



## Preface

Unacceptable forms of exploitation of children at work exist and persist, but they are particularly difficult to research due to their hidden, sometimes illegal or even criminal nature. Slavery, debt bondage, trafficking, sexual exploitation, the use of children in the drug trade and in armed conflict, as well as hazardous work are all defined as Worst Forms of Child Labour. Promoting the Convention (No. 182) concerning the Prohibition and immediate action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999, is a high priority for the International Labour Organization (ILO). Recommendation (No. 190, Paragraph 5) accompanying the Convention states that “detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labour should be compiled and kept up to date to serve as a basis for determining priorities for national action for the abolition of child labour, in particular for the prohibition and elimination of its worst forms, as a matter of urgency.” Although there is a body of knowledge, data, and documentation on child labour, there are also still considerable gaps in understanding the variety of forms and conditions in which children work. This is especially true of the worst forms of child labour, which by their very nature are often hidden from public view and scrutiny.

Against this background the ILO, through IPEC/SIMPOC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour/Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour) has carried out 38 rapid assessments of the worst forms of child labour in 19 countries and one border area. The investigations have been made using a new rapid assessment methodology on child labour, elaborated jointly by the ILO and UNICEF<sup>1</sup>. The programme was funded by the United States Department of Labor.

The investigations on the worst forms of child labour have explored very sensitive areas including illegal, criminal or immoral activities. The forms of child labour and research locations were carefully chosen by IPEC staff in consultation with IPEC partners. The rapid assessment investigations focused on the following categories of worst forms of child labour: children in bondage; child domestic workers; child soldiers; child trafficking; drug trafficking; hazardous work in commercial agriculture, fishing, garbage dumps, mining and the urban environment; sexual exploitation; and working street children.

To the partners and IPEC colleagues who contributed, through their individual and collective efforts, to the realisation of this report I should like to express our gratitude. The responsibility for opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the authors and does not imply endorsement by the ILO.

I am sure that the wealth of information contained in this series of reports on the situation of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour around the world will contribute to a deeper understanding and allow us to more clearly focus on the challenges that lie ahead. Most importantly, we hope that the studies will guide policy makers, community leaders, and practitioners to tackle the problem on the ground.



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<sup>1</sup> Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual, January 2000, a draft to be finalized further to field tests, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/simpoc/guides/index.htm>

## **Acknowledgements**

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Any deficiency in the report, however, remains my own.

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## Acronyms

CAR-NWG	Children at Risk Networking Group
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CONCERN-Nepal	Concern for Children and Environment –Nepal
CRC	Child Rights Convention
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal Concern Centre
CWS	Child Welfare Society
DCRDC-Baglung	Dhauragiri Community Resource Development Centre, Baglung
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GD	Gross Domestic Product
GFONT	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
GNP	Gross National Product
HMG/N	His Majesty’s Government of Nepal
HURENDEC	Human Rights and Environment Development Centre, Udayapur Gaighat
ILO	International Labour Office
INGO	International Non-governmental Organizations
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Centre
IPEC	International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour
MOWCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
NESAC	Nepal South Asia Centre
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NTUC	Nepal Trade Union Congress
PCP	Private Consumption Poverty
RA	Rapid Assessment
REEC-Beni	Rural Environment and Empowerment Centre, Beni
RWG-CL	Regional Working Group in Child Labour, Bangkok
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UPCA-Dharan	Under Privileged Children’s Association, Dharan
VDC	Village Development Committee



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Background*

The exploitative practice of child labour has come to be recognised as a major socio-economic problem. Child labour jeopardises children's potential to become productive adults, robbing them of their health, their education and their prospects for a better future. It is an affront to the principles of social justice, child rights and to the protection of human rights. Children are among the most neglected, abused and exploited segments of the population, exposed to such worst forms of labour as serving as child porters. In Nepal, child work in general – and child labour in particular – is a common phenomenon. An estimated 42 per cent of the total population of children from five to 14 years old are economically active (Suwal et al., 1997).

The need to restrict and eradicate such intolerable forms of child labour has become an essential element of a national development strategy to achieve sustainable growth and protect human rights. His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) has repeatedly expressed its commitment to eliminating the worst forms of child labour, and the government is currently in the process of ratifying the new International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, No. 182.

This Rapid Assessment aims to shed new light on the hazardous conditions facing child porters, and the manner in which these children are exploited. The tradition of porters in Nepal is an age-old phenomenon, but it is one of the least researched issues in the country. The findings of this study will provide invaluable and much needed background information on child porters to assist future action programmes aimed at eliminating this worst form of child labour. More specifically, the study focuses on uncovering the causes, characteristics, magnitude and consequences of these children and their involvement in this worst form, and to offer recommendations based on these findings.

This study is based on the Rapid Assessment (RA) methodology developed by the International Labour Organization/International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Rapid Assessment combines both quantitative and qualitative data gathering tools, and is aimed at obtaining in-depth knowledge of a given phenomenon within a short period of time. Secondary information was obtained from the limited existing studies. Primary information consists of both quantitative and qualitative data that has been generated through interviews and field surveys, with an emphasis on qualitative data that may shed light on the exploitation of children serving as porters in Nepal.

### *What is the target group of the study?*

The population targeted for investigation was child porters under the age of 18 at 19 different survey sites in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, including porter routes, porter absorbing areas of the country and tourist areas. These children are divided into two categories (i) porters carrying loads over long distances, journeys requiring more than one day; and (ii) porters working short distances in such areas as markets, business centres, bus and truck parks. Children carrying loads for their own families, rather than for wages, were not considered for this study.

### ***What are the characteristics of child porters?***

Children from poor and socially excluded caste and ethnic groups are prone to becoming porters, although children do not necessarily become porters because of these factors. Most child porters, short and long distance, come from rural areas of the hill districts and have homes, though their families are landless. Long distance porters (majority 10-14 years old) tend to be younger than short distance porters (majority 15-17 years old); it is rare for children under 10 to engage in this work. The overwhelming majority of porters are male.

A total of 21 per cent of the children in the study were enrolled in school, with long distance porters enrolled at a considerably higher rate than short distance porters of whom only six per cent were enrolled. Most children reported dropping out of school due to household poverty. The means of family survival for both groups is agriculture/share cropping and porter work. Short distance porter families are more likely to survive through daily wages as well. Additionally, the average family size of a child porter is large, comprising 6.5 members.

### ***Under what conditions do child porters work?***

Most child porters begin carrying loads when they are 10 to 14 years old. On the average, short distance porters are one year older when they begin work, and girls are two years older. A substantial proportion of short distance porters (42.7%) began later, between 15–17 years old. The longer the distance over which children carry loads, the greater their exposure to hazards. Long distance porters carry food with them to span many days and do not eat regularly. They experience malnourishment and stunted growth, while short distance porters often work barefoot, live in unhygienic conditions, and have inadequate clothing for work in cold weather.

As revealed by the survey data, more than 78 per cent of long distance porters work seasonally while 70 per cent of child porters carrying loads for short distances at market centres or bus parks work full-time. On the average, a long distance porter is likely to walk for about six days carrying loads while in the case of short distance porters, they work 8.4 hours per day.

Legislation in Nepal prohibits minors from carrying more than 25 kilograms (kg) at one time, however, enforcement is poor to non-existent. Wages are often determined according to the weight carried, motivating children to carry as much as possible, and causing them greater physical harm in the process. Most children reported transporting loads averaging 49 kg, often heavier than their own weight. Short distance porters carry the heaviest loads with about 69 per cent reporting loads heavier than 50 kg. Still, the average long distance load is substantially over the legal limit at 35 kg. Generally, the older the age of the child, the heavier their load, with boys carrying more than girls. Long distance porters carry items such as iron blocks, pipes, metal pots, and long wire rope and other odd-sized loads, which can catch obstacles and cause falls from high cliffs, although the majority of porters said they had never been injured from falls.

Child porters lack sufficient calorie intake and nutrients necessary for healthy development. Coupled with this, more than 61 per cent of the porters interviewed

reported that they drink alcoholic beverages, and smoking and chewing tobacco are common practices.

In terms of compensation, porters are not well paid – about Rs. 71 per day on long distance routes, of which almost half the porters give all their earnings to their parents. Short distance jobs combine to earn Rs. 95.6 per day and the majority of these earnings are kept by the child.

### *Why do children work as porters?*

The total number of child porters working in Nepal is estimated at 46,029, based on the results of this study. A total of 42,029 of the estimated porters fall into the long distance category. There are many push and pull factors that cause children to work as porters. Among the former are the need to supplement household income for economic survival, to help pay off family debts, to earn money for school uniforms and supplies, because it is preferred to attending school (by parents and/or children), peer group pressure, and boredom with village life. Pull factors include the desire to see market centres, motor vehicles and experience urban life, access to employment during farming off-seasons, the chance to earn wages, opportunity to buy school supplies that parents cannot afford, and earning money to provide for their own food and for personal expenses.

### *Child porters in the future*

The majority of child porters expressed a strong desire to continue their education either by attending school or skill development training. According to adult porters interviewed in the Kathmandu valley, however, many child porters eventually become street children. Policy interventions need to address the issues of child porters, focusing on three main areas: prevention, protection and rehabilitation. In addition to the recommended programmes and initiatives, further studies to obtain more data on the prevalence of child porters, as well as a strong database system to make precise estimates, identify vulnerable areas and design practical action programmes should be developed.

### *Recommendations for Policy Interventions*

The list of recommendations has been prioritised, and divided into those dealing with prevention, protection and rehabilitation.

#### *Prevention*

1. **Regulation** of the work of porters between the ages of 14 to 18 according to labour law specifications. Legislation that limits allowable weights for minors should be enforced on each porter route and at all areas where child porters are used. Adult porters should be organised in unions and against child labour
2. **Provision of alternatives** to child labourers aged 14 to 18 years, including vocational training and Start and Improve Your Business programmes. Vocational and skill development training should be available to interested teenagers.
3. **Reduction of economic vulnerability** in sending areas through support for programmes aimed at generating income-earning opportunities for the rural poor. Income generation programmes such as vegetable farming, agri-business and

marketing skills should be targeted at the parents of child porters in marginalised districts.

4. **Improving the quality and eliminating the cost of education** in sending areas in order to support a meaningful, quality and child-friendly education system.
5. **Improved monitoring systems** within District Child Welfare Committees should reach the local level with ample provision for recording and evaluating the situation of child workers in a pragmatic way.
6. **Campaigns for raising awareness** in source DDCs/VDCs should be combined with the mobilisation of municipality authorities, workers and employers' organizations. They should be encouraged to work collaboratively in advocating against the use of child porters and other exploitative child labour.

### ***Protection***

1. **Identification of work areas:** of the origin of short distance child porters; of porter routes; as well as wards, villages and families where children work as long distance porters. This should form part of an expanded effort to identify the most vulnerable areas, and design practical action programmes to combat hazardous forms of child labour in Nepal.
2. **Support for regular tracer studies** and monitoring, to protect former child porters from returning to the worst forms of child labour.
3. **Establishment of mobile health facilities** on long distance routes for the use of porters, especially child porters, these should offer improved medical help for all sick children.

### ***Rehabilitation***

1. **Increased participation of child porters** in vocational (or skill development) training programmes, and increased attention to the needs of children who do participate.
2. **Guarantee of job placements** after completion of vocational training programme.
3. **Improved arrangements for educational opportunities** to child porters who want them.
4. **Expansion of programmes for rehabilitation and non-formal education** so that they reach isolated villages where child porters originate.
5. **Continued withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children below 14 years of age**, in order to reunite these with their families and to mainstream these into primary education.

## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

In Nepal, child work in general – and child labour in particular – is a common phenomenon. An estimated 42 per cent of the total population of children from five to fourteen years old are economically active (Suwal et al., 1997). At the expense of education, children who work as family helpers as well as wage labourers must take on heavy workloads for survival. This deprives them of their right to development, protection and participation (ILO/IPEC, 1995). Children are involved in agricultural work, domestic servitude, hotels and restaurants, carpet factories, spinning mills, brick kilns and stone quarries. They work as street vendors and as rag pickers. They are trafficked into labour and sexual bondage. Child porters carry heavy burdens within urban areas and on remote rural footpaths, all too often risking their lives and damaging their health.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N) has repeatedly expressed its commitment to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, most recently at the "Best Practices" Conference and at the International Labour Conference in the spring of 2000. Nepal is soon expected to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), initiated globally on November 19, 2000. In view and support of these positive developments, the ILO has selected Nepal as one of three sample countries in which the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is to implement a Time Bound Programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

The tradition of porters in Nepal is an age-old phenomenon, the major means of transporting consumption and business goods and construction materials in the country. The work of contemporary porters provides a major share of off-farm and seasonal employment, as well as supplementary income for poor rural households of Nepal. However, porter work in general and the use of child porters in particular is one of the least researched issues in the country.

According to the companion Recommendation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (Recommendation No. 190), each member state shall undertake research and collection of information on the worst forms of child labour. In this context, the present study is concerned with the problem of child porters working in hazardous conditions providing services to others for survival in an exploitative manner. The present report is written in the hope of providing new information on the plight and lives of child porters, and for background information for the development of the Time Bound Programme.

#### Box 1: Porter Work

### 1.2 The Problem

Even though children have worked as porters longer than in 'modern' sectors such as carpet factories, brick kilns and stone quarrying, no study has yet attempted

#### According to CONCERN-Nepal, the work of porters is:

- a means of transportation,
- wage-earning employment,
- a popular profession among rural children,
- seasonal employment, and
- substitute for employment.



to capture the nature and extent of the use of child porters in Nepal.

Only a few local studies exist. In 1997, Concern for Child and Environment – Nepal (CONCERN-Nepal) identified 137 child porters in three districts of the Kathmandu Valley. Last year, a study carried out by the Human Rights and Environment Development Centre (HURENDEC), a local non-governmental organization (NGO), targeted child porters in eastern Nepal. Yet, due to the distinctly different geographical locations and research methods used, the findings of the two existing studies on child porters are very different.

- CONCERN - Nepal found that a majority of 137 child porters in the Kathmandu Valley were boys, ages 15 to 16, from rural households of the Tamang, Bhote or Chhetri ethnic groups, working an average of twelve hours a day, carrying average weights of up to 74 kg, and earning an average daily wage of Nrs. 66 (US \$1.10). The study revealed that about 42 per cent slept on the streets and 58 per cent lived in shared rented rooms, where they usually slept on the floor.
- In contrast, the HURENDEC (2000-2001) study focused on 274 child porters from Mongoloid ethnic groups (51% Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Sherpa and Magar; and 23% Dalits [Damain, Kami and Sarki]) who carry loads on long distance routes in eastern Nepal. The child porters studied in this region were younger than their Kathmandu Valley counterparts, carried lighter loads, and faced a number of distinct hazards, including sexual abuse of girl porters by their employers and work leaders.

The Labour Act (1992) clearly prohibits the employment of children and the companion Labour Rules (1993) prescribes that the maximum weight of a load carried by a minor must not exceed 25 kg.<sup>1</sup> Both of the two existing studies clearly described how child porters are carrying much heavier loads and under very difficult conditions. Whether and how such hazards can be termed worst forms of child labour has been a guiding question for conducting the first comprehensive Rapid Assessment on child porters in Nepal.

### 1.3 Analytical Framework

*“The right of the child is to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”* (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

The two single most important International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on child labour are the Minimum Age Convention, No. 138, ratified by Nepal in 1997, and the new Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, No. 182. Convention 138 stipulates that the minimum age for employment or work should not be less than 15, and that hazardous work is prohibited for children under 18. Convention 182 stipulates that no person under 18 is to be engaged in the worst forms of child labour. As per Article 3, the worst forms of child labour are defined 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, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict,

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<sup>1</sup> Minor male (16-18 years) 25 kg. minor female (16-18 years) 20 kg. and Minor male or female (14-16 years) 15 kg.

- 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.

The companion ILO Recommendation No. 190 further specifies how children can be said to be in the worst forms of child labour if they 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,

As the Rapid Assessment data is presented in the following report, the working conditions and hazards faced by the child porters will be examined within the framework set out in these two important ILO standard setting documents.

## **1.4 Supply and Demand**

Porters work in urban, semi-urban and rural environments. Most child porters come from the rural agricultural sector, but work in major urban and semi-urban centres, where there is a demand for cheap, easily exploited labourers, whether they are the rural poor or urban slum dwellers. This study explores the causes and consequences of children's involvement in both urban centres and in rural areas.

### **1.4.1 Supply**

Nepal's agricultural sector absorbs four-fifths of the country's work/labour force and produces only about 32 per cent of the national income (GDP). It is severely affected by low productivity, small size of landholdings<sup>2</sup>, and a high rate of underemployment (47.5 % in 1995/96) in the rural sector. The inability of agricultural growth in rural areas is responsible for slow growth and employment in the non-agricultural sector<sup>3</sup>.

More than 40 per cent of all holdings are under 0.5 ha. in size, and nearly 70 per cent are under one hectare (CBS, 1993). Despite heavy dependence on agriculture, only half of the total households have food security. Per capita income in agriculture has deteriorated. Nepal's GNP per capita, about \$210, ranks the country as one of the world's poorest. The disparity in its distribution is very high and increasing over the years (NESAC, 1998: 115-116). Household level poverty is positively correlated with a high level of fertility and high incidence of employment of children at low wages. In Nepal, women from the poorest 20 per cent of households have a total fertility rate of 6.2, compared to 2.9 for women from the wealthiest 20 per cent households (Knowles, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Average holding size 0.96 hectare and per capita holding size 0.15 hectare as of 1991/92.

<sup>3</sup> The Agricultural Perspective Plan (APP), 1995 of the country anticipated to derive encouraging growth and employment promotion in non-agricultural sectors through the achieved growth in agricultural sector with greater emphasis on agricultural roads, agri-business, valued crops and livestock products.

