



A Rapid Assessment of Children Working as Porters

Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN)
Keshab Adhikari
Govind Subedi

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Preface

Child labor in Nepal is a serious concern. Around 40% or 3,140,000 of the 7,700,000 children aged between 5 to 17 years are engaged in work. Of this 3,140,000, about half or 1,600,000 child laborers are in exploitive working conditions; and about 621,000 are in hazardous work. Children are found working in carpet and entertainment industries, mining, *beedi* making, portering, brick production, embroidery (*zari*), car/motorcycle repair workshops, domestic work, cross border smuggling and roadside hawking. Each sector has its own array of push/pull factors influencing entry and exit of children and which determine the nature and extent of exploitive work children are exposed to.

To get an update of the status of children working in some of these sectors, World Education's *Naya Bato Naya Paila* project funded by United States Department of Labor commissioned rapid assessments in four sectors - brick kilns, domestic service, mining and portering having high incidence of child labor. Rapid assessments in two additional sectors - urban transport and teashops and restaurants - were conducted in collaboration with, and financial contribution from, Plan Nepal. The Ministry of Labor and Employment/MoL&E (formerly Ministry of Labor and Transport Management/MoLTM) provided advisory inputs. The Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, UNICEF and ILO have been part of this research as members of the Working Committee, along with Plan Nepal and MoL&E.

The Rapid Assessments, conducted in 2011/2012, have used the methodology popularized by ILO in the early 2000s, have highlighted the factors contributing to children's entry along with the unique dynamics and emerging trends associated with each sector. Findings from these rapid assessments will be of use to policy makers in designing and implementing future actions to eliminate child labor. The research undertaken will I believe, also add to the literature and enhance the understanding on child labor, while encouraging deeper debate on this issue and will aid in the goal of eliminating child labor in the country.



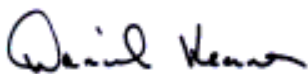
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Foreword

Child labour in general and its worst forms in particular are a global and a national problem. According to the quadrennial Global Report on Child Labor released by the International Labour Organisation in 2010, the picture is bleak: despite the fact that the number of child labourers declined slightly (from 222 million to 215 million over a period of five years), the pace of reduction has tapered off and 115 million children are still exposed to hazardous work worldwide. In Nepal the picture is similar: there has been a reduction overall, but it is uneven across sectors and an estimated 1.6 million children aged 5-17 years are still engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Approx. 20% (more than 600,000) are engaged in hazardous work that interferes with their education or is harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

In 2011 rapid assessments were conducted in six sectors of child labour—urban transport, mining, tea shops and small restaurants, portering, domestic service, and brick kilns—in order to explore the extent and nature of child labour in Nepal. The study looked at a number of things, including the prevalence of child labour in the sample districts; the emerging patterns of demand and supply; the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of child labourers; the push and pull factors of migration affecting children's entry into the sector; the work histories, working conditions and hours of children; the relation between work and school and education; the nature and extent of the hazardous and unhealthy working conditions, children's desire for rehabilitation and awareness about child rights; and possible programme interventions to improve existing conditions. I hope the findings, recommendations and data generated from these rapid assessments will be of use to policymakers and organizations working on child rights in their efforts to design and implement plans, policies and strategies for addressing child labor issues in Nepal.

On behalf of Plan Nepal, I would like to thank the Ministry of Labor and Employment for providing the technical guidance needed to make the assessments happen. Acknowledgement is also due to New ERA, the National Labor Academy and Child Workers In Nepal who undertook the six studies and prepared the associated reports. Our gratitude extends to all those members of the working committee, United Nations Children's Fund, International Labour Organisation, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development for providing their invaluable feedback and thereby helped finalise the report. Special thanks must go to World Education for coordinating the entire process of assessment. Plan Nepal is proud to be part of the team which undertook the assessments.



Donal Keane
Country Director
Plan Nepal

Acknowledgements

This research report is based on data collected by CWIN's research team during its rapid assessment of child porters in different districts in different development regions of the country. The overall objective of the assessment was to identify the extent to which children under 18 years of age are involved in portering at the national and sub-regional levels and to assess the underlying socio-economic, cultural, and family contexts responsible for sending children to work as porters.

The study team is grateful to World Education for commissioning this study. We are also grateful to the child porters who participated with great enthusiasm in the structured interviews, group discussions, and informal conversations as well as to the adult porters, school teachers, local communities, local political leaders, and social workers who gave us their time and input. We also express our gratitude to the district child welfare boards of the districts where the surveys were administered, concerned child right organizations, and other stakeholders for helping us to conduct the field operations successfully. Without their support and cooperation, this study would not have been a success.

We appreciate the efforts of the field investigators for making the field operations a success despite the adverse conditions. We appreciate in particular their courage and their understanding of the seriousness of this study. Data entry operators also deserve special thanks for their perseverance and timely outputs.

We are highly indebted to Mr. Chij K. Shrestha, Project Director of World Education, and to the World Education Naya Bato Naya Paila team members Ms. Dyuti Baral, Mr. Harihar Nath Regmi, Mr. Gopal Tamang, and Mr. Shankar Bimali for their unflagging support and encouragement.

Last, but not least, we would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude to World Education as an institution for entrusting the CWIN team with undertaking the assessment.

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Acronyms

CWIN	:	Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
GI	:	Galvanized Iron
GoN	:	Government of Nepal
ILO	:	International Labor Organization
INGO	:	International non-governmental organization
IPEC	:	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor
KII	:	Key Informant Interview
NGO	:	Non-governmental organization
UNCRC	:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children Fund

Glossary

<i>alu</i>	:	Potato
<i>bhaat</i>	:	Steamed rice consumed with <i>dal</i> and <i>tarkaari</i>
<i>dal</i>	:	A thin lentil soup consumed with rice
<i>chana</i>	:	Boiled chickpeas cooked with spices
<i>chiura</i>	:	Beaten rice (dehusked rice flattened into flat, dry, light flakes)
<i>dhakar</i>	:	A bamboo basket flat on one side used for carrying goods on the back secured by a <i>namlo</i> and, on long trips, <i>khakan</i> as well
<i>dharni</i>	:	A unit of volume weighing approximately 2.5 kg
<i>dhindo</i>	:	A thick porridge of millet, maize, wheat, or buckwheat flour eaten in the hills and mountains
<i>doko</i>	:	A bamboo basket for carrying goods on one's back with a tumpline
<i>haat</i>	:	Weekly market
<i>janajatis</i>	:	Indigenous ethnic groups
<i>jand</i>	:	Locally-made alcoholic beverage made from fermented food grains
<i>khakan</i>	:	Rucksack-like straps tied onto a <i>dhakar</i> to distribute the load
<i>khalasi</i>	:	Conductor on a bus or van or other vehicle
<i>mohi</i>	:	Buttermilk
<i>momo</i>	:	Steamed dumplings, often stuffed with buffalo meat
<i>namlo</i>	:	The tumpline used to carry a <i>dhakar</i>
<i>pathi</i>	:	A unit of volume weighing approximately 4 kg
<i>patuka</i>	:	A long length of cloth wrapped around the waist to prevent back pain
<i>raksi</i>	:	A local alcoholic beverage made from fermented food grains
<i>roti</i>	:	Unleavened bread made of wheat flour
<i>sahu</i>	:	Literally, boss or employer. Child porters used the term to refer to people, often shop owners, who engaged their services on a regular basis. They are distinct from "service users," who employ their services only on the odd occasion or even only once.
<i>tarkaari</i>	:	Vegetable, usually curried; eaten with <i>bhaat</i> or <i>roti</i>
<i>thulo manche</i>	:	Literally, a "big person"; someone of significance
<i>tokma</i>	:	A wooden stick with a curved top placed under a <i>dhakar</i> when long-distance porters in the eastern hills and mountains wish to rest standing up.

Executive Summary

Objectives and Methodology

The overall objective of conducting rapid assessments of the worst forms of child labor in general and portering by children in particular was to identify the number of children under 18 years of age involved in the sector at the national and sub-regional levels as well as to assess the underlying socio-economic, cultural, and family-level factors driving children into portering within the context of local- and national-level labor and product market dynamics

Quantitative approaches to estimate the populations involved in each type of portering and region and qualitative approaches to validate those estimates and to understand working conditions, how children get involved, and the socio-economic, cultural and psycho-social hazards associated with the occupation, were used in this study.

As the population of child porters is mobile, the ‘capture-recapture’ method was used to conduct structured interview with child porters. Formal Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as well as informal discussions (with child and adult porters, and other stakeholders), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and observation of activities as well as other approaches immediately arising in the field were adopted in line with the ILO/UNICEF “Guidelines for Rapid Assessment: Investigating Child Labor” (2005), a document which recommends using both quantitative and qualitative information as tools for in-depth research.

This rapid assessment of portering by children in Nepal is based on semi-structured interviews with child porters, key informant interviews (KIIs) with 14 school teachers; eight focus group discussions (FGDs) with child porters and six with adult porters; and consultations with officials of district line agencies, including representatives of Chief District and Women’s Development Offices and District Child Welfare Boards.

The field work was conducted for 35 days between April and May 2011. The combination of interviews, KIIs, FGDs with child and adult porters, informal conversations and interactions, and as well as an institutional survey, observation, and the mapping of survey sites contributed to the methodological robustness of the study. Kathmandu Valley, which comprises three districts, is taken as a separate geographical unit in the analysis.

Findings of the study

The greatest percentages of child porters are found in the eastern hill and mountain districts (Okhaldhunga, Udayapur, Khotang and Solukhumbu), followed by the mid-and far-western hill and mountain districts (Jajarkot, Kalikot and Baitadi).

Gender, Age, Ethnicity

493 child porters - 238 of who were under the age of 14, and 255 were aged 14 years and above but under 18 years, were interviewed during the rapid assessment. About 22% are girls and nearly 48% are of under the age of 14.

Only about 4% of all child porters; and 18% of the 45 child porters interviewed in Kathmandu Valley were found to have worked in another type of child labor before becoming a porter. In general, children enter into this sector at the age of 11 or 12. Children under the age of 14 on average started at the age of 11.5 while those 14 and above started before they turned 14.

Male and short-distance porters tend to start working at a slightly later age than girls and long-distance porters. The average length of involvement as a porter is 22 months, with the average for those under 14 just 16 months and for those over 14, 27 months. Long-distance porters, on average, have worked longer than short-distance porters.

The child porters interviewed belong to all social groups in Nepal but most (54%) are Janajatis (indigenous ethnic groups), followed by other caste groups (24%) and Dalits (22%). Almost 31% are long-distance porters.

Birth Registration

About 52% of the child porters surveyed had registered their births, but 30% did not know if their births had been registered and 17% said their births had not been registered. More female and short-distance child porters are registered than male and long-distance porters.

Land, Livelihood and Loans

All child porters come from families with poor living standards as measured by a number of wealth indicators. Two-thirds live in poor-quality housing¹ and although 88% own agricultural land², more than half (52%) do not grow enough food for more than six months or the year and 86% do not grow enough food for more than nine months. Almost all own some livestock.

The main occupation of the families of child porters is agriculture, followed by agricultural labor, and self-employment in the non-agricultural sector, which includes portering.

¹ Poor quality housing is defined as *kachhi*, or temporary, houses with one story, a thatched roof, fewer than three rooms and no separate kitchen.

² The average landholding size is 0.44 hectares.

Almost half (48%) of child porters reported that their families (often large joint families with an average family size of 8.3 persons) were in debt. Local money lenders are the main sources of loans.

Literacy Status

Almost all (94%) of the 493 interviewed child porters were literate, but 3% (16) never enrolled, and 20% had dropped out of school.

Girl porters were more likely to be literate and to be currently attending school. The reasons child porters gave for never enrolling in or dropping out of school included the need to help with household work, lack of interest in studying, their parents or guardians' not sending them, and the distance of the nearest school. Only 44% of the 113 currently out-of-school children said that they would like to go to school.

Over 95% of child porters said that there were schools in their villages, but in informal conversation, they said that they functioned poorly and that the physical facilities available were limited. Over 93% claimed that they would perform as well in school as children who did not work if they had the same opportunity to study.

Of the 477 child porters ever admitted to school, 47% had to repeat a grade at least once, with the younger group more likely than the older group to have been kept back (49% versus 46%). Similarly, long-distance porters and boys were more likely to have repeated a year.

Only about 38% of all 380 child porters who currently attend school (45% of those under 14 and 31% of those over 14) had received scholarships or other educational support during the last schooling year. The fact that they attend school irregularly may explain why so few child porters receive scholarships.³ Four-fifths of the child porters currently attending school (81% of 200 children under the age of 14 and 78% of 180 children aged 14 and above) said they worked as porters during school holidays and long vacations and when school was out of session after final exams.

Short-distance, male, currently out-of-school, or never schooled porters are cheated more than long-distance, female, and school-going porters. Cheating is more rampant within than outside the Kathmandu valley. The usual perpetrators are strangers, followed by service users and local drunkards. Some 13% child porters said they had been cheated or looted by employers (service users), adult porters and/or co-workers.

Over 90% of child porters feel bad that they are porters so young and over 95% aged 16 years and above said they would like to participate in a skill development or vocational training if it were offered.

Not one respondent said he or she wished to continue working as a porter in the future. Their most common future aspirations were to be school teachers (especially among girls), soldiers or police

³ Conversation with teachers and school communities revealed that school management committee gave scholarships and educational support to those who attended class mostly regularly. Since child porters tend to be irregular, they are often not among those selected.

officers, and doctors or nurses. Some 15% of boys and 8% of girls wanted to serve in the armed forces. Although 12% of boys wanted to be drivers, not a single girl expressed this wish.

Push and Pull Factors

A total of 55% of child porters, more among children under 14, females, and long-distance porters, reported that someone in their family, a parent, elder brother or sister, uncle or aunt or other member, also worked as a porter. The majority started to work as porters with their parents or other relatives.

Other factors pushing children into portering include family poverty, portering as a family occupation, the role of step-parents and parents' indifference, peer influences and pressure, failing school exams, and the lack of money to buy things desired. The chance to change occupation, earn pocket money, see new places, watch movies, buy things desired, work with other children of the same age, and live a life free of restrictions are pull factors.

Multiple marriages are common: about 15% of fathers and 4% of mothers had remarried.

Some children in newly developed markets like Ghurmi, Khurkot, work year-round because their schools and workplaces are in the same place. There is a trend of seeing short-distance child porters working in nascent transit points closer to home, even locally, rather than moving to big cities and market centres.

Overall, only one-third of all child porters work in a place other than where they were born, but in Kathmandu Valley all child porters are migrants, mostly from the eastern and central hill districts of Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Udayapur, Sindhuli, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok, Kavre, Nuwakot, Dhading and Makwanpur and a few from Rolpa and Bardiya districts in Mid-West.

Male child porters and those above the age of 14 are more likely to be migrants. Bhojpur, Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Sindhuli, Dolakha, and Sindhupalchok are child-exporting districts, and Kathmandu Valley only receives child porters. While Sunsari, Dhankuta, Udayapur, Ramechhap, Kaski, Surkhet and Kalikot districts do export child porters, they are net receiving districts.

Work and Pay

Child porters work in 40 of Nepal's 75 districts. Most (56%) were found in eastern districts though mid- and far-western districts were home to 19% and central and western districts to 16%⁴ Just 9% are found in Kathmandu Valley⁴.

One-third of child porters work on the basis of mutual negotiation while two-thirds work on the basis of a combination of the weight of the load and the distance of the trip. There are also some pre-determined rates for weight and distance; for oddly-shaped loads based on the type of load; for the long-distance porter, such loads include electric poles, GI sheets, materials for suspension bridges, and iron rods; while for the short-distance porter they include furniture and indivisible substances like quintal sacks.

⁴ Kathmandu Valley, which comprises three districts, is taken as a separate geographical unit in the analysis.

About 27% of the total child porters, 24% and 30% of those under and above the age of 14 respectively, said that their employers/service users had not paid them the agreed wage rate.

A short-distance porter on average completes each job within one hour and performs multiple jobs in a day, whereas long-distance porters spend on average 27 hours on a single job. The longer jobs lasted five days on average.

Average earnings per day⁵ are Rs 285, with about 54% earning less than Rs 250 a day, while 46% earn more. Boys, porters aged 14 and above, and long-distance porters earn more than their counterparts: Rs 244 versus Rs 323 for those under 14 and those 14 and above, Rs 208 versus Rs 306 for girls and boys, and Rs 270 versus Rs 319 for short- and long-distance porters. Some male porters aged 14 and above working in transit points like Ghurmi claimed to earn as much as Rs 2,000 a day if they got the chance to carry “development materials” such as electric poles, materials for building suspension bridges, or sacks of cement. Most child porters said that they worked during long school holidays and festivals, times when they could earn maximum wages.

The length of time they spend on each job demonstrates that long-distance porters suffer more health hazards than short-distance child porters except those who perform many jobs in a day.

The average weight carried by a child porter, irrespective of type, gender and age, was 37 kg. Child porters under the age of 14 averaged 30 kg while those 14 and above averaged 44 kg. Short-distance porters carried slightly heavier loads than long-distance porters. Most child porters, irrespective of sex and age, carried relatively light loads-less than their average body weight of 41 kg. Food, vegetables, bolts of cloth, readymade garments, and construction materials are the goods most commonly carried. Other items carried include stones and slate, wood and firewood, cartons of beer and other alcoholic beverages, odd-sized materials like galvanized iron (GI) sheets and pipes, and sometimes chemicals.

About 62% children reported that they had never fallen or experienced a life-threatening hazard while working, but about 18% had fallen and been injured and about 12% are always in fear of falling from foot trails on high cliffs. Another 8% said they had been cut by the GI sheets they carried, stuck en route due to flooding or landslides or back pain, hurt by stones falling from hillsides, or struck by motor vehicles. About 27% of all porters (25% of those under 14 and 30% of those 14 and above) had inadvertently damaged goods through a fall.

About 46% of the child porters interviewed said that they used certain safety measures to protect themselves from occupational hazards. They discovered these measures, all examples of traditional practices, by working with adult porters. Precautions include carrying a *dhakar* (bamboo basket) using *khakan* (shoulder straps) and a *tokma* (a support stick for resting the load while standing) on long trips, padding the *namlo*, or head strap, with thick cloth, wrapping a *patuka* (long length of cloth) around the waist to prevent back pain, and protecting the back with a pad made of sacks.⁶

⁵ Irrespective of the number of hours worked or number of trips made.

⁶ Short-distance porters working in vegetable markets and grocery centres put a pad of plastic sacks on their backs to prevent back pain and to avoid the possibility of damaging their clothes or irritating their skins if the goods they carry spill.

By age, 49% of porters 14 and above and 43% of those under 14 adopt such safety measures. Girls (60%) and long-distance porters (62%) are more likely to use safety measures than short-distance porters (39%) and boys (42%).

Back and neck pain; pain in joints and knees; flu, fever, and headache; and chest and stomach pains are common health problems child porters commonly face. About 74% of all child porters said that they had had health problems while at work. Girls suffer the most (84% of 106), followed by long-distance porters (80% of 152) and those under 14 (78% of 238). The majority did not seek any medical treatment of their health problems; they said they recovered after resting or did nothing at all. Overall, 45% of all child porters have fallen down with a load.

Disaggregated, the rates of accidents are about 51% for long-distance porters, 48% for males, 47% for those aged 14 and above, 44% for those under age 14, 42% for short-distance porters, and 33% for females. The rates of getting injured in a fall are higher among long-distance porters, males, and those 14 and above (36%, 32%, and 32% respectively) than it is among short-distance porters, females, and those under 14 (29%, 30%, and 30% respectively).

Over two-thirds (71%) of child porters either give all (47%) or some part of (24%) their earnings to their parents for household expenditures and 24% spent it on personal expenses like eating and drinking, buying clothing, and buying mobiles and recharge cards. Some use the money for schooling or save a portion of it. In terms of control over their earnings, 60% of child porters report giving the money to their parents to decide how it is spent and 37% make such decisions themselves.

Verbal abuse and use of humiliating words like “khate”⁷ are the most common psychological abuses child porters face, reported by 29% and 25% respectively. Just 4% reported having suffered physical abuse.

