



**International Labour Organization  
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**

**Nepal  
Situation of Domestic Child Labourers in Kathmandu:  
A Rapid Assessment**

**By  
Shiva Sharma  
Manasa Thakurathi  
Krishna Sapkota  
Bishnu Devkota  
Brahma Rimal**

**November 2001, Geneva**

## 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.



Frans Röselaers  
Director  
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)  
International Labour Office  
Geneva, 2001

---

<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://mirror/intranet/english/standards/ipec/guides/annex2.htm>  
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/simpoc/guides/index.htm>

## **Acknowledgements**

This research report has been prepared to enhance the understanding of the plight of domestic child labourers in Kathmandu. Children and their employers cooperated during the field data collection, and we thank them all for answering our questions.

I am grateful to Ms. Leyla Tegmo Reddy, Director, International Labour Organization (ILO), Kathmandu for her support and encouragement. Mr. Casper Edmonds, Associate Expert of ILO/International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Kathmandu has been helpful and invaluable in finalizing the report. Mr. Yadav Amatya, National Programme Manager, IPEC, Nepal provided comments to the draft report. Dr. Robert Jensen of Harvard University helped finalize the survey methodology.

We appreciate their efficient cooperation and sincerely thank them all.

Dr. Shiva Sharma  
Executive Director  
National Labour Academy

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The Problem	1
1.2 Domestic Child Labour as a Worst Form of Child Labour	2
1.3 Objectives	3
1.4 Methodology	4
1.4.1 Household survey	4
1.4.2 Focus Group Discussions	6
1.4.3 Key Informant Interviews	6
1.5 Lessons Learned	6
<b>2. Domestic Child Labour in Kathmandu and in Nepal</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Employer Profiles</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Domestic Child Labour Profile</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Literacy	11
4.2 Ethnicity, Caste and Origin	11
4.3 How Children Become Domestic Labourers	13
4.4 DCL and Family Vulnerability	14
4.4.1 Family structure	14
4.4.2 Family Assets	16
4.5 Two Categories of Domestic Child Labour	17
<b>5. Domestic Child Labour</b>	<b>18</b>
5.1 Work, risks and workload	18
5.2 Remuneration	19
5.3 Mobility and confinement	22
5.4 DCL Perceptions of their Occupation	24
<b>6. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>26</b>
6.1 Domestic Child Labour as a Worst Form of Child Labour	26
6.2 Recommendations	27
6.2.3 Specific Recommendations	29
<b>References</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Annexes</b>	<b>31</b>
Annex I: Estimated Urban Domestic Child Labour in Nepal	31
Annex II: Questionnaires and Discussion Guidelines	33

## List of Tables

Table 1.1	Estimated Number of Households by Category in Kathmandu	5
Table 2.1	Estimate of DCL in Kathmandu	7
Table 3.1	Households employing DCL by Caste and Occupation	8
Table 4.1	Distribution of DCL by Age and Sex	10
Table 4.2	Age of Employment as DCL	10
Table 4.3	Literacy Status of DCL	11
Table 4.4	Distribution of DCL by Caste/Ethnicity	12
Table 4.5	Distribution of DCL by District of Origin	12
Table 4.6	Person Recruiting DCL for Employers	13
Table 4.7	Involvement of DCL Before Becoming DCL	14
Table 4.8	Influences in Becoming a DCL	14
Table 4.9	DCL and Their Parents	15
Table 4.10	Size of DCL Family	15
Table 4.11	Siblings of DCL Also Working for Wage (below 18 Years)	15
Table 4.12	DCL Seniority in the Family	16
Table 4.13	Landholding Pattern of DCL Family	16
Table 4.14	Indebted DCL Families	17
Table 5.1	Main Activity of DCL	18
Table 5.2	Second Main Activity of DCL	18
Table 5.3	Average Working Hours of DCL	19
Table 5.4	Incidences of Injury During Work	19
Table 5.5	Salary of DCL	20
Table 5.6	Who Collects the Salary of DCL	20
Table 5.7	Quality of Room and Board	21
Table 5.8	DCL Currently Going to School	22
Table 5.9	Freedom to go Home	22
Table 5.10	Frequency of Home Visits in the Last Year	22
Table 5.11	Freedom to Leave the Job	23
Table 5.12	Number of Previous Places of Employment	23
Table 5.13	Reasons for Leaving Previous Work Place	24
Table 5.14	Reasons for not Recommending DCL Occupation	25
Table 6.1	Incidence of Worst Form Factors in Domestic Child Labour	27

## List of Boxes

Box 1: <i>Kanchi</i>	8
Box 2: Asha: Urban <i>Kamlahari!</i>	13
Box 3: Renu's Work: Respite for Her Parents but a High Price to Pay	21
Box 4: Jyoti Wants to Work in an Office	24

## **Executive Summary**

### ***Background***

Hiring a live-in person to undertake domestic household chores is an integral part of South Asian tradition. The use of domestic child labourers (DCL) is common in Nepal, especially in its affluent urban areas. In Kathmandu, according to the study's findings, one in five households employs children.

The consequences of domestic child labour on children, however, have prompted this study to investigate child domestic work as a worst form of child labour. This rapid assessment undertaken in Kathmandu aims to characterise DCL and to understand the trends in their employment. It provides overall quantitative and qualitative information on the topic of domestic child labour to fill the many gaps in knowledge about this hidden form of work.

The rapid assessment methodology was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO)/UNICEF (2000) to bring out an understanding of a particular social phenomenon and its context for the purpose of designing an intervention strategy. The methodology combines a broad range of qualitative and quantitative survey tools that can be adapted as necessary to investigate a certain, often hidden, worst form of child labour. This rapid assessment's means of data collection comprised Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant interviews, observation, and a door-to-door survey of 2,237 households in eight sub-wards of Kathmandu. A total of 420 domestic child labourers were employed in these households.

### ***What is domestic child labour and how are children recruited?***

Domestic child labour is defined internationally as children working in an employer's house with or without a wage. DCL are employed to perform domestic chores such as washing dishes, cooking, cleaning the house, looking after young children, and other household activities. This study considers any child from the ages of 7 to 18 working in an employer's household as a domestic labourer.

According to 46 percent of the respondents, relatives play a key role in enrolling children to work as domestic labourers. Sixteen percent of the respondents reported being sent to work by their own parents. At the same time, in terms of motivation for the job, 82 percent of DCL reported that their parents advised them to take such a job. In 24 percent of the cases, the employers themselves used their connections in the village to recruit DCL. Three of the study's respondents were employed through a 'broker' and are thus considered as trafficked into domestic child labour.

### ***Who employs domestic child labourers?***

According to the study, the Brahmin ethnic group employs the majority of DCL (43.8 percent), although the children are dispersed among a broad range of households. In terms of occupation, government and non-government employees are the largest DCL employing households. They employ 47.3 percent of the total number of DCL. It is believed that affluent households where at least one adult is employed full-time are most likely to hire children for domestic work.

### ***Characteristics of domestic child labourers***

Almost two thirds of the respondents are between 10 to 14 years old, and only 30 percent are between 15 and 18. Two percent are below 10 years of age. The large majority of the children enter into this work between the ages of 10 and 14. Employers generally prefer to hire young children due to the fact that salaries increase with age, and that teenagers can be more difficult to manage for the employers. More than half the DCL in the study are boys, a finding that is documented similarly in other studies. Cultural reasons are thought to be responsible for this, including lesser mobility for females in general, and the fact that some ethnic groups consider females to be impure during menstruation.

Forty percent of the respondents came from Brahmin and Chhetri ethnic groups, followed by Tharu at 19 percent. None of the DCL interviewed came from the Dalit ethnic group, considered to be “untouchable” and thus explaining why they are not hired as DCL. Approximately one third of DCL come from the neighbouring districts of Kathmandu.

A majority of respondents (72 percent) reported that both their parents are alive and together. The average family size of a DCL is four to six members. One fourth of DCL reported that at least one other child in their family was also working for a wage. Two thirds reported that they are either the first or second child of the family. In terms of family assets, this was assessed through inquiries of landholding patterns seeing as all the DCL originated in rural areas. A quarter of the families were reported landless, and only ten percent reported their land to be 0.50 hectare or more. Family vulnerability to children working in domestic child labour can also be measured by indebtedness. It is believed that one in ten child labourers is bonded to pay parental debt.

About 18 percent of respondents reported being unable to read or write, and another 10 percent were very weak in these skills. While the majority of the children surveyed reported that they were attending school before their employment as a domestic labourer, one third of them (and about half of the girls) worked on their family’s farm prior to their current employment as DCL. The families of DCL do not hold schooling, especially for girls, in high regard. Only about one third of DCL are currently enrolled in school.

### ***Conditions of domestic child labour***

More than two thirds of DCL work 14 hours or more per day, usually beginning at 5:00 AM. Their main chores include kitchen work, dish washing, child minding, clothes washing, house cleaning, cattle raising, and shop keeping. About 50 percent of DCL are not paid wages for their services. In the majority of cases of the 40 percent who do receive a salary, their parents collect the money. An overwhelming majority of children interviewed reported that their employers fed them better than at home, and that their sleeping premises were better than at home. This speaks to the size and poverty of their own families, and the discrepancies in the standards of living that exist.

Domestic child labourers, even when allowed the freedom to visit their homes, do not return home frequently. Almost one fifth of DCL reported that, due to their parents, they were not free to leave their present job. The majority of DCL worked for the same employer for most of the duration of their employment.

Loneliness, high workloads, bad treatment, and extreme and violent forms of abuse were cited by the children as reasons they believed other children might not enjoy this work. While most DCL are fed, sheltered and clothed often better than in their own homes, the emotional deprivation and psychological violence they encounter are great, and the lack of parental love and care holds dire consequences.

### ***Domestic child labour and the future***

Although there is a general belief that domestic child labour provides disadvantaged children with a relatively safe, comfortable option out of poverty or other forms of child labour, many of the study's findings point to this occupation as a worst form of child labour. By cross-referencing aspects of bondage, wages, work hours and times, and age with the standards defined by ILO Conventions 29, 138, 182 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), it can be concluded that 97 percent of DCL interviewed in this study are working under conditions that qualify as a worst form of child labour. While banning the practice of employing DCL may seem the ultimate solution, it is not a realistic one for cultural reasons and given the prevalence of poverty in Nepal. Improving the situation for DCL within the context of the socio-economic conditions in Nepal is a more viable option for action. Recommendations fall largely into three categories summarised briefly below:

1. **Policy-making**: poverty alleviation through employment opportunities and establishment of a minimum wage policy;
2. **Legal Framework**: attaching punitive measures to the use of child labour, and bringing relevant regulatory provisions to force through legal instruments; and
3. **Programmes**: two tiered programming including income enhancement for economically disadvantaged groups, and advocacy to educate parents about the realities behind child domestic work as well as advocacy campaigns aimed at employers.

