Chapter 1
1.1 INTRODUCTION

The National Policy for Children, 1974 states that 'the nation’s children are a supremely important asset. Their nurture and solicitude are our responsibility... It shall be the policy of the State to provide adequate services to children both before and after birth and through the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development.' It clearly brings out the importance of child development by recognising the need for special attention which they deserve to become robust citizens.

A nation's development depends upon its human resource, which, in turn, depends on what it does with the young. As children constitute a large segment of population in India (36.5 per cent of total population in the age group of 0-14, according to 1991 census), they are recognised as an important human resource and therefore the child development and welfare programmes are given prominent place in our national plans.

Though our Constitution and the policies declared for the benefit of children assure their protection and nurture, there is some ambiguity in the definition of child itself. Different Acts, Policies and Programmes recognise children differently. There is no uniformity in the age of the child mentioned in them. Generally, it is accepted that the younger the children, the more vulnerable they are physically and psychologically and the less they are able to fend for themselves. Children are
expected to fulfil certain tasks at certain age. These age limits formally regulate children’s activities. So, it is very important to understand the definition of child.

1.2 DEFINITION OF THE CHILD

Age limits differ from activity to activity and from country to country. Many countries make a distinction between light and hazardous work, with the minimum age for the former generally being twelve, for the latter usually varying between sixteen and eighteen. Generally, almost all the countries accept that minimum age to recognise the young ones as ‘children’ is fifteen. The legal definition of ‘child’ depends very much upon the specific legislations enacted for the protection of children. Obviously, it should be noted that mostly the definition of a child varies with the purpose. Some of such definitions are quoted hereunder.

The Indian Penal Code, 1860 states that ‘nothing is an offence which is done by a child above seven years of age under twelve, who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of his conduct on that occasion.’

According to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, ‘child’ means ‘a person who, if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female has not completed eighteen years of age.’

Industries and Factories Acts such as Factories Act, 1948, Apprentices Act, 1951 etc., recognise the age of child as fourteen and do not allow them to work. Even the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, confines the age to fourteen.
But the Central Children Act, 1960 and the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 consider the age of boys as sixteen years and for girls eighteen years for being considered as children. This is a most acceptable definition of children as it gives due attention to their physical and mental development as well as welfare (The main aim of Juvenile Justice Act is to provide protection, care, treatment, development and rehabilitation of neglected and delinquent children).

1.3 STATUS OF CHILDREN

Status of children in a country closely depends on its socio-economic conditions and family life styles. It reflects the standard of living in that country. As children are completely dependent on family, society and State for their physical and mental development, they are more vulnerable to the conditions around them. Consequently the problems faced by children directly or indirectly influence the national development.

Till recently, child welfare programmes are confined only to educational and health programmes. They are considered as a part of family and social welfare programmes. Only in later half of twentieth century children are recognised as individuals with dignity. The UNICEF passed a resolution on the rights of the child in the form of ‘Universal Declaration of Child Rights’ in the year 1989. The UNICEF’s Convention commits countries to guarantee children’s rights to:

- Survival, development and protection from abuse, neglect and economic or sexual exploitation;
- The highest attainable standard of health care;
• Free and compulsory primary education;
• Assistance for families to achieve an adequate standard of living; and
• Freedom of thought, conscience, religion, association and expression (Arabind, 1997).

India is one of the countries which adopted this resolution in the year 1992. From then onwards the focus is shifted to needs assessment and need based programmes are given priority in planning and implementation. Though attempts are made to formulate an integrated and uniform approach, no programme could succeed so far in meeting all the needs of children.

Assessment of children's needs at a comprehensive level necessitates understanding the family situation. Though different interventional approaches, viz., preventive, curative, promotive and rehabilitative, are adopted at various levels - individual and community - family is accorded prime position in the care of children.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1989) rightly obliges family, as a fundamental unit of society, to focus on children so as to afford to them necessary pre-conditions to growth.

Family influences child's development to a great extent. It is a major source of development of children, by way of providing nurturance, emotional bonding and socialization. The patterns of social learning, the acquisition of language and selfhood, the learning of social roles and moral norms are largely learnt in the family and its environment. Besides physical care, wholesome food and purposeful recreation, children get emotional security through warmth and love in the family. A favourable
atmosphere in the family helps a child in its holistic development reflected in a well integrated personality.

Bhatnagar (1991) rightly observes that there is a difference between the children belonging to the homes with favourable and unfavourable parent-child relationship. He observed that the children from homes with favourable environment are found to be warm-hearted and out-going, more intelligent and insightful, more stable emotionally with higher degree of ego-strength, more assertive and competitive, more enthusiastic and cheerful, more responsible and conscientious, more adventurous and socially bold, more reflective and individualistic, self-confident and self-controlled. In contrast, children from unfavourable home environment are found to be reserved and detached, distrustful and aloof, less intelligent, having weak ego and low degree of emotional stability, submissive and dependent, sober and serious, cautious and full of cases having low super ego strength, indolent and independable, shy and timid, individualistic and selfish, feeling inadequate and insecure and having low self sentiment integration.

