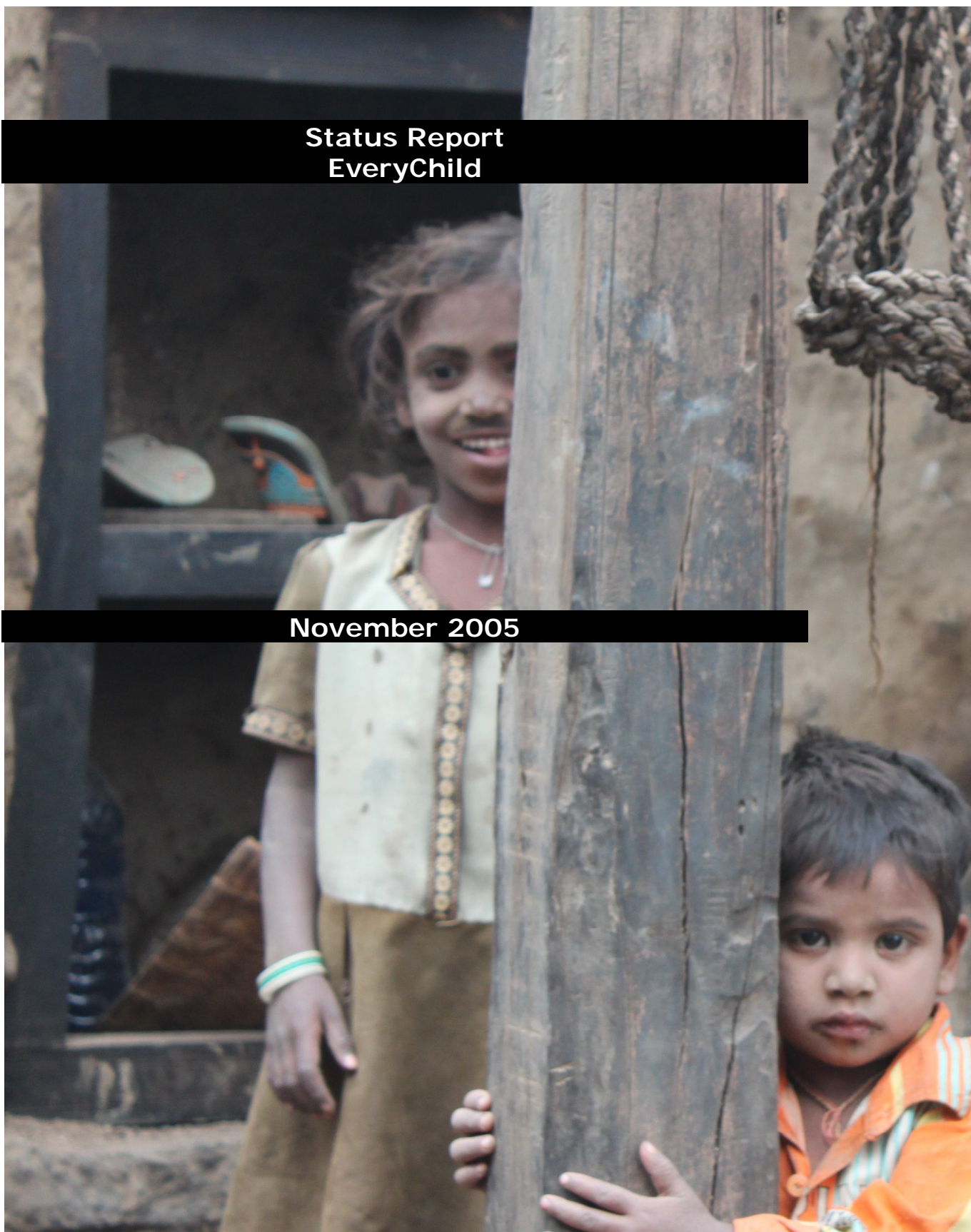


***SEPARATED CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA***

**Status Report  
EveryChild**

**November 2005**



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## ***ACRONYMS***

AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CARA:	Central Adoption Resource Agency
CACL:	Campaign Against Child Labour
CRY:	Child Relief and You
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
FORCES:	The Forum for Creche and Child Care Services
ICCW:	Indian Council of Child Welfare
ICDS:	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
LBW:	Low Birth Weight
MHRD:	Ministry of Human Resource Development
MICS:	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NACS:	National Aids Control Society
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIPCCD:	National Institute for Public Cooperation and Child Development
TB:	Tuberculosis
UNAIDS:	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCRC:	United Nations Child Rights Convention
UNCEF:	United Nations Children's Fund

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

South Asia nations are marked for their rich inheritance of historical evolution, cultural similarities, geo-political structuring, economic potentials and aspirations. Along with this is the dissonance consequent to their political dynamics, colonial legacies and the regional spread of conflicts. Concentration of poverty, unequal distribution of resources and the resultant marginalization, decline in agriculture leading to severe unemployment, aggravated marginalization consequent to the liberalization policies since the early 1990s and recurrent natural disasters put these nations vulnerable to child separation.

The slow rate of economic growth, high malnourishment, high infant and child mortality, gender bias in education and spreading HIV/AIDS contribute to child poverty in the region and lead to separation of children from their families. Available evidences indicate that the region has approximately 22 million children who are separated from families for various causes. The three largest countries – Bangladesh, India and Pakistan- account for 95 percent of the region's child population and most certainly that of separated children as well.

The separated children could be placed under the following categories: street children, children engaged in industries as child labourers, children in domestic work, children involved in commercial sex, children who are in certified homes and orphanages, children of HIV/AIDS patients, children who are affected by war, communal clashes and natural disasters. There is no scientific estimate of the children who come under each of these categories.

The main reason for child separation is poverty in the family. Children drop out of schools and leave home for earning an additional income for the family or for their own survival. Rural debt is another important reason why children are sent to work as bonded labourers. Family break up, violence at home, the glamour of the city and peer pressure are other factors leading to child separation. Children are institutionalized because there is no one to care for them or because of disasters, which are natural, or man made. The latest category of children who are separated is children affected by HIV/AIDS.

The separated children suffer much vulnerability. They are deprived of their childhood and are forced to take up burdens beyond their capacity. They are used by antisocial elements for crimes. They get into the habit of drugs and gambling. They experiment with sex early in life and are in danger of diseases. Girl children are forced into commercial sex early in their life. They are deprived of parental care and love, which are so essential for their growth.

The governments have intervened through legislations and with some programmes, particularly institutional care. There are many NGOs in the region who intervene to prevent separation or take care of the separated children.

Interventions for separated children should primarily be preventive. Government should generate employment and improve the earning capacity of families. Communities should take the responsibility for families at the verge of break up. Community resource should be mobilized to take care of separated children. The

institutions where separated children are taken care of should simulate family atmosphere and help children to have a normal environment.

Everychild should concentrate its work with NGOs that are working at prevention of separation at the community level. The focus of shelter homes aided by Everychild should be to restore children to their families as early as possible. Homes run for HIV/AIDS affected children could be funded.

# **SEPARATED CHILDREN IN SOUTH ASIA**

## **1.0 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

The social, economic and the cultural context of South East Asia are fast changing. Poverty is on the increase. More and more people are driven out of their traditional agricultural operations and migrating to the cities. The social network of the families is breaking down. Family violence and break down are on the increase. The reforms initiated by the governments benefit only a small section of the population. In this situation, one of the most affected groups is the child.

Along with the adults, the children also migrated to the cities either with their parents or alone. Many of them run away from their homes because of the poverty of the family, domestic violence, break up of the families. Many others are forced into child labour by the parents because of the rural indebtedness and poverty at home. A sizeable number of children are drawn to trafficking because of the allurements of the middlemen and the attractions of the city. The consequence is that children get separated from the families and live by themselves or live in groups. They suffer much vulnerability and are affected by diseases. They get into habits that are antisocial and live a life of freedom without values. This number is on the increase. Unless this tide is stemmed, the future of these countries will be affected.

EveryChild team is working with children in the Asian and African countries in their meeting on the Regional Strategy Planning Workshop in August 2005 decided to focus their attention on the separated children in a special way. In view of this a study was undertaken with the following objectives.

- To identify the forms of child separation existing in Asia.
- To assess the major issues and causes of separation of children
- To identify the extent of separation and the most vulnerable target groups of children in the context of separation.
- To identify the interventions that are most suitable in addressing the issues
- To identify the organisations that is working with the separated children.
- To identify the top priority interventions and the target groups.

Based on the objectives of the study, an interview guide was prepared to conduct in-depth interviews with the government officials, directors of INGOs and officials of the NGOs working at various levels for the welfare of the children. Though the study was to cover the whole of Asia, given the constraints of time and the resources, it was agreed that primary data would be collected only from the key players in India. For the other countries, data were collected from secondary sources like the government reports and documents, research studies carried out on issues related to children, documents available with INGOs and NGOs, and the information available in the internet.