The study team’s assessment of the sleeping arrangements and accommodations of child porters revealed that 51% commute to work daily from their own houses; about 19% overall and 26% of short-distance porters live in rented rooms (mostly a short distance away from their workplace), about 17% overall and 51% of long-distance porters sleep in houses along the route of their trip, and 13% stay in hotels at the workplace or along the route. In comparison with the average for all porters, more girls (82%), more children under the age of 14 (61%) and more short-distance porters (60%) live at home. Long-distance porters sleep in different locations each night of their trip, while short-distance porters who do not live at home sleep either in congested rented rooms, in small hotels, under the thatched roofs of teashops set up in developing transit markets or in shacks.

Dal-bhaat-tarkari (rice, lentils and vegetable), *roti* (flatbread) and vegetables, and *dhindo* (porridge) are the main foods eaten for midday and evening meals⁸. Tea or milk with biscuits or other bakery items, popcorn and soybeans, leftover rice with *mohi* (buttermilk), *momos* (steamed dumplings stuffed with meat), and instant noodles are what child porters eat for breakfast and/or afternoon snack.

⁷ A derogatory word for a street child.

⁸ Nepalis usually eat just two big meals a day—*bihaano ko khaana* (the morning meal) and *beluka ko khaana* (the evening meal).

Long-distance porters eat two to three times a day while short-distance porters eat three to four times a day because they have the time and opportunity to eat. Children themselves, adult porters and key informants all believe that the quality and quantity of food child porters eat does not meet the caloric or the nutritive level demanded by their work.

The clothes child porters wear are dusty and stained and often ragged and unwashed. Some were spotted wearing their school uniform as it was the only wearable outfit they had, but most wore t-shirts and shorts or pants. Most wear plastic sandals. Almost none take a bath regularly.

Substance Abuse

Altogether, 48% of all child porters use tobacco and/or drink alcohol. About 32% of child porters consume *jand* and *raksi* (local beer and spirits) and 17% smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco. The study team saw child porters smoking, chewing tobacco and drinking even though they said that they knew the bad consequences of smoking (that it can trigger cancer), and denied being users.

Worst forms of Child Labor

Following ILO conventions No. 138 (Minimum Age of Work) and No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor), the UNCRC, and the Nepal Child Labor Act of 1992, this study defines children as all persons under 18 years of age and child labor as ‘exploitative by nature and detrimental to the child’s growing process, depriving the child of the rights to survival, development, protection and participation’ (ILO, 1995). The analysis is based on two legal criteria: i) the age of child porters and ii) evidence that the nature of work, i.e. the number of hours of work per day and days per week, mode of payment and remuneration, violence or other abuse, or limited freedom makes it hazardous.

Past studies (KC et al., 2001) provided evidence that portering by children is a worst form of child labor. That evidence includes the following:

- A large number of child porters are under 14 years of age many of who do not go to school.

- The majority work more than eight hours a day.

- The majority of short-distance porters live away from home and are not provided with food by their families.

- There is a high chance of injury.

- Child porters (especially girls) are at risk of sexual exploitation.

- Child porters are paid a lower rate of remuneration than adult porters because they have little bargaining power.

The rapid assessments too indicated that child porters are at risk of physiological and social retardation and poor health as a result of bearing heavy weights on their prematurely developed bodies. Insufficient food intake and unsanitary personal habits exacerbate the incidence of stunting and wasting and further demonstrate that portering is indeed one of the worst forms of non-bonded child labor in Nepal.

Recommendations

Education

The government should make basic education up to a specified age and grade both free and compulsory for all, thereby upholding the fundamental right granted in the Interim Constitution of 2007, Article 28 of the UNCRC, and the ILO Minimum Age of Work Convention.

There should be a coordinated mechanism among the general public and school communities for tracking how regularly children of school age attend school and identifying and rescuing child laborers.

School communities and teaching-learning environments need to be made more child-friendly, more concerned about children from marginalized communities and ultra-poor families in order to increase children's motivation to attend school and pursue their studies.

The school curriculum needs to be modified so that it incorporates a life-skills approach of learning which utilizes local resources and knowledge to foster future self-employment in areas like livestock-rearing, horticulture, and television, radio and/or mobile repairs.

Child porters interested in participating in vocational training should be rescued immediately and given this opportunity.

All children from ultra-poor families and marginalized communities should be exempt from paying all educational costs if they maintain a specified level of regularity and sincerity identified by school teachers and community members.

Awareness

Children, their parents, potential employers of children, teachers, representatives of governmental and non-governmental offices, the media, and other concerned individuals should be sensitized to the minimum ages of employment by the nature and condition of the work involved.

Information about the forms of work done by children that are classified as hazardous and the worst forms of work needs to be provided to all stakeholders, including government line agencies and rights-based NGOs and community-based organizations as too many are ignorant and, wrongly, did not consider portering by children to fall in this category.

Child porters' knowledge and practice of health and safety measures need to be enhanced among all child porters and particular among *Jana-jatis*, who are the least informed, in order to lessen the levels of occupational hazards.

Poverty Alleviation and Family Livelihood Development

Children's right to education should be linked to their parents' or guardians' economic rights as only if adult family members can find gainful employment will the need for children's income become negligible. To see more children from marginalized communities and ultra-poor families in school requires, there is a need to promote household-level livelihood programs.

There is a need for a program which fosters employment and income security among the families of female and Dalit child porters since they have the greatest proportion of ultra-poor families (those whose food sufficiency is three months or less).

So that they are not exploited by local moneylenders, the ultra-poor and wage laborers need easy access to credit from formal financial institutions.

Specific policies and a programme of action which address child labour migration, particularly among *Janajatis*, Dalits and dysfunctional families, whose rates are the highest, are needed.

Providing income and employment security to adult family members is the best way to prevent children from working in hazardous and the worst forms of child labor in general and child porters in particular along with devising and adoption of preventive, protective and rehabilitative policy measures and interventions.

Child Protection and Law Enforcement

Government agencies, communities, NGOs, and UN agencies need to adopt a coordinated mechanism of tracking children so that all children get the chance to develop physically and mentally before they are old enough to be employed.

Since field observations revealed that female child porters, of whom there is a sizable number, are at risk of sexual abuse (though no cases were reported), there is a need to develop measures to safeguard them from this threat.

Officials at most government line agencies need to see and accept that portering by children as one of the worst forms of child labor.

CHAPTER I

THE CONTEXT AND RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 The Context

The prevalence of different worst forms of child labor, including portering, is a major socio-economic problem in Nepal. In 2001 KC et al. estimated that there were altogether about 46,000 child porters, 42,000 long-distance and 4,000 short-distance porters. KC et al. defined long-distance portering as trips requiring carrying loads great distances for more than a day, while short-distance portering involves carrying loads within market centres, bus/truck parks, *haats* (weekly markets), and bazaar areas. In the case of short-distance portering, no job takes more than eight hours and, for the most part, multiple jobs are performed in a single day. Portering jeopardises children's potential to become productive adults by interfering in their prospects for good health, educational opportunities, and a rewarding future. Studies demonstrate that it is children from poor families and socially excluded communities in rural hill districts who are most likely to work as child porters.

In 2001, boys were more likely to be short-distance porters than girls and short-distance porters were older than long-distance porters. The rate of school enrollment among both short- and long-distance porters was low and even if they did enroll, their attendance was irregular and they often dropped out. Families of child porters survived on what they earned from daily wage labor and were characterized by land poverty (KC et al., 2001).

KC et al. (2001) found that child porters worked in difficult conditions carrying loads greater than their own body weight for long hours. The food they ate did not supply the minimum calories or nutrients they needed and malnutrition and stunting was common. Though carrying loads is a hazardous job, almost no safety measures were adopted. Children walked either barefoot or in torn flip-flops and ragged clothes. Some of the factors pushing children into portering were the need to support their households, pay off a family debt, and earn money for school uniforms and supplies. Peer pressure and boredom with village life were other reasons (KC et al., 2001). Pull factors included the desire to see market centres and motor vehicles and to experience urban life; access to employment during the agricultural off-season; the chance to earn wages; the opportunity to buy school supplies; and the desire to earn for personal support (KC et al., 2001).

An assessment of the relationship between portering and wellbeing outcomes like diet, nutrition status, injury, and social and behavioral risks among child porters in Nepal revealed that they were consistently less well-off than their non-portering peers. They were, for example, 2.2 times as likely not to have attended school in the month before the survey and to attend significantly less frequently.

Their diets were poorer; in fact 30% were anaemic, a rate 1.9 times that of their non-portering peers, and their body mass indexes were significantly lower. About three times more child porters consumed alcohol than their non-portering peers and they were ten times as likely to be sexual assaulted (Shannon et al., 2007).

All the studies revealed that child porters felt that portering negatively impacted their physical, emotional and educational general wellbeing and that they wanted to continue their education either by attending school or participating in skill development training (KC et al., 2001; Shannon et al., 2007).

Despite the Nepalese government's legislative efforts and commitments to international treaties and conventions safeguarding child rights and protecting from exploitation (the country has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the ILO's Convention No. 138, Minimum Age of Work, and No. 182, Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor), the number of children working in different worst forms of labor is not believed to have declined. In collaboration with the ILO and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), the government formulated and implemented the Time-Bound Programme in 2001 to eliminate and regulate different worst forms of child labor, including portering by children. Though such efforts by the government, the UN, and national- and international-level child rights organizations have sensitized stakeholders to the issues, the root causes of the worst forms of child labor have not yet been addressed.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of conducting rapid assessments of the worst forms of child labor in general and portering by children in particular was to identify the number of children under 18 years of age involved in the sector at the national and sub-regional levels as well as to assess the underlying socio-economic, cultural, and family-level factors driving children into portering within the context of local- and national-level labor and product market dynamics. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the prevalence of child porters by type (short- and long-distance), age group (under 14 years of age and 14-17 years), sex, and region.
2. To assess the role which individual profiles and the socio-economic, cultural and family-level contexts of child porters play as underlying factors driving children into portering
3. To identify the nature, terms and conditions of work which child porters undertake and the hazards to their health, both physical and psycho-social, and to their cognitive and social growth they face.
4. To understand the process of children entering into portering within the context of the labor and product market dynamics.
5. To recommend policies and action strategies to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in portering.

1.3 Analytical Framework

There is no universally accepted definition of child labor though it is generally agreed that child labor is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to their physical and mental development. It includes work that 1) is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous for and harmful to children; and 2) interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO/IPEC, 2004).

Most definitions of child labor used by major UN and international organizations adopt the concept of ‘harmful work,’ as laid out in Article 32 of the UNCRC (Box 1). Any work done by children which harms their physical, mental, social, emotional or overall future development is defined as child labor. In this view, child labor includes only those economic activities that deny a child the possibility of developing normally into a responsible adult. It includes strenuous or hazardous employment in economic activities by young children (under the age of 15) as well as work by children of all ages in the worst forms of child labor (ILO/IPEC, 2004).

There are, however, contesting definitions. One defines child labor much more broadly as all non-school and non-leisure activities. In this view, child labor also includes light work in household enterprises after school and even helping with domestic chores such as cleaning the home and looking after younger siblings. This is not the definition of child labor adopted in this study. Other views, known generally as the “right-to-work perspective” (the perspective this report adopts) suggest that instead of categorizing all out-of-school children as child laborers and condemning all such labor that child labor and the worst forms of child labor be categorized according to the degree of harm they involve. In such a viewpoint, the distinction between child labor and child work is the difference between harmful and non-harmful forms of work. The degree of harm is in part determined by the age of the child. In this understanding, the term “child work,” not “child labor” is used to refer to all non-school and non-leisure activities.

Box 1: Article 32 of the UNCRC prohibiting children from doing harmful or hazardous work

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:
 - (a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
 - (b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
 - (c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

UN agencies like the ILO and UNICEF define work that hampers children's right to education as child labor but exclude light work in the home before and after school, supervised skill development and internship training, helping on the family farm or in a family business, and other work that does not hamper children's rights. Similarly, child rights organizations define child labor as work which denies children schooling opportunities by virtue of the need for their household or outside work for household or personal survival.

More particularly, in defining child labor by condition of work UNICEF does not object to children's work. Of children's work it writes:

Children's work needs to be seen as happening along a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work-promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest-at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development" (UNICEF, 1997).

Children not in school and not in the labor force are considered to be idle or inactive (Suwal, et al. 1997; Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004), a classification which makes good economic sense, but which, for various reasons, sees such children denied the right to education and serving as a reserve pool for the supply of child labor. Therefore, a number of movements and organizations⁹ have suggested that non-working out-of-school children be incorporated under a broad definition of child labor to draw the attention of all stakeholders, including the government, UN agencies, donors, NGO/INGOs, communities, school teachers, and parents, toward promoting universal education as a means to end child labor. Their reasoning lies with the observation that children who are not obliged to attend school until compulsory education laws are enacted or who genuinely do not have access to education have little alternative other than to work, beg, or turn to delinquency or worse (ILO, 1996:35). If such a child enters the labor market, it is likely he or she will end up in the worst forms of labor, including portering, which is one of the worst forms of labor both by definition and by condition¹⁰.

Major child rights organizations seem to have accepted that the term "children's work" means non-objectionable, light work which does not hamper the right to education or future development and that "child labor" refers to exploitative and harmful work. This understanding is captured in Article 32 of the UNCRC (Box 1), the most widely accepted definition of child labor. Once a country ratifies the UNCRC, as Nepal has, it becomes a legal document of the nation and the nation is obliged to implement it by creating a domestic legal framework to "provide appropriate penalties and other sanctions in order to protect children from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to interfere with the child's education."

International conventions adopted by the UN and the ILO define a child as anyone under the age of 18 and child labor as work performed by children under the age of 18. ILO Convention No. 138, Minimum Age of Work, defines the appropriate minimum age of work as 15 in developed and 14 in developing nations). For the worst forms of work, however, the minimum age of work is 18,

⁹ MV Foundation, www.schoolistherightplacetowork.org, Save the Children Japan and its partner organizations

¹⁰ By definition according to the Minimum Age Convention and by condition since portering harms the physical, mental and future development of the children who do it and is exploitative in nature

or adulthood, as is laid out in ILO Convention No. 182 and ILO Recommendation No. 190, which were adopted by the International Labor Conference in 1999. Convention No. 182 prohibits all children under 18 years of age from working in the unconditional worst forms of child labor, which it defines as slavery, forced labor, the sale and trafficking of children, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use of children in prostitution, pornography, and illicit activities. In addition, children are banned from performing “hazardous work,” which is determined by the nature of the work and the hazards associated with it (Box 2).

By definition under ILO Convention No. 182, portering qualifies as hazardous on multiple grounds: it exposes children to psychological abuse, forces children to transport heavy loads, and, in the case of long-distance porters, to work long hours. In addition, it is harmful by conditions. Since it results in children’s attending school irregularly and, ultimately, dropping out, it is, as defined in the UNCRC, harmful to children’s physical, mental and social development. Finally, under ILO Convention No. 138, no individual under 18 should engage in hazardous work. Thus, from many perspectives, portering by children is “child labor” and not “children’s work” and must be eliminated.

At the same time, however, these ILO conventions nos. 182 and 138 and Recommendation No. 190 allow for a child to become an apprentice or undergo vocational training at the age of 14 and for children aged 13 and above (12 in developing countries) to engage in light work if it does not harm their development and education and is beneficial for their learning (Table 1.1). The basic premise is that children should not be employed in any type of work before completing compulsory education.

Table 1.1: Minimum ages of work according to ILO Convention No. 138

Type of Work	In all countries alike, developed and developing facilities are poorly developed	Developing countries where the economy and educational
Work excluded from minimum age legislation*	Any age	Any age
Light work	13 years	12 years
Non-hazardous work	Not less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling, and in no case less than 15 years**	Not less than 14 years (for a limited period)
Hazardous work	18 years (16 years under certain strict conditions)	18 years (16 years under certain strict conditions)
Unconditional worst forms of child labor	18 years (only adults may do, if at all)	18 years (only adults may do, if at all)

Source: ILO/IPEC, 2004.

*Household chores, work in family undertakings, and work undertaken as part of education

**The minimum age for admission to employment or work is determined by national legislation and can be set at 14 (in developing countries), 15 or 16 years (in developed countries)

Box 2: The worst forms of work and hazardous work according to ILO Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190	
Worst forms of work (Convention No. 182)	Hazardous forms of work (Recommendation No. 190)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slavery or similar practices, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and forced or compulsory labor (including the forced recruitment of children for the use in armed conflict); • Using or offering a child for prostitution or pornography, • Using or offering a child for illicit activities, such as for the production and trafficking of drugs; • Work by whose nature or because of the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child, i.e. ‘hazardous work’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; • Work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights, and in confined spaces; • Work with dangerous machinery, equipment, and/or tools, or which involves the manual channeling or transport of heavy loads; • Work in an unhealthy environment exposing children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; and • Work under particularly difficult conditions including long hours, work at night, and work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employment.

1.4 Research Methodology

1.4.1 Rationale for Using Rapid Assessment

In conducting a rapid assessment of the children involved in portering, a worst form of work which involves a mobile population, using just a single research method would not suffice. Such a study requires both quantitative approaches to estimate the populations involved in each type of portering and region as well as qualitative and grounded approaches to validate those estimates and to understand working conditions, how children get involved, and the socio-economic, cultural and psycho-social hazards associated with the occupation. To get the fullest picture possible, quantitative and qualitative and grounded approaches were used to investigate and analyze portering by children. Because the population of child porters is mobile, the ‘capture-recapture’¹¹ method was used to conduct structured interview with child porters. Formal Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as well as informal discussions (with child and adult porters, and other stakeholders), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and observation of activities as well as other approaches immediately arising in the field were adopted in line with the ILO/UNICEF “Guidelines for Rapid Assessment: Investigating Child Labor” (2005), a document which recommends using both quantitative and qualitative information as tools for in-depth research.

Rapid assessment is an innovative methodology that employs several research strategies simultaneously for the relatively rapid understanding of a specific problem or issue and for use in comparison with the research methodologies of large-scale surveys. Though it is done within a short time frame with limited resources, its findings and interpretations of those findings provide a basis for formulating action-oriented strategies and implementing intervention policies or, alternatively, for conducting further research. A rapid assessment can also be used to launch effective awareness-raising and public information campaigns (ILO/UNICEF, 2005).

¹¹ This is a technique that has been used in biological sciences to quantify the size of wild animal or insect populations and, more recently, to quantify groups of people who are highly mobile like street children or children working in mobile sectors like portering.

Rapid assessment is regarded as a primarily qualitative methodology because it emphasizes the research tools of observation and interviewing without long-term participant engagement in anthropological fieldwork or systematic probabilistic survey methodology and tools. Nevertheless, it frequently integrates quantitative data and also produces results that can be compared. The method offers great potential for uncovering rich veins of previously unknown information about a relatively limited issue or population and leads to new and insightful understanding of a particular reality (ILO/UNICEF, 2005). For this reason, it is an appropriate tool for researching child porters, whose exact population in local and regional contexts and even urban areas is not known though portering by children is a phenomenon found right across the country.

The rapid assessment methodology is also appropriate for research into child labor for its replicability: it can target similar or related groups and populations by identifying the extent of an issue and/or amplifying or verifying the findings of earlier research. Rapid assessment offers the possibility of looking at, among other things:

- the causes of and the pathways into child labor in general and into portering by children in particular;
- the actual work that male and female porters, both those under 14 and those 14 and above do;
- the living and working conditions of child porters; and
- child porters' own perceptions of their situations.

Extensive testing of the rapid assessment methodology in the investigation of child labor has shown that even in difficult research circumstances it generates an impressive array of findings and interpretations that generate policy recommendations on a local and regional level and provide inputs for national policy-making (ILO/UNICEF, 2005). Since it includes the experiences and insights of both boy and girl laborers, it is instrumental in addressing child labor issues in a gender-sensitive manner. It also encourages children to participate in the research endeavour, thus approaching the ideal of child-centred research, and allows for the internal validation of the information collected through observations, interviews, and FGDs.