Traditional family system in India has provided economic, social and emotional support to its members. Needs of children were looked after by the joint family and it was not necessary to place destitute children in institutions. The process of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation has resulted in the breakdown of these traditional social structures and support systems. Nuclear families took the place of joint families. Economic necessities forced families migrate to urban areas and women to work field. As a result, child neglect, abuse, exploitation, abandonment and destitution appear to be on an increase. This trend and its
consequences deprive children of their basic right to personal social identity, protection, care and preparation for a productive life. Families who struggle for livelihood in slums and the deteriorating social environment in urban poor neighbourhoods contribute to the growing numbers of street children and delinquent children.

Estimates show that about 92 million Indian children live below the poverty line (NIPCCD, 1996) and work in hazardous occupations to make both ends meet. The Government launched many programmes to meet the needs of all sections of children. Apart from physically and mentally handicapped, a special group is also identified, namely 'Socially Handicapped'. Socially handicapped children are those children who are deprived of basic needs as well as rights, especially those who fall under below poverty line category, neglected and destitute children. Either economic necessity or disorganised family condition forces these children to encounter physical, psychological and emotional problems resulting in a retarded growth. UNICEF named such children as 'Children in difficult circumstances'.

1.4 THE PROBLEM OF STREET CHILDREN

'Ensure the physical, emotional and social well being of children in especially difficult circumstances particularly through community and family based interventions and ensure achievement of all sectoral goals to tackle the root cause' is a major goal of UN convention on Human rights declared in the General Assembly of United Nations on 20th November 1989. Recognising the exceptional vulnerability of children, it gives highest priority to the special care and assistance for these children. It is guided by the principle of 'First call for children'. 
In reality, children in difficult circumstances are far from the reach of this care and assistance. Children in difficult circumstances include -

- street and working children,
- neglected orphans and destitutes,
- children of prostitutes,
- juvenile delinquents,
- children of AIDS affected parents or AIDS affected children and AIDS orphans, and
- drug addicted children.

Though street children are a subset of a far larger number of vulnerable children, they are recognised as a more vulnerable group because of their working and living conditions. But, very little work is done for the welfare and rehabilitation of these children, as they are misunderstood as child labourers for quite sometime.

Assessment of needs of these children is very difficult unless the nature of the problem is understood. Before examining the nature of the problem of street children it is very important to understand the definition of street child.

The main issue arises in giving a correct definition itself as different countries perceive the problem differently. The definitions given by Cemane (1990) and Swart (1988) are somewhat clear in their nature and are applicable to all the countries.
Cemane (1990) stresses on socialization of these children and defines street children as "a group of poorly socialized children, failing to develop commitments and attachments within society".

According to Swart (1988), a street child is "any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become her or his habitual abode and or source of livelihood and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults." Similarly, an inter NGO programme conducted in 1983 gives the definition of street children as "those for whom the street, more than their family, has become their real home" (Ennew Judith, 1994).

Most of the studies presented street child in different ways like homeless (Drake, 1989; Breakey et al., 1990), abandoned (Hoge, 1983; Gebers, 1990; Hillman, 1994) and parentless (Ennew Judith, 1994) and working children (Lusk, 1992). Some of them considered these children as runaways and throwaways (Nye and Edelbrock, 1980; Richter, 1989). Mostly these children are understood as children who cut ties with families (Adams et al., 1985) and make street their dwelling place (Swart, 1988). While Cemane (1990) calls them as poorly socialized children, Loening (1988) says that they are a byproduct of a community that has been exposed to industrialization and urbanisation without the support of a firm social service infrastructure. This kind of understanding forced the researchers to describe these children as 'children in need of care and protection' or simply 'at risk' (Keen, 1992).

The UNICEF has given a more comprehensive definition of street children. UNICEF defines street children in these words: "The term 'street children' denotes
not only a place of congregation but also a certain set of working and living conditions. The vast majority are on the streets to make a living for their families and/or themselves. The return may be paltry and be in kind rather than in cash. For these children, the street is the working place. Secondly, they spend a lot of time in the street frequently because of the low return of their labour. Thirdly, most make their way into the informal sector as petty hawkers, shoeshine boys and scavengers of raw material or even thieves and street prostitutes. Fourthly, by the nature of their work and life, they are normally on their own, largely unprotected by adults. For these reasons, above all others, 'they are vulnerable' to many dangers and abuses and they tend to receive few services essential to their protection and development" (Hajra Kumar, 1997).

This definition gives a clear picture of the condition of children in the streets and their exceptional vulnerability. For most of these children street becomes 'home' where they sleep under open sky, find livelihood and make fun with the friends. The intensity of vulnerability depends on the time they spend on streets, exposure to street environment, presence or absence of some adult control and the nature of living and working conditions. Keeping all this in view, UNICEF (1997) has identified three categories of street children, viz., children on the street, children of the street, and abandoned children.

