

The emergence of democracy in Pakistan which was once plagued by fundamentalism and terrorism, has paved a way for freedom once again. Surprisingly, the young people are still found to be the victims of such fundamental groups that lure them into Jihadi movements. However, the problems of children are yet to be tackled in a programmatic approach. Choudhary (1994) emphasized that street children cannot be viewed in isolation, but with the overall socio-economic problems of the urban poor. He observed that the high visibility of thousands of children in the streets in the major cities of Pakistan had not yet created an awareness of the seriousness of the problem. The kidnapping of children is a major problem. There are no Juvenile Courts in Pakistan and child offenders are tried along with adult criminals and jailed. Several laws protecting
children’s rights exist in the country, but there is no machinery for their implementation.

Causes for children being on the streets in Pakistan also include poverty and family violence and conflict. NGOs appear as a major resource in working with the children and undertaking practice-based research of the issue. In 1999, a “non government initiative” was launched “to protect more than a million street children in Pakistan following the sensational murders of nearly 100 children in Lahore by a serial killer” (Najeeb, 1999). A report in 2001 noted that the majority of more than 10,000 children on the streets of Karachi were Bengalis and Burmese as well as other ethnic groups including Punjabis, Baluchis, and Urdu-speaking children. Nearly 90% used various drugs, with some 65% using solvents (Dawn 2001). The range of national origins, as well as extensive substance abuse, points to the vast distances travelled by some street children, as well as the plight of ethnic and minority groups in these countries.

3.2.8 Latin America

Latin America includes a host of countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Costa Rica, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Ecuador, Mexico and El Salvador. Brazil is considered to have one of the largest populations of street children in Latin America (Anderson, 1997). It is reported that there are, now, more than 160 million people who live below the poverty line, with 40 million of these being street children.⁸

⁸ Connolly M (1990), The health of Street children and youth, survivors series No. 1, New York, UNICEF.
3.2.9 Kenya

During the months of September and October of 1996, The HRW did a fact-finding mission on the number of street children in Kenya. It was reported that approximately 40,000 children are living on the street in Kenya, over half of which are in the city centre of Nairobi itself. The increase of children living on the streets is also believed to be related to the complex socio-economic status of the country, in addition to the factors such as rapid urbanization and the general breakdown of traditional support structures of the African extended family. The HRW report also highlighted the impact of single-parent households, the lack of funds for resources and education, the displacement of large numbers of people due to urban slum clearance programmes, and the internal displacement of approximately 300,000 people due to the recent ‘ethnic’ violence.9

3.2.10 Ruwanda

It is believed that the current political, social and cultural challenges of Rwanda recovering from genocide and internal conflict is the largest contributing factor to the existence of Rwandan street children (Veale, Dona, 2003).10 In April and July 1994, between 800 000 and one million Tutsis and Hutus were killed, which resulted in almost two million people leaving Rwanda as refugees at that time. By August 1996, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MINISTRASO) estimated that there were about 2 670 street children but this figure was increased in 1999 – only 3 years later – to about 6000 street children (UN Common Country Assessment, 2003).

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9 Human Rights Watch (HRW)(2007)
3.2.11 Russian Federation

The economy of Russian Federation is on the rise owning the marine oil finds. New organizations of business, coupled with new problem of population have possible new challenges to the government. In a report submitted by Balachova (2002), it was estimated that there are between 1 and 4 million street children in Russia, and about 50, 000 of these youths run away from their homes every year. In 2002, the state prosecutor of Russia, Vladimir Ustinov reported during a parliamentary hearing that during the month of January of that year, approximately 300 000 children were found living in railway stations, at airports and in the cellars of buildings\textsuperscript{11}.

3.2.12 South Africa

As noted earlier, it is only since the 1970s and 1980s that the focus has been directed towards street children in South Africa. While it is difficult to ascertain the true figure of street children today, various researchers in the 1980s to early 1990s have estimated that it is anything between 6 276 and 9 390 respectively with ages ranging between seven and sixteen years of age (Richter, 1991).\textsuperscript{12} However, in 1996 this figure was estimated to be at least 15 000 youths (Levenstein, 1996), which means that within a six-year period this figure has increased by 59.7% in this country. Even so, South Africa is considered to be fortunate in comparison with countries such as Nigeria (an estimated 12 million street youths) and Kenya (half a million street children) (Barrette, 2005).