## **1.4.2 Demand**

Child porters are used to carry goods in many urban market centres, to load, unload and fetch luggage in bus parks, and to transport goods on various cross-country routes. They are often based at various access markets to hills and mountains where the motor road ends. Porters are the main means of transporting both consumption and construction goods and services in the remote high hill areas of the country. For employers, they are easy to find and cheap to hire. For children, the work is required either for livelihood, to continue education, or for family financial survival.

The existing labour intensive nature of the urban and semi-urban market in producing goods and services is the main determining factor in the demand for child labour. Such a labour market will always seek to employ cheap and easily exploitable labourers. In turn, most Nepalese communities do not perceive children working as porters as a social problem, since they interact with consumers, traders and the service sector, and are not involved in illicit activities.

Still, in order to conclude whether child porter work falls under the worst forms of child labour or not, it is necessary to investigate closely the working conditions and hazards of their occupation. The use of children as porters is widely prevalent in Nepal and is the major concern of this rapid assessment.

## **1.5 Objectives**

The overall objective of this study is to assess the extent and nature of the use of child porters in Nepal. This study also explores the socio-economic and residential characteristics of child porters as causative factors, and unveils the possible consequences of taking up this occupation at an early age. Specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. to assess the nature and extent of child labourers working as porters in Nepal, including the pull and push factors related to the occupation, including the historical trends, cultural mechanisms and social dynamics relating to the problem of child porters,
- ii. to characterize the working conditions and related hazards of child porters,
- iii. to characterize the child porters (by age, sex, schooling and caste),
- iv. to identify the socio-economic, cultural and family backgrounds of the target population,
- v. to examine the impact and consequences of the occupation on children,
- vi. to identify perceptions and experiences of child porters,
- vii. to identify and critically assess government, international and national NGO interventions aimed at preventing and rehabilitating child porters, and
- viii. to assist in improving methods to research, reach and eliminate the problems of child porters.

## Chapter 2

### METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods of study. Structured Interviews, informal discussions, key informant interviews and observations of activities have been used according to the ILO/UNICEF Investigating Child Labour Guidelines for Rapid Assessment (RA), 2000.

The Rapid Assessment guideline requires both quantitative and qualitative information to serve as a tool for in-depth research. It seeks to strike a reasonable compromise between statistical precision and impressionistic data gathering. Rapid Assessment researches the population by observing or interviewing small groups of individuals. It does not employ scientific sampling methods.

#### 2.1 Sample Area

This study is based on information from the interviews of 349 porters from both rural and urban areas of the country. The selection of these areas is based on the incidence of child labour prevailing in the country in general and child porters in particular. For the purpose of analysis, long distance porters walking for many days along rural routes and short distance porters in urban bus parks and market centres are differentiated. Their inventory is presented in Table 2.1, classified as urban, semi-urban or rural.

Table 2.1: Survey Areas Classified by Rural, Urban and Semi-Urban

Survey Areas	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural
Dharan bus park and market centres	X		
Biratnagar bus park	X		
Kathmandu Valley bus parks and market centres	X		
Lalitpur (Patan) bus parks (Lagan Khel and Jawalakhel) and market centres	X		
Bhaktapur bus parks and market centres	X		
Pokhara bus parks and market centres	X		
Palpa bus park and market centres	X		
Butwal bus park and market centres	X		
Beni (Myagdi) bus park and market centres		X	
Nepalgunj bus park and market centres	X		
Surkhet bus park, market centres and Chhinchu bazaar	X		X
Baglung bus park and porterage routes	X		
Travelling/porterage route from Chatara (Sunsari) to Bhojpur and Khotang ( <i>Long</i> )			X
Travelling/porterage routes from Dhankuta and Hile ( <i>Long</i> )		X	
Travelling porterage routes from Gaighat and Beltar to Khotang ( <i>Long</i> )		X	X
Jiri to Namche travelling/porterage routes ( <i>Long</i> )		X	

*Note: X refers to category of survey area*

The study attempted to include main porter routes and porter absorbing areas of the country, including tourist areas (see also Table 2.2 and Map 1).

## 2.2 Target Population

Still, attempts to interview child porters involved in the tourism industry have failed. Key informants widely reported that child porters are not employed in the tourist industry, since the travel agencies that employ them fear controversy, loss of their credentials, and loss of business from tourists sensitive to child labour issues.

The focus of this study is on child porters below age 18, the age adopted as the critical boundary between childhood and adulthood (ILO convention, 182) and as the minimum age for hazardous work in the Minimum Age Convention No. 138.

Table 2.2: Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Case Stories by Survey/Observation Site, 2001

Survey Sites	Structured Interviews	Focus Group Discussions	Key Informant Interviews	Case Stories
Hile, Biratnagar	5	--	3*	--
Dharan	--	--	1	--
Chatara, Sunsari	40	2	3*	1
Gaighat, Udayapur	22	1	3	1
Beltar, Udayapur	23	1	--	2
Jiri, Dolakha	27	1	1	1
Banepa, Melamchi	7	1	1	--
Kathmandu	106	3	2	5
Bhaktapur	13	1	1	--
Lalitpur	11	1	2	--
Pokhara	8	1	2	3
Beni (Myagdi)	17	1	3	2
Baglung	12	--	2	2
Palpa, Butwal	11	--	3	--
Nepalgunj	11	--	--	--
Surkhet, Chhinchu	36	2	2	1
Total	349	15	29	18

\* adult porters only.

The target group was identified by physical appearance, possessions and work base in each particular locality. Sometimes child porters were used as key informants to identify and access other porters. In most instances, child porters appeared more physically mature than their actual ages, which made it difficult to determine their true age.

Structured interviews and in-depth interviews were taken only from those child porters who were ready to respond. Before starting on the subject matter of the structured interview a child was familiarized with the objectives of the survey. While interviewing and conducting focus group discussion, no fake assurances were given. The team only told the porters and respondents that “we are to learn from you”. Avoiding unnecessary risks, child porters were identified by observation of their possessions, activities, as well as through informal discussions, and only then were they directly asked if they were child porters. Those carrying loads for their own families, rather than for wages, were not considered professional porters, and were not interviewed for this study.

## **2.3 Selection of the target population**

In order to identify child porters in the selected areas, information was obtained from key informants from various sectors of social, political and administrative life. These informants provided a rough sketch of the prevalence of child labour in different activities in selected areas and also supplied other background information on child porters related to their place of work, origin, activities and working conditions. Such key informants were local political leaders, administrators mainly dealing with labour and social issues, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), police, local trade unions and specific local labour unions.

## **2.4 Survey Tools**

Structured and unstructured questionnaires, interview checklists, observations of activities, case histories, and focus group discussions were among the survey tools used in the study. Structured interviews were used to gather information from child porters. Semi-structured questionnaires and checklists were used to interview key informants. Further guidelines were prepared to compile case histories of child porters.

The structured questionnaire covered a wide range of socio-economic, residential and other questions regarding the households of child porters, as well as family structure and parental background. For each individual child, it covered history of the activity, causes for involvement, earning level, education, compromises between work and education, hardships or weight loads, employers' attitudes and other related aspects (Appendix II). A checklist designed to interview key informants contained background characteristics, perception on the phenomenon of child labour and estimates of the magnitude of child labour in the respective areas (Appendix III).

Observations of child porters regarding their working conditions and aspects of socialisation were made with the help of a semi-structured observation sheet. Focus group discussions were conducted with child and adult porters. Each focus group discussion included an average of eight persons. During observations and focus group discussions, most of the issues explored were recorded and taped, documenting speech patterns and the use of slang words. Child porters were photographed while sitting, walking and carrying loads. None of the children photographed have, however, been shown in this report.

Observations of child porters included the following aspects:

- physical appearance,
- working conditions and amount of load compared to their physical appearance,
- comfort when walking and carrying loads,
- aspects of socialisation, including interactions with others, language usage, and resting places,
- nutritional habits, and
- use of alcohol, smoking and drugs.

## 2.5 Field Personnel

Five field investigators underwent eight days of intensive training. The content of the structured questionnaire was finalised in consultation with ILO, the national consultant and with well-qualified field investigators upon pre-testing. All field personnel held Master's Degrees in social sciences. They were selected according to their skills in working with different communities of Nepal.

Training covered the following aspects:

- the concept of the worst forms of child labour,
- the essence of conducting Rapid Assessment (RA) and research in various aspects of hazardous forms of child labour,
- interview skills and skills in narrating case histories,
- in-depth interviews, informal discussions and focus group discussions,
- understanding the local situation and contact with key informants and target groups,
- skills on rapport building and socialisation according to local situation,
- observation skills, and
- ethical issues.

In addition, field personnel were familiarised with the survey schedules, checklists and guidelines in conducting in-depth interviews and narrating case histories with the participation of child porters.

## 2.6 Common Field Operation Challenges

- child porters were interviewed at places such as streets, footpaths, markets, *chowks* (roundabouts) and travelling routes, where it was difficult to generate a level of safety conducive to soliciting information,
- in a few places unidentified persons from the local community took the child porter away and thus distracted the interviews,
- adult porters were often present and influenced responses,
- most adult porters questioned the use of the survey and its benefits to them, and when the answers were not satisfactory, tended to be uncooperative and argued that it was a waste of time,
- many participants, both child and adult, said that since the survey personnel were paid dollars by NGOs, it would be better if the survey personnel shared the dollars with them,
- in a few instances, key informants and elected members of Village Development Committees and municipalities were indifferent to the plight of child porters, refused to help conduct interviews, or pretended they had limited knowledge of child porters,
- some travellers and some local people even attempted to attack the team of interviewers, complaining that the survey team was making fun of child porters by

asking silly questions. Yet, reflecting the fact that child porters are a common and accepted sight in both rural and urban areas of Nepal, most participants and stakeholders in the interviews provided invaluable assistance throughout the research period.

## **2.7 Structure of the report**

The report consists of eight chapters:

- i) the essence of the study and objectives,
- ii) Rapid Assessment study methodology,
- iii) a background profile of child porters,
- iv) the working conditions of child porters as they relate to ILO Convention 182, to justify the use of child porters as one of the worst forms of child labour,
- v) some tentative estimates and incidences of child porter work in Nepal,
- vi) conceptual issues, reasons for use of child porters and push-pull factors,
- vii) the institutional and legal framework pertaining to child labour in Nepal, and
- viii) summary of findings and recommendations for policy action.



## Chapter 3

# CHILD PORTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

### 3.1 Location

Child porters work in urban centres of hilly areas and the Kathmandu Valley as well as on established routes, a network of footpaths connecting rural communities throughout mountainous Nepal. Such porters can be classified into two types: 1) porters carrying loads over long distances, journeys requiring more than one day; and 2) porters working short distances in such areas as markets, business centres, bus and truck parks.

In eastern Nepal, long distance porters prevail (Table 3.1). They begin their foot journeys on paths at road heads where motor roads end at the Himalayan foothills. The construction of new north-south motor roads has shifted a number of these routes. For instance, the opening of new market centres, linked by these north-south motor roads, has diverted porters coming to Dharan and Chatara to Hile and Dhankuta. Ghurmi Bensi now absorbs many porters bound for Katari (Udayapur District); and porters coming to Gaighat (Udayapur District) converge at Murkuchi to begin their work.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Child Porters by Work Type, Gender, and Survey Area, 2001

Under Survey Area	Long distance		Long Total	Short Distance		Short Total	All Total
	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls		
<b>Eastern Nepal</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>120</b>
Hile	4		4				4
Chatara	27	13	40				40
Biratnagar				1		1	1
Gaighat	18	4	22				22
Beltar	13	10	23				23
Jiri (Dolakha)	14	3	17	9	1	10	27
Melamchi	1	2	3			0	3
<b>Kathmandu Valley</b>				<b>134</b>		<b>134</b>	<b>134</b>
Kathmandu				106		106	106
Lalitpur				11		11	11
Bhaktapur				13		13	13
Banepa				4		4	4
<b>Western Nepal</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>95</b>
Pokhara				8		8	8
Palpa				4	3	7	7
Butwal				4		4	4
Baglung	3		3	9		9	12
Beni				16	1	17	17
Surkhet				32		32	32
Chhinchu		2	2	2		2	4
Nepalgunj				7	4	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>349</b>

In western Nepal, the use of mules (*Khacchar*) to transport consumption goods and construction materials seems to restrict the use of children as long distance porters, according to key informants from Beni (Myagdi District) and Baglung. Still, a few children working as long distance porters in western areas reportedly carry odd-sized luggage, which cannot be carried by mule. However, the use of child porters at bus parks and market centres is common in western urban centres and newly opened markets in western Nepal.

Throughout the Kathmandu Valley, short distance porters work at market centres and bus parks. In places where there are adult porters, the number of child porters is also high. The Kathmandu Valley absorbs the highest number of short distance child porters. As is the case with most short distance porters, these are all boys.

### 3.2 Origin

This study found that about 91 per cent come from rural areas. A finding which correlates to that of the 1997 CONCERN study, which reported that 92.5 per cent of child porters working in Kathmandu came from rural areas<sup>4</sup>.

Table 3.2: Distribution of Child Porters by District and Place of Origin by Job Distance, 2001

Type and Rural Urban Districts by Regions	Long Distance Porters			Short Distance Porters			Both		All Total
	Rural	Urban	L. Total	Rural	Urban	S. Total	Rural	Urban	
Eastern Hill/ Mountain	97.1	2.9	91.2	100.0	--	14.0	97.8	2.2	39.3
Central Hill/Mountain	100.0	--	1.8	99.1	0.9	46.4	99.1	0.9	31.8
West+Mid-West Hill	100.0	--	7.0	65.3	34.7	30.6	68.8	31.3	22.9
Terai Districts	--	--	--	89.5	10.5	8.1	89.5	10.5	5.4
India	--	--	--	100.0	0.0	0.9	100.0	--	0.6
<b>Total %</b>	<b>97.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>88.1</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>349</b>

About 12 per cent of the short distance porters reportedly originate from urban areas, as compared to only 2.6 per cent of long distance porters (Table 3.2)<sup>5</sup>.

The majority of child porters are from the eastern hills and mountains, followed by the central hills and mountains. More than 91 per cent of long distance child porters are from eastern hills and mountains, whereas about 46 per cent of the short distance child porters originate from central hills and mountains (Table 3.2 and Map 1)<sup>6</sup>.

#### Box 2: The influence of Portering

Focus group discussions and informal talks with adult and child porters at Chatara, Beltar, Gaighat and Jiri revealed that children become porters to see markets, motor buses, and to watch movies. Many feel that if they do not become porters they could wait for years to see such things.

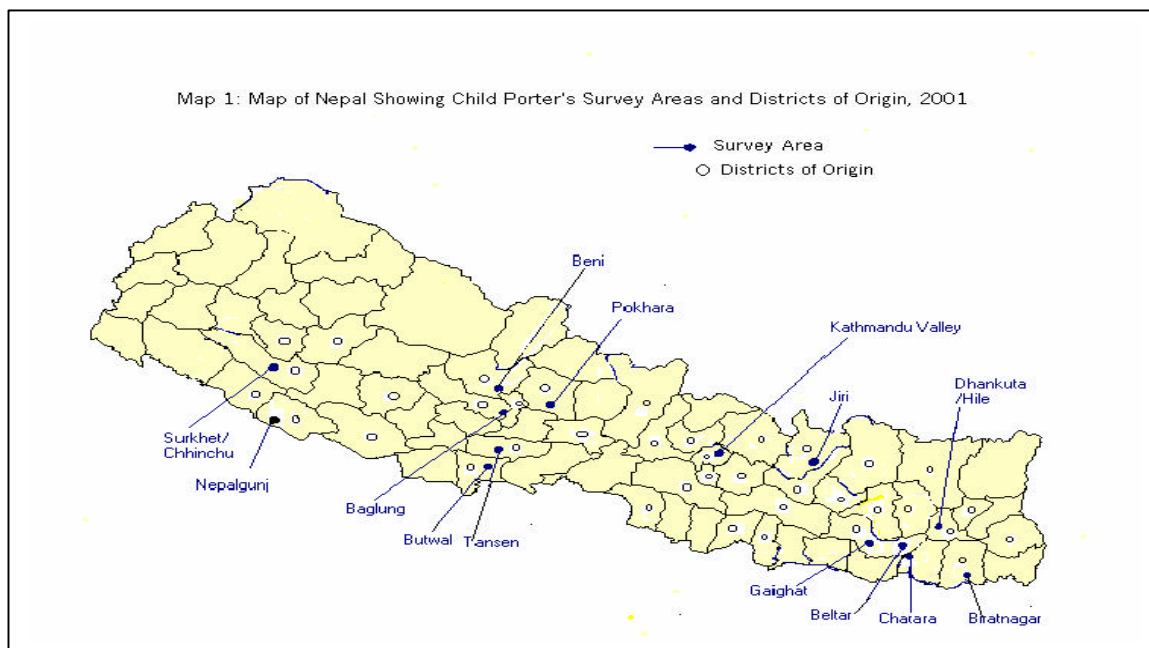
It is important to note that although most key informants have verified that a majority of child porters come from eastern and central hill/mountain districts, 'pockets' of child porters can be found all over Nepal. As the survey sample was based on purposive sampling of 349 child porters from market centres and bus parks, covering major portering districts and routes in an area ranging from Mid-western to Eastern

<sup>4</sup> Some child porters who reported urban areas as their permanent residence were actually born in rural areas that were afterwards classified as municipalities. For instance, three long distance child porters interviewed at Gaighat (Udayapur District) were born in Ward 5, Rajabas, Triyougga municipality, an area classified as a Village Development Committee (VDC) before the last local election.

<sup>5</sup> The number of child porters originating from urban centres of the Kathmandu Valley and eastern districts of Nepal is insignificant compared to the number of child porters originating from western urban centres such as Baglung, Palpa, Butwal, Nepalgunj, and Surkhet. This is due to the classification of many rural areas as urban centres.