UNICEF tried to draw a clear distinction between these three categories on the basis of family connections they have. The first category of children, *children on the street*, though work in the streets, maintain family connections and get support of more or less regular nature. Mostly, children of slum community belong to this
category of whom most return to home at the end of long working day. A sense of belonging to the local community in which their home is situated gives some emotional security to these children.

Comparatively, the second and third categories of children, *children of the street and abandoned children*, are more exposed to hardships of the society as they sever all ties with their families. When they have ties, they are remote and contacts with the family are few and far between. It is the street that gives them shelter, food and fosters a sense of belonging and companionship.

While the third category of children are completely abandoned or orphaned by their families, the second category consists of children who run away from unpleasant or traumatic home environment. Asha Rane (1994) feels that these children run away because they face such problems that they are unable to resolve like alcoholism of parents, child abuse, ill treatment by step parents, unemployment and poverty, and experience conflicts which go beyond their level of tolerance. Very few children run away to taste the joy of city life.

The above categorisation lays much stress on their working and living conditions, neglecting the specific needs and problems of these children. It somewhat fails to draw a distinction between street and working children. The first category, *children on the street*, who return to their homes in the evenings, are mostly working children. Though compulsion of work and excess load retard the growth and development of these children, most derive satisfaction in supporting their families. Tara Ali Baig (1979) supports this kind of productive work on the part of children. In her own words, “a child who contributes to his family’s resources is the child who
Belonging is one of childhood's most essential elements and it is often more important than play or happiness. Being useful to his family is a security that mere education and other benefits do not necessarily confer.” Moreover, as they supplement additional income to the family, most of their physical needs are fulfilled in the family itself. One should not forget that the constant adult supervision protects them from external environment. This saves them from ‘exceptional vulnerability’ of street living.

Comparatively, because of their exposure to street environment, second and third categories of street children face more problems and therefore will have more needs. Their needs completely differ from children with the families. Because of the unstructured and destabilizing street life, children of these two categories are completely mobile in nature. Different countries adopted different approaches in categorising these children. Adams et al., (1985) distinguished three types of street children: children who flee the home because of family conflict, bad social relationships, and alienation; children who are rejected by their parents, or forced to leave home; and children who are the products of rejection by society. In Vietnam, street children are categorised as abandoned and homeless, children who go home to their families; and children of street families. Jakarta's street children are of two categories: children working on the street; and children living on the street. Whatever may be the categorisation, all the countries accept the fact that the children without families are at high risk. Such children are influenced by adults or older street children (Childhope, 1992) and also are tend to be victimised by criminals to commit crimes (Santaputra et al., 1990). Nalini and Rayalu (1994) express the same view and
feel that these experiences have a harmful influence on their behaviour and development. In the absence of stable residence and a safe environment, they constantly move from one place to another. So, it is very difficult to estimate their number itself. Agnelli (1986) in his report on street children rightly points out that the estimates of street children are just guesstimates.

1.5 STREET CHILDREN: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The problem of street children is not only found in developing countries like India but also in developed countries like USA and UK. UNICEF (1994) estimated that at least 100 million children world wide live at least part of the time on the streets. le Roux (1996) rightly remarks - "no country and virtually no city can escape the presence of these so-called street children." At the same time no country could succeed so far in giving a clear-cut idea about street children phenomenon. They are always confused with child labour, homeless, juvenile delinquents and beggars. Some countries made an attempt to describe street children as 'Runaways' and 'Throwaways'. Nye and Edelbrock (1980) and Richter (1989) tried to describe these two terms. Runaways are described as children who voluntarily leave home without parental permission. Throwaways are those who leave home because their parents have actually encouraged them to leave, or have abandoned them, or have subjected them to intolerable levels of abuse and neglect.

Thanks to Indian social system, there are a very negligible number of throwaways compared to other countries. Whatever it may be, projections on such vulnerable children reveal the fact that no country is an exception from the problem - both developed and developing countries. Table 1.1 gives a clear picture of estimates
## TABLE 1.1

### Estimates of Street children in different countries of the World

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/State</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worldwide</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Working and Street children</td>
<td>100 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Homeless children</td>
<td>4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Bolivian Government Census figures</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>1500 to 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>Action International Ministries</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Homeless children</td>
<td>12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>World Vision International</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>5000 to 10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaka, Bangladesh</td>
<td>World Vision International</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Street girls</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul, Turkey</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>6000 to 7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>500 to 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Kids Alive Ministry</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Street and under privileged children</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>Casa Alianza Organization</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>40 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico city</td>
<td>Action International Ministries</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Under privileged and Street children</td>
<td>1900000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abandoned children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>240000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td>BBCI News</td>
<td>12th Oct. 1994</td>
<td>Abandoned children per year</td>
<td>50000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>BBCI News</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>3000 to 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manila, Philippines</td>
<td>Action International Ministries</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>50000 to 7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare and Development</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Street children</td>
<td>1200000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>The Children's Society</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Missing children per year</td>
<td>100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Runaways and Throwaways</td>
<td>500000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of street, working and homeless children in different countries in the world, while Table 1.2 shows the estimates of street children in different cities in India.