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid

3.2.13 Switzerland

Switzerland is not much known except for the status of children. In a report by Aptekar (1997) on street children in Swaziland, it was found that compared to most African countries, the number of street children there is small. Aptekar’s study revealed that there was no difference between families who lived in rural Swaziland or in urban areas. Family disintegration, educational levels, or population density often associated with urban migration was evident in both areas. This is interesting, because he concluded that the process of modernization is not solely responsible for street children in Swaziland but this may be linked to the political and social history of the country as well (Aptekar, 1997).

3.2.14 Zimbabwe

While it is reported that it is difficult to establish the exact number of street children in Zimbabwe, the Department of Social Welfare in 2000 estimated that there were about 5000 street children in Harare at that time, and that these numbers are expected to increase along with political strife, unemployment and poverty (Rurevo, Bourdillon, 2003).13

3.3 Status of Street Children in India

3.3.1 Background

India is the seventh largest country in the world with religious, cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity. It has a population of 1.027 million in 2001, of which 40% are under 18 (1/3 of the total population are under 15). Although seen as one of the fastest growing developing countries, it ranks 115th among 162 countries in the Human Development Index. In 2011, population increased to 1210 million. Rate of urbanization was 27.81% in 2001. Nearly 28% of the population

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lives in urban areas, with dramatic growth of slums and shanty towns. In 2011, as per provisional Census results, urbanisation increased to 31.16%. An average of 50% of the urban population live in conditions of extreme deprivation, compounded by lack of access to basic services and legal housing and poor urban governance. UNICEF’s estimate of 11 million street children in India in 1994 is considered to be conservative. Of estimated 100,000 to 125,000 street children, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi had 100 000 to 125 000 each, while Bangalore had 45, 000.

3.3.2 Achievements

Some significant achievements in the legislative framework have been made and they are as follows: 1) Legislative reform in the light of the Child Rights Convention (CRC) (e.g. Juvenile Justice Act 2000, Children’s Code Bill 2000 etc.) has been felt significant by all the concerned. 2) Advocacy and sensitization workshops held for members of parliament and the police. 3) Incorporation of modules on children’s issues in the training of police officers. 4) Growing awareness and attention to children’s rights in the media. 5) Establishment of NGO training. The Government claims that nearly 25 000 children have benefited through 85 projects in 35 cities under revised government scheme for the welfare of the street children. 6) Establishment of joint government / NGO project CHILDLINE, a 24-hour, free, emergency telephone hotline in 92 cities, used by more than one million children in past 11 years. 7) National Initiative for Child Protection campaign launched in 2000 across police, healthcare, judicial, education, labour, transport, media and corporate sectors14.

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14 Child line India Foundation (2008), Listening to children, an over view to Child line traces the evolution of India's first helpline for children. It examines the model created for Child line in a developing nation like India and illustrates the need for children's voices to be heard and be acted upon, Private circulation, Mumbai.
3.3.3 Constraints and Challenges

Some of the constraints and the challenges for the policy developers and the NGOs are as follows: Lack of implementation and monitoring mechanisms for programmes, and lack of enforcement of legislation; Lack of birth registration, uniform adoption law, children’s participation and child centered approaches in government; Impact of forced evictions, demolitions and displacement on children. India has the largest number of child labourers in the world; widespread poverty, unemployment, increasing rural-urban migration, attraction of city life and lack of political will to address the problem of increasing numbers of children on the streets. Street children are subject to malnutrition, hunger, health problems, substance abuse, theft, harassment by the city police and railway authorities, physical and sexual abuse; Inadequate budget allocation impacts the sustainability of projects and, in particular, the ability to employ qualified and experienced social workers.

3.3.4 Lessons Learned

Some interesting lessons to be learnt from the experiences stated above are as follows: Old-fashioned approach of institutionalizing street children in custodial care (often through juvenile justice system) is not an appropriate or effective intervention. Community-based models with an emphasis on the contact / outreach programme (trust and relationship building) linked to ‘Contact Centres’ (access to services) in the vicinity of their stay / work, are much more effective. As the children live in groups, working with the group is often more appropriate than working on a one-to-one basis. Promotion and protection of street children’s rights is dependent on: sensitization of allied systems such as the police, education, health, judicial system, media etc.; attitudinal changes in society which need to be addressed through public awareness campaigns. Government involvement and active support for NGO programmes is essential. Participation of street children
themselves in decision-making and formulating intervention strategies is greatly undervalued at present.