1.4.2 Research Design and Sample Size

Child porters are children of either sex under the age of 18 who carry loads for wages for their own or their family's survival. Children who occasionally carry loads of goods with their parents or guardians for family use—but not for the use of others—on non-school days were not included as part of the target population of the study¹². Child porters were targeted for structured interviews and the recording of personal histories, and their physical as well psycho-social activities and dietary practices were observed. They were categorised either as short- or long-distance porters depending on the time they had taken to complete their most recent job. Those who finished within eight hours and/or were able to make perform more than one job in a day were defined as short-distance porters while those who took more than eight hours and/or needed to spend the night en route were classified as long-distance porters.

¹² Any child working with family members carrying loads (like firewood) they had collected to sell in the market for cash, whether for personal or family use, was labeled a child porter, but children who carried loads of home-produced goods with their parents to sell in the market and returned with market goods for family consumption were not considered child porters. The key distinction lay in whether or not the child earned money by serving others.

Discussions and Key Information Interviews were held with parents of child porters, school teachers, and community people in locations where child porters participated in Focus Group Discussions in order to understand the family and local contexts which drive children into portering. Representatives of local NGOs and community-based organizations working in the child rights sector and district-level government officials responsible for the enforcement of national and international legal instruments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor (chief district, district education, and police officers) were interviewed to learn about their efforts and the constraints they faced.

After classifying child porters by type (short- and long-distance) and identifying other target populations to question (teachers, parents and the like), the study team classified the localities, sub-regions and major urban centres where child porters existed as core and peripheral areas. The team used the capture-recapture method of estimation to generate estimates of both types of child porters by age group and gender. To capture and recapture, interview and estimate the population of short-distance porters, it covered major market and business centres and bus and truck parks while for long-distance porters, it covered major traveling routes and transit areas at the road ends. Identifying these core and peripheral areas rested on the evidence of the rapid assessment conducted by ILO and the Central Department of Population Studies in 2001 and CWIN's experience working with children. The proposed research sites and the numbers of both short- and long-distance child porters the team expected to capture as well as the actual numbers captured in core and peripheral locations is given in Table 1.2.

The survey was designed to capture more long-distance (315-420) than short-distance (100-175) child porters as past estimates suggested that the former were in the majority. However, the scenario has changed since over the last decade since KC et al.'s study of 2001 and, in actual fact, 70% (343 of 493) of the child porters captured were short-distance and 30% (150 of 493) long-distance (Table 1.2). The change is explained by the construction of motorable roads along most of the traditional long-distance portering routes in remote hilly areas and villages. The porters now work short-distance routes at transit points where roads end and where there is no motorable river crossing, loading and unloading and carrying consumer goods and construction materials across rivers.

Table 1.2: Numbers of child porters interviewed

Numbers of child porters interviewed by types of portering and core and periphery areas

Region	Short-distance	Long-distance	Total
Core areas			
<i>Eastern and Central hill and mountain districts:</i> Sunsari, Dhankuta, Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Udayapur, Sindhuli, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok	176	102	278
<i>Kathmandu Valley:</i> Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur	45	0	45
<i>Mid-Western and Far-Western Districts:</i> Surkhet, Jajarkot, Kalikot, Baitadi	45	44	89
Total core	266	146	412
Peripheral areas			
<i>Eastern and Central districts:</i> Kavre, Rasuwa, Makwanpur, Parsa	13	4	17
<i>Western and Mid-Western districts:</i> Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahun, Kaski, Myagdi, Parbat, Baglung, Palpa, Rupandehi, Dang	64	0	64
Total periphery	77	4	81
Total core and periphery	343	150	493

Table 1.3: Child porters by age and type of portering

Type of Portering	5-13 Years			14-17 Years			Total		
	Girls	Boys	Both	Girls	Boys	Both	Girls	Boys	Both
Short-distance	52	118	170	32	139	171	84	257	341
Long-distance	12	56	68	10	74	84	22	130	152
Total	64	174	238	42	213	255	106	387	493
Total (%)	13.0	35.3	48.3	8.5	43.2	51.7	21.5	78.5	100.0

The existing research suggested that some girls and children under the age of 14 would be involved in long-distance portering but that they would rarely be involved in short-distance portering. The study team expected that children under 14 and girls would make up 17% and 23% of the total child porter respectively, but while the proportion of girls (22%) was about as expected, there were nearly three times as many younger children (48%) as expected (Table 1.3).

1.4.3 Estimation of the Number of Child Porters

The capture-recapture technique is used to estimate the size of mobile populations like child porters. An initial sample of child porters was “captured,” its individuals studied and marked and then released back onto the street to become randomly dispersed in the population as a whole. Then a second sample was taken, and its total size and the number of marked (recaptured) individuals noted. Under the capture-recapture principle, it was assumed that the proportion of marked individuals in the second sample equaled the proportion of marked individuals in the population of the survey locality as a whole, such that:

$$(a/nl = c/b)*i$$

where

n is the total population

l is the survey locality

a is the number marked in the first catch in a survey area and subsequently released into the population,

b is the size of the second catch,¹³

c is the number of marked individuals recaptured in the second catch,

nl is the size of the population in the survey locality, and

i is the adjustment factor of seasonal variation and the interval of catch by season of work.

Solving for nl , the estimate of the population of child porters in any specific survey area is $nl = (a.b/c)*i$, and the national estimate of child porters (N) is $N = \sum nl$, or the sum total of the populations in each of the survey areas.

Though the capture-recapture method is reliable when it comes to providing precise estimates of natural populations, it is not equally precise in yielding estimates of social activities; it does not, for example, consider seasonality or the vagaries of social phenomena. Any estimate of the population

¹³ A recaptured child (one marked in the first catch and caught again in the second) is observed and counted the second time around, but not re-interviewed.

of short-distance child porters must account for variations due to, among other things, the season, school attendance, and the increase in employment of children in marketplaces and bus and truck parks during festivals and holidays, while adjustments to long-distance routes include seasonal flows, days per trip, and trips per season. To adjust the population estimate to account for these variations, the study team used interviews with key informants, adult porters and others.

1.4.4 Research Tools and Data Collection

The following research tools and approaches to collecting data were used.

Literature review: The team reviewed the existing surveys, rapid assessment reports, and policy documents of the government, the UN and other bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, development partners, and child rights-based organizations before developing an analytical framework and designing the structured interviews and checklists for Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Particular documents reviewed include the publications of ILO/IPEC, UNICEF, Save the Children, and the Ministry of Labor and Transportation. The team also reviewed published research reports and articles from academic publications and research journals.

Survey questionnaire: Three types of survey questionnaires were designed: a semi-structured interview for use with child porters, a checklist for KIIs, and a checklist for FGDs with child porters. All three explored a variety of issues which can be broadly classified as characteristics of individual child porters, information about their family situation, reasons for their involvement in portering, the nature of their work and working conditions, and child porters' knowledge of child rights and desire for rehabilitation.

Child-centred questions identified the type of portering each child did and where as well as individual characteristics like age, sex, caste/ethnicity, height and weight, place of birth and current place of residence, marital status, literacy, current school attendance and reasons for leaving school, desire to go to school if the opportunity arose, and juggling both work and school.

Family-related questions probed into family composition, whether the child porters' parents were alive or dead, whether families included step-parents and step-siblings, and abuse by kin and step-relatives. Additional household issues covered include home ownership and type of house, ownership of agricultural land, access to drinking water and sanitation, main and secondary sources of family livelihood, family indebtedness, and ownership of different consumer durables, agricultural appliances and livestock.

In terms of work, the survey asked the reasons children were porters, whether their relatives were porters, who had gotten them involved in the work and at what age, and how long they had been portering. They were asked about working conditions, including average and maximum loads carried, hazards, the types of load they carried in different seasons, and wage rates. How often they had fallen and been hurt or gotten ill and by whom and where they were received medical treatment, who took over if they could not complete a job, whether they used safety measures, and the nature of their clothes and footwear were other issues probed. Interviewees were also asked where they slept while working and if they faced any harassment or other abuse, how often goods were broken or damaged en route and if they had to pay compensation.

The survey also looked into remuneration and abuse. It asked about wage rates and the basis of payment, average daily earnings, season of maximum earnings, if they had been cheated and by whom, and the nature of and control over expenditures. Whether child porters experienced verbal assaults, humiliation, scolding, or false accusations at the hands of service users was also investigated.

The study team also looked at personal habits, including typical diet of child porters, when and how often they ate and whether they ate expensive yet nutritious foods like meat, milk and fruit. Child porters were also asked if they used tobacco, consumed alcohol, or abused drugs and to what extent.

To find out more details about children's involvement in portering in the last year, child porters were asked how many days they had worked in each month, when the child would next return to the place of interview; and how many children under 18 from her or his family and own village worked as porters. It also asked the seasons in which the porter worked in the place of interview and how many children from villages other than his or her own he or she had seen working there. Children were also asked how he or she decided where to next search for work.

Personal interviews: Well-trained and experienced field investigators conducted semi-structured interviews with 493 child porters. After building rapport, each child porter was interviewed individually in circumstances which preserved the confidentiality of his or her responses.

Focus group discussions: Child porters who were not interviewed one-on-one were invited to participate in FGDs conducted in a free-flowing manner, with one member of the study team facilitating the discussion and another, taking notes. Group and individual discussions with adult porters were also held. Eight FGDs with child porters and five FGDs with adult porters or parents of child porters were conducted, each with 7-13 participants. In addition, KIIs were held with 19 persons, eight school teachers, five representatives of NGO persons and six governmental officials (Women and Children Officers or members of District Child Welfare Boards) to learn about their views on portering by children.

Observation and personal histories: The study team observed child porters, taking note of their loads, their physical size, the way they walked, safety measures used, their manner of speaking, their personal habits, including smoking and drinking, the food they ate, and their clothes and footwear. Some personal histories were compiled with the intention of acquiring a more in-depth understanding of the personal characteristics of the child porters in question, the nature of the family backgrounds that had pushed them into work, including family disruption, and the social and working processes that affected them.

1.4.5 Hiring and Training Field Investigators and Field Operations

A roster of interested field workers was created and those short-listed interviewed to assess their level of commitment, understanding of the problems associated with working with child laborers, and knowledge of the subject matter. The 10 most devoted and experienced were selected, awarding priority to those who had previously been involved in child labor surveys or who worked for child rights-based organizations. All 10 participated in an intensive five-day training conducted 5-10 April, 2011. The following topics were covered:

- the worst forms of child labor and why portering by children is considered one
- building rapport and assimilating into the local context,
- skills in conducting interview and recording personal histories,
- carrying out in-depth interviews, informal discussions, and FGDs
- understanding the local context and establishing contacts with key informants and target groups
- observation skills
- ethical issues, including being child-friendly and respectful to communities.

The training included one day of practice in the field: the 10 investigators surveyed child porters in different places in Kathmandu Valley (the Kalimati vegetable market, bus parks and city centres) under the supervision of core team members and a member of the technical committee (the statistical officer of the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare). This field practice served as a piloting exercise: the confusions and ambiguities which arose were identified and the wording was modified and simplified immediately. The actual field operations were supervised by core team members for 10-15 days. The core team members were actively involved in observations of, and informal talks with, child and adult porters, other concerned persons and government officials as well as assisting in conducting personal interviews in complicated contexts, holding FGDs and conducting KIIs with school management committees and local child rights organizations. Field operations ran for one month, 15 April-16 May, 2011, and saw a wide variety of research tools-interviews, formal and informal discussions, observations, and KIIs-being employed.

1.4.6 Data Management and Analysis

The structured interviews were thoroughly edited and checked for consistency right after they were completed, in the field itself, as were notes on personal histories, FGDs, KIIs and informal discussions, and observations. Back in the CWIN office, post-coding of open-ended responses and table-editing of interviews was done before data was entered using SPSS software to define variables and value labels and to manage and analyze the data. The entered data was edited for entry errors and intra- and inter-variable consistency and ranges were checked.

The qualitative and quantitative information collected was triangulated wherever possible in the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of findings. Blending the data enhanced both the reliability and the validity of the findings and made for more robust conclusions about policy. The data was categorized as is indicated below. Almost all of the variables were analyzed using these categories.

Re-grouping of caste/ethnic communities

Caste groups:	Chhetri, Brahmin, Thakuri, and Sanyasi
<i>Janajatis</i> :	Magar, Tharu, Tamang, Newar, Rai, Gurung, Limbu, Sherpa, Gharti/Bhujel, Kumal, Sunuwar, Majhi, Thami, Pahari, Kisan

Re-grouping of districts by region

East and central:	Sunsari, Dhankuta, Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Udayapur, Sindhuli, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok
Kathmandu Valley:	Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu
West:	Kavre, Rasuwa, Makwanpur, Parsa, Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahau, Kaski, Myagdi, Parbat, Baglung, Palpa, Rupandehi
Mid- and far-west:	Dang, Surkhet, Jajarkot, Kalikot, Baitadi

Dysfunctional family - is one in which conflict, misbehavior, and often abuse on the part of individual members occur continually and regularly, leading other members to accommodate such actions. Children sometimes grow up in such families with the understanding that such an arrangement is normal. Dysfunctional families are primarily a result of co-dependent adults, and may also be affected by addictions, such as substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.). Other origins include untreated mental illness, and parents emulating or over-correcting from their own dysfunctional parents. In some cases, a “child-like” parent will allow the dominant parent to abuse their children.

Poverty. A child is considered poor if his or her household meets any three of the following eight criteria; otherwise, he is not poor.

- Family does not own a house
- House is neither permanent nor semi-permanent
- House has three or fewer rooms
- House has no separate kitchen
- House has just one-storey
- Drinking water is not accessed from either a piped source or a tube well
- There is no toilet facility
- The family neither owns nor rents agricultural land

Food security. A child is considered food secure if his or her household’s main source of income supports the family for nine or more months; otherwise, s/he is food insecure.

1.4.7 Limitations of the Rapid Assessment and Lessons Learned

Though child porters exist in both rural and urban areas, the size of the national population of child porters is unknown, so it was difficult to determine a sample size by locality in order to yield statistically plausible estimates of local populations. The findings with respect to child porters may not be comparable with or applicable to other worst forms of child labor, making generalization difficult.

Though the study tried to cover all of the major places child porters are likely to exist, it is possible that it overlooked some, like airports in remote regions, including Karnali and other mountain regions, where key informants suggested there are indeed child porters. Neither the short- nor long-term health hazards associated with portering by children are documented well, though an attempt is made. Understanding the depth of the problem requires designing a survey for administration in the communities of origin (where substantial proportions of child porter were captured), but constraints on resources and time prevented the study team from doing so.

Among the lessons learned are the following:

- Officials at most government line agencies do not see portering by children as one of the worst forms of child labor as child porters perform a social service, delivering the goods of various businesses to consumers.
- The type of portering by children has changed drastically due to the proliferation of roads into the hinterlands: instead of long-distance portering, children work at transit points at the end of roads and at river crossings where there is no motorable bridge, loading, unloading and carrying goods.

- Portering is an entry point into the worst forms of child labor.
- Child porters working at river-crossings and road heads see portering as a short-term opportunity, not a long-term one.
- Child porters spend their income on meeting school expenses and buying mobile phones and recharge cards.
- The fact that a substantial portion of porters are girls and children under the age of 14 contradicted expectations and suggests that portering is a family-based profession.
- Some child porters carried loads wearing their school uniforms.
- In terms of personal habits, there is a huge discrepancy between what children said they do and what observations revealed. For example, children who said they did not smoke were spotted smoking during observations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE CONTEXT

Drawing on the literature on child labor, this chapter reviews the child labor situation in Nepal, focusing especially on the worst forms of child labor.

2.1 Evidence That Portering by Children is a Worst Form of Child Labor

Following ILO conventions No. 138 (Minimum Age of Work) and No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor), the UNCRC, and the Nepal Child Labor Act of 1992, this study defines children as all persons under 18 years of age and child labor as ‘exploitative by nature and detrimental to the child’s growing process, depriving the child of the rights to survival, development, protection and participation’ (ILO, 1995). The analysis is based on two legal criteria: i) the age of child porters and ii) evidence that the nature of work, i.e. the number of hours of work per day and days per week, mode of payment and remuneration, violence or other abuse, or limited freedom makes it hazardous. Age is the primary criterion deciding whether work is acceptable or not for children, but work that is considered hazardous is generally illegal for those under 18.

ILO Convention No. 182 defines the unconditionally worst forms of child labor as any activity carried out by a child that is so intolerable and hazardous that a child should be immediate withdrawn from that activity. They include the following:

1. Slavery or similar practices, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and forced or compulsory labor (including the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict);
2. Using or offering a child for prostitution or for pornography;
3. Using or offering a child for illicit activities, such as for the production and trafficking of drugs;
4. Work which by its nature or because of the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child. Various factors are given as defining this sort of work, including exposure to abuse; work that is conducted underground, underwater, at great heights, or in confined spaces; work that involves using dangerous equipment or tools; and work that is carried out in an unhealthy environment or involves exposure to hazardous substances.

ILO studied child labor in Nepal extensively in 1999-2002, carrying out rapid assessments of the number of children in various worst forms of child labor. It was estimated that there were 12,000 girls trafficked for sexual exploitation, 56,000 domestic child workers, 46,000 short- and long-

distance child porters, 32,000 child miners, 17,000 bonded child laborer, 8,000 child laborers in carpet factories, and 4,000 child rag-pickers (recycling). An ILO-sponsored study conducted by the Central Department of Population Studies in 2009 estimated that there were 14,000 children in forced labor in the agriculture sector in 12 districts, seven in the central and eastern Terai and five in the far-western hills.

Past studies (KC et al., 2001) provided evidence that portering by children is a worst form of child labor. That evidence includes the following:

- A large number of child porters are under 14 years of age.
- Many child porters do not go to school.
- The majority work more than eight hours a day.
- The majority of short-distance porters live away from home.
- The majority of short-distance porters are not provided with food by their families.
- There is a high chance of injury.
- Child porters (especially girls) are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Child porters are paid a lower rate of remuneration than adult porters because they have little bargaining power,

2.2 Larger Economic Context of Nepal

In 2011 the total population of Nepal was 26.6 million, 83% living in rural areas and two-thirds dependent on agriculture for a living. In 2006, the per capita income of Nepal was USD240 and according to Nepal Living Standard Survey 2010/11, a total of 25.2% were poor, 15.5% in urban areas and 27.4% in rural areas. The Nepal Living Standard Survey of 2010/11 showed higher rates of poverty in the Mountains than in the hills and valleys and in the Tarai and the mid-west than other ecological and development regions. Of the total poor, 96% reside in rural areas. Income poverty also varies by social group, with the highest rates among Dalits (45.5%) and *janaajatis* (44%) and the lowest among caste groups (18.4%) (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

The Human Development Index was 0.46 in 2011 with the lowest index among Dalits. The Gender Related Index and Gender Empowerment Measure were 0.452 and 0.391 respectively, placing Nepal falls behind all South Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries except Pakistan.

2.3 Educational Services Provided to Child Laborers

Education is “free and compulsory” free through Grade 8 and compulsory for children aged 6 to 12, but as this policy is not enforced many children are illiterate and out of school. The Ministry of Population and Health estimated that in 2010 5.4% of boys and 6.3% of girls aged 10-14 years had never attended school. This proportion is much higher in rural areas, in the far-western and mid-western development regions, and among disadvantaged groups. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports, the net enrolment rates for primary, lower-secondary and secondary levels were 87%, 52.3%, and 34.7% respectively and that at each educational level, the rate for girls was lower than that for boys (MoES, 2006/07). Drop-out and repetition rates are also high: 25% of boys and 16% of girls drop out of grade one and 20% of boys and 19% of girls repeat at least one primary-level grade. In general, children who are out of school come from poor and deprived

families, families living in remote rural areas, and dysfunctional families characterized by step-parents, parental alcohol and drug abuse, and violence against children.

The FGDs and KIIs held in the survey districts revealed that there are no government-aided educational interventions with a specific focus on child laborers. While a few NGOs and INGOs do support child porters with educational interventions (World Education in Khotang and Okhaldhunga and CWIN in Dolakha), their coverage is limited. Some NGOs, like those in Dolakha and Ramechhap, established child clubs and mobilized children to raise their voices about child rights. No District Child Welfare Boards in the districts surveyed supports education particularly for child laborers though District Education Offices do provide scholarships to Dalits, girls and *janajatis* in general.