The consultant had many meetings with the country director to understand the purpose of the study and went through the documents that were available from EveryChild before finalising the interview schedule. This was shared with the other

consultant and an expert in the field. With the use of the interview schedule, data were collected from the following categories of persons: government officials who are working with child issues (2), INGO (1), NGOs who are working on the rights of children in Asia (5), NGOs who are working with children who work (2), NGOs who are working with street children (4), NGOs who are running homes exclusively for girls who are at risk (3), Journalist (1) and Academicians who have undertaken research on Child right issues (2).

Interviews were conducted in the following cities: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore. These cities were selected as many children who are separated are in these cities and many organisations are working with these children. More persons could not be contacted for want of time or their unavailability. Each interview lasted about one hour and thirty minutes.

There were several limitations to this study. The time available to the consultants to collect information was limited. The consultants could not travel to other areas to meet key players because of the limitation of time and resources. It was difficult to collect the children in one place for focus group discussions. Most of the NGOs who were contacted by the consultants were working with all the categories of children. The concept of separated children was difficult for them to understand initially and it took time for them to answer some of the questions. Information from the secondary sources was limited and they were not easily available. Even the available information was incomplete and sketchy. The government officials were not easily available. Most of them wanted appointments to be taken a fortnight before. This was not possible. Though some NGOs agreed to send some materials through email, they did not respond in spite of repeated reminders.

The report consists of the following areas: the methodology, an analysis of the South Asian situation, the forms and extent of child separation, laws and policies of the government, governmental and non governmental agencies working with children, recommendations, recommendations for EveryChild, special recommendations for India and appendix.

## **2.0 REGIONAL CONTEXT**

The concept of 'South Asia' as a region is a colonial contribution after India and Pakistan became independent. The South Asian countries share a common political history and exhibit similarities in social and cultural situation and economic strategies. The geo-political evolution of the present day South Asia was through restructuring the Indian sub-continent through the superimposition of state boundaries on an adjoining cultural landmass and economic space. The current boundaries have a specific characteristic, where South Asian countries do not share borders with each other, except with and through India. This makes the region geo-politically 'Indo-centric' and inherently bilateral in intra-regional interactions. Political dynamics in the South Asian countries for more than fifty years have evolved on this given infrastructure of cultural and historical inheritance, geo-political construction and economic space.

The problem of the rise of religious sectarianism in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies in the region has led to the alienation of minorities and given rise to ethnic aspirations and separatist movements. In Sri Lanka both the JVP insurgency of the early seventies and the Tamil insurgency since the early Eighties have resulted from

the politics of ethnic consolidation of the Sinhalese in the political system. The Tamil insurgency still remains a major challenge for Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity, particularly so in the context of the now stalled peace process started in 2001. In Pakistan, the separation of Bangladesh was a consequence of the dominance of Punjabi ethnicity under the supremacy of an Islamic state. In Bangladesh, the Chakma unrest was a reflection of Bengali and Islamic assertion. In Nepal, the Terai movement of the Maoists insurgency of the late Nineties is manifestations of protest against the dominance of hill people, and against a Hindu state. In India, the unrest and ethnic turmoil in the northeast is a clear evidence of the failure of even a secular state to integrate its socially divergent groups. The sharpening of communal tensions in India that resulted in the demolition of the Babri Mosque (1992) and the carnage in Gujarat (2002) are due to the rise of Hindu fundamentalist forces that are pursuing the politics of religious segregation. South Asia, thus, is passing through a process of national integration in respective countries, which is both violent and disruptive, creating problems of internal and regional insecurity.

The search of legitimacy by the authoritarian forces (like in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan) and struggle for democratic power (such as in Sri Lanka and India) have both led to the mobilization of sectarian constituencies. This also has other complex dimensions related to the unleashing of globalization, explosion of information, aspirations and identity and uneven distribution of the fruits of development. The politics of South Asian states is also marked by the cycle of democratic distortions and resurgence. Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh witnessed an erosion of democratic processes and assertion of authoritarian governance. Bhutan has always remained a monarchy, though there are signs of democratic processes being introduced. The beginning of the 1990s witnessed a democratic resurgence in all these countries of South Asia, but in Pakistan and Nepal forces of regression have been again on the ascendance in the recent years. India also suffered a distortion in its democratic system for a short while in 1975, but its robust democratic institutions have been alive and vibrant since then.

The present day South Asia is marked by two incompatible features: (i) its rich inheritance of historical evolution and cultural contiguity, its geo-political structuring and its economic aspirations and potential; and (ii) its intense dissonance as a product of its political dynamics, colonial legacies and regional spread of domestic conflicts. In addition to the already existing widespread poverty and marginalization, India and Sri Lanka suffered consequent to the Tsunami disaster of 2004 and more recently India and Pakistan due to the earthquakes. Both these natural disasters pose challenges for the wellbeing of separated children in the region.

There are three fold challenges confronting contemporary South Asia. They are the challenge of univocal world and globalization at the level of the world order, the challenge of upsurge in people's aspirations and expectations from within the South Asian societies and the challenge of terrorism haunting most of the South Asian states.

Globalization has both positive and negative implications for South Asia, in terms of internal economic reforms, harnessing of common regional resources, creating and expanding trade flows within the region as also with the wider international community, coping with global trading regime, investment flows and technology

transfers, and in terms of managing explosion of information and migratory movements. South Asian states are getting sensitive towards these opportunities and pressures.

South Asia has a population size of 1.44 billion, more than 22 percent of the world's population. Among the constituent nations, India accounts for more than 75 percent of the population (See Table A1 in the Appendix). Therefore, an analysis of the situation in the region using any development indicator could be influenced by the Indian situation. However, these nations, with the exception of Sri Lanka, are comparable in their social and economic development scenario.

The contrasting picture of Sri Lanka is characterized by low level of economic development with appreciable social development situation; its health and education situations are comparable to that of more developed nations. In other nations, the human development index is low; it ranges from 0.520 in Bangladesh to 0.602 in India while it is 0.751 in Sri Lanka. In the other nations the life expectancy at birth ranges between 61 to 64 years, whereas it is 73 years in Sri Lanka; similarly, the adult literacy rate in Sri Lanka is 92 whereas it varies from 40 to 57 in other countries in the region.

Countries in South Asia are marked by their ethnic diversity and the existence of many linguistic groups. These nations are vulnerable to various natural hazards like cyclones, floods and earthquakes; these in recent years have claimed several lives and have been a major cause of displacement of people; the worst affected being women and children. Various blends of poverty, population growth, changing consumption patterns, industrialization and unequal resource distribution have affected their development efforts. India, with more than one billion people, one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and a robust information technology industry that is projected to earn about US \$ 50 billion, is a country of striking contrasts. With more than a quarter of population below poverty line, in absolute number India has the highest concentration poverty anywhere in the world and accounts for about 40 percent of the world's poor.

South Asian economies are based primarily on agriculture; the decline in its share to the GDP has aggravated rural poverty in these nations. In all these countries the per capita GDP is very low compared to developed countries; the situation is pathetic particularly in Nepal where the per capita GDP is as low as US\$ 240 and Pakistan where the annual growth in per capita GDP is a low 1.1 percent (See also Table A1 in the Appendix).

The liberalization policy has attracted foreign investment, resulting in industrial expansion; the past decade has shown a fast increase in annual rate of economic growth, from 3 percent in the 1980s to more than 7 percent. Yet the progress is far from the desired level; for instance, India, the nation with a population share of about 18 percent of the world accounts for only 1 percent of the world trade and the informal economy's share to gross domestic product is 23 percent. The liberalization process has resulted in a decline in social sector expenditure since the 1990s, especially in health and education. It is argued, though not conclusively, that the extent of vulnerability has increased among the already vulnerable groups during the past 15 years and so is the absolute number of vulnerable.

Bangladesh is the 8<sup>th</sup> most populated nation in the world and the most densely populated. A large section of the people of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan compete

for the meager resources that are marked by scarcity of land, periodic shortage of food, especially in Bangladesh, and abundance of labour. Nepal features among the economically poorest countries of the world. Nepal's social indicators still remain well below the average for South Asia.

Pakistan's long standing economic and social challenges include a fragile macro economic situation, endemic governmental problems, slow progress in poverty reduction, slackened economic growth, poor social indicators, particularly among women and in rural areas and severe gender disparities. Despite some improvements since the 1990s, Pakistan's social indicators, particularly for women, fall short of other countries at a comparable stage of economic growth.

The government of India has been concerned with the increasing number of suicides among farmers in the country, subsequent to decline in agriculture. The 59<sup>th</sup> round of National Sample Survey (2003) shows that the national level of an estimated 60.4 percent of rural households farmer households, 48.6 percent are indebted, with the highest being in Andhra Pradesh (82 percent) In absolute terms, out of an estimated 43.4 million indebted farmer households, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh account for 50 of them. Almost 80 percent of indebted farmer households possess less than or equal to 2 hectares of land.

