

Chapter IV

LIFE OF THE STREET CHILDREN: THE PATTERNS AND THE PROBLEMS

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The everyday life of the street children has been discussed in this chapter. Why they have selected this station area as their place of stay, how often they changed their place of stay and means of earning, their delinquent activities, their exposure to different types of abuse and exploitation, the people involved in such exploitation, their food habit, types of sickness, daily activities and some other aspect have been presented in this chapter. Some facts of the daily life and the problems faced by the street children are presented in the following sections.

The place of stay and support system

The children who choose Howrah station as their place of stay feel quite comfortable in this semi-protected environment of railway station. They meet their daily livelihood requirements from the station premises and around it. So they do not feel to leave this place as such without any compulsion. In addition to lone children there were some children who came from other areas first time either with their peers or others later identified Howrah station as their safe place for stay. Few children in the station area stay in temporary places and they are like migratory birds. They are in habit of changing their place of stay quite often out of certain reasons.

The street children prefer to stay close to their place of work. It has been observed that 50 per cent of children who have changed their place of stay it was due to their work convenience. The runaway children from family was found to have changed their place of stay often so that their families could not trace them.

For about nine per cent street children, as their families changed their earlier places out of some reasons they had to accompany them (see Table 4.1).

Table:4.1

Distribution of respondents by main reasons of changing their place of stay

Reasons	No.
work convenience	22(50.00)
Family relations	4(9.09)
Eviction by authority	5(11.36)
Eviction by local people	3(6.81)
other(magic, ran away from family, restoration)	10(22.72)
Total	44(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Majority of the street children (81%) get support from different sources. But the children who are newcomers in the station area sometimes only get the services mainly provided by the NGOs. The survey reveals only about eleven per cent street children had received some kind of services only from NGOs and support in kind. However a section of street children were dependent on services from multiple sources which have helped them to survive even in the midst of despair (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Distribution of respondents by support received by other organizations

Supported by other organization	Respondents
Relatives, Friends	3(4.00)
Non Govt Organization	8(10.67)
Other(employer,foster mother, parents)	3(4.00)
Combined (relatives, friends, non govt. organization, govt. organization, employer etc.)	61(81.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

The study reveals that mobility of the street children is highly influenced by a number of external factors and internal group dynamics which affect the nature, structure and composition of these groupings. The mobility of street children in most cases is greatly affected by weather conditions. During rainy season, leaving the open space they move to some protected or covered space, or shift to the nearby places like goods yard of new complex, taxi stand, under Howrah bridge. They particularly in rainy season construct lean-ton by spreading a polythene sheet from the walls, inside which a person cannot even stand properly.

The children living in jhupries near Martin bridge or Tikiapara slum also suffered considerably during rainy season. Their jhupris poorly thatched with polythene sheets, gunny sacks or bamboos and cannot protect them properly from rain. Their residential areas also suffer from water logging. When there is a continuous rain the floor of their jhupris turned muddy and invite a pain of hail. This dampness in their floor remains for quite some time even after rainy season. The

street children living in the jhupris in the Tikiapara area suffer particularly when the water of the nearby canal over flows due to heavy rain. It actually floods their many jhupris located to the canal.

In summer, most of the street children, whether they are in jhupris, streets or in platforms, sleep completely in the open space. However they face the problem of mosquitoes, rats and dogs in night. As a result, children mostly suffer from malaria, dog bites particularly in summer season. Their indigenous devices like use of smoke by burning cow dung cake or egg try made of thick paper etc. cannot give them permanent relief from the attack of mosquitoes. Sleeping on open pavement or platform is risky as there is a possibility that at night, the reckless drivers of buses, trucks or other vehicles accidentally can smash their sleeping bodies. Such incidents are not rare in Howrah bus stand or Tikiapara slum areas. However, as a safety measure, children put little embankment on the side of the sleeping spots by using railway sleepers, bricks or stones. But they believe that if bad luck comes nobody can save them.

