



Investigating  
the Worst Forms of Child Labour

**NEPAL**

## **Child Labour in the Nepalese Carpet Sector**

### **A Rapid Assessment**

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Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI-EC)  
And the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the  
Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC)

June 2002

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Dr Bal Kumar KC  
Study Director



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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

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Following a number of studies and research projects, the government of Nepal and the ILO/IPEC identified Nepalese carpet factories as the location of 'one of the worst forms of child labour'. Their decision was based on definitions recommended in the ILO Convention 182, and Recommendation 190. The evidence provided by previous studies, however, is insufficient to prove whether the work of children in carpet factories is actually 'one of the worst forms of child labour'. This new Rapid Assessment attempts to fill gaps in existing knowledge, and further explores the relationship between child labour and the wider carpet economy.

The study used RA methodology recommended by ILO/UNICEF to investigate the worst forms of child labour over a 3 month period, with the objective of designing strategies to eliminate such child labour.

The findings are drawn from an analysis of the current state of the Nepalese carpet sector and the complex relationship to processes and causes. The study combines a profile of child labourers and their families with an analysis of the conditions in which children work. This report also includes a review of existing interventions to combat child labour.

## Findings and Conclusions

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*The Current State of the Nepalese Carpet Sector (Section 3):*

The carpet sector in Nepal has been a leading industry in export production and employment.

It employed about 250,000-300,000 labourers during its "Gold Rush" period in the early 1990s. Its production capacity reached a maximum of US \$190 million per year with a share of 65 per cent of total exports. Since then, the carpet sector has experienced a great recession. It suffered not only an economic recession but also a moral recession for employing and exploiting child labourers.

- Due to fluctuations in their foreign markets, carpet entrepreneurs sought cheap labour to maximize their profit.
- Unhealthy and unsystematic competition among carpet entrepreneurs and their ignorance of the government's role in the management of industries and the carpet labour market quickly became the market of child exploitation.
- Industries were and are threatened by the loss of export markets and their future prospect lies in diversifying the buyer's market.
- Market structure favoured child labour because it constituted a largely unorganized and labour intensive sector, which did not require a skilled and trained labour force.
- Strengths and opportunities associated with hiring child labourers in carpet production still seem to be outweighing weaknesses and threats.
- Wide sensitization on issues relating to the severe exploitation of children and the associated threats of losing export markets can act as a deterrent to the producers/manufacturers in employing child labour.

*Labour Migration and Child Labour in the Carpet Sector (Section 4)*

Livelihood opportunities in rural areas are considerably low, and the urban informal sector provides new opportunities. Labour migration from rural poor households to urban areas, mostly into the Kathmandu Valley is high. A 'gold rush' period of carpet industry opened up

new opportunities for the poorest of the poor, on a massive scale. The carpet industry was one of the most prominent sectors with a remittance economy that benefited rural communities. The booming carpet economy not only opened up green pastures but also invited negative consequences.

- Children and women labourers have been victims of the mismanagement of a carpet economy and the labour market.
- In the process of recruitment, trafficking and debt-bondage were prevalent, which are two basic features of the worst forms of child labour.
- Trafficking and debt-bondage of child labourers are closely interrelated in the carpet sector.
- The successes of the carpet economy have been mixed. It has provided great many opportunities for rural poor households in the labourers' places of origin.

#### The Characteristics of Households and Individuals, and Parent's Perceptions of Children and Development (Section 5)

Child labour in the carpet sector is related to family vulnerability; with respect to illiteracy, unemployment, sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty, low incomes, few children in schools, or because of sisters/brothers/close relatives who already work in the carpet factories. There is a persistent high illiteracy rate among adults - from generation to generation. For these households, there is a high opportunity cost of sending children to schools as many households urgently need food, clothes and shelter. These households, similar to many rural households, do not see any long-term benefits in education for their children.

- The proportion of boys is higher than girls in 5-17 years and less than 18 years.
- The majority of households with children who work in the carpet sector do not have

their own agricultural land and this may be the cause of children having to work in carpet factories for the livelihood of their family. Their families rely heavily on children's income, which ultimately comes from carpet work.

- The majority of children are brought into the Kathmandu Valley for carpet work by brokers. These brokers are mainly from the same localities, who have worked in carpet factories for many years, and some are still working.
- There is no one who has completed higher than secondary level of education and no female has ever achieved beyond the primary level of education in the households with child labour in carpet factories.
- The majority of the parents whose children are working in carpet factories in Kathmandu Valley said that education is not so important for their children in their future.
- Most of the parents seem happy with their children working in carpet factories although they feel that majority of children are working under bad condition of working place and this may be due to lack of other alternatives they have.
- Nearly one-half of parents are found against sending their children back to schools, which may indicate a family's dependence on children's earnings.
- Some of the parents of child workers accept child labour without any hesitation while majority of them explain that they are compelled to put their children to work for various reasons. They also suggest that there should be enough income for family and enough land for farming to prevent child labour in carpet factories in the future.

#### *Working Conditions and Health Hazards at Work (Section 6)*

The overall working conditions of children reveal that a child's work in a carpet factory is

not simply 'child work', which most employers (including some of the CCIA members) believe. Neither is it a 'beneficial form of child labour', which might enable children to combine work and schooling. It is an intolerable form of child labour!

- A small proportion of children under 14 years of age works in registered factories. However, quite a large number of children of this age group work in unregistered and home-based fabricators (suppliers of large and registered factories).
- These children are exposed to a hazardous working environment – with dust and bad sanitation.
- As a result of this, they suffer from fevers, headache, cold, respiratory track infections and stomach pains.
- Supervisors and employers abuse these child labourers physically and psychologically to a large extent.
- On the basis of such evidence, this study recommends that the prevalence of child labour in carpet factories is one of the worst forms of child labour, that is, against ILO Convention 182.

#### *Review of Existing Intervention Programmes (Section 7)*

In Nepal, the involvement of NGOs and trade unions in protecting the lives of children in carpet factories is very encouraging. This indicates that a large number of people are aware of child labour issues. A range of monitoring strategies have been prepared by many NGOs, Government, and Trade Unions to develop and design codes of conduct for the inspection of factories, and social labeling.

- The code of conduct agreed between NASPEC and CCIA prohibits children under 16 years of age from working in carpet factories. The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2000 also defines a child as a person who has not completed 16 years of age.

- Yet most NGOs and Trade Unions have not realized that they should expand their programmes to include children between the ages of 14 and 16. Monitoring strategies should be aimed at children who have not completed 18 years of age.
- Education, health and micro-credit have been the major intervention programmes used to protect the lives of children. Unfortunately, most adult and child labourers reported that they had not benefited from such programmes. Even more striking is that most labourers do not know about the existence of such programmes in their locality.
- Much more effective actions (the identification of really needy groups, the efficient use of resources, effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, transparency and accountability) are needed from NGOs, Trade Unions and employers' organizations to protect children working in Nepalese carpet factories, one of the worst forms of child labour.

## **Recommendations**

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### **1) Government's Commitments**

#### *i) Subsidies*

There should be a provision of subsidies for export manufacturers. Some portion of the revenues may be directed to investing on the education of children and providing health facilities and skill training for the workers and their families.

#### *ii) Quality Control*

- Unhealthy competition among the business community (leading to the sale of carpets at a bargaining price that reflects the low quality of products and the low wage of labour) must be controlled by the government to gain the credibility of the Nepalese carpet in the international market.

### *iii) Management of Labour Market*

- Management of the labour market in the carpet sector is vital. The minimum wage rate should be determined by the government.
- No carpet industry uses contract letters to hire labourers. But they should be provided between employers and employees and specify wages, working hours, and working days in a week.

## **2) Prohibition of Middlemen and the *Thekedari* System**

- Prohibiting or eliminating middlemen and *Thekedars* in the recruitment of child labourers to factories would minimize the risks. Employers have the prime responsibility to avoid middlemen and *Thekedars*. The Government, NGOs, Trade Unions, and associations related to carpet production could work hand in hand with employers.

## **3) Working Conditions, Health and Education**

The employment of children under 14 in carpet factories should be strictly prohibited. In the case of children aged between 14-17 years, the following measures are recommended:

- The imposition of minimum indiscriminate wage rate by age and gender and/or minimum rate per square meter/feet for weaving and rate per kilo gram for spinning.
- Child labourers should be provided access to recreational facilities within or outside the factory premises.

- Small level employers must be made aware of the legal instruments and ILO conventions related to the prohibition of using child labor in their enterprises.
- Carpet workers must be regularly provided with information about the programmes being implemented by different organizations and there should be no charge for such services.
- A convincing and effective occupational health and safety campaign must be launched within Kathmandu's carpet factories. This should focus on issues relating to the actual working environment, such as lightning.
- Health programmes designed to deal with preventing musculo-skeletal disorders should be prioritized.
- The number of day-care centres for young children should be increased; the quality of their services should be increased, and the motivation of parents to enroll their children into centres fostered.
- Child labourers should be offered non-formal education (NFE) and schooling. NFE should also be provided to other adult workers covering issues on trafficking, debt-bondage, sexual abuse and harassment and the rights of the children.

## **4) Monitoring and Evaluation**

- There should be an effective high level networking system between all stakeholders led by the government in order to minimize the duplication of programmes. Regular interaction among stakeholders is essential to implement and monitor the child labour related code of conduct.

# Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In Nepal, there are 6.23 million children of 5-14 years of age, of whom 41.7<sup>1</sup> per cent (2.6 million) are economically active (Suwal et al., 1997). Of those working children, 4.5 per cent (279,000) are involved in wage labour. The gradual shift in the economy from agricultural to non-agricultural sector has increased the opportunity for wage employment. It has also increased the volume of labour migration from rural to urban areas. The notion of growth in the non-agricultural sector with perceived and anticipated better wages draws surplus labour from the agricultural sector. Both non-agricultural and urban sector work in Nepal are found to be offering relatively higher level of wages than agricultural and rural sectors. However, the phenomenon of labour migration in response to an increased demand for wage labourers in the manufacturing sector of Nepal occurred haphazardly and invited various socio-economic problems associated with the employment of child labourers in severely exploitative arrangements (ILO-IPEC, ND).

In the early nineties, the carpet sector was believed to have employed some 250,000 to 300,000 labourers, especially migrant labourers. However, by the mid-nineties, this sector was employing a substantial number of child labourers in exploitative arrangements. There was a rumor that child labourers in the carpet sector employed as much as 40 to 50 per cent of the total labour force in this sector. Forms of exploitation and the bad working conditions of child labourers gradually drew the attention of the international community, especially carpet buying countries, civil society organizations,

child rights activists', NGOs, and academics. Ideas about how or why children in the carpet sector are working in one of the worst forms of child labour have been widely obliterated. Commonly cited reasons for why carpet related work is hazardous for children's lives include:

- congested and dusty work places with poor lighting ventilation system,
- low payment, longer working hours,
- substandard shelter,
- exploitation by adults,
- deprivation from education and medical facilities,
- suffering from multiple health problems like respiratory diseases, poor eyesight, and gastro-intestinal problems, pneumonia, malnutrition, anemia and skin problems (ILO/IPEC, n.d.).

The existing knowledge, based on available information from various research findings, leads one to conclude that child labour in the carpet sector has been in the worst forms as defined in the ILO Convention 182.

## 1.2 Convention 182 and the Time Bound Programme (TBP) in Nepal

ILO Convention 182 calls for "immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency". The Convention applies to all persons under 18 years of age and gives special attention to the particular vulnerabilities of younger children and girls. Accordingly, ILO/IPEC is in the process of implementing a Time Bound Programme (TBP) for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour across the globe. Nepal is one of the first three countries selected for this programme (ILO, 2001: 2). The TBP is primarily designed to assist ILO member countries in vigorously implementing Convention 182.

<sup>1</sup> The figures estimated based on adjustment of proportion of working children aged 5 and 14 years to the population in the specified age group of 1991 census. Its growth rate may have changed over the years and will have to be adjusted with the population given by 2001 census. However, it is the only available estimate ever in hand.

In Nepal, the TBP initially included child trafficking, child portering, child ragpicking, child domestic labourers and bonded child labourers as the worst forms of child labour (ILO, 2001:2). It also identified carpet industries and mines in which child labour may be among the worst forms (Shrestha and Edmonds, 2002). The present study has been conceptualized along this line in order to help the TBP assess the state of child labour in the carpet sector. The TBP aims to prevent and eliminate all incidences of the worst forms of child labour within a defined period of time. It combines sectoral, thematic and geographical based approaches to combat child labour by integrating this programme in national development policy. It is, essentially, a set of integrated policy and programme actions designed to take place simultaneously on all levels from the individual and family to the national level (ILO, 2001: 3).

A complete knowledge of the extent and the magnitude of child labour in carpet production is lacking in Nepal. Some small-scale anecdotal studies have contributed to raising public awareness. However, a study with a reasonably sound methodology has for some time been required to understand the multidimensional aspects of child labour in the carpet sector. Existing rough estimates of the number of children working in the sector vary with the source. Such estimates have ranged from zero to 50 per cent (Adams, 1993; CWIN, 1993; CCIA, 1999). During the mid-nineties, the government of Nepal accepted the figure of 9 per cent child labour in the carpet sector. Other sources claimed a slightly higher percentage (BISCONS, 1998). With the exception of CCIA, no one has denied the prevalence of child labour in the carpet sector in Nepal.

### **1.3 Defining the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Nepal Carpet Sector**

Article 3 of Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, defines the worst forms as:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to

slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour,

- the use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic purposes,
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in international treaties, and
- work, which by its very nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

It is felt that children working in the carpet sector fall within this definition. Furthermore, ILO Recommendation 190 also highlights cases of worst forms of child labour if children are exposed to:

- physical, psychological or sexual abuse,
- work underground, under water, at dangerous heights, confined spaces,
- work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools,
- manual handling or transport of heavy loads,
- an unhealthy environment exposing workers to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise, levels or vibration damaging to health,
- work under difficult circumstances, including long hours, or during the night, and
- unreasonable confinement on the employer's premises,

In the carpet sector, unhygienic working environments, the inhalation of woolen fibers and rags, poor ventilation and exposure to excessive cold or heat during winter and summer seasons respectively affects children's health. Long hours of work and night works are common practices in the carpet sector that can seriously infringe acceptable working standards.



The ILO (1973) Minimum Age Convention (Convention 138) calls upon ratifying states “to pursue a policy consistent with the ILO’s fundamental goal - the total abolition of child labour -and to rise progressively the minimum age for employment to the level that allows for the fullest physical and mental development of young persons”. The link to education is the corner stone of this Convention, which provides that the minimum age must not be less than the age of completion of compulsory education and, in any case, not less than 15 years (ILO/IPEC/NIMC, ND.). Most of the children working in the carpet sector are either school drop outs, have not completed primary level education or have never been admitted to schools.

#### **1.4 Assumptions of the Study**

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The present study is a quantitative assessment of the child workforce, with a critical analysis of intervention models and qualitative tracer studies of child workers. It solicits views and concerns from children who work in the carpet sector, in order to throw some light on their conditions, background, life styles, and work as well as on recommendations for dealing with child labour in the carpet sector.

To explore the nature and extent of child employment in carpet related industries and the associated hazards this study is based upon the following assumptions:

- existing features of the carpet economy such as the structure of the economy, the technology involved, the profit maximization motive of the stakeholders in the production process, and the ease of employing children in exploitative arrangements are factors which encourage or discourage the employment of children,
- an abundance of labourers in the rural sector from marginal and land-less households act as push factors for the migration of labourers in general and children in particular,
- demands for child labourers in sectors like domestic, hotel, transportation, portering,

construction, ragpicking are equally high. Therefore, children can set out from home to work in any sector and take up employment within the carpet sector via a number of different steps,

- Children’s contribution to the livelihood of a household is significant. This is one of the reasons of the households sending their children to work in carpet works. In addition, household poverty, parent’s illiteracy and their occupations are closely associated with the employment of children in carpet works,
- the influence of peer groups and elder siblings are of equal importance in facilitating other children into the carpet factories,
- certain caste/ethnic groups from districts adjacent to the Kathmandu Valley and/or places of road accessibility have developed a ‘culture’ of carpet work from an early age,
- the education system has failed to motivate children to continue their education rather than begin work at an early age,
- existing legal provisions against employment of under aged labourers in various sectors is weakly enforced, and
- organizations working for the creation of a child friendly working environment (such as RUGMARK, Care and Fare, NASPEC, CCIA, and others) may or may not have created conducive environment to detract the employment of child labourers in the carpet sector.

This study will attempt to investigate the aforementioned assumptions.

#### **1.5 Existing Research and Gaps in Knowledge**

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Research on the worst forms of child labour like portering, ragpicking or mining and on the working conditions of carpet children started to emerge as early as 1993. Research on child labour is difficult and often is unreliable due, in many instances, to its invisibility. No researchers are rigorously trained to depict the reality of the worst forms of child labour. Research focused on

the precise extent, causes and consequences of the worst forms of child labour is painstaking and commensurate with manpower and resources.

An initial study by CWIN (CWIN, 1993) interviewed 3,322 children under 16 years of age from 365 factories in Kathmandu Valley. It estimated about 150,000 child labourers. This constituted 50 per cent of the total labour force in the carpet sector in 2,000 carpet factories in Nepal. Setting aside the reliability of the estimated number of child labourer, this study revealed many unacceptable working conditions and instances of exploitation and abuse.

A series of Impact Assessment Studies of Rehabilitated Children from Carpet and Carpet Related Works by NASPEC and ILO/IPEC between 1999 and 2002 attempted to unravel the working conditions of children in carpet factories and record their origins, family background, reasons for working, wages, and their aspirations. There is no reliable source of information on the extent of child labour in carpet factories and carpet-related works in Nepal. Previous studies including these impact assessments have failed to estimate the magnitude of child labour in carpet sector. However, these studies have explored reasonably well the socio-economic background of child labourers, their family background, their origins, caste/ethnicity and literacy.

The previous studies highlighted the Tamang community as the main group, which involves their children in the carpet sector. The districts of Sarlahi, Sindhupalchok, Kavre and Makwanpur have been identified as core 'sending areas'. The poverty of rural households, the lure of city life and cycles of debt have been reported as the main reasons for increasing rates of child labour in the carpet sector.

The following features emerge from the existing research on child labour in the Nepalese carpet sector (Table 1.1).

*Estimates:* Precise estimates do not exist. However, estimates made on the basis of small-scale surveys range from 40-50 per cent (CWIN, 1993; Adams, 1993) to 9 per cent (Pradhan, 1993) during the early 1990s. In 1998, child labourers were estimated to constitute 12 per cent of the total labour force in the carpet sector.

*Caste/Ethnicity and Age/Sex Composition:* An overwhelming majority of child labourers working in carpet factories are Tamang constituting 35 to 70 per cent followed by Magar and Rai/Limbu. More than 70 per cent of such children are from families consisting of six or more members. More than 60 per cent of such children are boys and nearly 40 per cent are girls. The majority are aged 15 and 17 years.

*Origin:* Twenty-three districts have been identified as major source districts for child labourers migrating for carpet related works in the Kathmandu Valley. The volume of child migration is very high from districts peripheral to the Valley or from areas accessible by roads to the Valley. Agriculture and manual labour are the main occupations of families that send their children to the carpet sector. A substantial number of children have worked as child domestics before coming to the carpet sector. Major reasons for leaving home included hardship of work at home, severe poverty in the family and social and economic pressure on children, children's desire for waged employment outside their village and the influence of returned child migrants.

*Literacy and Education:* The majority of children are illiterate and a substantial proportion has dropped out of school.

*Working Conditions:* A piece rate payment system is the basis of work. On an average, a child has to work for 12-16 hours per day. Work often lasts until after 10 PM. Monthly income ranges from NRS. 500.00 to 3,000.00. In extreme cases, the child earns only food and accommodation.

TABLE 1.1:  
Existing Research on Child Labour in the Nepalese Carpet Sector

Sources of Information	Type of Study and Method Employed	Findings/Extent of Child Labour and Origin	Working Conditions	Lacking Aspects
CWIN, 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>field based, survey of 365 carpet factories within the Kathmandu Valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 % of the total 300,000 estimated labourers,</li> <li>97% migrant child labourers, majority (41%) from Makwanpur,</li> <li>boys girls ratio 62:38,</li> <li>Tamang (47%), Magar (11.5%) and Chhetri (10.5%) are major caste/ethnic group,</li> <li>65% children aged 11-14 years,</li> <li>47% brought by broker,</li> <li>59% school drop outs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>57% wage in time rate,</li> <li>78% working for less than one year,</li> <li>86% work 12-16 hours a day,</li> <li>working environment: poor ventilation and lighting and small space,</li> <li>total earning in a month less than Rs. 400,</li> <li>broker keeping earning of 43%, food arranged by broker, poor health and hygiene, shelter by factory or broker.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>weak methodology,</li> <li>rough estimation,</li> <li>no synergy in between the size of surveyed child labour from the 365 factories and estimates of 150,000 child labourers in 2,000 factories,</li> <li>review of carpet sector.</li> </ul>
HMG/MOL/ BISCONS, 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>field based,</li> <li>structured interview to the carpet workers under 18 years of age,</li> <li>survey of 10 per cent carpet related establishments drawn from the CDIA's recent membership directory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11% of total 4,695 labourers,</li> <li>76% from the same development region,</li> <li>37% Tamang and 24% Magar children,</li> <li>agriculture is the major occupation of their parents and large family size,</li> <li>family, relatives and friends are the major elements to bring them to work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more than 76% work for 12-16 hours a day,</li> <li>monthly earning ranges from less than Rs. 500.00 to more than Rs. 3000.00. More than 46 per cent earn less than Rs. 1,000.00,</li> <li>piece rate is the main basis of payment (62%) followed by monthly salary (34%),</li> <li>94 per cent of these child labourers live in factory premises,</li> <li>61 per cent are illiterate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not give magnitude of child labour,</li> <li>Review of functioning of carpet sector,</li> <li>estimates of total number of factories and child labourers,</li> <li>hazards related to occupation,</li> <li>emergence of child labour in carpet sector</li> </ul>
NASPEC and ILO/ IPEC, 1999a.; sdfg1999b; 2001 and 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>data based on impact assessment study of rehabilitated children from carpet related works,</li> <li>two sets of structured questionnaires; first set was administered at the rescue time, second set included information from first set and additional information applicable to the post-phased out children,</li> <li>analysis of 100 (1999a), 250 (1999b), 129 (2001) and 150 (2002) rehabilitated children by NASPAC in between 15 Nov., 1998 and 31 December, 2001</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75% from Tamang and Magar ethnic groups. Family size with six or more members (64% children),</li> <li>68% are boys and 32 per cent girls,</li> <li>20 districts as major origin of child migration for carpet related works; Sarlahi (28%), Makwanpur (19%), Sindhupalchwok (9%), and Dhanusha (8%) are four major districts,</li> <li>all rescued children were under 15 years of age,</li> <li>major source of household income of such children is agricultural activities (69%) and manual labour (11%),</li> <li>major reasons for leaving home: attraction of city life, parents' will, food insufficiency at home and hard nature of work at home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>34% working as unpaid labourers and 53% earn less than Rs. 800.00 a month,</li> <li>Own-self, parents and relatives are controller of earnings,</li> <li>22% reported working at dark and cold rooms,</li> <li>73% used to work until after 10: PM to mid-night,</li> <li>84 dissatisfied with the carpet related works,</li> <li>62% could leave the place at their will but could not do so because of fear of punishment by employers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>impact assessment study,</li> <li>fails to provide estimates of magnitudes,</li> <li>review of carpet sector as a whole,</li> <li>emergence of child labour in this sector.</li> </ul>
CDPS, 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>field based survey of 107 girl child labourers under 18 years of age in the Kathmandu Valley,</li> <li>application of RA methodology, participatory observation, Key Informant interviews.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>69% from Tamang community. Family size of six or more members is obvious (70% girls),</li> <li>Coming from 23 districts, 58% from central hills,</li> <li>80% are of ages 16 to 17 years. Only 8 are below 14 years,</li> <li>girls' motivation for further education,</li> <li>reasons for leaving home: hard nature of work at home, to earn money, attraction of city life, and help to parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46% earn less than Rs. 2,000.00 per month and 6.5% work as unpaid,</li> <li>84% have experience of falling sick while in work,</li> <li>major sickness are headache, common cold and fever,</li> <li>87% work for more than 10 hours a day until mid night,</li> <li>most are not-satisfied with the work,</li> <li>92% have heard of trafficking of girls, 50% have feelings and experience of sexual abuse from peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>review of functioning of carpet sector,</li> <li>no magnitude and estimates,</li> <li>no proportion of factories closed down and new entries,</li> <li>hazards related to occupation.</li> </ul>

*Health Hazards:* Children work inside dark or congested rooms that are unhygienic and poorly ventilated. Excessive cold during the winter and excessively hot rooms during the summer are common.

### **1.6 Objectives of the Study**

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This Rapid Assessment aims to provide recommendations that can guide the development of specific interventions for the Time Bound Programme against the worst forms of child labour in the carpet sector.

The specific objectives are to provide:

- i. an analysis of the current economic status of the carpet sector and an analysis of the relationship between child labour issues and changing overseas markets,
- ii. valid benchmark/baseline data on the number of children working in carpet related industries, including a profile of the children, their families, with special attention to their socioeconomic

backgrounds, their conditions of work, health hazards, employment relations and incidences of abuse at different stages of the production process where children are involved,

- iii. an understanding of the process through which children enter into the carpet sector and on how, when and why they exit their work, with a special focus on recruitment, the role of labour contractors, seasonality of work, changing work places, the situation and perception of the family and on the linkages between the carpet sector and other worst forms of child labor,
- iv. an assessment of the linkages between trafficking and the carpet sector, i.e., whether the process of trafficking can account for the entry of children into the carpet sector as well as whether trafficking of children for exploitative employment originates in carpet factories, and
- v. an assessment of intervention models being used by organizations working for working children in the carpet sector.

# Methodology

## 2.1 Rapid Assessment

This chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the present study of child labourers working in the carpet sector in the Kathmandu Valley. This is primarily based on the rapid assessment (RA) methodology developed by ILO/UNICEF (2000) in order to understand migratory phenomena and its social and economic contexts, for the purpose of designing an intervention strategy. RA is a combination of a broad range of qualitative and quantitative survey tools with flexible research methods for incorporating contextual problems. This can be adapted to local conditions when investigating the often hidden and invisible forms of child labour.

These methods include both secondary and primary information. Secondary information is used to build a foundation for the present study and to make a comparative analysis that allows verification of primary information on the one hand and an observation of trends and patterns on the other. Secondary information has been drawn mainly from previous research and impact studies carried out by BISCONS, NASPEC and RUG-MARK. Primary information obtained using both quantitative and qualitative interview methods provides an in-depth understanding of the situation of child labourers in the carpet sector.

The study was completed within 3 months, beginning on the 1st May and ending on the 31st July 2002. This study was aimed at providing an intervention strategy for the Time Bound Programme (TBP).

## 2.2 Sampling Scheme

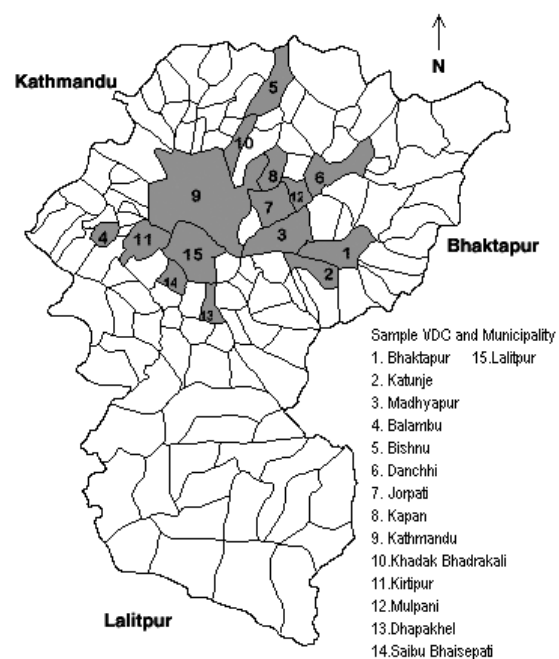
### 2.2.1 Survey Site

This study is based on systematic field surveys in the Kathmandu Valley (which, in this study is taken as, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts). The survey site was chosen on the basis of CCIA inventories of carpet factories, which show an overwhelming concentration of carpet industries (98%) located in 3 Municipalities and 12 VDCs with the Kathmandu Valley (Figure 2.1).

### 2.2.2 Sampling Frame and Sampling Technique

The present study uses a probability sampling technique in addition to RA methods in order to reasonably estimate the magnitude of child labourers within the carpet sector in the Kathmandu Valley. The sampling was based on a list of 976 carpet industries provided by Central Carpet Industry Association (CCIA). The method used was 'Stratified Cluster Sampling' and the selection of the cluster was based on 'Probability Proportionate to Size' (PPS).

FIGURE 2.1:  
Kathmandu Valley Map Showing Sample VDCs/ Municipalities for Child Labour Survey in Carpet Sectors



In selecting the sample of carpet factories, the status of its registration was taken into account with the notion that child labourers are more prevalent in unregistered factories than in registered ones<sup>2</sup>. So, the sampling universe was stratified in two strata according to the ratio of 60:40. That is, 60 per cent of the sample was drawn from unregistered factories and 40 per cent from registered ones. The basis of this ratio was obtained from the distribution of the factories based on the status of registration.

During the planning phase of the survey, several consultation meetings were held with different agencies and personnel. This provided some tentative ideas that about 33 to 66 per cent of the factories of the total listed in the CCIA record might have been closed during Nepal's state of emergency. In order to cope with this problem, a sampling scheme with a system for replacement was adopted. Replacement was made for those factories which were not found in the selected sampling area either because they had been relocated or closed. This helped to maintain the sampling target, and allowed the surveyors to also record the number of carpet factories that were liquidated or relocated.

The final selection of 100 clusters (100 factories, considering each factory as a cluster) from 976 factories were chosen using the 'Probability Proportionate to Size' (PPS) technique. The PPS enables the selection of more clusters, ensures the representation of elements contained in large clusters, and gives each element in the population an equal chance of selection (Babbie, 1990: 92). As this is a self-weighting technique, the weight was based on the number of labourers reported to have been working in each carpet factory according to the list. The assumption here was that the proportion of child labourers was commensurate with the proportion of adult labourers. Though, of course, this may not have been true in reality.

The 100 clusters were regrouped into 25 broad clusters, each cluster containing at least 3-4 clusters or factories, so that the number of interviews could be flexible within a broad cluster and that replacements could be found, if needed.

### **2.2.3 Target Population**

The target of this study is child labourers currently engaged in carpet-related work within the Kathmandu Valley. The age range of these child labourers is between 5 and 18 years, as recommended by the ILO Convention 1999. The total number of child labourers interviewed was 300. The numbers of interviews were equally distributed by clusters. In the case of the age and sex of the respondents, interviewers had to use their own judgement to select children for interview in each factory. The interviewers attempted to maintain a combination of children of different age and sex, with respect to the ratio of the total labour force in a particular carpet factory.

### **2.3 Household Survey at Origin**

In order to examine the factors responsible for migration of child labourers from the rural setting, survey was also conducted at one origin. The place of origin visited was identified after the survey at destination in Kathmandu was over. The survey result provided knowledge about the place most frequently cited place of origin. Makwanpur and Sarlahi districts were the most frequently cited origins of child labourers (Annex 1). The research team decided to visit Hariwan VDC of Sarlahi district, because the highest proportion of respondents interviewed at Kathmandu reported to have migrated from this VDC and the origin at Makwanpur district was found to be scattered through out the district, which could not be included in the study due to limited time.

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<sup>2</sup> Sample design was finalized in consultation with Dr. Pushp Lal Joshi, technical demographer from CDPS and Mr. Keshav Karmacharya, census statistician from CBS. ILO Office in Kathmandu, Bangkok, and Geneva also provided the feedback.

In Hariwan VDC of Sarlahi district, three hamlets namely Chapine, Taiwan and Pakhrin *tole* were visited. Address of these hamlets was taken from the survey at the destination and they were the most prevalent villages for migration. From these three hamlets, 22 household interviews were conducted, 11 households were among those which have migrant child labourers working in carpet factories in the Kathmandu valley and the next 11 were from among the non-migrant households at the origin.

## **2.4 Questionnaire Design**

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For the interview, structured questionnaire was designed to cover most of the components of the study to fulfill the study objectives. Previous studies carried out by a number of organizations and individuals were reviewed in order to acquire knowledge on the content of the questionnaire. Questionnaire already tested in Pakistan and Cambodia were also used as reference materials. A series of consultation meetings were conducted with concerned personnel from ILO/IPEC in the process of designing and finalizing questionnaire. The questionnaire was standardized with the help of feedback from the ILO, Bangkok and from result of the pretest of 50 randomly selected interviews with carpet child labourers working in non-sampling carpet factories in all 3 districts of Kathmandu Valley.

The major focus of the questionnaire was on the following themes (Annex 2):

- i. identification of factory and the respondents;
- ii. respondent's household information;
- iii. stepwise, inter- and intra-sectoral migration with process, causes and consequences;
- iv. current work and working conditions;
- v. health and hazards;
- vi. exploitation and torture/abuse; and
- vii. perceptions of children.

A different set of questionnaire was also developed for the household survey at the origin. This set covered basically the background of the households in terms of family size, education, economic activity and land holdings and about the perceptions of household heads towards their children working in the carpet sector (Annex 3).

## **2.5 Qualitative Interviews**

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Qualitative tools involved in this study are Key Informant interviews, case histories, focus group discussions (FGDs), and participant observation. Information obtained from these tools is basically to verify and compliment facts obtained from structured interviews.

Key Informant interviews included informal discussion with factory owners, factory staff, adult workers, and child workers. The discussion was focused on the history and current trend of carpet economy, employment situation in the carpet sector, processes involved in manufacturing carpet, relationship between small and big industries and between feeder and export industries, relationship between labourers and employers, labourers' risk factors and place in the carpet economy, process of employment and origin of labourers.