<sup>6</sup> Map 1 indicates the extent of porter work in the far western regions of Nepal, a region generally considered vulnerable to poverty by most assessment literature, and one could expect a high incidence of child porters originating from these districts as well. However, since this study does not enumerate the number of child porters throughout Nepal, the extent of use of child porters in this region may not be accurately reflected.

Development Regions of Nepal, the study does not, for instance, include child porters in remote hill/mountain districts in the Far-western Development Region.



The proportion of child porters originating from districts in the Terai region is very low. This indicates those rural households of the hills and mountains living in subsistence activities are more vulnerable to sending their children out for porter work<sup>7</sup> (Box 1). It also indicates that porter jobs are mostly found away from the Terai region, and along the major traditional portering routes in the hill/mountains areas of Nepal.

About 99 per cent of long distance and 97 per cent of short distance child porters come from villages that have schools. About 70 per cent of child porters are from villages with health facilities. Other facilities commonly available at the origin villages are post offices, piped water, telephones, and agricultural service centres. The least available facilities are motor roads, banks, and cooperatives (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Facilities Available at Route Origin by Job Distance

Social Facilities	Long	Short	Both
School	99.1	97.0	97.7
Post Office	77.2	69.8	72.2
Health Post	69.3	70.2	69.9
Piped Water	64.0	68.5	67.0
Telephone	21.1	28.9	26.4
Agri. Service Centre	23.7	26.4	25.5
Motor Road	5.3	34.5	24.9
Cooperatives	17.5	23.8	21.8
Bank	9.6	25.5	20.3

Basically, long distance porters from high hill areas strongly desired to see motor vehicles and market places. Formal and informal interviews with child porters revealed that the desire to see motor vehicles, market places, and the glamour of market life significantly increases the numbers of child porters in Kathmandu, other market centres and newly emerging bus parks.

### 3.3 Caste and Ethnic Groups

Porters come from almost all of Nepal's major castes and ethnic groups, and are predominately male in urban centres (Table 3.4). Studies in eastern Nepal found that about half the region's child porters belonged to Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Sherpa, and Magar

<sup>7</sup> List of districts according to broader geographical regions and number of child porters coming from each district for the purpose of this study have been presented in Appendix IV

ethnic groups, and about one fourth from *dalit* groups (HURENDEC, 2001). Another study reported that about 26 per cent of child porters in the Kathmandu Valley belonged to Tamang, Lama and Bhote ethnic groups, followed by Brahmin (17%), Chhetri and Newar (CONCERN, 1997). The HURENDEC findings resemble the findings of the present study concerning the long distance porters. However, the caste/ethnic composition of child porters identified in this study differs from the findings of the 1997 CONCERN study.

Table 3.4 shows that the ethnic origin of long distance child porters is overwhelmingly dominated (46.5%) by Mongoloid ethnic groups –Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Magar, and Sunwar – followed by *dalits* (18.4%) and Newars (15.8%). In contrast, the majority of short distance child porters come from Chhetri families (24.3%), followed by *Dalits* (23%), Tamangs (13.2%) and Mongoloids (12.3%). Considering their proportion in the national population and their regional composition, children from *dalits* are over-represented in porter work. The same is true for Mongoloid ethnic groups (Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Magar, and Sunwar), Newar and Tamang communities, whereas the representation of children from the Chhetri ethnic group is in proportion to their national share in population composition<sup>8</sup>.

Table 3.4: Gender Distribution of Child Porters by Caste/Ethnicity and Job Distance, 2001

Type of Porter and Gender Caste/Ethnic Groups	Long Distance			Short Distance			All Total
	Boys	Girls	L. Total	Boys	Girls	S. Total	
Rai, Limbu, Gurung , Magar & Sunwar (Mongoloid)	48.8	41.2	46.5	12.8		12.3	23.5
Kami, Damain, Sarki (Dalits)	25.0	2.9	18.4	23.5	11.1	23.0	21.5
Chhetri	6.3	8.8	7.0	25.2		24.3	18.6
Newar	11.3	26.5	15.8	9.3		8.9	11.2
Tamang	2.5	8.8	4.4	13.7		13.2	10.3
Gharti, Kumal				4.4	33.3	5.5	3.7
Brahmin	1.3	5.9	2.6	3.5	11.1	3.8	3.4
Tharu, Danuwar, Majhi	2.5		1.8	2.2	44.4	3.8	3.2
Other Terai				1.8		1.7	1.1
Others+	2.5	5.9	3.5	3.5		3.4	3.4
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>349</b>

+ Others include Praja/Chepang, Giri, Puri, and Bhote/Sherpa,

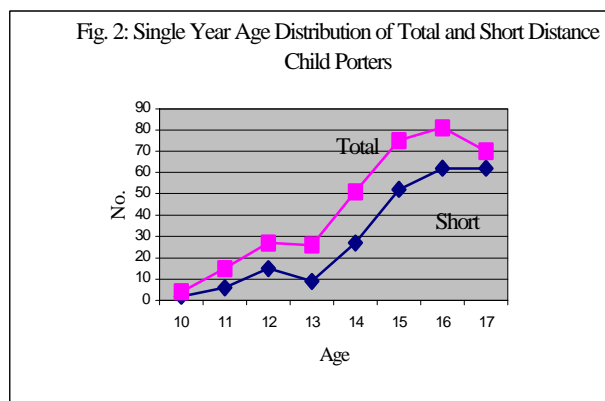
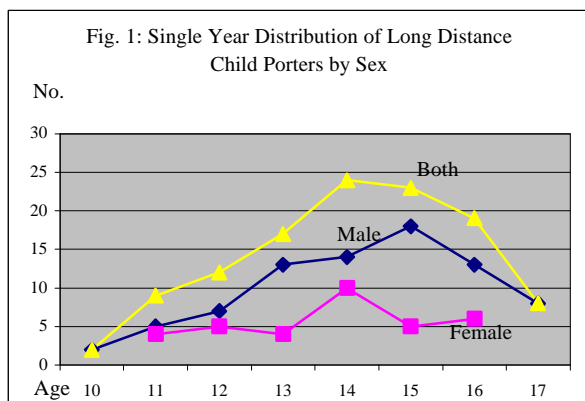
Source: RA of Child Porters in Nepal, 2001.

In terms of gender, a substantially higher proportion of girls from Mongoloid ethnic groups is represented, as compared to other groups. *Dalits* girls are poorly represented compared to their overall proportion, possibly because the group belongs to a vertical caste system, which tends to be less liberal than Mongoloid ethnic groups in terms of mobility permitted for girls.

### 3.4 Age and Gender Composition

About four per cent of long distance child porters and three per cent of short distance child porters reported that they began to work when they were under ten years of age. However, this study failed to identify child porters under age ten in either category (Figures 1 and 2).

<sup>8</sup> In Gaighat, key informants believed that many child porters are from Mongoloid ethnic groups followed by “untouchables,” because these groups tend to undervalue the importance of education. However, the links between education and work are complex, and are influenced by such factors as social discrimination and lack of alternative income generating opportunities.



The majority of short distance child porters were 15 to 17 years old, with the age of long distance child porters being relatively lower (Table 3.5 and Figures 1 and 2). The mean age of long distance child porters was around fourteen years, whereas the corresponding age for short distance porters was more than fifteen years. The girl respondents became porters at earlier average ages than boys. However, short distance child porters of either sex were older than long distance porters.

Table 3.5: Age and Gender Distribution of Child Porters by Job Distance, 2001

Age	10-14	15-17	Total	Mean	Total
Year	Year		Age	(N)	
<i>Long Distance Porters</i>					
Boys	51.3	48.8	70.2	14.2	80
Girls	67.6	32.4	29.8	13.7	34
Both	56.1	43.9	100.0	14.1	114
<i>Short Distance Porters</i>					
Boys	24.3	75.7	96.2	15.3	226
Girls	44.4	55.6	3.8	14.6	9
Both	25.1	74.9	100.0	15.3	235
All Total	35.2	64.8	100.0	14.9	349

Key informants explained that in market centres, job competition is high, and children must live on their own. On long distance routes, the father or guardian usually manages loads, wages and food. For instance, C. Darjee, 12, failed to find employment as a porter at Mahabouddha, Kathmandu, due to his physical size and age. Eventually, he returned home. At the same time, Phul Kumari

Tamang, 11, from Ghodetar, Bhojpur carries loads from Chatara to Ghodetar, Bhojpur along with her mother, relatives and villagers. During the fall season she comes once per week to Chatara as a professional porter.

### 3.5 Education and Literacy

About 21 per cent of all child porters, fifty per cent of long distance child porters and six per cent of short distance child porters, currently attend school. School enrolment is highest for younger (ages 10-14) long distance boy porters (82%), and lowest for the older short distance porters (ages 15-17). School enrolment of child porters by gender seems to be relatively higher for long distance than short distance child porters (Table 3.6), yet far fewer girl porters attended school than boys.

Of the total child porters included in the study, 75 per cent once attended school. There was a higher concentration of school dropouts among short distance porters after completion of primary school or failing in school exams, especially after age 14. Again, the gender bias in school attendance is quite apparent from Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Distribution of Child Porters by Age, Gender, Job Distance, Literacy, and School Attendance, 2001

Age and Type	Sex and Literacy/Schooling Status									Total
	Currently Schooling			Ever Attended School			Literate			
	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both	
Long Distance										
10-14	82.9	30.4	64.1	92.7	69.6	84.4	80.5	52.2	70.3	64
15-17	35.9	18.2	32.0	71.8	45.5	66.0	61.5	36.4	56.0	50
<i>L. Total</i>	<i>60.0</i>	<i>26.5</i>	<i>50.0</i>	<i>82.5</i>	<i>61.8</i>	<i>76.3</i>	<i>71.3</i>	<i>47.1</i>	<i>64.0</i>	<i>114</i>
Short Distance										
10-14	21.8	25.0	22.0	70.9	75.0	71.2	63.6	75.0	64.4	59
15-17	1.2		1.1	76.0	40.0	75.0	70.8	80.0	71.0	176
<i>S. Total</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>11.1</i>	<i>6.4</i>	<i>74.8</i>	<i>55.6</i>	<i>74.0</i>	<i>69.0</i>	<i>77.8</i>	<i>69.4</i>	<i>235</i>
<b>All Total</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>349</b>

Source: RA of Child Porters in Nepal, 2001.

About 68 per cent of child porters are literate. In the field, their ability to read and write was tested by various means. They were first asked to read the content of the questionnaire, and interpret it. Second, they were asked to write their names, addresses and other relevant information. Only then was a child classified as literate or illiterate.

The proportion of literate children working as long distance porters was lower than short distance child porters, due to the high concentration of school dropouts in market centres and bus parks. As an exception to the rule, some of the 16 to 17- year-old boys who passed high school were working as porters in the Koteswor, Teku and Maitidevi sections of Kathmandu and in Mangal Bazaar, Patan. However, the highest proportion of literacy was found in younger long distance child porters, regardless of current or previous schooling. This may be attributed to the market environment where literacy skills can be acquired informally. At Tansen, Palpa, many girl porters were attending an informal literacy class.

In summary, the majority of child porters are school dropouts and even those now enrolled in schools are at high risk of dropping out. About 80 per cent of child porters (57 of 114 long distance and 220 of 235 short distance child porters) do not currently attend school, while 30 per cent have never attended school.

The linkages between porter work, household poverty and education need further research. The child porters themselves gave household poverty as the main reason for never attending school (Table 3.7). The need for children to perform household chores was the second major reason, while death or illness of a parent was third. A considerable proportion of child porters reported having little or no interest in reading, because they considered being a porter easier than doing schoolwork. Failed school examinations were another major reason for dropping out of schools.

Table 3.7: Major Reasons for Leaving or Never Attending School by Job Distance, 2001

Type of Porters Reasons	Long distance		Short Distance	
	Major I	Major II	Major I	Minor II
Can not afford school	31.6	21.1	40.9	15.0
Need in household work	26.3	19.3	15.5	8.6
Parent's death or illness	15.8	14.0	8.6	7.7
School far way	1.8	5.3	2.7	3.2
Failed in school exam	8.8	1.8	5.0	1.4
Due to lack of company	1.8	0.0	5.9	1.8
Lack of interest	12.3	7.0	14.5	12.3
Others +	--	3.5	4.1	6.8
Do not know	1.8	28.1	2.7	43.2
Total (Number)	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>220</b>

+ Other reasons include teachers' humiliation or harassment, no use for reading, parents did not send them to school at proper age and now it is shameful to be admitted at lower classes, and ill-treatment by step parents.

Some adult porters in the Kathmandu Valley (in focus group discussion at Balaju and Dhaugal Bazaar, Patan) said that parents do not expect earnings from children and would prefer to send them to school. They believe many children drop out of school and run away from home because they want to experience such aspects of city life as motor vehicles and movies. When they return home, they often find village life boring and return to cities with porters from their villages. Yet, key informants also raised issues of household poverty, parental death/illness, abusive stepparents, family disturbance, parental ignorance, and negligence, and children's own attitudes as major reasons for dropping out of school or never attending school.

**Box 3: Children who drop out of school to be porters**

R. Mainali, 15 years old, from Sailungshor, Dolakha, failed in his class seven exams. His farther and mother told him to continue in school. But he did not listen to them. Instead, he became a porter at Tukucha Vegetable Market in Kathmandu.

D. Darjee, 12, from Dhairing, Parbat, said he had to drop out of school, as a result of the motor bus arriving at Beni Bazaar.

D. Majhi, 15, from Diktel, Khotang, left school to see the natural beauty of Pokhara and then became a porter.

H. Chapagain, 15, from Surkhet could not continue school because he failed twice at the class eight exams. He is now working as a porter at Surkhet bus park.

Statements generated by focus group discussions are as follows:

- not possible to read with empty stomach,
- parents send to schools up to primary level and do not care to sponsor further education,
- the higher the educational level the higher the level of educational expenditure for materials and clothes,
- government help to educate *dalits* is negligible,
- school far away, needs river crossing en route, no bridge, parents fear to send,
- although adults encourage them to attend school, children themselves are less interested, start working as porters, and eventually drop out,
- without being a porter no money comes for education, subsistence and household maintenance,
- poor educational environment at the village due to too many poor parents who never force children to go to school,

- schoolchildren make demands which are impossible to fulfil; therefore, guardians say go earn your own living and do whatever you like,
- teachers humiliate poorer students by commenting on clothes and dress, such as, ‘Why this patched trouser?, Why are you barefoot?, Why stains on your shirt?, Why are you not clean?’
- disinterested teachers play chess or cards or talk among themselves while children work on lessons,
- children are disinterested in education because of household poverty, and like being porters because it is an intergenerational occupation,
- income of an elder son will be helpful to raise other younger siblings,
- what is the use of reading when school graduates are sometimes jobless and also work as porters?

These responses indicate that most of the child porters come from impoverished households. Dissatisfaction with schooling systems and poor behaviour of teachers may accelerate a child’s intention to drop out, while peer groups are influential in persuading them to move from home.

### 3.6 Family Composition

Table 3.8: Incidence of Parent Loss and Average Family Size by Job Distance

Presence of Parents	Long Distance	Short Distance	Total
Both Alive	84.2	77.4	79.7
Both Dead	1.8	1.7	1.7
Mother Dead	2.6	6.8	5.4
Father Dead	8.8	11.9	10.9
Stepmother in home	2.6	0.4	1.1
Others	--	1.7	1.1
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>349</b>
Average Family Size by Sex of Child Porter			
Male	6.7	6.4	6.5
Female	6.3	7.2	6.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.5</b>

About 84 per cent of long distance and 77 per cent of short distance child porters had two living parents. About two per cent of all child porters had no guardians (Table 3.8). Still most key informants replied that child porters came from broken families, indicating that ill treatment by a stepparent forced them to leave home, or that one or both parents died, causing severe household poverty. Though the incidence of death in one or both parents seems relatively low, it was repeatedly mentioned as the reason for being a child porter (Box 3).

Case histories indicated that incidence of mother’s death is relatively lower than that of incidence of father’s death. When the father as breadwinner in the family dies, the child,

#### Box 4: Child porters and the death of parents

P. Lopchan (Tamang) 15 years old, from Humtang, Bhojpur, carries 35 kg loads from Chatara Bazar to Ghodetar Bazar, Bhojpur in order to support her family. Since she is not married, she has to take care of three younger sisters and brothers herself. Since their father and mother died two years ago, she has had only a cowshed to shelter her sisters. She has to make a living for the family of orphans.

especially the boy, is pushed into porter work.

Incidence of either parent's death is quite high for short distance porters. More stepmothers were reported by long distance compared to short distance child porters. Sometimes the mother eloped, the father disappeared in India, or the father was an alcoholic.



The majority of child porters have many siblings, and come from extended families. There are sometimes grandparents living in the household, as well as married brothers, sisters-in-law and nephews, but fewer uncles and aunts. Some children of both sexes were married and living with spouses. The average household size of families of child porters was 6.5 persons. This is one per cent higher than the national average, but not necessarily of that of the rural areas where most of the child porters originate. It is relatively higher for long distance porters, especially boys, but highest for short distance girl porters.

Thus, large family size may cause children to seek employment. However, only a few key informants raised the issue of high fertility and larger family size as a cause of child labour in general and child porter work in particular.

### 3.7 Family Economic Situation

Recording types of housing and ownership, it was found that families of long distance child porters owned their houses, and 97 per cent of them also owned agricultural land. The incidence of homelessness and landlessness were relatively higher for families of short distance porters (Table 3.9).

Comments about housing, and amount and quality of land were made in focus group discussions as follows:

#### Box 5: Family size and portering

B. Bogati, 16 years old, of Koteswor, Kathmandu, passed his School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams and was admitted to night classes at a Kathmandu university. His family is not poor, but his father told him: "Now that you are at SLC level, make your own way. My responsibility is to bring up your six younger brothers and sisters." So, to earn money for living in Kathmandu B. Bogati now works as a porter.