A list of specific recommendations to humanize the domestic child labour occupation in Kathmandu follows:

- a. A system should be created to keep records of DCL at the municipality's ward offices. The record system should include vital statistics and addresses of DCL and their employers, schooling level, and wage status of the domestic worker.
- b. A broad-ranging information campaign should be mounted to educate the population about children's rights and Nepal's legal provisions on child labour.
- c. Ward offices should be encouraged and supported in maintaining information on child labour use and running a drop-in centre for working children, where services such as health check-ups, counseling and non-formal education would be provided. Ward officers would be responsible in arranging leisure time for DCL with their employers so they can use the drop-in centre.
- d. Social support should be obtained in pressuring wards to provide schooling opportunities to DCL.

- e. Additionally, further research on the situation of domestic child labourers in other urban centres as well as in rural areas is warranted to help understand the overall attributes and incidence of domestic child labour in Nepal.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

His Majesty's Government of Nepal is preparing to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Form of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), 1999, a Convention that came into force globally on November 19, 2000. The Convention calls for the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as a matter of urgency. Nepal has already ratified various other international conventions, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989, and the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), 1973, which remain international documents of fundamental importance in combating child labour.

The Government of Nepal has repeatedly stated its commitment to eliminating the worst forms of child labour. At the time of writing the present Rapid Assessment, the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management is well into the process of drafting a Master Plan of Action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2005 and all forms of child labour by 2010.

The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has facilitated and supported these positive developments by choosing Nepal as one of three countries in which to implement a large-scale Time Bound Programme (TBP) for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. In preparation for this important initiative, five fields of child labour prevalent in Nepal have been tentatively identified as belonging to the 'worst forms' category. These are domestic child labour, bonded child labour, child ragpicking, child portering and girl trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. Intensive studies in these sectors are being conducted to complement earlier IPEC studies on child labour in tea estates and in coal-mines.

### 1.1 The Problem

Of about 4.7 million children ages six to 14 years in Nepal<sup>1</sup>, 25.5 percent are economically active and about 4.4 percent are wage workers. Among the children working for wages, almost 40 percent, or some 83,000 children, work in the informal service sector, which is largely comprised of domestic labour.

The use of domestic child labourers (DCL) is common in Nepal, especially in its affluent urban areas. However, specific information on the incidence of DCL in urban and rural settings is lacking, though it is suspected that at least half of DCL may be working in urban centres in Nepal. Indeed, there is a general lack of data and information to allow for a thorough analysis of the incidence and nature of DCL at both national and local levels.

One of the few studies on DCL (Pradhan 1995) estimates their incidence (aged 5-16 years) in Kathmandu at 19.2 percent; that is, for every 1,000 households in the capital, 192 households reported employing a DCL. Based on a limited sample size of 125 households in the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu and Patan cities), the study provides an estimate of 21,303 DCL for the area, and a total of 62,345 for all urban areas of Nepal. These figures have been used widely for advocacy, and have served as important tools in raising awareness on the

---

<sup>1</sup> The data is projected population for 1999. The projection is based on CBS population projection. Child labour related information is derived from CWCD (1997) as used by Sharma (1999) and UNICEF (undated).

situation of domestic child labour, yet the small sample size and the unclear sampling method call for caution.

Similarly, INSEC (1996) and Luintel (2000) have conducted domestic child labour surveys in Kathmandu and Pokhara respectively. Both studies picked only households having domestic child labour for their research and thus are not telling when it comes to estimating the incidence of the occupation overall. However, the studies are useful in understanding the socio-economic characteristics of the children in the occupation. The studies reveal that the DCL are mostly migrants, almost half do not receive any pay (though most receive room and board, clothing, and some may be allowed to attend school), and a majority work hours exceeding recommended standards.

On the basis of a full enumeration of households in one urban and one semi-urban ward in each of the municipalities of Pokhara, Butwal and Siddharthanagar (Butwal), Sharma et-al. (1999) provides an estimate of the incidence of DCL in these three cities. In Pokhara, 5.5 percent, in Butwal, 5.6 percent and in Siddharthanagar, 8.1 percent of households are reported to employ domestic child labourers. The study further documents that an overwhelming number of DCL are migrants from rural areas and that almost one-fourth of all DCL originated from mid- and far-western Terai districts, mainly from the Tharu ethnic group. The majority of children working as domestic labourers work excessive hours - more than 14 or 15 hours per day. Only 28 percent in Pokhara, and 10 percent in Butwal and Siddharthanagar, were enrolled in school.

## **1.2 Domestic Child Labour as a Worst Form of Child Labour**

Domestic child labour is defined internationally as children working in an employer's house with or without wages. DCL are basically employed to perform domestic chores such as washing dishes, cooking, cleaning the house, looking after young children and any other household-related activities. The domestic child labourer may be considered a 'helping hand' in the household, or be solely responsible for the various activities.

Domestic child labourers are also exposed to hazardous work. Some are victims of emotional deprivation, psychological violence and physical abuse. A majority of the Nepalese children interviewed in this study felt very 'lonely'; they were immobile and living in confinement, without seeing their family and friends for years. They stated that they lived too far away from home (see pages 23 to 25).

In most definitions of domestic child labour, a child is considered to be below 16 years of age. Yet, as the new ILO Convention stipulates that any person under the age of 18 years is to be protected from employment in the worst forms of child labour, this study will consider any person aged 7 to 18 working in an employer's household as a domestic labourer.

As per Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, the worst forms of child labour include:

- Slavery or practices similar to slavery including debt bondage, sale of children, serfdom, and forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts
- The use, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution or for pornography
- The use of children for illicit activities – particularly within the drug trade
- Work that is likely to endanger the health, safety, or morals of children.

The accompanying Recommendation (No 190) draws attention to such cases where children are exposed to:

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

In Nepal, the common reason for the prevalence of DCL is said to be widespread poverty, and the desire of parents to provide better exposure and a good education for their children. Judging from the comments made by both employers and members of the general public during the fieldwork, most do not regard the employment of children as domestic workers as hazardous or exploitative work. In fact, several argue that the children are better off compared to the lifestyle they would be exposed to at home. However, a case-by-case examination shows that though some DCL may have relatively good treatment and lifestyles, others are living and working in the most intolerable conditions.

According to the spirit of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as to ILO Conventions Nos. 29, 138 and 182, the worst form of DCL employment is said to exist if: (i) the child is sold, (ii) is bonded, (iii) works without pay, (iv) works excessive hours, (v) works in isolation or during the night, (vi) is exposed to grave safety or health hazards, (vii) is abused, (viii) is at risk of physical violence or sexual harassment and (ix) works at a very young age (UNICEF undated). The presence of any or a combination of these elements would render domestic child labour a worst form of child labour, and this study will establish information supporting this notion.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The broad objective of the present study is to characterise domestic child labourers and to understand the trends in their employment. It will also examine the incidences of worst forms of DCL, and provide overall quantitative as well as qualitative information related to domestic child labour. Specifically, the study will:

- a. Document the nature, extent and incidence of domestic child labour in Nepal.
- b. Characterise the domestic child labourers - age, sex, schooling and caste.
- c. Characterise the general working conditions of domestic child labourers, including debt-bondage situations.
- d. Document the socio-economic, cultural and family backgrounds of DCL.
- e. Examine the root causes for the prevalence of the occupation, including the cultural mechanisms and social dynamics relating to the problem of domestic child labour.
- f. Document institutional frameworks in which DCL interventions are operating.
- g. Document perceptions and experiences of domestic child labourers.

As mentioned previously, recent studies on the incidence and nature of DCL have been conducted by UNICEF in Pokhara, Butwal and Siddharthanagar (Sharma et al., 1999). In an

attempt to avoid overlaps, and to make good use of the limited time allocated for the Rapid Assessment of domestic child labour in Nepal, this study will concentrate on presenting an in-depth analysis of DCL in Kathmandu. Research on domestic child labour in the capital, combined with the information available from the three other major provincial cities, should, for the first time in Nepal, establish an accurate national estimate of DCL in urban areas of the country.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

Rapid Assessment (RA) is a methodology developed by ILO/UNICEF (2000) to bring out an understanding of a particular social phenomenon and its context, usually for the purpose of designing an intervention strategy. The methodology is a combination of a broad range of qualitative and quantitative survey tools, which allow for adaptation to local conditions required when researching the often hidden and invisible aspects of the worst forms of child labour.

In short, the Rapid Assessment is a sequenced research process, with one set of information generated by a particular research component leading into the next step of the process. The specific research components employed in the present Rapid Assessment include Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant interviews, observation, and a door-to-door survey of 2,237 households in eight sub-wards of Kathmandu. The Rapid Assessment was completed in three months, and the fieldwork took place in three wards of Kathmandu from December 2000 to January 2001.

Despite some reservations as to whether the worst forms of child labour may be adequately understood through the use of household surveys and by filling in questionnaires on a door-to-door basis, the sample survey was a major part of the overall research process. Based on previous experiences of researching domestic child labour in other urban areas of Nepal, the household survey proved to be a powerful tool in generating reliable data within a short period of time, especially when combined with other RA tools.

The use of the survey sample further minimised the problems of purposive sampling, as all domestic child labourers within a given area were targeted for interviews. Finally, the idea of conducting a household survey on domestic child labour proved relatively easy to promote amongst local community leaders, thus ensuring their co-operation and support.

##### *1.4.1 Household survey*

The capital of the Kingdom of Nepal, Kathmandu has 117,375 households that are divided into 35 wards for administrative/political purposes. Wards have been grouped in core urban, urban and semi-urban categories based on consultation with municipal authorities, which took into account factors such as commercial centres, population density and degree of urbanisation (Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1: Estimated Number of Households by Category in Kathmandu**

Category	Wards within area	Total wards	Estimated HHs
Core Urban	12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 & 30.	14	29,333
Urban	1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 29, 31, 32 & 33	10	41,363
Semi Urban	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 34 & 35	11	46,679
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>117,375</b>

For the purposes of the survey, one ward from each category was randomly selected: ward 25 was chosen to represent the Core Urban category, ward 32 the Urban category and ward 34 the Sub-urban category. Each ward has further been divided into sub-wards by CBS for survey purposes in 1999. Three of these sub-wards from wards numbers 32 and 34 and two sub-wards from ward number 25 were randomly selected for the sample survey (Map 1).

All households in the selected sub-wards were asked to respond to a brief structured questionnaire to collect information on the use of domestic child labour. The purpose of this initial survey was to help estimate the incidence of child labour in domestic chores among responding households, as an indicator of overall trends in the city. Among the eight sub-wards a total of 2,237 households were visited, in which a total of 420 domestic child labourers were employed.

The DCL thus identified were interviewed using a longer, semi-structured questionnaire. However, only 378 of the 420 children participated in the survey, the remainder either being absent from the household at the time of the survey or not being allowed by their employers to be interviewed. Fourteen additional participants dropped out of the survey after their employers refused to proceed with the interviews. Each questionnaire took 30 to 45 minutes to be completed, and in most cases, employers were present during the interviews.