Focus group discussions were directed towards obtaining information on the situation, process and reasons for employment, relationship of labourers with employers, level of wages and security of employees. Case histories of some selected respondents were also documented to better understand the problem of child labourers in the carpet sector. Participant observation was focused on observation of visual appearance of physical environment and its impact on children's health. This should be acknowledged that participant observation was based on a short span of time during the interviews in various survey sites.

## 2.6 Quality Assurance

A number of efforts have been made to increase the quality of information. It involved from the very beginning of the questionnaire design to the stage of analysis. There were series of consultation meetings for building experiences with concerned personnel from the ILO/IPEC for finalizing the questionnaire.

Questionnaire was designed in a proper sequence to maintain flow and consistency. This ensures consistency in response and less possibility of recall lapse errors in the respondent's answer. Pretest interviews were conducted to reach the final stage of questionnaire. ILO's concerned personnel observed both pretest and final field survey in some areas. Feedback from ILO, Bangkok was also received and incorporated in the final questionnaire.

Some probing questions were also prepared to follow the main questions where these were necessary. In the absence of probing questions, interviewers were instructed in such a way that they would have used a number of probing techniques when needed.

During the field survey period, there were a number of debriefing sessions with ILO. It was basically to make sure whether the survey was going on properly and to solve the problems faced in the field as well as in the interview. It was very much helpful to improve the strategy for the success of field survey.

There were also some additional questions designed along with the structured questionnaire, which were to be filled out by interviewers after completing the interviews on the issue of accuracy of responses. These questions were basically focused on food security in the origin and the exploitation and tortured experienced in the factory.

TABLE 2.1:  
Rating of Response in Some Selected Questions (N=300)

Issues of questions	Very reliable	Reliable	Satisfactory	Less reliable	Total %
From own agriculture land	0.3	36.0	51.3	12.3	00.0
Food security from principal activity	0.3	40.7	45.7	13.3	100.0
Exploitation/torture experienced in the factory	0.3	47.7	38.0	14.0	100.0
Persons involved in exploitation/torture in the factory	0.3	48.0	39.3	12.3	100.0

Table 2.1 provides the rating of the responses in some selected questions. The rating of the responses was based on information such as food security from both own agricultural land and principal activity and exploitation/torture experienced in the factory and persons involved in such activities. The rating of the responses felt by interviewers is either reliable or satisfactory. The highest percentage of respondent's response is satisfactory on the issue of food security and the highest percentage of their response is reliable on the issue of exploitation and torture. Interviewer in only 1 respondent's response feels a very reliable response. This indicates that quality of data is reasonably acceptable.

## 2.7 Informed Consent and Ethical Issues

First and foremost ethical issues concerning interviews of children were ascertained by obtaining consent from respondents for their interview. The front page of the questionnaire was devoted to a paragraph for informed consent. The aim of this paragraph was to introduce interviewers themselves in front of the respondents and to present the aim and objectives of the study.

In this survey, however, there were three steps of obstacles of interviewing child labourers. The first step is the factory owner. It was necessary to have his/her permission to enter the factory. Even if the first step is granted, it was necessary at the second step to get permission from the employer to have interviews with child labourers.



Only then the interviewer could reach the child labourer. Members of the research team made several efforts to reach the children for interviews with highest consideration of the ethical issues.

During the interview, the words in written consent were not sufficient even to obtain some time from some respondents. Interviewers tried their best to have their consent by presenting the intended purpose of the study. In cases where it was not possible to obtain informed content, the respondents were dropped from the interviews with due respect to their human rights.

Questionnaire was designed in a child friendly manner. Some questions that could not be responded by children were administered to children's parents or guardians working together. And for those who do not have parents or local guardians and who could not answer, the questions were not filled out.

Researchers were highly sensitive and respectful about the respondent's private matters. Even though one of the objectives was to find out the problem of trafficking and debt-bondage of children in the carpet factories, direct questions on both issues were not included in the questionnaire. Rather, researchers used indirect method of obtaining information on trafficking and debt-bondage. This information would indirectly provide indication of the trafficking and debt-bondage situation of child labourers in the carpet sector.

## **2.8 Research Challenges and Lessons Learned**

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There were some challenges faced in the pretest of the questionnaire. Random assignment of the carpet factory made it difficult to locate some carpet factories. This was due to two years old list provided by CCIA for selecting samples for pre-test. During the last 2 years, there were many changes occurred in the carpet sector in terms of liquidation and relocation, change in

ownership and new establishments. Besides, many factories did not have names and signboards. Based on the experience of those issues in the pretest, research team changed the strategy for surveying carpet child labourers by broadening the domain of cluster (see section 2.2 of this chapter) with broad cluster containing at least 3-4 sub-clusters and each sub-cluster containing 1 factory. It increased the originally conceived sample size from 200 to 300. This increased the latitude for replacement if needed and provided extra leverage for selecting well mixture of age and sex composition in the final sample.

Obtaining permission for the interviews of child labourers in the carpet sector is another serious problem. It can be particularly difficult for researchers to gain access to larger and reputable factories to conduct their surveys. From the Key Informant interviews, it was known that it was due to copy right issue that the design of the carpet is very much secret, which could be stolen by any body. Several cases of stealing designs had been reported in the past. In this case, researchers had to convince the factory owner by showing their ID cards during the field survey.

Finding out child labourers for interview was another problem. In large and registered factories, the magnitude of child labour below 18 years of age was observed to be low and the chances of finding out child labourers aged less than 15 years was even lower. It was because, most of these factories have trade unions, have boards of RUG-MARK and NASPEC telling "Stop Child Labour" and "employment of under 16 or under 14 children is strictly prohibited". It was reported that RUG-MARK and NASPEC have been frequently visiting to these factories. Small or shed based factories are mostly unregistered and work as feeder industries for the large factory in which child labourers are mostly recruited through middle-person. In such factories, the magnitude of child labour was high.

## *Current Status of Nepalese Carpet Sector*

The implications of hand knotted carpet industries for Nepal's national economy are two-fold. On the one hand they encourage exports of Nepalese products to overseas markets and are a major source of foreign currency. On the other hand, as a result of intensive production the industries create many employment opportunities for labourers. As the General Secretary of CCIA has written "the whole beauty of Tibeto-Nepali carpet is the involvement of labourer's fine hands in the process of its production" (Maskey, 1999: 21). In the year 1999/2000, the carpet sector contributed 2.3 per cent to GDP (Kshetry, 2000). From the early eighties to the mid nineties this sector flourished; earning about \$190 million in the fiscal year 1993-94 and employing more than 300,000 labourers (Rana, 2000:27). Now, in 2002, the sector is passing through a hard time for various reasons.

### **3.1 Conversion of Tibetan Carpet Culture into Tibeto-Nepalese Carpet**

Tibetans who came as refugees during the late 1950s and early 1960s introduced the art of carpet production to Nepal. To handle the refugee problem the Nepalese government sought the help of organizations such as International Red Cross Society (IRCS) and Swiss Agency for Technical Assistance (SATA). Accordingly, carpet-weaving schemes were established at the three largest refugee camps. Namely, Chialsa in Solukhumbu, Jawalakhel in Lalitpur and Pokhara. Such programmes were sustainable and self-reliant; they utilized inherited skills to secure the livelihoods of the

refugees (Maskey, 1999: 21; Graner, 1999: 202). Initially, these carpet-weaving schemes recruited labourers from within the refugee camps. As demand for hand knotted carpets grew on the international market, these camps based producers began to hire local Nepalese labourers or to give orders to other fabricators. The process gradually immersed the carpet-manufacturing phenomenon into the Nepalese economy (Pant, 2000:28; Graner, 1999:202; Maskey, 1999:21 and Key Informants in the field survey).

The first shipment of hand-knotted woolen carpets from Nepal was dated back to 1964. However, the visibility of the sector only became pronounced in the late 1970s (Pant, 2000: 28). Between 1961 and 1964 the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) assessed the European market for hand-knotted carpets being produced in the Tibetan refugee camps. Consequently, the Tibetan Handicraft Centre, Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre, the Carpet Trading Company (CTC) and other pioneer Tibetan carpet industries were formed in attempts to strengthen the market for carpet exports in Europe (Maskey, 1999: 21).

The origin of export oriented carpet production in Nepal is strongly linked with a search for secure livelihoods for and by Tibetan refugees. As the market expanded, the existing production infrastructure was unable to satisfy growing demand and thus gave an impetus to the establishment of new factories, both by Tibetans and Nepalese businessmen (Graner, 1999: 203). As it was not possible to locate new manufacturing units within the refugee camps, the sites of production and the recruitment of workers moved outside the limited area of the camps. By 1975, a broad spectrum of non-Tibetan manufacturers from Nepalese communities was established in the carpet sector. Though, the Tibetan Handicraft centre remained the major centre of production (Trade Promotion Centre, 1975 as cited in Graner, 1999).

### 3.2 Export Boom and Downturn

Nepal's carpet sector experienced its first export boom in 1976. The volume of exports tripled within one year, increasing from 19.7 thousand square metres in 1975 to 47.5 thousand square metres in 1976. The value of exports reached \$2.5 million (Garner, 1999: 203). The export of carpets accounted for about 7.6 per cent of Nepalese exports, and for the first time Nepal was listed as a carpet exporting country in the Yearbook of International Trade Statistics (YITS). This boom was made possible by the then government's policy of introducing a bonus scheme as per the amount of exports.<sup>3</sup> Year after year, from the early eighties to the mid nineties, the carpet sector continued increasing production and export volumes.<sup>4</sup> During this time, supply was lower than demand and the market was on the suppliers' side.

As more and more entrepreneurs began investing in the sector, supply began to exceed demand and the market shifted to a buyers' market (Panta, 2000:28). This fostered both healthy and unhealthy intra-industry competition and reduced the quality of carpets (Key Informants). Yet, producers<sup>5</sup> have not fully explored the possibilities of diversifying their export markets. All producers and exporters compete to export their products to the same European market in general and Germany in particular.

After the mid-nineties, the European market for Tibeto-Nepalese hand-knotted carpets was saturated. Nepali businessmen did not study the changing tastes of their customers and continued to supply the same quality carpets in the same styles. International competition and a price war with the Indian carpet sector are crucial factors in the decreasing demand for Nepalese Carpets.<sup>6</sup> These factors have further contributed the deteriorating quality of Nepalese carpets (Shakya, 1999: 16). In attempts to compete with Indian price levels, Nepali businessmen have repeatedly made one mistake

after another. The compromises in quality have contributed to a fall in the image of Tibeto-Nepalese carpets on the international market (Shakya, 1999: 16; and Key Informants). Nepalese carpet producers can survive by maintaining the unique identity and high quality of their products rather than by attempting to compete in quantities.

Producers trying to maximize their profits may actually have contaminated the hand-knotted carpet tradition. The use of machine spun yarn instead of hand spun yarn, recycled yarn from waste wool (Jhindu), acrylic yarn and azo dyes have become common activities. In the post boom years, the industry faced problems of over-production and over-capacity, price wars, low wages and a deterioration in quality (Rai, 2000: 25).

Despite these challenges, the Nepalese carpet sector continued to grow in terms of export volumes. By 1991, this sector constituted over 54 per cent of the nation's exports (Shrestha, 1991). The year 1993-94 recorded the highest ever volume of exports: 332.5 thousand square metres of carpets which earned \$190 million (Table 3.1; Figures 3.1 and 3.2). At this point the sector was believed to be employing more than 300,000 labourers, most of whom came from rural and remote areas of the country. The sector was growing rapidly and had the potential to increase the country's foreign currency income. It would bring about employment elasticity in the non-agricultural sector, and to foster non-agricultural growth. But from 1995 the stagnating carpet economy forewarned a more gloomy future than expected. In addition

<sup>3</sup> This bonus system granted the businessmen the benefits of import allowance of 60 per cent of their export value, which could be used either for direct imports or could be sold to importers.

<sup>4</sup> In the year 1993-94, volume of export reached the highest ever to 3,325,123 square metre and earned approximately \$190.00 million.

<sup>5</sup> Transfer of the tradition of carpet weaving from Tibetan refugee to Nepalese Sherpas, Newars and other communities during the period of three decades.

<sup>6</sup> India started to supply the same quality and styled carpet of Nepal in a very low price to the German market.

to external market factors, many internal problems such as unhealthy competition, the use of undesirable and low quality materials, quality compromises and also the use of child labour are often held responsible for the stagnation of the carpet sector.

These trends in the carpet sector's export volume and its changing share of overseas exports are well apparent in the years leading up to 2000/2001 (See: Table 3.1; Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2). Growth escalated from around the mid- eighties until the year 1994, when it established a record high, began to decline. The sector was still capable of making a significant contribution to the national output, however, producing 2.3 per cent share of GDP in the year 1999-2000 (Kshetry, 2000: 22).

In the fiscal year 2001/02, the situation became worse. The quantity of carpet exports (in square metres) declined by 24.5 per cent; even more than the previous year (2000/01). The amount of foreign currency (in US\$) earned by the Nepalese carpet sector for the year 2001/02 showed a drop of 30 percentage points, from US\$ 117.86 million to US\$ 81.60. Among the reasons for this heavy decline included a worldwide economic recession and the decline in purchasing power of consumers in developed countries; the inability of Nepalese products to compete with Indian and Chinese carpets in

FIGURE 3.1:  
Volume of Carpet Exported (in '000 square Metre), Nepal, 1972-2001

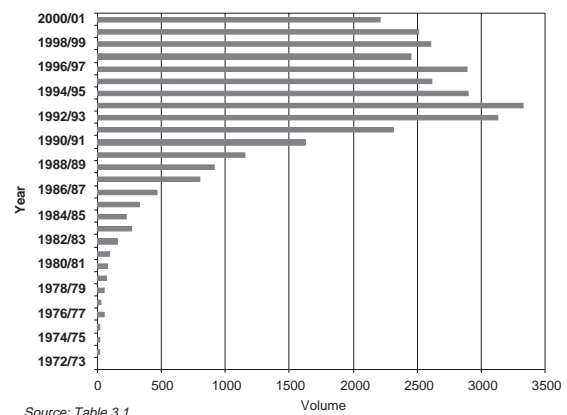
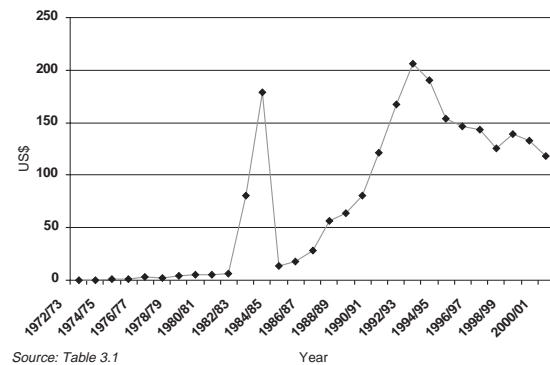


FIGURE 3.2:  
Trend in Earnings through the Export of Carpet (in million US\$), Nepal, 1972-2001



both price and quality; and political instability in Nepal which detracted new investments and threatened the operation of existing factories (Kantipur, August 28, 2002).

TABLE 3.1:  
Volume of Carpet Exports from Nepal in terms of Quantity of Carpet in 1000 M<sup>2</sup> and Value in US\$, Nepal, 1972-73-200-001

Fiscal Year	Export Volume ('000 M <sup>2</sup> )	Export value in million US \$*	Share in Overseas Export	Fiscal Year	Export Volume ('000 M <sup>2</sup> )	Export value in million US \$*	Share in Overseas Export
1972/73	10.46	0.25	1.84	1987/88	802.10	56.36	48.69
1973/74	13.07	0.37	2.18	1988/89	913.48	63.31	52.26
1974/75	18.58	0.78	4.71	1989/90	1152.26	80.52	52.28
1975/76	19.78	0.92	3.48	1990/91	1628.32	121.78	65.28
1976/77	47.47	2.76	7.68	1991/92	2317.15	167.39	58.52
1977/78	26.53	2.37	3.98	1992/93	3126.29	206.27	61.48
1978/79	53.28	4.17	5.39	1993/94	3325.12	190.36	57.70
1979/80	66.78	5.03	7.09	1994/95	2896.09	154.08	53.92
1980/81	79.62	5.65	10.85	1995/96	2617.65	146.04	51.73
1981/82	98.74	6.58	18.15	1996/97	2891.23	142.88	53.76
1982/83	151.00	80.12	47.55	1997/98	2447.05	125.24	47.35
1983/84	266.86	178.50	54.85	1998/99	2604.48	139.02	-
1984/85	227.20	13.87	22.20	1999/00	2509.45	132.87	37.34
1985/86	329.52	18.27	21.38	2000/01	2209.83	117.86	30.00
1986/87	465.30	28.65	37.81	2001/02	1693.00	81.60	-

\* conversion rate between US\$ and NRS is adjusted rates for the end of each respective years.

Sources: Carpet Bulletin, 2000, Year 9, Issue 4, October; 2001, Year 10, Issue 1, June-Jul, Graner, E., 1999 Appendix; TPC; 2000-2001, and Kantipur, August 28, 2002.

The reasons labeled responsible for bringing about the decline of Nepalese carpet industries can be listed as follows:

- over production and a shift from a “suppliers market” to a “buyers market”,
- an international “price war” in general and a price war with Indian carpet industries in particular,
- quality compromises and loss of the ‘identity’ and uniqueness of Tibeto Nepalese hand-knotted carpets,
- an inability to explore export markets in other developed countries and an over-reliance on the almost saturated European and German markets,
- a lack of design, style and quality changes or diversification in accordance with the change in consumer tastes and a lack of market research,
- the issue of “child labourers working behind the loom” and the pathetic situation of carpet labourers in relation to wage levels, living and working conditions, their misuse and abuse, and,
- a distinct lack of political commitment and indifferent government policy in the protection of this sector.

### 3.2.1 Issues of Over Production and Price War

Businessmen confess that they were too confident in their ability to sell carpets of any quality and any style with ease in overseas markets (Shakya, 1999: 16). Meanwhile, producers from other competing countries approached buyers with products of the same quality and same styles at much lower prices (Maskey, 1999; Kshetry, 2000; Key Informants). For instance, the prices of Nepalese carpets on the German market are likely to be 10 per cent higher than Indian carpets of the same style and quality. Industry sources reveal that in 2000, about 50 per cent of carpet exports were from ‘stock’, 30 per cent from ‘order stock’ and the remaining 20 per cent were ‘ordered’ carpets (Panta, 2000).

Unplanned stock taking, unplanned production, panic selling and competition characterize Nepalese carpet industries with Indian producers at a very thin margin. The Nepalese carpet sector has experienced a gradual decrease in the dollar price of its products over the past two decades (Rai, 2000).

It is clear that all production costs, market and export prices of Nepalese carpets have consistently and substantially decreased over the 1990s (See Table 3.2). Supplier producers are working at very thin and constantly worsening profit margins. During the mid and late seventies, the export price of Nepalese carpets was as high as \$74 per square metre (Rai, 2000). Only the devaluation of the Nepalese currency has helped the country’s carpet industries to survive. Yet, the cutting down of dollar prices is harmful to carpet labourers in general and child labourers in particular since there remains little hope of real increases in wage rates or salaries.

### 3.2.2 Loss of Quality and Inherent Identity

In the context of increased international competition, Nepalese carpet producers severely overlooked the quality of their products. The decline in quality was perpetuated by the use of recycled jhundu (Graner, 1999; Rai, 2000), as well as the use of acrylic and machine yarn (Kshetry, 2000: 22). A number of top carpet exporters are suspected by other industrialists to use machine yarn and recycled yarn (Key Informants from Field Survey, 2002). Despite, the labour rule

TABLE 3.2:  
Range in Production Cost, Market Rates, Profit at Market and Export Rates in Production of 60 Knot Carpet (in US\$), 1990-2002

Year	Range in Production Cost (in US\$)	Range in Market Rates (in US\$)	Range in Profit at Market (US\$)	Range in Export Rates (in US\$)
1990-91	36-48	40-52	4	50-70
1991-92	33-41	36-47	3-4	50-70
1993-94	27-36	28-38	1-2	40-50
1996-97	24-33	25-35	1-2	30-45
1998-99	24-34	25-37	1-3	30-50
2002*	23-34	24-36	1-2	28-45

Source: Graner, 1999, Table 1 and Key Informants in Field Survey, 2002.

TABLE 3.3:  
Export Diversification of Nepalese Carpets, Position of top Ten Countries Importing Nepalese Carpet, 1998-2001

Countries	1998-99		1999-2000		2000/2001		Share in Value
	Volume of Export ('000 m2)	Share of Export	Volume of Export ('000 m2)	Share of Export	Volume of Export ('000 m2)	Share of Export	
Germany	1866.3	77.37	1782.24	71.02	1461.49	66.14	62.49
United States	179.35	7.44	284.52	11.34	320.84	14.52	17.52
Belgium	90.53	3.75	113.13	4.51	81.70	3.70	3.69
Switzerland	93.01	3.86	74.32	2.96	113.05	5.12	4.94
Austria	51.67	2.14	57.14	2.28	35.00	1.58	1.47
United Kingdom	31.87	1.32	52.48	2.09	47.91	2.17	3.05
Netherlands	33.44	1.39	29.91	1.19	32.32	1.46	1.48
Spain	24.44	0.97	8.14	0.37	0.36		
Japan	13.17	0.52	11.16	0.51	0.48		
Turkey	12.19	0.49	4.30	0.19	0.19		
Others	66.09	2.74	65.91	2.63	93.91	4.25	4.32
Total	2412.25	100	2509.45	100	2209.83	100.00	100.00

\* Conversion rate between US\$ and NRs is adjusted that of the end of the year 2000.  
Sources: Carpet Bulletin, 2000, Year 9, Issue 4, October; 1999, Year 8, Vol. 4; TPC, 2000/2001.

clearly prohibiting the use of machines in the production of carpet yarn they are in wide use.

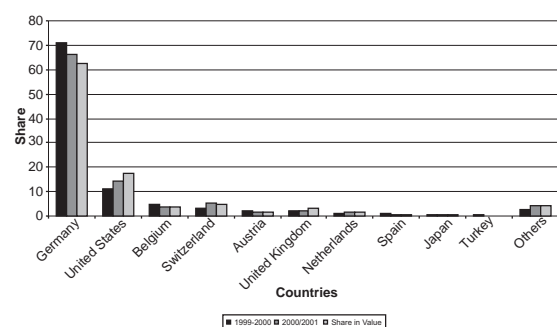
### 3.2.3 Single Country Export Boom with Monotonous Design-Style

Nepal survived for over 25 years in the European market, in general and German market in particular, with one single product (Shakya, 2000: 11). Producers concentrated on the same type of production and a single market. Timely modifications to design were largely lacking. Although exports of carpets to the United States of America (USA) are picking up constraints remain. The penetration of Japanese and the markets of other affluent European countries has not been encouraging (Kshetry, 2000: 22). At the same time, faulty tricks<sup>7</sup> are discrediting Nepalese carpets in the international market. Nepalese carpets are even failing to penetrate the markets of countries where a high demand for woolen carpets remains. Even in the context of market saturation, the German market

bought over 71 per cent of all Nepalese carpet exports for the year 1999-2000 (Table 3.3 and Figure 3.3). By the following year, however, this market share had declined by 5 per cent, to 66 per cent.

In the year of recession (1998) not only Nepal but other carpet-exporting countries to Germany (except Pakistan and Russia) have suffered a decline in the quantity of exports (Table 3.4). So, it can be said that declining carpet exports to Germany is not only limited to Nepal but is a global phenomenon. The economic recession in the global market in general and the European market in particular directly affected the income and purchasing capacity of German consumers.

FIGURE 3.3:  
Share of Export of Carpets by Country of Export and Share in Value



Source: Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.4:  
Nepal's Share in total Carpet Imported to Germany, 1998

Country of Export	Volume of Export ('000 M2)	Percentage	Range in Profit at Market (US\$)
India	3905.5	39.9	- 09.9
Iran	2407.5	24.6	- 30.8
Nepal	1793.4	18.3	- 18.5
Morocco	446.0	4.6	- 17.1
Pakistan	336.8	3.4	08.9
China	323.4	3.3	- 42.8
Turkey	272.3	2.8	- 14.4
Afghanistan	135.0	1.4	- 22.4
Russia	77.6	0.8	11.0
European Community	1.8	0.0	-
Other Countries	92.6	0.9	-
Total	9792.0	100.0	

Source: Shakya, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Export of Indian carpets with logo of Indo-Nepal Carpet, or Nepal made Carpet.

### 3.2.4 Government's Role and Political Unrest

Discussions with carpet businessmen and workers during the field survey revealed that the government's role in promoting the carpet business, exploring export markets, or implementing labour rules has not been encouraging. The provision of bonuses which previously boosted the export industry has been suspended, and a 0.7 per cent export tax introduced. This has substantially increased the cost of exports. Materials like wool are imported from New Zealand and Tibet, dyes from Europe and India, and cotton thread from other countries. Businessmen are of the opinion that they should be exempted from export taxes since they must pay taxes on the imported raw materials (Kantipur, August 24, 2002). The government has declared a floor price of US\$32 per square metre of carpet; this rises to \$75 for carpets of 80 knots and more. In the international market floor prices are substantially less. The exporter must declare US\$32 or \$75 even if the carpet is eventually sold at less than the specified rate of \$32 or \$75. The difference has to be born by the exporters (Shrestha, 2000). There is no synergy in between the income tax on exports and the floor price system.

The years 2001 and 2002 have been very difficult times. In 2001 a number of carpet factories closed down. According to Key Informants, the percentage of factories closing down may range from 20 to 40 per cent. However, there is no authentic source to prove it. The penetration of Maoist insurgents among factory labourers, demanding unexpectedly high benefits and wages, led to some well performing factories being bombed.<sup>8</sup> The royal massacre aggravated the situation, various parties canceled their preplanned trips to Nepal (Key Informants) and no importer visited the country to place orders. No Nepalese exporter was in a position to open a new showroom in the country to which they were exporting. The state of emergency from the end of 2001 further discouraged buyers from ordering (Key Informants). During the time of

the survey the existing factories were running at half the capacity because of a lack of orders.

### 3.2.5 Issues of Child labour and Working Conditions of Labourers

Working conditions for carpet labourers and the use and exploitation of child labourers have contributed to the decline in demand for Nepalese carpets, especially in Germany. Until the mid nineties Germany was buying over 80 per cent of Nepalese carpets (Graner, 1999: 205). However, after hearing about the use of child labourers in the Nepalese carpet sector, consumers in the German market refrained from buying Nepalese carpets. While businessmen involved in carpet production and the export sector refuted the use of child labour (Shakya, 1999:16), German journalists and a number of NGOs working for child rights within the country continued to explore the evidence of child labour in carpet fabrication. The Panorama Television Programme, shown in Germany, demonstrated that child labourers are knotting carpets in Nepal. And within Nepal, country field based reports with titles like "Misery behind the Looms" were published. Truths about the use of child labour in the carpet sector revolved around the fact that they are:

- powerless and easily exploitable (when brought by contractor),
- working in bondage situation (not allowed to go out without permission of master or employer),
- longer hours of work without in between rests (12-16 hours),
- poor living environment, lack of sanitation and unhygienic accommodation within the factory premises, and
- prone to high risk of trafficking (particularly girls).

In the period of Nepal's carpet export boom, big exporters were in a hurry to supply the

<sup>8</sup> Bombing at show room of Master Weavers, Ekantakuna and at Show room and factory of Pari Carpet, Gaththagar, Bhaktapur are due to expressed inability by the factory management to fulfill high-expected benefits.

quantities demanded. To do so, they began to hire more and more labourers and to contract out fabrication work either to leaders among the workers or other contractors. It was not possible to produce such volumes under the constant or direct supervision of the exporter. The principle applied to the industrial revolution in Europe, “all are equal before the machine” (Coontz, 1957: 172) truly applied to Nepalese adults, women and children seated before the carpet loom. During the early nineties, the sector was believed to employ about 250,000 to 300,000 labourers (Adams, 1992; Rana, 2000). The early arguments of child workers being cost effective or their “nimble fingers” being well skilled for carpet knotting has been proven wrong (Key Informants). To satisfy the increased demand, employers, contractors, feeder suppliers and exporters hired all available labourers irrespective of their age and sex (Key Informants). Exporters and producers accused the contractors of being primarily responsible for hiring child labourers and exploiting them. Yet, child labourers below 18 years of age are encountered to a lesser or greater extent at exporter/producers’ factories as well as at the factories of feeders or suppliers.

### 3.3 Inventory of Carpet Factories and their Functioning

There is no precise inventory of carpet and carpet related establishments showing their growth and decline over the years. Statistics on the number of carpet factories in existence differ

TABLE 3.5:  
Number of Carpet and Carpet Related Establishments in Nepal

Reference Year	Sources	Carpet	Related Establishments	In Kathmandu Valley
1991/92	CBS,	1995	1,173	-
1992	CWIN,	1993	2,000	1,600
1992/93**	Pradhan,	1993	6,437	-
1996/97	CBS,	2001	532	-
1999	CCIA	988	976	-
2000	CCIA (Members Directory)	1203	-	-

from one source to another depending on the year of the study and their ability to collect accurate data (See Table 3.5).

It is clear from this table that, despite statistical anomalies, the number of carpet and carpet related industries could be said to have decreased during the nineties.

Not all establishments are registered with the Department of Small and Cottage Industries of the Government and most have not taken membership of associations like the Central Carpet Industries Association (CCIA), Care and Fare, or the Nepal RUGMARK Foundation (See Table 3.6). However, a substantial proportion of factories can be found hanging the child friendly logos of RUGMARK, Care and Fare, or NASPEC outside their factories. Information derived from field observations and Key Informants indicates that most small-scale unregistered establishments, especially those engaged in weaving and spinning, are characterized by the presence of child labourers working in an unhealthy environment.

TABLE 3.6:  
Distribution of Registered and Unregistered Factories by Type of Works, 1999

Type of Factory	Unregistered	Registered*	Either Reg. or Member**	Total	Total (N)
Exporter	49.6	50.4	93.9	11.8	115
Producer	54.9	45.1	55.5	81.3	793
Spinning	59.7	40.3	52.9	12.2	119
Carding	40.7	59.3	74.1	2.8	27
Dying	40.9	59.1	79.5	4.5	44
Washing	56.2	43.8	68.5	7.5	73
Wool Importer	71.4	28.6	71.4	0.7	7
Total	55.0	45.0	54.8	100.0	976

Source: CCIA, 1999, Field Report.

\* registered to Department of HMG Small and Cottage Industries.

\*\* either registered to the Department of Small and Cottage Industries, HMG or taken membership from CCIA, RUGMARK, Care and Fare and CCI (Chamber of Commerce and Industries).

Note: Both total percentage and numbers may add up more than 100 and more than the actual total, because of 204 establishments doing multiple activities.



According to estimates presented in Table 3.7, the number of registered and unregistered units is 409 and 441 respectively. A look at the proportion of factories closing down indicates that the hard days have badly hit small scale, unregistered, factories. From the 49 factories visited at the time of the survey only 47.6 per cent looms were operating, reportedly due to a lack of orders.

Following the present survey, more than 80 per cent of factories running within the valley were found to be producers (weavers), with about 12 per cent spinners and exporters (Table 3.6). Around 204 factories can be considered to perform multiple activities under the same roof.

By taking into account the figures collected through the RA, it has been estimated that the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur) has a total of 847 carpet and carpet related factories as of May-June 2002.

### 3.4 Process of Production

The entire process of Tibeto-Nepalese carpet production, from the carding of raw wool to the washing and packing of shipments requires the manual skills of labourers. There are a number of different stages in the production of a carpet. In the past each of them used to employ the fine hands of labourers.

TABLE 3.7:  
Distribution of Total Factories Visited by Registration and Current Operation Status, 2002 and their Estimates Compared to 1999

Particulars	Total	Registered	Unregistered
Survey 2002**			
1 Number of Factory Visited	121	51	70
2 Percentage of Factory	100	42.1	57.9
3 Factory Closed	48	18	30
4 Proportion Closed	39.7	35.3	42.9
5 New Factories	32	15	17
6 Proportion of New Factories	26.4	28.5	24.9
7 Proportion Actual Decline (4-6)	13.2	6.8	17.9
Estimates of Registered and Unregistered Factories			
8 In 1999*	976	439	537
9 Estimates of 2002**	847	409	441
10 Percentage Change	-13.2	-6.8	-17.9

The production of a carpet passes through the following steps:

- 1) *Wool Import*: either from New Zealand or from Tibet.
- 2) *Sorting, Washing, Mixing and Carding of Wool*:
  - Washing of raw wool requires only of Tibetan wool;
  - Mixing: most common practice is to mix New Zealand and Tibetan wool at a proportion of 90:10 (CCIA, 1999). In almost carding plants a mixing machine is fixed at a corner to do the mixing works;
  - Carding: to make soft and dust free wool before sending for spinning. There were 35 carding units in various industries as of the year 1999 (CCIA)
- 3) *Spinning*: After weaving it is the second labour intensive work in carpet production sector. Most uniqueness of hand-knotted Tibeto-Nepalese carpet retains on the skills involved in hand spinning. Now a days, introduction of spinning machines endangered the unique identity of Nepalese carpet. Spinning works employ a large number of child labourers. As of the year 1999, there were 115 spinning industries in the country. In these days suppliers of spun yarn sends wool either at the place of origin of the labourers or at different Bhutanese refugee camps of Jhapa and Morang in order to lower the labour cost.
- 4) *Dying*: Colouring of spun yarn before sending for weaving. As of 1999, there were a total of 36 dying plants. Out of them 35 units were run in traditional ways using husk as fuel. One was electric and totally computerized.
- 5) *Weaving*: It is the most labour intensive work in carpet production process. Weaving work takes place either at exporter's own factory or at the factory run by supplier/producers as per the order of exporter. As this work employs higher number of labourers, incidence of employing child labourers of less than 18 years of age is quite high especially in the unregistered one (Table 3.8).

