CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Child labour is not a new phenomenon, but what is new is its perception as a social problem. Various ancient Indian studies have described how children in Indian families shared the work load of their parents and of the gurus during their Brahmacharya period. The practice of child labour has been flourishing throughout the length and breadth of the world with degrees of difference and it is deep rooted. With the many competing demands on their resources, the developing societies are often unable to do everything that is necessary to give the children their rightful place in the community. The result is that many children in their tender age are exploited for work. While this could be ascribed to many social-economic and cultural considerations, yet it cannot be over looked as there is widespread employment of children, both open and disguised, in environments and professions which are most detrimental to their health and growth.

Ragpicking is a form of child labour. Ragpicking is one of the most inferior economic activities in the urban informal sector, largely undertaken by children belonging to weaker sections of the society, for the survival and for supplementing their family income. Ragpicking is the profession mostly dominated by children aging 6 to 15 years who do not have any other skill and thus by way of refuse collection contribute to household income or own survival. These are mainly children of slum dwellers and poor people. Some of them are abandoned or runaway children.

A sustained effort of national and international organizations in the recent past to combat child labour has thrown light on the issue leading to large scale debate and interest in the problem. This has resulted in research and development of literature on the subject.

Very little work has been done on the situation of child ragpickers in India. There are, however a number of studies on child labour in different countries, as well as, in India. The studies, though not directly connected with the child Ragpickers have a special bearing on the problem under studies. The relevant review of literature has been divided into six sections.
I. Family Condition

II. Education Level

III. Condition of Work, Place and Exploitation

IV. Condition of Health

V. Anti Social Activities

VI. Role and Rehabilitation

**Family Condition:**

Kamat,(1999), in his article “Ragpickers of India” mentions the family status of Ragpicking Children. Most of the rag-pickers are extremely poor, illiterate and belong to rural immigrant families. Most of their families are in need of extra income from these young children.

Tripathy and Pradhan(2003) in their work “Girl Child in India” explains the problem of child labour both male and female and their condition in a hazardous occupation of ragpicking in Berhampur town(Orissa). In this work they mentions about the family size of girl child ragpickers. The girl child ragpickers family size is more than 6 persons.

Balkumar etal (2001) in their study of “Nepal – Situation of Child Ragpickers :A Rapid Assessment” mentions about the family of child ragpickers of Nepal. The authors conducted a survey of 300 children ages-5-17 years working currently as ragpickers in six major municipalities. The average family size of child ragpickers is 5.4 members, which is slightly higher than the national average of 5.1. The girl ragpickers usually come from larger families (6.3) than boys do (5.2). This assessment shows that the large majority 60.3% of children interviewed have both parents (own or biological father or mother) only few are belonging to families with a step parent or single parent or no parents. In this assessment, three indicators were chosen to determine the economic background of child ragpickers. Over 2/3 of respondents (68%) indicated that their family owned home. The majority of child ragpickers families (54.7%) do not own farmland. The main occupation among families of ragpickers is of a non-agricultural nature, which may include small business, mechanical work, low paid
services and other activities. Few families’ main activity is either in junkyard shops or ragpicking.

Mita Bhadra (1999) in “Girl Child in Indian Society”, reveals that the girl ragpickers are belonging to very poor, illiterate and improper civic amenities families. Their parents are mostly landless labours or small land labours. These families mostly live in slums. Most of the children are belonging to Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes families.

Kshitij (A Project for the Child Ragpickers of Bhandewari Dumping Ground, Nagpur) reveals that ragpickers are sizable proportion among the poorest workers in the urban informal economy. The traditional beggars have opted for ragpicking. Most of the ragpickers are extremely poor, illiterate and belong to immigrant families. Their families need supplementary income.

Ragpickers : Scavengers at a Different Graveyard A Documentary on The Ragpickers of Mumbai. (2005) explores the life of ragpickers that majority of them are below the poverty line and socio-economic strata and live a difficult life.

Rai (2002) in his work “Child Labour: A Reality” mentions, about the family of ragpicking children. These children lived in urban areas. They are mostly street children and work in the streets. Mostly, they had no relation with their families.

In the Article of NGO (1990) “Agape, Bangalore” it is found that ragpickers come from violent and broken homes, perhaps second marriages where the mother has been burnt to death with kerosene, the father demanding further dowry from the wife’s family to feed his drunkenness. The children from the first marriage not wanted (more mouth to feed) beating, starvation and deprivation of security and love are daily occurrences. Some are forced from a very young age to work and earn money, a few are influenced by peer pressure, and some are orphans fighting a daily battle to survive. Boys unable to tolerate the daily beatings and dysfunctional family life run away and become street children. Girls are forced to look after younger family members even have to beg for their own survival and that of the younger child. They are treated as slaves in the home and many are forced into prostitution at a very early age.
Singh (2006), in his book “Child Labour” broadly categorized Ragpickers into 3 groups, based on the contact with their families:.i) Children who will be living with their families. Whether it be on the street, in slums, or waste land or abandoned/derelict building etc. but would be spending a lot of time working or hanging about on the streets. It has been estimated that this will be the largest of the three categories. ii)Children who would be living and working on the street with occasional family contacts. These children, sometimes, send money to their families. They consider the streets as their homes. iii)Children who would be having no family contact what so ever. These children will be either orphaned abandoned or neglected by, or stranged from their families. Psychologically, they are deprived of love, affection and sympathy of a family.