The sixth son of his parents, D. Darjee, aged 12, is a porter at Beni Bazaar Bus Park. He says his father ordered him to drop out of school to work. His father told him, "You get nothing going to school, if you go for work, you may earn some."

Table 3.9: Family Living Arrangements and Means of Subsistence, 2001

House/Land	Long Dist.	Short Dist.	Both
House	100.0	97.4	98.3
Agri. Land	97.4	90.6	92.8

#### About Housing:

- it is a hut,
- it can not protect from rain,
- it is like a bird's nest (*Jureli ko gund*),
- wall is about to fall down,
- you can count stars at night sleeping on the floor,
- it is like cowshed, part of it is cowshed and part for us to sleep,
- cooking and sleeping at the same place.

#### About Land:

- not enough to feed year round,
- very steep and hard to cultivate,
- very small only to homestead,
- can not grow paddy and wheat, even difficult to grow maize,
- it is like slash and burn,
- cultivate for six months and harvest only for two months,
- yes, we are not landless (*sukumbasi*).

But not all child porters are from families with poor housing and small landholdings. Some replied that their families live in good houses, with roofs made from slate, wood, or zinc blocks. Their families owned enough good agricultural land to grow paddy, wheat, maize and other seasonal crops. Some families even produced surplus food grain to sell. These respondents reported that they came to work as porters at market places or bus parks to see modern things (Box 5).

**Box 6: Wealthy households also supply child porters**

B. Katwal, a married 16-year-old from Bilandu, Okhaldhunga, has worked as a porter at Kalanki for three months. He was employed at his uncle's carpet factory, but the factory closed, and he became a porter. His family owns a considerable amount of land, and double houses with stone roofs.

S. Pun Magar, 14, has worked as a porter at Beni Bazaar for 18 months. After fifth grade, he dropped out of school because he was bored with both schoolwork and tending the family cattle. His family owns plenty of land and a good house with enough room to live.

The majority of child porters reported that their families earn their livings from agriculture, which includes cultivation of their own farms or sharecropping. Working as porters stands as one of the major and highly valued supplementary activities for family survival (Table 3.10). This supplies ample evidence that porter work is one of the major off-farm employment sources in the rural areas of Nepal.

Table 3.10: Distribution of Porters by Family Occupation, 2001

Type of Porters & Activity	Long distance		Short Distance		Both	
	Major I	Major II	Major I	Major II	Major I	Major II
Farming/share cropping	73.7	8.8	75.3	1.7	74.8	4.0
Porter Work	15.8	73.7	9.8	78.7	11.7	77.1
Daily Wage	8.8	16.7	11.5	16.2	10.6	16.3
Others +	1.8	0.9	3.4	3.4	2.9	2.6
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>349</b>

+ Others include trade/business, service, driving, and pension and not stated

Porter work was found to be a balance between family survival and a family enterprise. Many adult porters bring their children or their relatives' children to market centres to find employment.

Yet, porter work is also often a major means of family survival, and children may perceive it as a stage of life that involves physical hardship, but also provides an opportunity to experience new places and new ideas. It is also a means to avoid hunger. A child who does not work as a porter on long distance routes may have to do without food.

The structured questionnaire for individual interviews failed to capture the issue of family indebtedness and its role in causing children to work as porters. Yet, informal discussions, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions can shed some light on this issue. During the focus group discussions, a substantial number of children replied that a porter's daily wages are not enough to pay back loans in high interest rates. For this reason, their family property, such as houses or land, is mortgaged. To help pay off family loans, the children worked as porters. But such statements were often made cheerfully.

However, long distance child porters frequently and seriously said that they would pay the loans incurred in eating meat, buying clothes and so on. An independent study of long distance child porters from eastern Nepal revealed that almost 70 per cent of the families

**Box 7: Portering as a family process**

M. Khatiwada, 12, from Baraha Pokhari, Khotang, accompanies her father as he carries loads from Khotang Bazaar. Her father said that she should know how to survive and care for her younger siblings if he dies.

B. Basnet, was found at Beltar Bazaar, arranging loads for all three of his children, two boys and a girl, who were less than 17 years old.

In Chhetrapati, Kathmandu, adult porters from Dhading said that their fathers had brought them to work as porters when they were young. (Some of their fathers were still working as porters). Now, they send their own children to school, but are thinking about bringing the children of other relatives to work as porters, if they are reluctant to read.

were in debt (HURENDEC, 2001). In the long run, inability to pay such debts invites a slavery-like situation for child porters.

### 3.8 Summary

This chapter presented background characteristics of child porters in market/business centres, bus parks and long distance routes. A total of 349 child porters were included in the analysis, including 134 from the Kathmandu Valley, 120 from eastern Nepal, and the remainder from western Nepal. The highest proportion of child porters came from eastern hills and mountains, followed by the central hills and mountains.

Long distance child porters are largely concentrated in eastern Nepal. Almost all major caste and ethnic groups supply child porters. However, most come from Mongoloid ethnic groups, followed by *dalits* and Newars. More Tamang children become porters than other groups when their proportionate share in the national population is considered. Children from poor and socially excluded caste and ethnic groups are very prone to becoming porters.

Major background characteristics of both long and short distance child porters may be summarized as follows:

Characteristics	Long Distance	Short Distance
Origin	Rural hill districts in eastern and central Nepal	Rural areas of hill districts, increasing phenomenon in western Nepal
Work Place	Porter routes and semi-urban centres	Market centres and bus parks, in some instances at semi-urban centres
Age	Low age range (10-14)	Upper age range (15-17)
Gender/sex	Out of 114, 34 are girls	Out of 235 only 9 are girls
Caste and Ethnicity	Mongoloid followed by Dalits, Newars and Tamangs	Chhetri (24%) followed by Dalits (23%) and Tamangs (13%)
Currently in School	50 per cent of total, 60 per cent of boys and 26.5 per cent of girls	6.4 per cent of total, gender breakdown unavailable
Ever attended school	76 per cent of total, 82.5 per cent of boys, and 62 per cent of girls	74 per cent of total
Currently literate	64 per cent of total, 71 per cent of boys, 47 per cent of girls	69 per cent of boys, gender breakdown unavailable
Family composition	Father's death relatively high, About 2 per cent orphans, Family size of 6.6 persons	Father's death relatively high, About 2 per cent orphans, Family size of 6.4 persons
Living arrangements	No homeless, A few landless, type of house and size and quality of land reflecting poverty	About 3 per cent homeless, About 9 per cent from landless families
Means of family survival	Agriculture/share cropping and porter work	Agriculture/sharecropping, porter work and daily wages

## Chapter 4

### WORKING CONDITIONS

#### 4.1 Duration of Employment

Most child porters begin carrying loads when they are 10 to 14 years old. On the average, short distance porters are one year older when they begin work, while girls are two years older (Table 4.1). A substantial proportion of short distance porters (42.7%) begins later, at ages 15 to 17.

Table 4.1: Age of Entry into Porter Work by Gender and Job Distance, 2001

Age of Entry Sex	Long Distance			Short Distance			All Total
	Boys	Girls	L. Total	Boys	Girls	S. Total	
05-09 Yr.	3.8	5.9	4.4	2.2	--	2.1	2.9
10-14 Yr.	73.8	82.4	76.3	52.4	33.3	51.7	59.8
15-17 Yrs.	21.3	8.8	17.5	42.2	55.6	42.7	34.5
Age don't know	1.3	2.9	1.8	3.1	11.1	3.4	2.9
Avg. age of entry	12.7	12.2	12.6	13.7	14.5	13.7	13.3
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>349</b>

A high proportion of children worked more than one year (Table 4.2), including about 73 per cent of long distance and 60 per cent of short distance porters. However, about 67 per cent of

girls worked less than six months. The higher the porter's age, the longer the duration of work. Fifteen to seventeen-year-old boys worked an average of 25.8 months, while girls that age worked an average of 23.8 months.

The longer the distance, the greater the exposure to hazards. Long distance porters carry loads for many days, and do not eat regularly. When such work begins at early ages, it affects growth. Observation suggested that long distance child porters are malnourished and severely stunted (Box 7). Among short distance child porters in urban centres, this was not the situation, despite the fact that they often work barefoot and inadequately dressed for cold weather, and live in unhygienic conditions.

#### Box 8: Stunted Growth

About seven porters approached the survey team from Gaighat Bazaar at Bokse (Udayapur District). They were so short they looked like children from the distance. However, when they arrived the team realized they were adults. The porters said they had all started carrying loads at very young ages.

Table 4.2: Duration of Work by Age, Gender and Job Distance, 2001

	< 6 months	6-11 months	12-24 months	25+ months	Mean Duration	Total I (N)
<b>Long distance</b>						
Boys					21.5	
10-14	29.3	2.4	53.7	14.6	17.3	41
15-17	7.7	7.7	51.3	33.3	25.8	39
Girls					20.7	
10-14	26.1	8.7	34.8	30.4	19.2	23
15-17	36.4	0.0	27.3	36.4	23.8	11
Total	21.9	5.3	46.5	26.3	21.2	114
<b>Short Distance</b>						
Boys					20.2	
10-14	34.5	9.1	29.1	27.3	17.6	55
15-17	24.7	11.8	37.1	26.5	21.0	170
Girls	66.7	11.1	11.1	11.1	6.8	9
Total	28.6	11.1	34.2	26.1	19.6	235
<b>All Total</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>38.2</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>349</b>

## 4.2 Seasonal Labour

Porters in the Kathmandu Valley work during two main seasons, autumn and spring. Focus group discussions indicated that child porters in the Kathmandu Valley return home after these work seasons to assist in agricultural work and celebrate festivals. During the agricultural off-seasons they work as porters in Kathmandu to supplement family incomes.

Table 4.3: Regular and Seasonal Work by Age, Gender, and Job Distance, 2001

Job Distance	Regular	Seasonal	Total (N)
<b>Long</b>			
10-14 Yrs	21.9	78.1	64
15-17 Yrs	22.0	78.0	50
Boys	21.3	78.8	80
Girls	23.5	76.5	34
<b>Long Total</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Short</b>			
10-14 Yrs	62.7	37.3	59
15-17 Yrs	72.2	27.8	176
Boys	70.4	29.6	226
Girls	55.6	44.4	9
<b>Short Total</b>	<b>69.8</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>All Total</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>349</b>

The survey data revealed that more than 78 per cent of long distance child porters work seasonally (Table 4.3), during school holidays, or after the autumn harvest<sup>9</sup>. However, 70 per cent of child porters carrying loads for short distances at market centres or bus parks, work full-time. For instance, children commute to Jiri Bus Park and the market centres of Beni, Baglung, Butwal, Nepalgunj, and Surkhet from local areas and surrounding villages for work every day. However, some of these children work less frequently during peak agricultural seasons.

If these children were not porters, how would they spend their time? When that question was posed, 53 per cent of a group of 89 long distance porters said they would attend school. Another 42 per cent said they would help with such household chores as caring for siblings, herding cattle, or collecting fodder and firewood. The others (5 per cent) said they would work as daily wage labourers.

### Box 9: Porters as Household Servants

The mother of R. Praja (Chepang), 16, from Danda Kharka-2, Makawanpur, died seven years ago, and his father is insane. He lives as a servant in a Kirtipur household, where he gets room and board in exchange for evening chores. During the day, he is free to work as a porter.

S. Pun Magar, 14, a porter at Beni Bazaar of Parbat Beni, lives under similar conditions.

Although the question was not so relevant for short distance child porters, some at Kathmandu and Beni (Myagdi) said they have also worked as household servants, helping with evening chores in exchange for food and shelter (Box 9).

<sup>9</sup> Whether or not they actively participate in agricultural work is subject to further investigation.

### 4.3

#### Work Schedule

Long distance porters tend to work regular schedules, walking an average of five days or more to deliver each load. However, 83 per cent of short distance child porters reported irregular schedules, explaining, “We work for long hours some days, but some days it is hard to get even a single job.” At Kalimati and Tukucha vegetable markets in Kathmandu, children said that they arrive at 3 or 4 a.m., when merchandise is loaded or unloaded, and often work 16-hour days. Children also arrive at bus parks outside the Kathmandu Valley as early as 4 a.m. to meet incoming night buses. Our research indicated that the average workday for short distance child porters is 8.4 hours.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of Child Porters by Work Schedule, 2001**

	Number	Per cent
<b>Long Distance</b>		
Walking Days (Mean)		<b>5.6</b>
01-04 Days	32	28.1
05-08 Days	73	64.0
09 + Days	9	7.9
Total	114	100.0
<b>Short Distance</b>		
Working Hours Per Day (Mean)		<b>8.4</b>
< 8 Hrs A day	9	3.8
8-12 Hrs a Day	23	9.8
12 + Hrs a Day	3	1.3
Irregular hours	195	83.0
Don' t Know	5	2.1
Total	235	100.0

#### 4.4 Load Weights

Although legislation prohibits minors from carrying more than 25 kg, enforcement is poor to nonexistent. Most children reported carrying loads averaging 49 kg, often heavier than

**Table 4.5: Weight of Load by Age, Gender and Job Distance, 2001**

Age, Gender and Job Distance	<= 25 Kg	26-35 Kg	36-49 Kg	50 + Kg	Total (N)	Average Weight
<b>Long Distance</b>						
Boys	21.3	33.8	18.8	26.3	80	37.2
Girls	47.1	26.5	20.6	5.9	34	29.0
Age Group						
10-14	48.4	42.2	4.7	4.7	64	27.9
15-17	4.0	18.0	38.0	40.0	50	43.6
<i>Long Total</i>	28.9	31.6	19.3	20.2	114	34.8
<b>Short Distance</b>						
Boys	6.7	10.3	12.9	70.1	224	56.4
Girls	33.3	33.3	0.0	33.3	9	33.3
Age Group						
10-14	19.0	27.6	22.4	31.0	58	41.0
15-17	4.0	5.7	9.1	81.1	175	60.3
<i>Short Total</i>	7.7	11.2	12.4	68.7	233	55.5
<b>All Total</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>48.7</b>

their own weights. Short distance porters carried the heaviest loads, with about 69 per cent reporting loads heavier than 50 kg. However, only about 20 per cent of long distance porters carried more than 50 kg. An average long distance load was 35 kg, and 29 per cent carried loads weighing less than 25 kg. Generally, the higher the age of the child, the heavier the load.

Boys tended to carry heavier loads than girls (Table 4.5).

Children carry heavier loads in the hope of higher earnings.

Wages are often determined by

the weight of the load carried. If a heavy load is divided between two children, the wages are also likely to be divided.

#### Box 10: A Matter of Habit

Sarala Shrestha, 15, was carrying a 40 kg load from Beltar to Khotang. She said she was used to carrying such loads, as she had started young. She said: “If we carry less, the income will be less.”

During informal discussions and focus group discussions, children were asked, “Is this weight too heavy for your age and body?”.

The responses of long distance child porters indicated:

- they are accustomed to carrying loads heavier than themselves,
- they couldn't earn enough to eat along the route if they carried lighter loads,
- it is possible to manage heavier loads by resting frequently along the route, even when it extends the time required,
- adult porters sometimes assist getting the loads across difficult terrain, and
- the *naike* (lead porters) can sometimes earn extra commissions of Rs. 20 when porters carry at least 25 kg, and will not employ children willing to carry less.

Short distance child porters said:

- some loads are difficult to divide, such as heavy sacks and containers of grain or vegetables, and a porter who asks the load be split usually loses the job,
- employers often hire porters to load or unload heavy sacks on a per piece basis. Carrying several 30-50 kg parcels at a time increases earning,
- porters who will not carry heavy loads are often rejected for employment.

#### Box 11: Work Hazards

**The children's responses indicated they are aware of these work hazards:**

- chronic cough and bronchitis due to sleeping in cold, damp places,
- increased heart, circulatory and digestive problems,
- tuberculosis,
- malnutrition and stunted growth,
- chronic leg and back pain, and
- life expectancy shortened by as much as 20 to 30 years.

The children know their loads can be hazardous, and say they “walk life on the edge of a sword.” Long distance child porters carry iron blocks, zinc plates, GI pipes, metal pots and materials to build suspension bridge (like long wire rope). Odd-sized loads can catch on obstacles, causing falls from high cliffs. A large majority of children, however, did not know which items were most dangerous, and considered carrying all loads dangerous.

## 4.5 Wages

Table 4.6: Average Daily Earnings by Gender, Age and Job Distance, 2001

Type, Age and Sex	< 50 Rs.	50-99 Rs.	100-199 Rs.	200+ Rs.	All Avg.	Total (N)
<b>Long Distance</b>						
Boys	17.5	63.8	18.8		74.2	80
Girls	26.5	67.6	5.9		62.3	34
Age Groups						
10-14 Yrs	29.7	60.9	9.4		62.6	64
15-17 Yrs	8.0	70.0	22.0		81.0	50
<b>Long Total</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>14.9</b>		<b>70.7</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Short Distance</b>						
Boys	6.6	40.3	47.8	5.3	97.3	226
Girls	55.6	44.4	0.0		52.8	9
Age Groups						
10-14 Yrs	23.7	55.9	16.9	3.4	70.5	59
15-17 Yrs	3.4	35.2	55.7	5.7	104.0	176
<b>Short Total</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>95.6</b>	<b>235</b>

Daily wages are relatively higher for children who carry loads short distances in urbanized areas, averaging Rs. 96 per day, than for those who carry loads long distances, averaging Rs. 71 per day. About five per cent of short distance child porters sometimes earn as much as Rs.200 a day (Table 4.6). Older children tend to earn more than younger children, and boys earn more than girls, due to the custom of allotting girls lighter loads on long distance routes.

Wages are usually determined between the porter and the employer. The rates are negotiable for short distance jobs, but there is a standard system of payment on long distance routes, calculated by the load weight and destination. For instance, the set wage of Rs.22 per kg is paid on the route from Chatara to Ditkel Bazaar, while Rs. 8 per kg is paid on the route from Chatara to Ghodetar, Bhojpur. Wages can fluctuate according to the value of the merchandise carried. For instance, porters carrying oranges at Beltar, Gaighat, and Chatara markets get lower wages if the price of fruit falls.