With India's one billion plus population and the young and large populations in Bangladesh and Pakistan, South Asia has the world's second largest population of children. On an average, in the region, about 41 percent of its population are children below 18 years; this share varies from 30 percent in Sri Lanka to 39 in India and to more than 48 percent in Pakistan and Bhutan where close to 15 percent are children below 5 years. South Asian children are characterized by primary level enrolment ratio of education less than 100 with a considerable gender bias in most of its constituent nations. Particularly in Pakistan, Bhutan, followed by India, the enrolment ratio in schools for girls is considerably low (See Tables 2 to 4 in the Appendix).

South Asian nations (excluding Sri Lanka) are marked by high infant and child mortality rates. Situation in Pakistan with an under 5 mortality rate of 103 and India, Bhutan and Nepal where the rate ranges between 82 to 87, a large section of children born are deprived of their right to survival. Of the three most populous countries in the region, only Bangladesh, with a lower rate of child mortality than either India or Pakistan, is on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals. It reduced under-five deaths to almost half of its 1990 level by 2002, at an average annual rate of reduction of 5.2 per cent.

More than half of all children under the age of four are malnourished and 30 percent of newborns are significantly underweight. About 60 per cent of the Indian women are anemic. In India, maternal deaths account for almost 25 percent of the world's childbirth-related deaths. India has the largest remaining pool of polio transmission in the world. Although declining, largely preventable diseases such as leprosy, tuberculosis, cataract blindness, and malaria continue to account for 50 percent of reported illness, and around 470 deaths per 100,000. In contrast, the slowdown in child mortality reduction seen in India and Pakistan in the 1990s has left them lagging behind. India must accelerate its annual rate of reduction to over 6 per cent to meet MDG 4, and for Pakistan, the required rate is 7 per cent.

Of the remaining countries in the region, only Bhutan is on schedule to meet the development goals set. While Nepal is not far behind, Sri Lanka will have to intensify their efforts. Child mortality in Afghanistan was virtually unchanged in 2002 compared with 1990, although the situation is likely to have improved in the past year. In South Asia, poor perinatal care is the leading reason for children under five dying, accounting for almost one third of all their deaths. Acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea are the other main killers. In proportionate terms, diarrhoea as a single proximate cause of child deaths is at its worst in the South Asia region.

According to the latest available statistics, HIV/AIDS is not yet a major cause of child mortality in the region; only 1 per cent of deaths are linked to the disease. However, rates of HIV infection are likely to increase in the coming years, adding to the burden faced by the region in its attempts to reduce child mortality.

Considerable extent of poverty, high extent of unemployment and landlessness, recurrent disasters in the region, ill effects of globalization including the fiscal pressures on governments, and the spread HIV/AIDS, all make the situation of separated children worse and an extrapolation on the future would show a bleak situation.

### **3.0 SEPARATED CHILDREN**

#### **3.1 Forms and extent of Child Separations**

The Separated Children are broadly categorized as Street Children, Children engaged in industries as child labourers, Children involved in Prostitution, Children who are in Certified homes run by the government, orphans who are in orphanages run by Non governmental organizations and educational institutions, children of HIV/ AIDS affected patients who are taken care of by Non governmental organizations and children who are victims of war, communal clashes and natural disasters.

There is no scientific information available on the number of children who are under each of these categories. There are estimates and projections made based on certain studies. There is a feeling among those who are working with separated children that the government should make an effort to find out the number of children who are separated from their homes under each of these categories.

#### **Street children**

This is one of the major categories of children who are separated from their parents. All the street children will not come under the category of separated children. Many children who are on the street go back home in the evening, if the parents are in the same city or they keep in touch with the family at least once in a fortnight. There is another category that has run away from home or forced to come to the street because they are abandoned by the parents or for other reasons.

The children come to the street because of poverty at home. Those who have an unpleasant or traumatic home environment leave home to escape from stepparents, abuse from relatives, unemployment, and alcoholism of the father. Their tolerance level for endurance is very low and they take the drastic decision of leaving the

family. Some of them run away because of the fear of pressure at home to perform beyond their capacity, glamour of city life or peer pressure.

Most of the street children are street smart and find themselves some work; even through it may not be steady. They become rag pickers, work as coolies in railway stations and do odd jobs like tea boys. Some of them get into the hands of anti social elements and are introduced to small crimes like pick-pocketing and small thefts. They do not have the habit of saving. They spent all the money they earn that day itself. When their needs become more, they resort to drug peddling and anti social activities.

Most of the street children are continuously on the move and stay in groups. The elder children take care of young children. They have a strong bond and a sense of solidarity among themselves. Very often they get into trouble with the police. They face problems from antisocial elements. Some of them are maimed and forced into beggary. Girls after the age of 10 are forced into prostitution. Some children are hired by the traffickers into working as child labourers and are unable to escape from their hold. Because of their low income they suffer from malnutrition. As they are introduced to sex very early in life, they are in danger of contracting diseases like HIV/AIDS. They also fall victims to diseases like Malaria and other communicable diseases.

Table 1 shows the number of children separated from their families in the south Asian region due to work, forced marriage, orphan hood and HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that 83 percent of the street children are boys, 33 percent of the street children are in the age group of 6-10 yrs, 40 percent are in the age group of 11-15 yrs and 27 percent are 16 yrs and above. Human rights watch estimates that approximately 18 million children live or work on the streets of India. The estimate for Nepal is about 5,000 children. In Bangladesh this number is estimated to be two million. No statistics are available for street children in Pakistan although verbal estimates attribute 10,000 street children each to Lahore and Karachi. About 15,000 children live on the streets in Sri Lanka. The magnitude of various forms of separation is also evident from Table 2 that presents information from both primary and secondary sources.

A recent study in Chennai shows that many street children (46%) would like to live in a secure place while 71 percent are eager to change their present life. 63 percent of children have an ambition to do something meaningful in their life time.

### **Child Labour**

Child labour could be categorized into three groups: Domestic labour, bonded children and working children. Child labour could be defined as these children who are doing paid or unpaid work in factories, workshops, establishments, mines and in the service sector such as domestic labour. More than 80 per cent of Domestic labour is dominated by girls. Most of the boys work either in formal industries or in agriculture.

Child labour is present in industries like matches, fireworks, explosives, glasses and bangles, beedi making, carpet, lock making, brassware, export oriented garments industries, gem polishing export industry, leather units and diamonds industries.

The main reasons for child labour are poverty and landlessness. Parents send their children as migrants to earn a supplementary income for the family instead of schooling.

The schools that are in rural areas are poorly managed. The schools lack basic facilities. Many of the schools have a single teacher. Consequently, the children benefit very little from the school education. The parents feel that it is a waste of time sending them to school, as it adds nothing to the employability of the child. The children get frustrated. The consequence is the child drops out of school and the parents send the child to work as child labourers.

The children are forced to work long hours. Their incomes are low and are forced to work in hazardous industries. They are employed as temporary workers. The quality of food given to them is poor. These children have no time for leisure or for any kind of recreation. They are denied the pleasures of childhood and education. The best part of their life is sacrificed for work, which is arduous, mechanical and boring.

**Table 1: Child Separation in South Asia: Child Labour, Orphan hood, Child Marriage, and HIV**

Indicator	Year	Country						
		Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	South Asia
Child Labour (5-14) – percent	1999 - 2003	8	-	14	27	15	01	-
No. (in thousands) of child labourers	2000	6000	-	11,000	1500	3500	300	-
Children Orphaned due to All Causes (thousands)	2003	5300	90	35000	1000	4800	340	-
Child marriage (percent)	1986 - 2003	65	-	46	56	32	14	-
Number of people (0-49) Living with HIV (thousands)	2003	-	-	5100*	61	74	3.5	5000**
Children (0-14) Living with HIV (thousands)	2003	-	-	120	-	-	-	130+

Source: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS II) and Demographic Health Surveys; UNAIDS Global HIV/AIDS Report 2004

\* UNAIDS estimates

\*\* UNICEF estimates

+ UNICEF estimate for the region; nationwide figures are not available.