Rita Pannikkar’s(1992), Study of Street Girls in the Union Territory of Delhi mentions the case study of street girl children. This is the case of the youngest of four daughters of a family where the father work as a ragpicker and this girl too picks up rags and adds family income. Due to circumstances she is forced to do work which she does not personally like. From a favourite child she has become a working child without any protest, toiling for nearly 16-18 hours a day. Recently she has been engaged to an illiterate farmer boy and expects that her future husband would help her in her sorrows. She wishes to have a house of her own with good environments where she would not see rags. She also wants to learn tailoring to wear new clothes of her liking.

According to Lal Das (1997), destitute children work as ragpickers. Most of these children come from broken homes and are denied warmth and affection of parents.

Inderjit Khurana (1991) in her article, ‘The Girl Child on the Street’ explains the family status of street children as ragpickers. The girl of the street is either an orphan or belongs to a one parent family, usually a homeless mother.

Thilagaraj and Prasanna Poornachandra (2001) conducted a study of 706 street children of Chnnai. Of the total they explain about family victimization. The survey reveals that most of ragpickers are deprived of basic facilities of food, shelter and clothing. A significant number of children do not live with their
families and there are children who have to undergone a great deal of hardship to secure basic needs.

Tripathy (1997), in his book “Migrant Child Labour in India” explains the family conditions of ragpickers of Bangalore. Most of the ragpickers are runaways from homes because of disturbed family conditions. Parents neglect, or conflict with parents, compels many to flee home with bitterness, anger and hostility, the cruelty, drunkenness, harsh and cruel treatment on the part of the father must have indeed made the child to hate his father and stay away from home. Many of them are engaged in such job due to non-availability of alternative jobs. Most of ragpickers are from the poverty stricken families and the consequences associated with such families.

Goyal (2005), in his work “Street Children and the Child Labour” describes the living places of street children. Children living on and off the streets working as shoe-shine boys, ragpickers, newspaper vendors, beggars etc. The problem of street children is somewhat different from that of child labour in factories and workshops for one thing. Most children have some sort of home to go back to in the evenings or nights while street children are completely alone and are at the mercy of their employers. They live on the pavements, in the bus stations and railway stations. They are at the mercy of urban predators as also the police. They have no permanent base and are often on the move. So their problem is more acute than that of children working in a factory and living at home.

Ashoka (2006) made an attempt to explore the social status of street children in his work “Child and the Law”. According to him, street children are those wandering on streets, begging for alms, vending goods, smoking besides sitting at corner places, indulging in quarrels and participating in major street brawls. These are the common features in most parts of urban areas. It is true that many children are pushed out of the home due to various factors. Among the many, poverty is the main contributing factor to give rise number of street children. Poverty and socio-political insatiability are the potent reasons that make children leave their homes and take to the streets.
Indira (1990) also strongly asserts that poverty, migration and slums are the predominant factors for increasing the number of street children. According to the 1993 Human Development Report of the UN Development Programme, India perhaps has the highest number of street children cities like Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta have around one lakh street children each and Bangalore alone has 45,000 of them (The Hindustan Times May-22, 1993)

Caroline Hunt - conducted a study on “Child Waste Picker in India: The Occupation and its Health Risks” describes the family of child waste pickers. The waste pickers came from poorer families than the other children. They were more likely to live in overcrowded, poorly ventilated huts made of dried vegetation (rather than clay). They were more likely to use open ground for defecation than use public or private latrine. Their fathers were more likely to be deceased, unemployed and unable to work for health reasons or to have left the family. They are more likely to have lower skill jobs. The waste pickers’ parents were also far more likely to be waste pickers and spoke fewer languages (none spoke Kannada, the state language, but only either Tamil or Telugu). Most of the waste pickers said they were born in Bangalore. It is likely that their Tamil speaking parents or grandparents migrated to the city. They could easily have been part of the large and continuing influx of people from rural TamilNadu into the city, in search of work. (c.hunt@ic.ac.uk)

Education Level:

Tripathy and Pradhan (2003) made an attempt to analyse the problem of child labour and their condition who are engaged in hazardous occupations like ragpicking in Berhampur town (Orissa). Analyzing the data the authors revealed most of child labourers are illiterate who do not know even ‘read and write’ and all most all the female child labourers are illiterate.

Kamat (1999) in his article “Ragpickers of India” describes the child ragpickers health, education, exploitation and their failure of rehabilitation programmes. According to him child ragpickers are extremely poor, illiterate and belong to rural immigrant families. Many commence their profession at the
young age of 5 to 8 years. Most of them never attend any school or have any formal education.

Shishir Srivastava (2008) in his article “Ragpickers in Modern Day India” studied the child ragpickers, in the capital city of Delhi. There are more than one lakh ragpickers with most of them being young children. Young children’s education has been promised from time to time, but this promise is never kept. Forget education, these children have to work in the harshest of environments and yet find it difficult to make ends meet. The government has tried to do a lot for the young children. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyana, the Free Mid-Day Meal Programme and many other initiatives. But how successful have they been?