There are two aspects to be noticed here. One is, these estimates just give some general idea about the magnitude of the problem. But one cannot completely rely on these estimates. Secondly, while estimating the number of street children, the age group is taken as 0-14 years in most studies. In reality, those who completely lead their lives on the streets are in the age group of 6-16 years. These estimates completely neglect 15-16 age group of street children. As a result, their needs and problems are also completely neglected. Gebers' (1990) definition of street child is a good attempt in this regard as it includes the children below 16 years as well. In the words of Gebers, "In the widest sense, a street child is one who has made the street his real home ... those who have abandoned (or have been abandoned by) their families, schools and immediate communities before they are sixteen years of age and have drifted into a nomadic street life."

1.6 NEEDS OF STREET CHILDREN

Most of the studies conducted on street children talk about basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, education and health services and the need for institutionalisation. But, this kind of institutionalisation may create more problems. Lack of love and affection makes these children tougher and tougher which may lead to deviant behaviour. Christina Noble (1992) of Vietnam rightly observes, "Inside a street child, who gives the appearance of being tough and difficult, is a child who has never experienced what it is to be loved and what it is to be human." Society's disapproval of these children makes them juvenile delinquents. Askale Mckonnen
### TABLE 1.2
Estimates of Street Children in different cities of India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/City</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age group (Yrs)</th>
<th>Working children</th>
<th>Street children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Operation Research Group</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>44 million</td>
<td>11 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>414700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>National Sample Survey</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18 million (17.36 million)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>300000</td>
<td>75000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>400000</td>
<td>100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta (Kolkata)</td>
<td>Ministry of Welfare/UNICEF</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75000 to 100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay (Mumbai)</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>More than 100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras (Chennai)</td>
<td>Ministry of Welfare/UNICEF</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras (Chennai)</td>
<td>Forum for Street &amp; Working children</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>75000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras (Chennai)</td>
<td>NGO's</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0-16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1500000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>Ministry of Welfare/UNICEF</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>45000</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalore</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0-16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80000 to 100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanpur</td>
<td>Ministry of Welfare/UNICEF</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>6-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20000 to 30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiruvanathapuram</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poona</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>NIPCCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>1661940</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad/Secunderabad</td>
<td>Ministry of Welfare/UNICEF</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyderabad/Secunderabad</td>
<td>National Sample Survey</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vijayawada</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1400 to 1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vijayawada</td>
<td>National Sample Survey</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
<td>National Sample Survey</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tirupati</td>
<td>National Sample Survey</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
remarks that, “the society in most cases has negative stereotype on street children and looks at them with suspicion since they consider that the works they are engaged with are all used as covers for other anti-social activities”. He further says that, “there is no effort made to educate the society about the lives, grievances, needs and problems of these disadvantaged children and for this reason the society should not be blamed for its attitudes/outlooks”. Participation of people in the rehabilitation process of these children can only change their attitude.

This rehabilitation process primarily includes assessment of needs. Hajra Kumar (1997) listed nine needs of street children. They are:

• proper nutrition;
• health care;
• bathing and toilet facilities;
• recreational facilities;
• guidance and counseling;
• non-formal and educational programmes;
• saving for future;
• a place to keep belongings; and
• social identity

This list of needs mentions only the immediate needs of street children. It does not mention vocational, emotional, psychological and esteem needs.

Child relief and you (CRY) has suggested for the provision of shelter, support related to health problems, basic numeracy and vocational training to meet the
immediate needs of these children. For long-term solutions, poverty alleviation programmes have been suggested.

It is a well known fact that for a better provision of welfare and rehabilitation services there should be a periodical check or assessment of needs. As it has been ten years in providing welfare services to street children, it is necessary to review how far these children’s needs are fulfilled. So, there is a necessity to examine the work done by the Governmental and Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) for the welfare of street children.

1.7 REHABILITATION OF STREET CHILDREN IN INDIA AND ANDHRA PRADESH

Concern for growing problem of street children was started only in 1980’s. The UNICEF’s identification of street children as children under especially difficult circumstances has drawn the attention of different countries on this special problem.

India, for the first time in 1988, conducted studies in eight major cites, viz., Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kanpur and Indore and estimated the number of working and street children to be around five to six lakhs. Based on these studies, a centrally sponsored scheme was launched in the year 1992-93 by the Ministry of Social Welfare for the benefit of the street children. The main objective of this scheme is to provide integrated community-based or non-institutional basic services for the care, protection and development of street children. A Special Task Force was appointed for the identification of voluntary organisations working for the street children. The Government gives 90 per cent grant as financial
assistance to run homes for children in need of care and protection. It emphasizes on provision of facilities like health services, nutrition supplement, education, vocational training, shelter and counseling services. Each NGO is expected to give basic education and vocational training to at least 300 children in a year. It is expected that each year 20,000 street children will be benefited under the scheme.