Child porters seldom earn more than subsistence wages, although there are some exceptional cases. A shopkeeper at Tukucha vegetable market said some child porters earn enough to deposit savings at a finance company, and this was verified as true.

Some children help support their families. During a focus group discussion at Koteswor, Kathmandu, one child said, “Our family is in debt, and if we do not help in paying back the loan, the home and land will go in oxen.” Others said, “Our parents ask money to pay loan incurred for eating meat<sup>10</sup>, and to buy salt, oil and to change some clothes.” But most children gave such responses as, “How can we give money to our parents when we are

Table 4.7: Income Control by Age, Gender and Job Distance, 2001

Gender, Age and Person Who Controls Income	Boys		Total	Girls		Total	All Total
	10-14	15-17		10-14	15-17		
<b>Long Distance</b>							
Self	9.8	17.9	13.8	4.3		2.9	10.5
Spouse					9.1	2.9	0.9
Parents	46.3	41.0	43.8	56.5	54.5	55.9	47.4
Self /Parents	43.9	41.0	42.5	34.8	27.3	32.4	39.5
Brother/Sister				4.3	9.1	5.9	1.8
<b>Long Total (N)</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Short Distance</b>							
Self	40.0	79.5	69.9				67.2
Parents	38.2	9.9	16.8	75.0	100.0	88.9	19.6
Self/Parents	20.0	6.4	9.7	25.0		11.1	9.8
Brother/Sister	1.8	4.1	3.5	0.0			3.4
<b>Short Total (N)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>235</b>

earning only enough to manage to live here in Kathmandu?”, and “We pay room rent to share a sleeping place on the floor,” and “We even do not have enough bed clothes.” A substantial proportion of long distance child porters reported that either they give all or part of their earnings to their parents (Table 4.7). Older children, especially boys, tend to keep more of their

earnings. Most unmarried girls give their wages to their parents, while married girls turn over their wages to their husbands.

The children are sometimes exploited by employers who pay as little as possible, or add extra weight to the loads. They must also submit to degrading or humiliating verbal assaults. Girls also risk sexual harassment from lead porters or employers.

#### 4.6 Working With Companions

About 73 per cent of short distance child porters work with adults from their villages. But on long distances, only 37 per cent work with such adult acquaintances, and only 38.6 per cent work with their parents. Older boys tend to work more with peer groups than adult relatives (Table 4.8). However, most girls work with parents or with relatives.

<sup>10</sup> Eating meat is only during festivals or on an occasional basis.



Table 4.8 Distribution of Child Porters by Age, Gender and Job Distance, According to Work Companion, Work Agreement Negotiator, and Person Who Found Work, 2001

Age, Gender and Other Characteristics	Boys		Boys Total	Girls		Girls Total	All Total
	10-14	15-17		10-14	15-17		
<b>Work Companion</b>							
<b>Long Distance</b>							
Parents/guardians	46.3	25.6	36.3	34.8	63.6	44.1	38.6
Siblings or other relatives	19.5	25.6	22.5	30.4	27.3	29.4	24.6
Friends and villagers	34.1	48.7	41.3	34.8	9.1	26.5	36.8
<b>Short Distance</b>							
Alone	23.6	14.0	16.4				15.7
Parents/guardians	9.1	1.8	3.5	50.0	20.0	33.3	4.7
Siblings or other relatives	3.6	6.4	5.8	50.0	20.0	33.3	6.8
Friends and villagers	63.6	77.8	74.3		60.0	33.3	72.8
<b>Work Agreement Negotiator</b>							
<b>Long distance</b>							
Self	61.0	87.2	73.8	47.8	18.2	38.2	63.2
Parents/Guardians	19.5	5.1	12.5	30.4	45.5	35.3	19.3
Siblings or other relatives	9.8	2.6	6.3	13.0	27.3	17.6	9.6
Friends and villagers	9.8	5.1	7.5	8.7	9.1	8.8	7.9
<b>Short Distance</b>							
Self	89.1	96.5	94.7	50.0	40.0	44.4	92.8
Parents/Guardians	3.6	1.8	2.2	50.0	20.0	33.3	3.4
Friends, relatives and others	7.3	1.8	3.1	0.0	40.0	22.2	3.8
<b>Person Who Found Work</b>							
<b>Long distance</b>							
Self	43.9	61.5	52.5	34.8	45.5	38.2	48.2
Parents/Guardians	43.9	17.9	31.3	60.9	45.5	55.9	38.6
Relatives and Friends	12.2	20.5	16.3	4.3	9.1	5.9	13.2
Long Total (N)	41	39	80	23	11	34	114
<b>Short Distance</b>							
Self	78.2	70.8	72.6	25.0	40.0	33.3	71.1
Parents/Guardians	9.1	1.8	3.5	75.0	20.0	44.4	5.1
Relatives and Friends	12.7	27.5	23.9	0.0	40.0	22.2	23.8
Short Total (N)	55	171	226	4	5	9	235
<b>All Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>349</b>

Most children (93 per cent of long distance and 63 per cent of short distance child porters) find their own jobs and negotiate their own wages. More than 87 per cent of older boys (15-17) on long distance routes said they find the work themselves, but only 61 per cent of younger boys (10-14) arranged their own jobs (Table 4.8). The same pattern holds true for boys carrying loads short distances. Both girls and boys tend to find work for themselves in urban areas.

More children have chosen to work as porters on short distance routes (71.1 per cent) than long distance routes (48 per cent). Parents and guardians play greater roles for the long distance child porters, whereas relatives and friends play greater roles for short distance porters.

Table 4.9: Incidence of Sickness, Type of Illness and Frequency of Visits to Hospital or Doctor by Gender and Job Distance, 2001

	Male	Female
<b>Ever felt sick</b>		
Long distance	40.0	41.2
Short Distance	45.1	44.4
Total	43.8	41.9
<b>Type of illness</b>		
<b>Long distance</b>		
Fever and flu	68.8	85.7
Body pain, etc.	9.4	7.1
Injury/fracture, etc.	12.5	7.1
Digestive problem	9.4	
Total (N)	32	14
<b>Short distance</b>		
Fever, etc.	73.5	25.0
Body pain, etc.	7.8	
Injury/fracture, etc.	8.8	25.0
Digestive problem	6.9	25.0
Skin diseases	2.9	25.0
Total (N)	102	4
<b>Ever sought medical care</b>		
Long distance	18.8	14.3
Short Distance	46.1	
Total	39.6	11.1
<b>Reasons for not seeking medical care</b>		
<b>Long distance</b>		
Lack of money	19.2	25.0
Cured self	34.6	41.7
Doctor not available	38.5	8.3
Buying medicine	7.7	25.0
Total (N)	26	12
<b>Short Distance</b>		
Lack of money	32.8	
Cured self	29.5	50.0
Buying medicine	34.4	50.0
Wanted to save money	3.3	
Total (N)	61	4

#### 4.7.2 Health

Interviews indicated that 40 per cent of boys and 41 per cent of girls on long distance routes had fallen ill while working (Table 4.10). This was true for a slightly higher proportion of short distance child porters. An overwhelming majority of all child porters had suffered from fever and flu, and most had experienced backaches, chest pains, stomach cramps, and diarrhoea. Digestive problems and body aches may result from eating improperly cooked food, drinking contaminated water, and sleeping on cold, damp cement floors.

Children carrying loads short distances in urban areas tend to get more frequent medical care than their counterparts on long distance routes. Nearly half (45 per cent) of 224 boys working short distances reported getting sick while working, but

## 4.7 Health, Food and Living Arrangements

The issue of health was explored through questionnaires and observation. Many key informants and adult porters reported that they often sleep in damp places, or on cement floors, inviting respiratory problems. The team asked whether sick or injured children are provided with medical treatment, and if so, who pays for the treatment. The nature of diet, and whether the customary diet is sufficient to sustain hard labour, was also examined.

### 4.7.1 Risk of Accidents

Survey data indicated that more than half of child porters, including 56 per cent working on long routes, and 50 per cent on short routes, had never suffered a serious accident (Table 4.9). However, a substantial amount had survived serious accidents (Box 11).

#### Box 12: Hazards

Mamita Khatiwoda, 12, fell into a river while carrying a load between Khotang and Beltar. Luckily, an adult male porter from her village was behind her. He rescued her and another porter ran to hold her load. Unfortunately, she lost her slippers, and walked the rest of the way barefoot.

V. Darjee, 16, Nailibang, Parbat, a porter at Baglung Bus Park for the past five years, was once trapped under a loaded truck. Luckily, he survived.

S. Darjee, 15, of Galeshwor, Myagdi a porter at Baglung Bus Park, Pokhara, worked as a loader of cement packs. Once he fell from a tractor with a cement pack and fractured his leg.

Table 4.10: Frequency of Accident While Walking with Load

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Long distance</b>			
Frequent	2.5	5.9	3.5
Sometimes	40.0	41.2	40.4
Never	57.5	52.9	56.1
<b>Long Total (N)</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Short Distance</b>			
Frequent	4.4		4.3
Sometimes	44.7	66.7	45.5
Never	50.9	33.3	50.2
<b>Short Total (N)</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>235</b>

only 46 per cent visited health centres for treatment. On long distance routes, 40 per cent of boys reported getting sick during work, but only about 19 per cent attempted to get medical treatment (Table 4.11), due to the scarcity of health services in rural areas, and the high cost of medicine.

Focus group discussions with adult porters at Kalimati and New Road revealed that many child porters don't get medical care even when it is available in urban areas, due to high costs of treatment, and the tendency to prioritise the need of food over medicine.

#### Box 13: Neglected Health

An adult porter at Kalimati, Kathmandu, once broke and seriously burned his back due to a broken acid bottle. Although the employer gave him Rs. 500 to get medical treatment, the porter spent the money on food and drink. Six months later, he still had his wounds.

C. Nepali, 10, worked near Bir Hospital, the largest medical center in the country. But when his hands and legs swelled, he did not seek medical treatment because he said he could not afford it.

#### Box 14: Sick in the Jungle

K. Shrestha, 17, of Barahapokhari, Khotang developed a high fever, chills and severe headache at an overnight jungle stop on the route from Beltar to Khotang. Her father was only able to give her boiled water.

### 4.7.3 Nutrition

More than 95 per cent of boy porters and all girl porters prepare their own food. On long distance routes, some children bring food from their homes, such as millet flour, maize, rice, or dry vegetables. Others buy their food supplies at the market centre where the route originates. Most of the children working in the Kathmandu Valley said they prepare and eat their meals in their rooms. In some cases, they could eat prepared meals such as dal (lentils), *bhat* (rice), *tarkari* (vegetables) and *masu* (meat) at cheaper rates in hotels. More children said they drank milk on long distance routes, while more reported eating meat when carrying loads short distances (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Food Intake, Alcohol Consumption and Smoking by Job Distance, 2001

	Milk	Meat	Fruits
<b>Long Distance</b>			
Never	20.2	5.3	10.5
Sometimes	61.4	55.3	65.8
Frequent	18.4	39.5	23.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>114</i>
<b>Short Distance</b>			
Never	25.1	2.1	13.6
Sometimes	66.8	24.7	68.5
Frequent	8.1	73.2	17.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>235</i>
<b>Incidence of Hunger and Frequency of Alcohol</b>			
	Frequent	Sometimes	Never
<b>Long distance</b>			
Incidence of Hungry	0.9	28.9	70.2
Frequency of Alcohol	61.4		38.6
<b>Short Distance</b>			
Incidence of Hungry	0.9	37.9	61.3
Frequency of Alcohol	61.3		38.7

Child porters working at market centres and bus parks are more likely to eat "junk food," and said they "rarely take milk since we are not kids now." Sometimes they buy and eat seasonal fruits. Children on long distance routes eat fruit such as oranges, mangos or bananas when it is in season, and drink milk when it is available (Box 14).

#### Box 15: Eating Fruit and Drinking Milk

M. Khatiwoda, a child porter, said the family buffalo made it possible to drink milk, and eat yogurt with rice, *chyakhla* (grain corn) or *dhindo* (mashed flour).

L. Basnet, 15, a porter at Beltar said he eats oranges from his load and picks more from trees along the way to replace them.

Child porters often go hungry. Of those who work short distances 38 per cent said they often run out of food, while 29 per cent of long distance child porters experience that problem. About one per cent of all child porters frequently go hungry. Going two days without work means going hungry if there are no

friends and relatives nearby. However, even more children of porters go hungry if they stay at home, rather than accompany relatives on long distance routes.

On long distance routes, about 12 per cent of child porters smoke cigarettes made of tree leaves, a more hazardous form of nicotine consumption than packaged cigarettes available at the market, which are often smoked by an estimated 35 per cent of children working short distance jobs. Children working on long distance routes tend to hide their smoking habit more than those working short jobs. A few children said they also take drugs, but more may be hiding addiction to drugs.

**Box 16: The possibility of illegal activity**

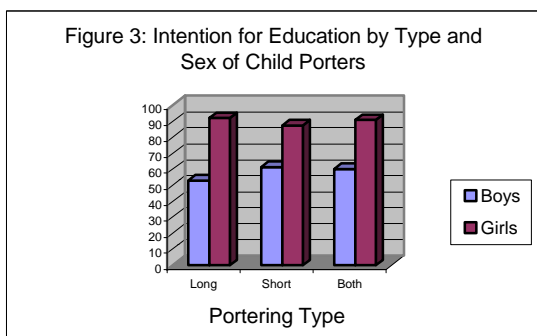
One porter at Teku of Kathmandu did not want to talk about his loads, saying ‘We do not have to disclose secrecy of the type and timing of work’. This statement hinted at the possible involvement of child porters in transporting contraband goods.

**4.8 Aspirations**

Over 91 per cent of girls and 60 per cent of boys said they would like to continue school (Table 4.12), and older children felt more strongly about school than younger children. Boys on long distance routes said they are not interested in reading because they did not attend school when young, and would be too old for their classes now. Girls seemed less concerned about attending school with younger children and felt that the boys “may be weak in reading and do not know the importance of education.”

Table 4.12: Intention to Continue Education

Age and Sex	Boys	Girls	Total (N)
<b>Long distance</b>			
10-14	42.9	93.8	23
15-17	56.0	88.9	34
Long Total	53.1	92.0	57
<b>Short distance</b>			
10-14	58.1	66.7	46
15-17	62.1	100.0	174
Short Total	61.3	87.5	220
<b>All Total</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>90.9</b>	<b>277</b>



**Box 17: Out of School**

K. Pandey, 15, a porter at Pokhara bus park, said his guardians never enrolled him in school, but sent him to work at market centres: "Now my mind is empty to read and write."

D. Majhi, 15 from Diktel, Khotang, ran away from home to see the urban sights of Pokhara, and became a porter. He wants to remain a porter, and has no plans to return to school.

Table 4.13: Desire to Change Occupation, by Job Preference, 2001

Job Preference	Male	Female
<b>Long Distance</b>		
Farming	12.5	11.8
Services	22.5	8.8
Education/training	35.0	32.4
Business	3.8	5.9
Undecided	10.0	20.6
Total	83.8	79.4
<b>Short Distance</b>		
Farming	4.0	--
Services	32.3	11.1
Education/training	23.9	44.4
Business	3.1	
Undecided	12.4	11.1
Total	75.7	66.7

About 75 per cent of boys and 88 per cent of girls do not like being porters. More boys working long distance routes (90%) do not like the work compared to those working short distance jobs (70%). Within a group of 80 long distance boy porters, 84 per cent wanted to do something else, while 79 per cent of girls wanted a different job.

Most children working on long distance routes, and most girls working on short distance jobs, would like to go back to school or enter training programmes that would eventually qualify them for *jagir*, government jobs they consider prestigious. Boys on short distance jobs expressed less interest in school, but said they

would like *jagir* (Table 4.13). All children felt a common frustration that even learning to read and developing skills would not lead to a better future.

Sometimes street children steal money from child porters when they are asleep, which makes them wonder whether it is worthwhile to continue working at all. While exploring the relations between street children (*khates*), ragpickers and porters, it became evident that short distance porters are very suspicious towards other types of child labourers. Street children (*khates*) were reported to steal from the very tired porters when sleeping at hostels or common rooms in city centres.

## 4.9 Conclusions

In conclusion, the use of child porters may be said to be a worst form of child labour. The following table compares working conditions of child porters with the definition of Worst Forms of Child Labour set out in ILO Convention 182.

Components of C182	Long Distance	Short Distance
<b>Age</b>	- all under 18, and majority between 10 and 14 years	- all under 18, majority between 15 and 17 years
<b>Hours of Work</b>	- average six days from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.	- more than eight hours a day, from very early morning into night hours
<b>Load Carried</b>	- above the maximum prescribed level, total average weight 35 kg	- above the maximum prescribed level, 56 kg
<b>Health</b>	- High risk of malnutrition, stunted growth, high risk of illness - Poor knowledge of personal health, lack of available medical care	- Malnutrition, stunted growth, high risk of illness - Poor knowledge of personal health, not seeking health care when available
<b>Safety</b>	- Risk of falling	- Risk of falling
<b>Family attachment</b>	- Attached to family	- Living apart from family

<b>Control over income</b>	- Less control over personal income, given to parents or husband	- Relatively high control over income
<b>Harassment</b>	- By team leader and local businessmen	- By local businessmen

## Chapter 5

### PREVALENCE OF CHILD PORTERS

#### 5.1 Background

For the purpose of this Rapid Assessment, interviews were conducted with 114 children carrying goods on eight long distance routes, 195 children working in market centres, and 40 children working in bus parks. All carried loads on their backs or heads. Their work included goods from the tops of buses, carrying consumer goods to the homes of purchasers, and carrying loads for business owners on long distance routes.