2.4 Birth Registration Status of Children

The Birth, Death and Vital Registration Act of 1976 and the Local Autonomous Governance Act of 1999 stipulate that local governments have the authority to register individual vital events (birth, death, marriage, and migration). Though the system expanded from just 10 districts in 1990 to all 75 today, in 2011 only 35% of children below the age of five were registered. The total number of births registered from 1991 to 2005 was 4,836,988, 51% of which were boys and 49%, girls (Central Child Welfare Board, 2007). The main reasons for the low birth registration rate include the dysfunction of local bodies due to the conflict and the resultant absence of VDC secretaries from VDC offices, the distance of registration offices from settlements, especially in rural and hill areas, the lack of effective campaigning for birth registration, and the lack of awareness among parents of the importance of birth registration.

2.5 Description of Institutional Framework

2.5.1 Legislation

The Interim Constitution of Nepal of 2007 is the overarching law that guarantees the rights of children. Article 22 states that every child has the right to a name and identity; the right to proper care and upbringing, basic health and social security; and the right against physical, mental and other forms of exploitation. It prohibits children from being employed in factories and industries and in hazardous work sites. It provides needy and vulnerable children with special rights. Article 17 guarantees every citizen free education up to the secondary level and Article 35 makes special provisions for the security of children and other vulnerable groups.

The Children's Act of 1991 defines a child as an individual below the age of 16 and states that no child under the age of 14 shall be employed in any work as a laborer. In addition, it protects all children from engaging in hazardous work (Section 18) and children aged 14-15 from work at night (6 p.m. to 6 a.m.) (Section. 17.2) and stipulates that no child aged 14-15 can work more than six hours a day or 36 hours a week.

The Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 2000 defines a child as a person below the age of 16 years and a minor as a person aged between 14 and 18 years. It protects children from hazardous working conditions and the carrying of excessive loads, which are defined as more than

25 kg for minor males and females aged 16-17 and 15 kg for minor males and females aged 14-15. It also prohibits the employment of a child in any work by deception, fraud, coercion or force and guarantees equal wages for equal work and basic health services and safety measures. The act also states that the government shall establish Child Labor Elimination committees and child labor elimination funds in the enterprises where children are employed as laborers. The authorities given the power to handle complaints about the exploitation of children are labor inspectors, *ilaka* (regional) police, child protection officers, the concerned VDC or municipality, trade unions and child rights organizations.

Besides his legislation, the GoN formulated the National Plan of Action for Children (2004/05-2014/15) to promote the rights of every child and eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse and discrimination against children. It identifies the six areas of intervention: i) promoting healthy life; ii) providing quality education; iii) protecting child rights; iv) combating HIV/AIDS; v) promoting child participation, and vi) coordination and monitoring.

The government also has a National Master Plan on Child Labor (2004-2014), which recognizes portering by children as hazardous work. This plan outlines nine areas of intervention for combating child labor in Nepal: policy and institutional development; education and health; advocacy, networking and social mobilization; legislation and enforcement; income and employment generation; prevention; protection; rehabilitation; and research and study.

2.5.2 History of Child Labor in Nepal

Studies indicate in Nepal children work in factories and industries, mines and quarries, agriculture, domestic service, shop-keeping, transportation, portering, construction, street-vending, entertainment, and circuses.

In 1998, the Central Department of Population Studies and the ILO estimated that of the 6.2 million children aged 5-14 years in Nepal, 41.7% were working children. Of them 25.5% worked and went to school while 16.1% only worked. A total of 26.6% were economically active but only 4.4% worked as paid workers.

According to the Nepal Labor Force Survey (NLFS) of 1998, 41% of children aged 5-14 years were working children (21% and 61% of those aged 5-9 years and 10-14 years respectively). The 2008 NLFS showed a decline: 37.8% of children aged 5-14 years worked (13.4% and 52.7% of those aged 5-9 and 10-14 respectively). By sex, 30.2% of boys and 37.8% of girls were working children. More child laborers work in the informal sectors than the formal sector and there is no institutional mechanism to monitor child labor in informal sector.

The forms of child labor are changing due to urbanization. In rural areas, children are engaged in agriculture and portering while in urban areas children are engaged in short-distance portering, the transport sector, hotel and restaurants, construction work, shop-keeping and domestic work.

There are a number of reasons for the pervasiveness child labor in Nepal. One reason is poverty and large family sizes: poor parents are compelled to send their children to work in order to earn a livelihood. Faced with dire economic conditions, parents even condone the worst forms of labor, as

the use of children from Makawanpur District in circuses demonstrates. Nepal's rigid social structure also contributes to child labor as it has resulted in sharp income inequalities between the rich and the poor, between social groups, and between regions. Skewed land ownership patterns and the resultant push for rural emigration compounds the problem. Besides these supply factors is the demand for child workers: employers benefit from a relatively docile, non-resistant work force they can easily exploit. Finally, the weak implementation of universal primary education has made it difficult to use education as leverage in curtailing child labor though it could be very effective as the more schooling a child has, the less likely he or she is to fall into child labor

2.5.3 Past Projects Designed To Eliminate Child Labor

In collaboration with the GoN, the ILO/IPEC developed a strategic Time-Bound Programme to translate into practice ILO Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190. The TBP, which was in line with the aims of Nepal's 10th Development Plan, ran from 2001 to 2007 in different parts of the country. As is illustrated below, a number of NGOs and trade unions as well as the government itself also implement programmes designed to combat the worst forms of child labor and protect the rights of the child.

2.5.4 Organizations Addressing the Needs of Child Laborers

The Ministry of Labour and Transport Management is the leading line ministry which concerns itself with to child labor while Ministry Women, Children and Social Welfare addresses child rights; they formulate, design, reform and implement policies and programs as required. Under the Ministry Women, Children and Social Welfare lies the Central Child Welfare Board, the statutory body responsible for coordinating all child-related programs in Nepal, including those run by the 46 District Child Welfare Boards that had been established as of June 2010.

NGOs, trade unions, employers' associations, community-based organizations, academics, researchers, and the media also work for child laborers. The leading organizations include CWIN, Concern for Child Right and Education in Nepal, Child NGO Federation, Child Development Society, the Child Protection Centre in Biratanagar, Hoste-Hainse in Lalitpur, Informal Sector Service Centre, the Under-Privileged Children's Association in Dharan, the Women's Rehabilitation Centre, Maiti Nepal, and Agro-Forestry and Basic Credit Nepal. These NGOs carry out a number of activities related to the prevention of child labor, especially of the worst forms, as well as to the protection of children and the prosecution of those who violate labor laws. These include awareness-raising, advocacy, non-formal and formal education, vocational training, and rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration with families. CWIN and Concern for Child Right and Education in Nepal, and other NGO efforts for porters have been limited.

A number of international organizations provide resources, expertise and materials to eliminate child labor and to ensure the rights of children. They include the ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Commission, World Education, Plan Nepal, and Save the Children.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

This chapter analyses the socio-economic profile of the families of child porters as well as their individual attributes such as age, sex, caste/ethnic group, and place of birth.

3.1 Socio-Demographic and Economic Profile of Child Porters and Their Families

3.1.1 Age and Gender

As Table 3.1 indicates, portering by children is a male-dominated sector: of the total 493 child porters interviewed, about 78.5% were male and 21.5% female. There are also many young workers: nearly half (48%) were under 14 years of age, with more females (60%) than males (45.5%) this young. Almost one-quarter of short-distance porters are girls but only about 15% of long-distance porters are. Of short-distance porters, 50% are under the age of 14 with 62% of females and 46% of males that young. Long-distance porters are slightly older: just 45% are under 14.

Table 3.1: Percentage distribution of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

Age group	Total (%)			Long-distance (%)			Short-distance (%)		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
< 14	60.4	45.5	48.3	54.5	43.1	44.7	61.9	45.9	49.9
14-17	39.6	55.0	51.7	45.5	56.9	55.3	38.1	54.1	50.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	106	387	493	22	130	152	84	257	341
Row %	21.5	78.5	100.0	14.5	85.5	100.0	24.6	75.4	100.0

3.1.2 Caste/ethnicity

Child porters are drawn from all social groups but most (54%) are *janajatis*; about 24% belong to caste groups and 22% are Dalits. This pattern varies little by age, sex, or type of child porters. Of short-distance child porters, *janajatis*, caste groups and Dalits comprised 56%, 25% and 24% respectively. By age group, more Dalit short-distance porters than those from caste groups were under 14. Among long-distance child porters, the proportion under the age of 14 was much higher among *janajatis* (62%) than Dalits (23.5%) and caste groups (15%). In the case of girls, the proportion of long-distance porters under the age of 14 among caste groups is conspicuously high: 25% (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Caste/ethnic group: Percentage of child porters by age, sex and type of portering

Caste/ethnic group	Total (%)			Males (%)			Females (%)		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
Short- and long-distance									
Caste groups	20.6	27.5	24.1	17.8	27.7	23.3	28.1	26.2	27.4
Janajatis	52.9	54.5	53.8	56.3	58.2	57.4	43.8	35.7	40.6
Dalits	26.5	18.0	22.1	25.9	14.1	19.4	28.1	38.1	32.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	174	213	387	64	42	106
Short-distance									
Caste groups	22.9	24.6	23.8	20.3	25.2	23.0	28.8	21.9	26.2
Janajatis	49.4	55.6	52.5	53.4	59.7	56.8	40.4	37.5	39.3
Dalits	27.6	19.9	23.8	26.3	15.1	20.2	30.8	40.6	34.5
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	170	171	341	118	139	257	52	32	84
Long-distance									
Caste groups	14.7	33.3	25.0	12.5	32.4	23.8	25.0	40.0	31.8
Janajatis	61.8	52.4	56.6	62.5	55.4	58.5	58.3	30.0	45.5
Dalits	23.5	14.3	18.4	25.0	12.2	17.7	16.7	30.0	22.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	68	84	152	56	74	130	12	10	22

3.1.3 Birth Registration

As Table 3.3 reveals, more than half (52%) of the child porters interviewed reported that their births had been registered, but 30% did not know and 18% said that they had not been registered. More girls (57%) than boys (51%) were registered and older girls (55%) were more likely than younger girls (51%) to be registered. More girls under the age of 14 (61%) than boys in the same age group (46%) were registered. More short-distance (57%) than long-distance child porters (41%) had had their births registered. Among boys, 58% of short-distance and 37% of long-distance porters reported that they had registered their births, whereas among girls, 80% of long-distance and only 41% of short-distance porters were registered.

Table 3.3: Status of birth registration: Percentage of child porters by age, sex and type of portering

Birth registration	Total (%)			Males (%)			Females (%)		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
Short- and long-distance									
Yes	50.0	54.5	52.3	46.0	55.4	51.2	60.9	50.0	56.6
No	14.7	19.6	17.2	14.4	19.2	17.1	15.6	21.4	17.9
Don't know	35.3	25.9	30.4	39.7	25.4	31.8	23.4	28.6	25.5
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	174	213	387	64	42	106
Short-distance									
Yes	55.9	58.5	57.2	53.4	62.6	58.4	61.5	40.6	53.6
No	13.5	19.9	16.7	11.9	18.7	15.6	17.3	25.0	20.2
Don't know	30.6	21.6	26.1	34.7	18.7	26.1	21.2	34.4	26.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	170	171	341	118	139	257	52	32	84

Birth registration	Total (%)			Males (%)			Females (%)		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
Long-distance									
Yes	35.3	46.4	41.4	30.4	41.9	36.9	58.3	80.0	68.2
No	17.6	19.0	18.4	19.6	20.3	20.0	8.3	10.0	9.1
Don't know	47.1	34.5	40.1	50.0	37.8	43.1	33.3	10.0	22.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	68	84	152	56	74	130	12	10	22

FGDs conducted with child porters and parents of child porters confirmed that many child porters have not registered their births. A large number of child porters also said that they did not know whether or not they were registered.

3.1.4 Place of Survey

The greatest proportion of child porters is found in eastern districts (56%), followed by mid- and far-western districts (19%), and central and western districts (16%). Kathmandu Valley has the least (9%). In fact, the overwhelming majority of both long- and short-distance porters and porters under and above 14 years of age come from eastern districts. The East accounts for 70% all child porters under the age of 14, irrespective of gender, and 44% of those over 14. More than half (51%) of short- and 68% of long-distance child porters are from eastern districts (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Region of survey: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

Region of survey	Total (%)			Males (%)			Females (%)		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
Short- and long-distance									
Eastern	70.2	43.5	56.4	71.3	44.6	56.6	67.2	38.1	55.7
Kathmandu Valley	0.4	17.3	9.1	.6	20.2	11.4	0.0	2.4	0.9
Central and western	11.8	19.2	15.6	16.1	20.2	18.3	0.0	14.3	5.7
Mid- and far-western	17.6	20.0	18.9	12.1	15.0	13.7	32.8	45.2	37.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	174	213	387	64	42	106
Short-distance									
Eastern	67.1	35.1	51.0	67.8	34.5	49.8	65.4	37.5	54.8
Kathmandu Valley	.6	25.7	13.2	0.8	30.9	17.1	0.0	3.1	1.2
Central and western	15.9	26.9	21.4	22.9	28.8	26.1	0.0	18.8	7.1
Mid- and far-western	16.5	12.3	14.4	8.5	5.8	7.0	34.6	40.6	36.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	170	171	341	118	139	257	52	32	84
Long-distance									
Eastern	77.9	60.7	68.4	78.6	63.5	70.0	75.0	40.0	59.1
Kathmandu Valley	1.5	3.6	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Central and western	20.6	35.7	28.9	1.8	4.1	3.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mid- and far-western	100.0	100.0	100.0	19.6	32.4	26.9	25.0	60.0	40.9
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	68	84	152	56	74	130	12	10	22

3.1.5 Place of Birth

As Table 3.5 makes clear, the child porters surveyed originated in 40 of Nepal's 75 districts. Most were born in the eastern hills and mountains, with Solukhumbu (12%), Okhaldhunga (11%), Khotang (nearly 10%), and Sindhuli (6%) key source districts. More than one-third of long-distance child porters were born in Solukhumbu, 19% in Kalikot, 12% in Khotang, and 9% in Okhaldhunga. Other districts where many child porters were born include Dolakha (7%), Bhojpur (5%), Baitadi (4%) Rasuwa and Jajarkot (3% each), Ramechhap, Bajura, and Achham. A large number of short-distance child porters were born in Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Sindhuli, Dhankuta and Baitadi districts. Female child porters came mostly from Baitadi (16%), Dhankuta (11%), Okhaldhunga (8.5%) and Khotang (7.5%).

Table 3.5: District of birth: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

District	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
1. Solukhumbu	13.9	10.2	12.0	5.7	13.7	2.3	33.6
2. Okhaldhunga	10.1	11.4	10.8	8.5	11.4	11.7	8.6
3. Khotang	8.8	10.6	9.7	7.5	10.3	8.8	11.8
4. Sindhuli	6.7	5.5	6.1	1.9	7.2	8.8	
5. Baitadi	5.5	6.7	6.1	16.0	3.4	7.0	3.9
6. Kalikot	5.5	6.3	5.9	3.8	6.5		19.1
7. Dhankuta	9.2	2.4	5.7	11.3	4.1	7.9	0.7
8. Udaypur	5.5	3.9	4.7	0.9	5.7	6.7	
9. Dolakha	2.9	5.1	4.1	2.8	4.4	2.9	6.6
10. Bhojpur	5.0	1.6	3.2	5.7	2.6	2.3	5.3
11. Sindhupalchok	2.5	3.9	3.2	4.7	2.8	4.7	
12. Ramechhap	2.5	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.2	2.0
13. Jajarkot	2.1	3.1	2.6	7.5	1.3	2.6	2.6
14. Surkhet	2.5	2.0	2.2	8.5	0.5	3.2	
15. Sunsari	2.5	1.6	2.0	4.7	1.3	2.9	
16. Parbat	2.1	1.6	1.8		2.3	2.6	
17. Rasuwa	0.8	2.4	1.6		2.1	1.2	2.6
18. Gorkha	1.7	1.2	1.4		1.8	2.1	
19. Kaski	0.4	2.4	1.4		1.8	2.1	
20. Dang	2.1	0.8	1.4	1.9	1.3	2.1	
21. Myagdi	1.7	0.8	1.2		1.6	1.8	
22. Palpa		2.4	1.2	4.7	0.3	1.8	
23. Baglung	1.3	0.8	1.0		1.3	1.5	
24. Dhading	0.4	1.2	0.8		1.0	1.2	
25. Makwanpur	0.4	1.2	0.8		1.0	1.2	
26. Lamjung	0.4	1.2	0.8		1.0	1.2	
27. Kavre		1.2	0.6		0.8	0.9	
28. Rupandehi	0.4	0.8	0.6		0.8	0.9	
29. Rolpa	0.8	0.4	0.6		0.8	0.9	
30. Bajura		1.2	0.6		0.8		2.0
31. Nuwakot		0.8	0.4		0.5	0.6	
32. Parsa	0.8		0.4		0.5	0.6	
33. Bardiya		0.8	0.4		0.5	0.6	
34. Achham		0.8	0.4		0.5		1.3
35. Sankhuwasabha	0.4		0.2		0.3	0.3	
36. Tanahau		0.4	0.2		0.3	0.3	
37. Syangja	0.4		0.2		0.3	0.3	
38. Pyuthan		0.4	0.2		0.3	0.3	
39. Banke		0.4	0.2		0.3	0.3	
40. Jumla	.4		0.2	0.9		0.3	
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	106	387	341	152

3.1.6 Current Residence

Most of the child porters surveyed (92%), irrespective of age group, reported that they currently live in places they were born (Table 3.6). However, while the current residence of almost all long-distance porters is where they were born, some short-distance porters, especially those working in Kathmandu Valley and other major urban areas and at highway heads are migrants. (Table 3.6; specific districts are shown in Appendix A.)

Table 3.6: Place of current residence: Percentage of child porters by age and sex

Place of current residence	Total			Males			Females		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
Birthplace	90.3	94.1	92.3	92.0	94.4	93.3	85.9	92.9	88.7
Place other than birthplace	9.7	5.9	7.7	8.0	5.6	6.7	14.1	7.1	11.3
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	174	213	387	64	42	106

3.1.7 Family Composition

Child porters reported that their family members include their fathers and mothers, stepfathers and stepmothers, their own and step-siblings, grandparents, spouses and their own children, and other relatives. While 93% reported that they have a mother at home, just 83% said they had a father, meaning a sizable proportion (17%) are fatherless. About 10% had step-parents. Altogether 89% said that they had their own siblings at home and 13% that they had step-siblings. The data reveals that a remarkable proportion of child porters come from a family in which there are step-parents, step-siblings, sisters-in-law, and nephews. Almost all (98%) are from families with more than one child at home and a few have spouses and their own children at home (3% and 2% respectively). (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7 also indicates that the average family size of child porters (8.3 members) is much higher than the national average (5.3 members). While it does not vary significantly by type of child porters it is higher among male (8.4 members) than female child porters (7.9 members).

Table 3.7: Family members at home and family size: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

Family members at home	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
Father	80.3	84.7	82.6	81.1	82.9	84.2	78.9
Mother	93.3	92.9	93.1	94.3	92.8	91.8	96.1
Spouse	.8	3.9	2.4	.9	2.8	2.1	3.3
Children	.8	1.2	1.0	.9	1.0	.6	2.0
Grandparent(s)	33.2	32.9	33.1	22.6	35.9	34.6	29.6
Brother(s)/sister(s)	97.9	98.8	98.4	97.2	98.7	97.9	99.3
Step-parent(s)	7.1	13.3	10.3	5.7	11.6	12.9	4.6
Step-sibling(s)	12.6	13.3	13.0	11.3	13.4	15.2	7.9
Sister(s)-in-law,							
Nephew(s), niece(s)	14.7	24.7	19.9	13.2	21.7	21.1	17.1
Other relative(s)	6.3	6.7	6.5	2.8	7.5	8.2	2.6
Average family size	8.0	8.6	8.3	7.9	8.4	8.3	8.4

Number of Siblings

As Table 3.8 demonstrates, most child porters have siblings at home. More than half (52.5%) have one or two brothers; 36% have three to four brothers and 8% have five or more brothers. Disaggregating the data by sex, nearly three-quarters (74.5%) of female child porters have one to two brothers while just under half (46.5%) of male child porters do. The average number of sisters that a child porter has is 2.02, with female child porters (2.42) having more than males (1.92). Long-distance child porters have on average more sisters (2.13) than short-distance porters do (1.98). About 10% of child porters reported that they had step-brothers at home and 10% that they had step-sisters.