TABLE 3.8:  
A Matrix of Carpet Production Process, Steps and Activities

Process	Areas	Best Practices	Desired and Undesired Activities	Economic Actors
Import	New Zealand and Tibet	New Zealand and Tibet	Increase in wool price unnecessary hoarding in time of high demand and monopoly of importers	Small and Cottage Industries Department, HMG Carpet and Wool Development Board, and Private Importers.
Sorting, Washing, Mixing and Carding	Nepalese Market	By hand of manual labour (washing only of Tibetan Wool)	Mixing of carpet rags and waste ( <i>Jhindu</i> ) and mixing of Tibetan and New Zealand Wool	Exporters, Importers and Labourers
Spinning	Within Valley and Outside Valley**	Hand Spinning, increasing trend in machine spinning	Introduction of spinning machine, one machine can displace more than 60 labourers, Use of Child Labour in hand spinning.	Exporter, Suppliers, Contractor, and Labourers including children.
Dyeing	Kathmandu Valley	Hand Dyeing in a small scale without fine colours	Use of low quality colours	Labourers (no child labourers)
Balling and Weaving (Knotting)	Manufacturing units in the Valley	Hand knotting and balling is the main work of carpet production	Use of child labour, Use of recycled yarn, and Use of machine yarn	Exporter producers, Suppliers, Contractor, and Labourers including children
Cutting	Either at place of weaving or at the workshop of exporter	Hand cutting with the use of different size of scissors or cutters.	Use of electric plainer	Exporter producer, Supplier producer, Labourers mostly adults since it require specific skill to give fine touch in design.
Washing, Stretching and Packing	Workshop of exporter of suppliers	Manual Labour and Chemical detergents	No observation	Exporter producer, Supplier producer, Labourers mostly adults since it requires specific skill to give fine touch in size, Cleanliness, and packing.

Source: Field Survey, 2002.

\*\* the household survey at the origin revealed that spinning works takes place to a larger amount at the place of origin of the labourers. In addition, there is a wide prevalence of Bhutanese refugees spinning carpet yarn at a very low rate in Jhapa and Morang.

### 3.4.1 Interrelationship between Different Economic Actors

Exporters are the principal economic actors in the carpet sector. They collect orders from the importing parties. In addition, they may also have showrooms in the country of export. In most cases, they produce designs and collect a substantial number of orders. Sixty one per cent of the total volume of carpet manufactured in 1998/99 was manufactured by only 62 exporters (CCIA, 1999).

Among exporters, there are two cultures of production. The first is the 'Tibetan culture', which tries to preserve the identity and quality of Tibeto-Nepalese carpet, the second is the relatively new 'Indian culture'. Exporters from the Tibetan tradition do not accept orders at a rate below the production cost (Key Informants). They want to compete in an international market with quality hand-knotted carpets at a good market price. They vehemently oppose the use of recycled yarn from waste wool

(Jhindu) and machine yarn. They claim to pay better rates for labourers and provide better accommodation facilities and safety nets for their workers. The 'Indian culture' of production thinks about quantity rather than quality. Key Informants are of the view that this phenomenon invited the over production of carpets. This over supply contributed to a drop in the prices of carpets of all types. Yet, exporters in this tradition are of the view that a simultaneous use of hand-spun yarn and machine yarn will bring about a diversification in production and quality. Buyers would then have a choice according to their budget. From field observations and the views of Key Informants, it can be revealed that at each level of factories<sup>9</sup> producing for these exporters, wage rates are likely to be low. These exporters are believed to accept orders at a very low rate even below the level of production and labour costs.

<sup>9</sup> Either at the exporters own manufacturing units or at the factory of manufacturers or small manufacturers.

Yet, as exporters of either ‘culture of production’ have to bear all their associated risks, they are likely to keep a substantial level of margin between production costs and the export price, and between the buying price from local suppliers and the eventual export price.

When dealing with a good order, a manufacturer (supplier/producer) is likely to either hire a contractor or to give orders to other small scale unorganized manufacturers. This type of contracting out (giving orders to supplier/producer) and sub-contracting the different stages of production are common in the carpet sector. Each level of contracting is likely to hike the margin of profit and it is likely to increase the chances of work being shifting from registered to unregistered factories. Each manufacturer is likely to appropriate profit through margins in the production costs in general and labour costs in particular. It is only the labour cost that can be flexible. Other production costs like, yarn and cotton thread have a fixed market price.

Terms and conditions of work are likely to pass through those which are relatively good to those which are relatively bad. Thus, at the bottom of

the layer, desperate labourers in general and child labourers in particular are the ones severely exploited. Process of profit appropriation and terms and conditions of work are likely to be the same for both weaving and spinning. The typology presented in Table 3.9 attempts to depict these interrelated networks between different economic actors, especially that of exporters, manufacturers, and small manufacturers in the carpet manufacturing business.

The contractor system is gradually decreasing and is about to disappear. Factory management provides work to a group of like-minded labourers mostly from the same family or from the same community on a piece rate basis (Table 3.10). In most cases, factory managers are of the view that the employment of child labourers invites a number of threats and weaknesses to the sector rather than providing comparative advantages and strengths.

TABLE 3.10:  
Differential Wage Rates by Types of Factory (per square metre of knotting 60 knot Carpet)

Type of Factory	Average Wage in Rs. /square metre	Minimum Wage	Maximum Wage
Exporter Manufacturer (Registered)	525	500	550
Registered Manufacturer	400	350	450
Unregistered Manufacturer	380	350	420
Total	413	350	550

TABLE 3.9:  
Typology of Networking between Different Economic Actors in Carpet Production Process

Actors or Stakeholders	Collect/get order from	Terms and Conditions of Work	Way of Profit Appropriation	Labourers Position
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exporter Manufacturer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseas Parties from exporting countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of Order and Export Rate in US \$,</li> <li>• Design, Style and Quality, and</li> <li>• Time of Delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margins between production and export rate,</li> <li>• Margins between buying rate from manufacturers and export rate,</li> <li>• Margins from grading *,</li> <li>• Margins in labour cost given to the contractors and or small scale producers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets relatively better wage level in terms of piece rate,</li> <li>• Relatively better accommodation facilities,</li> <li>• Relatively better working environment.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturer only</li> <li>• Includes industries of weaving and spinning both.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets order from exporter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of order in local market rate (NRS),</li> <li>• Design, Style and</li> <li>• Quality fixed by exporter, and</li> <li>• Time of Delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margins between production cost and agreed selling rates,</li> <li>• Margins from labour costs, and</li> <li>• Margins from sub-contracting the works to small-scale manufacturers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average wage level in piece rate in most of the cases,</li> <li>• Some working under contractor get paid as monthly basis,</li> <li>• Poor accommodation,</li> <li>• Poor working environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Scale Manufacturer,</li> <li>• Includes industries of weaving and spinning both.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets order either from exporter or from manu-facturers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of order in local market rate (NRS),</li> <li>• Design, Style and Quality fixed by exporter, and</li> <li>• Time of Delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margins between production cost and agreed selling rates, and</li> <li>• Margins from labour costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively poor wage level in piece rate,</li> <li>• Some working under contractor get paid as monthly basis,</li> <li>• Poor accommodation,</li> <li>• Poor working environment.</li> </ul>

\* Export takes place in lots at a same rate and not in piece basis. While buying from manufacturers, exporters, deal in piece basis. Manufacturers have a wide dissatisfaction on the way of grading at a lower level in order to reduce the buying rate.

### 3.5 Child Labour in the Carpet Sector

Despite more than half a decade of struggle to discourage the use of child labour in the carpet sector, children can be found working in most of the carpet factories in the Kathmandu Valley. During the early and mid nineties it had been claimed that “wave of poor, helpless villagers, many of them mere children, and their labour, sweat, health and sometimes lives have created a new class of local and foreign millionaires” (Adams, 1992). Thus, the employment of child labourers became one of the critical issues for Nepalese carpets on the international market. In 1999, CCIA very clearly stated that during their field survey no child labourer was found working in any factory, among some 47,946 labourers. The changing definitions and age limits of ‘children’ may have worked to their advantage. CCIA’s field persons may have looked for children under 14 years of age; now however, the generally accepted defining age limit for a ‘child’ has been increased to 18 years and under. CCIA say that they have made their staff and general members aware of these changes by publishing the Child Labour Act 2000 in English and Nepalese Language. And in a statement responding to this Rapid Assessment they write, “CCIA is aware on the minimum age of child labour as 18 years.” Yet, one can continue to observe a sizeable number of children working in carpet related industries especially the knotting (weaving) and spinning works.

Many reasons are given for the involvement of children in carpet weaving. One argues that children of weavers join in with their parents or elders, with a sort of fun and game attitude. Another argument is that children are sent by their parents to work (Pradhan, 1993: 42). A further commonly used reason is associated with the activities of contractors (Thekedars) who are accused of bringing children from villages to work in a bonded form (Adams, 1993).

The many steps of children’s involvement in the carpet production process and the associated risks are addressed in Table 3.11.

#### 3.5.1 Historical Fluctuation in Child Labour in Carpet Works

Child labour in the carpet sector is an issue that emerged during the mid- nineties when the volume of exports was at its peak. Since then, paradoxical estimates of child labourers in the carpet sector have emerged. Among them are the highly exaggerated figures offered by anecdotal studies and column writers for newspapers and magazines, who have suggested that 40 to 50 per cent of the total 250,000 to 300,000 labourers working in carpet industries are children (Adams, 1993; CWIN, 1993). More realistic claims have recognized that child labour was being used in the carpet industry but definitely not at the level of 50 per cent (Pradhan, 1993: 42). There are no estimates for the number of child labourers in the sector

TABLE 3.11:  
Children’s Involvement in Carpet Production Process and Associated Risks

Type of Manufacturer	Extent of Prevalence	Work to Perform	As sociated Risks	Accompany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Registered</li> <li>Exporter</li> <li>Manufacturer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lowest in proportion to total labour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To a large extent in weaving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education destroyed,</li> <li>Health empires, inhales carpet dust and fiber, exposed to lung diseases and cancer (See Chapter VI).</li> <li>Uprooted future, lack of human resource development and future security,</li> <li>Low earning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friends, villagers, family keens, contractors and middlemen</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manufacturers (Registered)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To a greater extent than that of the exporter and manufacturer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To a large extent in weaving</li> </ul>	The same	The same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manufacturer (unregistered)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Larger extent than that of registered manufacturer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To a large extent weaving</li> </ul>	The same	The same
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spinning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highest proportion to the total labour force than other activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spinning</li> </ul>	The same	The same

before the period of export boom (1990s) and after the start of recession (after mid 1990s). The proportion of child labourers to the total labour force employed in the carpet sector from 1990 onward, as reported by a variety of organizations is given in Table 3.12.

The clear decline in even the most conservative estimates of child labourers in the sector over this period may, in a large part, be explained by market fluctuations. During the boom period labour demand was high, so the labour market operated irrespective of the age and sex of workers. With the increased demand for unskilled labour, the employment of women and children lowered the cost of man's labour power - throwing every member of the family onto the labour market (Coontz, 1957: 172). The hypothesis can be found to operate in Nepalese carpet sector, since, the reason behind easy access to the industry for unskilled labourers and especially children is that it requires little skill for much of the process. Practice more than anything else improves skills and efficiency.

Now the carpet business is in crisis. When adult labourers laid-off from closed factories can not even find new work, employing child labourers makes no sense. The contractor system has almost disappeared and the sensitization of child labour and child rights issues by NGOs and the media have further discouraged the hiring of child labourers. In addition, the activity of the Nepal RUGMARK Foundation has increased a trend towards the licensing of carpet factories and the certification of their carpets (Rai, 1999; RUGMARK, 2001). All these factors can be said to have had a positive impact for the decline of child labour in the carpet sector.

### 3.5.2 Extent of Child Labour in Carpet Industries in Kathmandu Valley

From the total number of carpet factories surveyed, a total of 8,182 labourers (4,074 males and 4,156 females) of all ages were found working. Out of the 101 factories, 94 were found to be employing a total of 978 children (488

TABLE 3.12:  
Child Labour in Proportion to the Total Labour in Carpet Factories

Year/Period	Total Labour Force	Proportion
Early 1990s (1992/93 <sup>a</sup> )	NA	40-50
1993 (CWIN) <sup>10</sup> *	300,000	50
1993 (Government)	NA	9
1998 (BISCONS)	No Estimates	11
1999 (CCIA)	47,946	0
2002 <sup>b</sup>	64,304	12

a. ad hoc basis, Adams, 1993; Pradhan, 1993; Rai, 1999.

b. Field Survey, 2002.

\* of the total 300,000 labourers.

males and 490 females) comprising about 12 per cent of the total labour force. Female workers slightly outnumber males (Table 3.13). In some instances, men stay with their family in the factory which provides accommodation and go outside for other jobs during the day time. Similarly, when there are low orders and only a few looms at work, men may go out to search for other jobs while the women stay on.

Registered factories are of a bigger size than the unregistered ones. In the 47 registered factories visited 5,227 (64%) labourers were found to be employed, out of the total 8,182 labourers. Whereas, in the 54 unregistered factories 2,955 labourers were found to be employed. In both registered and unregistered factories the number of female labourers was found to be more than male labourers.

The employment of child labourers in both registered and unregistered carpet factories is almost universal in the Kathmandu valley. Of the total 101 factories visited, 94 factories (93.1%) factories were found with child labourers under 18 years of age engaged in either knotting or spinning work. It is interesting to note that the proportion of registered factories employing child labourers was actually higher (93.6%; 44 out of 47) than unregistered factories (92.6%; 50 out of 54). The gender distribution of child labour to the total labour force between registered and unregistered factories is about the same.

<sup>10</sup> It seems to be an ad hoc statement since the methodological explanation on how the figure has been derived was not given.

TABLE 3.13:  
Observed and Estimated Number of Total Labour and Child Labour in Carpet Factories in Kathmandu Valley, 2002<sup>11</sup>

Total and Sampled Labour force	Total Labourers	Registered Factories	Unregistered Factories
Total Labour force (Sampled)	8,182	5,227	2,955
Male Labour force	4,074	2,599	1,475
Female Labour force	4,156	2,628	1,528
Child Labourers			
Total Child Labourers	978	519	459
Male Child Labourers	488	259	229
Female Child Labourers	490	260	230
Proportion of Child Labourers to the Total Labour Force			
Total Child Labourers	12.0	9.9	15.5
Male Child Labourers	12.0	10.0	15.5
Female Child Labourers	11.8	9.9	15.1
Number of Factories (Sampled)			
Total Labour force	101	47	54
Male Labourers	101	47	54
Female Labourers	99	45	54
Number of Factories with Child Labourer			
Total Child Labourers	94	44	50
Male Child Labourers	93	44	49
Female Child Labourers	93	43	50
Proportion of Factories with Child Labourer			
Total Child Labourers	93.1	93.6	92.6
Male Child Labourers	92.1	93.6	90.7
Female Child Labourers	93.9	95.6	92.6
Estimates of Total Labour and Child labourers			
Estimated Number of Factories**	794	378	416
Total Labour force	64,304	42,041	22,751
Child Labourers	7,689	4,174	3,534
Male Child Labourers	3,837	2,083	1,763
Female Child Labourers	3,852	2,091	1,771
Estimates of Child Labourers by Age			
< 14 years	538 (7.0)	38	500
14-16 years	4,767 (62.0)	2,588	2,179
17-18 years	2,384 (31.0)	1,294	1,090

\*\* Estimates of Producers (weaving) and Spinning factories since only these factories were found employing more labourers as well as child labourers.  
Note: Figures in Parenthesis refer to percentage.

To summarize:

- Taking into account the proportion of factories closed down between 1999 and 2002 and new factories opened up, this study estimates a total of 794 (378 registered and 416 unregistered) carpet factories currently operating in the Kathmandu Valley.
- The total number of labourers working in those factories is estimated at 64,304 persons (42,041 in registered factories and 22,751 in unregistered factories).
- The carpet production sector in the Kathmandu Valley is estimated to employ a total of 7,689 child labourers (4,174 registered and 3,534 unregistered) under 18 years of age.
- Of those children, 62 per cent (4,767) are in the 14-16 years age group.
- Seven per cent (538) children are found to be less than 14 years of age.
- 31 per cent (2,384) are found to be between 17 and 18 years of age.

- Children under 14 years of age are mostly found in unregistered factories (500 out of 538 children).

Furthermore, the survey found the proportion of children under 18 years of age working in carpet factories in Nepal more than 5 per cent higher than that anticipated level by the TBP (which estimated a figure of 7%).

It is important to note that CCIA entirely disagree with the statistics in Table 3.13. CCIA maintain that child labourers can only be found in non-registered factories. A statement released by CCIA in response to this Rapid Assessment says, "We believe that the figure of child labour now is nil in the registered factories."

<sup>11</sup> The data are not adjusted for the biases that come from over-reporting or the assessments of other children rather than the informant, or the biases of the enumerators themselves as they collect the data.

### 3.6 SWOT Analysis on the Use of Child Labour in the Carpet Sector

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats associated with the carpet sector and the employment of child labour have been depicted in the following matrix (Table 3.14).

It is apparent that the market structure still favours hiring child labourers because of the carpet sector's unorganized nature and the lack of any need for highly skilled or trained

labourers. Only a few days apprenticeship is enough before a person can engage in weaving works.

The strengths and opportunities associated with hiring child labour in carpet production still seem to outweigh weaknesses and threats. However, the widely sensitized child labour especially in its worst forms and the associated threat of a declining export market should act as a deterrent to producers/manufacturers.

TABLE 3.14: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Associated with Carpet Factories in Employing Child Labour

SWOT	Labour Cost	Market Structure	Export Market	Economic Actors
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low labour cost,</li> <li>• High margin in labour cost, and</li> <li>• Flexibility in labour rates among migrant labourers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No need of longer periods skill and training,</li> <li>• Unorganized nature of work,</li> <li>• No terms and conditions of employment and no employment letter, and</li> <li>• Easy to hire and fire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely delivery of given order and</li> <li>• Rooms for bargaining to lower down the export price.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labourers: desperate one get means of survival,</li> <li>• Contractor: easy to hire and keep under as debt bondage,</li> <li>• Producers: minimize production cost, and</li> <li>• Exporter: chances to lower buying rate in the local market.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues of labour exploitation,</li> <li>• Child Labour in bondage forms, and</li> <li>• Poor working conditions of labourers and excessive longer hours of work of children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failed to improve in working conditions,</li> <li>• No need in going for skill training in modernizing the work, and</li> <li>• No employment security.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internationalized issues of poor working conditions of labourers and excessive use and exploitation of child labourer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labourers: available means of survival and lack of collective bargaining, and</li> <li>• Contractor, producer and exporter: profit-maximizing motive.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize labour cost and maximize profit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still favours in hiring child labour.</li> </ul>	x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labourers: additional income from employment of children</li> <li>• Contractors, producers and exporters: easy to hire at any time</li> </ul>
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue of exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NGOs activities in sensitizing issue of child labour employment and exploitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose export market and</li> <li>• Difficult in diversifying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unionization, collective voices of labourers to producers and exporters.</li> </ul>

## CHAPTER 4

# *Labour Migration and Child Labour in the Nepalese Carpet Sector*

### 4.1 Background

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Agriculture has the central role in Nepal's development. Eighty six per cent of all households cultivated some land in the mid 1990s, 80 per cent had some livestock, and that agriculture constituted the main sector of employment for 83 per cent of all individuals in the labour force (World Bank, 1998).

Agriculture production in Nepal is predominantly based on traditional ways of cultivation. Rapid population growth resulted in over population on existing subsistence agriculture, which in turn has resulted in the fragmentation of land into unproductive pieces creating food insufficiency, especially among the poor and marginal poor. It has displaced small landholders and marginalized the population on insufficient agricultural land for their survival. For instance, about 1,000,000 households are landless and another 1,000,000 households are dependent either on marginal land or on other's land (Preliminary Result of Agriculture Census 2001), out of the total 4,174,374 households (Population Census 2001) in Nepal. This means that little less than half (48%) of the total households in Nepal do not their own land for their survival<sup>12</sup> and this clearly indicates the precarious situation of rural population.

Along with the population growth, modernization also poses the effect on rural poverty in Nepal. In due course of

modernization, rapid urbanization<sup>13</sup> and the growth of informal economy such as the manufacturing of carpets and the construction of roads and buildings have been observed. On the other hand, rural economy based on agriculture and with subsistent mode of production in a traditional manner is suffering from low productivity and low wages for labour that is not compatible with modern consumerism. Therefore, the rural economy has failed to absorb a large number of labourers, whereas the urban economy has become a labour demanding area, preferably seeking for cheap labour. This implies mobility outside the village for seeking off-farm and non-farm employment to complement rural livelihoods. Both internal mobility and migration abroad have been common as a coping strategy.

### 4.2 Migration in Nepal

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Migration for labour in Nepal is not new. It started even before the recruitment of Nepalese in the 'British Gurkhas' in 1815-16. The Nepali migration was prevalent to Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Delhi, and then Bombay in India and to Bhutan for seasonal, semi-permanent and permanent migration. There are still many Nepali villages in Assam and Meghalaya in India. In Sikkim, majority of people speak Nepali language. Before Nepalese were driven out, Bhutan also had a large number of people who spoke Nepali language.

After the Malaria eradication in Tarai, heavy interregional migration began to Tarai from both mountain and hill. It was because of higher availability of cultivable land in Tarai. The percentage of Tarai in-migrants was 82.5 in 1971, 74.4 in 1981 and 78.4 in 1991 (KC, 1998), and it was 55.3 in 1996 (KC et al., 1997). In the

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<sup>12</sup> It is to be noted that land is the only property of Nepalese people privately owned.

<sup>13</sup> Among the Asian countries, Nepal is notable for the fact that large differentials between urban and rural population growth rates were sustained throughout the last three decades (Hardoy, 1992: 32).



second half the 1990s, drastic decline in migration to Tarai is observed. This indicates that there is nearly a saturation of interregional migration to Tarai from hills and mountains. Evidence suggests that, even though the flow to the Tarai is still predominant, the flow of internal migration has begun to divert to other areas, particularly urban areas. The internal migration to urban areas in Nepal was 16.3 per cent in 1981, which slightly increased to 17.2 per cent in 1991 (KC, 1998), and to 31.6 per cent in 1996 (KC et al., 1997). During the period of half a decade, the urban migration almost doubled.

Urban migration, especially to the Kathmandu Valley is overwhelming. Migration to Kathmandu Valley alone was 10.2 per cent in 1981, which increased to 16.5 per cent in 1991 (KC, 1998). Using the growth rate of 4.81 per cent per annum estimated share of the internal migration into Kathmandu Valley in 2001 would be 26.7 per cent. On the basis of information on in-migration in urban Nepal and in Kathmandu Valley cities, the direction of migration in Nepal has started shifting from rural-to-rural to rural-to-urban and especially to the Kathmandu Valley. This shift in migration patterns seems quite natural in that the capital city, is the center of power and privilege. It exerts its influence in charting the direction of the country's political, social, and economic development and it has disproportionately high share of consumption as well as investment in the urban sector (Gugler, 1988). It is evident that the per capita income is about Rs. 16,000.0 for urban Nepal and about Rs. 24,000.0 for Kathmandu (NESAC, 1998). Rural areas are far behind urban areas in Nepal.

In-migration to Kathmandu is primarily caused by the economic attraction where there has been a rapid growth of economic activities including tourist-oriented services, rapid growth of urban facilities, and abundance of low-skill informal sector service (Gurung et al., 1983). In addition, personal factors like economic condition of the family, job security, skill and education

encouraged rural to urban migration. More than two-third of the internal migrants reported economic reasons for their migration. Service, trade/business and agriculture together accounted for 49.7 per cent and search for job accounted for 17.5 per cent (KC et al., 1997). In the case of rural and urban migration, lack of job, business, and educational opportunities and landlessness at origin are the prominent push factors among both rural and urban in-migrants and better job opportunities and transfer of service at the destination are prominent pull factors for both rural and urban in-migrants.

Migration to Kathmandu Valley, now a days, is even higher particularly after the Maoist Insurgency began in Nepal seven years ago. People are not safe in the rural areas and they are in trap between the government security force and Maoist insurgents. So, people have been coming to the Kathmandu Valley where people may have felt relatively safer than in their origin.

There are four types of migrants in the Kathmandu Valley: (i) seasonal, (ii) temporary, (iii) semi-permanent, and (iv) permanent. Gurung et al. (1983) reported that the permanent in-migration is relatively high compared to seasonal ones. Even though the permanent migration is high, the prevalence of multiple residence, much prevalently dual or triple, is also high and remitting to the homeland to support household spending is also prevalent. This aspect needs a fresh research.

#### **4.3 Remittance Economy in Nepal**

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Seddon et al. (2001) identified five different forms of migration in Nepal. They are: (i) daily commuting, (ii) short-term and local migration to nearby towns, (iii) seasonal migration to other localities (within Nepal or to India), (iv) temporary but 'long term' (i.e., over 6 months), and (v) 'permanent' migration. They suggested the importance of the contribution of first four

forms of migration concerning the remittances to rural households with a different degree of emphasis. First two forms have considerable importance: Seasonal migration is compatible with agricultural cycle 'at home'; and temporary migration both within Nepal and abroad is a phenomenon of greater importance as its contribution to the total rural household income is substantial.

In the case of remittance from migration, CBS (1997) reported that 23 per cent of the total surveyed households received remittances from within and outside Nepal. Remittance receiving households in Tarai (25%) are slightly more than in hills and mountains (23%). The share of households receiving remittances was less in urban than in rural areas (20 vs. 24%). The sources where remittances originate from would be of greater importance to understand where the flow of migration is directed to. CBS (1997) outlined that the major sources of remittances are urban Nepal, India and other countries. Among the remittances received by urban households, 44 per cent came from urban and 31 per cent from rural areas. Similarly, among the rural households who received remittances, 25 per cent came from urban areas, and 33 per cent from rural areas. Remittances generated in urban areas for the rural households seem to be relatively less than that generated in rural areas. However, considering the number of urban localities and its capacity in generating remittances, this proportion is considerably high. Another fact is that there are only a few urban centres in Nepal that have capacity to absorb labour and to generate remittances.

Remittance system is an important component of the Nepalese household economy. Since an overwhelming proportion of population lives in the subsistence economy of rural areas with low productivity, migration has become a process of reducing poverty through remittances. The possibility of generating such remittances in the urban areas, especially in the carpet sector of the Kathmandu Valley, is higher.

#### **4.4 Labour Market in the Nepalese Carpet Sector**

Carpet industry, largely based on the labour-intensive manufacturing process, is one of the prominent labour absorbing sectors in the Kathmandu Valley, mostly for weaving. Because almost all of the carpet factories are concentrated in the Kathmandu Valley since its beginning. Initially, carpet manufacturing was established to provide income opportunities for Tibetan refugees during the early 1960s. Gradually, its market expanded to European countries. As its demand and production increased, the carpet manufacturing also expanded and extended even out of the Tibetan refugee camps. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was enormous growth in the carpet economy of Nepal. It encouraged the rural labour force to migrate to the carpet sector in the Valley. Carpet industry experienced a virtual 'gold rush' during the early 1990s, when annual growth rates reached 20-90 per cent and when there were more people employed in this sector than in all other industries put together (Graner, 1999).

During its peak period, carpet manufacturing was able to absorb about 250,000 to 300,000 labourers (Pradhan, 1993; CWIN, 1993; Graner, 1999). However, after the recession occurred in the mid- 1990s, many factories had to be closed and the number of labourers substantially declined to a total of about 60-80,000 (Graner, 1999).

During the RA study, some factory owners and Key Informants attributed the decline in the carpet economy to quality compromise and unhealthy competition. They believed that eliminating child labour from the carpet factories would be the positive step for the development of carpet industries. Nevertheless, easily exploitable child labour is prevalent in the Nepalese carpet sector with a sole motive of profit maximization (Hirway, 1991).

## 4.5 Child Labour Migration in the Carpet Sector

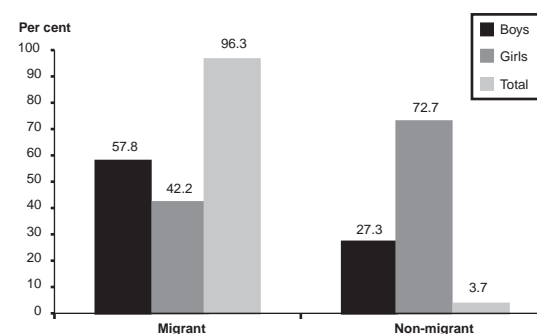
This section deals with migration of child labourer in the carpet sector. Figure 4.1 shows that migrant child labourers in the carpet sector are overwhelmingly predominant (96.3%). Only 3.7 per cent (11) carpet child labourers interviewed were non-migrants. Among the migrants, majority are boys (57.8%) with a sex ratio of 137, whereas among non-migrants, overwhelming majority are girls (72.7%). The representation of boys found in this study is relatively less than that found in NASPEC's studies. The non-migrants belong to Newar (5), Tamang (4), Limbu (1), and Chhetry (1). Out of 11, 8 non-migrants are working in Kathmandu, and 3 in Lalitpur.

An overwhelming majority of the children (78.2%) are currently aged 15-17 years (Table 4.1). KC et al. (2002) found that girl child labourer in carpet industries were mostly aged 16-17 years (80%).

Almost 22 per cent of the total child labourers interviewed are aged up to 14 years and there are no children aged less than 10 years. Age structure is relatively lower among girls than boys. Average age of child labourers interviewed is 16 years. Girls are one year younger than boys are. Girls after marriage may not continue the carpet work because they have to go with their husband and the husband's work might be in different sector or place. But, a boy can continue his work in carpet work even after his marriage.

Among the migrant child labourers, the proportion of Tamangs who worked in the carpet sector ranged from 37 per cent (BISCONS, 1998) to 75 per cent (NASPEC, 1999) in previous studies. Variation in proportion may have resulted due to a small sample. The present RA shows that 58.5 per cent of the total carpet workers are Tamangs followed by Magar (11.4%) Tarai groups (9.7%), and Rai (6.6%). All other groups constitute less than 5 per cent (Table 4.2).

FIGURE 4.1:  
Migration Status of Child Labour in Carpet Work



The predominant representation of Tamangs in the carpet sector has been due to poverty, surrounding districts, high concentration of Tamang population in origin districts, road access, and networking. It is obvious that most of the Tamangs are poor compared to many other communities and those who sent their children into carpet work in Kathmandu Valley are even poorer of the poor (see chapter V). Origins of the most of the Tamangs working in carpet factories are surrounding districts of the Kathmandu Valley that have high concentration of Tamang residence. Census 1991 recorded the proportion of Tamang population is highest of all communities, that is 46 per cent in

TABLE 4.1:  
Current Age of Migrant Child Labourers in Carpet Factories

Current Age	Boy	Girl	Total %	Cumulative %	N
Mean Age	16	15	16		
10	0.7	-	0.7	0.7	2
11	1.0	0.7	1.7	2.4	5
12	0.3	1.0	1.4	3.8	4
13	3.1	1.4	4.5	8.3	13
14	6.9	6.6	13.5	21.8	39
15	10.4	9.3	19.7	41.5	57
16	17.3	11.4	28.7	70.2	83
17	18.0	11.8	29.8	100.0	86
Total	57.8	42.2	100.0		289
N	167	122	289		

TABLE 4.2:  
Caste/Ethnicity of Migrant Child Labourers in Carpet Sector by Sex

Caste/ethnicity	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Tamang	34.3	24.2	58.5	169
Magar	6.9	4.5	11.4	33
Tarai groups	5.5	4.1	9.7	28
Rai	4.2	2.4	6.6	19
Dalit	2.1	2.4	4.5	13
Newar	2.1	2.1	4.2	12
Chhetri	1.0	1.4	2.4	7
Limbu	0.7	0.7	1.4	4
Brahmin	0.3	0.3	0.7	2
Gurung	0.7	-	0.7	2
Total	57.8	42.2	100.0	-
N	167	122	-	289

Makwanpur, 32.9 per cent in Sindhupalchowk, 32.8 per cent in Kavre and 23.4 per cent in Sindhuli. In Sarlahi district also Tamang's population (5.7%) is highest among the hill origin population (CBS, 1991).

Networking, as mentioned by Key Informants, between origin and destination has been well established, which is relatively stronger among Tamangs than among any other communities. It might not be well established in Dhading, Nuwakot, and rural southern belt of Lalitpur district where the population of Tamang is relatively more concentrated. Most of the villages of origin in Sarlahi are closer to the Mahendra Highway. All these factors may have contributed to the predominance of Tamangs in the carpet factories. However, there are also other groups of people in these districts who are as poor as the Tamangs but do not come to work in the carpet sector. This aspect also needs further investigation.

Parents themselves send their children for employment for the household support. Children often leave home with someone. Who are those persons being a bridge between children's home and children's work is examined through the information provided in Table 4.3. The higher proportion of the respondents reported that other relatives (43.6%) the first time while leaving home. Other relatives in this study include uncle and aunts and brother and sister. Those reported to have left home with their friends (20.8%) follow this. Parents and 'other' category are also equally responsible for accompanying children for leaving home. The proportion of children

TABLE 4.3:  
Persons Accompanying Children from Home to Carpet Factories

Persons accompanied	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Other relatives	36.6	53.3	43.6	126
With friends	29.3	9.0	20.8	60
Parents	7.1	15.6	10.6	31
On self	9.0	3.3	6.6	19
Broker	6.0	1.6	4.2	12
Carpet workers	3.6	3.3	3.5	10
Other	8.4	13.9	10.7	31
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167	122	289	

who left home on their own and with broker and former carpet workers is not pronounced. More than two-third of the girl child labourers reported that they left home either with relatives or with parents. This proportion is higher for girls than for boys by 25 percentage points (68.9% vs. 43.7%). On the other hand, relative magnitude of boys is considerably higher than girls who left home on their own and with brokers.