### Bonded Children

Bonded children are those who have either been pledged by their parents for paltry sums of money or those working to pay off the inherited debt of their parents. Bonded child labour is an acute problem in South Asia. Bonded children are the most

difficult to assist as they are inaccessible. The employers keep these children almost as prisoners

**Table 2: Magnitude of Child Separation in India (from interviews and selected secondary information)**

<p><b>From Secondary Data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child Labourers in Delhi - 400,000</li><li>• Street Workers in Delhi - 100,000</li><li>• Street Workers in Hyderabad - 30,000</li><li>• Separated Children in India (below 15 years) - 16,546,000</li><li>• Orphaned Children in India (below 15 years) - 770,000</li><li>• Exact Number of Children Working in many industries is not available</li><li>• Bonded Girl labour, aged 7-14 years in Cottonseed production – 400,000 (of which 250,000 are working in Andhra Pradesh)</li><li>• Since the inception of Scheme for Bonded Labour in 1978-79, 50827 bonded labourers were identified till 2003, of which 49027 were released</li><li>• India has the largest number of AIDS orphans</li><li>• About 14 percent of HIV/AIDS cases are children below 14 years</li><li>• Number of children in commercial sex work in India – 300,000</li><li>• Of the 900,000 sex workers in India, 30% are believed to be children</li><li>• Number of children in sex work is increasing at 8-10 percent per annum</li><li>• About 7,000 sex workers cross the border from Nepal to India every year</li></ul> <p><b>From Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No accurate statistics available on the extent of child separation (17 out of 20 interviewed reported)</li><li>• More than 100,000 children lost parents due to disasters</li><li>• &gt;30 percent of separated children are from excluded groups</li><li>• &gt;3600,000 people have migrated to Delhi from Bihar due to monsoon failure which forced them to give up farming</li><li>• There are about 500,000 separated children in Delhi</li><li>• The number of street children in small cities is less</li><li>• The number of children running away from home has increased during the last 10 years</li></ul>
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And cannot escape either from their place of work or from home. Their working conditions are difficult. They become victims of cruelty and sometimes are abused. They will spend their life in slavery till they get married and in turn, sell their children.

Working children are those who are working as part of family labour in agriculture and in home based work. These children work long hours, are deprived of education and are forced to take on burdens disproportionate to their strengths and abilities. The parents send their children for those works because of poverty. Census **1991** data suggests that there are 11-28 million children who are child labourers. Over 85 percent of these children work in the rural areas and their number is on the increase. In Nepal the children who are child labourers are 2.6 million out of a total of 12 million children below 18 years. Child labour is very prevalent in Pakistan. An estimated 3 to 8 million children are currently working in Pakistan. Most of these children either work in carpet industries, agriculture or in urban centers in

**Table 3: Magnitude of Child Separation in Other Countries**

<p><b>1. Bangladesh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Out of the 445, 226 street children in Bangladesh, 75 percent are in Dhakka city and 47 percent are girls; the average daily income is US \$ 0.55</li><li>• It is reported that the number of street children is increasing.</li><li>• About 400,000 children below 15 years work in urban areas.</li><li>• Over 1 Million women and children were trafficked out of Bangladesh during the last 30 years.</li><li>• Between 2001– 2003, at least 1008 Bangladeshis were trafficked out of the country; during this period, 1116 women and children were rescued from traffickers.</li></ul> <p><b>2. Nepal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About 150 thousand children work in carpet industry in Nepal</li><li>• The total number of child labourers is 1500,000 to 2600,000.</li><li>• There are about 5000 street children in Nepal</li><li>• Carpet industries in Nepal are used as the safest transit place for trafficking children.</li><li>• About 200, 000 Nepali women and children are trafficked to India of which 20 percent are children under 16 years.</li><li>• About 34 percent of marriages are to children below 16 years, 7 percent to girls below 10 years.</li><li>• UNICEF estimates that there are 30,000 street children in Nepal more than 60 percent belong to Dalit community.</li><li>• ILO estimates that 4000 children are working as rag pickers in Nepal ; 88 percent boys.</li><li>• A rapid assessment by ILO in 2001 shows that in addition to 4000 rag pickers, there are 55,000 domestic workers, 46,029 child porters, 57,000 bonded child laborers, 12,000 girls trafficked, about 20 percent of sex workers in Nepal are children below 16 years.</li><li>• About 30 percent of the “People’s Army” of Nepali Maoist insurgent comprise child recruits.</li><li>• 127, 000 children work in worst forms of child labour.</li><li>• Of about 100,000 Bhutanees refugees living in six refugee camps, 43,000 are children.</li><li>• Number of detained children in 2002 was 75, number of children of jailed parents 100.</li></ul> <p><b>3. Pakistan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child Labour 1996 : 3. 3 Million ( ILO Estimates) 2000 : 2. 9 Million</li><li>• Bonded Labour Liberation Front estimates there are 8 million children bounded of which 1. 2 million engaged in carpet industry.</li><li>• Another estimate put the number of child labour in Pakistan as 3. 5 million.</li><li>• SPARC estimates the number of child labourers as 8 Million, with two–thirds employed full time.</li><li>• No. of child prostitutes in Pakistan 20,000 – 40,000.</li><li>• About 10,000 street children (having no connection with family)</li><li>• About 1. 2 million street children in Pakistan, many work 12-15 hours a day, earn around Rs. 75 ( US \$ 1. 25). The number of street children is on the rise.</li><li>• Around 4,500 children are in detention in Pakistan; of them more than 3,000 have not been convicted any offence ( conviction rate is only 15 – 20%).</li></ul> <p><b>4. Sri Lanka</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• About 300, 000 child labourers in Sri Lanka (1percent of child population in the age group 5-14 years)</li><li>• Approximately 1 million children are directly affected by conflict in Sri Lanka, causing child separation</li><li>• NGOs estimate that there are 4,500 street children in Sri Lanka (2000 in Colombo and 2500 outside it ) with 10,000 children at risk.</li></ul>
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restaurants and automobile industries. Child labour in Bangladesh has increased alarmingly. The children work in agriculture and are employed in urban industries. Their number is estimated to be 4,00,000 children under the age of 15.

### **Children used for Commercial Sexual exploitation**

Children are used as commercial sex workers and are abused in their work places as well. Children are powerless to resist abuse by employers, and adult workers in work places. They are also cheated with the promises of gifts and other facilities

Middlemen often act as agents to get children to the city. They lend money to families who must pay back through their daughter's work. Almost all such children end up as commercial sex workers. Once they are caught up in this they find it impossible to escape from this situation.

The agents normally bring children from other states. For example, Andhra girls are brought to Tamil Nadu and visa versa. Because of the fear of HIV/AIDS, the clients prefer younger children and prefer children between the age of 10 and 12. Hence minors are introduced into commercial sex work.

**Table 4: Estimates of Separated Children in India**

Proportion of Separated Children Below 15 Years with One parent Alive (Per 1000)	41
Proportion of Separated Children Below 15 Years with Both parent Dead (Per 1000)	02
Estimated Number of Separated Children Below 15 Years with One parent Alive (thousands)	15766
Estimated Number of Separated Children Below 15 Years with Both Parent Dead (thousands)	770
Total Number (Estimated) of Separated Children Below 15 Years (thousands)	16546

Source: MICS II; Estimated using child population size

The street children who are girls pick rags up to the age of 10. After that traffickers force them into sex. A conservative estimate is that around 3, 00,000 children in India are engaged in commercial sex. There are about 5,000 children who are engaged in commercial sex in Nepal and another 32,000 children work in India as commercial sex workers from Nepal.

### **Orphans and vulnerable children of HIV/AIDS**

The impact of the AIDS crisis has not begun to fully emerge in India and AIDS related orphans have not been fully documented. However, it is estimated that India has the largest number of AIDS orphans in any country and this number is expected

to double in the next five years. Of the 55,764 identified AIDS cases in India, 2,112 are children. An estimation of HIV/AIDS infected people in Nepal is 15,000 and there are no estimates of the children affected by AIDS.

A study conducted by the ILO found that children of infected parents are discriminated. They are denied basic amenities and forced to take up petty jobs to augment their income. A new law is being drafted under which doctors will no longer be able to refuse treatment to people with HIV and discrimination against those with HIV will also be banned.

Several Non-governmental organizations have special homes for children who are either orphaned because both the parents have died of HIV or affected by HIV. The government is yet to start taking care of these children in any significant way.

### **Certified Schools and Orphanages**

The government has over 200 certified schools across India to take care of children who are either orphans or children who are in conflict with the law. When a child is referred to the certified school, the officials make an attempt to trace the parents. If they are traced, the child is restored to the parents. Otherwise the child will be forced to spend its childhood in a certified school.

These institutions are ill managed and the children are hardly given vocational training that would get them an employable skill when they leave the institutions. In certain institutions orphan children are kept with children who have problems with law. These children are transferred from home often and hence they do not feel a sense of belonging. The self-concept of these children is generally low. Because of the number, individual attention given to the children is limited. Their character formation suffers as a consequence.

Another category of separated children are those who are in Orphanages run by Non governmental organizations and in the hostels in public schools. The orphanages take children who are poor and not necessarily orphans. Many orphanages maintain a critical number because of the need of getting aid either from the government or from donor agencies. Persons who have little training in childcare or adolescent psychology administrate these orphanages. The children are kept in an unnatural setting and their growth is affected.

It is not only the poor children who suffer the effects of separations. Because of the break up of families, more and more children of well to do parents are sent to schools from their very early age. They lack parental care and suffer psychological damages. Some of these children become aggressive and delinquent as they feel that they are deprived of love and affection

### **Conflicts, war and Natural Disaster Affected Children**

Another category of children that suffers separation is victims of communal/religious conflicts, war and natural disasters. Both the parents could have died, or one of the parents would be alive and is unable to take care of the child or the child is lost and unable to find his/her way back to the parents. 5,00,000 children in Sri Lanka are

oppressed by the war. 2,00,000 children are disabled. Although 4 per cent of the child population is disabled, the government and NGOs assist only 1.5 per cent of them.