Bal Kumar, etal (2001) in their project analyzed the data of child ragpickers education. Nearly half of children are literate, though the discrepancy between literate boys and girls is significant. The rate of literacy increases with the age of children, which is considered a natural trend, Among Brahmin and Chhetris, the literacy level is the highest of all similarly it ranges from 56 to 58 percent among Tamangs, Magars, and other hill ethnic groups, while it is considerable lower among Dalits and Taria Children.

Rai (2002) has conducted several case studies of child ragpickers Kalipada Sarkara a 12 years boy live with his mother Kamala. His father left them long back and an elder brother who was living with them quarreled with his mother and left them a few months back. They live along the pavement of Southern Avenue in South Calcutta. Both of them live on ragpicking. He was totally illiterate. Later he joined one of the IPER open learning centers where he has shown considerable interest in the last six month. He has also learned to read and write. But he is very whimsical and emotionally disturbed. While attending to these lessons he often runs away to his mother sometimes he comes very late sometimes he is the first person to wait for the teacher.

Deepak Saxena in his research report analyzing educational status of ragpickers found that most of (94%) the ragpickers are illiterate. Other 5 percent of them are educated between 1st to 5th standard.
Tushar Kanti Saha in his article “The Issue of Child hood Deprivation and Survival Worldwide” mentions about the educational status of the street children and suggest mobile school scheme for the street children.

According to Gupta, etal (2001) mobile school scheme for street children can be initiated. The main handicap is posed by the economic–value of the time investment in education by this unfortunate lot of street children working as rag pickers. Alternative jobs or allowances as incentive to registration for schooling are now less attractive as the opportunity cost for them is too high. Thus NGOs plan to introduce this measure remained still-born, after all the need of the moment is immediate, and children are unwilling to accept Rs. 1,000 as monthly against their current earning level of around Rs 3,000 in Calcutta.

Malay Dewanji (2001) his article “Child Labour Problem in India” studies about the education of ragpickers. The children are often found working in small factories, motor garages, food stalls, doing shoe shining, as domestic helpers, rag pickers and even as beggars. No Education policy could make the parents interested to send their children to schools as earning by them is more lucrative for a poor family than education.

The former President of India Dr A.P.J. Abdulkalam said “Child ragpickers are not street children” while addressing a programme. Child ragpickers are the children of hope, they are children for hope. We do not brand them as street children. We have to give them confidence.

The P.V.R group has started an education programme for child ragpickers and orphans since last few years. About 275 such children are provided education at present at five centers. This programme seeks to give a new life to the poor and vulnerable children through educational, social and cultural activities. It is being conducted in alliance with Delhi Government (The Hindu Daily, New Delhi-19September-2008).

Caroline Hunt (c.hunt@ic.ac.uk) conducted a study on “Child Waste Pickers in India: the Occupation and its Health Risks” explains the education of child waste pickers. Child waste pickers were less likely to attend formal school.
Those that did attend school were than more likely to drop out from school. The proportion of educated parents was lower.

**Condition of Work, Place & Exploitation:**

Rai (2002) writes in his book “Child Labour- A Reality” about the informal non-wages sector ragpicking. The children earn an income in the informal non-wages sector such as garbage collecting. It also includes such as illegal activities like begging, petty theft and prostitution. Their activities are vital to the survival of poor people, especially in urban areas.

Tripathy and Pradhan (2003) in their book “Girl Child in India” made an attempt to analyse the problem of child labour both male and female and their condition engaged in a hazardous occupation like ragpicking in Berhampur town (Oriss). The job of ragpickers is the most dangerous and destructive of self-worth. The nature of their work and environment is most unhygienic. They remain busy in dust-bins and garbage dumping grounds for waste materials like paper, rags, coconut shells, tin, iron, plastic and glass pieces left over food. The author reveals that 80% of child labourers are in the age group of 9 to 14 years. Specifically, out of 55 girl child labourers 40 belong to the said ages group constituting of 2.72% of the total child labourers. 55% child labourers spent more than 5 hours to collect rags. As regards income 65% of child labours constitute an average monthly income of Rs.301 to Rs. 400 only. Compared to male child ragpickers the earning of the female child ragpickers is much lower. Out of 55 female child ragpickers, 36.36% female child labourers earn income in the range of Rs.250 to Rs. 300, where as remaining 63.63% girl child labourers receive income within the range of Rs. 301 to Rs. 350.

Bharati Chaturved (bharatic@hotmail.com) a specialist in organizing ragpickers in Chintan, India in her article “Ragpickers : The Bottom Rung in the Waste Trade Ladder” reveals that the ragpicker would have to begin work as early as 4 a.m, because otherwise miss the waste. As a resident, you could begin to recognize your own ragpicker, because the routes are totally territorial. By the late afternoon, or whenever the bag is full a ragpicker will return to the store of a middleman, also called a kabari, and sell. Even as he sells the waste should be
sorted out according to almost 30 different types of plastics, paper and metals. They must be clean and dry, or the kabari can’t accept them. The little segregation patches in street corners of the city, where thousands of the poorest sort out waste. They might even wash materials, hunched over for hours, segregation of waste.