Under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, support is extended to setup 'Helpline' which is known as 'CHILDLINE (1098).'</Childline is a phone outreach service for children in especially difficult circumstances. Any child in need or an adult finding a child in a crisis situation can dial 1098, free of cost, for immediate emergency assistance. On receiving the call, a Childline team member responds immediately by either reaching the caller or directing another NGO to respond to the call. The current focus of Childline is the children of the streets. Childline assures the street child that when in need someone who cares is just a phone call away (Jergo Billimoria, 1997). It was first started in Mumbai in 1996 and later extended to other major cities.

Understanding the severity of the problem of street children, different states also launched independent programmes. The Government of Andhra Pradesh appointed a Committee in 1998 to examine:

- all aspects leading to increasing trend of street children in major cities,
- the rehabilitation measures being taken up, and
- the utilisation of funds being provided for their welfare and well-being.

The committee visited major cities of Andhra Pradesh - Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and visited various Governmental and Non-Governmental
Organisations working for the street children and submitted its report. The committee's recommendations are as under:

1. To strengthen the functioning of Department of Juvenile Welfare and Correctional Services;

2. To conduct a comprehensive survey on the salient aspects of the street children;

3. To allocate budget for the rehabilitation of street children;

4. To provide rice, wheat and other essential commodities at a subsidised rate to NGOs working for the welfare of street children;

5. To issue identity cards duly signed by Commissioner of Police to all the street children with good conduct and behaviour to protect them from exploitation;

6. To start residential technical institutions exclusively for the street children to train them in carpentry, tailoring, motor mechanism, house wiring and screen printing, candle making, toy making and book binding etc.;

7. To provide medical aid to start free mobile medical units by the Municipal Corporation and Health Departments and to supply handgloves and plastic sticks to the children involved in rag-picking;

8. To start Childline Service in all the cities of Andhra Pradesh so as to enable the street children to avail this facility in emergency free of cost;

9. To separate street children from other children like poor children, children living in slum areas, child labour and delinquent and neglected children;
10. To appoint task force committees at State level as well as city level, throughout the State where there is a requirement;

11. To take up awareness campaigns through mass media, Radio, Television, Cable TV, Seminars, Conferences, Workshops etc. and to establish information centres in important cities at Railway Stations and Bus Stations.

12. To construct night shelters with sufficient toilets for stay of street children during night time in the major cities;

13. To arrange provision of loans to trained street children through Banks; and

14. To make amendments in the Juvenile Acts for an immediate justice to the Juvenile delinquents.

Very few attempts have been made to adopt these recommendations. A major attempt to be emphasised here is the allocation of budget for the welfare of street children. In the year 2001-2002, Juvenile Welfare, Correction Service and Welfare of Street Children got increased plan allocation of Rs. 417 lakhs compared to Rs. 303 lakhs in the year 2000-2001.

Another important attempt made is to extend Childline Services to all the major cities in Andhra Pradesh. An attempt to use police in the eradication of child labour and and street children has been made in Hyderabad and other cities.

A laudable work has been done by NGOs in this direction. Twenty one NGOs are working for the cause of street children in Andhra Pradesh. These organisations are not only providing shelter but also medical, educational and vocational guidance. In many organisations, though not by professional social workers, counseling services
are also given by trained workers. But many of these programmes give importance only to curative and promotive aspects as well as rehabilitation aspects to some extent, completely neglecting preventive work. As preventive work should have a long-term planning, importance should be given to rehabilitation aspects on the basis of need-based planning.

1.8 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As it is a recent phenomenon, very little work has been done on the problem of street children. Very few studies attempted to give a clear-cut idea of the problem. Further, almost all the studies presented the problem of street children as an urban problem. These studies confirm that the problem has exclusively urban nature and there are no rural street children (Agnelli, 1986). Singh (1996) finds that the problem is on an increase because of rapid changes in the social system, unplanned urbanisation and depriving conditions of the rural population.

Many studies conducted in different parts of the country revealed that there are also street girls but in small numbers. Rao (1988) feels that, “female children in India do not pour into the streets and street based earnings, unless threatened by acute circumstances, that too led by someone, a parent, a guardian or someone else who manages to care, despite his/her only interest being to make profit out of the child’s presence on the street”. He further says that, “somewhere a parent or two is present eternally vigilant about possible attempts of molestation, rape and abuse”. Phillips (1992) notes that, “the girls feel terribly insecure and they do not stay very long on the street, and in any case they are quickly picked up by the pimps from brothels”. RCUES report (1992) supports this view by stating that there were more than twenty
child prostitutes noticed in the vicinity of Secunderabad Railway station. Rao (1988) says that, “these girls are not taken in the arbitrary of street children as they are not shelterless despite using streets to contact customers”. As such, most of the studies on street children focused on boys alone.

Most of the studies conducted on street children have attempted to examine their living and working conditions but failed to provide a detailed analysis of the family background and needs of these children. The studies on street children could be discussed under three heads based on the area of focus, viz., reasons for leaving home, living and working conditions and needs and problems.