Exposure to Delinquency and Abuse

In Howrah station area the street children (61%) were involved in different types of delinquent activities like sniffing dendrite(glue), chewing ghutka, pick pocketing and gambling etc. The children who are on the street for the longer time there was a tendency in getting involved in different types of criminal activities and substance abuse. They were identified as the hardcore street children and somewhat different in behaviour. About 15 per cent street children were smokers. 19 per cent were engaged in begging and theft and five per cent were addicted to sniff dendrite (glue) (See Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Distribution of respondents by delinquent activities

Type of delinquent activity	No.
Smoking	11(14.67)
Others: dendrite, ghutka, slang word, no delinquency	4(5.33)
begging, theft	14(18.67)
Combined (smoking,others: dentrite, slang word, ghutka, gambling, begging,drinking, pickpocketing, theft etc)	46(61.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

These addicted street children were often found engaged in clandestine activities like stealing, pick pocketing etc. They spent a major part of their earning to meet up their addiction needs. It may be possible to rehabilitate them by sending to any drug de addiction centre or any Children's Home for proper care and protection. They need a long term treatment and rigorous counselling. One preventive measure may be taken for the new comers as well as the children of minor age may be kept isolated from street environment and put them in safer place under the state vigilance. In a similar study Sandhu observes that these delinquent children are economically quite unstable. Some of them are absolutely orphan or abandoned with little or no schooling back ground. They were mostly unskilled, unemployed and earn low wages. They were either run away, lost or missing children. They were found to sleep on the pavement or railway platforms.

They are subject to attack by fellow pavement sleepers and with no hope either in present or future (Sandhu 1977).

In Howrah station area the street children were neglected by their parents and tortured by police, employer, friend, relatives and anti socials. About 81 per cent street children were abused or exploited by their parents; employer, friends, police, relatives and anti socials (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4
Distribution of respondents by type of abusers

Type of abusers	No.
Parents	5(6.67)
Other(friends, relatives)	2(2.67)
Police	7(9.33)
Combined(parents, employer, friends, police, relatives, anti social)	61(81.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

They were forced to escape or leave their homes and reside in the street or station area because of maltreatment, abuse and exploitation they experienced from their parents, step father or mother, elder brothers or relatives and employers while working informally in shops, hotels, tea stalls etc. Abuse, in most cases, took the form of severe beating and insults for trivial mistakes. Constant

neglect at the family compelled them to opt for a street life. Various reasons including constant domestic work and lack of care, parents' ill treatment, sickness of a parent/ guardian especially father, conjugal instability and neglect from step parent compelled them to leave the family/ home. The peers acted as supportive means for their existence on the street and helped develop their ability to cope-up with the street life, with regard to food, shelter, entertainment, earning and protection, particularly during their early days on the street. Street children believe that they enjoy a certain amount of freedom such as away from routine jobs or life they had to cope with while staying with their families. A child explained that 'the street is better than home. You can move freely, go to the cinema and play games. It is not that bad'. They are often influenced by the presence of other senior brothers or sisters on the street, who acted as their 'role models'. These street children often move together and protect each other in any crisis situation.

With reference to physical abuses it has been observed that children may accept other types of physical abuses but they do not tolerate any sort of beating or thrashing that creates anger among them, makes determined to leave their own home and that ultimately push them to the street (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

Distribution of respondents by nature of physical abuse

Nature of abuse	No.	Male	Female
Beating	21(28.00)	20(95.23)	1(4.76)
Fighting	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Assault	4(5.33)	4(100.00)	0(0.00)
Neglect	6(8.00)	5(83.33)	1(16.67)
Beating, Fighting	16(21.33)	16(100.00)	0(0.00)
Fighting, Assault	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Beating, Neglect	8(10.67)	5(62.5)	3(37.5)
Fighting, Slangword	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Slangword, Neglect	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Neglect, Toucher	1(1.33)	0(0.00)	1(100.00)
Beating, Fighting, Neglect	8(10.67)	8(100.00))	0(0.00)
Beating, Assault, Neglect	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Beating, Slangword, Neglect	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Bulling, Slangword, Neglect	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Beating, Fighting, Slangword, Neglect	2(2.67)	2(100.00)	0(0.00)
Beating, Assault	2(2.67)	2(100.00)	0(0.00)
Total	75(100.00)	69(92.00)	6(8.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

About 31 per cent of street children were rather silent about their exposure to sexual abuse. They are quite conservative to express their experiences in this regard. With reference to nature of sexual abuse about one third (15%) of male

children were forced to build homosexual/gay relationship with the peers and some others. The street girls also faced kissing, molestation type of sexual abuse within and outside the peer group.