#### 4.5.1 Inter-sectoral Migration of Child Labourers

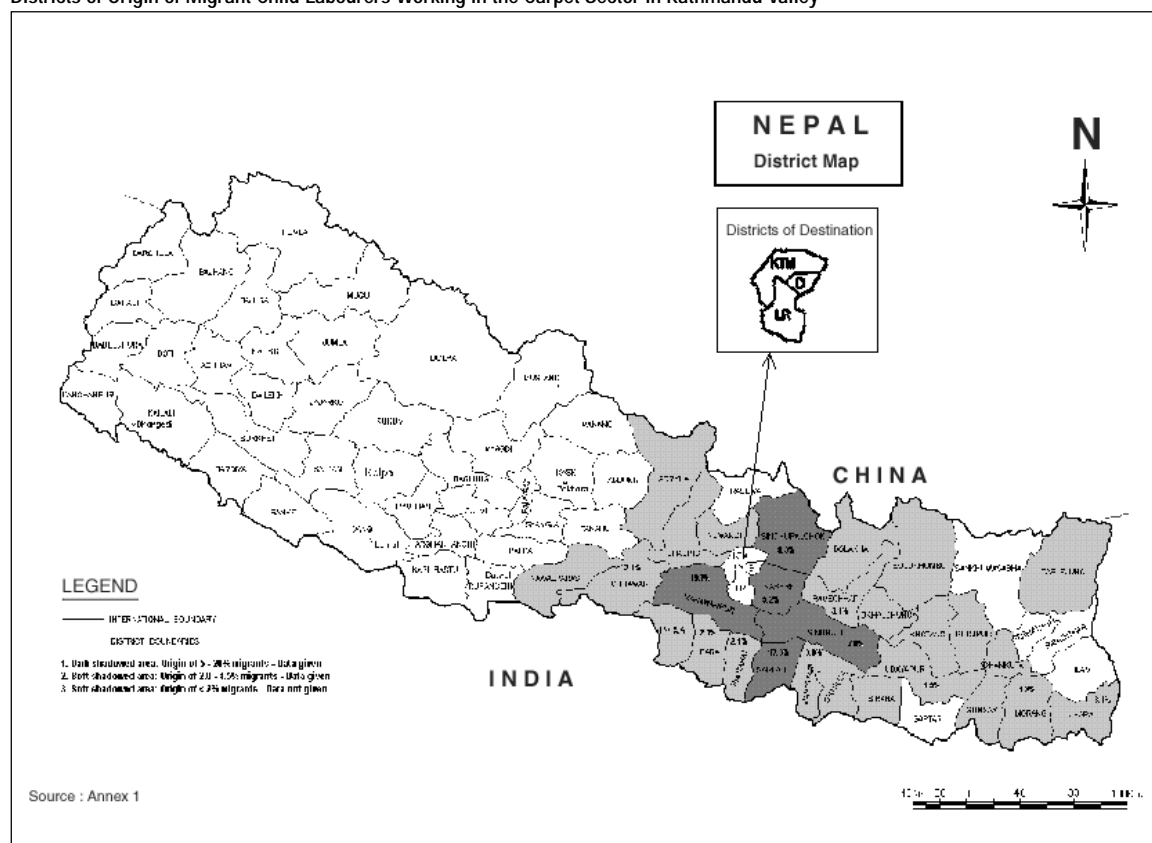
Origin of Migration: Many studies have shown that the stream of migration for carpet labour in Kathmandu Valley originated from the surrounding districts, namely Makwanpur, Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Dolakha, Sindhuli, Dhading, Nuwakot, etc. KC et al. (2002) found 23 such districts, but this RA found 30 districts from where the carpet workers originated (Figure 4.2). Districts with high proportion of carpet workers to the Kathmandu Valley are only few. Makwanpur (19.7%) and Sarlahi (17.3%) are districts, which send the highest proportion of children for the carpet work. Other districts are Sindhupalchowk (9.3%) and Sindhuli (7.6%) which have sent more than 5 per cent child labourers. Child labourers originated from some surrounding districts such as Dhading, Nuwakot, Lalitpur, and Dolakha constitute only 2 per cent.

Age at First Move: The age at which children usually leave home for the first time for the intended work is presented in Table 4.4. The age of respondents at the time of leaving home for the first time ranges from 2 to 17 years. Respondents who were less than 10 years of age were mostly either dependent or they left home

TABLE 4.4:  
Age of Respondents at Their First Move

Age at first move	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Mean Age	13	13	13	
< 10	9.0	9.8	9.3	27
10-14	58.7	55.7	57.4	166
15-17	32.3	34.4	33.2	96
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	-
N	167	122	-	289

FIGURE 4.2:  
Districts of Origin of Migrant Child Labourers Working in the Carpet Sector in Kathmandu Valley



as child care takers or for just to help their parents or relatives (not shown in table). The table shows that the over all mean age at first move is 13 years for both boys and girls. This indicates that the most appropriate age for leaving home among carpet child labourers is 13 years.

Majority of the carpet child labourer leave home during the age of 10-14 years (57.4%). This is followed by one-third of the total child labourers who left home during age of 15-17 years. However, the proportion of those who left home before the age of 10 is also significant.

*Sector of Involvement after Leaving Home:* An overwhelming majority of the carpet workers (82.7%) reported that they joined the carpet work immediately after leaving home for the first time (Table 4.5). Only 17.3 per cent of the total child labourers currently working in the carpet

sector involved in other works before joining the carpet work. However, of this 17.3 per cent, more than one-third (5.9%) also came directly to the carpet factory but worked as child caretakers in carpet factories. They helped their parents or other relatives by caring after younger children. The remaining 11.4 per cent were involved in domestic child labor and also worked in hotel/restaurant, construction, transportation, and other activities before joining the carpet work.

TABLE 4.5:  
Sector of Involvement after Leaving Home

Sector of involvement after leaving home	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Directly to carpet	80.2	86.1	82.7	239
Child caretaker in carpet	4.2	8.2	5.9	17
Domestic labour	3.0	4.1	3.5	10
Hotel/restaurant	4.2	-	2.4	7
Construction work	4.2	-	2.4	7
Transportation	0.6	-	0.3	1
Others	3.6	1.6	2.8	8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	-
N	167	122	-	289

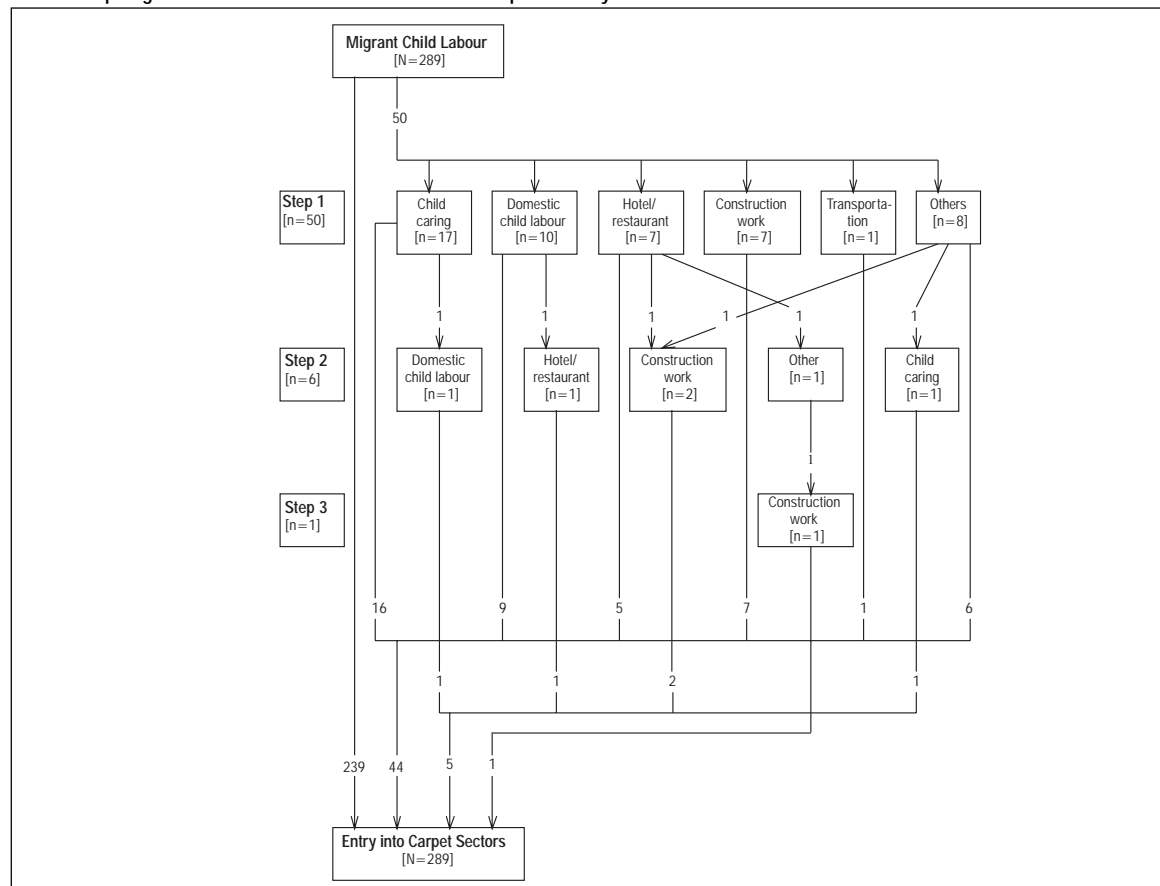
The relative magnitude is higher for girls than for boys among those who joined carpet factories immediately after leaving home. The gender difference is distinct among those who worked as child caretaker and domestic child labourer after leaving home. Magnitude of girls among child caretakers is twice bigger than that of boys. There are only boys who worked in hotel/restaurant, construction, and transportation before coming into the carpet work, which indicates that girls do not tend to go for such works.

(1), and other category (8). Of these 50 children, only 6 children were involved in the second step before joining the carpet work.

The shift in work was observed from child caring to domestic child labour, domestic child labour to hotel/restaurant, hotel/restaurant to other and construction work, and other jobs to construction and child caring. Only one child moved to the third step of migration shifting from other category to construction work. Other 5 children proceeded their third step of migration directly to the carpet work. The finding indicates that there are up to 3 steps in inter-sectoral mobility of work before joining the carpet factory and after leaving home. However, the proportion of shift from the first work to the second and the third is minimal before joining to work in the carpet factory. And, it can be concluded that children mostly come directly to carpet industry and even if they go to other sectors of work, most of them come to work in

*Stepwise Migration:* Figure 4.3 summarizes the stepwise migration of carpet child labourers after leaving home and before joining the carpet work. Of the total, 289 migrant child labourers interviewed, 239 joined carpet industry immediately after leaving home. Fifty children worked in other than carpet works such as child caring (17), domestic child labor (10), hotel/restaurant (7), construction (7), transportation

FIGURE 4.3:  
Flow of Step Migration of Child Labourer from Home to Carpet Industry



the carpet factory after their first step of migration (see Box 4.1).

Among those who involved in different works other than carpet at their first step of migration, children stayed, on the average, 12 months in a work (Table 4.6). The duration is considerably higher for girls (17 months) than for boys (10 months). According to the types of work, boys stayed more months in the work in 'other' category (22 months) and girls stayed more in child caring (23 months). In contrast, boys in hotel/restaurant, construction work, and transportation and girls in domestic child labourer stayed for the least number of months.

Table 4.7 displays the reasons for leaving the first work at which child labourers involved at their first step of migration. Majority of the children reported that they left their first work due to reasons of 'other' category (44%). Besides, the most common reason for their leaving the first work was that they were not paid for their work (14%), they had to work only with food and shelter. This is followed by no friends at work place (10%) and business/work closed (10%). Payment problem is more prominent for girls (17.6%) than for boys (12.1%). Similarly,

TABLE 4.6:  
Duration (mean month) of First Work Other Than Carpet after Leaving Home by Sex

Work before joining carpet	Boy	Girl	Total
Domestic child labour	10	5	8
Hotel/restaurant	6	-	6
Construction work	6	-	6
Transportation	6	-	6
Child caring in carpet	8	23	17
Others	22	12	19
Total mean	10	17	12
N	33	17	50

TABLE 4.7:  
Reasons for Leaving First Work Other Than Carpet by Sex

Reasons for leaving first work	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Not paid	12.1	17.6	14.0	7
No friends there	9.1	11.8	10.0	5
Business/work closed	12.1	5.9	10.0	5
Low paid	6.1	-	4.0	2
Physical/mental torture	3.0	5.9	4.0	2
Parents did not let	3.0	5.9	4.0	2
Marriage	3.0	5.9	4.0	2
Others	51.5	47.1	48.0	25
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	50
N	33	17	50	

#### Box 4.1: Inter-sectoral Migration

*Shrijana (18)* is an orphan, left home with her uncle when she was 7 years. Her uncle brought her to a Bahun's house in Kathmandu and she started working as a domestic child labourer. She worked there for 6 years. Land lady was very bad. She was being tortured and scolded most frequently. One day, she found a woman from Sarlahi working in the carpet factory. That woman took her to the carpet factory and taught her weaving the carpet. Now she has got her husband working outside the factory as mason and she is working in the carpet factory.

proportion of girls reporting physical/mental torture inflicted by the master or the factory owner, parents did not allow to work, and marriage is two times more than for boys. It is to be noted that there are no girls reporting the reasons for leaving the first work due to low paid job, sickness or driven out by the owner.

#### 4.5.2 Intra-sectoral Migration of Child Labourers within the Carpet Sector

*Shift of Child Labourers between Carpet Factories:* Structured interview found that there were up to 5 steps of shift of work within the carpet sector, even though some of the Key Informants (adult carpet workers) reported that they have been working in carpet sector since last 20 years and they changed many such factories during that period (see Box 4.2).

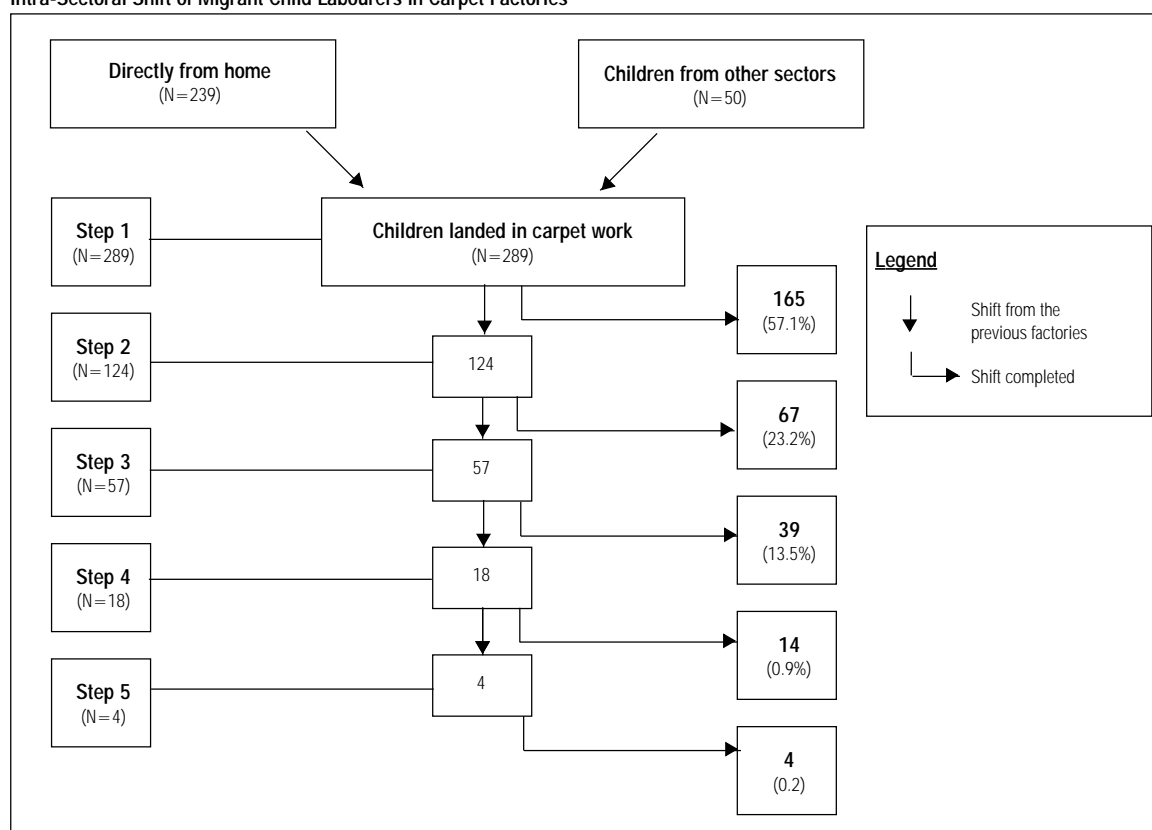
Figure 4.4 shows that, of the total 289 child labourers, 165 (57%) children were working continuously in the carpet factories where they entered for the first time after leaving home. Until the date of the interview, they have not

#### Box 4.2: Shift of Carpet Factories and its Reasons

*Parang (23)* has been working in carpet factory since last 12 years. He has shifted nine times to 9 different factories during this period. Employers exploit labour very much. They usually give wage for grade 'B' and sell in grade 'A'.

*Gopal (20)* changed 18 times in 18 factories since last 10 years. During his beginning of the carpet work, frequency of changing the carpet factory was high. It was because employers and Thekedars exploited younger children and he did not like it, so he frequently shifted from one factory to another.

FIGURE 4.4:  
Intra-Sectoral Shift of Migrant Child Labourers in Carpet Factories



changed the factory. About 23.2 per cent (67) of the migrant child labourers reported that the current factory is their second step where they were working. About 13.5 per cent (39 children) of children were working in the third factory. They are in the third step of intra-sectoral mobility. At the fourth step, 14 children (or 4.8%) were working at the time of interview. And, there were only 4 children who were working in their fifth step in term of shifting the factory.

*Who Brought Children to the Carpet Work?* It is important to identify persons involved in bringing children into work in the carpet sector. It is the process of being trafficked and debt-bonded. Table 4.8 provides detail information about the persons involved in bringing children into the carpet factory in each step of work. The highest proportion of child labourers who just entered into the carpet work and other relatives (45.3%) brought those who have come from other sectors. The category, 'relatives', in this study includes mainly brothers, sisters, uncles

and their spouse. These relatives are directly involved in recruiting children, more girls than boys (56.6% vs. 37.1%) in the carpet sector. Others are friends and neighbours, who have been working in the carpet sector, who brought about 17.6 per cent of the total children interviewed into the carpet work. Persons from the carpet factory are the least but the proportion is significant who brought children in their carpet work (7.6%) and is meaningful to understand the situation of children in carpet industry. In contrast to those who were brought by relatives, proportion of girls is less than boys among those who were brought by friends/

TABLE 4.8:  
Type of Persons bringing the Children to the Current Work in the Carpet Factory from Home and other Factories by Sex of Child Labour

Persons brought children to current carpet factory	Boys	Girls	Total	N
Relatives	37.1	56.6	45.3	131
Friends/Neighbours	22.8	10.7	17.6	51
Persons from carpet	8.4	6.6	7.6	22
On self	26.9	9.8	19.7	57
Parents	4.8	16.4	9.7	28
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289

Source: Annex 4.



neighbours and persons from carpet factory. Besides, the proportion of children who came with their parents is 9.7 per cent and of those came by themselves is 19.7 per cent. The magnitude of girls is about 4 times higher than boys for those who reportedly came with parents, whereas the magnitude of girls is about 3 times less than boys for those who reportedly came on their own. However, the emphasis is not given to these children who came on their own and who came with their parents. It is because the extent of vulnerability in terms of trafficking and debt bondage is relatively less for them.

The pattern is slightly different for child labourers who came into the current factory where the interview was conducted from other factories at different steps (Annex 4). The most important mediator for coming into the current factory is friends/neighbours in contrast to relatives as discussed above for those who shifted from the second to the fourth step of the work within the carpet factories. One notable finding among intra-sectoral movers is that there are no girls who were brought by persons from carpet sector and from other factory to the current one.

Relatives, friends/neighbours, factory owners, masters and middlemen have brought more than 70 per cent of the children to the carpet factories. Among these children, girls are relatively more than boys. This indicates that people other than family members put children into the worst forms of child labour. It was observed in the field survey that most of the children who work under *Thekedars* on a salary basis come either with relatives or villagers or masters/ supervisors of the factory and relatives and villagers are mostly the *Thekedars*. Key Informants reported that the salary of these children is very low, ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 900 per month. Most of them do not get salary in hand, *Thekedars* are said to have sent their salary directly to their parents at home or they have already paid a whole-sum amount before the children left home. Children who came with relatives and villagers and worked in 'piece basis'

did not need to work under the *Thekedari* system. But, some of them also did not have control over their earning. Their uncles or elder siblings might have even gotten the money before being brought into the factory.

*Type of Work Involved in the Carpet Factory:* Child labourers are mainly involved in weaving and spinning and rolling of wool. In washing, balling, and cutting/packing, a very limited number of children are involved and they are mostly above 15 years of age. In dyeing, there is no child involved. More factories need manpower for weaving for which child labourers are involved at the entry into carpet work.

Table 4.9 shows that an overwhelming majority of the migrant children were involved in weaving carpet (88%). This is followed by children who are also involved in carding, spinning and rolling wool (6.6%), but this work is not comparable with weaving. The proportion of boys involved in weaving is even higher (93.4%) than girls (80.3%). It is to be noted that a significant proportion of girls is also involved in carding, spinning and rolling wool (12.3%). Of the total migrant child labourers, 124 left the factory and shifted to the next. At the time when they left the factory, as at the time of entry, an overwhelming majority of child labourers were involved in weaving carpet (88%). Similar pattern is found for both boys and girls.

TABLE 4.9:  
Types of Work Performed by Child Labourers in Carpet Factory at the Time of Entry and at the Time of Leaving by Sex

Type of work	Boys	Girls	Total	N
<b>Type of Work at the time of entry</b>				
Weaving	93.4	80.3	87.9	254
Carding/Spinning/Rolling	2.4	12.3	6.6	19
Wool washing	1.8	3.3	2.4	7
Balling	1.2	4.1	2.4	7
Cutting/Packing	1.2	-	0.7	2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167	122	289	
<b>Type of work at leaving</b>				
Weaving	89.3	85.0	87.9	109
Carding/Spinning/Rolling	7.1	2.5	5.6	7
Wool washing	2.4	7.5	4.0	5
Balling	-	5.0	1.6	2
Cutting/Packing	1.2	-	0.8	1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	124
N	84	40	124	

However, there was a little difference between the types of work child involved in at the time of entry and at the time of leaving. There is also less difference in the proportion of boys and girls working as carpet weavers.

*Duration of Work in Each Step of Intra-sectoral Mobility:* Duration of work in carpet factories after leaving home is examined in terms of mean value of months. Mean duration is discussed in two ways: first, mean number of months child labourers worked at each step of intra-factory shift and, second, mean number of months they have been working since entry into the carpet sector. The latter is a cumulative duration of months starting from entry to the last step involved.

Over all, a child during his/her five steps into the carpet factories since the entry after leaving home works 53 months, on the average (Table 4.10). Up to the fourth step of shift, a child works for 36 months (3 years); up to the third step the duration is 31 months; up to second step it is 21 months; and for the first step it is 13 months. Looking at this information in terms of gender, for boys the pattern is similar to the over all picture and its progression is gradual as the number of shift increased, whereas for girls the progression of duration does not seem gradual, particularly for those who have proceeded to the last step.

On the average, in one working place or in one carpet factory, a child labourer stays for 10 months with work. The duration in one work for girls is slightly shorter than for boys (9.5 vs. 10.4 months). Spending 10 months period in a carpet

factory is almost 1 year of work. According to Key Informants, carpet work is also a kind of seasonal work. Seasonality is in terms of availability of order of the carpets from the exporters. Carpet workers are mostly from the agricultural households in rural areas who have to go back to villages during the plantation of paddy for about 2 months, and most of the carpet workers go home for celebrating Dashain each year. When they come back from home, they usually shift to another carpet factory. Therefore, the duration of 10 months in a factory is reasonable.

The average duration of work in each step in the carpet factory is decreasing with increasing number of shifts from one factory to another, even if the pattern is not gradual (Table 4.10). The average number of months child labourers spent in one factory is highest among those who were working in the first factory at the time of this RA, that is 13-14 months for boys and 12 months for girls. For both boys and girls, the duration is found to be shorter for those who are highly mobile from one factory to another.

*Reasons for Intra-sectoral Mobility:* The reasons of child labourers for changing a number of carpet factories are discussed in this section with the information presented in Table 4.11. The survey collected information on intra-sectoral mobility up to 5 steps. In other words, child labourers have changed from 2 to 4 factories and they are working in the current factory where they were interviewed. The highest proportion of child labourers reported that the reason for their shift into the current factory from the previous one was that the factory was closed. It

TABLE 4.10:  
Mean Number of Months Worked at Each Step of Intra-factory Shift and Duration since Entry into the Carpet Sector by Sex and Steps of Shift

Steps of intra-factory shift	Boy		Girl		Total		N
	At each step	Since entry	At each step	Since entry	At each step	Since entry	
Work in first step	14	14	12	12	13	13	165
Work in second step	11	22	11	20	11	21	67
Work in third step	13	31	10	30	12	31	39
Work in fourth step	6	34	5	65	6	36	14
Work in fifth step	8	53	-	-	8	53	4
Mean of mean duration	10.4	-	9.5	-	10.0	-	-

TABLE 4.11:  
Reasons for Child Labourers for Intra-sectoral Mobility by Sex

Reasons for change into current factory	Boys	Girls	Total	N
Factory closed	16.7	32.5	21.8	27
No friends	20.2	5.0	15.3	19
Low paid	9.5	15.0	11.3	14
Not paid	6.0	10.0	7.3	9
Physical/psychological torture	4.8	2.5	4.0	5
Sickness	2.4	2.5	2.4	3
No sanitation and drinking water	3.6	-	2.4	3
No consent of Parents	1.2	2.5	1.6	2
Marriage	-	5.0	1.6	2
Sexual abuse	1.2	-	.8	1
Kicked out	1.2	-	.8	1
Super is difficult	1.2	-	.8	1
Parents left the factory	1.2	-	.8	1
Other	31.0	25.0	29.0	36
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	124
N	84	40	124	

Source: Annex 5.

clearly reflects the current recession of carpet economy that many factories are closed due to decrease in demand in the foreign market. Apart from this, no friends, low paid and not paid are other important reasons for children leaving their previous factories. It is natural that proportion of boys is more than girls among those who reported that there were no friends in the previous factory, so they left.

Low pay is related to both those working in salary basis and working in 'piece basis', Salary is related with *Thekedars* and the 'piece basis' is related with the factory owner himself. The 'piece basis' wage varies from one factory to another ranging from Rs. 350.00 to 550.00 per square meter (for simple 60 nuts). Even if the product is grade 'A', payment is usually made according to grade 'B' by lowering the wage from Rs. 75.00 to Rs. 25.00 per square meter. Child labourers are highly exploited by being paid less than what they are supposed to be paid (see Box 4.3). Under the *Thekedar*, most of the child labourers are younger and new who are at the learning stage even if they are relatively aged. At the learning stage, they do not get salary, except food and shelter. And for younger children, *Thekedar* either sends the money home upon collection or they were paid even before they left.

Four per cent of total children interviewed also reported that they left previous work because they, especially boys, were being tortured physically as well as mentally. When examined

### Box 4.3: Reasons for Changing the Factories

*Kala (23)* started working in the carpet factory when he was 7 years old. His uncle brought him in the carpet factory. He spent 4 years in this factory. He has his own family - wife, a daughter and a younger sister. His wife and younger sister are also working with him. The main reason why he changed many (he can not remember the number of factories) factories is mistreatment by masters and employers. Before, there was no problem in finding out new factory for work. But, now it is difficult, so this is the factory where he has been working for a long time.

the reasons for why child labourers have this much of shifts from one factory to another, more frequent reasons forwarded were factory closed, no friends in the previous factory and low earning in all steps of shift (Annex 5).

### 4.6 Reasons for Child Labour Migration

The reasons why children leave home are classified in two broad headings with push and pull factors. For the migration of carpet child labourers, push factors are found to be stronger than pull factors (Table 4.12). Almost 75 per cent of respondents reported push factors and 25 per cent reported pull factors for leaving home. The relative proportion for push reasons is higher for girls than for boys (85.3% vs. 67.7%). Pull factors are more important for boys (30%) than for girls (11.5%).

Among the push factors, proportion of children's willingness to leave home for work is the highest (38.1%), which is followed by those sent by their parents (21.1%), and those run away from home (10.0%). Own will and run away from home might be similar reasons in that children may run away from home with their own will thinking that they have no work at the origin and they can do something for their life and home by earning in the carpet sector. Push factors such as dependant, expelled from home and physical/psychological abuse at home seem to be less important for the children leaving their homes.

Among the pull factors, friends who are already working in the carpet factories are the most

TABLE 4.12:  
Reasons for Leaving Home for the First Time

Reasons for leaving home	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Push reasons				
Willingness to go for work	31.7	46.7	38.1	110
Sent by parents	19.8	23.0	21.1	61
Run away from home	12.6	6.6	10.0	29
Dependent	2.4	8.2	4.8	14
Kicked out from home	0.6	0.8	0.7	2
Physical & psychological abuse at home	0.6	-	0.3	1
Sub-total	(67.7)	(85.3)	(75.0)	(217)
Pull reasons				
Friends at destination	18.6	3.3	12.1	35
To get rid of poverty by earning money	5.4	2.5	4.2	12
Promised better employment	4.2	1.6	3.1	9
To take care of child (inside factory)	1.2	4.1	2.4	7
Parents took money from employer/middleman	0.6	-	0.3	1
Sub-total	(30.0)	(11.5)	(22.1)	(64)
Others	2.4	3.3	2.8	8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167	122	289	

important factor that motivates children to leave home. This is relatively more important for boys than for girls. Irrespective of the push and pull hypotheses, the root causes of child labour in the carpet factories may be different.

#### 4.7 Trafficking and Debt-bondage among Migrant Child Labourers

Carpet industry is one of the informal sectors of economy in terms of labour relations. This sector depends on the demand of foreign market. During its 'gold rush' period (late 1980s and early 1990s), it was number one source of foreign income in Nepal. Since the late 1990s, a big recession in Nepalese carpet industry was experienced. Carpet industry turned into seeking cheap labour in order to maximize their profit. Consequently, labour market especially for children and women expanded in the Kathmandu Valley.

Being an informal sector of labour economy and due to expansion of cheap labour, recruitment of child labourers increased in the carpet factory. Labourers have been recruited without contract letter and with a very minimum standard of agreement, that is, with wage and shelter for living. This situation had to be compromised by labourers because the supply of labour was more than the demand. This situation was conducive to trafficking and debt-bondage of child labourers.

Trafficking and debt-bondage are sensitive issues both politically and socially. It was nearly impossible to ask direct questions about it in the interview. A consultation meeting with carpet professionals and trade unions prior to the survey also recommended not to ask these types of questions in the survey. This was partially resolved by synthesizing information from children such as whether they left home alone or accompanied with others, role of middlemen to recruit children in the carpet industry, relation of middlemen with children's parents, and behaviour of the masters or factory owners, freedom of children leaving and joining the carpet factory, and the situation of the child labourers in the factory itself.

##### 4.7.1 Trafficking in Children into Carpet Sector

The nature of trafficking in the carpet sector has been assessed through information about the recruitment process and the actors involved in the process. The major actors in the recruitment process are relatives such as brothers and sisters, uncles and their spouses (45.3%), neighbours (2.8%), and the persons from the carpet such as brokers and middlemen, factory owners, and former carpet workers (7.6%). According to Key Informants, neighbours and relatives also play the roles of middlemen for bringing children from home into the carpet sector, because they are carpet workers and have contacts with factory owners to perform this job. The possibility for

children being trafficked through these persons can not be ruled out.

Most of the younger children who have been brought by neighbours and relatives in carpet factory work under the Thekedar. Thekedars are mostly relatives working in the carpet factory and some of them are also factory owners. Thekedars make profit from the surplus value from paying low wages in salary basis to the labourers and by selling products in 'piece basis' to the factory owners or exporters. The profit Thekedars make from a child labourer is Rs. 100.00-300.00 in a piece of carpet depending on its size. Informal discussion revealed that the earning of these children is under the control Thekedars. Some children also reported that they did not know whether Thekedars sent their earnings to their home or not, even if Thekedars say, "salary is sent to your home". A considerable proportion of child labourers may have been trafficked by Thekedars, relatives, neighbours, and factory owners. Parents are largely the facilitators in this process.

Table 4.13 shows that, of the total migrant child labourers interviewed, only 5.2 per cent (15) reported that they did not want to come to work. This proportion among girls is slightly higher than boys (6.6% vs. 4.2%). This indicates that 15 out of 289 children were brought in the carpet work by force. The most prevalent reasons include parent's force, uncle's pressure, debt and ill behaviour of elder brothers. The findings clearly indicate that these children were trafficked into the carpet factory for their labour and the girls are relatively more than boys in this process being vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Of the total migrant child labourers, 3.5 per cent children reported that there was an exchange between labour and money while they were recruited in the factory (Table 4.14). Another 12.5 per cent are not sure whether monetary exchange was involved in their recruitment or not. Of the total 10 children who knew about this transaction, 40 per cent reported that it was

TABLE 4.13:  
Reasons for Children to Come to the Carpet Factories against their Will

Reason for coming into factory	Boys	Girls	Total	N
Will to come to factory				
Yes	95.8	93.4	94.8	274
No	4.2	6.6	5.2	15
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167.0	122.0	289.0	
Reason for coming into factory				
Accompanying parents	-	50.0	26.7	4
Peer pressure	14.3	-	6.7	1
Parents forced to come	42.9	50.0	46.7	7
Scolded by elder brother	14.3	-	6.7	1
Brought by uncle	14.3	-	6.7	1
Due to debt	14.3	-	6.7	1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	15
N	7.0	8.0	15.0	

Thekedar who received money from the factory owners for their recruitment. Apart from this, parents, cousins and aunts are also involved in this business. Boys are overwhelmingly predominant in reporting this fact. Panel 3 of the table shows the basis of receiving money for their recruitment. Of the total (10), 7 children knew that the recruiter received money by deducting from their salary and only 3 children reported that recruiter received advance money from the employer. Deduction from the salary also indicates that children are working under the Thekedar.