Table 5.1: Distribution of Interviews with Child Porters by Location, Gender and Type of Area

SN	Location	Long distance route			Market centre			Bus park		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>40</b>
01	Hile	4		4	0	0	0	0	0	0
02	Chatara	27	13	40	0	0	0	0	0	0
03	Gaighat	18	4	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
04	Beltar	13	10	23	0	0	0	0	0	0
05	Melamchi	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
06	Jiri	14	3	17	9	1	10	0	0	0
07	Chhinchu	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	0
08	Baglung	3	0	3	3	0	3	6	0	6
09	Nepalgunj	0	0	0	7	4	11	0	0	0
10	Palpa	0	0	0	4	3	7	0	0	0
11	Butwal	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
12	Banepa	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
13	Kathmandu	0	0	0	104	0	104	2	0	2
14	Lalitpur	0	0	0	8	0	8	3	0	3
15	Bhaktapur	0	0	0	12	0	12	1	0	1
16	Pokhara	0	0	0	3	0	3	5	0	5
17	Beni	0	0	0	10	1	11	6	0	6
18	Surkhet	0	0	0	16	0	16	16	0	16
19	Biratnagar	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1

Source: RA of Child Porters in Nepal, 2001.

About half of the child porters attend school, and work primarily during school holidays in the winter months. More child porters work in east Nepal than the west. On routes at Gaighat, Beltar and Chatara, there are normally ten to twelve child porters a day. The volume of porters on those routes is as high as 150 on the *haat* (market) day. At Hile, Dhankuta District, child porters start journeys to such destinations as Sankhuwasabha, Therathum, and Taplejung. The flow of child porters on these routes is about fifteen to twenty per day. At Jiri, central Nepal, there is a flow of eight to ten child porters a day, slightly more at times of *haat*. The lower incidence of human porters in western Nepal is due to the greater use of mules and sheep for transport.

## 5.2 Estimated Number of Child Porters

The total number of child porters working in Nepal is estimated at 46,029, based on the numbers of child porters identified during the Rapid Assessment survey on both long and short distance routes.<sup>11</sup>

The Rapid Assessment research indicated that 29 long distance routes are still frequently used to transport goods. In addition, goods are portered to district headquarters about 30 hill and 16 mountain locations that are not serviced by motor roads. Of these 75 routes, 13 are in east Nepal, 10 in central Nepal, and the remaining 52 in west Nepal.

The peak winter season spans three months from November to January (90 days). *Haat* or market days occur once a week during this period. The flow of child porters during normal working days is referred to below as the **normal flow**. The flow of child porters during *haat* days is henceforth referred to as the **abnormal flow**.

As evidenced earlier half of child porters attend school and half do not. It is assumed that school going children work about 26 days during the peak winter season, while those who do not attend school work an average 77 days during the peak winter season.

Therefore:

- Total number of days in the peak winter season = 90
- The number of normal working days = 77
- The number of *haat* days = 13

### 5.2.1 Long Distance Routes

The total number of child porters working on long distance routes throughout Nepal is estimated at 42,204, based on these calculations:

#### Eastern Region

- Number of routes = 13
- Normal flow (i.e. the flow of child porters during normal days) = 12 children
- Abnormal flow (i.e. the flow of child porters during *haat* days) = 125 children

#### **Non school going children:**

6 (50% of child porters/day) \* 77 (normal working days) \* 13 (number of routes) = 6,006  
62 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 13 (number of *haat* days) \* 13 (number of routes) = 10,478

#### **School going children:**

6 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 26 (normal working days) \* 13 (number of routes) = 2,028  
62 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 4 (number of *haat* days) \* 13 (number of routes) = 3,224

**Total estimated child porters on eastern routes = 21,736**

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that these estimates *do not* take into account 'double counting' (i.e. the same child working on the same route, more than once). Similarly, the estimates *do not* account for seasonality (i.e. those children working outside the peak winter season) or for differences in the flow of porters along each route (routes differ demographically, geographically, and in their demand for porters).



## **Central Region**

- Number of routes = 10
- Normal flow (i.e. the flow of child porters during normal days) = 10 children
- Abnormal flow (i.e. the flow of child porters during *haat* days) = 20 children

### **Non school going children:**

5 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 77 (normal working days) \* 10 (number of routes) = 3,850  
10 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 13 (number of haat days) \* 10 (number of routes) = 1,300

### **School going children:**

5 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 26 (normal working days) \* 10 (number of routes) = 1,300  
10 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 4 (number of haat days) \* 10 (number of routes) = 400

**Total estimated child porters on central routes: 6,850**

## **Western Region**

- Number of routes = 52
- Normal flow (i.e. the flow of child porters during normal days) = 4 children
- Abnormal flow (i.e. the flow of child porters during *haat* days) = 8 children

### **Non school going children:**

2 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 77 (normal working days) \* 52 (number of routes) = 8,008  
4 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 13 (number of haat days) \* 52 (number of routes) = 2,704

### **School going children:**

2 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 26 (normal working days) \* 52 (number of routes) = 2,704  
4 (50 % child porter/ day) \* 4 (number of haat days) \* 52 (number of routes) = 832

**Total estimated child porters on western routes: 13,618**

## **5.2.2 Short Distance Routes**

The total number of child porters working on short distance routes throughout Nepal is estimated at 3,825, based on the following calculations.<sup>12</sup>

### **Bus Parks**

The Rapid Assessment team identified forty children working as porters at eight bus parks, an average of five at each location. There are reportedly 51 such bus parks in Nepal. Therefore:

**Total estimated child porters at bus parks: 255**

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that these estimates *do not* take into account sampling issues (for example, it is likely that the work of short distance porters changes with seasons and with demand).

### **Market Centres**

The Rapid Assessment team identified 215 children working as porters at twenty market centres, an average of ten per location. Although there is no accurate count of market centres, the team estimated there are seven times as many market centres as bus parks, totalling about 357 market centres in the country. Therefore:

**Total estimated child porters at market centres: 3,570**

## Chapter 6

# CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

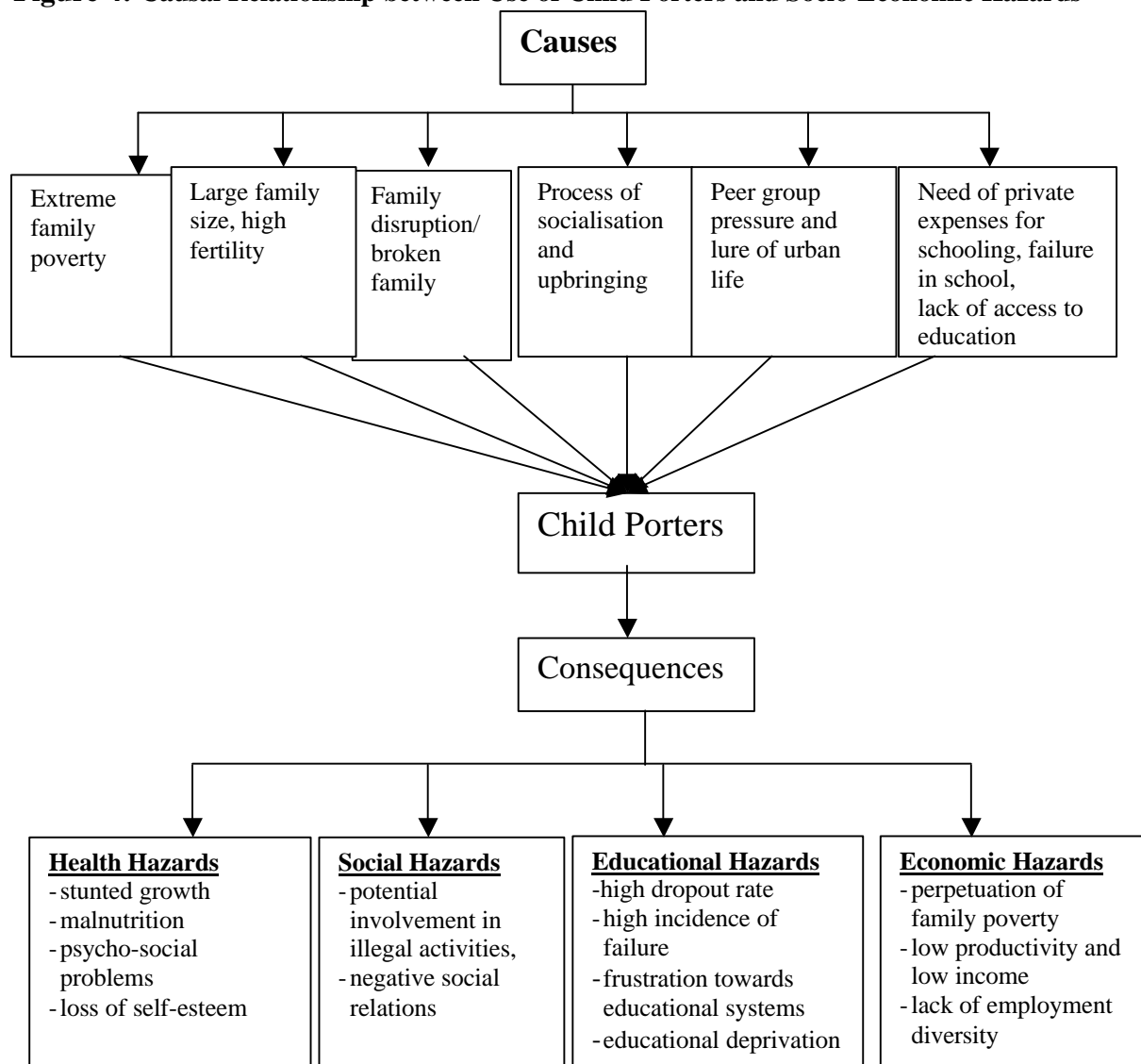
### 6.1 Background

Clearly, the use of human porters is a time-honoured custom in Nepal, the traditional means of transporting consumer goods, business merchandise and construction materials across difficult terrain. It is a major source of off-season employment for the rural poor, and often necessary for economic survival.

### 6.2 Cause and Consequences

Family poverty is the primary reason for the use of child porters, especially in large families, where older siblings need to help supplement cash income. Children usually work on long distance routes to assist the family. However, children who carry loads short distances in urban areas are more likely to be prompted by a desire to experience urban life with the peer group. Some of these children have dropped out of school due to poor performance or lack of interest. The absence of one or both parents is another causative factor.

**Figure 4: Causal Relationship between Use of Child Porters and Socio-Economic Hazards**



Analysis of child porter working conditions indicates that health-related hazards are the most threatening to child porters. The amount of food consumed is inadequate for heavy labour. Malnutrition is prevalent, especially among long distance child porters. This stunts growth, and increases susceptibility to respiratory ailments such as bronchitis and tuberculosis, as well as cramps, aching backs, and joint pain. Most porters, especially child porters, believe their work shortens their life spans. It also leads to increased mental illness, including retardation and depression. Some key informants in central Kathmandu said they believe child porters sometimes steal the goods they are supposed to carry.

Another important concern is educational. Most child porters are school dropouts, or at high risk of dropping out. The high dropout rate can be attributed to family poverty, and low priority accorded to education by the families.

Since child porters are not paid well, the work is basically a strategy for individual survival, which does not develop skills needed for improved economic status.

### 6.3 Push-Pull Factors

When 89 children who work part time as porters on long distance routes were asked why they are working, 47 per cent replied that they needed to earn money for such school supplies as uniforms, books, paper, pens and ink (the truth of this is questionable), and/or to buy new clothes. Another 40 per cent replied they could contribute to household income and save household expenses by earning enough to feed themselves. The remaining 12 per cent said they are porters because there is no work in the household during the agricultural off-season.

When 71 seasonal/occasional short distance child porters were asked why they are working, 59 per cent replied that they were working seasonally to supplement household income and save household food (*gharko manu bachauna*). Another 31 per cent replied there was no work in their households. Only 10 per cent said they are working to buy school supplies. Further research is needed to verify these underlying reasons for working as child porters.

During focus group discussions with adult porters at Beltar and Gaighat, these reasons were given to justify the use of children as porters:

- during school holidays children waste time playing,
- working as porters, children can buy their school uniforms and supplies,
- sending children to work helps save household food,
- children can help pay back loans,
- it helps parents if children can buy their new clothes.

#### Box 18: Seasonal Work

S. Rana Magar, 17, of Jhyangling, Nuwakot, is working as a porter in the Bishal Bazaar area of Kathmandu. He came here after finishing harvesting and cultivation work during the month of *Mansir* (November/December). He will work as a porter, until the month of *Baisakh* (April/May). Afterwards, he will return home and be involved with farming activities. He has been doing this for the past three years. He needs to work like this to make money for clothes, salt and oil, and to save household food.

Khilaraj Rai, 14, of Rajabash, Triyuga Municipality, carries loads during his school holidays. He wants to buy a new pen and inkpot with the money.

Mamita Khatiwada, gives her earnings to her father to pay his expenses en route, enabling him to save his wages.

<b>Push Factors</b>	<b>Pull Factors</b>
<p><b>Household poverty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need to save household food and/or to avoid hunger</li> </ul> <p><b>Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• money needed to buy school supplies and uniforms</li> <li>• lack of interest in school, sometimes caused teachers who humiliate students</li> <li>• parents prefer children to work</li> </ul> <p><b>Influence of Peer Groups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer group pressure</li> </ul> <p><b>Need of supplemental income</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of money for new clothes or other personal possessions</li> </ul> <p><b>Change of location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boredom with village life</li> <li>• lack of work/employment opportunity</li> </ul> <p><b>Family factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forced to work by parents</li> <li>• need to supplement family income for economic survival</li> <li>• large family size</li> <li>• need to help pay off family debts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ability to provide own food</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunity to buy school supplies that parents cannot afford,</li> <li>• working as a porter is considered more interesting than attending school</li> <li>• sense of personal identity</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more interesting than working at home or attending school</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• opportunity to earn money for personal expenses</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• desire to experience urban life</li> <li>• access to employment during off-farm seasons</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chance to earn wages</li> <li>• ease of getting work when villagers or peer group are already porters</li> <li>• increased association with peer groups</li> <li>• desire for new clothes, or cash income to repay loans</li> </ul>

## Chapter 7

# INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND LEGAL PROVISIONS

### 7.1 Constitutional and Legal Provisions

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) seeks to protect the interest of children by conferring on them certain fundamental rights and duties in the form of the “directive principles and policies of the state.” Under the broader framework of the Constitution, the Labour Act of 1992 defines a child as “*a person who has not attained the age of fourteen years,*” and a minor as “*a person who has attained the age of fourteen years but has not completed the age of eighteen years.*” The government adopted labour rules in 1993, including specific provisions for the prohibition and the regulation of employment of young persons. The Children’s Act was enacted in 1992 to protect the rights and interests of children in order to ensure their physical, mental and intellectual development by addressing CRC 1990. The Common Law Code of 1963, the Foreign Employment Act of 1985, and the Trafficking Control Act of 1986 also restrict the use of child labour and promote the healthy development of children.

With reference to child porters Section 32 of the Labour Act prohibits carrying of excessive loads by workers or employers. Labour Rule 39 prescribes the maximum weight of load to be carried by a minor as: minor males (16-18 Years) 25 kg, minor females (16-18 Years) 20 kg, and minor males or females (14-16 Years) 15 kg. Further, the Act prohibits the employment of children and provides various safeguards to minors. Such safeguards include prohibition on the operation of dangerous machines hazardous to health, prohibition on doing night duties, restriction on working hours, not more than six hours a day, and minimum wage for children. However, the minimum wage for a child porter has not been prescribed in the legal provisions.

The Children’s Act, 1992 prohibits the employment of a child under age 14 in any work as a labourer and against his/her will. It prohibits a child to work under conditions harmful to his/her health or hazardous to his/her life. It also prohibits guardians from engaging their children in work, which requires more labour than his/her physical capacity and which may hurt the child’s religious or cultural usage.

### 7.2 Government Mechanism

The Department of Labour under the Ministry of Labour is responsible for labour administration and enforcement of labour legislation. This department deals with industrial relations, arbitration, settlement of disputes, registration of trade unions, inspection of establishments for enforcement of labour legislation concerning health and safety at work, minimum wage, bonus and minimum age for employment (ILO, 1995). However, there is no responsible party to inspect children carrying loads heavier than those allowed by law.

A number of government ministries are implementing their own vertical programmes:

- The Ministry of Health is responsible for ensuring better child health.

- The Ministry of Education is attempting to provide universal school education as well as vocational and non-formal education to the child population.
- The Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare (MOWCSW), the agency responsible for formulation and implementation of programmes on children and development, is working to design better programmes for child welfare, and to implement CRC (1989) and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the country. Under the MOWCSW, the national Social Welfare Council has been established to formulate, implement, and coordinate social welfare activities and programmes for children.
- Other constituted boards and committees working on the issues of children's welfare and development are: Child and Women Development Section, National Planning Commission Secretariat; National Council for Women and Child Development; and the Children's Welfare Boards both at the central and district level. However, the District Children's Welfare Board has been found non-functional with respect to the issues of child labour in hazardous forms of work.
- The Nepal police are responsible for enforcing legislation, but seem to play a negligible role.

### **7.3 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

A number of NGOs work for the welfare of children. The activities of 25 of these NGOs are coordinated by a networking group called the Children at Risk Net Working Group (CAR-NWG), formed in 1992. These NGOs are carrying out a variety of research and action programmes that focus on children's rights and conditions.

Concern for Children and Environment (CONCERN-Nepal) in Kathmandu and the Human Rights and Environment Development Centre (HURENDEC) at Udayapur Gaighat are actively working on the issues concerning child porters. The Dhaulagiri Community Resource Development Centre (DCRDC) in Baglung, and the Rural Environment and Empowerment Centre (REEC) in Beni are also working on these issues. Three organizations, HURENDEC, DCRDC and REEC are working toward non-formal education and child rights for child porters.

Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) and the Child Welfare Society (CWS) operate common rooms and literacy programmes for working and street children. The Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) is involved in the issues of human rights and bonded labour. At the local level, there are also a number of NGOs working in the field of child rights, such as Underprivileged Children Association (UPCA) in Dharan, Children Contact Centre in Butwal, and Narayanghat and Youth Club in Bharatpur.

The General Federation of the Nepalese Trade Unions (GFONT) and the Nepal Trade Union Congress (NTUC) are involved in the elimination of child labour through preventive and reformative measures. They are launching non-formal education programmes to both parents and children who are involved as labourers in different industrial sectors of the country.

## **7.4 INGOs and UN Agencies**

Several INGOs provide financial and technical support. These include Save the Children UK, Save the Children US, Save the Children-Japan and Save the Children-Norway, Plan International, Action Aid, and DANIDA. Two United Nations organizations are also actively involved in this sector, The United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Labour Organization (ILO). UNICEF helped the government to prepare a ten-year Plan of Action Programme for Child Development. ILO recently supported the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare in preparing a National Plan of Action.



## Chapter 8

# SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 Summary

Porter work is an important seasonal off-farm employment opportunity for landless and land-poor households in rural Nepal. The use of children as porters has been a traditional survival strategy for impoverished families. Adults and children come to urban areas in search of regular or seasonal work as porters. They are employed by business owners or traders to transport consumer goods or other materials. Multiple generations often pursue this profession.

This report is a product of an intensive one-month field survey conducted from December 13, 2000 to January 12, 2001 at major market centres, bus parks, and porter routes of Nepal. The survey identified and interviewed 349 child porters under age 18. The study also identified and interviewed knowledgeable key informants. The social, economic, familial, and cultural aspects of the use of child porters were investigated through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, informal discussions and observation. Information was gathered in written, taped, and photographic form by field workers trained in interviewing techniques.

The Rapid Assessment classified two types of porters: short distance porters who work in market/business centres and bus parks, and long distance porters who carry loads along rural routes. Interviews were conducted with 235 short distance child porters and 114 long distance child porters. Only 43 of those interviewed were girls.

The average age for short distance porters was about 15, and 14 for long distance porters. Most children (65 per cent) were 15 to 17 years old. However, 56 per cent of the long distance child porters were only 10 to 14 years old.

A majority (91 per cent) of child porters were from rural areas of hill and mountain districts especially from the eastern or central hills. Long distance porters are concentrated on the eastern part of the country where schools, post offices, health posts and piped water are available.

Children do not necessarily become porters because of caste and ethnicity. Average family size of a child porter consists of 6.5 persons. More porters are landless than homeless. Long distance child porters are not homeless. Even most short distance child porters have homes.

Most child porters (64 per cent of long distance and 69 per cent of short distance) had attended school and could read. However, the literacy level of girls was lower than that of boys. About 75 per cent of child porters reported they had attended school, and about 21 per cent are currently enrolled in school. Half of the long distance porters are enrolled in school, but only six per cent of short distance child porters. Most children said they dropped out of school due to household poverty, and a vast majority said they would like to continue their education. An overwhelming majority of children said they would prefer to have a different occupation. They would be interested in obtaining skill development training if available.

The majority of children become porters between ages 10 and 14 years. On the average, child porters work 20.1 months, although the average is slightly higher, 21.2 months, in the case of long distance porters. About 46 per cent of child porters were working on a seasonal or occasional basis.

On the average, a long distance porter is likely to walk for about six days carrying loads while it comes to be 8.4 hours a day for the short distance porter. Both long distance and short distance child porters are likely to carry much heavier loads than their age allows. By legal provision no minor under 18 years of age shall be allowed to carry more than 25 kg of weight but in practice a long distance child porter under 18 years is likely to carry 35 kg of weight continuously for six days. For a short distance porter the average weight tends to go up to 56 kg. Since the amount of the load determines the total amount of earning, child porters are highly prone to physical hazards.

Porters are not well paid. On long distance routes, the average child porter is paid about Rs. 71 per day, depending on the size of the load carried. The older the child, the heavier the load carried. On short distance jobs, children earn about Rs. 95.6 per day. The wages on long distance routes are usually not negotiable, however child porters can negotiate rates for short distance jobs. Nearly half of long distance child porters (47.4%) give their earnings to their parents, while most others (39.5%) divide their wages between their parents and themselves. The majority of child porters working short distance jobs (67%) keep their earnings.

On long distance routes, most child porters work and walk with parents, other relatives, or friends. Most short distance porters work alone or with friends.

The majority of child porters reported that they had never been injured from falls. About 44 per cent of boys and 42 per cent of girls reported they were seriously sick at least once while working. Illnesses were related to fever and flu, as well as injuries such as fractures. About 40 per cent of sick children attempted to visit a health facility for treatment, while the remainder did not seek medical help, due to the cost.

Child porters lacked sufficient intake of calories, protein, calcium, and micro-nutrients. More than 61 per cent reported that they drink alcoholic beverages. On long distance routes, children drink *jand* (local beer), but many child porters working on short distance jobs drink alcoholic beverages from low-grade plastic packed pouches, which is more likely to cause addiction. Smoking and chewing tobacco are common practices.

The unique feature of this study is its estimates of the number of child porters under age eighteen who are currently working on major porter routes, at market centres and bus parks. These estimates were calculated based on information from key informants, child porters, and observation of porter movements at survey locations. The result is an estimate of 46,029 child porters working in Nepal. Of these, 42,204 child porters work on long distance routes, with 21,736 of these working in the eastern and central regions. The estimated number of child porters working short distance jobs is 255 at bus parks and 3,570 at market centres.

Using children as porters stunts their growth, and perpetuates marginalisation, deprivation, and social injustice. A number of adult porters in the Kathmandu Valley said during focus group discussions that many child porters ultimately become street children (*khates*). How to change this situation is a major challenge in Nepal.

## 8.2 Findings

Characteristics	Findings	Explanation
<b>Age</b>	Between 10 and 17	- 56 per cent of long distance ages 10-14 - 75 per cent of short distance ages 10-14
<b>Sex</b>	Only 43 of 349 child porters were girls	Girl porters included in the study were: - 12 per cent in total - 29 per cent long distance - about 3 per cent short distance
<b>Literacy/ Education</b>	- 78 per cent literate, - 75 per cent school dropout, - 21 per cent attending school	- Higher level of literacy and high incidence of dropout among short distance child porters - 50 per cent of long distance child porters still attending school - Gender discrimination in literacy and education quite high
<b>Caste/ Ethnicity</b>	- Over-representation of children from Mongoloid ethnic groups followed by Dalits, Newars and Tamangs - Representation of most of major caste/ethnic groups	- Mongoloid ethnic groups like Rai, Limbu, Magar, Gurung and Sunwar and the Dalit castes (Damain, Kami and Sarki) are marginal, and considered deprived
<b>Origin and Residence</b>	- Origin from hill and mountain districts, majority from the eastern and central regions, - Rural villages	- Child porters coming from the eastern and central hills and mountain areas work mostly on long distance routes and in market centres of Kathmandu and Pokhara - Child porters from other parts of the country work mostly in bus parks and market centres
<b>Family</b>	- Large family size, - About 2 per cent orphans - Incidence of father's death is higher than that of mother's death	- Large size and loss of parent found to be associated with the incidence of work as child porters
<b>Housing and Land</b>	- Incidence of homelessness small - Incidence of landlessness about 7 per cent	- Type of housing very poor, however a few children come from well-constructed houses - Amount and quality of land is very poor however, a few children come from households with sizable landholdings
<b>Family Occupation</b>	- Farming and sharecropping, followed by porter work	- Explains porter work as a sustaining family occupation

### Working Conditions

<b>Duration of Work</b>	- Most (60%) begin at 10-14 years - Mean age of entry 13 years - Average duration of work 20 months	- Average age of entry lower for long distance than short distance child porters - Duration of work is longer for long distance child porters - Early age of entry and longer duration of work means greater exposure to hazards
<b>Regularity of Work</b>	- 78 per cent of long distance and 30 per cent of short distance child porters work seasonally or occasionally	Work is required because of: - No work at household during off-farm, - During school holidays children want to make some money to buy school supplies, - To supplement household income, buy new clothes and save household food
<b>Work Schedule</b>	- Average walking days during a long distance job 5.6 days, - For majority of short distance child porters there is no regular schedule of work, however, work averages about 8.4 hours a day	- Long distance child porters walk days to complete one assignment, - Short distance child porters often must wait for hours to obtain work
<b>Weight of Load</b>	- Average weight of load carried by both long and short distance child porters exceeds maximum	- Likely to vary by age and gender - On an average, a long distance child porter carries 35kg and a short distance child porter

	recommended weight for minors	up to 56 kg. - Weight and income has positive association
<b>Wages</b>	- A long distance child porter earns Rs. 71 per day - A short distance child porter earns Rs. 96 per day	- Pay is low - Income level varies by age and gender
<b>Control of Income</b>	- About half of long distance child porters give wages to parents, most others divide wages between parents and themselves - Majority of short distance child porters keep earnings, but some give to parents	
<b>Work Companions and Work Agreements</b>	- Long distance: with parents followed by relatives and friends, make own agreements, - Short distance: with friends and villagers followed by alone, make own agreements	- Companions and peer group found to be major influencing factor for recruiting children as porters
<b>Health and Hygiene</b>	- Common problems are fever, flu and injuries such as fractures	- Most do not seek medical help due to high cost of fees and medicine
<b>Food and Alcohol</b>	- A significant proportion have experienced hunger - Alcoholic beverages are commonly consumed	- Many child porters work on long distance routes to prevent hunger - Threat of alcohol addiction is high among short distance child porters
<b>Future Intention</b>	- More than 60 per cent want to enrol in school if possible - Girls are more interested in school than boys - Most want to change occupations	- However, a substantial number of child porters do not want to attend school, for such reasons as “age is gone”, “mind is not concentrating”, and so forth

### **Incidence and Estimates**

<b>Incidence and Estimates</b>	- Estimated child porters in Nepal = 46,029 - Long distance child porters estimated at 42,204 - Bus park child porters, about 255 - Market centre child porters, about 3,570	Incidence of long distance porters varies regionally: - Eastern = 21,736 - Western = 13,618 - Central = 6,850,
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### **Conceptual Issues:**

<b>Causes</b>	- Family poverty, large family size, loss of parent, poverty, companionship of peer group, lure or urban areas, dislike of school, cost of school supplies	Encountered
<b>Consequences</b>	- Health hazards, social hazards, educational hazards, and economic hazards	Encountered

## **8.3 Respondents' Perspectives**

Key informants provided the following clues to pursue:

- S. Subba, Chairperson, Under Privileged Children's Association (UPCA), Dharan: the vegetable farming and marketing skills developed during the past decade among the farmers of Dhankuta, Terathum and to some extent Sankhuwasabha, have helped to reduce the number of child porters at Dharan.

- Sher Bahadur Pahadi, an aged porter from Bhojpur: parents lack alternative employment and income opportunities – “We ourselves want income and work from our children.”
- Chandra P. Khatiwoda of Barahapokhari, Khotang: if government irrigates the land and builds a motor road to the village, there would be enough income from farming vegetables and fruit to keep children in school.
- Informants from HURENDEC, Gaighat: working as a child porter is associated with household poverty, lack of seasonal employment for adults, and lack of education. Education on human rights and child rights is needed, even though it is not possible to completely eliminate the use of porters on long distance routes in Nepal.
- C. Singh Rai, a businessman at Gaighat: local Village Development Committees (VDCs) should have ample resources to implement and monitor child welfare and development programmes. Education should be compulsory.
- Key informants from Beni: children become porters due to parental negligence, household poverty, family break-up and lost interest in schoolwork. An orphanage could be established in each VDC.
- Informants from Rural Environment and Empowerment Centre (REEC), Beni: effective programmes against the use of children for hazardous forms of work should be established by the government. Donors and NGOs can only be short-term partners in implementation of such programmes.
- Y.R. Pant of Dhaulagiri Community Resource Development Centre (DCRDC), Baglung: only providing training to child porters currently working at urban centres may not address the root of the problem. They would only be replaced by others. Initiatives are needed at the villages where child porters and other child labourers originate. These initiatives would address such needs as health, education, skill development, income generation and marketing. Day care centres are needed to enable parents of infants and toddlers to work, so that older siblings do not need to drop out of school to baby-sit. Better family planning would also help reduce family size to a sustainable level.

## 8.4 Recommendations for Policy Interventions

The majority of child porters expressed a strong desire to continue education, either by attending school or obtaining skill development training. Some policy intervention to prohibit hazardous work by children may be highly desirable.

The list of recommendations has been prioritised, and divided into those dealing with prevention, protection and rehabilitation.

### Prevention

7. **Regulation** of the work of porters between the ages of 14 to 18 according to labour law specifications. Legislation that limits allowable weights for minors should be enforced on each porter route and at all areas where child porters are used. Unionize adult porters

8. **Provision of alternatives** to child labourers aged 14 to 18 years, including vocational training and Start and Improve Your Business programmes. Vocational and skill development training should be available to interested teenagers.
9. **Reduction of economic vulnerability** in sending areas through support for programmes aimed at generating income earning opportunities for the rural poor. Income generation programmes such as vegetable farming, agri-business and marketing skills should be targeted at the parents of child porters in marginalised districts.
10. **Improving the quality and eliminating the cost of education** in sending areas in order to support a meaningful, quality and child-friendly education system.
11. **Improved monitoring systems** within District Child Welfare Committees should reach the local level with ample provision for recording and evaluating the situation of child workers in a pragmatic way.
12. **Campaigns for raising awareness** in source DDCs/VDCs should be combined with the mobilisation of municipality authorities, workers and employers' organizations. They should be encouraged to work collaboratively in advocating against the use of child porters and other exploitative child labour.

## **Protection**

4. **Identification of work areas:** of the origin of short distance child porters; of porter routes; as well as wards, villages and families where children work as long distance porters. This should form part of an expanded effort to identify the most vulnerable areas, and design practical action programmes to combat hazardous forms of child labour in Nepal.
5. **Support for regular tracer studies** and monitoring, to protect former child porters from returning to the worst forms of child labour.
6. **Establishment of mobile health facilities** on long distance routes for the use of porters, especially child porters, these should offer improved medical help for all sick children.

## **Rehabilitation**

6. **Increased participation of child porters** in vocational (or skill development) training programmes, and increased attention to the needs of children who do participate.
7. **Guarantee of job placement** after completion of vocational training programme.
8. **Improved arrangements** for educational opportunities to child porters who want them.
9. **Expansion of programmes** for rehabilitation and non-formal education so that they reach isolated villages where child porters originate.
10. **Continued withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children below 14 years of age**, in order to reunite them with their families and to mainstream them into primary education

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**Appendix I: Distribution of Child Porters by District of Origin and Survey Areas, 2001**

Region & Districts	Hile	Chatara	Birat	Gaighat	Beltar	Jiri	KTM	Patan	Bhak.	Banepa	Melam.	Pokh.	Palpa	Butwal	Bag.	Beni	Surkh	Chhin.	Total
<b>East Mount+ Hill</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>1</b>							<b>137</b>
Ilam							1												1
Sankhuwasabha	2								1										3
Bhojpur		37																	37
Dhankuta	1																		1
Tehrathum	1																		1
Udayapur				14			7												21
Khotang		3		8	23		2					1							37
Okhaldhunga						11	18	3											32
Solukhumbu						4													4
<b>Central Hill+Mountain</b>						<b>12</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>				<b>1</b>			<b>113</b>
Dolakha						8	15		2										25
Ramechhap						3	17	2	4	1						1			28
Sindhuli								1	1										2
Makawanpur							3	1				1							5
Kathmandu							1												1
Lalitpur							1	1											2
Kavre							3		1	1									5
Sindhupalchok						1	4		4	2									11
Nuwakot							15												15
Dhading							13	2				2							17
Tanahu							1					1							2
<b>West+Midwest Hill</b>							<b>3</b>				<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>79</b>
Gorkha							2												2
Palpa													7		2				9
Baglung															6	1			7
Parbat															4	14			18
Myagdi												2				1			3
Dang							1												1
Rolpa											3								3
Jajarkot																		2	2
Surkhet																	30	1	31
Dailekh																2	1		3
<b>Terai Districts</b>			<b>1</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>4</b>						<b>18</b>
Morang			1																1
Sarlahi							1												1
Mahottari								1											1
Parsa							1												1
Rupandehi														4					4
Banke																			6
Bardiya																			4
India												1							2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>349</b>

Where child porters have been found and can be found in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur and Pokhara cities:

Places where child porters have been found and can be found in Kathmandu Metropolitan City are:

- Kalanki,
- Kalimati and Teku,
- New Road and Hanuman Dhoka,
- Mahabauddha, Birhospital and Mahankal,
- Purano (Old) Bus Park, Bagbazaar and Tukucha Veg. Market,
- Chhetrapati and Sorakhutte,
- Balaju and Gongabu Bus Park,
- Chabel-Mitrapark and Gaushala,
- Old Baneshwor, Maitidevi and Dillibazaar,
- New Baneshwor, Tinkune and Koteshwor,
- Bauddha and Jorpati.

Besides of these areas porters and child porters in Kathmandu can be found elsewhere.

Places where child porters have been found and can be found in Patan are:

- Mangal Bazaar, Durbar Square and Dhaugal Bazaar,
- Gwarkhu, Satdobato and Mahalaxhmi Sthan,
- Lagankhel, Jaulakhel and Kupandole.

Places where child porters have been found and can be found in Bhaktapur are:

- Thimi,
- Bhaktapur Bus Park,
- Suryabinayak, Sallaghari,
- Kamalbinayak,
- Durbar Square or Panchtale, Taleju,
- Sukuldhoka.

Places where child porters have been found and can be found in Pokhara are:

- Baglung Bus Park and Mahendrapool,
  - Sabhagriha Chwok and Bus Park,
- Matepani Bazaar and elsewhere.

