APPENDIX
Vijayawada lies in south-central India, about 275 kilometers north-east of Hyderabad. Its location has made it a significant travel hub within the subcontinent. Vijayawada, the third largest city of Andhra Pradesh, is a major trading center of the state lying on the banks of the Krishna River. Vijayawada is often referred to as the "Business Capital of Andhra Pradesh".

Vijayawada is also the largest railway junction of the South Central Railway Zone. It is home to one of the biggest bus stations in the country. The national highways from Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta to South India pass through Vijayawada. Administratively, it is a part of the Krishna District, which is located at a distance of 275 kilometres from Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh.

The presence of Kanaka Durga Temple raised its religious importance. Indrakiladri hills form the western boundary of Vijayawada, while it has Budameru river as the natural boundary on the northern side. Most of the city lies in coastal delta region of the state, which is suitable for intensive agriculture and cultivation of high-yield crops. The Prakasham barrage along with its three canals, namely Eluru, Ryves and Bandar provides irrigation facilities to most of agricultural activities in the city. The landscape of the city also features a few small and medium sized hills, which are part of the Eastern Ghats. The river Krishna meandering through the centre of the city cut through these hills to get lost into the the Bay of Bengal. The tropical climate of the city makes it excessively hot during summers, while it remains cool during winters. Average annual rainfall is 965 mm and most of the precipitation comes through the south-west monsoon as well as the north-
east monsoon. Located nearby at a mere distance of 11 km from the western border of Vijayawada is Kondapalli reserve forest.

The municipal area of Vijayawada is 84 sq. km. A large percentage of the population lives in slums mushrooming around markets, bus terminus, railway junction and marshaling yards, warehouses, embankments of canals and railway lines.

4.2. Vijayawada Railway Station & Railway / Street Children:

The Vijayawada Railway Station is the largest and busiest railway junction on the South Central Railways section, and one of the most important of the Indian Railways network. Since most trains travelling from the south to the North, East, North-East and, in some instances, the West of India pass through Vijayawada, the railway station sees an exceptionally high frequency of express and passenger train traffic.

Every day, the station handles about 30,000 passengers, a number that may go up to a few hundred thousands during important local festivals when people pour into the city to take a dip in the holy river Krishna. Daily, the station handles 135 trains, a number which may increase on occasion to 170. It is also an important revenue earner for the Railways.

Through the day, the Railway Station is also used by Railway personnel, from senior administrators to Class IV personnel, porters, policemen affiliated to two forces, vendors and workers at the different facilities like the food court. People alight from and board trains, buy tickets, or see off friends and relatives. Representatives from childcare organizations comb the platforms to rescue children – runaways / missing from homes, as do rickshaw pullers, touts and sex workers.
According to a recent survey by Navajeevan Bala Bhavan, an average of 27 new children (810 per month – 9720 per year) land up each day at the Vijayawada railway station alone, adding up to hundreds of children already on the streets of Vijayawada. They leave their homes and families because of domestic quarrels, problems in school, city attraction and economic hardship.

Coordinated by Forum for Child Rights/Childline Booth at railway station, various organizations rescue (85% by Navajeevan Street Presence team) only a third of these children, provided counselling and other supports and persuaded to return home or avail services at one of the city’s child care organizations. The others disappear into the city to become child labourers or street children, or carry on travelling. A significant number of them live in and around the Railway Station, a comparatively attractive place to make a living. They make friends here and become part of a larger peer group, beg for food or money, earn money by cleaning railway carriages or rag picking, and travel to other big cities. These boys and girls are at risk from ruthless middlemen, brokers, child abusers and traffickers, drug peddlers, substance abusers, porters, police, rickshaw pullers, auto drivers and street addicted adults. They eke out their living rag picking, shoe polishing, working as underpaid labourers and as domestic help. Young girls are drawn into prostitution. They suffer from diseases, wounds that pester, and even from STD / HIV. They are malnourished and ill clothed. They have no friends to turn to.

4.3. Bi-Data Analysis of Rescued Street Based Children:

- During the reporting period from April 2009 to March 2010, a total of 3365 street based children were weaned away/rescued and registered at Navajeevan Counselling Dept. Out of them, 95% of the children travel by train after leaving home to reach different urban centres.
• Out of the 2332 rescued last year by Navajeevan Street Presence during 2009-10, 12% are girls.
• 39% of them addicted to substance abuse.
• Parental Status: Out of the new children rescued, 69.38% are having both parents & 17.19% are semi-orphans & 9.23% are orphans & 2.19% are from broken families & 0.84% are having step parents & 11.54%.
• 85.84% were from within the State of AP, with the highest numbers from Navajeevan’s home district of Krishna i.e., 20.22%, followed by the bordering district of Guntur (10.59%) & East Godavari (7.90%) & West Godavari (6.22%).
• 14.17% were from other States, with highest number from the neighbouring State of Orissa, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, Tamilnadu and Jharkhand.
• The Age Analysis: 0.81% were below 5 years & 4.07% in between 6-8 years & 8.10% in between 9-10 years & 12.43% in between 11-12 years & 24.10% in between 13-14 years & 28.93% in between 15-16 years & 16.92% in between 17-18 years & 4.64% 19 and above years. That is, the highest number is in between 15-16 years followed by those in between 13-14 years and those in between 17-18 years.