Mamata Rajawat (2004), in her work “Child Labour - The Indian Perspective” mentions that many children make a living by picking up the city garbage, collecting paper, bottles, rags and bones. There are retailers who take what they find and pay them something, however small usually they have arrangements delineating their territory, so they have to be up before the city is stirring to ensure that no one poaches on their territory. These poor and helpless children undergo physical as well as psychological agonies.

Kshitij………… towards creating a new horizon (A Project for The Children Rag-Pickers of Bhandewari Dumping Ground, Nagpur) http://www.worldmissionfund.org.uk/KSHITIJ.pdf, conducted a study on “Children as Ragpickers” analyses the working conditions of the ragpicking children. Ragpickers work in appalling conditions in garbage bins on the streets and at land fill sites where garbage is dumped. They work for more than 10 hours and walk between 10-12 kms. Daily carrying heavy loads of up to 40 kg, in most cases, there are middlemen who engage these children. The middlemen take the major share of the sales and pay only paltry to the youngster. The conditions here for ragpickers are unhygienic and dangerous with a high risk of disease. Children walk bare-foot through rancid rubbish, dodging rusty razor blades, used syringes, broken bottles and discarded medicines, searching for any scrap which can be recycled. The work is dangerous and unforgiving-trawling through putrid, hazardous waste without gloves or shoes, in 40°C heat, surrounded by stench, filth, flies and mosquitoes. For the most of the children, there is no other alternative. It’s either this, or a life of begging or prostitution. The ragpickers live in unauthorized slums in the poorest neighborhoods, earning an average about 60-70 rupees per day. The money earned by them is required for running the household
and most of it is spent on food with hardly any money left over for housing, clothing, medicine, school books and other essential items.

The basic rights of the children of having food, shelter and drinking water are denied at the dumpsite. There is also no place where they can sit and eat or keep their food safely. The food that they carry gets contaminated by the flies and mosquitoes found abundantly on the dumping ground. Most of the children prefer eating in the morning and they work the whole day and then eat food only after they get back home.

Siddiqui (2003) in his work examines the working condition of child ragpickers. They are quite vulnerable in the society and prone to diseases. As it is well known, ragpickers collect recyclable things from the garbage and also from dumping sites usually in the outskirts. Earlier ragpickers used to collect rags, paper, cardboard, glass, and metals.

Khurana Indrajit (2001) in his article “The Girl Child on the Street” writes about the working environment of child ragpickers as street children. They are known to live with gangs of boys, masquerading as one of them. The modus operandi of the street girl child at the railway station is to run through the train compartments, collecting left-over of passengers....... papers, bottles, aluminum foil, sometime valuables and exchange them for money. Occasionally they get left over food as well. During the day the girls are also required to work as domestic helpers, ragpickers, look after siblings of any, steal/pick vegetables and cook the meal. They also beg, clean train compartments, vend newspapers just like street boys.

Upadhyay, etal (2005) in their book “Eco Tools for Urban Waste Management in India” studies the ragpicking children of Delhi and Bangalore. Waste picking is considered to be at the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy of activities within the unorganized sector and requires neither education nor specific skills. Therefore, it is generally children, often less than 10 years old, and women, who earn a living as ragpickers.

Tripathy (1997) in his book “Migrant Child Labour in India” reveals the working condition and the exploitation of the child ragpickers. The nature of their
work and work environment is most unhygienic. These children hail from poverty stricken scheduled caste families residing in slums. Even a casual look at their physical and clothing, reveals the extent of their poverty and deprivation. They scrounge in dust-bins and garbage dumping grounds for waste materials like paper, rags, coconut shell, tin, iron, plastic, glass pieces and even left over food. He also explains the exploitation of Ragpickers. Child ragpickers are the abused and exploited. Self employed migrant child labours, who are deprived of all parental care and needs for developing their personality.

Venkataiah (2001) explains that in ragpicking mostly boys between the age group of 8 to 14 years are employed. Some of the ragpickers are self-employed children who pick up rags from the streets and segregate them and sell to the dealers who deal with such goods. Some of the ragpickers are employed by shop owners who deal with plastic goods, tin products etc.

A Kumar (2002) in his book “Social Problems” explains the nature of child work. The number of children in urban areas who work in canteens and restaurants, or those engaged in picking rags and hawking goods, is vast but unrecorded. Among them more unfortunate ones are those who are employed in hazardous industries.

Singh (2006) is of the opinion that the work and exploitation of child ragpickers. Ragpickers have emerged as a community in almost all the cities of every developing country. They are quite vulnerable in the society and prone to diseases. As it is well known, ragpickers collect recyclable things from the garbages and also from dumping sites usually in the outskirts. Dumping sites and garbage disposal bins at different points in a city are certainly those locations where child workers, i.e., ragpickers may be easily spotted. Earlier ragpickers used to collect rags, paper, cardboard, glass, and metals but in the past few decades europolythene has given a boost to the recycling business. These are women and children who are garbage collectors in almost every town and city and they collect anything recyclable. As reported by him, the nature of harassment caused by these people usually takes the forms of driving them away from the part of the street they have chosen to live in. As has been reported by them that the
police patrol visits them from time to time and forces them to leave the place. They often behave very atrociously beating them and throwing away their meager belongings and threatening of put them behind bars.