Majority of the street children had different types of experiences with sexual abuses. Particularly among the male children of adolescent and above age homosexuality was a common practice. A few (9%) street children were even involved in making sexual relationship with street girls that however mainly continued to kissing and fondling (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6
Distribution of respondents by nature of exposure to sexual abuse

Type of abuse	No.	Male	Female
Homosex	22(29.33)	22(100.00)	0(0.00)
Sexual relationship with street girl	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Kissing	1(1.33)	0(0.00)	1(100.00)
Peer group	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Not get any response	23(30.67)	21(91.30)	2(8.70)
Homosex, Sexual relationship with street girl	11(14.67)	11(100.00)	0(0.00)
Homosex, Kissing	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Homosex, Peer group	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Homosex, Old Children	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Sexual relationship with street girl, Kissing	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Homosex, Sexual relationship with street girl, Kissing	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Kissing, Molestation	3(4.00)	0(0.00)	3(100.00)

Type of abuse	No.	Male	Female
Homosex, Sexual relationship with street girl, Kissing, Molestation	7(9.33)	7(100.00)	0(0.00)
Homosex, Sexual relationship with street girl, Kissing, Molestation, Peer group	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Total	75(100.00)	69(92.00)	6(8.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

The nature of sexual exploitation varies from victim of homosexuality to even rape. Some parents in the slums narrated the incidents where their young daughters, who worked as maid servants, had been sexually assaulted by the sons of their employers. They also scared that the life of their young daughters/ sisters is unsafe where the local antisocial dominate. The incidents of attempt to rape street girls by truck drivers, porters and local gundas are not rare in Howrah station and its adjacent areas. In Howrah vegetable market area, the places near Nataraj hotel and bus stand area the parents of street children narrated the incidents how they saved the prestige of a few young ladies of their jhupries from the hand of local hooligans who attempted to kidnap them at midnight. The age of homosexual victims varies from 8 to 15 years. In most cases the culprit identified for such immoral act are the porters, truck drivers, rickshaw pullers, workers in hotels and shops and similar other so-called rustic people. Such people take the undue advantage of the poverty of the homeless children and exploit them sexually by paying them ten to fifty rupees, or even simply by giving them a piece of bread or a small packet of sweet.

The on duty police staff often allows the street children to live and work in the station premises as well as street instead of money. It is an old practice and a form of economic exploitation and abuse. The street children collect used disposable water bottles in the station premises. But when they proceed to sell all those things outside the station, the police ask to pay some money. Otherwise they are detained by the police for unauthorized entry in the station premises. Even they are detained in the station and charge sheeted by the police.

Money extortion by the group leader was not all that uncommon among the street children. The group leader keeps the power in the group. Power relations in a group are also based on the capacity for providing loans including narcotic substances, electronic goods, clothes and even partners for sexual activities. The process of loaning assumes that the lender has more than what he or she needs or has earned it by sheer ability (Paul, 2014:19). As Guddu says 'lending money and substances make me very important'. The 'leader' is usually one who rates highly on the factors mentioned above. Gradually, the others listen to him or her and in this process the child becomes the leader. There can be more than one child who gets prominence in a particular group. Children who are risk-takers mostly try to become leaders. They consciously perform activities which will make them powerful and popular like Samim who says that he does things which force others to obey him. The children join or break away from groupings based on their calculations of opportunities to earn.