These children are taken care of in Homes, which are run especially for them, or orphanages that already exist in that area.

### **3.2 Vulnerability Suffered by Separated Children**

The children who are separated are deprived of their childhood, leisure and play. They are forced to take up an adult role for which the child is ill equipped or not willing to take up. Because of this, the child may develop a negative attitude towards the parents and the society that has been so cruel to them, for no fault of theirs. Their contact with the adult world is limited. Their character formation suffers and their sense of right and wrong is not clear to them and sometimes, it gets mixed up. This could lead to anti-social behaviors. In many cases, the child is denied of human dignity and freedom. One of the child rights activists puts it this way, "It is frightening to think of a whole generation of children who will grow up with no skills to fall back upon, no thought for the future, little value system and brought up in a culture of violence."

As the child grows up away from the parents, the bond with the family weakens or breaks up. The child undergoes psychological insecurity. The child has no future to look forward to and becomes hopeless.

The child on the street is almost physically and sexually abused. They are used by traffickers and anti social elements for small crimes. The older children take advantage of the smaller children and force them to work. They get into the habit of drugs and gambling. They are exposed to the danger of contracting HIV/AIDS. As they are malnourished, they easily contract diseases and are deprived of even basic health facilities. The society looks at them with hatred and they develop low self-esteem. They frequently get into difficulties with law enforcing authorities. They have no thought for tomorrow and live in a world of illusion. As they experiment with sex early in life, they become promiscuous. Once they are on the streets, it is difficult to come out of it.

The children in child labour are to work for long hours. They are deprived of education for no fault of theirs. They work in hazardous industries and are paid low salaries and their job is uncertain. They are forced to take up responsibilities beyond their strength or ability. They are exposed to diseases; most of them are malnourished and suffer the consequences of long hours of work. Employers abuse them. They have no way of seeking help from the outside world, even if they wanted. Hence they suffer loneliness and depression. Some of them even attempt suicide.

Children who are forced into commercial sex are too young and get traumatized. They feel that the middlemen cheat them. They feel that there is no future for them. They become victims of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Though they earn, middlemen take most of the earning away. They suffer loneliness. When they refuse to comply with the wishes of their clients, they are cruelly treated. They feel a sense of hopelessness.

The children who are in certified homes and orphanages are the least vulnerable. They are deprived of parental care and affection. Some of them are abused; their need for love is not fulfilled. Many of them become passive and are not motivated to perform.

It is difficult to say which is the most vulnerable group. According to some activists, the children who are in child labour are the most vulnerable. Others feel that the children who are forced into commercial sex are the most vulnerable. The general feeling is that vulnerability differs from child to child and does not fully depend upon the type of separation.

#### **4.0 Laws and policies of the government**

India and Nepal have much legislation to protect the rights of the children. India has progressive policies and the Juvenile Justice Act is comprehensive. India is a signatory to the Child Right Convention. The Constitution of India itself has a section on child protection. Sri Lanka has initiated a number of legislations like the National Plan of Action for Children, the establishment of the National Child protection Authority and the Child Abuse Desk at police stations. Pakistan is one of the first countries to sign the CRC. In spite of it all, the general feeling is that they are not implemented adequately. Those who are to implement these do not have a child friendly attitude. Many of them look at these children as problem children rather than as children who are victims of circumstances or victims of an unjust system.

If the laws are to be implemented in letter and spirit, the law enforcing authorities like the police have to be taught the rights of children and train them to have a child friendly attitude. Another important step is training the children themselves on their own rights in schools. The parents, community and the teachers also should become aware of the laws governing the children.

#### **5.0 Government and Non governmental Agencies**

The government has a number of agencies that work for the welfare of the children. They could be divided into two categories. One category is the government ministry/departments like the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministries of the States of India. The other category is the government-sponsored agencies like NIPCCD, Central Social Welfare Board and ICCW.

There are international agencies and Non Governmental Organizations that work for the Welfare of Children. Most of the International agencies are funding organizations like Plan International, Ford Foundation, UNICEF, CRY and Caritas. Most of the NGOs working for children are located in urban areas, as the children who are separated are found more in urban centers than in rural areas.

The NGOs working for children can be classified into four categories.

- Those who are working for the rights of children at the policy level and are involved in advocacy. Some of the well-known organizations are HAQ-Center for Child Rights (India), Center for Education and Communication (India), Baachpan Bacho Andolan (India), Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid

- (Bangladesh), and Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (Pakistan).
- Those who are working with working children. These organizations work to prevent child labour. In addition, they work with these children by conducting night schools and non-formal education. They also help the children to understand their rights. Some of the organizations working in this area are Butterflies (India), CCfCL and Child Labour Action Net Work (India), VV Giri National Labour Institute (India), Child Rights Information Net Work (India), South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (Pakistan) and Arunodaya (India).
  - Those who are working for Street Children. There are many NGOs who work with street children. NGOs like **Butterflies** work both with street children and working children. **Child Line** in India works with children who are in stress who contact them or referred to them by others. There are 150 NGOs who are related to Child Line in India. The Bosco institutions work in many cities for street children. Deepalya (India), Nagpada Neighbourhood House (India), Centers for Lost and Kidnapped Children (Pakistan) and Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children Environment (Bangladesh) are some of the other institutions that are working for street children.
  - Those who are working with children in Institutions. The government and NGOs run institutions. The government is running more than 120 institutions for children committed to the court all over India. There are NGOs who work with specific target groups. They work with girl children who are abused at home and who need protection. Some NGOs work specifically with children whose parents are no more or affected by HIV/AIDS. There are also NGOs who are working with the special children like the handicapped. They are too numerous to give a comprehensive list. There are over 200 NGOs who are running homes for the orphans. SOS villages run home for children who are orphans in a home atmosphere. The Indian Council of Child Welfare run homes for both orphans and special children. NGOs like Mottukal (India) Mariyalaya (India) and St.Catherine's Home (India) work specifically with girls who are abused. The Society Undertaking Poor Peoples Onus for Rehabilitation (India) and Indire Gram Sudhar Santha (India) work with HIV/AIDS affected Children.

A detailed list of organizations working for children in South East Asia is given as appendix Table A6.

## 5.0 Interventions attempted in South Asia

Separated children belong to different categories as has been stated earlier. If one looked at the NGOs who are working with these children, a majority of them work with street children and child labourers. The nature of interventions are restoring the children back to the family and taking care of them in institutions. Those who are working with child labour are involved in education of these children and advocacy.

The numbers of NGOs working with children who are victims of sex abuse are limited. As this number keeps on increasing and these children are in danger of contracting diseases like HIV/AIDS, more NGOs are needed to work with this vulnerable group. They need understanding, acceptance, a person whom they could trust and training/education to live a meaningful life. Those who work with children of Devadasis are very few and NGOs need to look at this group seriously. They also

need institutional care, as they cannot go back home and most of the time they are not welcome at home as well.

Another gap in intervention is the follow up of the children who are restored to the families. The parents are equally responsible for the child leaving home. Unless the family environment changes, the children may attempt to leave home again. The parents need counseling on how to take care of the children and make the home atmosphere child friendly. The child needs continuous monitoring and guidance as well. This requires networking between NGOs who are working with separated children in urban centers and NGOs working in rural areas from where the children migrate.

The numbers of organizations working with children who are victims of HIV/AIDS are limited. Though institutionalizing these children may be needed, community based support would be more beneficial to these children. They are ready ostracized by the society. Institutionalizing them will further make the isolated from the society. There are several organizations that are working to educate the people on HIV/AIDS. The aspect of community responsibility to the children who are victims of HIV/AIDS is not emphasized.

Though the NGOs who are working with street children run orphanages, the number of NGOs who have shelter homes for these children are less. Shelter homes give the child an opportunity to experiment with the street and a protected home. Once convinced of the need for a protected environment, the child will be more open to either to go back home or will be willing to learn an employable skill. The shelter homes are ideal for children who have a tendency to roam around and enjoy the freedom of the street.

There is lack of sufficient information on separated children. Some countries have attempted to provide identity cards. Still the available information is limited. Only the government or NGOs care for a small percentage of separated children. In Sri Lanka only 12 percent of the street children are provided any kind of support. In countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, there is severe shortage of professional social workers and counselors. Hence they are not able to address to the psychosocial needs of these children especially those who are traumatized by abuse. Lack of skills and a permanent address often limit the children from getting better employment.

In spite of the efforts made by the government and the NGOs, there is lack of coordination between them in their work with the separated children. Sometimes they work at cross-purposes. The public, the community leaders and the children are not aware of the right of the children and hence not in a position to seek help from the appropriate sources.

The existing interventions among street children in Bangladesh can be classified into 13 categories. They are: street approach (rapport building), market survey (analysis of supply and demand of non hazardous jobs and identification skills required for income generation), psycho-social counseling, recreational activities, legal aid/protection, provision of health services, job placement, advocacy, networking, raising awareness of their rights, family reintegration, establishing children's self help groups and research and analysis.