1.8.1 REASONS FOR LEAVING HOME

Verghese (1999) finds the reasons for leaving home as poverty, alcoholic parents, neglect and ill-treatment of parents and broken homes. Added to these, there are other reasons like influence of peer group, bad environment and disinterest in education. It also points out that some come out for enjoyment and free living. Rao (1989) gives the reasons that motivate children to be on the street as financial hardship, thrill of adventure, abandonment, negligence of parents and migration. Fr. Sebastian and Tom Jose (1997) also came out with a similar finding.

This picture is totally different in developed countries. As Agnelli (1986) puts it “the majority of street children in industrial countries are victims of inner-city decay, inherited deprivation, chronic unemployment, impossible housing markets, extraordinary high divorce rates and claustrophobic stress.” Raffaelli (1996) talks about structural factors contributing to the presence of street youth which include
“high birth rates, rural-to-urban migration, inadequate housing, economic stagnation, unequal distribution of income and the absence of Government assistance programmes and also war and the AIDS epidemic”.

Whatever may be the reason, as Harris (2000) rightly puts it, “they are produced by a global society that refuses to accept responsibility for the children it has created”.

1.8.2 LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Because of their living and working conditions, street children are called ‘children of the dust’ in Vietnam (Childhope Asia, 1992), ‘strollers’ in South Africa (Swart, 1988) as they spend their nights in the streets and feel they are free to do whatever their mind say and ‘twilight children’ in some other parts of the world, which suggests their fragile and indefinite status. Some studies referred to them as ‘roofless’ and ‘rootless’ children.

Askale Mckonnen (1996) feels that “the causative factor is urbanisation and the expansion of social services in towns which attract children to migrate from rural areas to cities. However, after they reach the city, they find life different from what they expected to be. At a place which is alien, unknown and without anything to offer them except the street, the new comers have to struggle for survival and in the process end up to be part of the street children population”. This gives a clear picture of their condition on the streets.

An UNICEF analysis (1994) shows that on an average 47.4 per cent of the street children spend their nights in open street. But the number could be even more.
It is as high as 99.6 per cent in Calcutta (Ghosh, 1992) and 61.6 per cent in Bombay (D’Lima, 1988). Contrary to this, Rao’s (1989) study which was conducted in Hyderabad reveals that 80 per cent of street children spend their nights in some covered shelter; in fact, those whom it is referring is working and slum children who live with their families.

Asha Rane (1994) noted that, “most of them live under open sky and sleep there too at night, while the rest spend most part of the day on the street, but sleep under a roof - some kind of covered shelter like a hut or a temporary kind of tent of their own, or the home of their employer”. Many studies revealed that these children are found mostly in railway stations, bridges, bus stands, parks, temples, sub-ways, shopping complexes and on pavements. According to Manihara (1999), for most children on the streets life is tiring, difficult and unhappy. Even then most of them prefer to stay on streets than night shelters. The question arises why these children do not prefer night shelters. According to SKCV, an NGO working for street children in Vijayawada, “many good hearted organisations are ultimately aiming to control the children by means of assistance and this deprives street children of the possibility of being accepted as they are. This might well prove to be the reason why street children on the whole aren’t prepared to pay for ‘assistance’ at the cost of their freedom”.

Majority of street children work for their survival. More than 80 per cent children engage in the activities like rag-picking, shoe-shining, begging, cleaning works in the railway stations and hotels and as petty vendors. Very few work as mechanics and shop assistants. According to Poornima Chikarmane (1996) there is a definite hierarchy in the work done by these children. She observes that, “very young
new comers start by rag picking and sweeping the aisles of trains. As they grow older and are able to access capital, they graduate to polishing shoes, vending and trading seats to passengers without reserved seats. Begging is looked down upon and considered to be the lowest form of work. The hierarchy of occupations is determined by the capital investment, returns and the accompanying respectability. Venkatesh (1999) supports this view by saying that “these children work exclusively in the informal sector, in jobs which do not require special skills, training or a sizeable capital investment”.

Many studies tried to examine the working conditions of street children in the activities they are engaged in. These studies revealed that most of these children are rag pickers (Mishra, 1988; Sandhya Venkateswaran, 1994; Singh, 1996, 1999) and they find it quite profitable. Singh (1996) explains that, “job satisfaction of child workers depends upon various factors like monthly income, daily hours of work, physical conditions, nature of work, contractor/employer’s behaviour, regularity of payment, compulsion of work, health of the child and other facilities in the work situation”.

As most of the street children keep shifting their jobs (Rao, 1989) it is very difficult to estimate the number of working children in a particular occupation. Whatever may be the occupation, these children work for more than 8 hours per day (Rao, 1988; Arul Maran, 1997) in a very hazardous and unhygienic surroundings.
1.8.3 NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

Even though there is a growing realisation that the needs and circumstances of street children require special attention, most of the studies made only a partial attempt to address the needs and problems of these children. The needs presented by these studies include basic needs like food, clothes, shelter, bathing and toilet facilities (Rao, 1988; Venkatesh, 1999), education, medical treatment, training and recreation (D’ Lima, 1989).