Trafficking is prevalent in the process of recruitment in that money is involved in changing hands. Debt-bondage is prevalent after the recruitment in that children are bonded until they get paid an equivalent amount of money the

TABLE 4.14:  
Persons Who Received Money for the Recruitment of Children in the Carpet Factory

Money received in recruitment	Boy	Girl	Total	N
1. Whether money received?				
Yes	4.8	1.6	3.5	10
No	84.4	83.6	84.1	243
Do not know	10.8	14.8	12.5	36
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167.0	122.0	289.0	
2. Person received money				
Cousin	25.0	-	20.0	2
Thekedar	50.0	-	40.0	4
Parents	25.0	50.0	30.0	3
Aunt	-	50.0	10.0	1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	10
3. Basis of money received				
Deducted from salary	75.0	50.0	70.0	7
Amount in advance	25.0	50.0	30.0	3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	10
N	8.0	2.00	10.0	

recruiter received. It may continue, according to Key Informants, even after being paid an amount of money equal to the one recruiter received, because children are obliged to employers for getting employment. There may also be an agreement between employers and recruiters to employ children at least for some long period of time in an exploitative condition.

Parents are also responsible for trafficking in their children into the carpet factory. According to Key Informants, some parents receive money from the Thekedar or broker or owner for employment of their children. Information from quantitative interview (Table 4.15) also supports this tendency of parents even if the magnitude is small. Among children who came to the factory with some one else, 3 per cent of children's parents took loan and 4.3 per cent of children's parents took money in advance from brokers, Thekedars or factory owners for their employment. About 12 per cent of children did not know whether their parents received money at all. But an overwhelming 81 per cent said their parents did not receive any money. Parents of boys tend to take loan while the parents of girls tend to get advance money for recruitment. From this discussion, it can be inferred that trafficking in child labourer is prevalent in carpet factory even if it is in a small scale.

#### 4.7.2 Child Labourer on Debt-bondage

Debt-bondage and the trafficking in child labourer are closely interrelated in the carpet sector. Trafficked children have a high possibility to be debt-bonded, because there are benefits involved for sender, middlemen, and employers in the process of recruitment. There is also a

hidden agreement among them for employing children for at least some long period of time.

When children are sent to work in the carpet factories against their will, the situation is called forced migration of children. One of the reasons for their leaving home for work may be due to that their parents are also debt bonded due to advance money taken from the Thekedars. Because of this children also fell into debt-bondage. This system is prevalent among those children who are working under the Thekedars. The evidence of forced labour is apparent in that 5.2 per cent of the total children did not come to the carpet factory at their will. They were forced to work by parents and guardians (see Box 4.4). Middlemen or brokers also benefit from recruitment of children, even if the benefits are small. Parents are also crucial actors for children being debt-bonded.

Debt-bondage situation can also be examined through information on freedom of children for leaving the carpet factory. Table 4.16 shows that 8.3 per cent of children are not free to leave the factory on their own decision. Key Informants mentioned that in principle children are free to leave the factory but it is not allowed in practice. If they want to leave the factory they must be prepared for losing some amount of money from their earning (Box 4.5).

Majority of the children (62.5%) reported that they are in debt-bondage and can not leave the factory. This proportion is considerably higher

TABLE 4.15:  
Parents Receiving Money as Loan or as an Advance from Broker/  
Owner for the Employment of Their Children

Parents received money from broker/Thekedar/owner	Boys	Girls	Total	N
Not received	81.1	80.9	81.0	188
As loan	4.9	0.9	3.0	7
As in advance	3.3	5.5	4.3	10
Don't know	10.7	12.7	11.6	27
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	232
N	122.0	110.0	232.0	

#### Box 4.4: Guardian's Force to Come to Carpet Work

*Ganesh (15)* came from Makwanpur district with his uncle. He was studying at grade 8 but his elder brother dropped him out of his school and sent him with his uncle for carpet work in Kathmandu. He wants to study and does not want to work in the carpet factory. Factory owner never treats labourers well and does not give money. He reports that factory owner tells him that the money he earned is directly sent to his elder brother at home. He does not believe it and wants to quit the factory work any time. But he does not have money to go home.

TABLE 4.16:  
Freedom for Child Labourers for Leaving the Factory When They Want

Freedom for leaving the factory	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Yes	92.2	91.0	91.7	265
No	7.8	9.0	8.3	24
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167	122	289	
Reason for no freedom				
Debt	69.2	54.5	62.5	15
Still learning	7.7	-	4.2	1
Given job is not completed	7.7	18.2	12.5	3
Thekedar does not let	7.7	18.2	12.5	3
Do not know	7.7	9.1	8.3	2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	24
N	13	11	24	

for boys than for girls for those who are in debt-bondage (69.2% vs. 54.5%).

Whether child labourers themselves control their earning or someone else controls it is also important to understand the situation of debt-bondage of children. Almost 39 per cent of child labourers interviewed do not have control over their own earning (Table 4.17). Earning of about 11 per cent of children is under their parents and the earning of 18.7 per cent of children is either under relatives and that of 9.3 per cent of children is under the Thekedar. Control of earning under both relatives and Thekedar is relatively higher for girls than for boys. This information indicates that the debt-bondage of child labourers in the carpet factory may also have been associated with other forms of exploitation.

Punishment given to the children by masters or factory owners while children do not work is also examined in relation to debt-bondage. Table 4.18 shows that 19 per cent of the total migrant child labourers were reportedly punished by masters or factory owners if children did not work. Higher percentage of boys (21.6%) are punished than girls (15.6%). Masters and factory owners usually a child labourer only when he/she is under the debt or under the Thekedari

TABLE 4.17:  
Control over Earning of Child Labour

Control of earning	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Self	73.1	45.1	61.2	177
Parents	4.8	18.9	10.7	31
Relatives	14.4	24.6	18.7	54
Thekedar	7.8	11.5	9.3	27
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167.0	122.0	289.0	

#### Box 4.5: Freedom in Carpet Factory

*Rajkumar (22)* directly came to the carpet factory in Kathmandu after leaving home 1 year ago. He has his own family, wife, son and a younger brother. His brother is also working in carpet with him. He pays monthly salary to his brother because his brother is learning to weave carpet. He says, after he becomes skillful he will also work in piece basis. In that factory, there are about 10 carpet workers working under the Thekedar like his brother. Thekedars are either relatives or neighbours.

He feels that employer is not good. The employer loves work but not human and does not give wage in time and the rate is also lower than in other factory. He does not help labourers during sickness. Rajkumar tried to protest his employer. But employer scolded him and blamed, you are doing politics, being party leader and parliamentarian. Once he tried to leave the factory and claimed his wage. As a result, the employer showed him a large amount of loan and warned that unless he pays this much of loan he cannot leave this factory. He tells his grief in this way.

system. If a child labourer is working in a 'piece basis', he/she is responsible for completing the job as fast as possible. Faster the carpet completed, greater the amount of money Thekedar can earn in a given period of time.

#### 4.8 Conclusions

Livelihood opportunities in rural areas of Nepal are considerably low. It is the informal sector in the urban areas where some opportunities for employment exist. This scenario in the last decade is shifting the direction of migration from rural-to-rural to rural-to-urban areas.

Labour migration from rural poor households to urban areas, mostly in the Kathmandu Valley is considerably high. 'Gold rush' period of carpet economy opened up a new opportunity for poor households through remittance. Booming carpet economy not only opened a green pasture but also invited negative consequences. Due to fluctuation in the foreign market, carpet

TABLE 4.18:  
Punishment to Children by Master/Factory Owner if Children do not Work

Punishment by master if not work	Boy	Girl	Total	N
Yes	21.6	15.6	19.0	55
No	78.4	84.4	81.0	234
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167.0	122.0	289.0	

entrepreneurs turned into seeking for cheap labour to maximize their profit. It was the gateway of recruiting children and women for labour in the carpet factories. Unhealthy and unsystematic competition among the carpet entrepreneurs and ignorance of line agency of the government to manage industries and carpet labour market turned into exploitation of the labour by the factory owner and exploitation of smaller factories by big factories. Children and women labourers are the ones who have been victims of mismanagement of carpet economy and labour market in Nepal.

The most prevalent districts of origin of the migrant child labourers are Makwanpur, Sarlahi, Sindhupalchowk, Sindhuli, and Kavre. All of these districts except Sarlahi are the surrounding districts of the Kathmandu Valley. Tamang is the dominant ethnic group for sending child labourers to the carpet factories in the Valley. The reasons forwarded are high prevalence of poverty, accessibility, population concentration of Tamangs in the origin, affinity and socio-economic network.

In the labour market, many Thekedars and/or middlemen emerged to supply the required

labour to the carpet manufacturing industries in the Kathmandu valley. They work in between the origin of labour and the place of employment. Exploitation of child labour inside the factory became prevalent. Exploitation of children also emerged in the process of recruitment of child labour. Thekedar and middlemen have benefited from these exploitative practices. In the process of recruitment, the prevalence of both trafficking and debt-bondage of child labourers also emerged as the basic features of the worst forms of child labour.

Trafficking in and debt-bondage of the child labourer are closely interrelated in the carpet sector. Trafficked children are also debt-bonded in the process of recruitment. The trafficking in child labourer is prevalent in carpet factories due to faulty recruitment process by the middlemen, Thekedars, relatives and parents. All are actors in exploiting child labour to their benefit without regard to the future of Nepalese children.

Even though the carpet sector economy provided a great deal of opportunity for livelihood to the rural poor households at certain places of origin, it also encouraged child labour in its worst forms.

#### Gender Differentials in Key Findings

SN		Boys	Girls
1	Proportion Migrants	57.8	42.2
2	Mean current age of migrants (in years)	16	15
3	Mean age while leaving home for the first time (in years)	13	13
4	Proportions directly landed to carpet	80.2	86.1
5	Persons accompanied while leaving home for the first time (%)		
	Other relatives	36.6	53.3
	With friends	29.3	9.0
	Broker	6.0	1.6
	Carpet workers	3.6	3.3
6	Duration of first work other than carpet after leaving home (mean month)	10	17
7	Mean age at the time of entry into carpet work (in years)	14	14
8	Persons (other than parents and on self) brought into carpet factory (%)		
	Relatives	37.1	56.6
	Friends/Neighbour	22.8	10.7
	Persons from carpet	8.4	6.6
9	Reasons for leaving home for the first time (%)		
	Push reasons	67.7	85.3
	Pull reasons	30.0	11.5
10	Without willingly to come to factory	4.2	6.6
11	Parents forced to come to carpet factory (N: boys=7 & girls=8)	42.9	50.0
12	Whether money received for the recruitment	4.8	1.6
13	Parents received money from broker/thekeदार/owner as loan/in advance	8.2	6.4
14	No freedom in leaving factory	7.8	9.0
15	No freedom due to debt and Thekeदार (N: boy=13 & girls=11)	76.9	72.7
16	Earning controlled by relatives (other than parents) and Thekeदार	22.2	36.1
17	Punishment by master if not work	21.6	15.6



# Household and Individual Characteristics and Parent's Perception Towards Child and Development

This chapter addresses the characteristics of households of children working in the carpet sector of the Kathmandu Valley. It is based on information obtained from both children's origin and their destination. The information from origin makes a comparative analysis of the situation of children from migrant and non-migrant households. This is supplemented by information from interviews with children working in the carpet sector in the Kathmandu Valley. Finally, the chapter deals with the perceptions of parents toward children, child labour and development. Each section presents household data collected both at the point of origin and at the place of work.

## 5.1 Demographic Characteristics

### 5.1.1 Family Size and Age/Sex Composition

*Household Information at Origin:* This study has examined the situation of families of child

labourers who work in carpet industries in the area of origin. The area selected was Hariwan VDC of Sarlahi district of Nepal. The study selected 11 households with child labour and another 11 households without child labour, as a control group

The average family size of households with children working in carpet industries is found to be 6.3. This average family size seems to be higher by 0.4 persons (Table 5.1) than other households in the same location with no children working in carpet factories. A lower proportion of children under 15 years of age can be observed in households with child labourers in carpet factories (33.3%) than in the households with no child labourers (47.7%). However, the proportion of children aged 5 to 17 years is higher in the former (43.5%) than in the latter (36.9%). From the table, it is also observed that in both types of households the proportion of boys 5-17 years is higher than girls.

*Household Information at Destination:* Table 5.2 summarizes age and sex composition of household population. The median age of the household population is 16 years. The study population is two years younger than the national median age of 18 years. Of the total household population, 45.8 per cent (855) consists of females and 54.2 per cent (1,012) of males. The lower proportion of females in the sample household population may be due to 'marriage migration'.

*Individual Information at Destination:* Table 5.2 shows the age and sex composition of respondents. The study has found only 7 per

TABLE 5.1:  
Percentage Distribution of Population by Sex, Broad Age Groups, under 18 Years of Age, 5-17 Years of Age and Average Family Size by Type of Household

Age group	HH with CL in carpet factory			LHH with no CL in carpet factory		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-14	39.6	25.8	33.3	50.0	45.4	47.7
15-59	57.9	74.2	65.2	46.9	48.5	47.7
60+	2.6	-	1.5	3.1	6.1	4.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
5-17	47.4	38.7	43.5	40.6	33.3	36.9
Average family size			6.27			5.91

cent of total child labourers in the carpet sector to be under 14 years of age. The majority (62%) consists of 14 to 16 years age group. Gender distribution is fairly similar. Most employers are sensitive to the issue of child labour in carpet factories. It is revealed from discussion with employers that most of them are unaware of ILO Convention 182, which protects a child under 18 years of age from being employed in the worst forms. Some employers regard the employment of children as the provision of 'good 'work' for poor children and their families. They claim that if they did not provide such 'work' children would either go hungry or end up in an even worse situation (as commercial sex workers or street children). One recent study (Subedi, 2002) supported this assertion.

### 5.1.2 Caste/Ethnicity

*Household Information at Destination:* Child labour in the carpet sector crosses the caste/ethnic groups of Nepal. Fifty-eight per cent child labourers in carpet sectors come from Tamang ethnic group who predominately reside in the neighbouring districts of the Kathmandu Valley such as Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Nuwakot, Dhading and Makawanpur (Table 5.3). Three in four child labourers in carpet industries originate from hill ethnic groups including Tamang. There are also substantial numbers of children originating from Tarai (10%), which include Majhi, Kusuwar, Darai, Praja, Tharu,

TABLE 5.3:  
Household Population Distribution by Caste/Ethnicity and Gender

Caste/ethnicity	Male	Female	Total
Tamang	57.6	58.4	58.0
Other hill ethnic group (Magar, Rai, Limbu, Gurung)	18.8	18.4	18.6
Tarai groups	10.8	8.8	9.9
Newar	5.7	6.5	6.1
Dalit	4.6	4.1	4.4
Brahman/Chhetri	2.5	3.9	3.1
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	1,012.0	855.0	1,867.0

Shaha, Das, Musahar, Yadav, Raut, and Chamar. The involvement of children into carpet sectors from Newar, Dalit and Brahman/Chhetri castes is also remarkable.

## 5.2 Literacy and Educational Status

### 5.2.1 Literacy and Level of Education

*Household Information at Origin:* At the point of origin, almost half the people are illiterate in the households with child labourers. The situation is somewhat better in households with no child labourers, which have an illiteracy rate of 34.5 per cent only. The illiteracy rate is higher for females in both types of household (Table 5.4). It can be said that higher levels of illiteracy and lower levels of educational attainment may contribute to the incidence of child labour.

When this data is broken down by age, we find that among children of 5-17 years of age only 66.7 per cent (77.8% boys and 50% girls) are literate in households with child labourers. This

TABLE 5.2:  
Age and Sex Distribution of Child Labourers

Age group	Boys		Girls		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<14	12	7.1	9	6.9	21	7.0
14-16	106	62.4	80	61.5	186	62.0
17-18	52	30.6	41	31.5	93	31.0
Total	170	100.0	130	100.0	300	100.0

TABLE 5.4:  
Percentage Distribution of Population Aged 5 Years and Above by Literacy and Level of Education by Sex and Type of Household

Literacy and Level of education	HH with CL in carpet factory			HH with no CL in carpet factory		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Illiterate	32.4	71.4	50.0	17.9	51.9	34.5
Literate	67.6	28.6	50.0	82.1	48.1	65.5
Primary	58.8	28.6	45.2	60.7	37.0	49.1
Secondary	8.8	-	4.8	21.4	11.1	16.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

compares to 91.7 per cent (100% boys and 81.8% girls) in households without child labourers. It is clear that the literacy rates and levels of education of children from household with no child labour are much better. The lower literacy rates and lower levels of educational attainment of children from households with child labour in carpet factories are obvious in Table 5.5. Some children may have worked before entering school and some may have discontinued their study once starting work in carpet industries.

*Household Information at Destination:* The literacy rate of households with child labourers in Kathmandu is 47 per cent; 7 percentage points lower than the national average of 54 per cent in 2001 (Table 5.6). A wide gender disparity in literacy rates persists among child labourers' household population (60% for males vs. 32% for females). The literacy rate of females is vital for the well being and welfare of children (NESAC, 1998). Among the literate household population, some have been educated to secondary level and above.

*Individual Information at Destination:* In order to measure the literacy rate and educational attainment of child labourers in carpet related industries, respondents were asked whether they

TABLE 5.6:  
Literacy Rate of the Household Population 6 Years and Above

Gender	RA Carpet	Nepal(Population Census, 2001)
Male	59.9	65.1
Female	31.9	42.5
Total	47.2	53.7

could read and write (in any language) and what level of grade they had completed. Half of the total respondents were illiterate, similar to the figures reported in the census of 2001 for rural Nepal. Even most of the literate respondents have had only primary level of education of 1-5 grades (Table 5.7). The literacy rate for girl child labourers in the carpet sector is much lower than the average figure for rural Nepal. For girls between 15 and 18 years it is just 37 per cent (Table 5.8) as against 47 per cent reported by NLSS in 1995/96.

This literacy scenario indicates that most child labourers in carpet sectors are deprived of access to education, perhaps leading them to migrate to urban areas for seeking employment. Previous studies have indicated that a primary level of education is not much help in finding skilled or well-paid employment (NESAC, 1998). Neither is it likely to have a significant change in attitudes towards drug and alcohol use either (Dhital et al., 2001).

TABLE 5.5:  
Percentage Distribution of Children Aged 5-17 Years by Literacy and Level of Education by Sex and Type of Household

Literacy and Level of education	HH with CL in carpet factory			HH with no CL in carpet factory		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Illiterate	22.2	50.0	33.3	-	18.2	8.3
Literate	77.8	50.0	66.7	100.0	81.8	91.7
Primary	66.7	50.0	60.0	84.6	72.7	79.2
Secondary	11.1	-	6.7	15.4	9.1	12.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 5.7:  
Educational Attainment Among Literate Population 6 Years and Above by Gender

Level of Education	RA carpet		NLSS, 1996 Nepal	
	Male (N=571)	Female (N=255)	Total (N=826)	Both
No schooling	12.8	16.5	13.9	8.7
Primary	59.5	63.9	60.9	41.9
Lower Secondary	9.3	9.8	9.4	19.2
Secondary	9.5	4.3	7.9	11.4
SLC	1.1	0.4	0.8	9.0
Level not reported	7.9	5.1	7.0	NA
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 5.8:  
Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Educational Attainment and Gender

Educational status	Boys	Girls	Both
No education	38.2	63.8	49.3
Primary	48.2	23.8	37.7
Some Secondary	10.0	7.7	9.0
Literate, but not enrolled in school	3.5	4.6	4.0

### 5.3 Economic Activity

#### 5.3.1 Principal Activity

*Household Information at Origin:* In the area of origin, where households have children who are working in the carpet industries of the Kathmandu Valley, work in the carpet factories seems to be the principal economic activity for other members of the household too. In households with no child labourers, 29.1 per cent are principally agriculturalists, 9.1 per cent are involved in rented agriculture or alternatively non-agricultural labour, 5.5 per cent are involved in transportation and 3.6 per cent in service. Table 5.9 shows that the proportion of the population involved in agriculture is much lower in households with child labourers than in households with no child labourers. This may indicate that majority of households with child labourers in the carpet sector do not own agricultural land. This may be the principal reason for their children for working in carpet factories for livelihood of the family.

*Household Information at Destination:* Table 5.10 summarizes the main economic activities of the household population. This study indicated that a substantial number of family members of those children working in carpet industries are also involved in carpet making. Though, a majority do still work in agriculture. Key informants, such as adult labourers and employers, reported that there is a high tendency to involve family members in carpet manufacture. This is the case particularly for girl children.

TABLE 5.10:  
Percentage Distribution of Household Population Aged 5 Years and Above, According to Economic Activities and Gender

Economic activities	Male	Female	Total
Agriculture own	19.6	18.8	19.2
Agriculture own and rented	6.1	6.6	6.3
Off farm wage labourers	3.8	0.5	2.3
Agriculture rented	1.0	1.4	1.2
Agricultural wage labourers	1.4	0.6	1.1
House hold work	5.9	24.9	14.6
Agriculture/household work	37.8	52.8	44.7
Work in carpet industries	29.6	24.6	27.3
Work in garment	0.3	0.5	0.4
Work in carpet/garment	29.9	25.1	27.7
Service	2.5	0.1	1.4
Small business/trade	1.5	0.4	1.0
Service/business	4.0	0.5	2.4
School/campus going	18.9	14.5	16.9
Others	8.5	6.9	7.7
DK	0.9	0.2	0.6
Total (Percentage)	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	970	814	1,784

#### 5.3.2 Persons Earning From Main Source of Income

*Household Information at Origin:* Information about the person earning the main source of income for households reveals that in most households with child labour, the role of children is as important as that of the head of the household. For about 64 per cent of households, the main source of income came from both heads of the household and their sons/daughters (Table 5.11). All these indicate the extent of family dependence on children's income from carpet work.

In contrast, the household head contributes the main source of income in households without child labour. Children may still make contributions but it is from service or transportation work.

TABLE 5.9:  
Percentage Distribution of Population Aged 5 Years and Over by Principal Activity by Sex and Type of Household

Principal activity	HH with CL in carpet factory			HH with no CL in carpet factory		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Agriculture (own)	14.7	14.3	14.5	10.7	48.1	29.1
Agriculture (rent)	2.9	3.6	3.2	7.1	11.1	9.1
Agricultural labour	5.9	21.4	12.9	-	-	-
Non-agricultural Labour	11.8	3.6	8.1	17.9	-	9.1
Service	-	-	-	7.1	-	3.6
Carpet and related work	38.2	35.7	37.1	-	-	-
Transportation	-	-	-	10.7	-	5.5
School going	14.7	3.6	9.7	46.4	25.9	36.4
Other	11.8	17.9	14.5	-	14.8	7.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Furthermore, despite children working in carpet factories, the average monthly income (in cash) of households with child labourers is found to be lower than those households without child labourers. The average monthly income of households with child labourers is estimated at Rs. 1,169. It is nearly double for households with no child labourers, at Rs. 2,140.

#### 5.4 Landholding and Food Sufficiency

*Household Information at Origin:* In the area of origin, the majority of households with child labourers working in carpet factories are found to be landless (63.6%), whereas almost 82 per cent of households with no child labourers possess some amount of land (Table 5.12). The ownership of land, or not, may be one of the many 'processes' which lead parents to send their children to work in the carpet factories of the Kathmandu Valley.

*Household Information at Destination:* A substantial proportion of child labourers in this study is from landless households (16.3%). For rural households, land is crucial for survival. Among the different factors of production - such as capital, labour, technology and organization - land contributes to economic security, social status and power-relations. Landless and marginal farmers must become involved in either agricultural wage labour or rent agricultural land for subsistence. Earning and productivity, however, often remain so low that sufficient food can not be provided. Three-fifth of the total households do not have food sufficiency from their own land around the year.

TABLE 5.11: Percentage Distribution of Households by Person/s Earning Main Source of Income/ Subsistence and Average Monthly Income (cash only) by Type of Household

Person/s earning main source of income	HH with CL in carpet factory	HH with no CL in carpet factory	Total
Head of HH (all males)	63.6	100.0	81.8
Wife of HH head	18.2	-	9.1
Son/daughter	63.6	27.3	45.5
Step-son/step-daughter	27.3	-	13.6
Daughter-in-law	9.1	-	4.5
Average monthly income (in Rs.)	1,169	2,140	1,400
Head of HH (all males)	63.6	100.0	81.8

Note: The sum of percentages may exceed 100, because of more than one person earning main source of income in some of the households.

TABLE 5.12: Status of Landholding and Average Number of Months of Food Sufficiency in a Year from Agricultural Land by Type of Household

Status of landholding	HH with CL in carpet factory	HH with no CL in carpet factory	Total
Yes	36.4	81.8	59.1
No	63.6	18.2	40.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average no. of months of food sufficiency from agricultural land	8.0	7.22	7.46

Almost 12 per cent of respondents originated from households with food available only for 1-3 months in a year.

In order to categorize the poverty levels of child labourers in carpet industries, three proxy poverty indicators have been examined: land holding, food sufficiency from own land, and food sufficiency from the major economic activity of the households (Table 5.13).

#### 5.5 Parent's Perceptions Towards Children and Development

##### 5.5.1 Parent's Desire of Educational Level for Children

Among households with children working in carpet industries but with children who are also

TABLE 5.13: Status of Land Holding and Food Sufficiency of Households (in %)

Land holding	Male	Female	Total
Yes	85.9	80.8	83.7
No	14.1	19.2	16.3
Food sufficiency from own land			
1-3 months	12.7	10.9	11.9
4-6 months	31.0	28.7	30.0
7-9 months	16.9	21.8	18.9
10-12 months	39.4	38.6	39.1
Food sufficiency from major activities			
Up to 6 months	8.3	12.0	10.2
6-12 months	70.8	68.0	69.4
DK	20.8	20.0	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

currently going to school, 60 per cent of parents wanted their sons to complete the secondary level of education. Forty per cent wanted their sons to complete beyond the secondary level of education. As for daughters, 25 per cent of parents wanted their daughters to complete the primary level of education while another 50 per cent wished their daughters to complete the secondary level of education. Parental responses have been collected in table 5.14. The table shows the distinct desires between those parents who have and those who do not have children working in carpet industries. Most parents whose children are working in carpet factories desired a lower level of education for children who were currently going to school, especially their daughters. These perhaps reflect a realistic recognition of their inability to afford children's education beyond this.

### 5.5.2 Parent's Perceptions on Importance of Children's Education

The majority of the parents whose children are working in carpet factories said that education is not so important for their children in their future. One-half of parents perceived education as not being so important for their sons, while 37.5 per cent said the same thing for their daughters (Table 5.15). In the households with no child labour by contrast, no body undermined the importance of education for children. About 64 per cent said it is very important for sons and 50 per cent said the same for daughters as well. It might be argued that perceptions of the importance of education have been influenced by the situation which compels parents to send their children to work for the survival of the family.

TABLE 5.14:  
Parents' Desire of Educational Level for Their Son/Daughter (for those only, whose children are currently going to school) by Type of Household

Desired level of education	HH with CL in carpet factory		HH with no CL in carpet factory	
	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter
Primary	-	25.0	9.1	10.0
Secondary	60.0	50.0	18.2	30.0
Secondary +	40.0	25.0	72.7	60.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

TABLE 5.15:  
Parents' Perceptions on Importance of Son/Daughter's Education by Type of Household

Importance of education	HH with CL in carpet factory		HH with no CL in carpet factory	
	Son	Daughter	Son	Daughter
Very important	30.0	37.5	63.6	50.0
Somewhat important	20.0	25.0	36.4	50.0
Not so important	50.0	37.5	-	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

### 5.5.3 Perceptions on Child Labour and Its Improvement

Out of the total households with child labour in the carpet industries, about 73 per cent of parents responded that they are happy with their children working. Only 27.3 per cent said they are not really happy with this work (See Table 5.16). Among those who were happy, 62.5 per cent mentioned that they are happy because their family needs more income and they can make it if their children have carpet work. Twenty-five per cent of them said they have to be happy because their children are not interested in going to school, so it is better to work in a carpet factory rather than doing nothing at home. The remaining 12.5 per cent are found to be unable to afford the expenses of their child's education and are happy that their children are earning money.

Among those who said not happy with their children working in carpet factories in Kathmandu Valley, 33.3 per cent each pointed out that they are not happy because children should be at school, or because children should stay at home and work on their own farm. In

TABLE 5.16:  
Parents Happy and Not Happy with Their Children Working in Carpet

	Percent	Number
Happy with children working in carpet factory?		
Yes	72.7	8
No	27.3	3
Total	100.0	11
Happy because		
Family needs more income	62.5	5
Parents can not pay for child's education	12.5	1
Child does not want to go to school	25.0	2
Total	100.0	8
Not happy because		
Children should be at school	33.3	1
Children should stay at home and work in own farm	33.3	1
Both	33.3	1
Total	100.0	3

households where parents are not happy with their children working in carpet factories, most children are found to have run away alone, with friends or relatives.

On asking those parents whose children are working in carpet factories whether children should be free from work if they want to go to school 40 per cent said no (for boys) and 50 per cent said no (for girls). These answers are collected in Table 5.17). Nearly one-half of parents were found to be against sending their children back to school, indicating that many families are dependent on their children's earning. Most parents agreed that if their children are sent back to school they will miss an important source of income. Some parents were of the specific opinion that it is not necessary to educate daughters and they should not be freed from working, even when they want to go to school.

Parent's perceptions about a child's work in carpet factories suggest that parents accept it for about 27 per cent of children. They feel it is not harmful or bad to put children into carpet work because they need additional income, which comes from child's work.

TABLE 5.17:  
Parent's Perceptions on Whether Children Should be Free from Working if They Want to Go to School by Gender

	Boys		Girls	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Whether children should be freed from working if they want to go to school				
Yes	60.0	6	50.0	4
No	40.0	4	50.0	4
Total	100.0	10	100.0	8
No, because of				
Economic hardship	100.0	4	75.0	3
No need to educate daughter	-	-	25.0	1
Total	100.0	4	100.0	4

Note: The total number of cases on 'whether children should be freed from working if they want to go to schools' differs because of either 'no son' or 'no daughter' in the households.

On asking parents about what should be done to prevent child's work in the carpet sector, a majority of children's parents (66.7%) said there should be enough income in the family and only then could child labour be prevented. Similarly, 33.3 per cent of children's parents suggested that if they had enough land to farm their child could be prevented from working in carpet factories. It could be said that some of parents of child workers accept child labour without any hesitation, while the majority of them recognize that their children are compelled to work for a number of reasons.

## CHAPTER 6

# Working Conditions of Carpet Child Labourers

### 6.1 Initiation of Work in the Carpet Factory

Carpet making by involving children has emerged as a family occupation for certain section of the Nepalese population. This is attested by more than one third of the total respondents with at least one family member working together in the same factory. This proportion is quite high among girl child labourers as compared to boys (51% vs. 32.9%) (Table 6.1). Some of the adult labourers have been working in carpet sectors for the last 10-12 years. They reported that they could not work outside the carpet factory, as they become accustomed to working inside the factory. It is expected that children of these parents, including new comers were involved in carpet making from the very early childhood.

Early childhood is affected by child labour phenomenon in carpet sectors. Overall, 38 per cent of the total respondents entered into the carpet factory before attaining the age of 14, and 62 per cent entered into the factory when they were 14 years (Table 6.2). More boys than girls entered the carpet factory in their early

TABLE 6.2:  
Cumulative Proportion of Respondents' Age of Entry into Carpet Factory for First Time

Age at first entry	Boys(N=170)	Girls(N=130)	Both(N=300)
9	4.1	0.0	2.3
10	7.1	0.8	4.3
11	12.4	8.5	10.7
12	19.4	15.4	17.7
13	43.5	30.0	37.7
14	65.9	56.2	61.7
15	85.3	81.5	83.7
16	97.1	92.3	95.0
17	100.0	100.0	100.0

childhood. For example, two thirds of boys and a little less than one third of the girls entered the carpet factory before attaining their 15th birthday. Much research is needed to understand why boys enter the carpet factory earlier than girls do. Some of our Key Informants indicated that most girls came to work in the carpet factories with the consent of parents while boys come largely independently. Girls' running away from home is considered unethical in the Nepalese society while this may not be then case for boys.

A question was asked to the respondents about the nature of carpet-work in which they were involved at first and the results are summarized according to gender in Table 6.3. An overwhelmingly majority of respondents first involved in carpet weaving/knotting (88%), with slightly higher proportion of boys (93%) than girls (81%). The second major carpet related work in which children first involved was spinning and carding. A few children were first involved in balling/rolling, wool washing and cutting and packing. None of the respondents first entered into dyeing and washing of carpet. The nature of current work also indicates that almost all child labourers are involved in carpet weaving and knotting. Carding and spinning are also noticeable sources of employment for girls.

TABLE 6.1:  
Distribution of Respondents According to Number of Family Members Working in the Carpet Factories

Number of Family Members	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total family members						
None	131	77.1	64	49.2	195	65.0
One	18	10.6	34	26.2	52	17.3
Two	10	5.9	15	11.5	25	8.3
Three to Five	11	6.5	17	13.1	28	9.3
Total	170	100.0	130	100.0	300	100.0



TABLE 6.3:  
Distribution of Respondent According to Initiation of Carpet Work and Nature of Current Work by Gender

Nature of work Initiation of work	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Weaving/knotting	158	92.9	105	80.8	263	87.7
Carding/spinning	4	2.4	15	11.5	19	6.3
Balling/rolling	3	1.8	6	4.6	9	3.0
Wool washing	3	1.8	4	3.1	7	2.3
Cutting and packing	2	1.2	0	0	2	0.7
Currently working						
Weaving/knotting	163	95.9	113	86.9	276	92.0
Carding/spinning	4	2.4	16	12.3	20	6.7
Cutting and packing	2	1.2	0	0	2	0.7
Others	1	0.6	1	0.8	2	0.7
Total	170	100.0	130.0	100.0	300	100.0

## 6.2 Time Allocation and Working Hours

Time allocation of child labourers in carpet factory was also recorded in this study and the results are presented in Table 6.4. Daily routine of child labourers in carpet sectors is completely different from a child who has got access to schooling even in rural Nepal. On the average, the waking up time of these children was reported to be 5:30 AM, and 48 per cent of total respondents are forced to wake-up before 6 AM. Most striking is that a few respondents have had time for going to toilet, taking bath and tea as they should work immediately after rising. The average time of starting work in the carpet factory is around 6 A.M.