Over a period of time all the South Asian countries have succeeded in making laws that are designed to prevent child labour. They have tried to ensure an improved provision of facilities at the work place. However, it is generally believed that the employers, and the government do not respect these legal provisions. Yet the governments have made an effort along with organizations like ILO to design programmes that are aimed at providing better facilities. They have also promoted education among the child workers by providing incentives on an experimental basis in selected areas. They have attempted to raise public awareness as well.

The Global Movement of Children has attempted to improve the situation of the children by involving them in their activities. The focus was on the participation of the children who were affected by the situations. This is particularly true of Pakistan and Nepal. The World Summit of Children (WSC) 1990, the establishment of the National Steering Committee in 1999 in Pakistan, organizing a Child Right Festival in 2001 with the theme 'Education Through entertainment' and the 'Change Makers' Workshops' in Islamabad and Nepal have the children involved in their activities.

Existing interventions among street children of Sri Lanka include introduction/amendment of legislation, installation of monitoring mechanisms, establishment of administrative structures, and exposure of child abuse by NGOs and the media. Other notable activities in the country included the launching of Street Children Network, establishment of the National Child Protection Authority, Child Abuse Desk in police stations and a 24 hour Child Abuse Hotline. The NGO services ranged from provision of identity cards to street children, programmes to alleviate Poverty micro enterprises, formal and non-formal education.

In India, anti-trafficking interventions are aimed at prevention/control of trafficking by various agencies. This is done through better coordination of different actors, identifying and reporting cases, increasing attention and awareness among the NGOs and providing shelter and care. The establishment of the National Child Protection Authority in Sri Lanka has succeeded in bringing together NGOs, Government, Political leaders, and Academics, in a consultative net work to advise the government as well as to undertake complementary activities. The specific activities include awareness raising, capacity building of a variety of professionals who are working with child abuse, legal reforms and monitoring of enforcement of law and protection and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking. Among the activities aimed at prevention were improving the local economic conditions in order to reduce trafficking, education of families, programmes to enhance livelihood skills and improving the awareness of the public and community leaders. Schools for non-formal education and multipurpose centers for children are the other major interventions to reduce trafficking. They are also aimed at enhancing accessibility to education and other learning and recreational opportunities. Attempts have been made in the region in order to establish an effective net working and linkage between government, NGOs and Community Based Organizations so the sustainability is ensured.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

### **7.1 Core Areas**

The Child has a right to its childhood. It should be provided with opportunities for leisure and play. The best place for a child to grow up is the home, whatever the economic conditions of the family. The child has a right to basic education and health.

It is the responsibility of the family, the community and the government to provide these to the children. If the family is not able to take care of this responsibility, the state should step in through family assistance grants, childcare facilities, parenting education, and community based assistance programmes.

Domestic violence is one of the major issues that have emerged as the cause of children leaving home. There are parents who feel that the only way of disciplining the child is through corporal punishment. Sometimes these become so brutal that children get physically hurt. In the Asian countries there is a feeling that parents have a right to treat their children in any way and no one can question them. In addition, children are brutalized in schools as well. The adults need to realize that children are not their personal property and children need to be respected and protected from harm.

Under no circumstance, the child should be permitted to be separated from the family. Unfortunately, given the socio-economic-political conditions, the child has become more and more vulnerable. There is a disturbing trend that the children are separated from their families and homes more and more. This not only makes the child vulnerable but also creates a group of persons who will be ultimately the enemies of the society. Hence top priority should be given to reduce separation of children. Wherever it is absolutely necessary, for institutional separation, it should be temporary. The focus should be to restore the child to the parents as early as possible.

### **7.2 Role of Government**

The problem of the separated children should not be seen in isolation. Separation of children is related to the economic policies of the government, migration from rural to urban areas and break up of the traditional family system.

The government must re-look at the economic policies. It is important to increase the earning capacities of the families. This will be possible through rural employment generation and payment of minimum wages to labourers. This will reduce migration of families to urban areas and separation of children from parents to earn an additional income for the family.

Another important step is making education compulsory up to the age of 14. Drop out rates needs to be reduced. The rural schools lack basic facilities like buildings and teachers. The school is unattractive and the curriculum is not relevant. It is important to see that children are not taken out of schools for employment.

The local administration should be decentralized and the responsibility of community development should be handed over to the local bodies like Panchayat. The Panchayat should keep a record of all the children who are under their jurisdiction

and prevent these children from moving out of their area. Even if they move out, they should keep track of their whereabouts

### **7.3 Community**

The local community should act as a pressure group. The main focus is to see that families do not break up. If a family is at the verge of break either due to economic reasons or other reasons, the community should step in to help the family. Children who are vulnerable could be taken care of by the community either through community-based organizations, foster families or through local adoptions.

In urban area, when children who do not belong to the area are seen, organizations like self-help groups, youth Associations and children Associations could identify such children and make efforts to see that they are sent back to their families.

### **7.4 Family**

Families that are under stress need special help. The local community or NGOs can come forward to help them. It could be in the form of economic help for a limited period, counseling or education in parenting. This will reduce the incidence of separation and the home will become child friendly.

### **7.5 NGOs**

The non-governmental organizations can intervene at three different levels. Community Development is an important need. Unless the local communities are developed, the problem of separated children could not be adequately tackled. Community development could be economic and educational. Communities should be made aware of the rights of the children and taught to take responsibility for vulnerable children.

NGOs can identify vulnerable families and give them the needed help. It could be economic, social or psychological. This will reduce the strain in the family and keep them together; family intervention is important.

At the level of the government, they should undertake advocacy. It should be related to the economic development, education of children and decentralized administration.

### **7.6 Institutions**

Institutionalizing a child should be the last resort. If it is necessary a child could be institutionalized as long as is needed. The focus should be to send the child back to the family at the earliest.

Trained personnel should administer the government run institutions. The system of having house parents should be adopted. Each house should have a family and a maximum of 12-15 children. This will reduce some of the ill effects of institutionalization. Periodically the home situation is to be reviewed and the child should be sent back as soon as the situation improves.

Those children who have difficulties with the laws should be given adequate facilities to train themselves in a vocation. Life coping skills needs to be taught as well.

### **7.7 Orphanages by NGOs**

The focus of the NGOs should be to send the children back home when they are rescued either from the street or railway stations. An institution should not be run for the sake of running an institution. Those children who are abused at home could be provided this facility. The children could be kept in smaller numbers following the SOS model.

Providing shelter homes to the street children is important. These shelter homes should be open to all the children. They could provide medical facilities for these children, a place to wash and spent the night under a protected environment. Without any pressure, these children could be befriended and once they are open to be befriended, steps could be initiated to contact the family and send them back to the family.

Some children are difficult children. They like the freedom of the street and cannot be tied to one place. These children need to be identified and through persistent effort helped to learn a trade so that they could be gainfully employed when they are ready.

Homes of children affected by HIV/AIDS are necessary especially for children who are helpless. They need love, understanding and continuous medical care with supervision. This should not be left with the NGOs alone. The government should come forward either to run such homes or provide generous subsidy.

### **7.8 Other areas that need attention**

- There is an urgent need to compile a profile of separated children in all the countries. Data available of these children are inadequate and outdated.
- Networking of NGOS and international agencies that are working in similar areas is a must. This will avoid duplication of work and waste of resources.
- Help to develop a more cooperative atmosphere and less of competitive atmosphere among the NGOs.
- Create a forum for separated children of the NGOs for South Asia region for sharing of information on the best practices and advocacy.
- Develop income generation projects and micro-credit schemes for families whose income is low and at the verge of breakdown.
- Mobilize corporate sector support for the programmes organized for the separated children.
- Organize programmes for separated children in consultation with them and with their participation.
- Help to educate the employers who employ children in their industries to be just and make them aware of the rights of children.

### **8.0 Role of EveryChild**

The decision of Everychild to refocus their work on separated children is a welcome step. The identified groups are children who are living on the street or in a residential institution, children who are victims of sexual abuse, domestic workers,

child labourers, children separated because of physical and mental disability and those separated because of the parent illness or death as a result of HIV/AIDS

The interventions have to be looked at from two different angles. One is the prevention of child separation and the other is working with children who are already separated from the family because of various reasons stated elsewhere in this report.

At the level of prevention, community based organizations that are working to reduce breakdown of families should be encouraged. Working with children should be an integrated one. As separation is linked to poverty, violence at home and pressure on the child to perform, the interventions should be directed at all these levels. Poverty reduction should be attempted through community development programmes, creation of job opportunities in rural areas, increasing the earning capacity of the family, ensuring minimum wages to the workers, providing improved facilities for the agricultural farmers and implementation of programmes that are appropriate for the development of the rural areas. Advocacy with the government is one of the important strategies in this approach.

Education is an important indicator of development. Hence the school system should be improved in rural areas. The curriculum should be relevant and meaningful. The parents should be encouraged to enroll their children in school. Continuous monitoring of the children will reduce drop out. The local community should take the responsibility for the running of the school. Family counseling is an important strategy to reduce domestic violence and break up of the families. Children need career guidance and counseling to be able to cope with the demands of modern living.