According to Goyal (2005) the problem of street children is some what different from that of child labour in factories and workshops. For one thing, most children have some sort of home to go back to in the evenings or nights. While street children are completely alone and are at the mercy of their employers. They live on the pavement, in the bus stations and railway stations. Their have no permanent base and are often on the move. So their problem is more acute than that of children working in a factory and living at home.

Caroline Hunt (c.hunt@ic.ac.uk) describes the work of child ragpickers over two thirds of the children reported that they started the job with a family member (usually their mother). All of them collected from dustbins and the roadsides. They all walked to the different places they picked from and a small number also used busses. The average length of time that they had been picking was four years. They all collected plastics, other materials included metal, paper, bones, rubber, glass, batteries and coconut shells.

Punecha (2006) in his book “Child Labour : A Social Evil” explains the condition of working children in the Philippines. In Philippines millions of children are suffering and some of them dying, due to the inhuman practice of child labour in the country. It has been estimated that about 50,000 street children are waging war against want in the metropolitan streets of the Philippines by using their small labour. They are collecting garbage, begging, washing cars, pick-pocketing, selling goods.

Misra (2004) in his work “Problem of Child Labour in India” explains the working condition of ragpickers. The most dangerous, demanding and destructive of self worth is the job of scrap-collectors or ragpickers. They scrounge dustbins and garbage dumps in search of paper, rags and scraps of tin, iron, glass and even food that others have thrown away. Sometimes they are seen fighting with dogs for a piece of mildew bread.
Dalai and Misra (2004) in their article “Socio Economic Problem of Street Children: A Recipe” describes about the work of street children and suggest for the protection of street children from the exploitation. The ragpickers work hard throughout the day, but they are exploited at various levels: One level being at the local godown keepers where they sell their collections. Since there is no uniform rate-charts for different rag items, the innocent rag-pickers fall prey to various godown keepers. So, Government must take proper initiative to fix-up uniform rates for different scraps and the godown keepers must be instructed to display the rate-charts for public and work accordingly. They also suggest for the protection of street children from the exploitation. Since the nature and working pattern of the street children varies from one to another, Government must work out some specific legislation for the welfare of each category of these children.

Khurana Inderjit (2001) in his article “The Girl Child on the Street” explains about working of the girl child on the street. The girl child on the street is distinguished as being part of the army of ragpickers ranging between 4-12 years who leave home at dawn each morning and return to spread and categorize the rags, eat a hurried meal and be back on the street till night fall. Others only return at dust, eating a small snack in between anywhere they can find.

Rehman, etal (2002) in their book “Child Labour & Child Rights” reveals some facts on street children in India. India has a large number of street children. Though the exact number is not known there presence could found in every cities of the country. A number of studies sponsored by UNICEF have been conducted to assess the situation of street children in Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta, Kanpur, Madras (Chennai), Indore, Bangalore, and Delhi. The studies graphically present the pathetic condition of child labour in these cities. The following highlights this phenomenon: Children are an important part of the labour force in many industries. Child labour force estimate vary from 20 million (government) to 45, 50 to 100 million. 80 percent of the child labour is found in the agriculture sector. 15 million children work in debt bondage. Two million children are employed in hazardous industries. Incidence of sexually exploited children is estimated at over 400, 00. 100,000 street children were identified in Delhi (1987-
88) and their number is on the rise. The Government had launched a new initiative to eliminate child labour in all hazardous occupations by the year 2000.

Agape India Centre (www.agape India.com/rp14) estimated that there are about 70,000 ragpickers in Bangalore city (50% of these Ragpickers are children) and 65,000 street children living in extreme physical and spiritual poverty. They live on the streets, railway platforms, and the unhygienic disease infested slums in and around Bangalore city. 750 slums areas have already been identified.

Bangalore based organization Mythri Seva Samithi (1994) in its article “Waste Wise: Rehabilitation of Street Children through an Urban Solid Waste Management Project in South India”, explains that Bangalore has an estimated 35,000 waste pickers mostly women and children, who pick out discarded waste materials like pieces of paper, plastic, metal and glass from the dumped garbage and rubbish heaps. These materials are sold to a number of small recycling industries in the outskirts of the city, waste picking forms their only form of livelihood. Although waste picking forms the basis for a web of recycling activity, it remains unrecognized and unregulated. The socio-economic situation of the waste picking women and children is very vulnerable and they receive no institutional nor government support.(www.globnet.org)

Thilagarai and Poornachandra Prasanna (2001) in their study “Deviant Behaviors as a Consequence of Child Abuse and Neglect among Street Children in Chennai” explain about the working condition and exploitation of the street children. Street children are a symptom of a deep and disturbing trend in society. They encompass a wide section of children in distress such as those who have been abandoned, abused, neglected and missing children. Literally, they are children who live on the streets and have been categorized by the UNICEF into three groups based on contact with their families as: Children who have regular contact with the family, ‘children on the street’- who have occasional family contact and ‘children of the street’- who do not have any family contact. These children often live on the street and earn a livelihood to support their families and in the process become vulnerable to exploitation by others and to a variety of physical and moral dangers. They are exploited and victimized at various stages
of their lives irrespective of the place that is the home, the school or the work place. The most disturbing fact is that while being exposed and victimized by various factors besides poverty, these children are forced to become deviants.