Most children had to work up to late night as the estimated average time for stopping the work is 9 PM, which is slightly higher for boys. There are few respondents who stop work before 6 PM (N=12), and one-third of the respondents reported that they stop work in between 6 PM to 8 PM. and 63 per cent of the total respondents

stop work in between 8 PM to 11 PM. These findings of time allocation of child labourers in carpet sector clearly suggest the fact that there is a gross violation of ILO Convention 182 and Labour Act, 1992, which prohibits children under 18 to work at night even in non-hazardous form of work.

Table 6.5 summarizes average working hours of child labourers in carpet related industries. On the average, children work 15 hours a day, which is 7 hours more than legally allowed even for an adult worker. If considering working hours by age and gender, it is evident that younger girls less than 14 years work 2 hours more (14 hours) than boys (12 hours). These results are consistent with

TABLE 6.5:  
Average Working Hours by Age and Gender

Age group	Average Working Hours		
	Boys	Girls	Both sex
<14	12.2	14.3	13.1
14-16	14.9	15.1	15.0
17-18	15.0	14.6	14.8
Total	14.8	14.9	14.8

TABLE 6.4:  
Distribution of Respondents and Time Allocation

Daily Work	Male		Female		Total	
Wake-up time						
Before 6 AM	77	45.3	68	52.3	145	48.3
6 AM and after	93	54.7	62	47.7	155	51.7
Average time	5:30 AM		5:30 AM		5:30 AM	
Work starting time						
Before 6 AM	77	45.3	68	52.3	145	48.3
6 AM and after	93	54.7	62	47.7	155	51.7
Average time	5:55 AM		5:55 AM		5:55 AM	
Work stopping time						
Before 6 PM	8	4.7	4	3.1	12	4.0
6 PM-8 PM	57	33.7	41	31.8	98	32.9
8 PM-11 PM	104	61.5	84	65.1	188	63.1
Average time	9:10 PM		8:45 PM		9:00 PM	
Total	169	100.0	129	100.0	298	100.0

Note: two cases are missing from work stopping time.

BISCONS study (1998) on child labour in carpet factories of the Kathmandu Valley.

It appears that child labourers in carpet sectors not only are different from the average children of Nepal, they are also completely different from those children who are economically active. This is because the average working hours of child labourers in carpet sectors is as high as 7 times more than those economically active children of the same age group in Nepal (data from KC, 1999). In this context, there is little hope of recreational and rest time for these children, which is dealt in detail in the following section.

### 6.3 Child Labour in Carpet Sector and Schooling Opportunity

KC et al. (1999: 1-32) reported that about one-fourth of the total children aged 5-14 were combining work and school in Nepal. However, child labour in carpet sectors appears to be completely incompatible with schooling. For example, only 7 (2.3%) respondents (6 girls and 1 boy) reported that they were working and attending school but an overwhelming majority of children reported that they are only working in carpet sectors as they did not have opportunity and time to enroll in schools (Table 6.6). Among those who were combining schooling and child labour in carpet sectors, only one girl was attending to a non-formal class while 6 girls and one boy reported that they have

TABLE 6.6:  
Table 6.6: Schooling and Child Labour in Carpet Sector

	Boys	Girls	Both
Whether going to school?			
Yes	1	6	7
No	169	124	293
Types of educational institutions			
Non-formal educational institutions		1	1
Formal educational institutions	1	5	6

enrolled in a public school. These fortunate ones, however, belong to master's or supervisor's family. It is to be noted that these masters and supervisors work in the factory and milk the profit from children's sweat.

### 6.4 Earning Status

It was understood from the survey that children work very long hours, averaging 15 hours a day and seven days a week. They have little opportunity to participate in social and recreational activities. They lack time and freedom of mobility. In such a situation, this study analyses how their work for long hours matches with the level of earning.

#### 6.4.1 Income

Table 6.7 summarizes the income status of respondents according to gender. Overall, monthly income is estimated to be around Rs. 1,700 with the median income of Rs. 1,500, which indicates that half of respondents earn less than Rs. 1,500<sup>14</sup> per month and half of the them earn more than Rs. 1,500. There is no remarkable gender disparity in earnings

TABLE 6.7:  
Monthly Income and Extent of Support to the Family, According to Gender

Monthly earning/support to the family	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Monthly income (in Rs.)						
< 1,000	41	25.3	24	19.2	65	22.6
1,000-1,999	50	30.9	45	36.0	95	33.1
2,000-2,999	43	26.5	41	32.8	84	29.3
3,000-8,000	24	14.8	8	6.4	32	11.1
Income not reported	4	2.5	7	5.6	11	3.8
Average monthly income (in Rs.)	1,715		1,650		1,690	
Median monthly income (in Rs.)	1,500		1,500		1,500	
Extent of support to the family						
100%	1	0.6	1	0.8	2	0.7
50%	8	4.9	13	10.4	21	7.3
25%	93	57.4	71	56.8	164	57.1
Not at all	60	37.0	40	32.0	100	34.8
Total	162	100.0	125	100.0	287	100.0

Note: Those reporting currently learning work and helping their relatives were excluded from the table.

<sup>14</sup> Exchange rate at the time of the survey, one year ago (June 2002), was US\$1.0 = NRS.78.0.

although on the average boys earn Rs. 65 per month more than girls. This earning is extracted from working on an average of 15 hours a day. Most discouraging scenario is that this income is so small that one peon level staff in the civil service working for 8 hours a day earns around Rs. 3,000, with absolute security of his job and many rest hours.

Key Informants complained that their remuneration has not been increased for the last 5-6 years but the cost of living concerning food, clothing and kerosene has skyrocketed. Given the current year price index of Nepal, most of the child labourers' real income has declined by two to threefold since last five years. For example, the price of the lowest quality rice 5 years ago was around Rs. 8-10 per kg. It increased to more than Rs. 20.00 per kg now.

It is essential to understand here to what extent child labourers' small income is vital for the livelihood of the family. One-third of respondents reported that their income is not helpful at all to support their family. While two-thirds reported that their income is, to some extent, helpful in managing their family. More girls than boys were reporting this. More than half of respondents (57%) reported that their income contributes at least 25 per cent of the family's spending on food, clothing, health as well as schooling of children. There were very few respondents (21) reporting that their income supplement would be about 50 per cent

of their family's total spending. There were two respondents (one girl and one boy) who reported that their families were completely dependent on them (Table 6.7).

Extent of family support also depends upon children's average monthly earnings. Among 92 boys whose monthly income is less than the median income of the sample (i.e. Rs. 1,500), about half reported that they can not support their family (N=45/92) and the remaining 50 per cent (47) reported that their income contributes about 25 per cent of the family's spending. In case of girls, even with the minimum income i.e. equal to the median income of the sample, about two thirds reported that their income contributes about 25 per cent of the total spending of their family (Table 6.8).

#### 6.4.2 Control over Earning and Indebtedness

Regarding the control over their earnings (i.e. including those respondents who even reported they were learning work and helping their relatives), two-fifth of total respondents reported that they were not receiving their remuneration in their hand but extracted by Thekedars and other relatives (Table 6.9). These children are mostly younger, working under the debt situation of parents and are from poor families by implication.

A few respondents' parents reported to have been indebted to employers and/or middlemen

TABLE 6.8:  
Number of Respondents by Monthly Income and Extent of Support to the Family

Extent of support	Monthly income in Rs.			Total
	< = 1500	1501-2400	2401+	
Boys				
100%	0	1	0	1
50%	0	1	7	8
25%	47	17	27	91
No support	45	10	11	66
Total	92	29	45	166
Girls				
100%	0	0	1	1
50%	4	4	5	13
25%	41	16	12	69
No support	22	12	6	40
Total	67	32	24	123

Note: 10 cases are missing (4 boys and 3 girls), as their income was not reported.

(3%), yet 11 in 100 respondents did not know about the indebtedness situation of their parents. Similarly, 5.4 per cent of the total respondents reported that employers/middlemen gave advance money to their parents in order to employ them in the carpet factory. Yet a remarkable number of children are unsure whether their parents received money at all from employers/middlemen in order to employ them in the carpet factory (Table 6.10). Answers to the questions of indebtedness and advance taken by parents were not solicited from parents and may be subject to exaggeration. This is because borrowing is one of the coping strategies of rural-people, which is widely reported to be disproportionately exploitative<sup>15</sup> against tenants, sharecroppers, small/marginal farmers and other debtors. About 6 in 10 such households in Nepal were reported to be indebted in 1992 with Rs. 9,987 average debt per household (NESAC, 1998). The reason for borrowing was mainly for domestic consumption (66%).

Many poor households face incompatibility in borrowing loans from formal institutions such as Small Farmer's Bank because of bribery, time consuming process, too far distance to banks, lack of information and lack of mortgage (NPC,

1998). This has increased high dependence of many poor rural-households on moneylenders or middlemen and/or employers of carpet factories for their subsistence. Such dependence is widely reported case of bonded child labour practices.

### 6.4.3 Mode of Payment

Although 5 per cent of the total interviewed children were unpaid workers, payment system appears to be common in carpet making. Four types of mode of payment exist in carpet making: price rate per sq. meter in case of carpet weaving (59%), monthly salary (28%), price rate (per kg. wool) (7.7%) in case of spinning and rolling of wool and daily wages (Table 6.11). The dominant modes of payment are either piece basis or salary.

Unpaid child labourers are those children who were learning work (2.7%) and helping their relatives (1.7%). These children are much exploited in the sense that they do not get their remuneration in the name of apprenticeship system. These children are mostly younger under 14 years of age and have been working for the last 6 months. They are twice provided with daily meals and a cup of tea, and accommodation facilities within the factory premises.

TABLE 6.9:  
Respondents Reporting Control of Earning by Gender

Control of earnings	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self	123	72.4	57	43.8	180	60.0
Other relatives	24	14.1	31	23.8	55	18.3
Parents	10	5.9	27	20.8	37	12.3
Thekedar	13	7.6	15	11.6	28	9.4
Total	170	100.0	130	100.0	300	100.0

TABLE 6.10:  
Indebtedness of Child Labour's Family

Indebtedness/Advance Situation	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents indebted by employers/middlemen						
Debt taken	6	4.8	1	.9	7	2.9
Debt not taken	103	83.1	104	89.7	207	86.2
Don't know	15	12.1	11	9.5	26	10.8
Parents taken advance from employers/ middlemen						
Advance taken	7	5.6	6	5.2	13	5.4
Advance not taken	104	83.9	95	81.9	199	82.9
Don't know	13	10.5	15	12.9	28	11.7

<sup>15</sup> The average interest rate was 31 per cent per year (17% for institutional and 37% for non-institutional).

It was further asked if the employers provided the respondents additional incentives. An overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) reported that they get additional incentives from employers (Table 6.12). Among those who reported receiving incentives from the employers, almost all were provided living rooms in the factory premises (91%), followed by food (33%). Other incentives included medical treatment (6%), clothes (2%), bonus (0.7%) and skill training (0.3%).

Field research included observation of most of the sampled factories regarding the overall sanitary condition such as the cleanness, toilet and sewerage facilities, access to drinking water, lighting, height of room and number of persons living in a room. As more than 90 per cent of the labourers stay inside the factory premises with

an average of 20 to 100 persons, most of the factories are unable to manage sanitary condition - cleaning toilets, managing waste disposal and refuse, adequate water supply and lighting. Sewerage facilities are rare, toilets are worse than most public toilets in the Kathmandu Valley. Drinking water is mostly drawn from hand-pump. Living in such a condition would cause labourers diarrhea and typhoid more frequently.

Access to rooms to the labourers including child labourers is provided on the basis of number of working persons living in the room. Employers reported that they could not provide single room for a family if it has not at least 3 working persons in carpet making<sup>16</sup>. However, it was observed that most of the living rooms lacked natural ventilation and on an average, five persons live together in a room (Table 6.13).

TABLE 6.11:  
Respondents Reporting the Mode of Payment

Mode of payment	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Paid child labourers	162	95.3	124	95.4	286	95.3
Price rate (Sq. meter)	95	55.9	83	63.8	178	59.3
Monthly salary	60	35.3	24	18.5	84	28.0
Price rate (Per kg. wool)	6	3.5	17	13.1	23	7.7
Daily wages	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.3
Unpaid child labourers	8	4.8	6	4.7	14	4.7
Learning work	4	2.4	4	3.1	8	2.7
Helping only relatives	4	2.4	1	0.8	5	1.7
Others	0	0.0	1	0.8	1	0.3
Total	170	100.0	130	100.0	300	100.0

TABLE 6.12:  
Additional Incentives Provided by Employers

Additional incentives	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Whether incentives provided?						
Not at all	9	5.3	13	10.0	22	7.3
Yes	161	94.7	117	90.0	278	92.7
Types of Incentives						
Room	158	92.9	115	88.5	273	91.0
Food	67	39.4	31	23.8	98	32.7
Medical treatment	6	3.5	11	8.5	17	5.7
Clothes	4	2.4	2	1.5	6	2.0
Bonus	1	0.6	1	0.8	2	0.7
Skill training	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.3

TABLE 6.13:  
Distribution of Respondents by Number of Persons living in a Room

No. of persons living in the room	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-4	73	42.9	50	38.5	123	41.0
5-8	80	47.1	75	57.7	155	51.7
9-13	17	10.0	5	3.8	22	7.3
Total	170	100.0	130	100.0	300	100.0
Average number of persons	5.3		5.1		5.2	
Median number of persons	5.0		5.0		5.0	

<sup>16</sup> However, none of the labourers are allowed to work outside the factory if they are staying inside the factory premises. This may restrict the mobility of labourers freely.

The median number of persons living in a room is 5 and about three-fifth of the total respondents were living in a room with 5 persons and more. Given the small size (mostly 6 x 8 feet) of rooms with poor ventilation in most of the factories, more than four persons living in such rooms is considered overcrowded and unsanitary inviting health hazardous.

### 6.5 Occupational Health and Safety

The data in this section has been drawn from another component of the Rapid Assessment Survey of child labour in the carpet industry in Nepal, which was simultaneously undertaken by Dr. Saeed Awan, Director of Centre for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment, Lahore, Pakistan. The basic aim of the study was to document a health and safety profile of the working children (Annex 6).

In addition to children working in the carpet factories, data for children of the similar age group and gender as the working children from the same localities was also collected to serve as a control group for the study. The health profiles of both groups were compared to have an insight of the impact of carpet weaving on the physical and psychological development of children. In addition, a small group of adults was also selected for the health-monitoring component of the study. As most of these adults had started working when they were children, their health profile reflects the cumulative health and safety implications of carpet weaving as a regular occupation.

### 6.5.1 Health Complaints of the Respondents

All the respondent children were asked about the common illnesses and health related complaints they have. The complaints of working children were then compared with those of the control group children, which are presented in Table 6.14 and Figure 6.1.

As can be seen from this data, there was no consistent pattern of health related complaints. While the complaints about cough, chest pain, joints pain, backache, diarrhea and skin problems were higher among the working children, more control group children complained about headache and stomachache.

FIGURE 6.1: Comparison of Health Related Complaints of Working Children with the Control Group

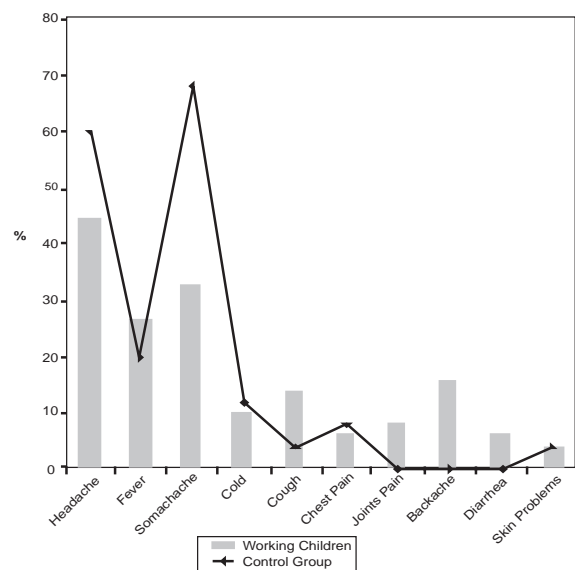


TABLE 6.14: Health Related Complaints of Working and Control Group Children

Health Complaint	Working Children			Control Group		
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Headache	35.7	54.2	44.2	71.4	45.5	60.0
Fever	28.6	25.0	26.9	7.1	36.4	20.0
Stomachache	32.1	33.3	32.7	64.3	72.7	68.0
Cold	14.3	4.2	9.6	7.1	18.2	12.0
Cough	17.9	8.3	13.5	7.1	0	4.0
Chest Pain	0	12.5	5.8	7.1	0	4.0
Joints Pain	7.1	8.3	7.7	0	0	0
Backache	7.1	25.0	15.4	0	0	0
Diarrhea	7.1	4.2	5.8	0	0	0
Skin Problems	7.1	0	3.8	7.1	-	4.0

### 6.5.2 Health and Safety Indicators of the Working Children, Control Group and the Adult Workers

An analysis of health and safety indicators measured as a result of clinical observations as well as the tests administered to the working children, control group and adult workers is given in this section. The adult workers, as mentioned earlier were included in the study and were physically examined. A total of 30 adults including 19 women and 11 men aged 18 to 30 were examined. The age and gender profile of these adults reflects the profile of workforce in carpet weaving sector. It seems that most of the workforce is relatively young and may yet be another indicator of the high turnover of the labour force in this sector.

All the respondents were examined by a physician, who also asked questions about the history of illnesses and some aspects of psychological stresses. The data of working children was compared with that from the control group, while that for the adult workers is also presented. The differences in proportions between working and control group children were checked through statistical formulae to test the significance of these differences. The results are outlined below.

## 6.6 General Health Examination

All the children were physically examined by the occupational physician. The physician recorded his opinion on vital health indicators and diseases suffered by these children. The

physician recorded his observations based on the medical checkup and tests performed on each child. Data about weight, height, eyesight, pulse and blood pressure were recorded. In order to assess the impact of work on the lungs of children, all the children were given Pulmonary Function Test (PFT). The physician also carried out examinations of children's limbs, respiratory system, evidence of injuries, systemic exam, gastro-intestinal system, cardio-vascular system and musculo-skeletal system. The results of this part of examination are presented in Table 6.15.

As can be seen, there is no consistent pattern of health impairment. Every fourth working girl was found to be anaemic. Symptoms of anaemia and vertigo were also very high among the adult workers. The control group children had a higher ration of palpable lymph nodes, which might be due to some seasonal infections.

### 6.6.1 Respiratory Diseases

In this section the comparative data for the incidence of respiratory diseases among the respondents is presented.

As can be seen from the comparative data given in Table 6.16, the incidence of pain chest, cough, rhinitis, and other respiratory diseases was higher in the working children as well as the adults in comparison with the control group. This indicates the susceptibility of these workers to respiratory illnesses due to exposure to dust from the work, combined with awkward posture, cramped working environment and lack of access to proper health care facilities.

TABLE 6.15:  
Comparison of Vital Health Indicators

Disease/Health Indicator	Gender	Incidence in Working Children (%)	Incidence in Control Group (%)	Incidence in Adults (% in both sexes)
Anaemia	Males	0	0	16.7
	Females	25.0	9.1	
	All	11.5	4.0	
Palpable Lymph Nodes	Males	21.4	42.9	0
	Females	4.2	18.2	
	All	13.5	32.0	
Vertigo	Males	35.7	42.9	66.7
	Females	50.0	45.5	
	All	42.3	44.0	

### 6.6.2 Skin Allergies and Diseases

Several cases of skin allergies (5.8%) and scabies (5.8%) were detected in the working children, while there was no case in the control group children. This difference may again be attributed to unhygienic and cramped conditions in the carpet industry.

### 6.6.3 Musculo-skeletal Problems

The work on the carpet loom involves use of hands, shoulders, back muscles and joints. In order to assess the impact of work on the musculo-skeletal system of the children, they

were thoroughly examined. The results of this part of examination are given in Table 6.17.

The comparative results of this section reveal that the carpet-weaving children are highly likely to suffer from musculo-skeletal disorders than the non-working children belonging to the similar socio-economic strata of society.

All the respondent children were asked questions about the symptoms of various musculo-skeletal problems and were also administered 'Phalen's Test'<sup>17</sup>. Those, who could

TABLE 6.16:  
Comparison of Respiratory Illnesses

Disease/Health Indicator	Gender	Incidence in Working Children (%)	Incidence in Control Group (%)	Incidence in Adult workers (%)
Pain chest	Males	14.3	7.1	9.1
	Females	16.7	9.1	21.1
	All	15.4	8.0	16.7
Cough	Males	35.7	14.3	45.5
	Females	20.8	18.2	10.5
	All	28.8	16.0	23.3
Pulmonary tuberculosis (TB)	Males	3.6	0	9.1
	Females	0	0	0
	All	1.9	0	3.3
Rhinitis	Males	10.7	0	27.3
	Females	29.2	0	26.3
	All	19.2	0	26.7
Tonsillitis	Males	7.1	14.3	0
	Females	8.3	0	10.5
	All	7.7	8.0	6.7

TABLE 6.17:  
Comparison of Musculo-skeletal Disorders

Disease/Health Indicator	Gender	Incidence in Working Children (%)	Incidence in Control Group (%)	Incidence in Adults (%)
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	Males	17.8	0	50.0
	Females	8.3	0	50.0
	All	13.5	0	50.0
Low back pain	Males	39.3	14.3	81.8
	Females	50.0	0	73.7
	All	44.2	8.0	76.7
Pain neck & shoulders	Males	35.7	0	90.9
	Females	54.2	0	78.9
	All	44.2	0	83.3
Ganglionic cyst	Males	0	0	0
	Females	4.2	9.1	15.8
	All	1.9	4.0	10.0
Pain abdomen	Males	46.4	57.1	54.5
	Females	58.3	63.6	47.4
	All	51.9	60.0	50.0
Bowlegs	Males	10.7	0	0
	Females	0	0	5.3
	All	5.8	0	3.3

<sup>17</sup> Phalen's Test is a test for carpal tunnel syndrome in which both hands are held tightly Palma flexed opposite to a prayer position, creating at least a 90° angle between the forearm and the hand. If the test is positive, numbness and tingling are produced when the hands are held in this position for approximately 30 seconds.



### Box 6.1: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS)

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common problem that affects the hand and wrist. This condition, or syndrome, has become the focus of much attention in the last few years due to suggestions that it may be linked to occupations that require repetitive use of the hands - such as typing.

#### What Causes CTS?

As stated earlier, swelling of the tendons that line the carpal tunnel causes CTS. Although there are many reasons for developing this swelling of the tendon, it can result from repetitive and forceful movements of the wrist during work and leisure activities. Job tasks involving highly repetitive manual acts, or necessitating wrist bending or other stressful wrist postures as found in the carpet-weaving, are connected with incidents of CTS or related problems.

#### Symptoms of CTS

The symptoms of CTS often first appear as painful tingling in one or both hands during the night, frequently painful enough to disturb sleep. Accompanying this is a feeling of uselessness in the fingers, which are sometimes described as feeling swollen, even though little or no swelling is apparent. As symptoms increase, tingling may develop during the day, commonly in the thumb, index, and ring fingers. A decreased ability and power to squeeze things may follow. Many patients with CTS are unable to differentiate hot from cold by touch, and experience an apparent loss of strength in their fingers. They appear clumsy in that they have trouble performing simple tasks such as tying their shoes or picking up small objects.

#### Prevention

One way to prevent this condition is by relieving awkward wrist positions and repetitive hand movements. Other approaches include altering the existing method for performing the job task and providing more frequent rest breaks.

#### Treatment

Treatment of CTS may involve surgery to release the compression on the median nerve and/or use of anti-inflammatory drugs and hand splinting to reduce tendon swelling in the carpal tunnel.

not perform the required maneuver and confirmed the symptoms, were labeled as positive cases of carpal tunnel syndrome where the affected person feels tingling and pain in arms, hands, and shoulders during the night (Box 6.1 below). This data is indicative of the high incidence of musculo-skeletal disorders among the carpet-weaving children, which are caused by awkward posture, traumas and stresses on the muscles, poor lighting conditions, long working hours and cramped work spaces.

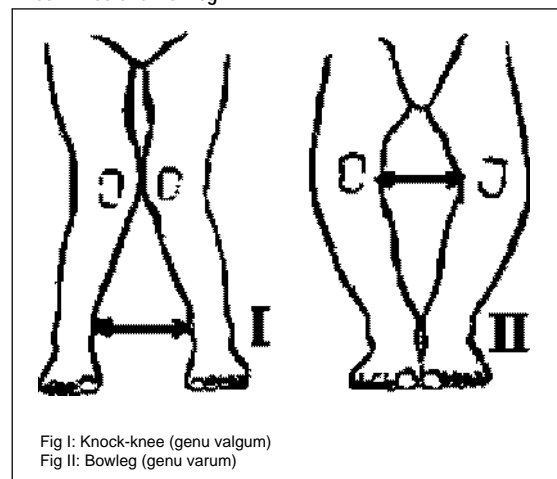
Lack of physical activities, specifically physical exercise, may compound these problems. The incidence of musculo-skeletal disorders among the female working children was generally higher than the males, which shows that they are more susceptible to musculo-skeletal problems than the males. Furthermore, most of the adult workers were found suffering from one or several musculo-skeletal disorders.

Interestingly 10 per cent of the working children were found to have bowlegs (see Box 6.2), which is a knee deformity. On the other hand, no case of bowlegs was detected among female working

children or the control group children of both sexes. None of the respondents was detected having knock-knees.

The sitting posture on the loom is such that the worker has to either sit on foot pads or ankles. Long working hours and growing bones at age 7 and beyond leads to bending of the bones of the knees, which affects the gait of the child and usually continues in the adulthood (See Figure 6.2).

FIGURE 6.2:  
Knock-Knee and Bowleg



### Box 6.2: Knock-Knees and Bowlegs

Knock-knee (or genu valgum) is a condition where the legs are bowed inwards in the standing position. The bowing usually occurs at or around the knee, so that on standing with the knees together, the feet are far apart. Bowleg (or genu varum) is a condition where the legs are bowed outwards in the standing position. The bowing usually occurs at or around the knee, so that on standing with the feet together, the knees are far apart.

Most people have some degree of bowleg or knock-knee and are considered within normal limits. During development in the first few years of life, because of rapid and differential growth around the knees, most children are bowlegged from birth till age 3, then become knock-kneed till age 5, then straighten up by age 6 or 7. In most children, even as they grow through these phases, the bowleg and knock-knee are not severe, and are not a cause of concern. In some instances, the bowleg or knock-knee gets quite obvious, and becomes a reason to worry. There are, some more serious causes of bowlegs and knock-knees. They include the following:

1. Growth disturbance - or epiphyseal dysplasia, which may be a part of a generalized bone growth disturbance, and may be caused due to uncomfortable posture at work.
2. Rickets - Lack of vitamin D intake, or inability to metabolize vitamin D due to kidney disease can cause growth disturbance of the bones in the body, including the knee.
3. Post-trauma - where injury to the knee causes damage to the growth plate (also called the epiphyseal plate) and abnormal growth around the knee.

The children in the carpet sector seem to suffer from the first cause as they are above the age of 7 and have to sit with their knees bent for prolonged hours. The treatment of the conditions depends on the severity and types of symptoms. In some cases it is considered worth raising the inner edge of the heel of the shoes slightly. In severe cases, walking braces or night splints may be used, or even an operation to correct the situation. In carpet sector perhaps more frequent rest breaks, and regular exercise of legs and feet will help.

**FIGURE 6.18:**  
Comparison of ENT Disorders

Disease/Health Indicator	Gender	Incidence in Working Children (%)	Incidence in Control Group (%)	Incidence in Adults (%)
Deafness	Males	7.1	0	0
	Females	0	0	5.3
	All	3.8	0	3.3
Other ear diseases	Males	92.9	7.1	0
	Females	50.0	0	5.3
	All	44.2	4.1	3.3
DNS	Males	7.1	0	9.1
	Females	0	0	15.8
	All	4.0	0	13.3
Nosebleed	Males	14.3	0	27.3
	Females	12.5	0	5.3
	All	13.5	0	13.3

#### 6.6.4 ENT Examination

The clinical examination of ear, nose and throat of all the respondents was carried out. The results are presented in Table 6.18. The incidence of Ear diseases was significantly high among the male working children than the control group boys ( $Z$  value = 2.773) which shows that the work in carpet sector is somehow associated with ear infections. Half of the working girls were found to be suffering from ear diseases. Similarly many of the adults were also found to be suffering from ENT maladies.

#### 6.7 Evaluation of Working Environment in Carpet Industry

The researchers assessed the conditions of the working environment in the homes and production centres where these children worked. Data about the lighting, ventilation, dust exposure and general facilities available at the workplaces was collected through this form. Working environment monitoring equipment was used to record the data.

At each factory, the workplaces were visited for measurement and assessment of working

environment hazards. A total of 13 enterprises, from which the child labourers and adult workers were examined. The working environment was also evaluated for the various assessments of hazards faced by the workers. These measurements were carried out by trained hygienists from the Occupational Safety and Health Project (OSH), His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N). For estimation of the workers' exposure to dust, Method 0500 of US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) was used. Similarly, for measurement of illumination levels in the workplaces, a calibrated LUX meter was used. The results of measurements were then compared with internationally recommended exposure limits.

The general hygiene and sanitation facilities at each worksite were also examined for their adequacy. The results of this part of the study are given in the following sections.

### 6.7.1 Dust Exposure of the Workers

The dust emanating from carpet weaving process contains dyed wool yarn. Dust is one of the most common air-borne contaminant affecting the health of workers worldwide. The wool dust can cause irritant effects and allergies of the respiratory system and long-term exposure may result in obstructive lung diseases. None of the workers was seen using any protective devices like masks.

The dust exposure of workers at all the sites was monitored and their exposure in the form of Time Weighted Average (TWA) for 8-hours work-day was calculated. The data was compared with the internationally recommended standards for hazardous particulate matter. The dust exposure data along with the size of enterprises is given in Table 6.19. The name of the enterprise has not been disclosed here. The same serial number for each enterprise is used in later parts of this section.

There is no well-established exposure standard for wool dust. However, for raw cotton the American Conference of Industrial Hygienists (ACIH) has proposed a limit of 0.1 mg/m<sup>3</sup>. Also for most hazardous dusts, the exposure limits in most countries are around 1 mg/m<sup>3</sup>. If these standards are considered as yardstick, then most of the workplaces had excessive dust exposure, which is further compounded by the fact that such standards are meant for healthy adults and not children and are applicable for 8-hour work day, and not for excessively long working hours as are observed in the carpet factories.

### 6.7.2 Illumination

Good lighting at the workplace is essential not only for visual comfort, it also reduces the chances of errors and injuries. Carpet-weaving is a meticulous task requiring immense concentration and dexterity. The natural and artificial lighting in the workplaces were checked with visually as well as with an illumination meter. Out of 13 factories, only 3 had adequate natural lighting. Transparent fibre glass sheets in the tin roofs of the factories were used as source of natural light. But most factories did not have adequate number of such sheets. As looms were installed in large-sized halls, the light from windows did not reach most of the looms installed away from windows. The fluorescent lights and electric bulbs were available in most workplaces, but were rarely seen lighted

FIGURE 6.19:  
Comparison of ENT Disorders

Serial Number of the factory	Number of looms installed in the factory	Dust Exposure of workers mg/m <sup>3</sup>
1	20	0.4
2	26	0.35
3	16	1.14
4	34	-
5	60	1.03
6	8	2.02
7	16	0.88
8	9	1.32
9	8	1.0
10	8	1.16
11	12	2.60
12	20	2.78
13	15	1.32

(perhaps to save on electricity bill). Different countries and professional organizations recommend different levels of illumination in the workplaces. A range of illumination level is recommended for different kinds of activities. Different kinds of precision work require high illumination, while packing areas and corridors may need less illumination. Table 6.20 provides the DIN standards used in Germany. As may be seen, the lighting levels in most of the workplaces were lower than a minimum of 500 LUX required for precision work or office work.

### 6.8 Exploitation and Abuse

Children not only are economically exploited in the carpet factory, they are also much vulnerable to psychological and physical abuse by employers and or middlemen. Of the total child labourers working in carpet sectors interviewed, 19 per cent reported that employers punished them in case they did not work (Table 6.21). Several conditions of punishment were reported: a) employers may punish if children do not work on time and do not produce a piece of carpet in a given time, b) if children made mistakes in weaving carpet such as design, and c) if children

demand more price per square meter or per kg. Unfortunately, some of the adult labourers complain that after the declaration of state of emergency in Nepal, most labourers including child labourers are unable to raise their voices in front of employers as there is a danger that such workers may be labeled as 'terrorists'.

There were altogether 57 children living together with their own parents. Among them, only seven reported that they are punished by parents if they do not work, with majority being girl children. Child labourers in carpet sectors may experience exploitation, abuse and harassment. Asking such questions is sensitive and difficult, especially if asked in front of employers, middlemen, masters/supervisors and adult labourers. In the sample, altogether 37 respondents (25 boys and 12 girls) complained that they were either exploited or abused, that is 12 per cent of the total.

### 6.9 Conclusions

Overall working condition of children discussed in this section revealed that child's involvement in carpet factory can not be termed as 'child work', which most employers including some of the CCIA members believe. Neither it is a 'beneficial child labour', where children can combine work and schooling - a major concern of protectionists. It lies in the opposite pole of 'child work' - an intolerable form of child labour. This is evident from this that two-fifth of the total child labourers interviewed entered into the factory before attaining their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. Children work, on an average, as high as twice

FIGURE 6.20:  
Standards of Illumination for Various Types of Works

Type of Work	Recommended Illumination Level (Lux)
Rough assembly work	250
Precise assembly work	1000
Very delicate assembly work	1500
Rough work on tool making machine	250
Precise work on tool making machine	500
Precise work on tool making machine	1000
Technical drawing	1000
Book-keeping/office work	500

FIGURE 6.21:  
Respondent Reporting Punishment by Their Employers and Parents if They did not Work

Punishment by	Boys		Girls		Both	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Punishment by employers						
Yes	36	21.2	20	15.4	56	18.7
No	134	78.8	110	84.6	244	81.3
Total	170	100.0	130	100.0	300	100.0
Punishment by parents						
Yes	2	7.4	5	16.7	7	12.3
No	25	92.6	25	83.3	50	87.7
Total	27	100.0	30	100.0	57	100.0

the normal average working hours for adults, with limited rest and recreational time. It is understood that long working hours did not translate into 'good earnings' by these children. A substantial proportion of children did not have command over their earnings and that the payment system has been much exploitative in practice.