They are also cheated by the shop keepers whom they sell their rags. Some of them work in stalls and shops with minimum wage. They even do not get their required monthly payment regularly. In case of female street children their

income often appropriated by their parents or group leader. Their earnings are snatched by the male street children. They are also cheated by the shopkeepers whom they sell their rags (see Table 4.7).

Table: 4.7

Distribution of respondents by nature of exposure to economic abuse

Type of abuse	No.	Male	Female
Cut money taken by police	35(46.67)	34(97.14%)	1(2.85%)
Cheating	5(6.67)	4(80%)	1(20%)
Less money	9(12.00)	9(100.00)	0(0.00)
Snatching money by children	6(8.00)	5(83.33%)	1(16.67%)
Exploitation	2(2.67)	2(100.00)	0(0.00)
Money extortion	8(10.67)	5(62.50%)	3(37.50%)
No response	2(2.67)	2(100.00)	0(0.00)
Cut money, No monthly payment`	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Cut money,Less money	2(2.67)	2(100.00)	0(0.00)
Less money,Exploitation	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Exploitation, Money extortion	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Less money, Exploitation, Money extortion	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Cut money,No monthly Less money, Money extortion	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Cut money, No monthly payment, Exploitation, Money extortion	1(1.33)	1(100.00)	0(0.00)
Total	75(100.00)	69(92.00)	6(8.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Health and Hygiene

Most of the street children (97%) live in unhygienic condition. So they suffer from various ailments and diseases (see Table 4.8). They were mostly under clad (93%) and under nourished (99%). The nutritional status of the street children was very poor. The causes of malnutrition among street children are multiple and interrelated. Consumption of inadequate dietary intake of essential nutrients, faulty dietary habits and repeated illness are the immediate causes of malnutrition among them. About 25 per cent street children were suffering from scabies, another 21 per cent were suffering from the diseases like scabies, lice, rickets; conjunctivitis etc.

Scabies are common among the street children. Such skin diseases were very much linked with their dirty and unhygienic living and work condition. They are always at high risk of chronic health problems such as respiratory diseases, parasitic infections, skin infection and related health problems as well as exposure to a wide range of other diseases. A few (5%) street children were mentally retarded. Parents used them as beggars and they earn money by displaying their disabilities to the public.

Table 4.8

Distribution of respondents by status of health hygiene

Distribution of respondents by their physical health	No.
Poor	73(97.33)
Normal	2(2.67)
Distribution of respondents by condition of hygiene	
Poor	73(97.33)
Normal	2(2.67)

Distribution of respondents by their clothes	
Underclad	70(93.33)
So so	5(6.67)
Distribution of respondents by their nutritional status	
Undernourished	74(98.67)
Normal	1(1.33)
Distribution of respondents by disease/ illness	
Scabis	19(25.33)
Lice	27(36.00)
Conjunctivitis	3(4.00)
Rickets	2(2.67)
Others: big belly	2(2.67)
Combined(scabis, lice, ricket, conjunctivitis)	16(21.33)
No disease	6 (8.00)
Distribution of the respondents by nature of physical/ mental disabilities	
Mentally retarded	4(5.33)
Other(night blindness)	1(1.33)
No handicapped	70(93.33)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Fever was common among 71 per cent of the street children in Howrah (see Table 4.9). The reason may be they have no proper place to sleep. Sometimes they sleep under the shade or sometimes without it or even under the sky. Howrah station and its surroundings are polluted by smokes of vehicles and trains. That invites the diseases like asthma (3%) among the street children. They were also

attacked by the disease like jaundice (3%) and anemia. They face respiratory problems due to glue sniffing, cigarette smoking etc.

Many street children also suffer from the diseases like stomach ache(3%), weakness(1%), vomiting(1%), water stool(1%), headache(1%) etc due to their unhygienic food habit. Dog bite (4%) is also common problem in Howrah station. As street children do not maintain personal hygiene nor do take regular bath so they suffer from various types of skin diseases (3%). Working in unhygienic conditions and neglecting personal hygienic care cause scabies to them.

Street children often view the types of diseases they experience as ‘minor or normal’ as long as they can move, work and run. Sickness to them often means ‘inability to move or work’. It is interesting that as ‘old’ street children are quite conditioned to the street environment and have acquired certain immunity they have lesser sufferings from common diseases compared to others.