### 3.3.5. Recommendations

Some of the significant recommendations made are as follows:

1. Launch Railway Children intervention / prevention projects at major railway stations.
2. Link street children to urban poverty reduction programmes.
3. Increased emphasis on HIV/AIDS awareness programmes as street children are a high-risk group.
4. Replication of outreach programmes, community-based models, night shelters, drop-in / contact centres in the vicinity of places of work/stay of street children.
5. Innovative models of NGOs with Bal Mandals (Children’s Committees), and children’s participation in decision making.
7. Amendment to Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 to protect children (particularly street children) in informal labour economy.
8. Simplification of procedures to obtain grant-in-aid from the government to reduce the burden of paperwork.
9. Timely release of government grants, allocation of adequate funds on a long-term basis, continued financial support to ensure sustainability of NGO interventions and beneficiary rather than donor-led funding policies.
10. Realistic appraisal of the situation of street children to acknowledge the current inadequacy of government and NGO interventions to reach a vast number of children in major cities in India.\textsuperscript{15}

According to the Human Development Report of the UNDP (1993)\textsuperscript{16}, our country has the greatest number of street children. It is reported that New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta have around two lakh street children each and Bangalore has about 45,000 street children. Another estimation (UNICEF – 1994)\textsuperscript{17} reveals the fact that in six major cities of India – Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Kanpur – there are about 4,14,700 street children and of these about 48 percent spend their nights on the open street. Thus the phenomenon of street children with all its magnitude and dimensions is a challenging social problem of urban India.

The Street Children of Kolkata, The idea of a drop-in centre is this: it is meant to be a nearby place that the kids at Sealdah can simply drop-in at if they want to rest, or if they want someone to talk to. CINI-Asha’s staff fan out amongst the platforms of the station and talk to the kids about the drop-in centre, encouraging them to visit it. This is the first phase of trust-building, and it is a difficult phase; the kids need to be convinced that CINI-Asha’s staffs are sincere, and are not just another group of adults out to exploit and abuse them. Once at the drop-in centre, the kids continue to be suspicious; it sometimes takes them a few years of constant visits to the centre before they can trust the staff enough to open up and talk about themselves. However, once they start to visit, CINI-Asha’s staffs


at least have a chance of reaching out to the kids and letting them know about the possibilities of a better life.18

3.4 Estimation of Street Children

Though children using public places to survive existed for a long time, this phenomenon has become much more acute in recent years. It has become a common sight of many cities. This phenomenon of street children is not only reported from developing countries but it is a worldwide experience. The nature of the problem of street children is thought to have changed both in size and character. There are efforts made to estimate the magnitude of the street children’s problem as this population is not adequately covered by national census.19

The Consortium for Street Children is a group of 35 UK-based development and human rights NGOs which support projects for street-living and street-working children and children at risk of taking to street life in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America. The Consortium welcomes the Committee’s decision to devote two discussion days to the theme of violence against children, the first focusing on State violence, with emphasis on “particularly vulnerable groups of children who are temporarily or permanently deprived of a family environment, which renders them more vulnerable to abuse while increasing the obligation of the State to offer special protection.” CSCUK also appreciates the Committee’s specific acknowledgement of: a) the double violation of street children’s rights: both social, economic and cultural as well as civil and political, and b) their double vulnerability in the juvenile justice system (as identified in the 2nd sub-theme for working group discussions, ‘Violence against children in the context of ‘law and public order’ concerns’) - they are more likely to be at risk of

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19 Rane (1994), Street children, a challenge to the social work profession, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.
entering the system in the first place (legally or illegally) and are simultaneously less able to defend their rights within that system. It is with this in mind, and within the framework established for this day of general discussion, that the Consortium for Street Children UK is calling for the naming of a Special Rapporteur on Street Children (CSCUK, 2000).\(^{20}\)

