

## Street Children in Nepal

### ➤ *Global Scenario*<sup>1</sup>

According to UN sources, there are up to 150 million street children in the world today. Chased from home by violence, drug and alcohol abuse, the death of a parent, family breakdown, war, natural disaster or simply socio-economic collapse, many destitute children are forced to eke out a living on the streets, scavenging, begging, hawking in the slums and polluted cities of the developing world.

### ➤ *Some facts and statistics of street children of Nepal:*<sup>2</sup>

- Children are living, sleeping and working under the open sky and surviving as they can without family support. They are staying with friends and working as Khalasis, Beggars, Rag Pickers, Sell newspapers, bread, biscuits, wash dishes in restaurants, carry water, and work as construction laborers.
- Children aged below 16 years constitute 41% of Nepal's population.
- While on the street they face problems of hunger, shelter, clothes, etc. Similarly, face problems from police, "dada" (bullies), gang etc. With all these problems and tensions, they lead their complex life.
- Street children are among the high risk and insecure groups and they are vulnerable to various forms of exploitation and abuses.
- Street children in Nepal are very vulnerable to the exposure to alcohol, drugs and tobacco. Street Children regard alcohol and drug use is one of the escape mechanisms to release or to get away from all their worries, tensions and problems.
- Street life means various risks and continuous dangers for that particularly vulnerable young population. Risks / Dangers that they face are numerous: violence (moral and physical), drugs addiction, threatening from gangs, social exclusion, health problems, delinquency, criminality, alcoholism, starvation, lack of self-esteem etc.
- The new challenges in working with street children are the rampant use of drugs, including intra-venous drugs used by some of the children. The threat of contracting HIV due to common sharing of needles and unsafe sexual behaviors. Street youths are gradually being exposed to the world of crime as well.

1. Peter C. Rebeiro. 2009. *Rehabilitate street children*. *The Daily Star*. March 25.

2. *Abuse and Exploitation of Street Children*. *Child Street to School*. [http://www.child-nepal.com/?page\\_id=281](http://www.child-nepal.com/?page_id=281). Accessed on 22/05/2014

➤ **According to *Child Protection Centers and Services (CPCS) report*<sup>3</sup>**

- 15% of the children in a street situation are from the eastern Terai district of Sunsari.
- There are around 5000 street children all over Nepal. In Kathmandu only, it is estimated that the number of street children is approximately 1200-1500.
- 86% of the rag pickers continue to work around the clock. 62% of the beggars work at night.
- Children as young as 9 are smoking ganja: 35% of 13 year old and 60% of street youth regularly smoke ganja.
- Street children from the age of 6 are regularly sniffing glue.
- The critical ages for many street children to use glue seem to be between 9 and 13. It is here that 25-35% of the children have not tried sniffing glue.
- Less than 25% of street children 13 years old or less stated they have had sexual relationship with penetration compared to over 50% of those 14 and older.
- 78% of the street children were part of a street based group or gang and more than 60% agreed that being in a group is compulsory for survival on the street.
- 66% of the respondents agreed that street life in a group is enjoyable.
- 76% of the children openly sniff glue but only 1.5% get arrested for it. 19% of the streets children beg but only 1 % of arrests are for begging.
- The police had arrested 66 % of the street children. 92% of these by the age of 15.37% had been arrested 5 times or more.
- 87% of the street children had visited NGOs often. Similarly, more than 78% slept at NGO and 66% regularly visited different NGOs.
- 89% think NGOs are helping street children properly. 73% of the children practiced religion regularly.
- 34% reported that they can change their religion.
- 15% of the street children have never been to school and only 9% have completed a primary school education.
- Over 40% of the respondents had stayed in school until grade 3 to 5, except those aged 10 to 12. They were well under 30%.
- More than 60% of the street children can read and write. The exception is 10 year olds where only 21% can read and write.
- Of the street youth, over 90% would prefer to learn a skill or be in training.

3. *The Street Children of Nepal "Anthroposociological Study of Social, Cultural and Communicational Practices. 2012. Child Protection Centers and Services*

➤ **Statistics about the sexual abuse of street boys:** <sup>4</sup>

75% of street boys in Kathmandu are victims of sexual abuse at the hands of foreigners, locals and their peers. Here are some worrying and disturbing figures.