Table 4.9

Distribution of respondents by type of sickness

Type of Sickness	No.
Fever	53(70.67)
Asthema	2(2.67)
Jaundice, Pox	3(4.00)
Eye problem	2(2.67)
Stomach ache, Weakness, Vomiting, Water stool, Head ache	6(8.00)
Dog bite	3(4.00)
Skin disease	2(2.67)
No disease	4(5.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

The survey reveals that on an average the maximum duration of sickness for street children was thirty days in a year. The children who were affected by the diseases like pox, jaundice etc. had suffered for a longer time. In such cases they kept them refrained from their daily activities. The street children were as such least bothered about their sickness. They could hardly remember the type of sickness from which they suffered in previous year and the number of days. The average duration of their sickness varied from thirty to fifteen days in a year.

In case of any serious illness, they go to their native places or seek assistance from any NGOs. They (85 %) used to take medical assistance only at the time of their acute or prolonged illness. A smaller proportion (9 %) did not look for any medical assistance at the time of their sickness (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

Distribution of respondents by medical assistance received

Medical assistance received	No.
Medical assistance received	64(85.33)
Did not receive medical assistance	7(9.33)
No sickness	4(5.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Majority of street children (40%) got medical assistance from the NGOs who are working for the street children and providing medical assistance to them. About 37 per cent of the street children availed the treatment and medicine from outpatient unit of the district hospital.

Some of them (5%) purchased medicines from medicine shops. They can get medicine either from the government hospital as per doctor's prescription or from NGOs at free of cost. So they like it as they need not to pay anything from their own pocket. Sometimes, in case of serious illness, they got admitted to the hospital. Normally the children go for purchasing medicine from the shops when NGOs are not available to them (see Table 4.11). Self-medication is common among street children who initially consult each other when they feel sick.

Table 4.11

Distribution of respondents by sources of medical assistance

Sources of medical assistance	No.
Govt hospital	28(37.33)
NGO	30(40.00)
Parents	2(2.67)
Own	4(5.33)
Govt. hospital,NGO	1(1.33)
No sickness	4(5.33)
Did not get any help	6(8.00)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Food is the most important requirement for sustenance of life. It has direct linkage with physical and mental growth and working ability of a person. But in case of the majority of street children their poor parents were unable to feed

them properly when they were at home. At times some of the children remained unfed or half fed.

Street children did not have any specific choice for breakfast. But majority (72%) of them like puri, sabji, tea, bread, muri, ghugni, biscuit and chattu etc as breakfast items. Some street children do not take breakfast at all. They like to take early lunch only (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12

Distribution of respondents by items consumed in breakfast

Items consumed	No.
Puri, Muri, Biscuit, Bread, Rice	11(14.67)
Chattu, Tea	5(6.67)
No breakfast	5(6.67)
Combined(puri,sabji, tea, bread, muri, ghugni, biscuit, sabji, chattu)	54(72.00)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

For 13 per cent street children, their breakfast item was the leftover food of the passengers at the trains. Majority (45%) of street children spent on breakfast on their own. Parents (7%) who were staying with their children used to give money to their children to get their breakfast items on payment or collect breakfast from their houses(4%). Few children also collect breakfast from different NGOs (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13

Distribution of respondents by their sources of breakfast

Sources	No.
Self prepared	34(45.33)
From home	3(4.00)
Train checking	10(13.33)
Parents, Brother	5(6.67)
Employer	3(4.00)
Begging	2(2.67)
No breakfast	5(6.67)
Combined(father,brother, own, trainchecking, ngo, from home, parents, employer, begging)	13(17.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

For 97 per cent of street children their common lunch items were rice, meat / fish/ egg and vegetables. Non vegetarian items were their preferred food items. Field observations reveal that street children in Howrah often eat food very fast. They are seen almost swallowing food and in large quantities. When food cannot be purchased, children eat what they can get by any means(see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14
Distribution of respondents by the items consumed at lunch

