

The Lives of Child in the Street of Nepal

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Research Area: Nepal
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Key words: Nepal, street children, NGO, development, practice

Background and objectives

This study aims to introduce the lives of street children in Kathmandu, Nepal through data from my ethnographical field survey.

Street children have been of much concern for Nepali urban society since the 1990's. It is said that there are 5,000 children who stay in the street of Kathmandu. According to annual report of NGO CWIN, which works for child in Nepal, 500 children come to street in Kathmandu every year while the number of NGOs working for child is increasing.

Traditional understandings of these street children focus on various risks associated with their lives on the street, and are often related to a larger debate on child labor. Understanding street children as exposed to risk leads naturally to calls for expansion of interventions aimed at reducing the risk. In this perspective, street children appear essentially as poor victims who need to be rescued, suitably socialized, and properly educated. The main focus of previous with this perspective has been "How is it possible to reduce the risk or rescue them?"; or "What is the method to socialize them into mainstream society?" Also, arguments in these studies are often made in the larger context of advocacy for children's rights.

The understanding described above reflects important part of the reality surrounding street children and is legitimate in its own terms. But its framework almost inevitably lead to low valuation of competence that children already possess to cope with their own trouble. In other words, the framework tends to reproduce and perpetuate images of street children that are biased.

This study seeks an alternative understanding to street children through ethnographic data showing how the children cope with their trouble in the street and how they manage their life by utilizing a variety of networks. Networks between street children and other groups like rag-buyers, street gangs, and their parents, show how closely they are tied to wider networks. Based on these research concerns and findings, in I present plural occupations and strategies for survival of children in the street as constitutive practices of urban society in contemporary Nepal.

Pictures

Figure.1 Street in Kathmandu



Picture 2 Children’s play in street



Picture3. Reading class of NGO for street children



Figure 4 Help for stalled small bus