D’ Lima (1989) and Joe Arimpur (1992) concluded that, these children suffered from homelessness, overwork and police harassment and experienced physical abuse, extortion by older children, adults and local dadas.

A study conducted by Palna (1997) points out that, older children need more than food and shelter. They need a great deal of love and understanding to help them overcome the trauma of what they perceive as rejection.

Some studies conducted in other countries have focused the attention on psychological needs of the street children. They tried to analyse various aspects like self-identity and self-perception among street children (Monteiro and Dollinger, 1988), stress and mental depression in street youth (Ayerst, 1999) and nature of adaptability (D’Abreau et al., 1999).

In India, studies which attempted to examine the psychological profile of street children came to a conclusion that these children have a very low self-image (Mukta Srivastava, 1995; Joe Paul, 1999) and suffer from a sense of inferiority complex (Rao, 1988). In the words of Mukta Srivastava (1995), “these children suffer
from an inferiority complex, are rebellious and destructive in nature and often slip into moments of depression, despair and hopelessness.”

Anu Dasaka (1997) examined the emotional needs of street children and found that, the common needs of a street child arise from lack of love and affection from parents, or the lack of attention and guidance from responsible adults, or the lack of care and concern at the right age. Joe Paul (1999) opines that, “it is in the give and take of the parent-child and other relationships that the child finds a sense of security and self-esteem and ability to deal with complex inner problems”. As they are deprived of all these conditions, they become emotionally vulnerable, physically resilient, naive, wary and street-smart.

As Venkatesh puts it, “since their contacts with society are mainly causal, street children rarely develop any stable or protective relationships with non-street people. They live in a world of their own, seeking the support and protection of local gangs for companionship or to learn the intricacies of street life. They sometimes develop a group identity, and occasionally a spirit of comaraderie, which meet, however imperfectly, their emotional and psycho-social needs”. Even then these children need a personalised counseling. Rao (1988) says “attitude of love, care, concern and friendship with expertise in guiding or counseling for leadership development will route the street child constructively”.

1.9 NEED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The need for the study arises from the necessity to understand the problem of street children in its entirety. As the number of street children is increasing day by
day, it is drawing the attention of people and Government as a social problem. Institutionalization is not always a solution for the problem. For the prevention as well as rehabilitation, a careful investigation and analysis of problems and needs of these children is necessary. Very few attempts have been made in this direction.

A glance at the available literature clearly indicates that very few attempts are made to address their needs. There is no 'completeness' in these studies as they failed to examine all the needs of street children. In most of the studies, much importance is given to basic needs like food, clothes, toilet and bath facilities and need for a shelter. These studies recognised educational, recreational and psychological needs as well but neglected emotional, social, occupational and esteem needs. Since the problem is widespread in many towns and cities, there is a need for comprehensive studies in order to assess the needs of street children, and to evolve a comprehensive framework for their rehabilitation. The present study is a modest attempt in this direction.

1.10 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on the assessment of needs of the street children in a growing city of Andhra Pradesh with an aim to evolve a rehabilitation policy. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. examine the socio-economic characteristics of street children;

2. study the living and working conditions of street children;

3. assess the needs of street children on a comprehensive basis; and

4. suggest measures in the light of the findings of the study, to improve the conditions of street children through a need-based rehabilitation approach.
1.11 CONCEPTUALISATION

For a clear understanding of the topic of the study, it is very important to understand the meanings of the terms used in it. The terminology used in the study is explained below.

1.11.1 REHABILITATION

Oxford dictionary explains that ‘to rehabilitate’ means ‘to restore to a normal life or good condition.’

Rehabilitation is usually defined as the third phase in medicine (prevention being the first and curative care the second). The term is now being stretched to include the whole range of health, economic and social problems. Rehabilitation service is now becoming a multidisciplinary team approach. The term ‘rehabilitation’ is used here in its widest sense.

1.11.2 NEED

According to Webster’s dictionary, ‘need’ is a condition necessitating ‘supply or relief’ or it is ‘a requirement for subsistence or for carrying out some function or activity.

In Kaufman’s (1988) opinion, the most difficult concept to grasp is the whole idea of ‘need,’ in the sense it has been widely accepted for needs assessment. Part of the reason may be due to ambiguity in the language. Witkin and Altschuld (1995) explained that the noun and verb have quite different meanings. In their own words - “Need as a noun refers to the gap or discrepancy between a present state (what is) and a desired state, future state, or condition (what should be). The need is neither the
present nor the future state; it is in between them. Therefore, a need is not a thing in itself but, rather, an inference drawn from examining a present state and comparing it with a vision of a future (better) state or condition. In a sense, a need is like a problem or concern.”