While interviewing the domestic child labourers, the enumerators noted observations on physical appearance and the responses of the participants. They also recorded their own impressions of the employers' attitude towards the respondent and the enumerator during the survey. Except for cases where an employer would not allow the child to participate in the interview, the employers were, in general, co-operative during the field survey.

The survey teams were comprised of professional researchers and locally hired enumerators (from within the selected wards). The local staff was instrumental in the smooth operation of the door-to-door survey, as their familiarity with the area inspired confidence in the participants and their employers. Two fieldworkers visited the households together; one would survey the employer while the other surveyed the DCL, thereby minimising chances for intervention or influence during the interviews.

All research team members were trained for one week on Rapid Assessment and survey methodologies and on the purpose of the research, as well as on ethical issues and on methods to win confidence in the households and when conducting research with children. During training, pre-tests of questionnaire and checklists were conducted. The survey instruments were finalised using the pre-test.

### *1.4.2 Focus Group Discussions*

Prior to the household surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held in the three wards and eight sub-wards selected for the study. The FGD were specifically aimed at helping to establish social mapping and cause and effect information related to domestic child labour, as well as to provide some general information on the incidence and location of child labourers within the ward. Ward representatives, school teachers, social workers, employers and other knowledgeable persons participated in these FGD, making them valuable in securing support from local authorities as well as in building rapport and networks within each ward.

Focus Group Discussions were also held with domestic child labourers, mainly in the public schools some of them attended. Involving the DCL who do not attend school was not possible, as their work did not allow them the free time necessary. The discussions proved to be very useful, not only in gauging the incidence of DCL, but also as a means of learning more about the nature of their work, their workload, and contact with the outside world while working.

### *1.4.3 Key Informant Interviews*

Four Key Informant interviews were conducted in each sub-ward. These interviews helped understand the root causes and incidence of DCL, as well as working conditions in the respective sub-wards. Key informants were also asked to provide their opinions on ways and means to humanise and/or eliminate the domestic child labour problem. Furthermore, the interviews with ward authorities helped inspire confidence among locals about the survey and research team.

## **1.5 Lessons Learned**

- a. The survey was greatly eased by the inclusion of locally hired, gender-balanced field assistants on the survey teams. These local team members had a full grasp of the survey localities and were familiar with the households, which helped the survey teams be cordially accepted.
- b. Door-to-door survey work was easy during holidays and weekends, as both male and female household members were accessible on those days.
- c. Due to limited time, no repeat interaction with the DCL and other stakeholders was possible. Had there been more time, it may have been a good idea to share the draft findings with them and elicit their views.
- d. Similarly, due to lack of time, the parents of DCL could not be met, which would have been useful in getting additional information on the causes of domestic child labour, as well as to verify the information provided during individual interviews.
- e. Rapid Assessment (RA) tools are useful, probably more so when the subject of information collection is difficult to access. In the case of DCL in Kathmandu, the co-operation of the employers minimised the problem of accessibility, therefore the survey placed greater reliance on the questionnaire technique. This confirms the fact that RA techniques should be adapted to the local situation and to the degree of accessibility of research participants.

## Chapter 2: Domestic Child Labour in Kathmandu and in Nepal

During the door-to-door survey in selected wards and sub-wards of Kathmandu municipality, 345 core urban, 771 urban and 1,121 semi-urban households were visited. A total of 402 out of the 2,237 households surveyed employed 420 child domestic workers, showing that only a few households employ more than one DCL at a time.

10.4 percent of core urban households, 21.3 percent of urban and 18.3 percent of semi-urban households were found to employ domestic child labourers. The lower incidence in the core areas may be partly explained by cultural tendencies, as Newar families who traditionally do not employ labourers for domestic work mostly populate these areas.

Of a total estimated 117,375 households in Kathmandu, 25 percent reside in core urban wards, 35.2 percent reside in urban wards and 39.8 percent reside in semi-urban wards. Based on the sample information cited above and by applying the respective percentage of incidence of DCL among households by ward category, the number of DCL employed in the Kathmandu municipality can be estimated to be 21,191 (Table 2.1), and the percentage of households employing such workers to be 18.1. By comparison, the estimate published by Pradhan (1995) of 21,303 DCL for Kathmandu and Patan combined is therefore much lower than the current estimate, which pertains to Kathmandu alone.

**DCL in Kathmandu**  
*< 18 years of age: 21,191*

**DCL in urban areas of Nepal**  
*< 14 years of age: 42,674*  
*< 18 years of age: 55,655*

Applying the incidence level of Kathmandu Valley, Pradhan (1995) estimated the number of DCL in all municipalities of Nepal at about 60,000. Yet, the incidence of DCL in various municipalities and urban areas is known to fluctuate greatly, due to differences in the degree of urbanisation and affluence enjoyed by the households in the various areas of Nepal. This study will thus not attempt to estimate overall occurrence of urban DCL using the Kathmandu parameter alone, since this would be misleading.

Fortunately, the recent study by UNICEF provides incidence parameters for Pokhara, Butwal and Siddharthanagar (Sharma et al, 1999, Annex 1). By classifying all municipalities in Nepal to fit the profile of either Kathmandu, Pokhara, Butwal or Siddharthanagar, and by applying the respective incidence parameter of each municipality, it is now possible to estimate the incidence of DCL in urban areas. It is estimated that in the all urban areas and municipalities of Nepal, there are 42,674 DCL aged 14 years or younger.

Yet, unlike the present Rapid Assessment, the UNICEF study has only included DCL below 14 years of age. By applying the ratio relevant for 14 years and above, the total number of DCL of 18 years or below in urban areas of Nepal can therefore be calculated to 55,655. Still, information on DCL in rural and other market towns is absent altogether.

**Table 2.1: Estimate of DCL in Kathmandu**

	Total Wards	Total Households	Surveyed Households	DCL in Surveyed Households	Estimated DCL in wards
Core Urban	14	29,333	345	38	3,231
Urban	10	41,363	771	171	9,174
Semi-Urban	11	46,679	1,121	211	8,786
<b>Kathmandu</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>117,375</b>	<b>2,237</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>21,191</b>

### Chapter 3: Employer Profiles

Domestic child labourers are dispersed in a broad range of households (Table 3.1), though the majority are employed by Brahmins (43.8 percent), followed by Newars (21.1 percent), Chhetris (16.2 percent) and Janajati (Gurung, Magar, Rai, Tamang etc.) (8.2 percent).

Across the three types of wards, Newars are the largest DCL employers in core urban wards, while in urban and semi-urban wards Brahmins are the most frequent employers. Though as stated earlier, Newars do not traditionally employ domestic workers for household activities, there is a growing trend amongst more economically advantaged members of this group to employ domestic help. However, when considering the demographic predominance of Newars in Kathmandu compared to that of Brahmins and Chhetris, the percentage of DCL employed by Newars is proportionally low.

#### BOX 1: 'Kanchi'

Hira Kaji has a family of four; he and his wife are employed in a bank in Kathmandu, and their children go to school. Since there is nobody at home during the day, they needed somebody to man the house and perform domestic chores. They brought 'Kanchi' (12 years old) back from a friend's village in the Nuwakot district. Kanchi's father collects her salary (Rs 200 per month\*) every four or five months. She is not sent to school, as the prime reason for her being employed is to man the empty house. She was promised that her employers would provide all wedding expenses when she gets married. Kanchi sleeps in her employers' girl's bedroom. Hira Kaji is confident that 'Kanchi' is doing well here compared to the lifestyle she would likely have in the village, collecting firewood, water, grass and yet being only half fed. Kanchi also seems to be happy, but complains that she is not being sent to school. She also misses her friends in the village, and has not been able to make friends in Kathmandu. \*US \$1 = NR 74,65 (August 2001)

**Table 3.1: Households employing DCL by Caste and Occupation.**

Caste/Ethnicity of Employer	Kathmandu		Occupation	Kathmandu	
	No.	%		No.	%
Brahmin	176	43.8	Service (employees)	190	47.3
Chhetri	65	16.2	Trade	102	25.4
Newar	85	21.1	Grihathi	53	13.2
Terai	15	3.7	Retired	18	4.5
Thakuri	13	3.2	Wage Earner	10	2.5
Praja/Chepang	2	0.5	Agriculture	8	2.0
Janajati*	33	8.2	Student	5	1.2
Marwari	4	1.0	Social Service	2	0.5
Others	4	1.0	Politician	3	0.8
Not stated	5	1.3	Not stated	11	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Includes Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Tamang etc.

Government and non-government service holders (employees) are the largest DCL employing households. They employ 47.3 percent of the total number of DCL. Traders and 'Grihathi' (without specific occupation) are the second and third largest groups, employing 25.4 percent and 13.2 percent of DCL respectively. This could mean that more affluent households where at least one adult is employed full-time are more likely to hire a domestic labourer.

Ten percent (42) of all the DCL identified in the survey could not be interviewed, either because they were not present while the interviews were being conducted, or because their employers did not allow them to do so. In general, though, it was relatively simple to survey in the densely populated core urban areas, and most DCL could be approached easily. Such goodwill on the part of the employers was found to be closely linked to the widespread perception among the employers that they are benefactors, securing a better future for the DCL. In all DCL households researched, the employers would tell the same story of how a child, lost and found, has now obtained a better life.

## Chapter 4: Domestic Child Labour Profile

Almost two-thirds of the respondents are in the age group of 10 to 14 years. Only 30 percent DCL are between 15 and 18 years old, and two percent are below the age of 10 years, which would be equivalent to about 450 children at the national level (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Distribution of DCL by Age and Sex**

Age	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<10 years	1	0.5	7	4.1	8	2.1
10 to 14 years	128	62.1	127	73.8	255	67.5
15 to 18 years	77	37.4	38	22.1	115	30.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

When analysing the age at which the children were introduced to work (Table 4.2), it was found that two percent started working before they were seven years old, and that over 15.1 percent were working before the age of 10. Comparatively, 13 percent enter into the domestic labour occupation at the age of 15 years or above, with the large majority of children entering into the occupation between ages 10-14<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 4.2: Age of Employment as DCL**

Age	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5 to 7 years	3	1.5	4	2.3	7	1.9
8 to 9 years	22	10.7	28	16.3	50	13.2
10 to 11 years	56	27.1	57	33.1	113	29.9
12 to 14 years	90	43.7	69	40.1	159	42.1
15 or above	35	17.0	14	8.1	49	13.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The relatively low percentage of DCL above 15 years of age in the survey may indicate that as they grow older, DCL may change occupations and join the adult workforce<sup>3</sup>. Focus groups and key informant interviews revealed that the preference is in hiring younger children, mostly due to the fact that salaries increase with age, and that teenagers may be more difficult to manage for the employers.