Ragpickers Education and Development Scheme (1970) explain working conditions of ragpickers. Thousands of India’s poor subsist by picking waste items from roadsides, trash piles, garbage dumps, and forgotten areas that can be resold. Iron rods, plastic bags, metal gargling, notebooks, cardboard, newspaper, rubber, shoe soles, wires, cables, aluminum, glass, bottles, electrical parts, nails and coal are commonly collected. These items are then sold to a scrap shop which pays the children by the kilogram of refuse collected. Ragpicking shops then sell the waste to factories which recycle the materials for a higher rate.

Ashoka (2006) in his book “Child and Law” explains about the exploitation and working condition street children. Street children usually get arrested by the police because of their stay on pavements and involvement in gambling in public places. These children mainly have their activities, either social or anti-social in crowded areas. Their chances of coming in to contact with the police are frequent. Street children are also subject to harassment and eviction by the municipal authorities because of their unauthorized occupation of city roads and vacant places. Drug abuse among street children is rampant. Young children normally consume cheap intoxicants such as solvents, alcohol, tobacco and ganja. Abuse of solvents is widely reported; glue sniffing is common, as it is a cheap substitute or food. Street children usually undergo deep psychological trauma, due to lack of parental love, malnutrition related diseases, sex abuse by peers and older people and violence in several forms. He reveals that, the street children for the survival are involved in collecting rags, scavenging on rubbish dumps, shoe shining etc.

BalKumar, etal (2001) in their research “Nepal Situation of Child Ragpickers : A Rapid Assessment” attempts to analyse the exploitation of Child Ragpickers from junkyard owners. The relationship junkyard owners have with ragpickers can often be described as being exploitative. Apart from cheating the children when weighing materials and exploiting those by demanding payment for
shelter or food some junkyard owners also indirectly encourage children to steal materials like metal goods for their benefit.

Deepak Saxena in his “A Research Report on Rag Pickers of Jaipur for Enhancing Quality of Life Ragpickers” mentions that ragpickers face problems from official such as policemen, municipal corporation officials and alike. Sometimes police suspect them for thefts even when they are innocent. In extreme cases they have to bribe (give a cut) to few official to enable continue their means of livelihood.(www.kuhadtrust.org)

Tushar Kanti Saha (2001) in his paper “The Issue of Childhood Deprivation and Survival World Wide” explains about sexual harassment of street children. He opines that they are the most unprotected species as far as rape victims are concerned. In the United States nearly 30 percent rape victims are children below 16 years. If they are on the street, the probability of harassment is even greater everywhere.

Kamat Potpourri (1999) in his article “Ragpickers of India” explores on the exploitation of child ragpickers. In most cases, there are middlemen who engage these children. They are required to collect bottles, plastic, metal parts, glass pieces and alike. The middlemen pocket the major shares of the sales and pay only paltry to them. It is said that ragpickers who clean up dirt and contribute to environment are harassed by both police and municipal workers. They need to bribe municipal workers to forage into garbage bin. Police instead of protecting them, often beats them and forces them to sweep police station and municipal offices.

Srivastava Shishir (2008) in his article “Ragpickers in Modern Day India” points out the exploitation of child ragpickers. The Ragpickers scrounge around every day as soon as the waste gets deposited early in the morning at the main garbage centers. But it is not as simple as just finding the stuff and selling it to the ‘Kabaadi walla’ shops. The garbage picking industry has a hierarchal format with there being several middlemen who make the most of these innocent children, much like the organized retail industry.
Vasantha Elumalai and John Mary (2004) in their work “Socio Economic Problems Faced by Ragpickers using over Lab Block Fuzzy Cognitive Maps” explains the exploitation of Ragpickers, Ragpickers once they are in the profession of ragpicking they face still more problems by the police, by the public, by the middlemen by the other ragpickers and so on.

SWACHH- (2005) reveals that wastepickers are harassed by police and municipal workers, shunned by society, exploited by scrap traders and money lenders; they are often excluded even in the organizing efforts of NGOs and Trade unions.

**Condition of Health:**

In the article “The Role of the Ragpicker” reveals the risks and health problem of child ragpickers. While picking through waste, the ragpicker puts himself at a great risk and it is always prone to disease as the waste that he rummages through can be infected. We can indirectly help the ragpicker by carefully segregating the waste that is generated at our homes, thereby facilitating his search for materials that are useful to him. He will not have to scavenge in the bins for long hours ([www.edugreen.teri.res.in/EXPLORE/solwaste/segre.htm](http://www.edugreen.teri.res.in/EXPLORE/solwaste/segre.htm)).

KSHITIJ …… towards creating a new horizon. “A Project for the Children, Ragpickers of Bhandewari Dumping Ground, Nagapur” mentions the health problem of child Ragpickers. The children are exposed to injurious sharps like glass pieces, injections, thorns, nets, nails, blades, stones, metal pieces, rods with sharp edges, tin pieces, and wires, carve deep cuts on their hands and legs. Sometimes the bleeding is profuse but immediate help or medical aid cannot be administered as the first aid box is not available at the dumpsite.([www.world:missionfund.org.uk//KSHITIJ.pdf](http://www.world:missionfund.org.uk//KSHITIJ.pdf)).