Items	No.
Bread/ loaf	2(2.67)
Combined(rice, meat, rice, fish, vegetable, egg)	73(97.33)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Among the street children 53 per cent used to get lunch provided by NGOs, another 11 per cent used to buy lunch items from their own pockets. Collection of leftovers food stuff by the passengers in the trains and begging were the main sources of food for lunch for a section of children. A few children admitted that in absence of regular means they even gone for stealing food items from different places and even eating the remains of food thrown in garbage pits (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15
Distribution of respondents by the sources of lunch

Sources	No.
Own/ self made	8(10.67)
From home	2(2.67)
Train Checking, Begging	7(9.33)
NGO	40(53.33)
Parents	5(6.67)
Employer	2(2.67)
Combined(father,brother, own, NGO, from home, parents, train checking, employer, begging)	11(14.66)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

Living conditions

Among the street children majority (69%) of them used to stay at on footpath, open space and especially on railway platform(see Table 4.16). They do not have any fixed type of shelter. The street children outside the station premises were mostly found on the street and footpaths. They do not like to stay at railway platform, station yard etc. for several reasons.

Table 4.16

Distribution of respondents by types of shelter

Type of Shelter	No.	Male	Female
Street/Footpath	10(13.33)	10(100.00)	0(0.00)
Open space(railway platforms)	4(5.33)	4(100.00)	0(0.00)
Other(slums near Howrah station)	9(12.00)	7(77.78)	2(22.22)
Combined(street/footpath, Open space (railway platform), station yard, hume pipe)	52(69.33)	48(92.30)	4(7.6)
Total	75(100.00)	69(92.00)	6(8.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

A section of street children stay in slums close to Howrah station. They use Howrah station as their place of earning. In the Howrah station area street children preferred to stay at railway platforms, around eateries, bus depots, markets, car parks, shopping places, signal points etc. Some of them like to choose such places from where they could easily collect rags. The above places are suitable for their begging, collecting rags, waste food etc. They beg food from the passengers near shops, tea stalls etc. They collect used disposable water bottles thrown by the passengers. They beg near bus depots, shopping places,

railway platforms etc. They used to collect broken plastic glasses, iron scraps, old newspaper etc from the dumping ground etc. They also collect or beg vegetable from the vegetable market and sell those to the small retail shops. In signal point they use to clean glasses of the car and earn money.

About 25 per cent street children preferred to stay at railway platforms. These children are platform centric and they used to collect empty water bottles from these platforms. They are old enough in the station and like to live in a group(see Table 4.17).

Table 4.17

Distribution of respondents by their preferred place of stay

Preferred place of stay	No.
Railway platforms	19(25.33)
Railway platform, Around eateries	23(30.67)
Combined (railway platform, bus depots, markets, car parks, around eateries, shopping places, dumping ground, signal points)	33(44.00)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages

By economic activities most (60%) of the street children in Howrah station area were rag pickers. They regularly collect used empty disposable water bottles, news papers etc. Another 11 per cent were engaged in begging in and around the station premises. Some children were engaged in other works like collection of coin at bathing ghat of Ganga river, van pulling, boy in hotel. A few street children

earn money by showing magic show in the train and places like Ganga ghat. For some children their job was to unload fish packets from the goods trains at the early morning and bring those packets from the station premises to the wholesale fish market located close to Howrah station by pushing hand carts. The number of street children working in different shops was very small. The shopkeepers are less interested to employ street children as their assistant. Also they are somewhat scared about the child labour Acts and the consequences (see Table 4.18).

Table 4.18

Distribution of respondents by engagement in specific work

Types of earning	No.
Beg	8(10.67)
Sell things	4(5.33)
Rag picking	45(60.00)
Labour in shop	3(4.00)
Any other work (no work, magic, collection of coin at Ganga river, van pulling, labour in hotel)	6(8.00)
Combined(beg, rag picking, selling things, labour in shop, doors-windows closing of train)	9(12.00)
Total	75(100.00)

Figures in parenthesis are percentages