Table 4.1 also shows that more than half of DCL are boys. While there may not be a large difference between the number of boy and girl DCL, there is indeed a high incidence of male workers in an occupation that is typically considered female-oriented in most countries

<sup>2</sup> There might be said to be some discrepancy in the above sample. Between, for example, the percentage of DCL aged below 10 years of age (2.1 percent) and the percentage that said that they began work before 10 years of age (15.1 percent). While it is likely that employers may restrict access to younger workers, it is also probable that the questions in the survey generated less specific data. It thus seems likely that many children reported entering work below 10 years of age, and not specifically domestic work.

<sup>3</sup> In addition, the lower percentage of female DCL aged 15 and above suggests that girls leave service at around 16 years of age. This correlates with social trends in the context of Nepal. It is commonly thought inappropriate for single adolescent females, who are non-family members, to live and be employed within households. It is thus suggested that 10 to 14 years represent the ideal age for a domestic child labourer.

including Nepal. Sharma et. al. (1999) documented a similar pattern in other municipalities of the country.

This extraordinary pattern may be explained by various cultural contexts in Nepal: first, girls are usually less mobile and few leave their village or family until and unless they are married. Second, some ethnic groups consider females to be 'impure' during the time of their menstruation, and therefore are not allowed to enter or work in the kitchen and other rooms in the house. Similarly, over 50 percent of girls were hired before the age of 12, while 60 percent of boys were hired after 12. This, again, may be associated to the cultural taboo cited earlier, and to the fact that as a girl approaches and reaches puberty, her parents may be considering marrying her.

#### 4.1 Literacy

About 18 percent of respondents reported they cannot read or write, and another 10 percent are just literate, meaning they can only write their own names. These two categories, 'illiterate' and 'just literate' refer to children who have never attended school. The discrepancy in literacy levels between girls and boys is consistent with national literacy levels. Similarly, while 25 per cent of boys interviewed passed lower secondary level, only three percent of the girls had reached the same level (Table 4.3).

About half of DCL studied primary grades before joining their current occupation. The remaining half were studying in lower secondary or secondary grades prior to being employed, which means that about 70 percent of DCL are school dropouts. Whether they had to drop out of school in order to work or for other reasons is not known. Of the 378 children sampled, 123 go to school whilst 255 do not.

**Table 4.3: Literacy Status of DCL**

Literacy Status	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Illiterate	19	9.2	50	29.1	69	18.3
Just Literate	9	4.4	30	17.4	39	10.3
Primary Level	115	55.8	86	50.0	201	53.2
Lower S. Level	48	23.3	5	2.9	53	14.0
Secondary Level	14	6.8	1	0.6	15	4.0
Higher Secondary Level	1	0.5	0	-	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.2 Ethnicity, Caste and Origin

A large portion (40 percent) of the participants in the survey come from Brahmin and Chhetri ethnic groups, and Tharu represent 19 percent of the DCL (Table 4.4). None of the DCL interviewed came from the Dalit ethnic group, most likely because they are considered to be 'untouchable' in the traditional caste system. This means they are not allowed to perform household activities in the homes of other castes, which in turn restricts them to other forms of labour. Significantly, about a quarter come from 'Janajati' ethnic groups (Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rai and Limbu), which were traditionally considered to be outside the caste system, and therefore may not be subject to some of the cultural taboos observed with other castes.

There is no ready explanation for the dominance of Brahmins and Chhetris in this occupation, other than the fact that since they are considered 'pure,' they may be seen as more suitable for kitchen work. Some key informants, however, also point out how some Brahmin DCL are recruited through networks of high-caste families in much the same way that potential brides are traditionally found for sons of high-caste families.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of DCL by Caste/Ethnicity**

Caste/Ethnicity	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bramhin/Chhetri	83	40.3	65	37.8	148	39.2
Newar	8	3.9	14	8.1	22	5.8
Tamang	28	13.6	20	11.6	48	12.7
Magar	21	10.2	8	4.6	29	7.7
Gurung/Rai/Limbu	6	2.9	12	7.0	18	4.8
Tharu	38	18.5	33	19.2	71	18.8
Others	22	10.7	20	11.6	42	11.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As for their point of origin, Table 4.5 shows that 32 percent of DCL come from neighbouring districts of Kathmandu, and the same percentage come from Terai districts other than the Kamaiya districts.

The five districts of Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchanpur accounted for another 14 percent of DCL and 42 out of the 53 coming from these districts are from the Tharu ethnic group. It is speculated that these children come from former Kamaiya (bonded labour) households. Although the Kamaiya system has been abolished by a government decree, new research indicates that exploitative labour practices persist in the form of sharecropping arrangements, where the daughter of a sharecropper is often used as collateral in the sharecropping agreement, and where she is subsequently sent to work as a DCL in the house of the landowner.

**Table 4.5: Distribution of DCL by District of Origin**

Districts (place)	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Neighbouring District*	68	33.0	51	29.6	119	31.5
Other Hill District	55	26.7	30	17.4	85	22.5
Kamaiya District**	30	14.6	23	13.4	53	14.0
Other Terai District	53	25.7	68	39.5	121	32.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\* Includes Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Kavre, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Nuwakot, Dhading and Makwanpur.

\*\* Includes Dang, Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur districts. Of the total, 85 percent reported their caste as Tharu.

**Box 2: Asha: Urban Kamlahari!**

Asha is a Tharu girl from Kailali. She is twelve years old, and has been working for her present employer for four years. Her father works as a 'Kamaiya' for one of her employer's relatives in Dhangadhi. Asha has two brothers and one sister. Both brothers work in Dhangadhi, and her sister is also working in Kathmandu, but she seldom sees her. Asha's work begins at five in the morning with sweeping and mopping the house, and ends at ten at night with dishwashing. She is illiterate and is unlikely to be sent to school, as there is no one to share her workload. She is unaware of the amount of her salary, which she thinks her parents receive in the village from the landlord for whom they work. According to the Kamaiya system, however, her salary is probably built into her father's payment of his debt to the landlord.

### 4.3 How Children Become Domestic Labourers

Relatives play a key role (46 percent) in enrolling children to work as domestic labourers, and an additional 16 percent of the respondents were sent to work by their own parents. In 24 percent of the cases, the employers themselves used their connections in the village to recruit DCL (Table 4.6). Three respondents were employed through a 'broker,' and can therefore be considered as trafficked into domestic child labour. Although not a lot is known of the actual recruitment procedure, the data clearly points out that the recruitment networks are informal, personalised and mostly family-based. Written contracts are rarely provided, and it can at times be difficult to differentiate clearly between a relative, a broker and/or a trafficker.

**Table 4.6: Person Recruiting DCL for Employers**

Person	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents	25	12.1	35	20.4	60	15.9
Relative	105	50.9	67	38.9	172	45.5
Friend	7	3.4	4	2.3	11	2.9
Own	10	4.9	3	1.7	13	3.4
Broker	2	1.0	1	0.6	3	0.8
Employer	38	18.5	51	29.7	89	23.5
Villagers	19	9.2	11	6.4	30	7.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of the children surveyed reported that they were attending school before being employed as a domestic labourer. One third of them, and about 50 percent of the girls, worked on their family's farm prior to being hired, while only five percent were employed in wage labour. On the one hand, this information indicates how little regard is paid to schooling from DCL and their families, and especially how girls are discriminated against. On the other hand, Table 4.7 suggests that lack of opportunities or the prospect of a better lifestyle in the city encourage children to leave their current unpaid occupations to seek work as a domestic labourer.

**Table 4.7: Involvement of DCL Before Becoming DCL**

Work before joining	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Study in School	156	75.7	73	42.4	229	60.6
Work at Farm	43	20.8	85	49.4	128	33.9
Wage Labour	7	3.4	14	8.2	21	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Yet the motivation comes mostly from the parents. Eighty-two percent of DCL reported that their parents advised them to take the job, while 11 percent said they made that choice on their own. It is interesting to note that a larger proportion of girls reported that they followed their parents' advice (88 percent / 77 percent), whereas a larger proportion of boys claimed they made that decision themselves (16 percent / 6 percent). This difference may be ascribed to the fact that boy respondents may not want to admit that their parents were involved in the decision, or that a majority of boys start work as domestic labourers at an older age, making them more apt to make that decision themselves. It is also highly probable that this situation is related to gender differences in Nepal, whereby boys have more say in their future than girls do.

**Table 4.8: Influences in Becoming a DCL**

Reason	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Friends Counselling	5	2.4	2	1.2	7	1.9
Own Choice	33	16.0	11	6.4	44	11.6
Parents Advice	160	77.7	152	88.4	312	82.5
Step Mother/Father	2	1.0	-	-	2	0.5
Others	6	2.9	7	4.1	13	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.4 DCL and Family Vulnerability

In the course of the semi-structured interviews with 378 domestic child labourers, information was also gathered with the view to documenting the socio-economic background of families sending children to urban areas for employment as domestic labourers. Family vulnerability is often cited by observers as a root cause of child labour, and frequent attempts have been made to gauge family vulnerability in light of such indicators as a fragile family situation (alcoholism, unemployment, abuse, domestic violence), poverty, illness, literacy level of parents, and family size, etc.

##### 4.4.1 Family structure

Having established previously that parents are instrumental in sending their children to work as DCL, and in hoping to critically examine their reasons for doing so, the respondents were asked questions on the composition of their family, family size and family assets. Although it was not possible to examine in-depth whether family vulnerability can be said to be a main cause for child labour, the data generated does question the validity of this pervasive argument in the case of domestic labourers.

**Table 4.9: DCL and Their Parents**

	<i>Father Alive</i>	<i>Father Dead</i>
<i>Mother Alive</i>	72 %	12.4 %
<i>Mother Dead</i>	9.8 %	5.8 %

A majority of respondents (72 percent) reported that both their parents are alive and together, and only six percent of DCL reported that one of the parents had deserted the family. Almost 22 percent of participants reported that their mother or father had died, and significantly, a high proportion of girl respondents were without a father (17 percent, not shown in table). The data suggests that a common belief in Nepal, that most children are pushed into domestic labour due to the death of a family breadwinner, does not hold true. Yet, 28 percent of DCL have experienced the death of one or both parents. This seems to be a higher percentage than is likely to occur in the general population, and may therefore be a more significant factor than it initially appears.

As for the size of DCL families, the average family size from which they originate is four to six family members (Table 4.10), which is consistent with the national average of 5.4 members per family. About 35 percent of respondents came from families of seven members or more. While this does not represent an overriding trend in the probable causes for children to become DCL, it is still a significant proportion, especially among boys where the percentage rises to over 40 percent.