EveryChild should be open to supporting those NGOs who work for the improvement of the economic condition of the rural areas and have an integrated approach to child development. The kind of service to be undertaken by the NGOs may vary from place to place and region to region. The focus of the programme should be strengthening the family relationship and structures. This will reduce child separation to a great extent. Migration from rural areas could be restricted. The middlemen will not be able to influence the parents to part with their children.

Another important area where prevention will play a major part is at the level of policies. Pakistan does not have a clear policy on Child Labour though it was one of the countries that signed the CRC first. There are too many loopholes in the Indian Law on Child Labour and adoption. In Bangladesh child trafficking takes place across the border and children are taken to places like Singapore for the flesh trade. It is important to have statutory policy and systems changes and reforms. The policies have to be interpreted correctly and should be child friendly. Those who are responsible for implementing the policies should be well trained and should be in favor of children. For this advocacy with the government is important. At the same time, the community and the children should be made aware of their rights and made to demand these rights. EveryChild could encourage those NGOs who are working towards policy changes and those who create awareness of the policies in the community.

At the level of intervention after the separation has taken place each category of children should be treated differently. When a child comes to the street, the child experiences a number of vulnerabilities that the child has not foreseen. The decision

to leave home could have been impulsive. Now the child would like to go home and is afraid of the consequences. The child needs protection from antisocial elements and helped to analyze the child's present condition. This will require a short stay home where the child could be accommodated. Every child who leaves home could not be sends home. The home situation may not be conducive for the child to go back home. This may be especially true of girls. In that case, the child will need a longer stay in an institution. Some children come to the street because they have no one to care for them. They will require institutions that would keep them till they are old enough to stay by themselves. They will also require education and an employable skill. EveryChild should support all these three types of institutions. At the same time EveryChild should also insist that these institutions are as close to a home atmosphere as possible.

Another important group is the children involved in child labour. To meet children who are in domestic labour is difficult unless they themselves seek help. Even then there are organizations that are working with children in domestic labour by befriending the families that employ them. They try to get a just wage for them and reduce abuse as much as possible. The children who are working in industries could be given education and training. There are a number of NGOs who work with them. They give them non-formal education and help them to acquire a skill. They use mobile units so that they could move as close to the children as possible. This is a very needed service as the children could be helped to come out of their bonded condition and get out of the circle of poverty which has forced them to work. EveryChild could promote these efforts.

Another group of children who are separated from the parents who need special care are those who have been sexually exploited. Most of them prefer not to go home and the families also do not welcome them because of the stigma attached. They need special care and they also need training to take up an employment that would sustain them. They will need institutions that care for them and are interested in their welfare. This is another group that could be supported by EveryChild. This could also apply to children who are separated from the families because their parents are in prison. These children also carry a stigma and need protection. There are very few organizations that are working with these children. They need encouragement.

Children separated because of HIV/AIDS are a special group. They need constant medical attention, support, and love. The number of these homes is very limited. The number of children affected is on the increase. There are some NGOs who are experimenting with community-based rehabilitation. The Gram Panchayat could take up this responsibility and work with the NGOs working in this area. These efforts could be supported. In addition institutional support for these children is also a must.

Yet another group that should be a major concern for EveryChild is the children who have fallen victims to drugs, glue and alcohol. There are institutions that are working with the children who need help to come out of these habits. This effort also needs the support of EveryChild

## **8.1 Specific suggestions for India**

A Majority of those who work with children were of the opinion that the best place for the child is the home and the child should be sent home as early as possible to the family. If there is vulnerability, the family should be helped. As a policy this view is to be accepted.

There are a few other situations that need to be considered as well. A majority of the children who come to the street or migrate are from the marginalized groups. **The most marginalized groups are the scavengers, the tribal from the tribal belts of central India, and women groups.** Parents are uneducated; they live in poverty and are unable to send their children to school. Even the schools to which they send their children are so poorly run that they learn very little. The parents feel that it is better to send the children to work than to send them to school. Most of the well to do send their children to private English medium schools that are expensive and accessible only to the affluent. Generally they belong to the upper caste. It is these children who have access to higher education and have the opportunity to go high up in the economic ladder.

A few who work with children feel that though institutionalizing children has harmful effects, leaving the children, from marginalized groups, with their parents does more harm. They feel that these children need to be institutionalized and sent to school where they will be trained to compete with the upper class students. If education is an important indicator of development, then educating these children in better schools is equally important. Hence it is suggested that special boarding could be maintained for these children. They along with school education should be taught to commit themselves to the marginalized groups at least for a few years. Those who have benefited from this system strongly advocate opening residential facilities for these children, especially for the lowest of the dalit groups, the scavengers. This group has not benefited significantly from either education or programmes aimed to their economic development. EveryChild could consider helping those who work for these marginalized groups in institutions.

Another group that need to be taken care and protected in residential institutions are the girl children. There are two categories that are particularly vulnerable. The first group of these **children are those abused by family or relatives**; they do not have any privacy at home. Some of these children spend their nights on the platforms. These children are in danger of not only losing their dignity as girls but also in danger of contracting diseases like HIV/AIDS. Another group of **girl children are the daughters of "Devadasis" (temple prostitutes) in South India.** This system is being revived slowly by vested interests. The middlemen who are looking for girls to be taken as commercial sex workers are actively promoting it under the name of religion. The consequence is, girls of Devadasis have become commodities and helpless in the hands of these middlemen. Unfortunately this group is also coming from the marginalized groups.

These girls need residential facilities primarily to escape from the middlemen. They could be trained on home making skills, life skills and an employable skill. Institutions like Mottukkal in Chennai have done commendable work with these girls. These groups need to be taken into consideration in working with separated children.

Hence the feeling that providing residential facilities to children will harm their growth is true in one sense, if one takes their psychological growth. It is not true if one considered the marginalized groups and their physical and moral growth. The

suggestion is that residential institutions should be opened in selected areas where there is a concentration of the scavenger community and where the girls are in vulnerable situations. This could be one of the focused areas for the intervention of EveryChild.

Yet another consideration is working with children who are **child labourers**. These children never get an opportunity to go to educational institutions because of poverty at home and indebtedness. If they were not cared for, they would never get an opportunity to better their life. They could be educated outside the working hours. This experiment has succeeded to some extent in places like Sivakasi where child labour was prevalent. This experiment needed to be initiated especially in North India where the educational level is low. These children could also be given some technical education so that they will get into remunerative jobs.

The **children of migrant workers** move from place to place, along with their parents, especially the construction workers. The construction workers are also a vulnerable group and need consideration. In Delhi they had experimented with mobile schools for these children. The schools moved along with the migrant workers to the construction sites and educated the children. This is another programme, which could be funded by EveryChild. The beneficiaries would be once again the marginalized groups and tribal children.

It is difficult to say which NGO could be a collaborator with EveryChild. This has to be decided taking into account the local conditions, the focus of the work of the NGO, and the new orientation of EveryChild. The decision will also depend upon the previous experience of EveryChild with the organization and the credibility of the NGO in the locality.

## **8.2 NGOs supported by EveryChild**

The consultants are not aware of all the NGOs who are supported by EveryChild. Sathi, a NGO supported by EveryChild is based in Bangalore. The focus of their work is: helping children on the platform, restoration of the separated children to the family, providing short term shelter to the rescued children, conducting de-addiction camps to children who have picked up the habit of drugs, working with selected families whose children are on the street and running children welfare home. They have stated as having 50 per cent success with the children who have been sent home. There is regular follow up with these children. They also net with other NGOs who are working in the areas where they have restored the children to the family and help the family and the children with these NGOs. Their attempt to update the knowledge of their workers is also commendable.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

A healthy society is one, which takes care of children and prepares them as useful citizens of tomorrow. Today, there are several factors that hinder the healthy development of children. Child separation is one such phenomenon. Separation of children from the family environment is dangerous for the child and the society at large. Hence it is important to work out strategies to reduce separation of children, if not totally eradicate separation of children from their family environment.