Further, it is said that they are uncontrollably violent, have lost the ability to feel emotions such as love, have no morals, and do not know how to play. Children living most of their lives on the streets do endure violence on a daily basis, often at the hands of the police who are, after all, paid by society to keep the streets clean and safe. They also tend to experience violence from some older children and from psychologically disturbed Street adults. Those who have experience of jails and detention centres almost always have scars to provide it. This all adds up to learning experiences that inevitably lead to fights between children. But this need not be irreversible. Many children living on the street speak about the importance of friendship in their lives and from around the world there are reports of the ‘family groups’ they form for mutual support. No one who has ever watched street children for any length of time would miss the fact that they break into spontaneous burst of fun and recreation. A final common view is that they are drug addicts, and that many of them have AIDS. Some street children do use cigarettes, alcohol and a variety of drugs.\(^{21}\)

Street children are at the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STD), including HIV infections, when they have sex with infected adults for money or because of threats and violence. These infections also spread through communities of street children because some of them have sexual relations with

\(^{20}\) CSCUK (2000), Consortium for Street Children UK is calling for the naming of a Special Rapporteur on Street Children.

\(^{21}\) Aptekar L (2003), Methodological Implications of Contextual Diversity in Research on Street Children, *Youth and Environments* 13(1) spring 2003.
each other. Both heterosexual and homosexual relationships are involved. HIV infection is not the most common sexually transmitted diseases among street children, but it is the one that has attracted the greatest attention. In fact very little is actually known about the spread of HIV infection among street children (UNICEF, 2003). It is more than likely that they are particularly at risk of infection, because:

1. Sex with an adult can lead to genital injuries and bleeding, so that the virus can be more easily transmitted.

2. They may already have a history of sexually transmitted disease, which may increase their chances of HIV infections.

3. Their health may already be poor, meaning they are more vulnerable to infection.

4. They do not have knowledge about HIV / AIDS, and do not know how to protect themselves;

5. They cannot buy condoms, as they are children or because they cannot afford to owing to the fact that they are children and they have no power to insist that clients use condoms.

There are two additional problems for street children caused by the popular idea that they all have AIDS; one is that the stigma can make discrimination against them even worse, and the other is that some projects concentrate on this problem to the exclusion of all others. It is much more sensible to consider HIV as one health problem among many for street children. These children are mainly homeless street children. A pilot study was conducted on 30 inmates of the observation home in January 2002 in which the substance use rate was found to be

22 UNICEF (2003), unless otherwise indicated, the data was taken from UNICEF (www.unicef.org) and refers to information published in 2003.
50%. At 10% allowable error, the sample size was calculated as 100. Based on the admission rate of 25 children per month, it was estimated that about 125 boys would be available for study in 5 months, allowing an attrition rate of 20%. All the boys between 6-16 years who were brought to the observation home between February, 2002 and June 2002 were included. At admission, the boys underwent psychological screening and IQ testing whenever required by trained psychologists. The criteria for exclusion were (a) mental retardation defined as IQ £70 (b) inability of the subject to understand either Hindi or English.\(^{23}\)

WHO estimates that globally, 25% to 90% of street children indulge in taking sedative substance? According to UNICEF, there are more than 5,00,000 street children in India who live and work in inhuman conditions and are at high risk of substance use. Knowledge of extent of the problem and socio-demographic risk factors is essential to devise effective preventive strategies against substance use. The present study was designed to know the magnitude of substance use and its risk factors among a group of street children in Delhi. The age of the child was taken from the official records and was determined by the Juvenile Welfare Board at the time of admission. The study tools consisted of a self-developed, semi-structured questionnaire about child’s social and demographic background.

This questionnaire was pre-tested on 30 inmates of the observation home in January 2002 and suitably modified. The study subjects were interviewed regarding substance use any time before coming to observation home and the knowledge of its harmful effects. The informed written consent of the observation home authorities was obtained (WHO, 2003).\(^{21}\)

The knowledge of harmful effects did not deter children from indulging in substance use. This factor needs consideration while devising preventive interventions against substance use. It was found that substance use in the family

\(^{23}\) Ibid
did not increase the risk of substance use in children. This finding is different from other studies. The most common agents consumed were nicotine and alcohol (Deepti Pagare G S, Meena M Singh and Renuka Saha, 2003).\textsuperscript{24}