Table 3.8: Numbers and types of siblings at home: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

Number of siblings	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
Own brothers							
None	3.8	2.7	3.2	4.7	2.8	2.9	3.9
1-2	55.9	49.4	52.5	74.5	46.5	56.0	44.7
3-4	35.3	36.5	35.9	18.9	40.6	34.0	40.1
5 and above	5.0	11.4	8.3	1.9	10.1	7.0	11.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average no.	2.32	2.67	2.50	1.85	2.68	2.41	2.70
Own sisters							
None	15.5	11.8	13.6	8.5	15.0	16.1	7.9
1-2	52.5	52.9	52.7	48.1	54.0	50.7	57.2
3-4	27.3	31.0	29.2	36.8	27.1	28.7	30.3
5 and above	4.6	4.3	4.5	6.6	3.9	4.4	4.6
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average no.	2.00	2.05	2.02	2.42	1.92	1.98	2.13
Step-brothers							
None	89.5	90.2	89.9	91.5	89.4	88.6	92.8
1-2	8.0	7.8	7.9	5.7	8.5	9.1	5.3
3-4	2.5	1.6	2.0	2.8	1.8	2.1	2.0
5 and above		.4	.2		.3	.3	
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average no.	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.20	0.21	0.16
Step-sisters							
None	90.8	90.6	90.7	90.6	90.7	88.6	95.4
1-2	7.6	7.8	7.7	5.7	8.3	9.1	4.6
3-4	1.3	1.2	1.2	3.8	.5	1.8	
5 and above	.4	.4	.4		.5	.6	
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average no.	0.18	0.16	0.17	0.22	0.16	0.21	0.07

Whereabouts of Parents of Child Porters If They Are Not at Home

Child porters whose parents were not at home were asked where their parents were. Of the total of 86 child porters who reported that their biological fathers were not at home, 37% said that they were dead, 33% that they had gone to India, and 12% that they had eloped with a second wife.

Child porters aged 14-17 were more likely than those under 14 to report that their fathers were dead or in India. Disaggregating the data by sex, while nearly 40% male child porters whose fathers were not at home reported that their fathers were dead, just 30% of girls reported this status. About 39% of short-distance child porters reported that their fathers were dead and 24% that they were in India, while the corresponding figures for long-distance child porters were 34% and 47%. (Table 3.9).

As Table 3.9 indicates, of the 34 child porters who reported that their biological mother was not at home, 53% said that she was dead and 53% that she had eloped with another man. While there was no significant variation by the sex of the child porters, 83% of long-distance child porters and 46% of short-distance porters whose mothers were absent said that their mother was dead, and while 43% of short-distance porters said that their mother had eloped, not one long-distance child porter did.

Table 3.9: Whereabouts of father and mother if they are not at home: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
Whereabouts of father							
Dead	34.0	41.0	37.2	30.0	39.4	38.9	34.4
In India	29.8	35.9	32.6	35.0	31.8	24.1	46.9
In another foreign country	10.6	5.1	8.1	5.0	9.1	9.3	6.3
Eloped with a second wife	17.0	5.1	11.6	15.0	10.6	16.7	3.1
In another place in Nepal	8.5	5.1	7.0	10.0	6.1	7.4	6.3
Don't know		7.7	3.5	5.0	3.0	3.7	3.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	47	39	86	20	66	54	32
Whereabouts of mother							
Dead	31.3	72.2	52.9	50.0	53.6	46.4	83.3
Gone abroad for employment	6.3	5.6	5.9		7.1	3.6	16.7
Eloped with a second husband	56.3	16.7	35.3	33.3	35.7	42.9	0.0
In another place in Nepal	6.3	5.6	5.9	16.7	3.6	7.1	
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	16	18	34	6	28	28	6

Inter-Caste and Multiple Marriages of Child Porters' Parents and Living with Stepmothers

Table 3.10 summarizes the incidence of inter-caste and multiple marriages and presence of stepmothers at home. Overall, 6% of child porters have parents of different castes, more among short-distance (8%) than long-distance porters (1%) and more in the East than elsewhere. About 15% of fathers have a second wife, more among short-distance porters (17%), *janajatis* (17%), and child porters working in Kathmandu Valley (29%).

Overall, 4% of the mothers of child porters have a second husband, with higher rates among child porters who are under the age of 14, work short distances, belong to caste groups, and live in the eastern region. Of the 73 child porters who reported that they have stepmothers, 41% said that their stepmothers live at home with them, with rates much higher among boys, child porters aged 14-17, short-distance porters, caste groups, and those who live in the central and western survey region than their counterparts.

Table 3.10: Parental status of child porters: Percentage of child porters with parents of different caste groups and/or multiple marriages and with stepmothers at home

Characteristic	Parents of different caste or ethnic groups	Fathers who have married more than once	Mothers who have married more than once	Stepmother who lives at home with child porter (N = 73)
Sex				
Female	6.6	15.1	3.8	20.0
Male	5.4	15.0	3.9	46.6
Age group				
< 14 years	5.5	15.1	5.9	25.7
14-17 years	5.9	14.9	2.0	55.3
Type				
Short-distance	7.6	17.3	5.3	43.1
Long-distance	1.3	9.9	.7	33.3
Caste/ethnic groups				
Caste group	5.0	11.8	.8	50.0
Janajati	6.8	17.0	6.0	37.8
Dalit	3.7	13.8	1.8	42.9
Region				
Eastern	7.9	16.9	5.4	23.4
Kathmandu Valley		28.9	4.4	53.8
Central and western	5.2	14.3	2.6	90.9
Mid- and far-western	2.2	3.2		100.0
Total	5.7	15.0	3.9	41.1

3.2 Literacy/Educational Status

As shown in Table 3.11, 94% of child porters, regardless of age or gender, were literate and very few had never been to school (less than 2%). Currently 77% of child porters overall and 84% and 71% of those under and over the age of 14 respectively are enrolled in schools. More girls (89%) than boys (74%) were attending school at the time of the survey. Of the 380 currently attending school, 53% were in grades 1-7) and 57% were studying in grade 8 and above). Obviously, more child porters under the age of 14 than above are in the primary and lower secondary levels. There was no difference in educational achievement by gender.

Table 3.11: Literacy and school-going status: Percentage of child porters by age and sex

Category	Both Sex			Males			Females		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
Literacy status									
Literate	93.1	94.4	93.8	94.1	94.9	94.5	96.9	97.6	97.2
Illiterate	6.9	5.6	6.2	5.9	5.1	5.5	3.1	2.4	2.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
School attendance									
Never attended	3.4	3.1	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.1		1.9
Have attended	96.6	96.9	96.8	96.6	96.2	96.4	96.9	100.0	98.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Current schooling									
Going to school	84.0	70.6	77.1	81.6	67.6	73.9	90.6	85.7	88.7
Not going to school	16.0	29.4	22.9	18.4	32.4	26.1	9.4	14.3	11.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Grade completed									
1-7 grade	79.9	22.7	52.6	80.1	23.4	51.4	79.3	19.4	56.4
8 and above	20.1	77.3	47.4	19.9	76.6	48.6	20.7	80.6	43.6
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	199	181	380	141	145	286	58	36	94

3.2.1 Drop-Outs by Grade and Reasons for Dropping Out

A total of 97 of the child porters interviewed (20%), 30 of them under the age of 14 and 87 male, reported that they had dropped out from school. Overall, 70% dropped out before completing their primary education, 66% and 80% of older and younger children respectively.

Table 3.12: Grade dropped out of: Percentage of child porters by age and sex

Grade dropped out of	Both Sex			Males			Females		
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	<14 years	14-17 years	Total
1-5 (primary)	80.0	65.7	70.1	76.9	65.6	69.0	100.0	66.7	80.0
6 and above (secondary)	20.0	34.3	29.9	23.1	34.4	31.0		33.3	20.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	30	67	97	26	61	87	4	6	10

Table 3.13 summarizes the reasons child porters gave for having dropped out of school. The highest proportion said they had dropped out to help with household work (41%). Other reasons include the lack of interest in studying (33%), the fact that their guardians did not send them (11%), the expense (9%), the distance to school (3%), the uselessness of education (2%), and family problems (2%). Except for expense, which 12% of those aged 14-17 and just 3% of those under 14 reported, there is little difference by age group.

With respect to the sex of drop-outs and their reasons for dropping out, more than two-thirds of females dropped out to help with household work, while among boys helping out (36%) and lack of interest (38%) were the main reasons. Among short-distance child porters, helping with household

work (40%), lack of interest (32%), and parental inaction (12%) were the main reasons, while among long-distance child porters, in addition to helping with household work (44%) and lack of interest (35%), the expense (17%) was a key reasons for dropping out.

Table 3.13: Reason for dropping out of school: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

Reason for Dropping out	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
To help with household work	39.5	41.3	40.7	66.7	37.6	40.0	43.5
Not interested in studying	36.8	30.7	32.7	8.3	35.6	32.2	34.8
Guardians did not send	13.2	9.3	10.6	25.0	8.9	12.2	4.3
Too expensive	2.6	12.0	8.8	0.0	9.9	6.7	17.4
School too far away	5.3	1.3	2.7	0	3.0	3.3	0.0
No use of education	0.0	2.7	1.8	0.0	2.0	2.2	0.0
Family problems	2.6	1.3	1.8	0.0	2.0	2.2	0.0
Got a job	0.0	1.3	.9	0.0	1.0	1.1	0.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	38	75	113	12	101	90	23

3.2.2 Desire to Go Back to School and Support Needed

As Table 3.14 shows, of the 113 child porters currently not attending school, just 44% would like to do so, 55% of the younger age group and 39% of the older. Another 13%, twice as many girls (25%) as boys (12%), said that they did not know. With respect to sex, more boys (46.5%) than girls (25%) currently out of school would like to attend school. The majority (47%) of short-distance child porters would like to attend school, but the majority of long-distance child porters (52%) would not.

Those who did wish to go to school (50 altogether) were asked where they would like to go to school. They majority reported they would like to attend school in their own village but 40% said that they would like to attend a school in an urban area.

Table 3.14: Desire to attend school and type of school desired: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and types of portering

Characteristic	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
Desire to go to school							
Yes	55.3	38.7	44.2	25.0	46.5	46.7	34.8
No	31.6	48.0	42.5	50.0	41.6	40.0	52.2
Don't know	13.2	13.3	13.3	25.0	11.9	13.3	13.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	38	75	113	12	101	90	23
Preference for school							
School in own village	42.9	48.3	46.0	66.7	44.7	42.9	62.5
School in another village	19.0	10.3	14.0		14.9	14.3	12.5
School in urban area	38.1	41.4	40.0	33.3	40.4	42.9	25.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	21	29	50	3	47	42	8

3.3 Family Economic Situation

Housing Conditions

All of the indicators of housing conditions shown in Table 3.15—ownership, quality, number of rooms and stories, and separate kitchen—reveal that most child porters live in poor quality houses. In terms of house ownership, a considerable proportion of families (12%) own no house at all; they either rent rooms or are squatters on someone else's land. Of those who do have houses, nearly two-thirds have poor quality houses, meaning they have thatched roofs and mud-mortar stone walls rather than being built of brick and cement. Most child porters (84%) live in homes with more than two stories but 72% do not have a separate kitchen and the median number of rooms is two, meaning that half live in home with more than two rooms and half in homes with less than two rooms.

Table 3.15: Housing conditions: Percentage of child porters by selected characteristics

Characteristics	Ownership of house		Quality of house		Median no. of rooms	Number of storeys		Kitchen facility	
	Yes	No	Good	Poor		Two or more	Only one	Separate	Not separate
Sex									
Female	82.1	17.9	47.2	52.8	3	85.8	14.2	31.1	68.9
Male	89.7	10.3	31.8	68.2	2	83.5	16.5	26.9	73.1
Age group									
<14 years	84.5	15.5	33.2	66.8	2	81.5	18.5	22.3	77.7
14-17 years	91.4	8.6	36.9	63.1	2	86.3	13.7	32.9	67.1
Type									
Short-distance	85.6	14.4	36.4	63.6	2	85.0	15.0	33.7	66.3
Long-distance	93.4	6.6	32.2	67.8	2	81.6	18.4	14.5	85.5
Caste/ethnic groups									
Caste groups	93.3	6.7	49.6	50.4	3	93.3	6.7	38.7	61.3
<i>Janajatis</i>	90.6	9.4	30.2	69.8	2	79.6	20.4	23.0	77.0
Dalits	76.1	23.9	31.2	68.8	2	84.4	15.6	27.5	72.5
Region									
Eastern	89.9	10.1	18.3	81.7	2	79.1	20.9	17.3	82.7
Kathmandu Valley	95.6	4.4	22.2	77.8	2	88.9	11.1	48.9	51.1
Central and western	80.5	19.5	66.2	33.8	2	85.7	14.3	46.8	53.2
Mid- and far- western	84.9	15.1	65.6	34.4	3	94.6	5.4	33.3	66.7
Total %	88.0	12.0	35.1	64.9	2	84.0	16.0	27.8	72.2
Total no.	434	59	173	320		414	79	137	356

Landholding Status

Most child porters own some land but 12% are landless (Table 3.16). Landlessness varies by the characteristics of the child porters surveyed. For example, nearly 20% of female child porters but only 10% of males are from landless families, and three times more short- than long-distance child porters are landless (15% versus 5%). Among Dalit child porters, 22%, three times the rate among caste groups and twice that among *janajatis*, are landless. In terms of the regions surveyed, rates of landlessness range from nearly 20% in central and western districts to just 2% in Kathmandu Valley.

Table 3.16 : Land ownership: Percentage of child porters by selected characteristics

Characteristic	Ownership of land			
	Own some land	Landless	Total %	Total no.
Sex				
Female	80.2	19.8	100.0	106
Male	90.2	9.8	100.0	387
Age group				
<14 years	86.1	13.9	100.0	238
14-17 years	89.8	10.2	100.0	255
Type				
Short-distance	85.0	15.0	100.0	341
Long-distance	94.7	5.3	100.0	152
Caste/ethnic group				
Caste groups	92.4	7.6	100.0	119
Janajatis	90.2	9.8	100.0	265
Dalits	78.0	22.0	100.0	109
Region				
Eastern	90.3	9.7	100.0	278
Kathmandu Valley	97.8	2.2	100.0	45
Central and western	80.5	19.5	100.0	77
Mid- and far-western	82.8	17.2	100.0	93
Total	88.0	12.0	100.0	493

Livestock

Table 3.17 shows that 80.5% of the families of child porters have at least one cow or ox, 47% have at least one buffalo, 68% at least one sheep or goats, and 33% at least one pig. However, 9% have no livestock at all. Female child porters are more likely than males not to have livestock (14% versus 8%), as are younger porters versus older (10% versus 9%), short- versus long-distance (13% versus 1%), Dalits versus caste groups (23% versus 3%), and porters in central and western districts (22%) versus those in other regions.

Table 3.17: Possession of livestock: Percentage of families of child porters with livestock by selected characteristics

Characteristic	Cow/Ox	Buffalo	Sheep/Goat	Pig	None
Sex					
Female	68.9	27.4	65.1	25.5	14.2
Male	83.7	52.7	69.0	35.1	8.0
Age group					
<14 years	77.7	39.5	64.3	35.3	10.1
14-17 years	83.1	54.5	71.8	31.0	8.6
Total					
Type					
Short-distance	75.1	44.9	66.9	30.8	12.9
Long-distance	92.8	52.6	71.1	38.2	1.3
Caste/ethnic groups					
Caste groups	90.8	63.0	89.1	4.2	3.4
Janajatis	83.4	47.5	64.9	47.2	6.4
Dalits	62.4	29.4	53.2	30.3	22.9
Region					
Eastern	86.0	51.8	64.0	48.2	4.3
Kathmandu Valley	88.9	77.8	75.6	40.0	4.4
Central and western	63.6	22.1	67.5	10.4	22.1
Mid-and far-western	74.2	39.8	77.4	3.2	16.1
Total	80.5	47.3	68.2	33.1	9.3

Household Amenities

Table 3.18 shows what percentage of child porters reported that their families owned household assets such as radios, televisions, telephones, and sewing machines. The first three are important sources of information and communication while the last is a major source of income and self-employment in rural areas of Nepal. About 71% own a radio and 45% have a telephone or mobile but just 13% have a television and even fewer (4%) have a sewing machine. Nearly one-fifth of all families have none of these four assets, with higher proportions among the families of female child porters (34.5%), child porters under 14 (26%), long-distance porters (24%), Dalits (31%), and porters in the mid- and far-western districts (33%). The data suggests that child porters belong to poor families that lack basic assets needed for information, communication, and income generation.

Table 3.18: Possession of household assets: Percentage of child porters by selected characteristics

Characteristics	Radio/cassette player	Television	Telephone/mobile	Sewing machine	No assets at all
Sex					
Female	60.4	15.1	42.5	7.5	24.5
Male	74.4	12.7	45.5	2.8	18.6
Age group					
<14 years	63.0	12.6	40.3	4.6	26.1
14-17 years.	79.2	13.7	49.0	3.1	14.1
Type					
Short-distance	73.0	18.2	49.6	4.4	18.2
Long-distance	67.8	2.0	34.2	2.6	23.7
Caste/ethnic group					
Caste groups	81.5	12.6	56.3	2.5	11.8
Janajatis	74.3	14.7	45.7	2.3	18.9
Dalits	53.2	10.1	30.3	9.2	31.2
Region					
Eastern	68.3	9.0	42.8	2.9	20.9
Kathmandu Valley	82.2	17.8	57.8	6.7	11.1
Central and western	88.3	28.6	62.3	2.6	5.2
Mid- and far-western	61.3	10.8	30.1	6.5	33.3
Total	71.4	13.2	44.8	3.9	19.9

Main and Secondary Occupations of Households

Table 3.19 lays out the main and secondary occupations of the families of child porters. A family's main occupation is defined as that occupation on which the family depends for its survival for most of the year while a secondary occupation is any occupation from which a family earns extra income. The main occupation of the overwhelming majority of child porters, irrespective of age, sex or type, is agriculture. Agricultural wage labor, self-employment in non-agricultural sectors, and portering are other important main economic activities, all activities which are time-consuming but not well-remunerated.

Agricultural wage labor was reported to be the secondary occupation of all of the families of child porters, irrespective of the age, sex or type of child porter. Nearly 10% of child porters reported that their family's secondary occupation was portering, and almost none said that work in the service sector was a secondary occupation.

Table 3.19: Main and secondary occupations of families: Percentage of child porters by age, sex, and type of portering

Occupation	Age group			Sex		Type	
	<14 years	14-17 years	Total	Female	Male	Short-distance	Long-distance
Main occupation							
Own agriculture	87.8	91.4	89.7	83.0	91.5	85.3	99.3
Agricultural wage labor	6.7	3.9	5.3	10.4	3.9	7.6	0.0
Self employment in non-agricultural sectors	2.5	2.7	2.6	4.7	2.1	3.8	0.0
Labor in non-agricultural sectors	1.3	1.2	1.2	0.0	1.6	1.5	0.7
Portering	1.7	0.8	1.2	1.9	1.0	1.8	0.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	106	387	341	152
Secondary occupations							
Own agriculture	0.0	1.6	0.8	0.0	1.0	1.2	0.0
Agricultural labor	53.8	44.3	48.9	38.7	51.7	49.6	47.4
Self employment in non-agricultural sectors	13.4	16.9	15.2	19.8	14.0	17.9	9.2
Labor in non-agricultural sectors	22.7	25.9	24.3	33.0	22.0	20.2	33.6
Portering	8.8	11.4	10.1	7.5	10.9	10.9	8.6
Service	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.7
Others	0.8	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	493	106	387	341	152

Food Security Situation

Table 3.20 shows the number of months that the families of child porters are food sufficient from their main occupation. About 14% can produce or buy food for not more than three months of a typical year while 38% have enough food for just four to six months. This means that slightly more than half of all child porters' families have food deficiencies of half a year or more when only their main occupation is considered. Clearly, these are extremely poor families.