## Appendix II

### Observation Sheet

#### Observation Sheet on Activities of Child Porters

City or Location of Observation: \_\_\_\_\_ Code No. ( ) ( ).

Specific Point of Observation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation:-

Duration of Observation: From: \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_,

Observed group of children or individual: Group – 1, Individual --- 2.

Children's (Estimated) Age: \_\_\_\_\_, Sex:- \_\_\_\_\_.

Observed Child (group) Number: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) ( ).

Caste/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_, (if possible)

Where the children come from: Local or from outside: \_\_\_\_\_,

If from outside where: (District, VDC/Mun., Ward No. Village/Tole): \_\_\_\_\_, -  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,

#### 1. Identification and Health Aspects

101. How the child is identified as a porter child: \_\_\_\_\_,

102. What child was doing at first observation: \_\_\_\_\_,

103. Physical appearance:

- Health status: (lean and thin, weak look likes malnourished)

- Cleanliness: \_\_\_\_\_,

- Clothing: (from head to feet):- \_\_\_\_\_,

- Status of illness: \_\_\_\_\_,

- Easily visible wounds in body: \_\_\_\_\_,

- Possessions: \_\_\_\_\_,

- Sitting places when not in work: \_\_\_\_\_,

## 2. Working Conditions

201. Type of load carrying:

First observation:

Second Observation:

3<sup>rd</sup> –

4<sup>th</sup> –

202. How the child was walking while carrying the load: -----,

203. Amount of load (bhari) compared to child's age and physical size: -----,

204. How far the child seems to go carrying the load (bhari): -----,

205. Carrying load alone or with other accompanies:

206. Frequency of taking rest:

207. Supporting substances while taking rest:

208. Body position while carrying the load (bhari):

209. Types of carried goods: -----,

210. How hazardous are the goods for the child's health and why? -----,

211. Walking for long route or short rout: -----,

212. Goods carrying for what purposes? -----,

213. Chances of falling down with the load (bhari): -----,

## 3: Food habit and Socialisation Aspects:

301. What time she/he eats: -----, -----, -----,

302. Types of food: -----, -----, -----,

Observer's Comments on food: Is the taken food item sufficient to supply required calorie looking at the work she/he perform:

303. Smoking habit and frequency of smoking: -----,

304. Type of smoke used: -----,

305. Alcohol drinking and habit of drugs: -----,

306. Who he speak most of the time: -----,

- 307. Types of slang and words used: -----,
- 308. Easy or difficult to talk (social or rude): -----,
- 309. State of shyness: -----, ----- , -----,
- 310. Feelings of responsibility: -----,
- 311. Sense of morality/cheating attitude: -----,
- 312. Quarreling and fighting: -----,
- 313. Observation of some seen abused or maltreatment by the employer: -----,

Other situation based crucial issues found out by the observer:

Observer's comment:

Number of Photos taken observing this child: -----,

### Appendix III: Individual Interview Questionnaire

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Central Department of Population Studies

#### Individual Questionnaire

Asked information shall be kept confidential

To be Interviewed with children (Age in between 5 and 18) working as porters

Survey Information

The Survey Site	Code	Place of Interview	Porterage route (1) Market Centre (2) or Bus Park (3)	Child's ID No.	Interview Completed in sitting Single (1) Double (2)

Child's Permanent Address: VDC/Municipality: -----, Ward No. -----,  
 Tole: -----, District:----- ( ) ( )

Child's Current Address: VDC/Municipality: -----, Ward No. -----,  
 Tole: -----, District:----- ( ) ( )

Date of interview:      DD      MM      YY  
                                    

Interviewer's Name: -----, Code:

Signature: -----,

Supervisor's Name: -----

Signature: -----

Date: -----

## Section 1: Origin, Family Background and Social Aspects

Q. No.	Questions	Coding Specification	Go to
101	Name and Sex : _____	Male ----- 1 Female ----- 2	
102	Your Caste/Ethnicity:	----- ( ) ( )	
103	How old are you? Age in completed years as stated and estimated.	Stated ----- ( ) ( ) Estimated ----- ( ) ( )	
104	Where were you born? <i>Specify the VDC/Municipality and district of birth Place</i>	VDC--- 1, Mun. --- 2. ----- ( )  District ----- ( ) ( )	

Ask only Short distance porters working in bus stops and market centres

106	Where do you live here?	Rented room ----- 1 Others Specify: ----- 2	
107	Who do you live with here?	Alone ----- 1 Wife/children----- 2 Parents ----- 3 Other family members ----- 4 Siblings ----- 5 Friends ----- 6 Others _____	

For both types of Porters

108	Are both of your parents alive? How they are living?	Both alive living together ----- 1 Both died ----- 2 Mother died father alive ----- 3 Father died Mother alive ----- 4 Both alive father with step mother ----- 5 Both alive mother with step father ----- 6 Mother died father with step mother----- 7 Father died mother with step father----- 8 Other specify _____	
109	<i>Ask only if parents are alive</i> Where your parents are living?	At my place of birth ----- 1 At my current residence ----- 2 No fixed place ----- 3 Other specify _____ Don't Know ----- 8	
110	Whether both of your parents come from the same caste/ethnic and religious origin or from different one?	The same ----- 1 Different ----- 2 If different note down the combination Father ----- Mother ----- Don't know ----- 8	111
111	Who took care of you until you were five years old?	Parents both ----- 1 Mother only ----- 2 Father only ----- 3 Other Specify _____ Don't know ----- 8	

112. Who among the following family members are in your home?

	Yes.....1	No.....2	No. of persons
(i) Father			
(ii) Mother			
(iii) Step-father			
(iv) Step-mother			
(v) Spouse			
(vi) Sister (unmarried)			
(vii) Brother			
(viii) Uncle			
(ix) Aunt			
(x) Other			

Total Member in Family

113. Among the children of your parents 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
which child are you?(including brothers/sisters)

114	Does your family own house to live? <i>Write type of House: -----</i>	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	116																														
115	If no, where do you and your family live? <i>Write what he/she says</i>	- -																															
116	Does your family possess agricultural land	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2																															
117	How does your family manage food and other income for annual consumption and maintenance? <i>Note: write how he/she says</i>	- - -																															
118	Which of the following facilities are available in your village?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>School -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Health Post/Hospital -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agri. service Centre -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cooperatives (Sajha)-----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Piped Water -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Motorable road -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telephone -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bank -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Post Office -----</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Yes	No	School -----	1	2	Health Post/Hospital -----	1	2	Agri. service Centre -----	1	2	Cooperatives (Sajha)-----	1	2	Piped Water -----	1	2	Motorable road -----	1	2	Telephone -----	1	2	Bank -----	1	2	Post Office -----	1	2	
	Yes	No																															
School -----	1	2																															
Health Post/Hospital -----	1	2																															
Agri. service Centre -----	1	2																															
Cooperatives (Sajha)-----	1	2																															
Piped Water -----	1	2																															
Motorable road -----	1	2																															
Telephone -----	1	2																															
Bank -----	1	2																															
Post Office -----	1	2																															

Section 2: Being Porter and Reasons for it

201	How long you have been working as a Porter? <i>Write how answer comes:</i>	- -	
202	At what age you first started to work as porter?	Age in Years ----- ( ) ( ) Don't know ----- 98	
203	Do you do this regularly or occasionally?	Regular ----- 1 Occasional ----- 2 Seasonally ----- 3	206



For seasonal/occasional porter only

204	If it is occasional/seasonal work/occupation, what do you do regularly?	-	
205	If so, what seasons you come to work as porter? And why?	Seasons: ----- Reasons: -	
206	For both seasonal and regular porters Where do you go to search for a job most of the time?	Bus Parks ----- 1 City/business Centre----- 2 Long route ----- 3 → 208 Others _____	
207	For porters working in market centres and bus parks In a day how many hours you have to work?	Number of hours ( )( ) → 210 Not fixed ----- 97 Don't know ----- 98	
208	For long route porters only For how many days/hours will you carry this load?	Days ----- ( )( ) Hours ----- ( )( ) Others _____ Don't know ----- 98	
209	From where you take this bhari and up to where you have to go with this?	<u>Point of Origin</u> _____	<u>Point of Destination</u> _____
210	For both porters On an average how much load you have to carry?	In K.G ----- ( )( ) 1 In Dharni ----- ( )( ) 2 Not fixed but more than - KG/Dharni ----- ( )( ) 3 Employers don't want show - 4 Don't know ----- 8 Others _____	
211	In most of the cases what may be the basis of payment of your work?	Daily wage basis RS/day: ----- ( )( )( ) 1 Amount basis Rs/kg a Day ---- ( )( )( ) 2 Amount basis Rs/dharni a Day --- ( )( )( ) 3 Depends upon chances not fixed ----- 4 Load /Trip Basis ----- 5 Others _____	
212	On an average how much do you earn in a day? <i>Not exact but a tentative estimate</i>	Daily earning in Rs. <input type="text"/>	
213	Who controls over your earnings? Who takes your wage and who decides of its expenses?	Own self ----- 1 Spouse ----- 2 Parents (both) ----- 3 Father Only ----- 4 Mother only ----- 5 Some give to parent and some keep own self ----- 6 Brother/Sister ----- 7 Other specify _____	
214	Are you working alone or working accompanying with others?	Alone ----- 1 Father/Mother ----- 2 Elder brother/sister ----- 3 Other relatives ----- 4 Friends ----- 5 Villagers ----- 6 Others Specify _____	
215	Who does agreement of the work? Who fixes the remuneration or wage rate?	Own self ----- 1 Others Specify _____	

216	<b>Who put you into this work?</b>	Own self ----- 1 Parents ----- 2 Relatives ----- 3 Friends ----- 4 Others _____	
217	What types of loads are more dangerous to you as risk of accident and risk of health hazard? <i>Note: Write what he/she says</i>	- - -	
218	<b>For only long route porters</b> <b>What type of travelling route you have to take carrying load (bhari)?</b>	-	
219	How often you have experience of accidents such as fall down with load, cuts and fracture, severe back pain and others by carrying load (bhari)?	Quite often ----- 1 Often ----- 2 Sometimes ----- 3 Rare ----- 4 Never ----- 5 Others _____	
220	<i>Ask only those who are working at bus parks and business centres.</i> Can you tell, how many porters of your age (<= 18) work here?	Number ----- <input type="text"/>	
221	How many of them are from your village?	Number ----- <input type="text"/>	
222	<i>Only for long distance porters:</i> How many kids like you work as porters in your village?	Number ----- <input type="text"/>	
223	<b>Besides porters do you do other work?</b>	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	225
224	<b>What type of work do you do?</b>	-	
225	How do you spend your leisure time?	- -	

### Section 3: Frequency of Portering

301	If I had came here yesterday would I have found you here?	Yes----- 1 No ----- 2	
302	If I come here tomorrow can I found you again?	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	
303	How often you come to this place in search of job?	Every time ----- 1 Once or twice in a day ----- 2 Daily ----- 3 In two to three days ----- 4 Twice in a week ----- 5 Once a week ----- 6 Once in two weeks ----- 7 Others Specify	
304	How many days did you come here last week?	Days ----- ( ) ( )	
305	<i>(If Q 303 is 4, 5,6 and 7)</i> After how many days you will be available here again?	Days ----- ( ) ( )	

### Section 4: Food and Personal Habits

401	Who gives/arranges foods while you are in work?	Own self ----- 1 Others Specify _____	
402	What kind of food do you take most of the time? <i>Write what he/she says</i>	- - -	
403	How often you get to take the following items? Milk Meat Fruits	Never   Rare   Often   Q. Often 1   2   3   4 1   2   3   4 1   2   3   4	

404	How often do you spend days and nights in hunger?	<b>Quite often</b> ----- 1 Often ----- 2 Sometimes ----- 3 Rare ----- 4 Never ----- 5 Others _____	
405	Usually who prepares meal for you? <i>Note: note down what he/she says</i>	- -	
406	Do you drink alcohol? Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2 If yes How often?	Rare ----- 1 Often ----- 2 Quite often ----- 3 Daily ----- 4	
407	Do you smoke?	<b>Yes</b> ----- 1 No ----- 2	
408	Do you take drugs or smaks (Gaza and others) If yes What? _____	<b>Yes</b> ----- 1 No ----- 2	

### Section 5: Health Hygiene and Record of sickness

501	Have you ever experienced of being sick while you are in work of this kind? <i>Note: after she/he started working as porter</i>	<b>Yes</b> ----- 1 No----- 2	→ 507
502	Please indicate the type of sickness you suffered including wounds, cuts, fractures, and pains caused by accidents of bearing load.	- - -	
503	Did you go to see a doctor for the treatment of your illness?	<b>Yes every time</b> ----- 1 Yes some times ----- 2 Not at all ----- 3	→ 506
504	Who took you to the doctor?	<b>Own self</b> ----- 1 Father/mother ----- 2 Brother/sister ----- 3 Other relatives ----- 4 Friends ----- 5 Villagers ----- 6 Employer ----- 7 Others _____	
505	Who pays for the medical expenses?	<b>Own self</b> ----- 1 Father/mother ----- 2 Brother/sister ----- 3 Other relatives ----- 4 Friends ----- 5 Villagers ----- 6 Employer ----- 7 Hospital/doctor ----- 8 Free of cost ----- 9 Others _____	
506	Why did you not go to see a doctor or hospital for the treatment when you felt sick? <i>Note: Write major three-four causes</i>	- - -	
507	Where do you sleep at night? <i>Note: Write where she/he says</i>	- - -	
508	Do you sleep alone? <i>Note: Write down what has been said</i>	Alone ----- 1 Parents ----- 2 Siblings ----- 3 Other relatives ----- 4 Friends ----- 5 Villagers ----- 6 Others specify _____	

### Section 6: Aspects of Harassment and Future Ambitions

601	How often you have been harassed or abused by the employer or work provider?	Quite often ----- 1 Every day ----- 2 Often ----- 3 Sometimes ----- 4 Rare ----- 5 Never ----- 6 Others _____	
602	How often the work providers have cheated you? <i>Note: Ask who are mostly with cheating attitude</i> - - -	Quite often ----- 1 Every day ----- 2 Often ----- 3 Sometimes ----- 4 Rare ----- 5 Never ----- 6 Others _____	
603	In what type of entertainment she/he mostly likely to participate and how often? <i>Write the entertainment activities and participated relative frequency of it</i>	Entertainment - - - -	How often - - - -
604	Do you know how much load is allowed you to carry by legal provision according to your age?	Yes I know ----- 1 No ----- 2	606
605	If yes can you say how much?	Unit Kilogram (kg)----- 1 Dharni ----- 2 Pathi ----- 3 Others - _____	Amount
606	Do you like this job?	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	
607	Do you have any ambition in life? Do you want to change this work occupation? If yes what type? Yes – 1, No. ----- 2	- --	
608	Do you want other your friends and siblings to bring in this work/occupation	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	
609	Can you say some good and bad things of this work what you have experienced?	- --	

**Section 7: Literacy and Education**

701	Can you read or write? <i>Ability to read and write</i>	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	
702	Are you currently attending school?	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	→ 705
703	In which class are you reading? What is your schooling time?	Class ----- ( ) ( ) Morning ----- 1 Day ----- 2 Evening ----- 3	
704	How do you meet the School expenses? <i>Write how he/she says</i>	- --	
705	Have you ever been to School? <i>If yes the completed grade ( ) ( )</i>	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	
706	What are the causes of dropping out or never been to school? <i>Note: write what she/he says</i>	- - --	
707	Would you like to go to school if arranged? <i>Preference to go to school or not.</i>	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	
708	Is there any school in your village? <i>If yes what type: _____</i>	Yes ----- 1 No ----- 2	

## Appendix IV:

### Checklist for Key Informant Interview

#### Identification of the Key Informant:

Serial No. ----- ( ) ( )

Name: -----, Age: -----, Sex: -----,

Caste/ethnicity: -----, Position: -----,

Affiliated Institution/Organization/Individual:-----,

Location/Address: -----,

#### On the Issues of Child labour:

Organization's and personal view on the issues of child labour in general and children working as porters in particular. What may be their social implications?

-  
-  
-

How it is detrimental to children's overall growth?

-  
-  
-

What are the most hazardous forms of child labour?

-  
-  
-

What is the extent of such forms of child labourers in this city or village? Is it possible to estimate their number?

-

In which locality of this city mostly such child labourers can be found?

-

Acceptability of a child working as porter in the locality: -----,

Causes of child labour in general and child porter in particular:

-

Child labour/porter in the particular city/locality come from (Local/outsider):

-

Types of households they come from: including household's economic status

-

-

Some indication on caste/ethnic composition of the child labour/porter:

-

-

Family background (aspects of family disturbance):

Load carrying according to age and body size of the child porter:

Types of hazards associated with carrying heavy load in a young age:

Other hazards of portering:

Living arrangements of the child porters:

Food habit and types of food they take:

Aspects of socialization:

- the way they speak:
- shyness:
- Cheating behaviour/and moral grounding:
- Quarreling and fighting:
- Involvement in drug abuse:
- Involvement in trafficking
- Association:
- Involvement in other undesirable social activities by type:
- Ever service taken from child porters:

Others said by the Informant:

-

-

Earning of the children by the work (per day):

Use of their earning:

Financial support to their family: and aspects of support:

Harassment and abuse by the employer: types of harassment:

- 
- 
- 

Who is responsible for their situation:

- 
- 
- 

What can be done to eliminate the problem of child labour in general and child labour in hazardous works in particular? (Aspects of human development, resource development, social movement government actions).

- 
- 
- 

What your institution is doing in this matter:

- 
- 

Success story and coverage:

- 
- 

Problems faced:

- 
- 

Working partners and aspects of cooperation:

Other institution/organizations acting in this area:

- 
- 

Their Success story including coverage and area of work:

- 

Overall comments of the Key informant:

With many more thanks:

Interviewer:

-----