Delhi Shelter Home for street children (Amit Sinha, 2003) formed in 2003 connects and synergizes the efforts of three distinct groups of society street children, youth volunteers and those who mobilize resources for the home shelter. Jamghat has no regular means of income or funding to sustain itself. It has managed to sustain itself with funds raised through street plays. Either the children engage in vocational training or formal schooling but all receive non formal education. About 30 children have been part of Jamghat Ghar for over four to six months and as for others, some have found work after some educational or vocational process. Tamil Nadu Models of paediatric care in HIV (Jeyapaul Sundar, 2006) Buds of Christ run projects on paediatric care in HIV in Namakkal and Madurai. The key components that really worked, with children affected and infected, are Life Skills Education, Children Peer Support Group, Children’s Clubs – for children less than eight years old, children friendly drop-in centres, and community Kids Club for teenage but vulnerable children. The organization has held opportunistic Infection Management Health Camps for children living with HIV, trains children on innovative methods to help them adhere to ART. Maharashtra District Integrated Strategic HIV/AIDS Action’ (DISHA), Sangli District (Shreepal Saptasagar, 2007)\textsuperscript{22} UNICEF launched the programme with Sangli Zilla Parishad and Yerala Projects Society, as a nodal agency. DISHA held a camp for HIV infected and affected children in 2007 that helped identify and provide treatment and counselling.

\textsuperscript{24} Deepti Pagare GS, Meena, Singh MM and Renuka Saha (2003), Risk Factors of Substance Use Among street children from Delhi, From Department of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi.
The Civil Hospital of Delhi has a Paediatric HIV care cell, which is providing ART to 232 children. Nineteen ICTC centres have been set up across the district. To facilitate awareness for early detection, three testing centres at the level of Primary Health Centre (PHC) have been set up. Support is available to take care of nutrition, travel and other needs of these children; however, very few still benefit by it. Draft UN Guidelines: For the Appropriate use and Conditions of Alternative Care for children (Mini Bhaskar, UNICEF, Sahibabad, 2007) United Nations; 18 June 2007 Intended to enhance the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child regarding the protection and well-being of children who are in need of alternative care Discusses the effects of global impact of HIV on children and recommends strengthening of HIV treatment and prevention services for children.

3.5 Status of Street Children in Andhra Pradesh

It is observed that along with the large influx of people on transit and business, come also hundreds of children, mostly between 8 and 16 years of age. They mostly come from poor rural, landless agricultural labourers’ communities and from impoverished artisans / petty traders’ families, from all over Andhra Pradesh, with only 5% of them from other states. It is observed that a vast majority of these children who run away from their families are not able to cope with the hardships, turmoil, the stark reality of deprivation of food and love in their large poor rural families. Children of alcoholic fathers, deserted mothers and also those who are beaten, tormented and driven out of their homes / villages for petty thefts, quarrels, come looking for a way out for a break from hurt, pain and hunger. They come by trains, buses, and lorries, hitchhiking and even walking. 5% of these street children constitute girl children. Many of them are pimp within a very short time after reaching the city. Unfortunately, they are for the most part, never seen again.
The first few days for the child on the street, away from his village, are
days of bewilderment coupled with fear and hunger. His meagre belongings are
soon stolen or pawned. He is molested, beaten and/or sexually abused. Sometimes
he is picked up by the police and sent to remand home. With a total breakdown of
his coping abilities, he should rather go back home, but decides to remain on the
streets only because the situation at home is more desperate or because he has no
“home” to go to.\textsuperscript{22}

Vijayawada situated on the banks of the sacred river Krishna is Andhra’s
third largest city, after the capital Hyderabad and the port city of Visakhapatnam.
It is inhabited by an estimated population of 1.2 million. With more than 200 long-
distance trains passing through every day, it is one of the nation’s busiest railway
junctions. Moreover, National Highways 5 and 9 which connect Delhi, Mumbai,
and Calcutta with the south of India bring a steady flow of trucks and buses. Due
to its very accessibility, more than 40,000 people among them, scores of street
children migrate to the city every year. Most of them come here from rural and
coastal Andhra to escape underdevelopment, unemployment, water scarcity, or
food shortages. A survey by the Forum for Child Rights in May, 2001 counted 235
children on average, 33 a day who arrived at the Vijayawada railway station over
the course of a single week. The majority of them hailed from other towns and
villages within Andhra, while only about 10 per cent had travelled from out of
state. Vijayawada’s “main attractions” abundance of cheap and tasty food,
availability of water to drink and bathe, ease of finding employment, and the
presence of over 40 movie theatres (by far, the children’s favourite pass-time)
charging a mere 4 Rupees (10 cents) for admission render the city particularly a
popular destination for runaway children. Essentially, the city offers them
comparatively greater opportunities to provide for their basic needs and entertain themselves occasionally.25