Food sufficiency status varies across certain selected characteristics of the child porters interviewed. The proportion of child porters with less than or equal to three months of food sufficiency (extremely poor families) is almost double among females versus males (23% versus 12%), short-distance versus long-distance (17% versus 9%), and Dalits versus caste groups (21% versus 13%). Child porters enumerated in central and western districts are more than four times as likely to have food for three months or less than those enumerated in Kathmandu Valley (29% versus 7%).

Table 3.20: Months of food sufficiency from their family's main source of occupation: Percentage of child porters by selected characteristics

Characteristic/ Months of food security	3 months or less	4-6 months	7-12 months	Total %	Total no.
Sex					
Female	22.6	36.8	40.6	100.0	106
Male	12.1	38.8	49.1	100.0	387
Age group					
<14 years	16.8	39.9	43.3	100.0	238
14-17 years	12.2	36.9	51.0	100.0	255
Type					
Short-distance	16.7	36.7	46.6	100.0	341
Long-distance	9.2	42.1	48.7	100.0	152
Caste/ethnic group					
Caste groups	10.1	37.0	52.9	100.0	119
Janajatis	13.6	35.5	50.9	100.0	265
Dalits	21.1	46.8	32.1	100.0	109
Region					
Eastern	8.3	39.9	51.8	100.0	278
Kathmandu Valley	6.7	42.2	51.1	100.0	45
Central and western	28.6	37.7	33.8	100.0	77
Mid- and far-western	24.7	32.3	43.0	100.0	93
Total	14.4	38.3	47.3	100.0	493

Household Loans

As Table 3.21 shows, 48% of child porters reported that their households had taken a loan and 28% said that they did not know. The proportion in debt was much higher among boys, porters aged 14-17 years, long-distance porters, caste group porters, and porters enumerated in Kathmandu Valley than among their counterparts. The majority reported that their households had received loans from informal channels such as money lenders (55%) and relatives (22%) but formal channels such as micro-credit banks (13%) and cooperatives (10%) were also important sources of loans.

Table 3.21: Family indebtedness and source of loan: Percentage of child porters by selected characteristics

Characteristic	Indebtedness				Source of loan				
	Yes	No	Don't know	Total	Bank cooperative	Savings-credit	lender	Money Relatives	Total
Sex									
Female	38.7	39.6	21.7	100.0	12.2	26.8	51.2	9.8	100.0
Male	50.9	27.1	22.0	100.0	9.1	10.7	55.3	24.9	100.0
Age group									
<14 years	41.6	25.2	33.2	100.0	10.1	15.2	54.5	20.2	100.0
14-17 years	54.5	34.1	11.4	100.0	9.4	12.2	54.7	23.7	100.0
Type									
Short-distance	46.6	33.1	20.2	100.0	13.2	15.1	54.7	17.0	100.0
Long-distance	52.0	22.4	25.7	100.0	2.5	10.1	54.4	32.9	100.0
Caste/ethnic group									
Caste groups	52.1	36.1	11.8	100.0	9.7	17.7	50.0	22.6	100.0
Janajatis	47.2	26.0	26.8	100.0	11.2	13.6	57.6	17.6	100.0

Dalits	46.8	32.1	21.1	100.0	5.9	7.8	52.9	33.3	100.0
Region									
Eastern	49.6	16.2	34.2	100.0	5.8	18.1	58.0	18.1	100.0
Kathmandu Valley	64.4	28.9	6.7	100.0	20.7	3.4	62.1	13.8	100.0
Central and western	49.4	42.9	7.8	100.0	23.7	13.2	34.2	28.9	100.0
Mid- and far-western	35.5	60.2	4.3	100.0		3.0	57.6	39.4	100.0
Total	48.3	29.8	21.9	100.0	9.7	13.4	54.6	22.3	100.0

Source of Drinking Water and Access to Toilets

Table 3.22 presents the percentage of child porters who have access to safe drinking water and toilet facilities. Sources of safe drinking water include piped water and hand pumps, whether private or public. Unsafe sources include wells, ponds, rivers and streams.

Table 3.22: Access to safe drinking water and toilet facilities: Percentage of child porters by , selected characteristics

Characteristic	Availability of safe drinking water		Availability of toilet		No.
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Sex					
Female	84.0	16.0	62.3	37.7	106
Male	75.7	24.3	63.6	36.4	387
Age group					
<14 years	74.4	25.6	58.8	41.2	238
14-17 years	80.4	19.6	67.5	32.5	255
Type					
Short-distance	82.1	17.9	61.6	38.4	341
Long-distance	67.1	32.9	67.1	32.9	152
Caste/ethnic group					
Caste groups	84.0	16.0	79.0	21.0	119
Janaajatis	77.0	23.0	63.8	36.2	265
Dalits	71.6	28.4	45.0	55.0	109
Region					
Eastern	75.2	24.8	64.0	36.0	278
Kathmandu Valley	84.4	15.6	55.6	44.4	45
Central and western	83.1	16.9	68.8	31.2	77
Mid- and far-western	76.3	23.7	60.2	39.8	93
Total	77.5	22.5	63.3	36.7	493

More than three-quarters (77.5%) of child porters have access to safe drinking water sources but 22.5% rely on unsafe sources. In the survey sample, more males than females, younger child porters than older child porters, more long-distance than short-distance porters, more Dalits than other groups, and more child porters from the East than other regions rely on unsafe sources of drinking water.

Nearly 38% of the families of child porters have no toilet facility. The exact proportion varies across age group, type of portering done, social groups, and survey regions.

3.4 Social Infrastructures in the Place of Origin

Child porters were asked whether they have schools in their own ward or village. As Table 3.23 shows, nearly 85% have a primary school in their own ward with more males than females, more *Janajatis* than Dalits and caste groups, and more child porters in the central and western region than other regions thus facilitated.

Respectively, 69% and 67% of child porters reported that there were lower-secondary and secondary schools in their villages, but only 29% and 6% respectively said that there were higher secondary and vocational and technical schools in their villages¹⁴.

Table 3.23: Availability of schools in the village: Percentage of child porters reporting, according to the selected characteristics

Characteristics	Primary school in own ward	Lower secondary school in village	Secondary school in village	Higher secondary school in village	Vocational and technical school in village
Sex					
Female	74.5	62.3	67.0	23.6	5.7
Male	87.3	70.8	67.2	30.7	6.2
Age group					
<14 years	83.2	70.6	63.4	24.4	4.6
14-17 years	85.9	67.5	70.6	33.7	7.5
Caste/ethnic group					
Caste groups	83.2	55.5	69.7	20.2	2.5
<i>Janajatis</i>	89.1	75.5	63.8	29.1	7.5
Dalits	75.2	67.9	72.5	39.4	6.4
Region					
Eastern	90.3	76.6	62.2	22.3	0.7
Kathmandu Valley	88.9	68.9	82.2	48.9	2.2
Central and western	94.8	79.2	83.1	55.8	33.8
Mid- and far-western	57.0	37.6	61.3	18.3	1.1
Total	84.6	69.0	67.1	29.2	6.1

3.5 Migration and Children's Entry into the Portering Sector

Portering is seen as an entry point for children into the labor market as a whole, including various forms of informal labor, among them the worst forms of child labor. Studies show that the rural areas of hill districts, mostly in the eastern and mid- and far-western regions supply the major portion of child porters, who are employed either in major cities or market centres, district headquarters, bus and truck parks, transit areas, or along walking routes (KC et al., 2001). In fact, most of the child porters in such places are believed to be migrants. The obvious push factors in the place of origin include household poverty, parental ignorance, the inability to meet the costs of school, consumer goods like cosmetics and mobile phones and new clothing, a child-unfriendly school environment, and portering being a family occupation. The pull factors in the place of destination include the ease with which work is found, the desire to see marketplaces and motor vehicles, and the desire for a job which provides instant cash-in-hand.

¹⁴ Village schools are classified as follows: primary schools offer classes up to grade 5; lower secondary, up to grade 8; secondary, up to grade 10; and higher secondary, up to 10+2 (grades 11 and 12).

This assessment defines a child as a migrant if his or her district of birth is different from the district where he or she was residing at the time of this survey¹⁵. Under this definition, 33%, or 160 of the 493 child porters interviews, is a migrant (Table 3.24). More older children (40%) than younger (25%) are migrants. Similarly, short-distance, male, and out-of-school child porters are more likely to be migrants than long-distance, female, and school-going migrants. Other differences include the fact that *Janajati* child porters are more likely than Dalits and caste groups to be migrants, as are child porters from dysfunctional families. All child porters, irrespective of age group, who work in Kathmandu Valley are migrants but only 9% of child porters of both age groups in the mid and far-western regions are (Table 3.24).

Table 3.24: Migration Status: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Non-migrants	Migrants	No.	Non-migrants	Migrants	No.	Non-migrants	Migrants	No.
Type of portering									
Short-distance	75.3	24.7	170	54.4	45.6	171	64.8	35.2	341
Long-distance	75.0	25.0	68	72.6	27.4	84	73.7	26.3	152
Sex									
Female	81.3	18.8	64	76.2	23.8	42	79.2	20.8	106
Male	73.0	27.0	174	57.3	42.7	213	64.3	35.7	387
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste Group	83.7	16.3	49	60.0	40.0	70	69.7	30.3	119
<i>Janajatis</i>	69.0	31.0	126	56.1	43.9	139	62.3	37.7	265
Dalits	81.0	19.0	63	73.9	26.1	46	78.0	22.0	109
Currently attending school									
Yes	74.5	25.5	200	61.1	38.9	180	68.2	31.8	380
No	78.9	21.1	38	58.7	41.3	75	65.5	34.5	113
Family condition									
Normal	77.6	22.4	183	63.4	36.6	194	70.3	29.7	377
Dysfunctional	67.3	32.7	55	50.8	49.2	61	58.6	41.4	116
Region									
Eastern	71.3	28.7	167	66.7	33.3	111	69.4	30.6	278
Kathmandu Valley		100.0	1		100.0	44		100.0	45
Central and western	75.0	25.0	28	69.4	30.6	49	71.4	28.6	77
Mid- and far-western	92.9	7.1	42	90.2	9.8	51	91.4	8.6	93
Total	75.2	24.8	238	60.4	39.6	255	67.5	32.5	493

The study team made an attempt to identify core and periphery regions and districts in terms of sending and receiving child porters. Districts in which 10 or more child porters were interviewed were classified as core sending districts, while those which 10 or more children reported as their birthplace were categorized as core receiving districts. In the porter-receiving market centres, transit areas and traveling routes of 31 districts, the study team discovered that child porters originated from 43 districts. Except for Kaski, Surkhet and Kalikot and Kathmandu Valley, all core receiving districts are in the East (Table 3.25). The three districts in Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur) only receive child porters; they do not export them. The sources for hill porters in Kathmandu Valley are in the east (Okhaldhunga, Udayapur, Sindhuli, Ramechap and Dolakha), in the west (Rolpa and Bardiya), and adjoining districts (Sindhupalchok, Kavre, Nuwakot, Dhading, and Makwanpur). The core sending districts all lie in the eastern mountains and hills.

¹⁵ The national-level definition of migration, which defines a migrant in terms of the duration of his or her absence from home (at least six months) is not used. Any child who is living away from his/her home district regardless of the time spent away is considered a migrant.

Table 3.25: Classification of Survey Districts as Net Child Porter Sending, Receiving or Balanced Districts and as Core or Periphery Districts

Net sending districts		Net receiving districts		Balanced districts	
Core	Periphery	Core	Periphery	Core	Periphery
Bhojpur, Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Sindhuli, Dolakha, Sindhupalchok	Sankhuwasabha, Nuwakot, Dhading, Makwanpur, Lamjung, Syangja, Parbat, Pyuthan, Dang, Rolpa, Banke, Bardiya, Jumla, Bajura, Achham	Sunsari, Dhankuta, Udayapur, Ramechhap, Lalitpur, Kathmandu, Kaski, Surkhet, Kalikot	Kavre, Bhaktapur, Tanahun, Gorkha, Myagdi, Palpa, Rupandehi	Jajarkot, Baitadi	Rasuwa, Parsa, Baglung

Those factors which attract children into portering, often seen in contrast with the hardships or detractions of their place of birth are pull factors, while those, like family and economic problems, that compel children to work as porters are considered push factors. FGDs, group discussions with adult porters, and KIIs revealed that the following push and pull factors are at play in determining whether a child gets involved in portering.

Push factors	Pull factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family poverty coupled with large family size, - Portering as family profession, - Dysfunctional family and pressure of step -parents, - Peer pressure and company, - Frequent failure in school and unpleasant school environment, - Need to meet personal and family expenses, - Emergence of short-term opportunities, primarily the development of transit points, river crossings¹⁶ and road heads (Box 3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ease in entering the occupation, - Chance to shift to other sectors of occupation like the transport sector, - Ability to buy goods desired, like mobile phones and recharge cards, cosmetics and new clothes, - Opportunity to see new places, motor vehicles, and market centres and to learn new things, - Pleasure of working in a group and competing with other group members (Box 1), - Ability to make money for personal use and to buy school materials - Ability to live freely, without the burdens of family responsibilities and studies.

¹⁶ In places where there are no motorable bridges, goods are unloaded on one riverbank, carried across to the opposite bank either in boats or by suspension bridge, and loaded in the waiting vehicles.

Box 3: Pushed by the opportunity and pulled by the pleasure of competition

Children from Okhaldhunga, Udayapur and Khotang districts migrate to Ghurmi and Jayaram Ghat of Udayapur District to unload and carry goods across the Sunkosi River from the Tarai region and reload them on the opposite bank to be transported to Okhaldhunga, Khotang and Solukhumbu districts. Once the motorable bridge is completed, however, this opportunity for children to work is likely to move or cease altogether. A similar opportunity exists in Khurkot of Sindhuli. Children carry construction materials and food items across a suspension bridge and get instant cash-in-hand for each job. To maximize their earnings, children compete with each other, running back and forth with loads. Informants believe that the exhilaration of this competition attracts children again and again after they first experience it.

3.6 Social Networks and Work Histories

Social networks can serve to introduce a child to portering if it is the occupation of relatives, neighbors, or peers in the community or at school. Most qualitative responses revealed that children who work as porters in market centres come either with family members (fathers or siblings) or with adult porters from their village or neighborhood. Children who work in transit areas or along long-distance routes work mostly with children from their own village, family members, and friends (mostly school friends in school uniforms).

The data presented in Table 3.26 reveals that 55% of all child porters and 58% and 53% of those under and over 14 respectively reported that an adult family member also worked as a porter.

Table 3. 26: Adult Family Members in Portering: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		Total	
	% working	No. working	% working	No. working	% working	No. working
Type of portering						
Short-distance	51.8	170	48.5	171	50.1	341
Long-distance	72.1	68	61.9	84	66.4	152
Sex						
Female	73.4	64	73.8	42	73.6	106
Male	51.7	174	48.8	213	50.1	387
Currently attending school						
Yes	59.0	200	55.6	180	57.4	380
No	50.0	38	46.7	75	47.8	113
Family condition						
Normal	60.7	183	54.1	194	57.3	377
Dysfunctional	47.3	55	49.2	61	48.3	116
Caste/ethnicity						
Caste group	57.1	49	54.3	70	55.5	119
Janajatis	52.4	126	48.9	139	50.6	265
Dalits	68.3	63	63.0	46	66.1	109
Region						
Eastern	54.5	167	52.3	111	53.6	278
Kathmandu Valley		1.0	43.2	44	42.2	45
Central and western	39.3	28	32.7	49	35.1	77
Mid- and far-western	83.3	42	82.4	51	82.8	93
Total	57.6	238	52.9	255	55.2	493

Irrespective of age, long-distance child porters are more likely to report that adult family members work in portering than short-distance porters are as are female over male and school-going over out-of school child porters. By ethnicity, more Dalit child porters, especially those under 14, reported that adult family members are porters than did *jana-jatis* or caste groups. More children from normal than dysfunctional families reported that adult family members were porters and about 83% of child porters of both age groups from the mid- and far-western regions came from portering families.

Irrespective of most other characteristics (age, gender, type of portering, ethnicity, family condition, and region), in 51% of cases it is the child porter's own or step-parent who is a porter, followed in frequency by a sibling or other relative.

Almost all child and adult porters and key informants claimed that children were involved in portering either because it was an alternative means of family survival or because villagers or friends were involved. Observations of different market centres in Kathmandu Valley revealed that porters live and search for work in groups, either of family members or fellow villagers. While they porter a load alone, they find jobs and negotiate the terms of work and payment together. About 83% of all porters in urban centres came with family members, friends, or fellow villagers. They have created their own systems of safeguarding each other and their domains of work.

For instance, in Kalimati vegetable market, the study team came across a group of child porters who had come from Rolpa with family members or fellow villagers after taking their final exams at the end of Chaitra in 2067¹⁷. They were closely acquainted with porters of the same area and district. The child porters in Chabel and Koteshwor, in contrast, were from Dolakha, Ramechhap and Okhaldhunga districts; they also lived and worked as family and village units and restricted others from entering their self-constructed work domain and social network.

To understand the role of social networking in children's engagement in portering, both the structured interview and the checklists of FGDs and KIIs asked who had first introduced child porters to portering. About 54% and 48% of child porters under the age of 14 and aged 14-17 respectively said that their own parents or other adult family members, including elder siblings, were responsible (Table 3.27).

¹⁷ Chaitra is the 12th month of Nepal's lunar calendar. It falls between mid-March and mid-April. The year 2067 BS is in the Nepali calendar Bikram Sambat and corresponds to the Gregorian year of 2011.

Table 3.27: Person Responsible for Introducing Surveyed Child Porters to Portering: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	>14 years				14-17 years			
	Own family	Villagers/Friends	Self	Total no.	Own family	Villagers/Friends	Self	Total no.
Type								
Short-distance	48.9	18.2	33.0	88	49.4	32.5	18.1	83
Long-distance	63.3	34.7	2.0	49	46.2	48.1	5.8	52
Sex								
Female	57.4	17.0	25.5	47	45.2	41.9	12.9	31
Male	52.2	27.8	20.0	90	49.0	37.5	13.5	104
Currently attending school								
Yes	55.1	24.6	20.3	118	51.0	36.0	13.0	100
No	47.4	21.1	31.6	19	40.0	45.7	14.3	35
Family condition								
Normal	55.0	22.5	22.5	111	49.5	36.2	14.3	105
Dysfunctional	50.0	30.8	19.2	26	43.3	46.7	10.0	30
Caste/ethnicity								
Caste group	39.3	35.7	25.0	28	55.3	42.1	2.6	38
Janajatis	53.0	21.2	25.8	66	45.6	35.3	19.1	68
Dalits	65.1	20.9	14.0	43	44.8	41.4	13.8	29
Region								
Eastern	41.8	25.3	33.0	91	31.0	39.7	29.3	58
Kathmandu Valley	-	-	-	0	78.9	21.1	-	19
Central and western	72.7	27.3	-	11	50.0	50.0	-	16
Mid- and far-western	80.0	20.0	-	35	57.1	40.5	2.4	42
Total	54.0	24.1	21.9	137	48.1	38.5	13.3	135

About 39% of child porters aged 14-17 years and 24% of those under 14 said that villagers or friends had first introduced them to portering, but, surprisingly, more children under the age of 14 (22%) than those aged 14-17 (13%) said that they had gotten involved on their own. Regardless of the variable considered⁵, it was family members rather than friends or villagers or child porters' own initiatives that saw child porters begin portering. This fact makes it clear that children work as porters to contribute to their family's survival. Indeed, most adult porters and school teachers recognize that in rural areas children first carry loads with either their own family members or fellow villagers and that in rural areas portering by children is a means of earning a livelihood and a way of learning a future occupation.