Main reasons for migrating to street:

- 41.1% Family violence
- 27.1% Peer influence
- 19.6% Family economic situation
- 15.9 Family disintegration
- 0.9% To escape from conflict situation
- 3.7% To seek opportunities

Reason of children for becoming homeless on the streets of Kathmandu

- 41% of children leave home due to family violence
- 27% due to peer influence
- 19% due to economic factors
- 15% due to disintegration of the family

The perpetrators of sexual abuse to children

- 10.7% foreigner
- 83% Nepali male
- 3.6% Nepali female
- 2.7% Third gender

First time sex statistics of street boys in Kathmandu:

- 15% Female not from village
- 15% Female adult from village
- 4.7% Older street boy
- 15% Girl, same age, from village
- 3.7% Male not from village
- 15% Street girl
- 20.6 % Street boy same age or younger
- 13.1% Third gender

Reasons the children gave that would help them stop living on the streets:

- 33.3% Provide protection
- 25% Go back home
- 16.7% Did not know

4. *A study on the sexual abuse of street boys in Kathmandu. 2010. Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN)*

## Number of street children in Kathmandu Valley<sup>5</sup>

The estimated data of street children in Kathmandu valley under 18 years accounts to 257-342 and street children under 16 accounts to 127. The segregation of the estimated data based on the data gathered by CCWB from organizations working with street children are shown in the following table:

S.N.	Area	No. of street children		No. of street children below 16 years
		Minimum	Maximum	
1.	Gaushala, Pashupati, Chabahil and Tilganga	60	80	20
2.	Boudhha and Jorpati	15	20	8
3.	Chakrapath and Maharajgunj	3	5	2
4.	New Buspark	5	8	4
5.	Swayambhu	10	12	3
6.	Kalanki	10	12	10
7.	Balkhu	5	7	6
8.	Lagankhel, Patan, Jawalakhel, Mahalaxmasthan	10	20	5
9.	Banglamukhi	5	10	3
10.	Kalimati, Tripureswor and Teku	10	15	13
11.	Basantapur	21	25	12
12.	Koteshwor, Narephaat, Jadibuti Paari	6	6	0
13.	Baneshwor	4	6	5
14.	Kirtipur Paanga	5	7	5
15.	Thamel, Jyatha Chaur	25	30	7
16.	Bir Hospital, Sundhara, Mahankal	12	15	5
17.	Jamal, Durbarmarg, Bagbazaar, Jyapubari, Kamaladi, Ganeshthan	15	17	5
18.	Sohrakutte	13	17	6
19.	Bhaktapur Durbar Square	13	15	14
20.	Ramghaat	10	15	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>127</b>

5. *Report on mapping street children and organizations working with street children of Kathmandu Valley 2072. Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare. Central Child Welfare Board.*

***According to IBBS Survey among Street-Involved Children and Youths in Three Districts of Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, 2016 report<sup>6</sup>***

*(The research was carried with 350 street involved children and youths aged 10 to 24 year from Kathmandu Valley)*

- Prevalence of HIV Prevalence of HIV among street-based children and youths was found to be 0.86 percent.
- Among 350 participants, 288 (82.3%) were male, and 62 (17.7%) were female
- The median age of the street involved children and youths was 15 years, and 83.2 percent of the respondents were less than 20 years of age
- More than four-fifth (86.6%) of the street involved children and youths were illiterate
- Nearly two-third (64.3%) of the street involved children and youths were found to be used for alcohol and 67.1 percent of them had habit of sniffing solvents
- The median age of the street involved children and youth was ten years when they started sniffing, and 96.2 percent of them had begun deliberate inhalation of solvents below 16 the of age.
- Overall 6.6 percent of the street involved children and youth were found to be as injecting drug users.
- Almost a half (48.6%) of the street involved children and youth never had sexual intercourse, and 28.3 percent of them had first sexual intercourse much earlier at 7 to 14 years of age.
- Overall 6.3 percent of the street involved children and youth ever had sex in exchange for money, food or clothes.
- In total, 7.7 percent of the street involved children and youth were being involved for forceful sexual intercourse
- Overall 42.6 percent of respondents had ever used a condom. Among them (N=149), A major proportion (94%, n=140) were known how condom could be obtained, and 40.7 percent (n=57) of them had got condom from any organization in free of cost
- More than one-third (35.6%) of the street involved children and youth had used condom during their last sex act
- Overall 44.0 percent of the street involved children and youth correctly identified all A, B and C as HIV preventive measures and 0.6 percent of the respondent were found to be aware of all the five major indicators, B, C, D, E, and F, of HIV transmission and perceptions
- In total, nearly two-third (62.7%) of the participants were known about confidential HIV test facility available in the community and 57.1 percent of them were aware of the place of HIV testing. Little more than a quarter (26.3%) of the street involved children and youth ever had HIV test
- Overall, 56.9 percent of the street involved children and youth had found to be heard about sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Overall, 78.9 percent of the street involved and youth children had visited DIC, 8.6 percent of them had visited HTC center and 4.3 percent of them had visited STI clinic in the past 12 months

6. *Integrated Biological and Behavioral Surveillance (IBBS) Survey among Street-Involved Children and Youths in Three Districts of Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, 2016 (Round I). National Center for AIDS and STD Control Teku, Kathmandu*

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