“Need as a verb points to what is required or desired to fill the discrepancy - solutions, means to an end. In simple words, needs are means to achieve some desired end - in effect, they are solutions to the underlying problem or concern.” The term ‘need’ is used both as noun and verb in this study.

1.11.3 REHABILITATION NEEDS

The needs to be assessed for the purpose of rehabilitation are called Rehabilitation Needs in this study.

1.11.4 STREET

The definition given by the Oxford dictionary that the street is a public road in a town or village, with houses on one or both sides, is taken into account for this study.

1.11.5 CHILDREN

For the purpose of this study, a child is taken as a young human being, generally belonging to the age group of six to sixteen years.
1.11.6 STREET CHILDREN

Children who live on the streets or pavements or spend most of their time on the streets, engaged in various activities with no adult supervision or guidance are called 'Street Children.'

1.11.7 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Rehabilitation process involves assessment of needs. Witkin and Altshuld (1995) defined Needs Assessment as "a systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about programme or organisational improvement and allocation of resources. The priorities are based on identified needs." The data obtained through needs assessment can form the basis for guidelines. It gives a base for decision-making and provides a criteria for selecting the means or solutions.

1.12 METHODOLOGY

The present research is meant to study the rehabilitation needs of street children. Survey Method has been used in this study for collecting the information from the sample street children. Case studies have been reported to wherever necessary in order to get deeper insights into the problem. The design selected for the study is descriptive type as it is the best type of research that can be used in the assessment of needs.

Since the study is undertaken by an individual scholar, it is decided to confine the study to one growing city in Andhra Pradesh where the problem of street children is profoundly reported.
As Vijayawada is one of the major cities in Andhra Pradesh and constitutes a large number of street children (nearly 19,000 street and working children according to National Sample survey, 1991), the place is purposively chosen for the study. Even though all the street children living in Vijayawada constitute the universe of the study, important areas where the street children spend most of their time like Railway station, Krishna Barriage, Bridges, Bus stand, Parks, busy shopping areas like Besant road and Lenin Centre etc. were specifically identified for selecting the sample. The sample size is restricted to 100 street children. The sample is again confined to boys only as it is difficult to find shelter-less street girls in the area chosen for the study. The study is mostly based on the primary data. Secondary data and other studies were also consulted to arrive at meaningful conclusions. Convenience and snow-ball sampling methods were followed for conducting the study.

There is a greater chance of accuracy and reliability when the researcher gets the information through direct personal observation. As the respondents are children and most of them are either illiterates or school-dropouts, the tool chosen for data collection was the Interview Schedule. A detailed interview schedule was developed for the purpose of data collection consisting mostly of structured questions. Open-ended and multiple-choice questions were also used to get an insight into various aspects of the problem.

The interview schedule was divided into two parts. The face-sheet consists of personal Bio-Data of the respondents, family background and nature of street life. The second part of the schedule consists of the questions related to the rehabilitation needs of street children.
While framing the questions, care is taken to elicit as much information as possible, taking into account the secondary data available, tools used in various studies and opinions of social workers dealing with the street children. Personal visits to different organisations working for the street children helped the researcher in preparing the schedule. The schedule was pre-tested before going for data collection.

The primary data collected was tabulated and analysed using simple statistical tools like averages and percentages. ANOVA technique has been used to examine the variations across different categories of sample street children, while correlation technique has been used to study the relationship between different types of needs.

1.13 LIMITATIONS

The following are the important limitations of the study:

1. Though street children are spread into different parts of Vijayawada, the study is confined only to few parts. As the street children are completely mobile in nature and the sample size is restricted to 100, the convenience and snow-ball sampling methods are followed. The nature of the study and the sample made the researcher to adopt this method, even though the sample may not represent the universe in its entirety.

2. Though proper care is taken to include all the needs of street children at a comprehensive level, needs related to sexual exploitation, child abuse and drug addiction are completely neglected in the study. Moreover, as it was felt that probing into such areas may spoil the whole work, they were purposively avoided. This also could be one of the limitations of the study.
3. Though the title signifies the needs of all the street children, it is focused only on the needs of street boys. Reasons for not considering the girls under the study are:

   a. As there would be very few girls without adequate protection and shelter, they are not represented in the sample. Another reason for not including the girls in the sample is that it may be difficult to gather information from them without anyone's interference and the chances of reliability would be low.

   b. It was felt that there should be a separate criteria for the assessment of needs of street girls keeping in view the aspects like gender and their legal age.

4. In view of the limited size of the sample and the place of study, it may be difficult to generalise the findings.

   The above limitations may be borne in mind while analysing the results.

1.14 SCHEME OF PRESENTATION

The study is presented in five chapters including the present one. The second chapter is devoted to examine the socio-economic background of the sample respondents. In the third chapter, the living and working conditions of respondents have been discussed. The fourth chapter deals with the rehabilitation needs of street children. An attempt is made to examine the variations in the needs of street children across different age groups and categories. The last chapter gives a summary of the findings and conclusions. It also presents the suggestions for a need-based rehabilitation approach to deal with the problem of street children.