• Growing Number of Run-Aways from the Marginalized Communities – the dichotomies Perceived: Out of the children rescued during 2009-10, the children from the marginalized communities (SC&ST together) constitute 39.63%. Unlike in the past years where majority of children hailed from Backward Communities, a comparative analysis of last 3 years data - 2007-08 & 2008-09 & 2009-10, reveals a steady increase in the number of children from SC & ST communities, from 27.94% in 2008-09 to 29.6% in 2008-09 to 39.63% in 2009-10 – an increase of 11.69%. One of the main culprits may be economic recession and escalation of prices of commodities and loss of livelihoods thereof, making the life of
families of these marginalized communities all the more difficult and miserable. Within SCs & STs, the number of ST children, both boys and girls, decreased progressively, from 11.06% in 2008-09 to 10.15% in 2008-09 to 7.36% in 2009-10 – a decrease of 3.7%, where as a progressive increase was recorded in the case of both boys and girls of the SCs, from 16.88% in 2008-09 to 19.45% in 2008-09 to 32.27% in 2009-10 – an increase of 15.39%. The reasons for this progressive difference are to be studied further. One of the reasons may that, while STs, though the most marginalized among the lot, unlike SC children, instead of coming to streets, the children from the interior ST communities are trafficked out to distant places across the country for cheap child labour, commercial sex work, etc. Of late, it was found that the Vijayawada railway station has become the main trafficking transit point. When SCs & STs are compared to BCs, there is a considerable reduction of number of children ran away/rescued from families belonging to BCs, from 49.09% in 2008-09 to 41.81% in 2008-09 to 28.09% in 2009-10 – a decrease of 21%.

- The ‘reason-for-leaving-home’ analysis points out that, 24.41% of children came away from home as they were verbally and physically abused/ neglected by parents, forced to go for work, scolded or beaten for getting less marks, stole money from home or when the alcoholic parents become unbearable. 2.95% are from broken families; 4.34% (99 boys and 14 girls) are orphans and not taken care off by close relatives; 7.02% ran away to escape from the abuse of their teachers or hostel wardens or not interested in studies for other reasons; 18.46% left home to escape the torture of work place or when they are forced into work by their parents and 12.43% came due to peer pressures/city attractions, etc. 1.96% (36 boys and 15 girls) children were missing cases. The data reveals, while 22.81% girls ran away due to family problems, 13.68% came off seeking support to pursue their studies.
• Among the new children rescued, 0.44% was 15 mentally challenged children & 0.53% was Deaf & Dumb boys, mostly abandoned/neglected by parents/close relatives.
• The case history of some of the children, previously housed in Observations Homes for the children in conflict with law & Children Homes for those in need of acre and protection, points to the pathetic and anti child-friendly environment that exist in these homes unlike what is envisaged under JJ Act.

4.4. Children Affected By AIDS (CABA):

The situation seems to be grim with the growing number of children living with/affected by HIV/AIDS in the target villages located in and around the city of Vijayawada. The registered data of children at Navajeevan’s shelter reveals the increasing number of children infected/affected with HIV/AIDS. Out of the rescued children during 2009-10 by Navajeevan, 0.56% children were orphans or semi-orphans (13 boys and 6 girls – with 3 cases of children infected with HIV/AIDS) and neglected due to their parents either died or bed-ridden due to AIDS. Of late, the tendency to abandon children infected by HIV/AIDS and with other disabilities, by parents or close relatives, is on the rise. Within the State, the district of Krishna, the home district of Navajeevan, stands in the A Grade along with the neighboring district of Guntur. The project area – the 12 target villages (10 of the Penamaluru mandal and 2 bordering villages) – fall within the district of Krishna, which are more prone to HIV/AIDS than other villages within the district as they lie adjacent to Vijayawada, the third largest city within the State, with one of the busiest railway junctions in the country and is having one of the largest automobile industrial estate in South India. The target villages are located adjacent to National and State High ways, with busy transit traffic carrying vegetables, commercial crops, construction materials, etc. to different destinations. Among the 12 target villages, 8 villages belong to high risk category as they are having high inflow/outflow of temporary migrant construction/agricultural/industrial workers and truck drivers.
4.5. Women Victims of Domestic Violence:

Involvement of Navajeevan in the target villages of Child Safety net project was an eye-opener. The domestic violence suffered by mothers resulting in broken families is one of the culprit for the increasing number of children suffering from serious neglect, and many of them, leaving home disoriented to street. The analysis of cases dealt last year by Navajeevan Hitoshi team points out, while 20.93% cases of domestic violence were related to alcoholism of the partner, 16.28% cases were that of dowry, 13.95% cases of extra marital relationship, etc. Looking at the caste composition of the cases, 23.25% cases are of SC families; 6.98% of ST; 37.21% BC, 16.28% OC and 16.28% Muslims. In other words, the number of children neglected due to domestic violence is high among the most marginalized, socially-economically marginalized communities/families.