### **6.9.1 Combating Health and Safety Hazards to Child Workers in the Carpet Sector**

The carpet sector is an export-oriented industry, with most of the manufacturing concentrated in factories situated in the Kathmandu Valley. While it provides a useful means of earning livelihood for vulnerable and poor segments of society, its impact on the health, safety, education and well being of child workers is a cause of great concern. Outline of an action-oriented approach to save children from the harmful health and safety aspects of work in carpet sector is given in the following paragraphs.

### **6.9.2 Reduction in Working Hours**

Carpet weaving is a tedious and time-consuming task, requiring immense concentration, which causes musculo-skeletal disorders in the children as shown in the present study. By reduction in working hours of the children major improvements can be made in their health and safety profile. Children should be given opportunities for participation in positive recreational activities, games, and provided education whether formal or non-formal. This will result in reduction of their working hours.

### **6.9.3 Awareness Programmes**

It is important that the results of OSH studies

be discussed with parents, contractors, employers, government officials and other stakeholders and their opinion and cooperation be sought to combat hazardous impacts of carpet weaving on the children. Any strategy in this area should only be evolved with their consultation and participation. The representatives of local bodies should be taken on-board in any effort to combat child labour in their areas

### **6.9.4 Healthcare Facilities**

As carpet weaving is carried out in relatively large-sized enterprises, it is relatively easy to provide minimum health care facilities to the workers with special focus on child workers. Any effort at combating child labour should have a health component, whereby the workers should be provided basic health facilities and taught the importance of basic personal hygiene and health care. Healthy parents are less likely to use children to earn for the family.

### **6.9.5 Improvement of Lighting in the Work Places**

The illumination level in the workplaces were found to be very low than the required minimum. Following low-cost steps can be taken to improve the lighting at workplace, which will indirectly also help in improving productivity as well as quality of the products.

- Installation of more transparent sheets in the roofs of workplaces.
- Provision and installation of light bulbs or fluorescent lights at the workplaces.

Improvement in natural lighting by having windows and regular cleaning of the windows if already available.

# *Review of Existing Interventions to Combat Child Labour in the Carpet Sector*

### **7.1 Introduction**

Many stakeholders are implementing different intervention programmes to combat child labour in the carpet sector in Nepal. They are government organizations, non-governmental organization, trade unions, and employers' organization. They employ a multi-pronged approach with a series of complementary policy measures on one or more of three key areas a) prevention b) withdrawal (rescue) and rehabilitation and c) protection (Table 7.1).

Many child-related organizations and institutions in Nepal are focusing only on the individual child development programme. Child focused development endeavours seem to be still gloomy. Most of the organizations do not work with children's family, communities, institutions and policy-making bodies. The organizations and institutions are simply ignoring root causes and just working on simple symptomatic remedies (Regmi, 2001).

### **7.2 Features of Intervention Programmes**

Most intervention programmes aimed at prevention and protection are focused on non-formal education and training, and primary health care services. There is a lack of programme that aims at stopping or checking the children from entering into the carpet works. From the review of the existing intervention programme,

the government's role in prevention and protection of children from carpet works seems to be negligible. There is no strict mechanism to monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of existing legal provision on minimum age at work and employment of under aged labourers. However, government has assisted NASPEC and RUGMARK in rescue and rehabilitation of carpet children. In addition, it has supported to run non-formal education as tools of prevention and protection of the labourer's excessive exploitation and basic human rights respectively in different times targeting carpet labourers in general.

Besides government, intervention programmes run by different organizations targeted to the carpet children are of more preventive and protective in nature. However, such programmes have made working area either at factory premises or working localities rather reaching at the bottom of the causes i.e. place of origin. Programmes such as non-formal education and basic health care targeted to either working children or children of adult carpet workers may not put prevention to the desperate children migrating out of home for a number of reasons. Ultimately, the desperate child is likely to end up with taking hazardous forms of work. Thus, preventive and protective programmes found in the Kathmandu Valley so far are less effective.

Only NASPEC in collaboration with CCIA and ILO/IPEC and Nepal RUGMARK foundations are running both preventive/protective and rescue and rehabilitative programmes so far in the area. NASPEC so far has rescued and rehabilitated more than 1,000 children from 200 carpet factories in the Kathmandu Valley. It is running non-formal education classes for the rehabilitated children at rehabilitation centres as a means of rehabilitation and non-formal education classes for the working children. Similarly, RUGMARK foundation has twin programmes as prevention/protection and rehabilitation. As prevention and protection it provides support to single parent or orphan

children for schooling. In addition, it supports schooling for children of extremely poor parents. As a rehabilitation the foundation has its own school cum rehabilitation centre. It further takes commitment from parents of working children rescued from carpet works to support for schooling of children and provides the parents with the whole education expenses as a community (family) based rehabilitation package (Table 7.1 and 7.2).

Despite some achievements in rescue and rehabilitation of working children in the carpet factories by NASPEC and RUGMARK, reentering to the work of children who were rescued, rehabilitated and sent to family reintegration or social rehabilitation has not stopped either (Box 7.1).

### Box 7.1: Rescued, Rehabilitated and Reintegrated but are at Work

A sixteen years old Tamang boy from Makwanpur was withdrawn from carpet works last year by the NASPEC team. The boy was kept to the NASPEC's CRC for some months and was enabled to read and write and then sent to his family for reintegration. He stayed at home hardly one-month, came back to Kathmandu and restarted knotting carpet at Sainbu (Bhainsepati).

A fourteen years old Tamang boy from Sindhupalchowk was found knotting carpet at a carpet factory of Madhyapur Thimi -14, Gathaghar. The child was run away from rehabilitation cum schooling centre of RUGMARK just before 15 days. The child was of the view that he did not like the place. He was told to read and to do other learning things. But he found those entire things boring, so he ran away.

A 17 years old Tamang girl from Sarlahi was working at a carpet factory of Kathmandu-4, Pipalbot, Maharajgunj. She was withdrawn from work by RUGMARK and kept at the rehabilitation centre for some days. Her parents were also working at the same factory now she was sent back with provision of schooling support by RUGMARK under the community (family) based rehabilitation package. Now she discontinued school and came back to work again. Her father says RUGMARK did not continue to support for her schooling.

TABLE 7.1: Key Stakeholders and their Strategic Framework in Elimination, Prevention and Protection of Child Labour in Carpet Factories

Stakeholders/ Strategic Framework	Prevention	Rescue/Rehabilitation	Protection
Government(Ministry of Labour, Occupational Health and Safety Project).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 2000.</li> <li>It defines child a person who has not completed 16 years of age (Article 2,a).</li> <li>No child shall be engaged in works during a period from 6 PM to 6 AM (Article 9,1).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates conducive environment to other organizations to rescue and rehabilitate children from carpet factories such as NASPEC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It defines riskful occupation or works "work relating to ----- weaving and dyeing carpet, clearing wool -----"(Schedule Related to sub-section (2) of Section 3).</li> </ul>
NASPEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NASPEC/CCIA code of conduct on not using child labour in carpet factories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rescued 1,063 children from 200 carpet factories in the Kathmandu Valley- Non formal Education to 2,766 working children at the rehabilitation centers in 24 different carpet factories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-formal education classes, technical education to rehabilitated children- Counseling given to parents, contractors, manufacturers and local communities.</li> </ul>
CCIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NASPEC/CCIA code of conduct on not using child labour in carpet factories.</li> </ul>	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day care centre for labourers' children.</li> </ul>
Nepal RUGMARK Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social labeling i) licensing, inspection and monitoring, ii) certification.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rehabilitation: i) removal of child labourers, ii) centre based rehabilitation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community based rehabilitation, and iv) social programmes in carpet factories.</li> </ul>
Care and Fair- Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health services to the children and family of carpet community.</li> <li>Education to the children of carpet weavers.</li> <li>Social services: basic human rights, creation of school and training facilities and developing public health system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health services to the children and family of carpet community.</li> <li>Education to the children of carpet weavers.</li> </ul>
STEP Foundation Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Motivating employers' to establish day care centers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of health safety at work.</li> </ul>
GEFONT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No regular programme.</li> <li>Awareness against child labour through carrying out art and dance competition among labourers in the factory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No regular programme.</li> </ul>
Trade Union Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child education.</li> <li>Micro-credit programme to the adult carpet workers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No regular programme.</li> </ul>
DECONT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No regular programmes were reported.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No regular programme.</li> </ul>

In totality, from the review of existing intervention programmes to combat child labour in carpet works in Nepal it can be said that no programme has proved its modality to replicate in both prevention/protection and rescue and rehabilitation works. Therefore, it is needed to devise most result oriented intervention programmes in the sector reaching at the place of origin and the place of work.

Key stakeholders and their strategic frameworks on intervention programmes have been summarized in Table 7.1 and their strategic

programmes on prevention, protection rescue and rehabilitation in Table 7.2. Such intervention programmes are of the following categories.

- rescue, rehabilitation and family re-union programme
- non-formal education programme
- counseling service
- vocational training
- health education and services
- school support programme
- action research.

TABLE 7.2:  
Intervention Programmes by Different Stakeholders in Combating Child Labour from Carpet Factories in Nepal

Stakeholders	Programmes and Strategies on Prevention, Protection, Rescue and Rehabilitation	
	Prevention and Protection	Rescue, Rehabilitation and Training
NASPEC/CCIA and ILO	<p>Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health campaign in carpet factories and a boarding school</li> <li>• Health care of the all (2,726) children in Childcare and NFE centers,</li> <li>• Counseling of parents, contractors, manufacturers and local communities, and</li> <li>• Non-formal education (NFE) for 2,766 working children at the rehabilitation centers in 24 different carpet factories.</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An effective sensitization and awareness programmes for carpet manufacturers,</li> <li>• Creation of proper living and working environment at the carpet factories,</li> <li>• Anti pollution masks to the carpet children, and</li> <li>• Placement of anti-child labour slogans hoarding boards in strategic areas.</li> </ul>	<p>Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non formal education for 2,766 working children at the rehabilitation centers in 24 different carpet factories,</li> <li>• Vocational training to 329 children in rehabilitation centres (knitting, knot-craft, greeting cards and envelope making),</li> <li>• As rehabilitation and family reunion programme 284 children were provided with school support, and</li> <li>• 284 children were provided support for regular schooling under Family re-union and regular school support programme.</li> </ul> <p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rescue, rehabilitation and reunion of carpet children with family,</li> <li>• Eliminate child labour from the member carpet factories of CCIA, and</li> <li>• Re union of children rescued through networking with NGOs working in the field of child labour.</li> </ul>
CCIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covering 71 factories running 8 daycare centres in different locations in Kathmandu in collaboration with GTZ.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No independent programme, but collaboration with NASPEC's programme.</li> </ul>
Nepal RUGMARK Foundation	<p>Social Programmes in Carpet Factories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship for schooling of children in carpet factories (single parent or orphan children),</li> <li>• Establishment of day care cum non-formal education centre, and</li> <li>• Awareness programme for carpet workers on issues of child rights and child labour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centre Based Rehabilitation</li> <li>• provides education, food, clothes, medical support, extra curricular development activities and vocational training.</li> <li>• Community Based Rehabilitation</li> <li>• believed to be cost effective, these programmes make commitment from parents to provide children with conducive environment for schooling with a provision of specific support.</li> </ul>
Care and Fair- Nepal	<p>Health and Education Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health care to the children and family of carpet community (at present running four health clinics in different parts of Valley) and</li> <li>• Regular schooling opportunities for children of carpet workers.</li> </ul>	No programme
STEP Foundation Nepal	<p>Two Programmes of Prevention and Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Labeling of Carpet: of those exported to Switzerland and</li> <li>• Improving working Conditions of Carpet Workers and their families through: grassroots support project on adult education mainly for women, income-generation projects, school and day care centres, local health units, safety at work and promotion of eco-friendly production.</li> </ul>	No programme
GEFONT	Occasional NFE, Health and Awareness programme	No specific programme mentioned
Trade Union Congress	Occasional NFE, Health and Awareness programme	No specific programme mentioned
DECONT	Occasional NFE, Health and Awareness programme	No specific programme mentioned



### **7.3 Code of Conduct, Social Labeling and their Effectiveness**

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The leading NGOs introducing the code of conduct for not employing children in the carpet factory and social labeling of carpet are NASPEC, CCIA, Nepal RUGMARK Foundation and STEEP Foundation.

With initiatives from NASPEC and CCIA, a code of conduct was developed in March 19, 2000 regarding the prohibition of the employment of children in carpet related industries. The code of conduct states (unofficial translation):

1. CCIA and all registered industries under CCIA should provide commitment in writing that they shall not use children under 16 years of age in their industries.
2. All carpet related industries should allow, without any hindrance, to enter into the factory for supervision of: a) factory itself and b) use status of child labour to the representatives of CCIA, NASPEC, carpet related organizations, and representative of MOL jointly or separately.
3. If any worker or contractor were found to be employing children in the factory, factory owner or any other responsible persons to the NASPEC and CCIA should report such an event.
4. During supervision of any factory or fabricator, if the use of child labour is found, such children should immediately be rescued and handed over to the rehabilitation centre of NASPEC or any nearby child homes.
5. If the factory was proved employing children for the first time from which children were rescued, a responsible person of the factory should sign on a bond stating that now onwards, he/she would not employ child labour in his/her factory.
6. If a factory is found employing child labour the second time, such a factory owner should bear all incurred cost in rescuing and rehabilitating children, in reuniting with family and paying school admission cost. If they were found denying it, relevant agency of HMG would be informed to take necessary action to panelize against such activities.
7. If a factory were found to have used child labour the third time, its membership to CCIA and other related organizations would be revoked and informed to the Ministry of Labour, HMG/N.
8. Entrepreneurs of the related factory should motivate labourers to send their children or dependants to schools and make necessary arrangements for the enrollment of children in a day care centre close to the factory.
9. Entrepreneurs of related factory should maintain good sanitation in the working place, shelter, and toilet appropriate for good health.
10. Entrepreneurs of related factory should put a hoarding board in front of the factory labeled its name and a visual hoarding board stating messages such as:  
  

*Let's not use child labour; increase the export of carpet,  
Let's keep factory clean and let's not make dirt elsewhere in the factory*
11. Supervision and monitoring body representing NASPEC, CCIA and other related organizations and representatives from MOL should monitor and supervise and prepare a supervision report every six months and disseminate it for public information.
12. Entrepreneurs that have written commitment for not employing child labour in the carpet factories, they shall be categorized as child labour free factory and awarded child labour free certificate for the period deemed by NASPEC and CCIA.

According to the project coordinator of NASPEC, the code of conduct is yet to be implemented depending on whether or not the employers know about the code of conduct

regarding not employing child labour in the factory. Most of the employers were unaware of such provision. It is also found that other key stakeholders such as RUGMARK Foundation and Trade Unions were also unaware of the code of conduct agreed between CCIA and NASPEC.

Another leading organization introducing licensing of carpet factories and social labeling in carpet is the Nepal RUGMARK Foundation, which was established in December 1995 as a member organization of RUGMARK International E.V., the apex RUGMARK body. It commenced licensing RUGMARK - the certification of trademark for child labour free carpets - to carpet manufacturers and exporters from November 1996. By December 2000, about 65 per cent (412 carpet factories of the licensees or of their suppliers) of the total capacity of the Nepalese carpet industry was already with RUGMARK. Yet it is reported that about 8 to 9 per cent of the total export of carpets were RUGMARK labeled i.e. certification of child labour free carpet. Note that the RUGMARK approach is non-imposing or business-like. Licensing and certification are voluntary (Rai, 2001:9:10). Besides, RUGMARK provides different services to the working children (Nepal RUGMARK Bulletin, 2001).

From the Key Informant's interview with RUGMARK officials, it is revealed that social labeling is highly dependent upon the value, attitude and awareness of child labour issues among importers and consumers. The more importers and consumers demand carpet with RUGMARK label, the more factories may come under the RUGMARK umbrella. With such a tiny proportion of the total volume of carpet exported with RUGMARK labeled (8-9%) means that a) either the charge of RUGMARK to be labeled may be unacceptable to exporters b) or importers or consumers may be less aware of child labour issues in the carpet factories c) or the scope of RUGMARK may yet to be largely expanded.

Another leading NGOs in social labeling of carpet is the STEEP Foundation, Nepal, which is basically working to make both importers (mainly Swiss) and exporters aware of abusive child labour issues in producing a carpet. Although its contribution in terms of coverage is small, about only 4 per cent of the total volume of carpet is exported to Switzerland. It, however, has developed a sound code of conduct signed between carpet importers and retailers ensuring the social justice for workers particularly for child labourers. The code of conduct states that both parties should:

- respect socially just, economically fair and ecologically sound STEEP standards in all their market operations in terms of fair salaries, proper working conditions and ecologically friendly production methods.
- pay producers a fair price for their product, allowing fair wages to weavers and labourers without abusive child labour.
- fight actively against abusive child labour practices.
- enforce the above commitments with their commercial partners, such as importers and exporters in the country of origin and with local producers and manufacturers.
- hold their business transparent and be at any time accountable to the independent monitoring and verification body nominated by STEEP.

According to the personnel of STEEP Foundation, Nepal, importers are committed to observe the code of conduct. They pay fair price to exporters so those exporters are enabled to pay fair wages, provide proper working conditions and observe ecologically friendly production methods. The entire manufacturing process of carpet is monitored by independent monitoring and verification body of STEEP. The objective of the monitoring and verification of factories is to ensure that the workers are getting fair deal and to guarantee the consumers that the carpets they purchase are produced under fair working conditions.

## 7.4 Conclusions

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Involvement of a large number of NGOs and trade unions in protecting the lives of children working in carpet factory is very much encouraging in Nepal. This also indicates that a large number of people are aware of child labour issues. There is a small proportion of children under 14 years working in the registered factories. However, there are quite a number of children of this age group in unregistered and home-based fabricators (suppliers of large and registered factories).

Many NGOs, Government, and Trade Unions prepared inspection of factories and social labeling a range of monitoring strategies such as code of conduct. Such provisions are yet to be injected to the employers, exporters, importers, consumers and parents of carpet children. Even the code of conduct agreed between NASPEC and CCIA prohibits children under 16 years of age working in the carpet factory (Article 1). Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2000, Article 2, defines child a person who has not completed 16 years of age, yet most NGOs and Trade Union authorities have not fully realized that they should expand their programme also to children under 18 years of age.

The present study attempts to underline the fact that children working in carpet factory are in the worst forms for they are compelled to work in unsanitary conditions, long working hours, at night, with limited choice to mobility and a few are also working in bonded regime.

Education, health and micro-credit were the major intervention programmes performed to protect the lives of children. Key Informants (adult labourers including children) reported that they were not benefited from such programme. Much striking is that most of the labourers do not know the existence of such programme running in their locality. Even if they knew, some complained that could not afford to send their children to school or day care centre and get access to health care facilities even with a nominal charge. This claim has its merits within the context of declining real income, stagnant wages and high market inflation. In such a situation the cost of their children's education has become exorbitant.

Much effective actions such as identifying real needy group, efficient use of resources, effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and transparency and accountability are needed from NGOs, Trade Unions and employers' organizations to protect children working in the carpet factories in general and those in the worst forms, in particular.

# *Conclusions and Recommendations*

## **8.1 Introduction**

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Following a number of previous studies, the government of Nepal and the ILO/IPEC identified carpet factories in Nepal as the location of one of the worst forms of child labour based on the definitions recommended in the ILO “Convention 182” and “Recommendation 190”. However, the evidence provided in previous studies is insufficient to prove whether and how they are the worst forms of child labour. This study attempts to fill this gap and explore relationships between child labour and the wider aspect of the carpet economy in Nepal.

The study is based RA methodology recommended by ILO/UNICEF in order to investigate the worst forms of child labour within a 3 month period, especially for designing a strategy to eliminate forms of such child labour.

The findings are drawn from an analysis of the current state of the Nepalese carpet sector and its relationship to processes and causes. The study combines a profile of child labourers and their families with an analysis of the conditions in which children work. This report includes a review of existing interventions to combat child labor in the Nepalese carpet sector.

## **8.2 Findings and Conclusions**

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### **8.2.1 The Current State of the Nepalese Carpet Sector**

The carpet sector in Nepal has been a leading industry in export production and in terms of employment. It employed about 250,000-300,000 labourers during its “Gold Rush” period in the

early 1990s. Its production capacity reached a maximum of US \$190 million per year with a share of 65 per cent of the total export. After then, the carpet sector has experienced a great recession. It was not only an economic recession but also linked with the employment and exploitation of child labourers.

- Due to fluctuation in the foreign market, carpet entrepreneurs turned into seeking for cheap labour to maximize their profit. It was the gateway of recruiting children and women for labour in the carpet factories.
- Unhealthy competition among the carpet entrepreneurs and ignorance of line agency of the government to manage industries and carpet labour market turned into exploitation of the labour by the factory owner and exploitation of smaller factories by big factories.
- Industries are threatened by the loss of export markets and their future prospects lie in diversifying the buyer’s market.
- Market structure favours hiring child labour because it is a largely unorganized and labour intensive sector which does not require a skilled and trained labour force.
- Strengths and opportunities associated with hiring child labourers in carpet production still seem to be outweighing weaknesses and threats.
- Wide sensitization on issues relating to the severe exploitation of children and associated threats of loosing export markets can act as a deterrent to the producers/manufacturers in employing child labour.

### **8.2.2 Migration and the Child Labour in the Carpet Sector**

Along with the rapid growth of urbanization in Nepal, the gap between rural and urban life in terms of livelihood opportunities has been broadened. Livelihood opportunities in rural areas are considerably low and it is the urban informal sector where opportunities are available. Labour migration from rural poor households to urban areas, mostly in the

Kathmandu Valley is considerably high. A ‘gold rush’ period of carpet industry opened up a new opportunity for poor households. It was one of the prominent sectors of the economy from which people could derive their livelihood by sending remittances to their households in the rural areas. The booming carpet economy not only opened a green pasture but also invited negative consequences.

- Children and women labourers are largely the victims of mismanagement in the carpet economy.
- The process of recruitment is associated with both trafficking and debt-bondage of child labourers in the carpet sector, which are the basic features of the worst forms of child labour.
- Carpet economy may have helped to sustain the livelihood of certain segment of the poor households in the rural areas, it has not, however, helped to reduce their poverty.

### **8.2.3 Household and Individual Characteristics**

Child labour in the carpet sector is related to family vulnerability with respect to illiteracy, unemployment, sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty, low income, few children in schools, sisters/brothers or close relatives already in carpet factories and illness or disability of parents. There is a persistent high illiteracy among adults - from generation to generation even in the origin of child labourers working in the carpet sector. For these households, there is a high opportunity cost for sending their children to schools as these households urgently need food, clothes and shelter. These households, similar to many rural households, do not see any long-term benefit of education to their children.

- The proportion of boys is higher than girls in both 5-17 years and under 18 years of age.
- The majority of households with children who work in the carpet sector do not have

their own agricultural land and this may be the cause of children having to work in carpet factories for the livelihood of their family. Their families rely heavily on children’s income, which ultimately comes from the carpet work.

- Brokers bring the majority of children into the Kathmandu Valley for carpet work. These brokers are mainly from the same locality and have worked in the carpet factories for many years; some of them are still working in the carpet factory.
- There is no one who has completed higher than secondary level of education and no females have achieved even beyond the primary level of education in the households with child labour in carpet factories.
- The majority of the parents whose children are working in carpet factories in Kathmandu Valley said that education is not so important for their children in their future.
- Most of the parents seem happy with their children working in the carpet factories although they feel that majority of children are working under bad condition in their workplaces.
- Nearly one-half of parents are found against sending their children back to schools, which may indicate a family’s dependence on children’s earnings.
- Some of the parents of child workers accept child labour without any hesitation while majority of them are compelled to put their children to work for various reasons. They suggest that income and land sufficient for the survival of the family are prerequisites to eliminating child labour from the carpet sector of Nepal.

### **8.2.4 Working Conditions and Health Hazards at Work**

The overall working condition of children discussed in this section reveals that a child’s involvement in a carpet factory can not be termed ‘child work’, which most employers including some of the CCIA members believe.

Neither is it 'beneficial form of child labour', which might enable children to combine work and schooling. It is an intolerable form of child labour. This is evident from two-fifths of the total child labourers interviewed entering into the factory before attaining their 14th birthday. These children work, on average, twice the normal working hours for adults with limited rest and recreational time. It is understood that long working hours do not translate into 'good earnings' by these children. A substantial proportion of children did not have command over their earnings and the payment system has been exploitative in practice.

- There is a small proportion of children under 14 years of age working in registered factories. However, quite a number of children of this age group work in unregistered and home-based fabricators (suppliers of large and registered factories).
- These children are exposed to a hazardous working environment – with dust and bad sanitation.
- As a result of this, they suffer from fevers, headache, cold, respiratory track infections and stomach pains.
- Supervisors and employers abuse these child labourers physically and psychologically to a large extent.
- On the basis of such evidence, this study recommends that the prevalence of child labour in carpet factories is one of the worst forms of child labour, that is, against ILO Convention 182.

### **8.2.5 Review of Existing Intervention Programmes**

In Nepal, the involvement of a large number of NGOs and trade unions in protecting the lives of children working in carpet factories is very encouraging. This also indicates that a large number of people are aware of child labour issues. A range of monitoring strategies was prepared by many NGOs, Government, and Trade Unions in the form of developing, designing code of conduct, inspection of factories, and social labeling. Such provisions are

yet to be injected to the employers, exporters, importers, consumers and parents of carpet children as well.

- The code of conduct agreed between NASPEC and CCIA prohibits children under 16 years of age working in carpet factories. Yet, the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 2000 defines a child as person who has not completed 16 years of age, yet most NGOs and Trade Union authorities have not realized that they should expand their programme to include children under between 14 and 16 years of age. Monitoring strategies should capture children under 18 years of age.
- Education, health and micro-credit were the major intervention programmes performed to protect the lives of children. Unfortunately, most of the key informants (adult labourers including children) reported that they had not benefited from such programmes. Even more striking is that most labourers do not know about the existence of such programmes running in their locality.
- Much more effective actions (identifying real needy group, efficient use of resources, effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism, and transparency and accountability) are needed from NGOs, Trade Unions and employers' organizations to protect children working in the carpet factories in general and those in the worst forms of labour, in particular.

## **8.3 Recommendations**

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### **8.3.1 Government's Commitments**

*Subsidies:* There should be a provision of subsidies for export manufacturers on the basis of quantity of exporting carpets and the amount of revenue to be paid to the government. Some portion of the revenues may be directed to investing on the education of children, health facilities, and skill training for the workers and their families.

*Quality Control:* Unhealthy competition among the business community, leading to the sale of carpets at a bargaining price that reflects the low quality of products and the low wage of labor, must be controlled by the government to gain credibility of the Nepalese carpet in the international market.

*Management of Labour Market:* Management of the labour market in carpet sector is vital. The minimum wage rate should be determined by the government with provision of adjustment according to prevailing price index of the country. No carpet industry has a system of contract letter in hiring labourers, but there should be a provision of contract letters between employers and employees in the carpet factory specifying wages, working hours, and working days in a week.

### **8.3.2 Prohibition of Middlemen and Thekedari System**

- Prohibiting or eliminating middlemen and *Thekedari* system in the process of recruitment of child labourers in the carpet factory would minimize the risk of putting child labour into worst forms. Employers have the prime responsibilities in eliminating middlemen and Thekedars in this process. Government, NGOs, Trade Unions, and other associations related to carpet productions could work hand in hand with employers to circumvent this issue.

### **8.3.3 Working Conditions, Health and Education**

The employment of children under 14 should be strictly prohibited. In the case of children aged between 14-17 years, the following measures are recommended to improve the situation of children in the worst forms of child labour keeping in view the spirit and purpose of ILO convention 182.

- Imposition of minimum indiscriminate wage rate by age and gender and/or minimum rate per square meter/feet for weaving and rate per kilo gram for spinning.

- Child labourers should be provided access to recreational facility within or outside factory premises.
- In order to eliminate the worst forms of child labour small level employers must be made aware of the legal instruments and ILO Conventions related to employment and child labour.
- Carpet workers must be provided with information about the programmes being implemented by different organizations, there should be no charge for the service and the service should be regularly provided.
- A convincing and effective occupational health and safety campaign must be launched within Kathmandu's carpet factories. This should focus on issues relating to the actual working environment, such as lightening.
- Health programmes designed to deal with preventing musculo-skeletal disorders should be prioritized.
- The number of day-care centres for young children should be increased; the quality of their service should be increased, and the motivation of parents to enroll their children into centres fostered.
- Child labourers should be offered non-formal education and schooling. Non-formal education should also be provided to other adult workers concerning trafficking, debt-bondage, sexual abuse and harassment and the rights.

### **8.4 Monitoring and Evaluation**

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- There should be an effective high level networking system among the stakeholders led by the government in order to minimize the duplication of programmes. Regular interaction among stakeholders is essential for implementing and monitoring of the code of conduct.

## 8.5 Summary of the Findings

Chapter	Findings
Labour migration and child labour in Nepalese carpet sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among child labourers working in carpet factories in Kathmandu Valley, 96.3 per cent are migrants.</li> <li>• About 92 per cent child labourers belong to 14-17 years of age.</li> <li>• Higher proportion of ethnic group constituted in child labour is Tamang with 58.5 per cent.</li> <li>• About 45 per cent of child labourers are accompanied with their relatives, other than parents, to work for the first time in carpet factories.</li> <li>• More than 57 per cent of child labourers left home for the first time at the age of 10-14 years, and 24.2 per cent of them involved in carpet work at the age of 14 years for the first time.</li> <li>• Carpet factory was the first working place for 82.7 per cent of child labourers working in this sector.</li> <li>• About 88 per cent of child labourers do weaving in carpet factories.</li> <li>• Among child labourers who worked in more than one factory, the mean duration of their stay in a factory ranged from 5 to 13 months.</li> <li>• Seventy-five per cent migrant child labourers left home due to push factors.</li> <li>• About 95 per cent child labourers came to work in carpet factories at their own will.</li> <li>• Among those who received money during recruitment of child labourers in carpet factories, 40 per cent are found to be brokers.</li> <li>• More than 61 per cent child labourers reported self control over their earning.</li> <li>• Nineteen per cent of child labourers were punished by their masters or factory owners while at work.</li> </ul>
Profile of family and child labourers in carpet factory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Among sample population, 58 per cent are from the ethnic group of Tamang.</li> <li>• Population under 20 years of age constitutes 53.3 per cent.</li> <li>• About 60 per cent males and 32 per cent females are literate in families of child labourers.</li> <li>• Among literate, 60.9 per cent have primary level of education and 13.9 per cent have no schooling.</li> <li>• About 38 per cent children aged 5-17 years are currently not going to schools.</li> <li>• About 45 per cent population are involved in agriculture and household work and 28 per cent in carpet and garment.</li> <li>• More than 16 per cent families are landless and more than 60 per cent have insufficiency of food for a year.</li> <li>• Among child labourers aged 5-17 years, 62 per cent (62.4% boys and 61.5% girls) are in between 14 and 16 years.</li> <li>• Literacy rates for child labourers aged 10-14 and 15-17 are 42.4 and 52.7 per cent respectively.</li> </ul>
Working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thirty-five per cent of child labourers are accompanied by other family members in carpet factories.</li> <li>• About 42 per cent boys and 39 per cent girls are working for less than 6 months at the current carpet factory.</li> <li>• Average wake-up time for child labourers was found to be 5:30 A.M., start work at 5:55 A.M. and work until 9:00 P.M. A child labourer works in an average for 14.8 hours a day.</li> <li>• An average leisure time for a child labourer is estimated at 53 minutes a day.</li> <li>• About 98 per cent child labourers are not going to schools at present.</li> <li>• Majority of child labourer's (33.1%) monthly income ranges from Rs. 1,000.00 to 2,000.00 with an average monthly income of Rs. 1,690.00, and 57.1 per cent of them contribute about 25 per cent expenditure of their family.</li> <li>• About 93 per cent of child labourers are provided with some facilities from the employers, but most of them include room only for living within factory premises.</li> <li>• Up to 13 people are found living in a single room provided by the employers.</li> <li>• About 87 per cent child labourers reported occurring cuts during work in carpet. Similarly, 35.7 per cent had fever and 33.3 per cent had headache.</li> <li>• About 12 per cent child labourers are found abused during work in the carpet factories.</li> </ul>
Household characteristics at origin and parent's perceptions about children and child labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of children aged 5-17 years is 43.5 per cent and less than 18 years is 53.6 per cent.</li> <li>• Almost one-half of people are illiterate and the illiteracy rate is higher for females. Among children aged 5-17 years, only 66.7 per cent are literate with 60 per cent having primary level of education.</li> <li>• Only 30 per cent of literate children aged 5-17 years are found currently going to schools.</li> <li>• More than 63 per cent of the households are landless and about two-third depend on carpet and related work as the main source of their income.</li> <li>• For about 64 per cent of the households, main source of income come from child labourers.</li> <li>• More than 36 per cent of the households have no asset.</li> <li>• Most of parents whose children are working in carpet factories, desire lower level of education for their children who are currently going to schools, especially for daughters.</li> <li>• About 50 per cent of the parents perceived education as not so important for their children.</li> <li>• Local brokers of the village find children from about 46 per cent of households taken into carpet work in the Kathmandu Valley.</li> <li>• Parent of about 73 per cent of the households are happy with their children working in carpet factories and 50 per cent of them are against sending their children back to schools even if their children want to go to schools.</li> </ul>



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## Annexes

### ANNEX 1: Origin of Child Labourers Working in Carpet Sector in Kathmandu Valley

SN	Districts of birth place	Respondent's Current Residence			Total	
		Kathmandu	Bhaktapur	Lalitpur	N	%
1	Makawanpur	40	4	13	57	19.7
2	Sarlahi	40	5	5	50	17.3
3	Sindhupalchowk	22	4	1	27	9.3
4	Sindhuli	21		1	22	7.6
5	Kavre	13	1	1	15	5.2
6	Udayapur	10	2	1	13	4.5
7	Morang	12			12	4.2
8	Mahottari	9	1	1	11	3.8
9	Jhapa	9			9	3.1
10	Ramechhap	9			9	3.1
11	Chitwan	3	1	2	6	2.1
12	Bara	6			6	2.1
13	Rautahat	4	2		6	2.1
14	Dhading	2	1	2	5	1.7
15	Bhojpur	4			4	1.4
16	Dhanusha	2		2	4	1.4
17	Parsa	4			4	1.4
18	Khotang	3			3	1.0
19	Okhaldhunga	3			3	1.0
20	Sunsari	2			2	0.7
21	Dhankuta	2			2	0.7
22	Solukhumbu	2			2	0.7
23	Dolakha	2			2	0.7
24	Kathmandu	-	1	1	2	0.7
25	Siraha	1			1	0.3
26	Nuwakot	1			1	0.3
27	Lalitpur	1			1	0.3
28	Gorkha	1			1	0.3
29	Nawalparasi	1			1	0.3
30	Taplejung	1			1	0.3
	Don't Know	2	1		3	1.0
	India	3		1	4	1.4
	Total	235	23	31	289	100.0
	%	81.3	8.0	10.7	100.0	

Respondents ID

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**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION STUDIES**

**A Survey on Child Labour in Carpet Sector in Nepal**

Greetings! My name is ..... and I am working as an interviewer for the Central Department of Population Studies, TU which is undertaking a study on Child Labour in Carpet and Carpet Related Industries in Kathmandu Valley. The results of the study will be used for possible interventions among the children people and their families. In order to determine what may be appropriate interventions, we are looking into the children's living conditions, the nature of their work, their educational levels, and their life goals and aspirations.