Tripathy and Pradhan (2003), mention health condition of children engaged in a hazardous occupation like ragpicking in Berhampur town (Orissa). Health hazards are experienced in some of the occupation in which child labourers are engaged. Ragpicking children develop several kinds of skin diseases while collecting rusted iron pieces; they sustain injuries on their hands
and become susceptible to tetanus. The sharp glass pieces lying hidden in the garbage injure their bare feet.

Kamat (1999) in his article “Ragpickers of India” reveals child Ragpickers health related problems. Ragpickers are subjected to chemical poisons and infections. Because of malnutrition they suffer from retarded growth and anemia. The ragpickers are very susceptible to diseases like tuberculosis and cancer due to their exposure to hazardous materials and these ragpickers chewing and smoking tobacco. Soon they become addicted to alcohols and then they switch to hard liquors. They even do not refrain from taking the drugs. They have free sex with street walkers and hence become victims of AIDS.

Steinert Mari, etal (2007), in their article “Ragpickers” explains the health problems of ragpickers. Picking garbage is a risky business. Ragpickers often get cuts, burns, different body aches, allergies, dog-bites and respiratory problems.

Rajawat Mamata (2004) in his book “Child Labour. The Indian perspective” describes health condition of child garbage and ragpickers. The working conditions of child garbage and ragpickers increase the risk of disease and disability through exposure to lead and mercury, buckling of the back because they have to lift heavy sacks of rags, and the presence of parasites.

Upadhyay, etal (2005) in their article “Eco Tools for Urban Waste Management in India” reveals that the poor waste management is associated with increased health problems ranging from epidemics of water borne or food borne disease to the adverse effects due to contamination of ground water. The effects of such health hazards are difficult to quantity because of limited epidemiological studies.

Tripathy (1997) in his book “Migrant Child Labour in India” analysed the health status of child ragpickers. The child ragpickers develop several kinds of skin diseases. While collecting rusted iron pieces, they may receive cuts on their hands and susceptible to tetanus. The sharp glass pieces lying hidden in the garbage may injure. Their bare feet and injury may develop into festering wounds.
Ashoka (2006) in his book “Child and the Law” explains the health conditions of ragpickers. Street children are involved in activities which are harmful to their physical and mental health.

**Anti-Social Activities:**

Rai (2002) mentions that the parents and other family members fast lose the control may even the moral authority, over the child labour who soon begins to imitate his adult fellow workers, mistaking them to be their ideals. The illiterate child, having freed himself from the family ties, becomes susceptible to all sorts of evil influences which may turn him into a heavy smoker, a drug-addict, a gambler, a smuggling operator, a film addict, a thief, a pick pocket, or even a hard criminal, such children are often seen to be in the habit of using filthy and abusive language.

Misra (2004) explains about anti-social activities of child workers. Economic freedom at an early age, particularly among boys encourages them to develop bad habits like gambling, drinking of country liquor, smoking, frequent visit to cinema and other cheap sources of entertainment. The attraction towards an urban life style results in extravagance expenditure. The wage, rather than going to the family income pool is used by him. Sometimes these extravagant expenditures encourage delinquent activities like pick-pocket, stealing, drug trafficking etc.

According to Singh (2006) majority of the street children were anxious, aggressive and unsocial. This is because of the fact that they do not get chance of moving with other children of the society.

**Role and Rehabilitation:**

In the documentary film “Ragpickers – Scavengers at a Different Graveyard” on the Ragpickers of Mumbai explores the role of ragpickers. As of today, the city of Bombay generates nearly 8 million ton of waste (household, commercial, hotels and restaurants, markets, institutional, construction etc). 85,000 Ragpickers (the name by which garbage collectors are popularly known in India), it is estimated help the Bombay’s Municipal Corporation’s effort to manage solid, recyclable waste and control hazards of pollution, health and
hygiene for its residents. (Ragpickers Scavengers at a Different Graveyard Duration-54 a documentary on the Ragpickers of Mumbai- www.brahmanandsingh.com-2008)

Upadhyay, etal (2005), in their article “Eco Tools for Urban Waste Management in India” describes about the role of ragpickers. A large proportion of recyclable components i.e., paper, plastic, metal etc are collected by ragpickers from the garbage bins, from roadside, or in streets, market places, etc. in metropolitan cities, thus supplying raw material to the flourishing recycling units.

It is seldom realized that ragpickers serve a useful function. Assuming that, on an average, a ragpicker collects about 10 kg waste each day and that there are 80,000 of them in Delhi, the total quantum of waste collected by the pickers is 800 tons daily which is approximately 18% of the total waste generated every day. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi spent approximately 1.2 billion rupees (1995/96) to manage 1.98 million tons of garbage generated during the year. Thus, the ragpickers saved the municipal authorities more than 182 million rupees which otherwise would have been spent on handling 0.29 million tons of additional garbage and small percentage which has not been soiled by other wastes is recovered by the vast network of ragpickers in large towns and cities and recycled.

Recycling Glass is another component of municipal solid waste that is normally recycled. It is usually picked up by ragpickers and reaches the glass industry through dealers. Waste glass is generally used in producing the three types of glass products viz.(i) containers and hollow wares (ii) sheet glass and (iii) flat glass (www.j.Hum.Ecol.,18(4);253-269.).