**Table 4.10: Size of DCL Family**

Family size	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 4 persons	15	7.3	16	9.3	31	8.2
4 to 6 persons	107	51.9	106	61.6	213	56.4
7 to 8 persons	56	27.2	37	21.5	93	24.6
Above 8 persons	28	13.6	13	7.6	41	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It has also been attempted to establish whether the respondents were the only child within a family working for a wage, or if their siblings also worked. One-fourth of DCL reported that at least one other child from the family was also working for wage, and about a quarter of those with siblings also working reported that more than one additional child was working (Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11: Siblings of DCL Also Working for Wage (below 18 Years)**

Number	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Siblings working for wage	53	25.7	44	25.6	97	25.7
One	36	67.9	37	84.1	73	75.3
Two	12	22.6	6	13.6	18	18.6
Three	3	5.7	1	2.3	4	4.1
More than three	2	3.8		-	2	2.1

Strikingly, almost two-thirds of participants reported that they are either the first or the second child in the family. Several key informants suggest that it is quite common for the economic burden of the family to fall on the eldest child first. Apparently, this is not only due to traditional values, but also to the fact that, as younger children grow up and start taking up household work, the older children can be sent to earn wages as a labourer or domestic worker. In addition, as many DCL come from families with a large number of children, they may feel it their responsibility to migrate to urban centres for work to help cope with poverty.

**Table 4.12: DCL Seniority in the Family**

Seniority	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 <sup>st</sup> Child	76	36.9	65	37.8	141	37.3
2 <sup>nd</sup> Child	56	27.2	50	29.1	106	28.0
3 <sup>rd</sup> Child	22	10.7	20	11.6	42	11.1
4 <sup>th</sup> Child	8	3.9	6	3.5	14	3.7
5 <sup>th</sup> Child	4	1.9	3	1.7	7	1.9
Younger than 5 <sup>th</sup>	40	19.4	28	16.3	68	18.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>0.0</b>

#### 4.4.2 Family Assets

As all DCL interviewed originated from rural areas, the main method of establishing the size of the family's assets was to inquire about landholding patterns (Table 4.12). However, as the data comes from children who may be unsure of the exact size of land owned by their parents, and as the information could not be verified, the data reported should be treated carefully. It can be noted, though, that almost one-fourth of DCL interviewed reported that their family does not own land, more significantly so among girls, 40 percent of whom come from landless families. Only 10 percent of respondents reported the land size to be 0.50 hectare or more, which reinforces the notion that DCL mostly originate from land-poor households. Yet, about 25 percent reported that their family owns land bigger than 0.2 hectare, which may indicate that lack of land ownership alone may not be a determining reason for children being sent to work as DCL.

**Table 4.13: Landholding Pattern of DCL Family**

Land holding	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Landless	33	16.0	69	40.1	102	26.9
Don't Know	54	26.2	45	26.2	99	26.2
Below 0.10 ha	24	11.7	15	8.7	39	10.3
0.10 to 0.20 ha	25	12.1	9	5.2	34	9.0
0.20 to 0.50 ha	48	23.3	18	10.5	66	17.5
Above 0.50 ha	22	10.7	16	9.3	38	10.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Indebtedness seems to be a more significant factor when assessing family vulnerability and the incidence of domestic child labour. As a matter of fact, indebted families represent almost one-third of all DCL families. However, an almost equal percentage reported that they did not know the debt situation, which may suggest that this number is even greater than reported. Among those with indebted families, 35 percent reported that the debt is incurred from their actual employer (Table 4.13), which indicates how the DCL function as collateral for the debt.

**Table 4.14: Indebted DCL Families**

Indebtedness	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Indebted	62	30.1	54	31.4	116	30.7
Not taken from current employer	45	72.6	30	55.6	75	64.7
Taken from current employer	17	27.4	24	44.4	41	35.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 4.5 Two Categories of Domestic Child Labour

In conclusion, two main categories of DCL can be deducted from information presented and analysed in the above.

1. In the first category of DCL, the DCL is likely to be a young girl of the Terai, with no education, who comes from a family of more than seven members. Her family would possess little or no land, and it is likely that the employer has recruited her as collateral for her family's debt or as a part of a sharecropping arrangement. Her parents, probably influenced by relatives, have sent her for work as an additional breadwinner or just to have one less mouth to feed.
2. The second category of DCL come from a Brahmin or Chhetri family of four to six persons. His family owns land, he is relatively educated, he collects a wage, and was sent to the city by his parents as a way to potentially get a better education and to better his chances for employment opportunities upon the completion of the contract with the present employer.

## Chapter 5: Domestic Child Labour

### 5.1 Work, risks and workload

DCL working in urban areas of Nepal are engaged in all domestic chores and some work outside the house. Kitchen work, dish washing, child minding, cloth washing, house cleaning, cattle raising and shop keeping are the main activities in which DCL are engaged.

Participants were asked to rate the work they do by degree of importance, and more than half reported their most important activity to be dish washing, while one-third reported that kitchen work was their main responsibility. There seems to be no systematic difference between girls and boys in assigning their work priority according to the survey results.

**Table 5.1: Main Activity of DCL**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kitchen work	72	34.9	56	32.6	128	33.9
Dish washing	109	52.9	96	55.8	205	54.2
Child minding	7	3.4	11	6.4	18	4.7
Washing of clothes	2	0.9	2	1.2	4	1.1
House cleaning	9	4.4	7	4.1	16	4.2
Cattle herding	3	1.5		-	3	0.8
Shop/trade	4	1.9		-	4	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Over 38 percent of participants rated house cleaning as their second most important responsibility, while 28 percent cited dishwashing, and 20 percent washing of clothes. All the domestic chores in which DCL are involved are considered to be arduous tasks, which could in many cases be eased or eliminated with the use of modern equipment and methods.

**Table 5.2: Second Main Activity of DCL**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kitchen work	8	3.9	3	1.7	11	2.9
Dish washing	60	29.1	45	26.2	105	27.8
Child minding	10	4.8	23	13.4	33	8.7
Washing of clothes	34	16.5	42	24.4	76	20.1
House cleaning	84	40.8	58	33.7	142	37.6
Cattle herding	10	4.8	1	0.6	11	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Respondents were asked about the length of time they spend doing domestic activities in an average day. Table 5.3 reports the total number of hours worked by DCL, although rest hours or school hours are not deducted, as most times they have to be available on demand, even during their free time. More than two thirds of DCL work 14 hours or more per day. In fact, their work usually begins as early as 5:00 AM and continues until after 8:00 or 9:00 PM, when all domestic activities are completed.

**Table 5.3: Average Working Hours of DCL**

Working Hours	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
< 12 hours	2	1.0	2	1.2	4	1.0
12-14 hours	52	25.2	60	34.9	112	29.6
14-16 hours	137	66.5	106	61.6	243	64.3
16 and more	15	7.3	4	2.3	19	5.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Participants were asked whether they had had any recent accidents while working, in order to assess health hazards and physical risks in their work environment. Twenty-seven percent of respondents reported that they had encountered accidents, mostly in the form of cuts and some burns, which are explained by the nature of their work. The specific severity of accidents could not be assessed because of lack of information, yet the data indicates that, contrary to the common belief that domestic chores are not hazardous, when children are engaged in these activities the risks involved are compounded.

**Table 5.4: Incidences of Injury During Work**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hurt During Work	59	28.6	44	25.6	103	27.2
Cut	53	89.8	39	88.6	92	89.3
Burned	7	11.9	5	11.4	12	11.7
Fracture	1	1.7	1	2.3	2	1.9
<b>Total*</b>	<b>61</b>		<b>45</b>		<b>106</b>	

\* Total does not tally because of multiple responses.

## 5.2 Remuneration

About 40 percent of participants reported that they receive a salary. Almost 40 percent of these reported that their salary does not exceed Rs. 4,000 per annum, and another 40 percent receive an annual salary ranging between Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 6,000. Only 20 percent of respondents reported a salary above Rs. 6,000 per annum<sup>4</sup>.

Most importantly, though, over 50 percent of DCL are not paid for their services. Among them, many attend school, and their schooling expenses are met by the employer in lieu of a salary. Of the 123 children (from the sample of 378) who do go to school, 15 are also paid a salary, 107 are paid no salary, while one child was unaware of their salary status. Most school-going DCL attend government schools where admission is free. While there are some costs associated with school attendance such as uniform, stationary and exam fees, these do not likely exceed the average salary paid to DCL.

When, surprisingly, it is reported that a few more girls than boys receive wages, the fact that fewer girls are sent to school in lieu of wages must be considered. The wages that girls do

<sup>4</sup> US \$1 = NR 74,65 (August 2001)

receive are also significantly lower than those of boys, as over 50 percent of girls are paid less than Rs. 4,000 a year, compared to only 28 percent of boys.

**Table 5.5: Salary of DCL**

Salary	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Get Salary	75	36.4	70	40.7	145	38.4
No Salary	119	57.8	80	46.5	199	52.7
Don't Know	12	5.8	22	12.8	34	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Up to Rs. 4,000	21	28.0	36	51.4	57	39.3
Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 6,000	32	42.7	27	38.6	59	40.7
Above Rs. 6,000	22	29.3	7	10.0	29	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In the majority of cases, parents collect the salary of the DCL (59.3 percent), especially among girls (78.6 percent). About one-third reported they receive the salary themselves and send it to their parents at a convenient time, though the incidence is significantly higher among boys (52 percent) than girls (17.1 percent). The remainder of respondents who receive wages have a relative collecting their salary or the employer keeps it on their behalf. The economic control of the children over their salary thus seems to be extremely limited as most of DCL's earnings are being given to their parents. This supports the previous notion that parents are mostly responsible for sending their children to work as part of an income-generating strategy for the household. In addition, the substantial discrepancy between girls and boys in terms of control over their salary can probably be related to established gender equality issues, particularly in rural areas.

It should be noted, however, that the remuneration arrangements for most DCL interviewed were unclear, as salary was often combined with schooling expenses or room and board. However, even if schooling, food and lodging are considered a part of the remuneration of the domestic child labourers, the total remuneration is low, and considerably more so for girls. The facts that there are no written contracts and that a great deal of confusion exists as to the level and scope of remuneration among employers and DCL alike, bear witness that DCL rely heavily on the goodwill of the employer.

**Table 5.6: Who Collects the Salary of DCL**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Self	39	52.0	12	17.1	51	35.1
Parents	31	41.3	55	78.6	86	59.3
Employer	1	1.3	1	1.4	2	1.3
Relatives	4	5.4	2	2.9	6	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The survey also attempted to establish the living conditions and treatment received by DCL. An overwhelming majority (75.1 percent) of children interviewed reported that their employers fed them better than they would be fed at home. Similarly, over 70 percent said their sleeping facilities were better at the employer’s premise. The remaining respondents felt food and sleeping arrangements were similar to those they had at home, although about 4 percent complained that conditions were worse.

**Box 3: Renu's Work: Respite for Her Parents but a High Price to Pay**

Renu Tamang is thirteen years old and comes from Makwanpur district. She was employed as a domestic servant in a Brahmin family of six in Indra Chowk two years ago. Her parents felt she might get better exposure and opportunity for schooling. In the village the school is quite far, and Renu have never had the opportunity to go. As a domestic labourer, she has to work from five in the morning until ten at night, performing kitchen chores such as cooking, dish washing and water collection in the mornings and evenings, and tidying the house and washing clothes for the remainder of the day. With such a workload, Renu knows she will never have time to go school. Her mother comes every second month to collect Renu's salary, (Rs 800 for two months) which represents a great respite to her poor landless parents. But the cost to Renu is great: she will always work hard and will remain illiterate.