Parents need to play an important role in early intervention services to have a significant effect on children's developmental and social-emotional well-being. With some exceptions, the field of early intervention has failed to engage parents as active and primary mediators of the developmental services their children receive. This failure is incompatible both with the developmental theories on which early intervention services are based, as well as the substantially greater number of opportunities. Parents have to influence children’s learning and development compared with school personnel and intervention specialists. Furthermore, an increasing body of empirical evidence has identified parent involvement as a critical ingredient of effective developmental intervention. Theory and research findings demand early intervention change practices related to parent involvement. Social workers in children and family services may be ideally suited to meeting the need for early intervention professionals who are committed to working with families. This article describes an early intervention training program that is being integrated into the master’s degree social work program at Case. Western Reserve University (Mahoney, Gerald, Wiggers, Bridgette, 2007).26 “The United Nations has been attributed as estimating the population of street children worldwide at 150 million, with the number rising daily. These young people are more appropriately known as community children, as they are the offspring of our communal world. Ranging in age from three to eighteen, about 40 per cent of those are homeless. The other 60 per cent work on the streets


to support their families. They are unable to attend school and are considered to live in “especially difficult circumstances.” Increasingly, these children are the defenseless victims of brutal violence, sexual exploitation, abject neglect, chemical addiction, and human rights violations.”

Hyderabad a career in IT for street children, Sounds far-flung, doesn’t it? Well! Satyam’s corporate social responsibility arm - Satyam Foundation and Society for Integrated Development in Urban and Rural Areas (SIDUR) — has made it possible for these children to dream of a career in the IT sector too. An IT training centre trains a batch of 30 street children in basic computer skills, MS Office and data entry. English speaking and development of communication skills will also form a part of the training. The organization also plans to train children having monthly income of less than Rs. 2,000. Satyam Foundation has facilitated 10 computers and has plans to increase the number to 30 in the near future. Apart from one regular faculty for English and communication skills and two for computer training, Satyam employees will also volunteer for training and counselling sessions of children over the weekend. As regards to placements, Balaji, senior vice-president, Satyam Foundation said, “in an increasingly computer literate world there would be no dearth of opportunities for these children.”

Sometimes, the street child runs into a friend who introduces him into his gang, for a price. He has to slowly gain in roads, go for contacts and acceptance. Generally, within a month, he gets accustomed to the rough life. But it takes at least two years to make the grade as a street child, somewhat equipped to cope. He learns the hard and cruel way to survive – to beg, steal, scavenge, and win patronage of the bigger boys or pimps. And slowly he is on his own, in his own


28 SIDUR and Satyam Foundation, Hyderabad (2008)
gang of street children but ‘independent’ and ‘his own master’. Most kids live on the railway platforms, in the bus terminus, market yards, shop verandas, parks, pavements and footpaths.\(^{29}\)

One of the surveys (ILO, 2007) revealed that more than 60% of the street children are rag-pickers, and more than 50% of these boys were some way or other attached to different ‘Rag shops’ (Places to exchange recyclable materials for small amounts of cash). In many a case, the children pledge themselves to the rag shops owners by borrowing money from them. But they are not in a position to pay back the borrowed money. In fact, they borrow even more which makes them “Bonded Child Labourers.” The henchmen are there to hunt them out bringing them back; if they try to run away from the respective shop owners. An investigation by the street educators reveals a fact that apart from girl children, the cases of sexual abuse of male children are also on the rise in the city. Most of the street children live in dirt and filth. Some of them are severely malnourished and are the victims of diseases such as Tuberculosis, Typhoid, Malaria, Jaundice, Hepatitis-B, Kidney Disorders, etc., which often go untreated and result in death. Many of them are victims of drug abuse and liquor addiction. Sexually Transmitted Diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, are becoming rampant. Needless to say, the vast majority of these innocent children, unless rescued and rehabilitated at an early age, are prone to become anti-social elements. The reality of the street child is the naked and vicious face of broken home, poverty and exploitation. Apart from these street children who have no contact with their families, there are a huge number of children on the street, flowing onto the city’s streets from its slums to be engaged in various works to earn income to their families (ILO, 2007).