## APPENDIX

**Table A1: Basic Indicators: South Asia**

Indicator	Year	Country						
		Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	South Asia
Population Size	2003	146736	2257	1065462	25164	153578	19065	1436478
Life Expectancy at Birth (years)	2003	62	63	64	60	61	73	63
Adult Literacy Rate	2000	40	47	57	42	43	92	54
Per capita G Gross National Income (US \$)	2003	400	660	530	240	470	460	511
Annual Rate of Growth in Percapita GDP (%)	1990-2003	3.1	3.7	4.0	2.1	1.1	3.3	3.6
Human development Index (Value)	2003	0.520	0.536	0.602	0.526	0.527	0.751	0.628
Human development Index (rank)	2003	139	134	127	136	135	135	

Source: Human Development Report 2005

**Table A2: Child Population (thousands) in South Asia, 2003**

Indicator	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	South Asia
Child Population Below 18 years	65342	1088	414965	11710	73711	5734	584618
Child Population below 5 years	19408	345	118568	3688	23528	1513	171284

**Table A3: Health Status of children in South Asia**

Indicator	Year	Country							
		Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	South Asia	
Infant Mortality rate	2003	46	70	63	61	81	13	67	
Under five Mortality rate	2003	69	85	87	82	103	15	92	
% Of Children with LBW	1998-2003	30	15	30	21	19	22	30	
% Children <5 with ARI	1998-2003	27	29	19	23	NA	NA	19	
% Of Children <1year Immunised for TB	2003	95	93	81	91	82	99	82	
% Of Children <1 year Immunised for Polio	2003	85	96	70	76	69	98	72	

**Table A4: Educational Status: South Asia**

Indicator	Year	Country													
		Bangladesh		Bhutan		India		Nepal		Pakistan		Sri Lanka		South Asia	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio Primary Level	1998-2002	97	98	82	62	107	90	130	113	84	62	111	110	102	88
Net Enrolment Ratio Primary Level	1998-2002	86	88	58	47	91	76	75	66	76	57	100	100	88	75
% of Primary School Entrants Reaching grade V(M+F)	1997-2003	86	-	91	-	92	-	92	-	91	-	97	-	91	-
Gross Secondary School Enrolment ratio	1998-2002	45	49	7	2	56	40	50	37	29	19	72	77	51	39

**Table A5: Separated Children in Indian States**

State/Country	Proportion of Separated Children Below 15 Years (per 1000)	
Andhra Pradesh	45	2
Arunachal Pradesh	56	4
Assam	64	4
Bihar	45	1
Delhi	28	2
Goa	36	1
Gujarat	32	2
Haryana	38	1
Himachal Pradesh	38	1
Jammu and Kashmir	38	1
Karnataka	42	3
Kerala	24	0
Madhya Pradesh	32	3
Maharashtra	45	1
Manipur	45	2
Meghalaya	60	4
Mizoram	47	7
Nagaland	47	7
Orissa	49	5
Punjab	32	1
Rajasthan	30	2
Sikkim	54	4
Tamil Nadu	45	2
Tripura	48	3
Uttar Pradesh	42	1
West Bengal	37	3
Andaman & Nicobar	35	3
Chandigarh	34	1
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	35	4
Daman & Diu	52	4
Lakshadweep	34	1
Pondicherry	51	0
<b>INDIA</b>	41	2

**Table A6: List of Organisations Working for Children in South Asia**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum(BASF), Bangladesh</li><li>• Ankur, New Delhi</li><li>• Delhi Bal Adhikar Manch, New Delhi</li><li>• Forum for Creche and Child Services, New Delhi</li><li>• PRAYAS, New Delhi</li><li>• Butterflies, New Delhi</li><li>• Deepalaya, New Delhi</li><li>• Bachpan Bachao Andholan, New Delhi</li><li>• Salam Balak Trust, New Delhi</li><li>• Asar Trust, New Delhi</li><li>• SAWNET, New Delhi</li><li>• Jain Bal Ashram, New Delhi</li><li>• Missionaries of Charity, New Delhi and Mumbai</li><li>• Welfare Home for Children, New Delhi</li><li>• Arya Bal Gtraha, Delhi</li><li>• SOS Children Village of India, Delhi</li><li>• Bal Sahayog, New Delhi</li><li>• Bachchon ka Ghar, New Delhi</li><li>• Jeewan Jyoth Home, New Delhi</li><li>• Holy Cross Social Service Centre, New Delhi</li><li>• Sheetal Chhaya, New delhi</li><li>• Kasturba Gandhi Smarak trust, New Delhi</li><li>• Palna, Delhi Council of Child Welfare, New Delhi</li><li>• Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, New delhi</li><li>• Right to Life Society, New Delhi</li><li>• Sundharam Educational Foundation and Charitable Trust</li><li>• Jeewan Jyothi Residential Home, New Delhi</li><li>• Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), New Delhi</li><li>• Centre for Child Rights, New Delhi</li><li>• BBA/SACCS, New Delhi</li><li>• Samarth, New Delhi</li><li>• CASP PLAN Project, New Delhi</li><li>• PRERANA, Bangalore</li><li>• KSCCW, Bangalore</li><li>• Concern for Working Children, Bangalore</li><li>• APSA, Bangalore</li><li>• CARDTS, Bangalore</li><li>• Domestic Child Labour Elimination, Bangalore</li><li>• India Alliance for Child Rights, New Delhi</li><li>• Community Outreach Programme, Mumbai</li><li>• Nagpada Neighbourhood Houses, Mumbai</li><li>• Shree Manava Seva Sangh, Mumbai</li><li>• Naigaum Social Service Society, Mumbai</li><li>• Gujarat Research Society Child Guidance Clinic, Mumbai</li><li>• Each One Teach One Charitable Foundation, Mumbai</li><li>• Indian Association for Promotion of Child Adoption and Child Welfare, Mumbai</li><li>• Sraddhanand, Mumbai</li><li>• The Society of Helpers of Mary, Mumbai</li><li>• Guild of Service, Mumbai</li><li>• Chembur Children's Home, Mumbai</li><li>• Fr. Agnel Ashram, Mumbai</li><li>• Children AID Society, Mumbai</li><li>• World Children Trust India, Mumbai</li><li>• Balvikas, Mumbai</li><li>• Vatsalya Projects for Street Children, Mumbai</li><li>• Child Guidance Clinic, Mumbai</li><li>• The Byram Jejeebhoy Home for Children, Mumbai</li><li>• Dharmveer Shikshan Sansthan, Amaravati, Maharashtra</li><li>• Econet, Pune, Maharashtra</li><li>• Indian Institute for Youth Welfare, Nagpur, Maharashtra</li><li>• Jeevan Sanstha, Pune, Mharashtra</li><li>• National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development, Nagpur, Maharashtra</li><li>• National Institute for Sustainable development, Pune, Maharashtra</li><li>• All India Christian Council, New Delhi</li></ul>
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- People's Rights and Social Research Centre, New Delhi
- South Asia Forum on the Rights of the Child, Nepal
- Children at Risk Network, Nepal
- National Alliance of Child Rights Organisations, Nepal
- Coalition Against Child Labour, Pakistan
- Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aide, Pakistan
- UNIFEM, New Delhi
- The Asia Foundation, Nepal
- International Organisation for Migration
- National Child Protection Authority, Sri Lanka
- Population Council, New Delhi
- International Labour Organisation
- ECPAT International
- International Save the Children Alliance
- ABC, Nepal
- UNICEF
- Forum for Law and Development, Nepal
- ATSCE Bangladesh Chapter, Dhaka
- Save the Children Fund (UK)
- Child Rights Information Network
- Childnet International
- Anti-Slavery International
- Free the Children
- Global March Against Child Labour
- ICFTU Campaign to Stop Child Labour
- FISEK Institute

Note: This is not an exhaustive list

**Table A7: List of Experts Interviewed**

- Ashima Kaul, Freelance Journalist, C – 8, Press Apartments, 23, I.P. Extension, Delhi – 110092
- Enakshi Ganguly Thukral, Executive Secretary, HAQ, Centre for Child Rights, 208, Shahpur Jat, New Delhi – 49
- Gerry Pinto, UNICEF
- Mathew, Director, SICHREM, Anjappa Complex, Hennur Main Road, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore
- Mr. Gratian Vas, Executive Director, IGSSS
- Mrs. Rita Pinto, Director, Butterflies, U 4 Green Park Ext. N. Delhi
- R.S. Chaurasia, General Secretary, South Asian Coalition of Child Servitude, L – Kalkaji, New Delhi
- Shomasree Dey, Project Concern International, B – 7, Ext., 110 – A Safdarjung Enclave, New D
- Joseph Gathia, Director, Centre for Concern for Child Labour, 201, Pankaj Tower, Mayur Vihar I, N. Delhi 91
- Poonam Sharma, NIPCCD, 5, Siri Institutional Area, Hauz Khas, New Delhi
- Ravi Nayar, Executive Director, South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre, B 6/6, Safdarjung Enclave Ext, N. Delhi
- Saroj Thirupathy, ICCW, 4, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Park, N. Delhi
- Dr. Rajani Knonthambigi, Faculty, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Coordinator, 'Betul Project' a Field Action Project for Children
- Dr. Vrinda Datta, Faculty, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and Convenor, Maharashtra FORCES
- Mrs. Jaisita Panigrahi, Managing Trustee, Balvikas, Malad, Mumbai
- Fr. Francisco Diniz, Director, Fr. Agnel Ashram and Agnel Technical Education Complex, Mumbai
- Mrs. Andal Damodaran, President, ICCW Chennai
- Fr. Jesu, Director, Nessakaran, Chennai
- Mrs. Virgil, Director, Arunodaya, Chennai
- Sr. Alphonsa, Director, Muttukal, Chennai

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- [www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org](http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org) (European children's network)
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