There may be a few explanations for such a positive response to living conditions. First, most of the children working as domestic labourers come from large, poor families, and were therefore probably subject to scarcity of food and inadequate lodging previous to their employment. Second, most employers would feed their domestic workers leftovers from their own meals, and accommodate them in their own house, both of which would likely be of higher quality than what the DCL may be used to at home.

**Table 5.7: Quality of Room and Board**

	Food		Bed	
	No.	%	No.	%
Better than at home	284	75.1	268	70.9
Same as home	81	21.5	93	24.7
Worst than at home	11	2.9	15	3.9
No response	2	0.5	2	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On whether they had the opportunity to pursue their education, only about one-third of DCL interviewed reported they are currently enrolled in schools. Of those enrolled, about one-fourth are enrolled in primary grades, and about one-fifth are enrolled in lower secondary grades. Almost 10 percent are enrolled in secondary or higher secondary grades (Table 5.8). Clearly, the proportion of girls attending school is very low (16.3 percent), compared to boys (46.1 percent), and most of them are enrolled in primary grades. This may be again explained by traditional beliefs whereby education is less valued for girls, as they will marry into a new family and a different household.

As for boys, the data supports the notion that DCL are sent for urban employment by their parents in the hope that they may benefit from exposure to city life and get the opportunity to study in a better school. A substantial portion of boys attending school was studying at secondary levels (34.7 percent).

**Table 5.8: DCL Currently Going to School**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Going to School	95	46.1	28	16.3	123	32.5
Primary Level	62	65.3	26	92.9	88	71.6
Lower Sec. Level	21	22.2	2	7.1	23	18.7
Secondary Level	11	11.3	0	-	11	8.9
Higher Secondary Level	1	1.2	0	-	1	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 5.3 Mobility and confinement

Since most DCL come from remote rural areas, respondents were asked whether they were allowed to visit their villages and homes. Over 11 percent reported that they were not allowed to do so, especially girls.

**Table 5.9: Freedom to go Home**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not free to go home	14	6.8	28	16.3	42	11.1
Free to go home	192	93.2	143	83.1	335	88.6
No response			1	0.6	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

While the majority of the children are free to visit their homes, they may not actually do so. In fact, over 44 percent of those free to visit their homes had not done so in the preceding year (Table 5.10), and others had generally used that opportunity only once. The frequency of the visits is probably inversely related to the distance of their home or village from Kathmandu, and the expenses required for travelling to that location. Most DCL visiting home probably do so during the religious Dashain holiday. Further probes were not made in this regard.

**Table 5.10: Frequency of Home Visits in the Last Year**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
One visit	86	44.8	56	39.2	142	42.3
Two visits	21	10.9	6	4.2	27	8.1
Three visits	9	4.7	2	1.4	11	3.3
Four visits	2	1.0		-	2	0.6
Five visits	2	1.0	2	1.4	4	1.2
12 visits	0	-	1	0.6	1	0.3
No visit	72	37.6	76	53.2	148	44.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Almost one-fifth of DCL reported that they are not free to quit their present job, most (56.5 percent) because their parents would not allow it. About 20 percent said they would have to complete the year before making any decision to quit, and about 5 percent of the respondents were unable to leave the job because their parents have taken loans from the employer. This supports the concept that parents and their financial status are the main reason for these children to be employed as domestic labourers, and indicates that a large portion (at least 24 percent) of them are bound to the current job by some contractual agreement between their parents and employer.

**Table 5.11: Freedom to Leave the Job**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not free	31	15.1	42	24.4	73	19.3
<b>Reasons for not being free</b>						
Have to complete year	4	12.9	10	23.8	14	19.2
Loan taken from parents	1	3.2	3	7.1	4	5.3
Lack of alternative job	4	12.9	3	7.1	7	9.4
Parents disagree	16	51.6	25	59.5	41	56.5
Other	1	3.2		-	1	1.4
No response	5	16.2	1	2.5	6	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Although it was found that a majority of DCL work for the same employer for most of the duration of their employment, one-fourth of respondents had worked with other employers previously. As this study did not allow further investigation into the paths followed by DCL who leave their current employer, the 94 respondents who reported having left a previous employer for the current position constitute the only data on where DCL may go after a specific placement, and why (Table 5.12).

**Table 5.12: Number of Previous Places of Employment**

Place	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None	159	77.1	125	72.7	284	75.3
One	29	14.1	36	20.9	65	17.2
Two	15	7.3	8	4.7	23	6.9
Three	2	1.0	3	1.7	5	1.3
Four or more	1	0.5		-	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>100.0</b>

For almost half of the respondents who have worked with a different employer previously, 'harassment' was quoted as one of the important reasons to quit that former placement. This is especially true among girls, over 55 percent of whom left employment due to harassment, compared to 42.5 percent among boys. Though the term could not be further qualified among respondents, many key informants raised the issue of sexual abuse of girl domestic workers.

For nearly 15 percent of the participants, low remuneration was the reason they quit their previous job, and about 13 percent left because they saw no prospect for schooling opportunities. Significantly, a large proportion of boys (17 percent) report the lack of

schooling to be an issue, supporting the idea that some parents hope employment as a DCL will provide opportunity for their children to have access to better schooling. Almost one-fourth of respondents reported having been fired from their previous position, though reasons were not clear.

**Table 5.13: Reasons for Leaving Previous Work Place**

Reasons	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low Remuneration	9	19.2	5	10.6	14	14.9
Harassment	20	42.5	26	55.3	46	48.9
No Schooling	8	17.0	4	8.5	12	12.8
Poor Food	1	2.1	2	4.3	3	3.2
Fired by Employer	9	19.2	10	21.3	19	20.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Box 4: Jyoti Wants to Work in an Office**

Jyoti Khanal, originally from Dhading, came to Kathmandu with her mother and four sisters after her father deserted the family. Her mother owns a small vegetable shop, and Jyoti works as a domestic servant. With the support of an NGO (CWIN), which pays for education materials and fees, Jyoti has been able to pursue her schooling. Her mother provides her school dress, and her employer provides food and lodging. In exchange, Jyoti has to perform all household and kitchen chores in the morning and evening. She seldom has time to do homework, yet she is confident that she will pass SLC in two years, and plans to look for a job in a government office. She feels this will prevent her sisters from having to face her situation, but her mother may not be able to wait until Jyoti accomplishes that goal before she has her sisters employed as domestic workers.

**5.4 DCL Perceptions of their Occupation**

At the end of the questionnaire interviews, each participant was asked whether they felt they could encourage another child to work as a DCL. More than one-third of them said they would not and two-thirds said they would. Among five reasons why they believed other children might not enjoy this work, nearly 68 percent said feeling lonely was a main detriment to their occupation. This suggests that the immobility and confinement of the DCL to the employer’s household is a serious issue.

About half of the respondents criticised the high workload, while one-third blamed bad treatment. In fact, during the interviews, just a few of the respondents reported having been subject to extreme and violent forms of abuse. This may, of course, be due to the fact that it can be very difficult for children to touch upon such issues in the course of an interview, and that the researchers generally avoided pressing hard for answers concerning such sensitive issues.

A much larger proportion of girls than boys reported 'feeling lonely' and 'high work load' as their main reasons for not recommending the occupation to other children. The

preponderance of 'high work load' as a detriment to the occupation further indicates that, contrary to the belief of the employers who often view themselves as benefactors, the respondents feel their welfare matters less to the employer than the contributions they make to the household.

None of the respondents attributed physical risks (i.e. cuts and burns) as a major reason for not recommending the employment to other children.

**Table 5.14: Reasons for Not Recommending DCL Occupation**

	Boy		Girl		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Feeling Lonely	36	62.1	58	71.6	94	67.6
Bad treatment	24	41.2	24	29.6	48	34.5
Bad food	3	5.1	1	1.2	4	2.9
High work load	27	46.2	49	60.5	76	54.7
Others	5	8.6	7	8.6	12	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>		<b>139</b>		<b>234</b>	

*Note: Several respondents gave more than one reason for not recommending the work to other children.*

The limitations of the household survey made it impossible to probe further into the psychological impact of DCL employment. For example, it is unclear whether children who enter DCL with hopes of attaining a better life for themselves actually achieve it. Such detail requires longer periods of time, yet the information gathered suggests that children are greatly affected by various forms of emotional deprivation and psychological violence, which are usually considered by society to be less severe or less obvious, and even socially acceptable.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Hiring a live-in person to undertake domestic household chores is an integral part of South-Asian tradition. More often than not, this is in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, and/or regular salary. The information gathered in this Rapid Assessment further suggests that sending children for DCL employment has become a normal and valued poverty-coping and income-generating strategy for poor rural households of Nepal.

Several key informants pointed out that the responsibilities of DCL are often ill defined, which was further supported by individual interviews. In fact, domestic child labourers perform the work of adults, yet with little or no pay, leisure time, or advantages. Working hours are long and remuneration not clearly outlined. Most employers have total control over the domestic child labourers' lives, and fail to provide them with opportunities to improve their lifestyle through schooling or other privileges.

The majority of DCL are the eldest in a poor rural family and work to help their parents support their household. An almost equal number of boys and girls are employed as domestic labourers, but girls are usually hired younger than boys, and are paid less. Most have completed their primary level of education, and come from Brahmin, Tharu or Janajati ethnic groups.

Based on the characteristics of the work and on, the study supports the notion that the occupation can be considered one of the worst forms of child labour.

### 6.1 Domestic Child Labour as a Worst Form of Child Labour

Although there is a general belief that domestic labour provides disadvantaged children with a relatively safe, comfortable option out of poverty or other forms of child labour, the case-by-case investigation of the working conditions of domestic child labourers point to this occupation as one of the worst forms of child labour. Specifically, based on the study of Kathmandu DCL, 53 percent do not receive any pay, 47 percent work excessive hours, and 79 percent work at night.

By cross-referencing the survey data and the factors described in section 1.2, the following points can be emphasised in categorising domestic child labour as one of the worst forms of child labour:

- (i) About 10 in every 100 DCL are probably bonded. Parents have incurred debt from the employer and the children are not free to leave the employer until the debt is paid back.
- (ii) A majority (53 percent) of DCL work without pay, although many are instead given the opportunity to go to school, which from the viewpoint of the employer justifies the lack of wages.
- (iii) 47 percent of DCL work excessive hours, over 16 hours in the case of school goers and 14 hours for non-school goers.<sup>5</sup>
- (iv) 79 of every 100 DCL work until or beyond nine at night, meaning the majority work at night.

---

<sup>5</sup> This difference is attributed to the fact that school going DCL are still required to complete domestic tasks, thus their labour begins earlier in the morning and ends later at night. It is likely that children calculated their working hours from the time they wake up until the time they go to sleep.

- (v) Seven percent of DCL are employed before the age of 10.