The Hindu Daily (2007) news report, the staff reporter explains about the group of ragpicking is going to participate in a cycle rally to highlight the impact of privatization of waste management of Delhi. The ragpickers are the biggest contributors in keeping the city clean, saving the Municipal Corporation of Delhi of each day Rs. 6 lakh segregating garbage. While ragpickers have been an essential part of the waste disposal cycle, with privatization of collection of waste by the MCD they have been left out completely with no other source of income.
They are being further pushed to the ragpickers the privatization of waste in the capital leaves a lot to be desired in environment terms according activities. The privatization agreement has been signed for nine years between the MCD and the Delhi Waste Management (DWM).

SWACHH (2005) in this article “Alliance of Wastepickers in India” is a group of organizations working with wastepickers in different regions of the country. Wastepickers are a sizeable proportion among the poorest workers in the urban informal economy. They earn their livelihood from the collection, segregation and sale of scrap from recycling. Entry into the sector is largely mediated by caste and gender. Many of them are sole income earners in their families. Wastepickers play a significant though informal role in the management of urban solid waste by contributing to 1) Resource recovery, 2) Environment conservation, 3) Reduction in municipal costs, and 4) The reprocessing industry.

Chandigarh Housing Board (www.chb.co.in) it has constructed 328 pre-fabricated structures on 3.18 acres of land in sector 56 for ragpickers as per the direction of Administration. The building work of the pre-fabricated structures in sector 56 has been completed. Internal infrastructural works are in progress. The construction of pre-fabricated shelters along with necessary infrastructure stands completed. Camps on sits are being held to shift eligible beneficiaries.

The Hindu Daily (2008) in this news report the Former President of India Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam said “Child Ragpickers are not Street Children” while addressing a programme PVR street to school: Child Ragpickers are the children of hope, they are children of hope. We do not brand them as street children we have to give them confidence.

The PVR group has started an education programme for child ragpickers and orphans since last few years. About 275 such children are provided education at present at five centers.

This programme seeks to give a new life to the poor and vulnerable children through educational, social and cultural activities. It is being conducted in alliance with Delhi Govt., Resident Welfare Association Market Bodies and NGO’s.
The Indian News (1/5/2008), reported on rehabilitation of ragpicking. To attract the attention of the authorities towards their poor working conditions across the country, hundreds of ragpicking children staged a protest here today demanding human rights on the occasion of the International Worker’s Day. Thousands of children along with other workers took out a protest march demanding better working conditions. The protestors alleged that the government was ignoring the welfare of the workers and paying no attention towards their poor working conditions. Championing their cause for basic human rights, Ravi Prakash Sharma, a law maker said that ragpickers need to be organized for various welfare measures including provision of proper medical and educational facilities.

Numerous states are enforcing anti-begging laws and hence the traditional beggars have joined the ragpicking profession. Labour Day has its origins in the eight hour day movement, which advocated eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation and eight hours for rest.

Agape India Centre aims to provide shelter for ragpickers and orphan children between five to twelve years of age, demonstrating and encouraging social skills and hygiene and enabling them to bathe, rest, play and wash their clothing. At the present time the centre has a Children’s Centre for Girls. The Boy’s Centre is at Chikkajala village on the Bangalore International Airport road. Presently it has fourteen boys and four staff workers. The Girls Centre is at No.3 Church Street, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore presently it has thirteen girls and four staff workers.

This center provides clothing, medical helps, and one free meal a week for the boys, those who are still on the streets. The center encourages them to save money. The centre discourages borrowing money. The centre runs a well attended street children club on all Wednesday evenings, with the provision of items for play, a hot meal, vitamin tablets, nursing care, counseling and a children’s church service on all Saturdays. These children have integrated well with regular church members and though in formal talks and befriending, are starting to trust us and be less defensive. Non-formal education is provided on weekdays, with over
twenty children attending. This center’s aim to teach basic English vernacular language and equip them with knowledge and skills for everyday life (www.agapeindia.com).

A Bangalore based organization Mythri Seva Samithi (1994) in short called as Mythri, having many years of experience in working with street children initiated a project to combine the recognition of the waste pickers with an improved urban solid waste management in the city. The NGO started a pilot project in one area of the city. They trained street children which were already involved in ragpicking and educated the local residents on how to minimize and separate domestic waste. The children collected household garbage from door to door transported it by cycle cart to a nearby site for segregation into dry waste, which was used for recycling and wet waste, which was converted into compost. By selling the compost to the nearby farmer, the plastic and metals to the recycling industries and by imposing monthly garbage for on the local residents, the children could generate some income (www.globenet.org).

Singh (2006), in his book “Child Labour” explains that the rehabilitation of child ragpickers. The Child Labour Cell grants financial assistance to voluntary organizations to take up action-oriented project for child labour. During the year1991-92, an amount of Rs. 15.72 lakhs has been released as grant-in-aid for the following project connected with the welfare of ragpicking children. Jai Rajendra Ragpickers Project runs by the Karnataka State Council for Child Welfare, Bangalore. The project would aim at measure to maintain the health of the child by providing supplementary nutrition and to provide non-formal education and vocational training to help them better their employment.