The study team inquired whether child porters had come directly to portering or if they had first been involved in another worst form of child labor. As Table 3.28 indicates, 92% of all child porters (95% of those under 14 and 89% of those aged 14 and older) had done no other work than schoolwork (48%) and household chores (44%) before they began portering. Just 4% and 11% of those under and above 14 years of age respectively (8% overall) had been involved in a different type of portering (short instead of long or vice versa) or in another form of wage labor (4% each for children of all ages) before their current job. Although just 8% of all child porters had worked elsewhere first, the proportion was significantly higher among those from dysfunctional families and those who were out

¹⁸ Except for child porters aged 14-17 who are from dysfunctional families, who work long-distance routes or who are out of school.

of school. Age disparities were also conspicuous: among older children, long-distance porters and those working in Kathmandu Valley were more likely to have done other work, while among younger children those in central and western regions were more likely to have been previously employed. (Table 3.28.)

The fact that many short-distance porters in Kathmandu Valley had earlier worked as long-distance porters is not surprising as all of them are migrants from hill and mountain districts, where long-distance is prevalent. In fact, long-distance portering seems to be an entry point for rural children to get involved in other worst forms of work. In particular, these child porters would like to become transport workers, helping tractor or truck drivers, and, ultimately, to become drivers (Box 4).

Table 3.28: Previous Work Involved In: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years				14-17 years				Total	
	School only	Helped family	Child labor	Total no.	School only	Helped family	Child labor	Total no.	Child labor	Total no.
Type										
Short-distance	51.8	43.5	4.7	170	45.6	45.0	9.4	171	7.0	341
Long-distance	50.0	47.1	2.9	68	42.9	42.9	14.3	84	9.2	152
Sex										
Female	43.8	54.7	1.6	64	35.7	54.8	9.5	42	4.7	106
Male	54.0	40.8	5.2	174	46.5	42.3	11.3	213	8.5	387
Currently attending school										
Yes	55.5	41.0	3.5	200	47.8	45.0	7.2	180	5.3	380
No	28.9	63.2	7.9	38	37.3	42.7	20.0	75	15.9	113
Caste/ethnicity										
Caste groups	49.0	44.9	6.1	49	45.7	44.3	10.0	70	8.4	119
Janajatis	52.4	43.7	4.0	126	45.3	43.9	10.8	139	7.5	265
Dalits	50.8	46.0	3.2	63	41.3	45.7	13.0	46	7.3	109
Family condition										
Normal	53.0	44.8	2.2	183	45.9	45.9	8.2	194	5.3	377
Dysfunctional	45.5	43.6	10.9	55	41.0	39.3	19.7	61	15.5	116
Region										
Eastern	53.3	44.3	2.4	167	38.7	51.4	9.9	111	5.4	278
Kathmandu Valley	100.0	0.0	0.0	1	38.6	43.2	18.2	44	17.8	45
Central and western	67.9	21.4	10.7	28	71.4	18.4	10.2	49	10.4	77
Mid- and far-western	31.0	61.9	7.1	42	37.3	54.9	7.8	51	7.5	93
Total	51.3	44.5	4.2	238	44.7	44.3	11.0	255	7.7	493

Box 4: With a chance to be a driver in the future, why rejoin school?

During his structured interview and informal chat, 16-year-old X. Rai, a porter in Okhaldhunga Bazar, showed a strong desire to rejoin school in order to finish his education and be a successful man in the future. The study team member who interviewed him encouraged him to continue his education. But the very next day after the interview, X. Rai was sitting beside the driver of a tractor and called out to the study team member, “Look, Sir, I got job on a tractor [as an assistant].” When the study team member asked him about continuing his education, he replied, “Why go to school? Now I have the chance to be a driver and earn money”.

3.7 Working Conditions of Child Porters

This section discusses a wide variety of work-related matters, including how long child porters had worked as porters and what age they had begun; the nature of work agreements; the types of work they did and the nature and weights of the loads they carried in general and the maximum weight ever carried; average daily working hours and the time taken to complete the current job; experiences of hazards in carrying heavy loads, including falls and injuries; the method and rate of wage payment; savings; expenditure and sufficiency of earnings; psychological and physical abuse; relationships with employers/service users; and social security.

3.7.1 Age of Entry into and Number of Months in Portering

Each interviewee was asked how old he or she was when he or she began portering and how long (in years, months and days) he or she had been a porter in order to assess their exposure to the hazards associated with carrying loads, including the retardation and suppression of growth, the trade-off between education and work, and the gradual development of bad personal habits like smoking and drinking.

As Table 3.29 reveals, on average children under the age of 14 started portering at the age of 11.5 years; while the median age is 12, meaning half began before this age and half after it. The average age of first entry into portering among those aged 14-17 years is 13.7 and the median is 14. Overall, irrespective of age, the average age a child first carried loads was 12.6 and the median, 13. Comparing other variables, short-distance porters enter the field later than long-distance porters, as do males in comparison to females. In terms of region, those in the mid- and far-western regions begin earliest, followed by those in the eastern region.

Table 3.29: Mean and Median Ages of Child Porters at the Start of Portering by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.
Type									
Short-distance	11.6	12	170	14.1	14	171	12.8	13	341
Long-distance	11.4	11	68	12.9	13	84	12.2	12	152
Sex									
Female	11.3	11	64	12.9	13	42	11.9	12	106
Male	11.6	12	174	13.8	14	213	12.8	13	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	11.5	12	200	13.7	14	180	12.6	12	380
No	11.6	12	38	13.6	14	75	12.9	13	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	11.3	11	49	13.0	13	70	12.3	12	119
Janajatis	11.7	12	126	14.2	15	139	13.0	13	265
Dalits	11.3	11	63	13.0	13	46	12.0	12	109
Family condition									
Normal	11.6	12	183	13.6	14	194	12.6	13	377
Dysfunctional	11.2	11	55	13.8	14	61	12.6	12	116
Region									
Eastern	11.6	12	167	13.8	14	111	12.5	12	278
Kathmandu Valley	13.0	13	1	14.5	15	44	14.4	15	45
Central and western	12.2	12	28	14.6	15	49	13.7	14	77
Mid- and far-western	10.8	11	42	11.8	12	51	11.3	11	93
Total	11.5	12	238	13.7	14	255	12.6	13	493

Irrespective of age group, the youngest ages of entry were seven and eight in long- and short-distance portering respectively. Long-distance child porters begin portering either to help their parents or to make some pocket money for their own use (Box 5). Child and adult porters who participated in group discussions said that child porters began at the age of 11 or 12.

Box 5: Very young children carry goods to help their parents and make some pocket money

Seven-year-old M. Sunar of Vartha, Kalikot, was found in Jitegadha carrying 15 kg of consumer goods en route to her village with her father. On the top of the load, she carried food to eat on the way back and clothes for both her and her father. Her father said she was helping him by carrying the food and clothes they needed while traveling and spending nights along the route and that she would make some pocket money that she could use to buy notebooks, pencils and other stationery. He said that he would not take any share of the wages she earned.

The child porters surveyed had worked anywhere between less than one year to eight years (96 months) with an average of 22 months and a median of 12 months. Disaggregating the data by age group revealed that, on average, child porters under the age of 14 had worked for 16 months with a median value of 12 months and that the corresponding values for those aged 14-17 were about double, with a mean of 27 and a median of 24 months (Table 3.30).

In both age groups, long-distance porters had worked longer than short-distance porters but the variation in duration was greater in the older age group. Females had worked longer than males, those out of school had worked longer than those attending school, and those from dysfunctional families longer than those from normal families. Child porters in the Mid- and Far-West had worked longer than those in other regions. The longest duration a child porter under the age of 14 had worked was 72 months for short- and 60 months for long-distance work; the longest duration among older children was 96 months in the case of both long- and short-distance porters.

Table 3.30: Mean and Median Duration (in Months) of Portering by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.
Type									
Short-distance	14.5	12.0	170	21.7	12.0	171	18.1	12.0	341
Long-distance	19.1	12.1	68	38.5	36.0	84	29.8	24.0	152
Sex									
Female	16.9	12.0	64	33.5	36.0	42	23.5	13.0	106
Male	15.5	12.0	174	26.0	24.0	213	21.3	12.0	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	15.3	12.0	200	27.4	24.0	180	21.0	12.0	380
No	18.7	14.5	38	27.0	24.0	75	24.2	24.0	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	15.0	12.0	49	35.6	36.0	70	27.1	24.0	119
Janajatis	15.7	12.0	126	20.6	12.0	139	18.3	12.0	265
Dalits	16.8	12.0	63	34.6	33.0	46	24.3	18.0	109

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.
Family condition									
Normal	14.6	12.0	183	27.1	24.0	194	21.0	12.0	377
Dysfunctional	20.0	14.0	55	27.9	24.0	61	24.1	18.5	116
Region									
Eastern	15.1	12.0	167	24.1	24.0	111	18.7	12.0	278
Kathmandu Valley	12.0	12.0	10	20.4	12.0	44	20.2	12.0	45
Central and western	11.9	5.5	28	17.6	12.0	49	15.5	12.0	77
Mid- and far-western	21.4	24.0	42	49.3	48.0	51	36.7	36.0	93
Total	15.8	12.0	238	27.2	24.0	255	21.7	12.0	493

3.7.2 Working Hours and Quantity of Weight Carried

Respondents to the structured interview were asked how long (in hours and minutes) on average it took them to complete one job and their average and heaviest-ever loads (in kg). The same questions were asked in formal and informal discussions with child and adult porters and KIIs. About 69% finish each trip within eight hours and 31% take more time (Table 3.31). The mean duration for all ages was nine hours, while that for the younger group was seven and for the older, slightly more than 11. The median differed drastically: it was 50 minutes among child porters under 14 and 42 minutes for those 14 and above. Among short-distance porters, the median time taken to complete one job was 30 minutes and the longest job lasted seven hours¹⁹. In contrast, among long-distance porters of both age groups the average job took more than 27 hours; the average job of just younger porters was 21 hours, while that of older porters was 33 hours. The median among long-distance porters was 14 hours, with those under 14 reporting a median of 12 hours and those 14 and above reporting a median of 15.5 hours. The longest long-distance portering job took 120 hours (five days).

Table 3.31: Mean and Median Time (in Hours) to Complete One Job: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.
Type									
Short-distance	1.0	0.5	170	1.0	0.4	171	1.0	0.5	341
Long-distance	20.7	12.0	68	32.7	15.5	84	27.3	14.0	152
Sex									
Female	4.4	0.6	64	7.8	2.5	42	5.7	1.0	106
Male	7.5	1.0	174	12.1	0.7	213	10.0	0.7	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	7.3	1.0	200	13.3	0.8	180	10.1	1.0	380
No	3.4	0.5	38	6.9	0.5	75	5.7	0.5	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste group	6.6	0.7	49	19.1	2.0	70	13.9	1.0	119
Janajatis	7.6	0.7	126	9.0	0.5	139	8.3	0.5	265
Dalits	4.8	1.0	63	6.9	0.6	46	5.7	1.0	109
Family condition									
Normal	7.0	1.0	183	11.5	0.7	194	9.3	0.8	377
Dysfunctional	5.6	0.5	55	11.1	0.5	61	8.5	0.5	116
Region									
Eastern	6.6	0.6	167	11.8	3.0	111	8.7	1.0	278
Kathmandu Valley	1.0	1.0	1	0.6	0.4	44	0.6	0.4	45
Central and western	1.4	0.6	28	2.6	0.4	49	2.2	0.4	77
Mid- and far-western	10.4	4.5	42	28.4	9.0	51	20.3	6.0	93
Total	6.6	1.0	238	11.4	0.7	255	9.1	0.8	493

¹⁹ In Kathmandu Valley, it is three hours.

Porters carry their loads on their backs, with a tumpline around their foreheads; or with both a tumpline and shoulder straps, sharing the load between head and shoulder. The study team recorded the weights of the loads which the interviewed child porters were carrying at the time of interview to serve as an estimate of their loads in general. Weights recorded in local units such as *dharni* and *pathi*²⁰ were converted into kilograms. As Table 3.33 reveals, the average load carried by both age groups was 37 kg, with children under 14 carrying 30 kg on average and those aged 14-17 carrying 44 kg. The median weights were 30 kg and 40 kg respectively for younger and older children.

In general, except among children under the age of 14, short-distance porters carry slightly heavier loads than long-distance porters do. Regardless of the type of portering, male child porters carry more than females do, as a comparison of both means and medians indicates. Children of both age groups who were out of school carried heavier loads than those currently attending school and *Janajatis* carried more than Dalits and caste groups. The ethnic difference may be attributable to the fact that *Janajatis* are more likely to be work in the East, where a system that supports heavier loads is used, whereas Dalits work mostly in the Far-West, where a less efficient system is used. In the East, porters carry goods in a bamboo basket called a *dhakar*, which distributes the weight to the head and neck, the shoulders, and the back. In the mid- and far-western regions, in contrast, porters call loads in a *doko*²¹ supported by a *namlo*²² (tumpline) with no additional support from their shoulders.

Among child porters aged 14-17 years, those from dysfunctional families carry more than those from normal families and those who work in Kathmandu Valley carry the heaviest loads. Those in the central and western region (who work short distances) carry lighter loads than those in the East and Mid- and Far-West. The heaviest weight carried by the child porters surveyed was 110 kg, as reported by an older short-distance porter working in Kathmandu Valley.

On average, children carry loads 3-4 kg less than their own body weight. Children who repeatedly carry loads about equal to their own body weight impede their physical and mental growth.

Table 3.32: Mean and Median Weights Carried by Child Porters (in Kg) by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.	Mean	Median	No.
Type									
Short-distance	29.8	30	170	45.3	50	171	37.5	30	341
Long-distance	30.5	30	68	40.3	40	84	35.9	30	152
Sex									
Female	27.9	30	64	35.9	30	42	31.1	30	106
Male	30.7	30	174	45.1	50	213	38.7	35	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	29.9	30	200	42.7	40	180	35.9	30	380
No	30.7	30	38	45.8	50	75	40.7	40	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	29.5	28	49	39.9	40	70	35.6	30	119
<i>Janajatis</i>	31.7	30	126	46.2	50	139	39.3	35	265
Dalits	27.0	30	63	41.3	40	46	33.0	30	109

²⁰ 1 *dharni* = 2.5 kg.; 1 *pathi* = 4 kg (approximately)

²¹ A bamboo basket used to carry goods on one's back

²² The rope part of a *namlo* is looped around the *doko* to support it and its flat strap is rested against the forehead to support the load.

Family condition									
Normal	29.9	30	183	42.0	40	194	36.1	30	377
Dysfunctional	30.3	30	55	48.6	50	61	39.9	30	116
Region									
Eastern	30.9	30	167	41.4	40	111	35.1	30	278
Kathmandu Valley	65.0	65	1	55.6	50	44	55.8	50	45
Central and western	32.0	30	28	44.9	50	49	40.2	40	77
Mid- and far-western	24.1	20	42	36.8	40	51	31.1	30	93
Total	30.0	30	238	43.6	40	255	37.0	30	493
Weight of child	34.3	34.0	238	46.6	46.0	255	40.7	41.0	493

Child porters generally carry food, clothes and construction materials. Overall, 67% carried food and clothes, with girls least likely and long-distance porters most likely to carry these items of daily use (54% and 78% respectively). About 20% carry construction materials, including sacks of cement, iron rods, sand, and bricks. Short-distance, older and female child porters were more likely than long-distance, younger and male child porters to carry construction materials. Other materials they carry include slate and stones, which are carried by 5% of all child porters and 10% of girls. The study team observed girls carrying slate and stones to the Patan area of Baitadi District from the adjoining villages but not elsewhere. About 3% of child porters said they carry wood or firewood, many to Jitegada Bazaar of Kalikot; and 2.6% said they carried odd-sized materials like GI sheets, electric poles, and materials for suspension bridges. Other materials children carry are bottles of beer and other alcoholic beverages, stationery/books, and chemicals and chemical fertilizers. The study team most commonly saw children carrying food items and construction materials (Box 6).

Table 3.33: Types of Goods Carried: Percentage of Child Porters by Type of Portering, Age, and Sex

Types of goods	Type		Age		Sex		Total
	Short-distance	Long-distance	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	
Food, cloth, and clothing	62.2	77.6	68.5	65.5	53.8	70.5	66.9
Construction materials (cement, iron rods, sand, bricks)	24.0	11.2	17.2	22.7	25.5	18.6	20.1
Slate/Stones	3.8	6.6	5.0	4.3	10.4	3.1	4.7
Wood/Firewood	3.5	1.3	2.9	2.7	5.7	2.1	2.8
Odd-sized materials (GI sheets, electric poles, materials for suspension bridges)	3.5	0.7	2.1	3.1	0.9	3.1	2.6
Bottled liquids like beer and other liquors	1.2	1.3	1.7	0.8	2.8	0.8	1.2
Stationery/Books	0.6	1.3	1.3	0.4	0.9	0.8	0.8
Chemicals/Chemical fertilizers	1.2	-	1.3	0.4	-	1.0	0.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	341	152	238	255	106	387	493

Box 6: Observations of types of items carried by child porters

A group of long-distance child porters in Salleri, Solukhumbu, were carrying a number of items in their *dhakar* to carry to remote villages for businessmen. They included sacks of rice, some packets of iodized salt, some kilograms of sugar, a gallon of kerosene, some packets of edible oil, and cartoons of noodles. Some children in Ghurmi and Jayaram Ghat of Udayapur were carrying sacks of rice, beaten rice (*chiura*) and flour across the Sunkosi River via a suspension bridge to be taken by vehicle to Okhaldhunga, Khotang and Solukhumbu districts. Others in the same place were carrying sacks of cements, sections of electric poles, and materials for suspension bridge across the suspension bridge at Shivalaya toward Okhaldhunga. Child porters in Khurkot, Sindhuli, rushed to get a load to carry across the river as a truck transporting cement sacks arrived. Girls in Patan, Baitadi, were carrying slates for the roofs of houses one way and food items on the way back.

3.7.3 Experience of Hazards While Carrying Loads

In structured interviews with child porters, FGDs and informal discussions, the study team inquired if child porters had experienced a life-threatening hazard while carrying a load, how often they had fallen with a load, and how often they had been injured or broken or damaged goods as a result of a fall. As Table 3.35 shows, the majority of child porters (62%) had never encountered a life-threatening hazard or fallen or been injured but the rate was high enough to provide ample evidence for the claim that portering is a hazardous form of work for children. In fact, 54% of long-distance porters had encountered a hazard. For the most part, it was short-distance, young and, to a lesser extent, female child porters who were least likely to have encountered a hazard.

The types of life-threatening hazards child porters had experienced include falling with a load and, in consequence, getting injured, whether fracturing an arm or leg or developing swollen joints (18%) and the fear of falling from steep foot trails and getting injured (12%). These hazards are more commonly experienced among long-distance, older and male child porters than among their short-distance, younger and female counterparts. Other hazards child porters have experienced including falling with and being injured by a load (especially being cut by a GI sheet) (3.0%), being hurt by stones falling from high cliff and injured (in Kalikot and Baitadi) (2.2%), and stranded in route due to flood in river and landslide (Kalikot, Jajarkot and Solukhumbu) (0.8%). Some 2% of child porters, mostly short-distance, older and male had been hit by a vehicle while loading or unloading odd-sized materials from a bus or truck. A few child porters reported that they suffered from back pain or that they were harassed by service users (Table 3.34).