Hyderabad is the largest city as well as the capital of the state of Andhra Pradesh. According to 2001 Census, in Hyderabad, the total city population was

\(^{29}\) ILO (2007), International Programme on the elimination of child labour and street children, Evaluation Report IPEC in India
7,280,000, out of which 40% were children. As per the Government report, the street children in Hyderabad City are more than 55,000. Majority of these street children are below 15 years age, and mostly are migrants from rural or semi-rural areas from all over Andhra Pradesh.\textsuperscript{30}

The Municipal Corporations of major cities like Hyderabad, Visakapatnam, Vijayawada are, however, showing some interest in the plight of street children. Studies show that there are more programs for street children in the country today than ever before, and that some are either located in Municipal Building or assisted by the Local Body. The Juvenile Justice Act 1986 is now defunct since the U.N.C.R.C., and India’s ratification of the same. The new JJ Act is better but it needs serious discussion.\textsuperscript{31}

In conjunction with URDES India, HTH assisted in two “Pavement Programs” which consisted of visiting areas where street children normally “hang out.” Lunch was served and time was spent befriending these youths. Typically, a few former street kids who now live at the shelter and receive job training will come along to talk and help the young people relate to living at a shelter. HTH makes weekly visits to the shelter to bring food and clothing and give classes in morality and life.\textsuperscript{32}

The History of women and children has all too often been marred by cases of marginalization, difficulties, hardships and violence. In times of danger or crisis, childhood has almost always come face to face with the closed world of welfare institutions, and this is a chapter in history that cannot as yet be considered entirely closed. It is only in recent years, as a consequence of the new importance given to the concept of protecting children’s rights, it has been possible to break


\textsuperscript{31} NISD (2004),Training manual for Street Educators, UNICEF.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid
the rigidity of those social policies that entrusted children and adolescents to the care of such institutions.\textsuperscript{33}

Most kids live on the platform, in the bus terminus, at way side eating places, shop verandas, parks, pavements and footpaths. They steal, beg or scavenge from refuse bins enough to eat and stay alive. Then they move on – by trains and Lorries. Most of them are ‘rolling stones.’\textsuperscript{34}

\textbf{3.6 Status of Street Children in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Guntur Cities}

In 2003 UNICEF report estimated the number of street children in Vijayawada to be 19,800. Such a figure includes those who live in the streets or the railway station, those who are orphans and homeless, and those from the surrounding slums who work in the streets. In November of 2002, however, The New Sunday Express Magazine reported that Vijayawada is believed to be home to as many as 60,000 street children. The data collected by the Forum for Child Rights, which comprises the area’s major NGOs, allow us to trace a demographic profile of Vijayawada’s street children. The typical street kid is a boy between 11 and 13 years of age; a large majority are Hindus pertaining to castes that the government designated as “backward.” Street children are driven out of their homes by poverty and violence. More than 75 percent, in fact, mention the breakdown of their families, and the repeated abuse as the precipitating causes. Such abuses generally begin or intensify when one of the parents remarries, and the child ends up being considered inferior to the step parent’s sons and daughters. In other cases, street life is not a choice — \textit{albeit} one compelled by unbearable

\textsuperscript{33} Juvenile Justice Dept (2007)

\textsuperscript{34} Donbosco Navajeevan, Secunderabad (2010)
circumstances — but the consequence of abandonment or the loss of both
parents.\textsuperscript{35}

Local NGOs operate a number of homes, hostels, and shelters — among
them, Navajeevan Bala Bhavan, AMG, SKCV, Happy Home and Daddy’s Home
— designed to accommodate street children. Many, however, view such
organizations with suspicion; often, they leave these structures shortly after having
been welcomed there. Many of these homes, in fact, require that the child attend
school and comply with more or less stringent behavioural rules. To protect the
freedom that street life guarantees, many choose to sleep on sidewalks, street
corners, or night shelters over the safety and relative comfort of the homes. Such
supposed freedom, however, exposes the children to disease, exploitation, and
further abuse. Sniffing toxic substances like glue and other solvents is a
commonplace experience. In addition, their lifestyle often puts them at high risk of
contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. According to the United
Nations, one-half of Vijayawada’s street children have a sexually transmitted
disease or infection.\textsuperscript{36}