**Table 6.1: Incidence of Worst Form Factors in Domestic Child Labour**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1. Bonded/ Indebtedness	17	24	41	10.7
2. Work without pay	119	80	199	52.7
3. Work excessive hours	88	88	176	46.6
4. Work at night	170	128	298	78.8
5. Work at a very young age (10 yrs or below)	10	17	27	7.1

Only 11 out of the 378 DCL interviewed did not fall into any of these categories, which entails that 97 percent of DCL are working under the worst conditions.

However, any investigation of child labour in general and of DCL in particular must also take into account the contextual realities and the background of the children before making sweeping statements on the work and lives of the respondents. Thus, whereas the DCL who works under conditions of debt bondage or at a very early age can clearly be said to be in the worst forms of child labour, it is likely that at least some of the children who work extensive hours without pay would not hope for better or worse working conditions if they had remained with their families in the poor rural areas of Nepal.

Still, this study also indicates how the lack of mobility, isolation and unreasonable confinement to the employer's premises, albeit very difficult to quantify or qualify, constitute a problem of large proportions. An affront to the principles of the CRC and ILO Convention No. 182, the plight of the 55,000 DCL in the urban areas of Nepal is a problem that demands immediate attention.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Considering the results of the study, two options can be presented to eliminate the worst forms of domestic child labour.

1. First, to ban the practice of employing children for domestic labour completely. However, this option is not only culturally difficult to enforce, it may be detrimental to children from poor families who may end up in other, worst forms of child labour.
2. Second, to improve the situation for domestic child labourers, which would be more viable in keeping with the socio-economic conditions in Nepal.

Since almost half of the population of Nepal lives below the poverty line, children of such households have to contribute to supporting the family or look for better opportunities and are therefore pushed into various forms of labour. At the same time, unequal growth patterns have caused rapid urban expansion and growth of the working middle class. Members of this quickly enlarging affluent class are reliant on domestic child labourers to undertake their household activities. Therefore, in order to eliminate the worst forms of domestic child labour, steps must be taken to discourage influx of recruitment and to humanise the working conditions for existing domestic child labourers.

### ***Policy-making***

Poverty alleviation is key in discouraging the perpetuation of child labour over time. Two key areas need emphasis: First, employment opportunities for rural (and urban poor) populations need to be expanded through distributive economic development policies. Second, a minimum wage policy should be established for the labour force and reinforced through effective implementation and monitoring. As the current high demand for domestic child labour might be partly encouraged by low wages, regulation of wage rates and working conditions may reduce the demand.

National-level, distributive economic policies are essential to poverty alleviation and to control today's urban-centred growth patterns. Without the expansion of productivity and activities in rural sectors, only a limited portion of the population will continue to have exclusive access to the fruits of development, at the cost of an on-going impoverishment of the rural mass.

### ***Legal Framework***

Structures for the enforcement of legal aspects of children's rights and policies should be developed. Attaching punitive measures to the use of child labour should discourage use of child labour, especially in the domestic sector. As the child labour problem cannot be solved overnight given the socio-economic reality of Nepal, relevant regulatory provisions should be brought into force through legal instruments. For example, working conditions, work hours and pay should be regulated, and a mechanism to enforce these should be put in place. The local governments, including municipalities and VDCs, should be entrusted with the task of regulating the use of child labour with adequate administrative and judicial support.

### ***Programmes***

A two-tiered programme, aimed at the vulnerable sections of rural society that are likely to instigate child labour, is recommended in helping reduce the incidence of domestic child labour and improving the working conditions of these children. First, these economically disadvantaged groups should be approached with income-enhancing programmes, which would allow them to become less reliant on the added income of their working children. Second, an advocacy programme should be launched to educate parents about working conditions. Educating the parents about the implications of domestic child labour, could help dislodge the belief that such an occupation may provide better opportunities or exposure. As a result, it will discourage the inclination to send their children to work in the cities.

Additionally, massive advocacy campaigns and activities to humanise child labour can raise the awareness of employers about children's rights and their responsibilities as employers, as well as the legal provisions against the exploitation of children in any form. This can be achieved locally through VDCs and municipalities.

On a more practical level, encouraging the use of modern convenient equipment in performing domestic chores through promotion and reduced tariff rates may help alleviate both the workload and harshness of domestic labour.

### 6.2.1 Specific Recommendations

Some specific recommendations to humanise the domestic child labour occupation in Kathmandu can be made:

**Building capacity** of local authorities to monitoring child labour.

- A system should be created to keep records of DCL at the municipality's ward offices. The record system should include vital statistics and addresses of DCL and their employer, schooling level, and wage status of the domestic worker.
- Ward offices should be encouraged and supported in maintaining information on child labour use and run a drop-in centre for working children, where services such as health check-ups, counselling and non-formal education would be provided. Ward officers would be responsible in arranging leisure time for DCL with their employers so they can use the drop-in centre.
- Community monitoring should back up the registration of child domestics.

**Support services** such as counseling, health care and hotlines can be promoted.

- Social support should be obtained in pressuring wards to provide schooling opportunities to DCL.
- Promote the unionization of adult domestic workers to protect child workers.

**Innovative information campaigns** should be mounted to educate the population about children's rights and Nepal's legal provisions on child labour.

- Child-to-child advocacy can be an important tool. Sensitising the children of DCL employers can encourage good practices within households, and a greater recognition of child labour issues.
- Public awareness campaigns should target employers and mobilize communities against exploitative child labour.
- Good practices by employers should be promoted, including the practice of foster parents and sponsorships for domestic child labourers.
- A code of conduct for employers and civil servants should be drafted

**Further research:** The results of this study cannot be generalised to all urban centres in Nepal due to the special urban character of Kathmandu. Research, especially on the risks of physical and sexual abuse as well as on the nature of isolation and confinement to employer's premises is needed.

- Studies should be conducted in urban centres with different characteristics to help understand overall attributes and incidence of domestic child labour in urban Nepal.
- As domestic child labour is not confined to urban areas, a study of the phenomenon in rural areas should also be warranted.
- Research should focus on the attitudes and perceptions of parents and employers towards domestic child labour. A better understanding of the aspirations and goals of DCL may inspire further solutions in humanising the occupation and providing these children with appropriate support.
- Follow-up studies should determine what happens to children, particularly girls, when they are dismissed from their domestic labour occupation and return to their villages.

## References

- CWCD, 1998. Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Nepal. A Report submitted to National Planning Commission, Centre for Women/Children and Community Development, Kathmandu.
- INSEC, 1996. Survey Report on Prevention of Migration of Children for the Purpose of Employment: Phase I Report: Identification of Migrant Children in Kathmandu. Report prepared for IPEC/ILO-Nepal; Informal Sector Service Centre, Kathmandu.
- Luitel, S., 2000. Socio-economic Conditions of the Child Domestic Workers: A Case Study of Pokhara Sub-Metropolis Ward No. 3. A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.
- Nepal District Profile, 1999.
- Pradhan, G., 1995. Urban Domestic Child Labour in Nepal. Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Group (CWIN), Kathmandu.
- Sharma, S., 1999. Child Bonded Labour: Nepal. Draft paper for discussion in Asian Regional Meeting on the worst forms of child labour, Phuket, Thailand (Sept. 8-10, 1999). ILO, East Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team, Bangkok.
- Sharma, S., Thakurathi, M. and Sah, B.N., 1999. Domestic Child Labour in Urban Nepal: Case of Pokhara, Butwal, and Siddharthanagar Municipalities. Report prepared for UNICEF, Nepal by National Labour Academy-Nepal, Kathmandu.
- UNICEF (Undated). Situation Analysis of Child Labour in Nepal: A Synopsis. Kathmandu.
- UNICEF (undated). Child Domestic Work, The Innocenti Digest, International Child Development Centre, Florence, Italy.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Estimated Urban Domestic Child Labour (14 yrs or below) in Nepal

Municipality	Total HHs*	Incidence Parameter (% of HH with DCL)	Estimated DCL
<b><u>1 Pokhara</u></b>	<b><u>24,680</u></b>	<b><u>5.5</u></b>	<b><u>1,357</u></b>
2 Ilam	5,221	5.5	287
3 Dhankutta	8,569	5.5	471
4 Khandbari	4,020	5.5	221
5 Triyuga	9,266	5.5	510
6 Kamalamai	5,131	5.5	282
7 Bhimeshwor	4,528	5.5	249
8 Kirtipur	7,937	5.5	437
9 Bhaktapur	9,737	5.5	536
10 Madhyapur Thimi	5,450	5.5	300
11 Banepa	2,038	5.5	112
12 Dhulikhel	1,678	5.5	92
13 Panauti	3,897	5.5	214
14 Bidur	4,351	5.5	239
15 Ramgram	3,940	5.5	217
16 Prithibi Narayan	4,384	5.5	241
17 Byas	4,094	5.5	225
18 Putalibazar	5,446	5.5	300
19 Walling	3,319	5.5	183
20 Lekhnath	7,501	5.5	413
21 Baglung	3,103	5.5	171
22 Tansen	2,889	5.5	159
23 Narayan	3,160	5.5	174
24 Dipayal	2,478	5.5	136
25 Amargadi	3,527	5.5	194
26 Dashrathchandra	3,695	5.5	203
<b><u>27 Butwal</u></b>	<b><u>11,504</u></b>	<b><u>5.6</u></b>	<b><u>644</u></b>
28 Dharan	15,438	5.6	865
29 Hetauda	12,628	5.6	707
<b><u>30 Siddharthanagar</u></b>	<b><u>8,595</u></b>	<b><u>8.1</u></b>	<b><u>696</u></b>
31 Bhadrapur	3,320	8.1	269
32 Damak	8,873	8.1	719
33 Mechinagar	8,215	8.1	665
34 Biratnagar	28,302	8.1	2,292
35 Inaruwa	4,161	8.1	337
36 Itahari	6,317	8.1	512
37 Rajbiraj	5,062	8.1	410
38 Lahan	4,794	8.1	388
39 Siraha	5,032	8.1	408

**Annex 1 (contd.) : Estimated Urban Domestic Child Labour (14 yrs or below) in Nepal**

Municipality	Total HHs*	Incidence Parameter (% of HH with DCL)	Estimated DCL
40 Janakpur	11,397	8.1	923
41 Jaleswor	3,561	8.1	288
42 Malangwa	2,664	8.1	216
43 Gaur	1,764	8.1	143
44 Kalaiya	3,562	8.1	289
45 Birgunj	13,532	8.1	1,096
46 Bharatpur	13,573	8.1	1,099
47 Ratnanagar	5,614	8.1	455
48 Taulihawa	3,872	8.1	314
49 Tulsipur	3,101	8.1	251
50 Tribhuvan Nagar	3,691	8.1	299
51 Nepalgunj	10,415	8.1	844
52 Guleriya	6,566	8.1	532
53 Birendra Nagar	5,934	8.1	481
54 Dhangadi	10,231	8.1	829
55 Tikapur	5,376	8.1	435
56 Mahendranagar	13,227	8.1	1,071
			-
<b><u>57 Kathmandu</u></b>	<b><u>117,375</u></b>	<b><u>11.34</u></b>	<b><u>13,310</u></b>
58 Lalitpur	26,137	11.34	2,964
<b>All Urban</b>	<b>527,872</b>		<b>42,674</b>

\* Number of households are projection for 1998 and is reported in Nepal District Profile 1999.