We have a number of questions that we would like to ask you but please be assured that your responses will be treated in complete confidence. The interview will take approximately half an hour to one hour during which time we will be noting down your answers. Would you have the time to help us with our study?

Name of Interviewer:

Date:

Signature of Interviewer:

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### A Survey on Child Labour in Carpet Sector in Nepal

[Children aged 5 years and above and under 18 years]

Introductory Particulars	
01. Cluster .....	<input type="text"/>
02. VDC/Municipality .....	<input type="text"/>
03. Ward number .... <input type="text"/>	04. Name of Locality: .....
05. Name of <i>Tole</i> .....	
06. Name of the respondent .....	
07. Sex of respondent (boy =1, girl=2) .....	
08. Caste / Ethnicity of the respondent .....	
09. Name of carpet factory .....	
10. Type of factory	<input type="text"/>
[registered =1; unregistered (home base) =2; unregistered (shed) =3] .....	
11. What are the products of this factory? (multiple answer possible and circle the responses)	
Wool sorting and washing .....1	Weaving/knotting .....5
Carding/spinning/rolling .....2	Trimming/washing/stretching .....6
Dying .....3	Cutting/packing .....7
Balling .....4	Others .....8
12. Where are you staying here?	
[inside factory premises ...1; outside factory (provided by employer) ...2; outside (rent) ...3]	

### Times visited for interview

Particulars	1	2	3
Date			
Results [see code below]			
Date for next visit			
Results	Code	Results	Code
Completed	1	Refused to respond	3
Partly completed	2	Domain not found	4

### Questionnaire edited by

	Supervisor	Office	Data entry personnel
Name			
Signature			
Date			

## 2. FAMILY INFORMATION

[Please list information of all immediate family members]

SN	Name of Family Member	Relationship to respondent		Sex		Age How old is this person?	Only for 5 years and above Education				(For 5-17)		(For 5+ years)																
							Literacy (read & write)		Grade completed		School going		Principle Activity																
		(see code)		Male	Female	(completed age)	Yes	No			Yes	No	(see code)																
(01)	(02)	(03)		(04)		(05)	(06)		(07)		(08)		(09)																
01		0	1	1	2		1	2			1	2																	
02				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
03				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
04				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
05				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
06				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
07				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
08				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
09				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
10				1	2		1	2			1	2																	
Codes for question 03		Codes for question 05		Codes for question 07		Codes for question 09																							
Father/mother ..... 01	Stepfather/mother ..... 02	Do not know ..... 98	Brother/sister ..... 03	Grandparents ..... 04	Uncle/aunts ..... 05	Brother's wife ..... 06	Spouse ..... 07	Others (specify) ..... 08	Self ..... 99	Below grade 1 ..... 00	Grade 1 completed ..... 01	Grade 2 completed ..... 02	.	(and so on)	.	Completed SLC+ ..... 11	Do not know ..... 98	Agriculture (own) ..... 01	Agriculture (rented) ..... 02	Agriculture (both) ..... 03	Agri-labour ..... 04	Non-agri labour ..... 05	Service ..... 06	Small business ..... 07	Carpet ..... 08	Garment ..... 09	School going ..... 10	Household work ..... 11	Others (specify) ..... 12

10. Does your parent's own agriculture land?
1. Yes
  2. No ⇨ Q. 12
  3. 8. DK ⇨ Q. 12
11. If yes, how many months does your family have sufficient food from your agriculture land around the year?
- No. of Months: ..... ⇨ Q. 301
12. If no, how many months does your family have food sufficiency from the family's main occupation?
- No. of Months ..... (do not know = 98)

### 3. MIGRATION

Place of birth of respondents:

301. District: ..... 302. Name of VDC/Municipality: .....  
 303. Ward no.: ..... 304. Village/Tole: .....

Respondent's current place of residence:

305. District: ..... 306. Name of VDC/Municipality: .....  
 307. Ward no.: ..... 308. Village/Tole: .....  
 309. Duration of Stay (in months) .....

Place of birth of respondent's parents:

310. District: ..... 311. Name of VDC/Municipality: .....  
 312. Ward no.: ..... 313. Village/Tole: .....

Parent's current place of residence:

314. District: ..... 315. Name of VDC/Municipality: .....  
 316. Ward no.: ..... 317. Village/Tole: .....  
 318. Duration of Stay (in months) .....

#### Filter

(FOR NON-MIGRANTS, SKIP TO Q 501)

[Migrants are those whose place of birth is different from the current place of residence]

### 4. INTER-SECTORAL SHIFT IN WORK

401. At what age did you leave home (place of birth) for the first time? \_\_\_\_\_
402. What was the main reason for leaving home (place of birth) for the first time?
- |                     |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|
| <b>Push Factors</b> | 1. Own will                              | 2. Abduction                                     |
|                     | 3. As Dependant ⇨ Q. 405                 | 4. Physical and Psychological Abuse              |
| <b>Pull Factors</b> | 5. Runaway from home                     | 6. Sent by parents                               |
|                     | 7. To get rid of poverty                 | 8. Parent took money from middleman/<br>employer |
|                     | 9. Promised good employment              | 10. Fake love                                    |
|                     | 11. Fake marriage                        | 12. Friends                                      |
|                     | 13. To care after baby (insight factory) | 14. Others (specify)                             |
403. Before leaving home, did you know about the work that you were to perform?
1. Yes
  2. No ⇨ Q. 405
404. If yes, what was the expected work? (see code below) .....
- If answer is 1 for Q. 404 ⇨ Q. 501

*After leaving home and before entering the carpet factory, how many works were you involved in?*



After leaving home and before entering the carpet factory, how many works were you involved in?

No. of works	405		406		407		408		Reason for change	
	Types of Work		Place of Work		Who accompany you ?		Duration (in months)		409	
									409 Entry	410 Exit
First										
Second										
Third										
Fourth										
Fifth										

Code for Q 405 and Q405		Code for Q 407		Code for Q 409		Code for Q 410																															
Directly to carpet factory ..... 1	Self ..... 1	Good promise by middlemen/ employer ..... 1	No payment ..... 1	Domestic child worker ..... 2	Friends ..... 2	Good earning (self) ..... 2	Low paid ..... 2	Hotel/restaurant worker ..... 3	Persons working in this factory ..... 3	Friends working here ..... 3	Physical/psychological abuse ..... 3	Construction ..... 4	Middlemen ..... 4	Parents working here ..... 4	Sexual harassment/abuse ..... 4	Kicked out ..... 5	Transportation ..... 5	Father ..... 5	Forced to come ..... 5	No friends ..... 6	Portering ..... 6	Mother ..... 6	Due to Marriage ..... 6	Business closed ..... 7	Street business/vending ..... 7	Father and mother ..... 7	Others (specify) ..... 7	Parents did not want to work ..... 8	Care after baby (in fac.) ..... 8	Other relatives ..... 8	Parents moved ..... 9	Others (specify) ..... 9	Employer ..... 9	Other (specify) ..... 10	Due to marriage ..... 10	Due to sickness ..... 11	Others (specify) ..... 12

### 5. INTRA-SECTORAL SHIFT IN WORK (both migrants and non-migrants)

501. At what age did you start working in carpet related industries for the first time?.....

Please tell us the number of carpet factories you worked, types, and duration of work and reason for changing the factory.

No. of carpet related works	Type of work					Reason for change	
	502	503	504	505	506	507	508
	At the time of entry	Whether knew about the nature of work(1- Yes, 2- No)	At the time of exit	Who accompany you ?	Duration (in months)	Entry	Exit
First							
Second							
Third							
Fourth							
Fifth							

Code for Q 502 and 504		Code for Q 505		Code for Q 507		Code for Q 508																															
Wool sorting and washing ..... 1	Self ..... 1	Good promise by middlemen/ employer ..... 1	No payment ..... 1	Carding/spinning/rolling ..... 2	Friends ..... 2	Good earning (self) ..... 2	Low paid ..... 2	Dyeing ..... 3	Persons working in this factory ..... 3	Friends working here ..... 3	Physical/psychological abuse ..... 3	Balling ..... 4	Middlemen ..... 4	Parents working here ..... 4	Sexual harassment/abuse ..... 4	Kicked out ..... 5	Weaving/knotting ..... 5	Father ..... 5	Forced to come ..... 5	No friends ..... 6	Trimming/washing/stretching ..... 6	Mother ..... 6	Due to Marriage ..... 6	Business closed ..... 7	Cutting/packing ..... 7	Father and mother ..... 7	Others (specify) ..... 7	Unable to weave super ..... 8	Others (specify) ..... 8	Employer ..... 9	Other (specify) ..... 10	Due to sickness ..... 9	Parents did not want to work ..... 10	Parents moved ..... 11	Due to marriage ..... 12	Poor sanitation ..... 13	Others (specify) ..... 14

## 6. CURRENT WORK

### 6.1 Process of Recruitment

601. Who brought you to this factory?

1. Self
2. Friends
3. Former Carpet Workers
4. Middlemen
5. Father
6. Mother
7. Father and mother
8. Other Relatives (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Factory owner
10. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

602. Did you come here at your own will?

1. Yes ⇨ Q. 604
2. No

603. If no, why? (list main reason) .....

604. Do you know that any one has received money from the employer for recruiting you into this factory?

1. Yes
2. No ⇨ Q. 608
8. DK ⇨ Q. 608

605. If yes, who were they? Specify \_\_\_\_\_

606. On what basis does this person receive money?

1. From salary (if possible, mention the percentage: .....)
2. Lump sum amount in advance (If possible mention amount: .....)

607. If this person is not parent, do you know that your parents are paid for your recruitment in this factory?

1. Yes (if possible, mention amount: .....)
2. No
8. DK

608. Do you think that you can leave the factory if you wish at any time?

1. Yes ⇨ Q. 610
2. No

609. If no, why? (list main reason) .....

### 6.2 Working Conditions

610. Do you attend school currently?

1. Yes
2. No ⇨ Q. 612

611. If yes, what type of school do you attend?

1. Non-formal
2. Formal, public
3. Formal, private

612. How long have you been working in this factory? (in months)

613. Are there your family member(s) working in this factory?

1. Yes
2. No ⇨ Q. 615

614. If yes, how many?

Males.....

Females.....

615. What is the main job do you perform in this factory?

1. Wool sorting and washing
2. Carding/spinning/rolling of wool
3. Dying
4. Weaving/knotting
5. Trimming/washing/stretching
6. Cutting/packing
7. Others (specify)

616. At what time do you get up? ..... A.M.

617. At what time do you start your work? ..... A.M.

618. When do you stop working at the evening? ..... P.M.

619. At what do you go to bed? ..... P.M.

620. Do you have a lunch break?

1. Yes
2. No

621. If yes, how long is it? ..... Hrs.

622. Do you have other rest break?

1. Yes
2. No

623. If yes, how long is it? ..... Hrs.

624. Do you play with your friends?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, type of games: \_\_\_\_\_

625. Does your employer/supervisor punish you if you do not work?

1. Yes
2. No

626. Does your parents punish you if you do not work? (*only for those currently living with parents*)

1. Yes
2. No

627. What is the mode of payment of your work? (Multiple answer)

- |                          |                            |                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Piece basis           | 4. Per kg. wool            | 7. Other (specify) ..... |
| 2. Daily wages           | 5. Currently learning work |                          |
| 3. Weekly/monthly salary | 6. Helping relatives only  |                          |

628. Is there any additional incentives/benefits from employers?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 630

629. If yes, what are they?

1. Food
2. Clothes
3. Accommodation
4. Bonus
5. Medicine
6. Schooling support for kid(s)
7. Training skills
8. Other (specify).....

630. How much do you earn (per month)?

NRs. ....

(not applicable for answers 5 and 6 in Q.627)

631. How much does your earning support your family?

1. 100%
2. 50%
3. 25%
4. Not at all

632. Who controls your earning?

1. Self
2. Parents
2. Other Relatives
4. Others (specify) .....

633. Do you know that your parents are indebted with recruiter or employer?

1. Yes
2. No
8. DK

634. Do you know that your parents have taken advance from recruiter or employer for your work?

1. Yes
2. No
8. DK

## 7. HEALTH

701. How many persons do you live together? .....

702. Have you ever experienced any type of injury due to work in the factory?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 704

703. If yes, what type of injury have you experienced?

1. Minor cuts
2. Severe cuts
3. Fractures (leg, hand, etc.)

704. Have you ever experienced any type of illness during work in this factory?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 706

705. If yes, what type illness have you experienced?

1. Headache
2. Fever
3. Cold
4. Coughing/respiratory problem
5. Stomachache
6. Backache
7. Chest pain
8. Eye problem
9. Skin disease
10. Joints pain
11. Others (specify) .....

## Abuse and Harassment

706. Have you ever been abused in this factory?
1. Yes
  2. No ⇒ Q. 801
707. If yes, who was the abuser?
1. Supervisor
  2. Employer
  3. Employer's relative
  4. Adult co-worker
  5. Other (specify)
708. What type of abuse did you experience during work? (Multiple answer)
1. Scolding
  2. Beating
  3. Teasing
  4. Sexual harassment
  5. Sexual abuse
  6. Others (specify).....

## 8. CHILDREN' PERCEPTION

801. Would you recommend this job to be done by your brother, sister and friends?
1. Yes
  2. No
  8. DK
802. If you could change anything that you would make your job better, what would that be?  
.....

*After filling out the questionnaire, circle on the appropriate rating based on the answers given by the respondents on following questions.*

## 9. RATING OF QUESTIONS

901. Answer on the question of *how many months does your family have sufficient food from your agriculture land around the year?*
- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very reliable | 3. Satisfactory  |
| 2. Reliable      | 4. Less reliable |
902. Answer on the question of *how many months does your family have food sufficiency from the family's main occupation?*
- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very reliable | 3. Satisfactory  |
| 2. Reliable      | 4. Less reliable |
903. Answer on the question of *who was the abuser in this factory?*
- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very reliable | 3. Satisfactory  |
| 2. Reliable      | 4. Less reliable |
904. Answer on the question of *what type of abuse did you experience during work?*
- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1. Very reliable | 3. Satisfactory  |
| 2. Reliable      | 4. Less reliable |

## Observation and Record Sheet

Total number of adult laborers in the factory:

Adult Male .....

Adult Female .....

Total number of child laborers in the factory

Boys .....

Girls .....

Type of factory:

If weaver, number of carpet looms in the factory:

### Health hazardous

Particulars	Adequate	Inadequate	Remarks
Overall cleanliness			
Drinking water facility			
Natural ventilation			
Natural lighting			
Electricity			
Electric fans			
Toilet facility			
Waste disposal			
Working space (in terms of no. of workers in a room)			
Height of the room			

## SURVEY OF ORIGIN OF CHILDREN WORKING IN CARPET SECTORS IN KATHMANDU VALLEY

(Parents/household head respondent)

Greetings! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am working as a researcher for Central Department of Population Studies, TU that is undertaking a study on migration of children for child labour in carpet sectors in Kathmandu valley. The results of the study will be used for possible interventions among the children/young people and their families. In order to determine what may be appropriate interventions, we are looking into the children's/ young people's living conditions, the nature of their work, their educational levels, and their life goals and aspirations.

We have a number of questions that we would like to ask you but please be assured that your responses will be treated in complete confidence. The interview will take about 1 hour during which time we will be noting down your answers. Would you have the time to help us with our study?

Name of Researcher \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Household Visited      1. Household with children working in carpet  
2. Household with children not working in carpet

Name of parent/  
household head \_\_\_\_\_

Gender of parent/  
household head      1. Male 2. Female

Caste/ethnicity of  
Household head/parent \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the respondent  
If respondent is other than  
Parent/head \_\_\_\_\_

To be filled out:

Particulars	Place of origin of children working in carpet factories
Date of Interview	
District of Interview	
VDC	
Ward	

### 1. DEMOGRAPHY DATA (CHILDREN'S FAMILY)

Ask PARENT (or head of household) about ALL family members who live with them (for q09 and q10, ask only for 5 years & above)

SN	Name of Family Member	Relationship to respondent (see code)		Sex Male Female		Age How old is this person?(if < 12 months: write 00)  (completed age)	Only for 5 years and above Education				(For 5-17) School going		Activity Principle Activity  (see code)	Do you consider this person to be a dependent/disabled		
							Literacy (read & write)		Grade completed		Yes	No			Yes	No
							Yes	No								
(01)	(02)	(03)	(04)	(05)	(06)	(07)	(08)	(09)	(10)							
01		0	1	1	2			1	2			1	2			
02				1	2			1	2			1	2			
03				1	2			1	2			1	2			
04				1	2			1	2			1	2			
05				1	2			1	2			1	2			
06				1	2			1	2			1	2			
07				1	2			1	2			1	2			
08				1	2			1	2			1	2			
09				1	2			1	2			1	2			
10				1	2			1	2			1	2			
Codes for question 03		Codes for question 07				Codes for question 09				Codes for question 10						
HH Head ..... 01	Below grade 1 ..... 00	Agriculture (own) ..... 01				Dependent/disable ..... 1										
Spouse ..... 02	Grade1 completed ..... 01	Agriculture (rented) ..... 02				Not at all ..... 2										
Son/Daughter ..... 03	Grade 2 completed ..... 02	Agri-labour ..... 03				<i>Note: Dependent is not economically active or disabled.</i>										
Step-son/Step-daughter ..... 04	.	Non-agri labour ..... 04														
Daughter-in-law ..... 05	.	Service ..... 05														
Brother/Sister ..... 06	(and so on)	Small business ..... 06														
Niece/Nephew ..... 07	.	Carpet ..... 07														
Grad son/daughter ..... 08	.	Other child labour ..... 08														
Father/mother ..... 09	Completed SLC+ ..... 11	School going ..... 09														
Other ..... 10		Others (specify) ..... 10														



**2. ASK PARENT OR HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD ABOUT THE FOLLOWING: (ASK ONLY FOR 5 YEARS AND ABOVE)**

SN	Name of the family member	2.1 What is this person's main source of income?	2.2 Who is the person earning the main source of income for the family?	2.3 Where does s/he work now? 1. Kathmandu (carpet) 2. Kathmandu (not carpet) 3. Somewhere (not in Kathmandu) 4. In the village, but lives in the house	2.4 In general, what is the average monthly income of each family member on the income-earning activity?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

2.4 Do you think this is a sufficient amount to support your family (yes/no)?

1. Yes
2. No

2.5 Do you have own agricultural land?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 2.7

2.6 If yes, how many months does your family have sufficient food from agricultural land around the year?

Months:

2.7 Do you have any assets?

0. No assets
1. Land
2. TV
3. Radio
4. Bicycles
5. Fans
6. Agricultural equipment
7. Animals, specify
8. Other, specify

2.8 What is your source of cooking fuel?

1. Firewood
2. Dry cow dung
3. Straws (paral/chhwali etc.)
4. Other

2.9 Do you have electricity?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 3.1

2.10 Do you have access to any medical facilities?

1. Yes
2. No

2.11 If yes, what type of facilities do you have?

0. No access to medical facilities
1. Nearby pharmacies
2. Pharmacies at the market
3. Health post in village
4. Health post in nearby village
5. Other

### 3. PARENT'S PERCEPTIONS FOR REASONS FOR CHILD/CHILDREN WORKING

3.1 Are you happy with your child/children working?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 3.3

3.2 If yes, why? Tick (✓) for one or more reasons.

1. Family needs more income
  2. Child has reached working age
  3. Parents cannot pay for child's education
  4. Child does not want to go to school
  5. Child gets a meal there
  6. Parents are not interested in sending child to school because quality is bad
  7. Others, specify
- ⇒ Q. 3.4

3.3 If no, why? Tick (✓) for one or more reasons.

1. Children should be at school
2. Children should stay at home and look after their younger siblings
3. Both
4. Others, specify

3.4. Have you taken loan from the person who takes your children to the carpet work?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 3.8

3.5. If yes, how do you pay back the loan?

.....

3.6 If you pay back the loan by your child work, could your child leave the work before paying back the loan completely?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 3.8

3.7. (Only if yes) If the child really leave the work before completing the loan paying back, how do you pay it?

.....

3.8 Who took your child (children) for the carpet work in Kathmandu?

1. On self
2. Friends
3. Carpet workers
4. Broker
5. Parents
6. Other relatives (specify)
7. Factory owner
8. Other (specify)

3.9 If it is not 'on self' or 'parents' or 'friends', have you been paid for your child to send to the carpet work?

1. Yes
2. No ⇒ Q. 4.1

3.10 If yes, does your child receive salary or wage for his/her work?

3. Yes
4. No

#### 4. PARENTS' OPINION ABOUT THE WORKING CONDITIONS IN CARPET FACTORIES FACED BY THEIR CHILDREN.

4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.10
SN from Table 2	Name	Age	Sex	Heat/ exposure to sun [USE CODE]	Amount of time per day for rest. [USE CODE]	Condition of work places [USE CODE]	Difficulty of the work [USE CODE]	Amount of hours worked per day	Amount of days worked per week
Code for Q. 4.5 to 4.8 1=Bad      2 = Fair      3 = Good									

#### 5. PARENTS PERCEPTION ABOUT

Working children's ID(SN from HH roster)	5.1 Employer treatment to child. [USE CODE]	5.2 Wages received by child. [USE CODE]	5.3 Health risks faced by child. [USE CODE]	5.4 How tired the child is due to work? [USE CODE]	5.5 Do you think that the current working situation is acceptable for the child/ children? If Yes, ask why? If No ask why? [USE CODE]	5.6 What condition/s would allow the child to stop working? List in order of importance. [USE CODE]

Code for 5.1 1=Harsh 2=Moderate 3=Good 4=Child works for family	Code for 5.2 1=Low 2=Moderate 3=High 4=Child works for family	Code for 5.3 1=High risk 2=Moderate risk 3=Low risk	Code for 5.4 1=Very tired 2=Moderate tired 3=not very tired 4=DK	Code for 5.5 If YES: 1= Need additional income 2= Work conditions not abusive 3= Others, specify  If NO: 4= Bad for health 5= Can't go to school 6= Need additional income 7= Others, specify	Code for Q. 5.6 1= Enough income for family 2= Enough money for child's education 3= Enough land for farming 4= Enough money for medical/ health care 5= Schools closer to home/workplace 6= Better quality schools 7= Others, specify
---	---	--	--	---	---

## 6. EDUCATIONAL AND LIFE ASPIRATIONS

6.1 (If the child is working), would the child/children have to stop working if they wanted to go/ to continue with schooling?

Response category	Son	Daughter
Yes		
No		

6.2 If no, why?

Response category	Son	Daughter
1= economic hardship		
2= primary income earner is disabled		
3= school fees too high		
4= no need to educate daughter		
5= others, specify		

6.3 What level of education do you want your child to have, if child currently attending school?

Response category	Level of education
Son	
Daughter	

6.4 What kind of training/informal education do you want your child to have, if child is not in formal school?

Response category	Son	Daughter
1= bicycle repairing		
2= motorcycle repairing		
3= carpentry/mession		
4= sewing		
5= driving		
6= Others, specify		

6.5 How important do you think education is for your child's/ children's future?

Response category	Son	Daughter
1= very important		
2= somewhat important		
3= not so important		

6.6 What do you wish your child or children to do when older? [USE CODE]

Response category	Son	Daughter
1 = Work on farm		
2 = Become civil servant		
3 = Work in carpet factories		
4 = Have own business		
5 = Become teacher		
6 = Others, specify		

## **Check list for interviewing children under 18 years of old (at least 5 interviews)**

[Respondent must be from the peer group (preferably friends) of migrant children working in Kathmandu carpet factories]

### **About their own**

1. Background of the children (age, sex, schooling status)
2. What is the family composition of the child?
3. Whether the child knows about the work available in Kathmandu such as carpet?
4. Are you interested to go to Kathmandu for carpet work as your friends have gone?  
If yes, why?  
Are you planning to go?  
If no, why?
5. Whether the child wants to continue education?

### **About migrant children**

6. What is the perception towards migrant children who are working in carpet factories?
7. How have they been migrated for carpet child labour?  
Who sent them?  
Who took them?  
How took them?
8. Why have they been migrated?  
Situation of family (poverty and very low income; fragile family; alcoholism, unemployment, sexual abuse, domestic violence, children not enrolled in school, family members already in carpet factories, parents are disable, school teachers' behaviour)
9. Is there any possibility to return them to home and continue to send school?  
If yes, how?  
If no, how and why?

## ANNEX 4:

**Persons Who Brought Children in Current Carpet Factory from Home and Other Factories by Sex of Child Labourers**

Persons brought children to carpet and shift to next factory	Boys	Girls	Total	N
Entry/shift from other previous steps				
Relatives	37.1	56.6	45.3	131
Friends/Neighbour	22.8	10.7	17.6	51
Persons from carpet	8.4	6.6	7.6	22
On self	26.9	9.8	19.7	57
Parents	4.8	16.4	9.7	28
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	289
N	167	122		
Shift from first step				
Friends/neighbours	40.4	25.0	35.5	44
Relatives	20.2	50.0	29.8	37
Persons from carpet	14.3	-	9.6	12
On self	20.2	10.0	16.9	21
Parents	4.8	15.0	8.0	10
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	124
N	84	40	124	
Shift from second step				
Friends/neighbours	34.9	7.1	28.1	16
Relatives	16.3	57.1	26.3	15
Persons from carpet	14.0	-	10.5	6
On self	32.6	7.1	26.3	15
Parents	2.3	28.5	8.8	5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	57
N	43	14	57	
Shift from third step				
Friends/neighbours	35.3	-	33.3	6
Relatives	29.4	-	27.8	5
Persons from carpet	5.9	-	5.6	1
On self	29.4	100.0	33.3	6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	18
N	17	1		
Shift from fourth step				
Friends/neighbours	50.0	-	50.0	2
Relatives	25.0	-	25.0	1
On self	25.0	-	25.0	1
Total	100.0	-	100.0	4
N	4	-	4	

## ANNEX 5:

## Reasons for Change of Carpet Factory from One to Other by Sex of Child Labourers

Reasons for change the factory	Boys	Girls	Total	N
Shift from first step				
Factory closed	16.7	32.5	21.8	27
No friends	20.2	5.0	15.3	19
Low paid	9.5	15.0	11.3	14
Not paid	6.0	10.0	7.3	9
Physical/psychological torture	4.8	2.5	4.0	5
Sickness	2.4	2.5	2.4	3
No sanitation and drinking water	3.6	-	2.4	3
No consent of Parents	1.2	2.5	1.6	2
Marriage	-	5.0	1.6	2
Sexual abuse	1.2	-	.8	1
Kicked out	1.2	-	.8	1
Super is difficult	1.2	-	.8	1
Parents left the factory	1.2	-	.8	1
Other	31.0	25.0	29.0	36
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	124
N	84	40	124	
Shift from second step				
Factory closed	23.3	14.3	21.1	12
Low paid	14.0	7.1	12.3	7
No friends	9.3	-	7.0	4
Not paid	4.7	7.1	5.3	3
Physical/psychological torture	4.7	7.1	5.3	3
No consent of Parents	4.7	7.1	5.3	3
No sanitation and drinking water	2.3	14.3	5.3	3
Super is difficult	4.7	-	3.5	2
Parents left the factory	2.3	7.1	3.5	2
Sexual abuse	-	7.1	1.8	1
Sickness	2.3	-	1.8	1
Marriage	-	7.1	1.8	1
Other	27.9	21.4	26.3	15
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	57
N	43	14	57	
Shift from third step				
Factory closed	29.4	100.0	33.3	6
Low paid	17.6	-	16.7	3
No friends	17.6	-	16.7	3
Other	35.3	-	33.3	6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	18
N	17	1	18	
Shift from fourth step				
Not paid	25.0	-	25.0	1
Low paid	25.0	-	25.0	1
No friends	25.0	-	25.0	1
Other	25.0	-	25.0	1
Total	100.0	-	100.0	4
N	4	-	4	

Investigator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. General Background**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M  F

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Number of siblings \_\_\_\_\_

Are the parents: both alive  only one alive  divorced

**II. Education**

Do you attend school? Yes  No

If yes then : Full time  Part time

**III. Employment:**

At what age did you start work: \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. Working Conditions**

When do you get up: \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.

When do you start work \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. When do you finish work \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. When do you go to bed \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.

Do you have sound sleep  Yes  No

Do you have a rest break  Yes  No

If yes, how long \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

How may rest days you have per week  None  One  Two

Do you work at home or at a shed \_\_\_\_\_ Do you play with the friends  Yes  No

If yes, which games \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how long \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

Do you smoke  Yes  No



What other recreation facilities do \_\_\_\_\_ you have (e.g., radio, tape recorder/TV etc) Does your employer/parents punish you, if you don't work  Yes  No

Do you like your work  Yes  No

How many times in a week do you eat meat  none  once  Twice  More

Do you suffer from any injuries during work,  Yes  No

specify their nature if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you suffer frequently from any complaints like:

headache  fever  cold  cough  backache  joints pain  diarrhea

stomachache  fatigue  excess hunger  less hunger  cuts/bruises

skin problems,  any other \_\_\_\_\_

Medical & Physical Examination of Working Children in Carpet Industry (to be conducted by a physician)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. General Physical Examination**

Pulse	per minute	Temperature	Normal/Abnormal
Anaemia	+ ve - ve	Weight	Kg
Jaundice	+ ve - ve	Height	cm/in
Oedema	+ ve - ve	Clubbing	+ ve - ve
Dyspnoea	+ ve - ve	Palpable lymph nodes	+ ve - ve
Nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting)	+ ve - ve	Vertigo/headache	+ ve - ve

**II. Personal Hygiene/Habits (Tick the relevant box)**

- 1. **General appearance**     Clean             Dirty
- 2. **Teeth**     Healthy         Unclean         Carries        Any other problem \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. **Nails**     Clipped         Unclipped
- 4. **Hair**     Combed         Unkempt
- 5. **Skin**     Clean             Dirty

**III. Musculo-skeletal Problems due to working posture**

	Abnormalities detected		Remarks
	+ ve	-ve	
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (based on Phalen's Test and complaints of tingling/pain or numbness in the arm, hands or shoulder muscles at night)			
Ganglionic cyst			
Low Back Pain			
Pain neck & shoulders			
Hernia			
Rheumatoid arthritis			
Any other problems			

**IV. Respiratory Examination**

	Abnormalities detected		Remarks
	Yes	No	
Pulmonary Function Test			
Pain chest			
Cough			
Chronic bronchitis			
Asthma			
Pneumoconiosis			
Pulmonary Tuberculosis			
Emphysema			
Any other (describe)			

### V. Allergic Disorders

	Abnormalities detected		Remarks
	Yes	No	
Allergic dermatitis			
Conjunctivitis			
Rhinitis			
Tonsillitis			
Any other			

### VI. Local Examination

Any deformities observed	Abnormalities detected		Remarks
	Yes	No	
PPP			
Spine			
Chest			
Hands			
Knock knees			
Bowlegs			
Feet			
Gait			
Any other			
Skin abnormalities (scabies)			
EYES			
Visual acuity			
Conjunctivitis			
Trachoma			
Injuries			
Any other			
EARS			
Deafness			
Diseases (please identify)			
NOSE			
DNS			
Nosebleed			
Any other			

Other Observations/Remarks by Physician \_\_\_\_\_

**Working Conditions and Environment Questionnaire for use at the worksites**

Investigator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Completion:: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

**I. General Background**

Name of owner \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the type of work as \_\_\_\_\_ Home based  Shed-based

No. of carpet looms: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of looms per room \_\_\_\_\_ Approx. dimensions of room (s) \_\_\_\_\_

Is the work room also used as living/bed room  Yes  No

**II. Physical Hazards**

	Adequate	Inadequate	Remarks
Electric Fans			
Natural ventilation			
Natural lighting			
Artificial lighting			Lux _____
Thermal conditions(ambient)			(temp: _____ Rh _____)
Thermal conditions(workplace)			(temp: _____ Rh _____)
Cleanliness			
Toilet facility			
Drinking water facility			
First-aid Facility			

Exposure of workers to airborne wool dust \_\_\_\_\_ mg/m<sup>3</sup>  
*(use separate form for recording the dust levels)*

**DUST EXPOSURE SURVEY**

**FORM-IV**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address of Household/Shed: \_\_\_\_\_

Pump No. \_\_\_\_\_ Flow Rate /min \_\_\_\_\_

Duration of sampling (Min) \_\_\_\_\_ Filter No. \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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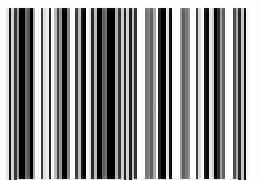


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