If one tours around the city of Visakhapatnam, the most ubiquitous scene
that one finds at almost all the traffic islands is the presence of street children or
women with kids in their arms seeking alms, unmindful of the heavy traffic. There
is every danger of these children being knocked down by moving vehicles. One
can witness the growing insensitivity of the public and the authorities concerned
towards abuse of children. It’s wrong to think that giving a coin or scolding the
beggars is a solution. The children come from different backgrounds. Many of
them are runaway kids, who are victims of neglect or torture at home. Some are
made to beg by their own parents to supplement the family income or fall into the


\textsuperscript{36} UN Report (2004).
hands of middlemen who hire their services to mint money. Some live on the railway platforms and beg in trains.\textsuperscript{37}

Forum for Child Rights and CHILDLINE is a common platform of NGOs working for the cause of street children in Vijayawada for collective action towards children at risk. Its vision is to promote the Rights of the Child as enshrined in the UN Charter: Survival, Protection, Development and Participation. Its mission is to make Vijaywada a child-friendly city established on 14 August 1997. The Chairman of Care and Share is the Secretary of the Forum (The Governing Body includes the Mayor, Commissioner of Police, Commissioner Municipal Corporation, and Asst Labour Commissioner). The Forum runs CHILDLINE 1098 – a 24 hour Helpline for children in distress. CHILDLINE has been functioning since 20 November 2000. So far, CHILDLINE has reached out to 7,479 children, with programme supported by Government of India and NGOs.\textsuperscript{38}

They indulge in all sorts of vices like gambling, smoking and even consuming liquor. Sometimes they are rescued by voluntary organizations like CHILDLINE but most of them prefer to return to the streets and live the way they want instead of going back home and getting beaten up by their drunkard father or step mother. Some of the little boys and girls prefer doing petty jobs like working as a helper at a mechanic shop, tea stall, and hotel or as domestic help. Girls are generally preferred as domestic servants. Their services are much sought after by employers despite a ban on child labour. Ironically, children have been employed even in the works being executed by Government departments like the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and the Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA). It could have been just indifference or insensitivity.

\textsuperscript{37} CHILDLINE Visakhapatnam (2007), Problems of street children in Visakhapatnam, National Newsletter, Visakhapatnam.

to the problem. A little girl was badly beaten up at Murali Nagar, Visakapatnam a week after the world observed Anti-Child Labour Day, and even as the Labour Department was conducting a drive for identification, release and rehabilitation of child labourers. A few years ago another girl was beaten black and blue by her employer for a trivial mistake. While these cases have come to light, there could be several others that go unreported. The ‘victims’ suffer silently either out of fear of losing their ‘job’ or under pressure from their parents back home. Interestingly, most of the time it is the educated or rich ‘master’ or members of his family, that indulge in violence against their ‘servants’ (The Hindu, 2008).

Visaka Bala Tejassu conducted the survey on platform children in vizag in 2010. The survey lasted for 7 days and identified 291 children. Each day 15 new children land on the vizag platform. 31 per cent of the children are addicted to smoking, 17 per cent to inhaling solution and 27 per cent to gutkha. Majority of the children are in the age group of 11-17 years. Children intolerant to physical harassment tend to run away and they constitute 37 per cent of children found belong this category.

According to the Andhra Jyothi, a daily in Andhra Pradesh, “Street children are suffering for their families, when they are supposed to go to schools.” The Andhra Jyothi, that in Guntur city there are about 800 street children. Most of these children are paper-pickers and beggars. Some of them earn money by cleaning the railway compartments, and they use that money for their enjoyment like smelling white fluid distillers (whitener) as a drug and some of them also go for sexual enjoyment.

To come out from this life they need non-formal education, self employment courses like tailoring, vehicle-mechanism. They need to be provided

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40 Visaka Bala Tejassu (2010), Visakapatnam.
with good shelters, food and medical needs. There is also need for counselling for repatriations or home placements.\textsuperscript{41}

The serious problem of an institutionalized childhood could not be resolved by simply establishing a series of programmes for deinstitutionalization. A completely new model of social services has first to be implemented, a model that will act preventively where children and families are vulnerable and at the risk of marginalization.\textsuperscript{42}

When the parallels among the cities selected for study are drawn, Vijayawada happens to be the city where the highest amount of work on street is being undertaken, while Guntur city is lagging behind with meagre activity on street children. Visakhapatnam, of course, is seen on the picture with moderate activity on street children.

\textsuperscript{41} Andhra Jyothi news paper April 12\textsuperscript{th} 2011(Dist edition).

\textsuperscript{42} Juvenile Justice Dept (2010).