## **Annex II: Questionnaires and Discussion Guidelines**

### **National Labour Academy–Nepal/ILO–Nepal**

#### **Domestic Child Labours as the Worst form of Child Labour in Nepal, 2000-2001**

##### **A Rapid Assessment**

##### **Individual Questionnaire For Domestic Child Labours Aged Under 18 years**

0	Serial No.	
<b>SN</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Code</b>
1	Ward No	
2	Sub-ward/Tole	
3	Name of the Interviewer	
4	Date of Interview	

1.2 I. Origin, Family Description and Reasons for Work

QN	Questions	Response Category & Code
01	How old are you ?	
02	What is your Caste	
03	Sex of the child.	<b>Boy</b> ..... Girl ..... 2
04	Duration of Service in Current Place.	<b>Year</b> ..... <b>Month</b> .....
05	Origin (Home Address)	District .....
06	<b>What you used to do prior to joining current job ?</b>	<b>Attending school</b> ..... Own farm/household work..... 2 Wage work..... 3 Other (state)..... 4
07	Why did you come here ?	<b>Friend's advice</b> ..... Own opinion..... 2 Parents advice..... 3 Domestic conflict..... 4 Step mother/father ..... 5 Others (state)..... 6
08	With whom did you come to join ?	<b>Parents</b> ..... Relatives ..... 2 Friends ..... 3 Own ..... 4 Broker ..... 5 Others (state)..... 6
09	In what age did you start workers as domestic servant (Yrs.)	<b>5 to 7</b> ..... 8 to 9..... 2 10 to 11 ..... 3 12 to 14 ..... 4 15 and above ..... 5
10	Is it your first place of work ?	<b>Yes</b> ..... No ..... 2
(a)	If not, which place	<b>Second</b> ..... Third ..... 2 Forth ..... 3 Fifth or above ..... 4
(b)	Why you change your working place ?	<b>Low remuneration</b> ..... Punishment/harassment..... 2 Not allow to school..... 3 Insufficient food ..... 4 Sacked by master..... 5 Other (specify)..... 6
11	Do your parents know you where about ?	<b>Yes</b> ..... No ..... 2
12	Are your parent alive ?	<b>Father dead</b> ..... Father alive..... 2 Mother dead ..... 3 Mother alive ..... 4 Father deserted ..... 5 Mother deserted..... 6
13	Family member (exclude married sisters)	<b>Number</b> .....
14	Which child are you (inorder) ?	<b>First</b> ..... Second ..... 2 Third ..... 3 Fourth ..... 4 Fifth ..... 5

		Others (specify).....	6
--	--	-----------------------	---

QN	Questions	Response Category & Code
15	Are there any member of your family below 18 years, working as a wage earners or domestic labours ?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
	If yes, how many ?	Number .....
16	Two main sources of income of your family	<b>Farming</b> ..... Service ..... 2 Trade..... 3 Wage work..... 4 Other (specify)..... 5
17	Family has own home	<b>Yes</b> ..... No..... 2
18	Family has farm land	<b>Yes</b> ..... No..... 2
19	If has land ?	<b>Bigha/Ropani</b> ..... Katha/Aana .....
20	Are your parents indebted ?	<b>Yes</b> ..... No ..... 2 Do not know..... 3
21	If yes, did they borrow loan from your masters house ?	<b>Yes</b> ..... No..... 2 Do not know..... 3
	If yes, how many Rs.	<b>Rs</b> ..... Do not know

## II.

## Type of Work and Work Environment

22	Type of main work you do here	<b>Kitchen work</b> ..... Dish washing..... 2 Child minding..... 3 Cloths washing..... 4 House cleaning ..... 5 Other (specify)..... 6
23	What is your second priority job ?	<b>Kitchen work</b> ..... Dish washing..... 2 Child minding..... 3 Cloths washing..... 4 House cleaning ..... 5 Other (specify)..... 6
24	Time you start in morning	<b>Time</b> .....
25	Time you finish in the evening	<b>Time</b> .....
26	Do you have any hurt ?	<b>Yes</b> ..... No..... 2
	If Yes,	<b>Cut</b> ..... Burn ..... 2 Fracture..... 3 Others (specify)..... 4
27	Quality of your food	<b>Better than home</b> ..... As home ..... 2 Not good as home..... 3 Other (specify)..... 4
28	Is there any differences between your and your master's food	<b>Yes</b> ..... No..... 2
	If yes, what's the differences	<b>Different food</b> ..... Remaining/Wastage food..... 2 Others (specify)..... 3
29	quality of your bed	<b>Better than home</b> ..... As home ..... 2 Not good as home..... 3

		<b>Other (specify) .....</b>
--	--	------------------------------

QN	Questions	Response Category & Code
30	Did you bought any of these during last three months ?	<b>Cloth</b> ..... Slipper/shoes ..... 2 Soap ..... 3 Tooth Brush/paste..... 4 Food items..... 5 Others (specify)..... 6
31	How much salary and others benefits you have been promised ?	<b>Per months Rs</b> ..... Annual Rs ..... Only fooding and clothing ..... 1 Fooding, clothing, schooling facility . 2 Service provide later on ..... 3 Do not know..... 4
32	Who collects your salary?	<b>Self</b> ..... Parents ..... 2 Others (specify)..... 3
33	Are you satisfied with workload and pay?	<b>Work</b> Yes..... 1 No..... 2 Do not know..... 3 <b>Salary</b> Yes..... 1 No ..... 2 Do not know..... 3
34	What type of work and salary will make you happy?	<b>Work</b> Ok..... 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ of present load ..... 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ of present load ..... 3 do no want to continue work ..... 4 <b>Salary</b> Ok..... 1 50% increment..... 2 100% increment..... 3
35	Have your parents taken loan after you began work?	<b>Yes</b> ..... No ..... 2 Do not know..... 3
	If yes, how much?	<b>Rs</b> ..... Do not know

### III. Education, Health and Personal Matters

36	Are you literate?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
37	Up to which grade have you study?	
38	Do you go to school, now?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
39	If Yes, which grade you studying?	Class .....
40	Have you enough educational materials?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
41	Which is your home work time?	Morning ..... 1 Day time..... 2 Night..... 3 No time for home work ..... 4
42	If you are not admission to school, master promised you to admit at school?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
43	Have you been dropped out from school	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
	If yes, reasons for dropping out	Master don't pay fee..... 1 Over work load in home..... 2

		Discrimination in school ..... 3
		Others (specify) ..... 4

QN	Questions	Response Category & Code
44	Are you better-off here than home?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
	If yes, what are reasons?	Education ..... 1 Food..... 2 Clothing ..... 3 Urban expose..... 4 Companion..... 5 Others (specify)..... 6
45	Have you fallen sick here?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
46	If Yes, type of sickness?	Caught and cold..... 1 Fever/Measles ..... 2 Chest pain/respiratory problem ..... 3 Headache..... 4 Water borne disease..... 5 Back pain ..... 6 Others (specify)..... 7
47	Who pays for medical expenses?	Self ..... 1 Master..... 2 Others (specify)..... 3
48	Do you have to work when you are sick?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2

**IV.**

**Penalty**

49	Have you been penalized?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
50	Can you quit job?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
	If not, why?	Complete the year..... 1 Parents/Relative have taken debt..... 2 Don't get better than this job ..... 3 Parents don't allow..... 4 Others (specify)..... 5
51	How you spend your time at leisure time?	Watch TV..... 1 Play..... 2 Study..... 3 Other (specify)..... 4
52	Allowed to visit home	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
53	How many times have you visited in your home last year?	times .....
54	If not allowed how many years you had not been visited home?	Year .....
55	Would you bring somebody like yours to work as servant?	Yes..... 1 No..... 2
55.1	If Yes, (mark two reasons √ )	Better than in village..... 1 Good food ..... 2 Good clothing..... 3 Schooling ..... 4 Others (specify)..... 5
55.2	If not (mark two reasons √ )	Feel Isolated ..... 1 Bad treatment ..... 2 Bad fooding..... 3 work load ..... 4 Other (specify)..... 5

**National Labour Academy-Nepal/ILO-Nepal  
Participatory discussion with the children**

- Why do you come to work in your master house?
- Who brought you to the master house?
- What sorts of work do you usually performed? Please list two major form of your works.
- What is your rate and pattern of remuneration ? Who usually collect your remuneration Please list two major type of remuneration.

Pattern of remuneration	Rate		Collectors
	Boys	Girls	

- How do you assess your master and his family support to you and your family? Are you happy with him or not? Please discuss.
- Can you recall any good/bad story in relationships between you and your master?
- Have you received any opportunities from master house or others to develop your career? If yes, what are they?
- Have those opportunities has any effect on your life? If yes, how ?
- If you got opportunity to change yourselves, what you like to be?
- What will make you happier if any one want to help you?

**National Labour Academy-Nepal/ILO-Nepal  
Checklist for Focus Group Discussion**

- How do you define a domestic child labour?
- How many domestic child labours (boy/girl) are there in your sub ward ?
- What are the positive and motivational features of keeping the domestic child labour?
- Do you believe that keeping of the domestic labour has effect on the nation? Please discuss.
- What sort of works does domestic child labour usually performed? Please list two major form of his/her work.
- What is the rate and pattern of remuneration of domestic child labour? Please list two major types of remuneration.

Pattern of remuneration	Rate	
	Boys	Girls

- Do you recall any good/bad story in relationships between the domestic child labour and his owner?
- Do you recall any good/bad story in relationships between the domestic child labour family and his owner?
- How do you assess the education and health situation of the domestic child labour in your sub-ward? What are the reasons for it?
- Being a domestic labour, has he/she got any opportunities in the sub-ward e.g. education, training, facilities etc?
- What was the impact of those opportunities in his/her life? Can you recall any success and failure story of person due to participation of those programmes?
- In your opinion, are the programmes implemented for the elimination of domestic labour is effective? If yes, please give reasons?
- If no, what are their weaknesses?

- What sort of programmes must be designed to reduce the problems of domestic child labour?

**National Labour Academy-Nepal/ILO-Nepal  
Door to Door Survey Questionnaire**

Ward No:

Sub-ward No:

Settlement/Tole:

1. Name of Household Head :.....
2. Caste :.....
3. Occupation of household head :.....
4. Please give the details of members in your house, who were using the same kitchen.

Name	Age	Sex	Education (Years of schooling)	Relationship with HH Head

5. Give the following details about the domestic servants you have employed.

Name	Caste	Place of origin (District)	Live in your home 1 Yes, 2 No	Attend school or not 1 Yes, 2 No
1.				
2.				
3.				