4.6. Lack of Child Rights Monitoring Mechanisms:

- The experience of JJ AP Desk and the recently established Child Rights Monitoring Cell (CRMC), initiated by Navajeevan JJ AP Desk on a pilot basis, is that, often the victims and their families, especially of the socially and economically excluded marginalized, are pressurized by the perpetrators, often belonging to the dominant castes, using their clout with police and political leaders, to compromise the case or not to file a petition. Even if some of them go forward, they are threatened with dire consequences. There is also undue delay in filing FIR with suitable and valid clauses of various Acts, forensic test process, resulting in destruction of crucial evidence, mal-practices, and above all, adding trauma to the victims and their families.

- There is no effective and active mechanisms in the city, for that matter in the district as well as State in general, to fact find the case of child rights violations and to render/facilitate the required socio-economical-psychological-legal support to the child victims and their families.
4.7. Key Issues:

- Gangs of senior children and anti-social elements roaming around railway station to rob in run-away children, especially fresh ones, for their legal and illegal / anti-social activities (for example, rag-picking, bogie-cleaning, begging, etc. Of late, children are used to sell psychotropic substances, such as, erasers (locally called 'solution/box'), marijuana, cheap sedative ampoules (Petwin) for intravenous injection, etc.

- Bullies and senior children addicted to street life gather new and smaller children into their gangs and use them for their selfish interests, including cheap child work; also, in the process, make them addicted to psychotropic substances.

- A recent survey by Navajeevan (in follow-up of its Study in 2004), 35% of the street based children are addicted to substance abuse.

- Sexual abuse of children by these anti-social gangs and bullies/senior children/peers are rampant, and thereby, more prone to HIV/AIDS and other serious communicable diseases.

- Some of these gangs are too dangerous and commit any type of crime, not only chain snatching, shoe, etc. and other robberies, but also even murder for petty economic gains and to settle the scores.

- Growing number of run-away girl children and inadequate facilities to support them.

- Not so child friendly attitude among the personnel of various line departments within the Railways, including GRPF, RPF, TTEs, Porters, etc., mostly due to lack of awareness on Child Rights, the related legislations like JJ ACT and the violations thereof – for example, often children become handy for the personnel to carry/remove dead bodies of the accident victims and other hazardous works, etc. but they are not bothered about their life situation, deprived of basic needs and psycho/emotional-social support from their close family members or any other significant adults.
• Growing number of children from other States, speaking different languages.
• Lack of proper follow-up & delay in making home integration due to lack of personnel and financial resources. Many a time, the children, tired of waiting, leave the temporary rescue shelter and often fall prey to gangs and get addicted to street life, jeopardizing their security and future.
• Increasing number of Children Affected By AIDS (CABA)
• Increasing number of children affected by the domestic violence suffered their mothers and the broken families thereof.
• Unfortunately, as noted elsewhere, even in the inadequate number of government Child Care Institutions, most of the objectives of JJ Act are not met, when one assesses the ground reality of the judicial and custodial treatment of children in these homes against the key indicators, such as, length of time in institutions, rate of restoration to families or to family based care, case pendency, child rehabilitation and mainstreaming with education as the cornerstone, and protection (from abuse, violations, deprivations) under non-family based/institutionalized care. Even the existing but inadequate number of children homes (27 altogether including Observation Homes, Special Homes and Children Homes) have no adequate separation of processes and infrastructure addressing children in conflict with law and those in need of care and protection and there is greater urgency for achieving de-criminalization and de-institutionalization and ensuring the basic human dignity of all children.
• Out of 23 districts, only 17 has Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) to deal with the cases of children come in conflict with law & 17 Children Welfare Committees (CWCs) to cater the needs of the children in need of care and protection. Only a few of JJBs and CWCs are in function. For most of the existing JJBs and CWCs, constituted under Juvenile Justice Act, the minimum infrastructure facilities or funds to function are not made available by the government.
• Many of the officials of the concerned government line departments are not fully aware of the implications of JJ Act and other Acts and the concerned Rules related to children. Hence, difficulties are being faced when dealing with cases.

• There is no effective and active mechanisms in the city, for that matter in the district as well as State in general, to fact find the case of child rights violations and to render/facilitate the required socio-economical-psychological-legal support to the child victims and their families.