Table 3.34: Experience of Life-Threatening Hazards While Portering: Percentage of Child Porters by Type of Portering, Age, and Sex

Hazards faced while carrying a load	Type		Age		Sex		Total
	Short-distance	Long-distance	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	
No threats or dangers faced	68.9	46.1	69.7	54.5	65.1	61.9	61.9
Injured by falling (joint swelling and fractured arms or legs)	15.5	23.0	16.8	18.8	17.0	17.8	17.8
Fear of falling from a steep foot trail and being injured	5.3	25.7	8.8	14.1	6.6	11.6	11.6
Falling with a load and being injured by it (being cut by GI sheets)	4.4	-	1.3	4.7	0.9	3.0	3.0
Hurt by stones falling from a cliff	2.6	1.3	2.1	2.4	7.5	2.2	2.2
Struck by motor vehicle	2.6	0.7	0.4	3.5	-	2.0	2.0
Stranded en route due to flood or landslide	0.3	2.0	0.4	1.2	2.8	0.8	0.8
Back pain	0.0	1.3	0.4	0.4	-	0.4	0.4
Scolding/thrashing/threat by employer	0.3	-	-	0.4	-	0.2	0.2
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	341	152	238	255	106	387	493

When child porters fall while carrying a load, they are exposed to two types of hazards: physical and psychological. The immediate physical hazard is the possibility of being injured, whether that is incurring a wound, a fracture, or strain, as well as damaging the goods carried and being exposed to broken glass, caustic or flammable chemicals or other dangerous substance. If a fall results in broken goods, the service user may inflict physical or psychological abuse on the child porter who fell or may demand compensation, either taken out of the child's wages or taken from family property. To probe into these hazards, the study team asked how often child porters had broken or damaged the goods they carried. The answers were coded into four categories—every delivery, once in every 5-10 jobs, one or two times till date, and never—and then regrouped into never and yes, at least once. Overall, 27% had broken or damaged goods at least once, with those under 14 reporting a rate of 25% and those over 14 a rate of 30% (Table 3.35).

In general, there is little difference between the rates of damaged or broken goods for long- and short-distance porters, but younger long-distance and older short-distance porters were more likely to have experienced such a mishap. Disaggregating by other variable reveals that more male than female porters, more out-of-school than school-going porters, more child porters from dysfunctional than normal families, and more *Janajatis* than other ethnic groups had damaged or broken goods. The rate of such mishaps is highest in Kathmandu Valley and second highest in the central and western development regions.

As their experiences of falls and injuries to fears of such mishaps to incidence of damaging and breaking goods demonstrate, child porters experience many occupational hazards which impede their physical and psycho-sociological growth.

Table 3.35: Experience of Breaking or Damaging Goods: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Yes, at least once	No, never	No.	Yes, at least once	No, never	No.	Yes, at least once	No, never	No.
Type									
Short-distance	24.1	75.9	170	30.4	69.6	171	27.3	72.7	341
Long-distance	26.5	73.5	68	28.6	71.4	84	27.6	72.4	152
Sex									
Female	18.8	81.3	64	9.5	90.5	42	15.1	84.9	106
Male	27.0	73.0	174	33.8	66.2	213	30.7	69.3	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	22.0	78.0	200	26.1	73.9	180	23.9	76.1	380
No	39.5	60.5	38	38.7	61.3	75	38.9	61.1	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	18.4	81.6	49	27.1	72.9	70	23.5	76.5	119
Janajatis	29.4	70.6	126	33.8	66.2	139	31.7	68.3	265
Dalits	20.6	79.4	63	21.7	78.3	46	21.1	78.9	109
Family condition									
Normal	23.0	77.0	183	28.9	71.1	194	26.0	74.0	377
Dysfunctional	30.9	69.1	55	32.8	67.2	61	31.9	68.1	116
Region									
Eastern	26.9	73.1	167	32.4	67.6	111	29.1	70.9	278
Kathmandu Valley	-	-	1	43.2	56.8	44	42.2	57.8	45
Central and western	42.9	57.1	28	34.7	65.3	49	37.7	62.3	77
Mid- and far-western	4.8	95.2	42	7.8	92.2	51	6.5	93.5	93
Total	24.8	75.2	238	29.8	70.2	255	27.4	72.6	493

3.7.4 Rates and Pattern of Remuneration

In 2001 a short-distance child porter working in an urban or semi-urban area earned on average NPR 96 a day while a long-distance child porter earned just NPR 71. Older and male child porters earned more than younger and female ones (KC et al., 2001). A similar pattern of remuneration exists today though there has been a substantial increase in the level of earnings in nominal prices. As Table 3.36 shows, one-third of child porters earn NPR 150-250 per working day. In comparison with short-distance porters, long-distance porters earn more than they used to: 54% earn more than NPR 250 per working day compared to just 43% of short-distance porters. Female child porters still make less money than males: 75% of girls make less than NPR 250 per day versus 48% of boys.

Table 3.36: Earnings Per Working Day: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex and Type of Portering

Earnings in NPR	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
<150	29.4	12.5	37.7	16.0	21.1	19.7	20.7
150-250	32.4	33.7	36.8	32.0	36.1	26.3	33.1
250-350	25.2	23.5	18.9	25.8	24.6	23.7	24.3
350+	13.0	30.2	6.6	26.1	18.2	30.3	21.9
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Earnings in NPR	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Summary of statistics regarding daily wage patterns							
Average	244	323	208	306	270	319	285
Median	200	300	200	300	250	300	250
Maximum	1000	1200	800	1200	1200	1000	1200
Minimum	40	50	45	40	40	50	40
Total (No.)	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

On average, a child porter earns NPR 285 for a day of work with considerable variations by age, sex, and type. A long-distance child porter is likely to average about NPR 50 more than a short-distance porter. Males make NPR 100 more than females; and older children, NPR 80 more than younger. Earnings range from a minimum of NPR 40 to a maximum of NPR 1200. Male, older, and short-distance child porters are the ones who report earnings of up to NPR 1200 per day, while it is male, younger, and short-distance children who earn the minimum rate, just NPR 40 per day.

To crosscheck the findings of the structured interview, child porters were asked about their daily earnings in informal conversations and FGDs as well. Most said they earned NPR 300-400 a day but some said they sometimes earned nothing at all and others that they had earned over NPR 2000 in a single day. They said that they earned the most when they carried construction materials and “*bikase saman*,” or development materials.²³

Participants in FGDs and informal conversations were also asked which seasons saw them earning the most money to establish if any seasonal variations exist. The majority (50%) said they worked and earned the most in the dry season (March to May), followed by about equal proportions (13% each) who reported that they earned the most in the festival season (September and October) or the rainy season (June to August).

Table 3.37: Season of Maximum Earnings: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Type of Portering and Sex

Season of maximum earning	Age		Type		Sex		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Short	Long	Female	Male	
Dry season (March to May)	46.6	52.9	46.9	56.6	44.3	51.4	49.9
Festival season (September and October)	10.9	16.1	14.1	12.5	5.7	15.8	13.6
Rainy season (June to August)	17.2	9.8	17.6	3.9	18.9	11.9	13.4
Winter season (November to February)	10.9	11.4	8.5	17.1	17.9	9.3	11.2
In all seasons	8.8	7.8	11.4	1.3	10.4	7.8	8.3
During school holidays	5.5	2.0	1.5	8.6	2.8	3.9	3.7
Total	238	255	341	152	106	387	493

²³ Such as electric poles and wires, parts of suspension bridges, cement sacks, and iron rods

The dry season is the season of maximum earnings for many, especially those who both attend school and work. Students have time off before starting the new academic year and after final exams. All the child porters who participated in the FGD in Kalimati, Kathmandu, for example, had just taken their final exams, as had child porters in Patan, Baitadi District, Jitegadha, Kalikot District; Salleri, Solukhumbu District, and elsewhere. Children in Ghurmi and Okhaldhunga said that they earned the most in the rainy and festive seasons. During the rainy season, there was a shortage of labor since porters from other districts engaged in agriculture and were not free to porter; thus, businessmen and other users of portering services, including commuters and travelers, were willing to offer higher rates. During the festival season, the flow of consumer goods increases so wage rates are also likely to increase.

3.7.5 Basis of Work Agreements and Payment

A 2001 study clearly indicated that child porters did not work on a contractual or regular basis. Instead, they worked on a piecework basis, getting paid either by mutual agreement for each job or on the basis of the weight of the load and the distance it had to be carried (KC, et al, 2001). A decade later, little has changed. Child porters do not arrange labor contracts; they get paid the rate agreed upon at the end of each job. The study team did not uncover any instances of children working as bonded laborers or employed by contractors. All were working of their own free will.

As Table 3.38 indicates, 67% of all porters and 71% and 64% of those under 14 and 14 and above work on the basis of the weight of the load and the distance they have to carry it. Disaggregating the data by type of portering, virtually 90% of long- and 57% of short-distance porters negotiate rates based on these two variables. To give an example, the rate per kilogramme or *dharni* is less for a two-day route than a four-day one. The other system of remuneration, in which porters negotiate mutually agreeable terms with service users, prevails among short-distance porters, usually those working in urban areas.

There is little difference in terms of payment on the basis of weight and distance (67% overall) except that the reverse trend—payment by mutual agreement—is the trend among child porters under 14 in the mid- and far-western regions (67%) and child porters under 14 (71%) and 14 and above (65%) in the central and western regions.

The study team's field observations found that there are some set wage rates determined and implemented by mutual understanding among the suppliers and users of portering services, such as consumers, retailers, wholesalers, and commuters. Some examples of such pre-determined rates follow.

- In the Kalimati vegetable wholesale market in Kathmandu, there are pre-determined rates for carrying vegetables from the market to different parts of city. The rate depends on both the weight of the load and the distance it is carried, but for short distances, such as from inside the market to the surrounding Kalimati bus stops, there is a fixed rate,
- Children who carry sacks of cement and other construction and development materials in Ghurmi, Okhaldhunga/Udayapur districts said that they get paid by piece. For instance, the carrying a sack of cement across the suspension bridge in Ghurmi fetches NPR 30 while carrying the same sack across the bridge in Khurkot, Sindhuli, brings in NPR 25. Porters get NPR 50 for carrying one segment of an electric pole across the bridge in Ghurmi.²⁴

²⁴ One electric pole consists of two pieces and each piece is carried by two porters, each of whom rests one end on his or her shoulder.

- Mutual negotiations of short-distance portering, especially in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Butwal, consider the weight of the load and the distance it will be carried as well as whether or not the load is an odd size.
- Children in Salleri, Solu District, and Jitegadha, Kalikot District claimed that there is a pre-determined rate per kilogram according to the distance the load has to be carried and that, accordingly, a porter's earnings depended on how much he or she could carry.

Table 3.38: Basis of Remuneration: Percentage of Child Porters by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Negoti- ation	Weight/ Distance	No.	Negoti- ation	Weight/ Distance	No.	Negoti- ation	Weight/ Distance	No.
Type									
Short-distance	36.5	63.5	170	49.7	50.3	171	43.1	56.9	341
Long-distance	11.8	88.2	68	9.5	90.5	84	10.5	89.5	152
Sex									
Female	37.5	62.5	64	50.0	50.0	42	42.5	57.5	106
Male	26.4	73.6	174	33.8	66.2	213	30.5	69.5	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	27.5	72.5	200	35.0	65.0	180	31.1	68.9	380
No	39.5	60.5	38	40.0	60.0	75	39.8	60.2	113
Family condition									
Normal	30.6	69.4	183	35.6	64.4	194	33.2	66.8	377
Dysfunctional	25.5	74.5	55	39.3	60.7	61	32.8	67.2	116
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	40.8	59.2	49	38.6	61.4	70	39.5	60.5	119
<i>Janajatis</i>	20.6	79.4	126	31.7	68.3	139	26.4	73.6	265
Dalits	38.1	61.9	63	47.8	52.2	46	42.2	57.8	109
Region									
Eastern	13.2	86.8	167	20.7	79.3	111	16.2	83.8	278
Kathmandu Valley	0.0	0.0	1	40.9	59.1	44	40.0	60.0	45
Central and western	71.4	28.6	28	65.3	34.7	49	67.5	32.5	77
Mid- and far-western	66.7	33.3	42	39.2	60.8	51	51.6	48.4	93
Total	29.4	70.6	238	36.5	63.5	255	33.1	66.9	493

3.7.6 Patterns of Expenditure and Savings

Child porters were asked their first and second priorities for the expenditure of their earnings. As Table 3.39 clearly indicates, the majority, irrespective of age, sex and type of portering, prioritize household needs (66%), followed by personal (24%) and school (9%) expenses. Child porters aged 14-17 are most likely to prioritize household uses (74%), followed by 72% of long-distance porters and 68% of male child porters. Only 58% of those under 14 prioritize this area. In contrast, younger children and girls are most likely to name spending on themselves as their top priority (31% and 30% respectively). Personal expenses include buying clothes, cosmetics (among girls), mobiles and their recharge cards, and food. School expenses were the first priority for only a small proportion of respondents: only 10% each of male porters and those under 14, 9% of long-distance porters, 8% of girls, and 7% of child porter aged above 14 named this area.

The second most-prioritized area of expenditure is schooling: 58% of the total, 73% of long-distance porters, 67% of girls, and 64% of child porters under the age of under 14 make education their second priority (Table 3.39).

Table 3.39: How Child Porters Spend Their Earnings: Percentages by Age, Type of Portering, and Sex

First and second priority areas for Expenditure	Age		Type		Sex		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Short	Long	Female	Male	
First priority areas of expenditure							
Household uses	57.6	74.1	63.3	72.4	60.4	67.7	66.1
Personal expenses	30.7	17.3	26.4	17.8	30.2	22.0	23.7
School expenses	10.1	7.8	8.8	9.2	6.6	9.6	8.9
Others	1.7	0.8	1.5	0.7	2.8	0.8	1.2
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Second priority area of expenditure							
School expenses	64.3	52.9	51.9	73.0	67.0	56.1	58.4
Personal expenses	15.1	28.6	26.4	12.5	22.6	22.0	22.1
Other	18.5	17.3	19.4	14.5	8.5	20.4	17.8
Household uses	2.1	1.2	2.3	-	1.9	1.6	1.6
Total (N)	238	255	341	152	106	387	493

Most child porters who participated in FGDs also said that they spend their earnings on household necessities and school expenses. Some representative responses follow.

- All seven children in Jitegadha, Kalikot District, claimed that their first priority was to give their earnings to their parents for household use. In terms of their second priority, some said they bought school materials like notebooks, pens and pencils, and uniforms, while others said they spend their income on personal needs.
- Children in Surkhet District said they use the money to buy mobile phones and re-charge cards.
- Some girls in Patan, Baitadi District, Ghurmi, Udayapur District, and Khurkot, Sindhuli District, said they bought cosmetics with their earnings,
- All eight child porters at the FDG held in Kalimati, most of whom were from Gharti Gaun, Rolpa District, that the money they did not spend on the cost of living in Kathmandu they saved to give to their parents for household use. They also kept a little themselves to spend on school expenses.

Almost all child porters who participated in FGDs and informal discussions claimed that they did not earn enough to save anything. KIIs and an institutional survey conducted in Kathmandu Valley, particularly in Kalimati, suggested that porters' welfare funds and porters' savings and credit cooperatives, in which porter deposit a certain amount either daily or weekly had been formed and were in operation, but no child porters encountered by the study team were members of such institutions.

3.7.7 Control over Income and Perception of Its Sufficiency

As Table 3.40 indicates, in 71% of cases, parents keep at least part of the income their children earn; in 47% of cases parents keep all of it and in 24% child porters keep part of the money. About 4% turn their earnings over to another relative and 1% to a friend or friends they work with. Less than one-quarter of all child porters keep all of the money they earn. In terms of keeping their own

money, younger child porters are less likely than older child porters (21% versus 28%), long-distance than short (19% versus 26%) and girls than boys (19% versus 26%).

Regarding who decides how the earnings of child porters are spent, in 60% of cases, it is parents alone who make the decision, but in 37% of cases, it is the child porter alone who decides. Parents are more likely to decide in the case of child porters under 14 than of those 14 and above (64% versus 57%), long- than short-distance porters (67% versus 57.5%) and, though only marginally, girls than boys (61% versus 60%) (Table 3.40).

Table 3.40: Person(s) Who Keep the Earnings of Child Porters and Decide How They Are Spent: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Type of Portering, and Sex

Persons keeping income and deciding on its expenditure	Age		Type		Sex		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Short	Long	Female	Male	
Person(s) keeping income							
Parents	51.3	43.5	44.3	53.9	56.6	44.7	47.3
Self	20.6	27.5	26.4	19.1	18.9	25.6	24.1
Self and parents	24.4	23.5	22.6	27.0	22.6	24.3	23.9
Other relatives	2.9	4.3	5.3	-	0.9	4.4	3.7
Co-working friends	0.4	0.8	0.9	-	0.9	0.5	0.6
Others	0.4	0.4	0.6	-	-	0.5	0.4
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Person deciding about expenditures							
Parents	63.9	57.3	57.5	67.1	61.3	60.2	60.4
Self	34.5	40.0	39.6	32.2	35.8	37.7	37.3
Step-parents	0.8	1.2	1.2	0.7	1.9	0.8	1.0
Elder brother/sister	0.8	1.2	1.5	-	0.9	1.0	1.0
Person giving the work	-	0.4	0.3	-	-	0.3	0.2
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	238	255	341	152	106	387	493

Regarding the sufficiency of the income they earn, child porters who participated in FGDs and informal discussion said that some days they earned as much as Rs. 2000 but some days they returned empty-handed. Boys who were carrying electric poles in Ghurmi said that they did not save for the future, but instead spent what they had, enjoying it until it was finished. All child and adult porters consulted said that child porters were not paid a wage commensurate with the physical hardships involved in completing a job.

3.7.8 Psychological and Physical Abuses

The greatest hazard faced by most child laborers is the physical and psychological abuse they are subjected to at the hands of service users or adult co-workers. This survey attempted to document the level of various types of abuse and harassment that child porters had faced during the entire period they had been portering. They were asked about verbal assault, the use of humiliating words, being beaten for a real or purported fault, and punishment for a delay in or damage to a delivery (actual or alleged). Each response was recorded as a “yes” or a “no,” and those who answered in the affirmative were then asked to specify the last time they had experienced such an abuse.

The most commonly experienced forms of abuse are verbal harangues for faults (30%) and the use of humiliating words (25%). Long-distance more than short-distance porters and males more than females experience both these sorts of abuses. Younger porters are more likely than older ones to be subjected to humiliating words (27% versus 23%). Less than 2% have been physically abused. (Table 3.41).

Table 3.41: Experience of Different Types of Psychological and Physical Abuse: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Type of Portering, and Sex

Type of abuse	Age		Type		Sex		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Short	Long	Female	Male	
Faced verbal abuse for fault	29.0	29.8	33.1	21.1	16.0	33.1	29.4
Called humiliating words	27.3	23.1	29.3	15.8	11.3	28.9	25.2
Scolded for fault	3.4	0.8	2.9			2.6	2.0
Scolded/punished for late delivery	0.8	2.4	2.1	0.7		2.1	1.6
Scolded/punished for breakage	0.8	2.0	1.8	0.7	1.9	1.3	1.4
Given poor quality or too little food	0.4			0.7		0.3	0.2
Total no. questioned *	238	255	341	152	106	387	493

*The columns do not add up to 100% because each row is simply the percentage of “yes” responses. The value in each cell refers to the percentage of the total number of child porters questioned.

Children who participated in FGDs and informal discussions reported that because their work is not regular, long-term or contractual, there is little chance of their being physically assaulted but all said that they were subject to verbal abuse while negotiating and getting paid wage rates and for other reasons. Some particular abuses are highlighted below.

- Participants in the FGD in Ghurmi, Udayapur, said they were verbally assaulted by service users who tried to pay less than the agreed upon rate and took offense when child porters asked for it. They often used degrading words like “khate”.
- Participants in the FGD in Kalimati, Kathmandu, said they were cursed, humiliated, and threatened while negotiating wage rates and when they were accused of not delivering goods on time or of breaking or damaging goods,
- No child porter, regardless of sex, reported having been sexually harassed.
- Sometimes service users do not pay the agreed rate upon the delivery of their goods at their place.
- One child from Gharti Gaon, Rolpa, working in Kalimati shared an unforgettably horrifying experience: a service user had tried to pay less than the negotiated rate after completion of the work and attempted to beat him while he refused to accept the reduced amount than the negotiated one. A crowd of locals gathered to watch the dispute. Since they were in favor of the boy, they forced the service user to pay NPR 100 more than had initially been agreed upon.

About 90% and 94% of child porters said that they had faced verbal abuse and humiliating words respectively within the last month and 40% had incurred physical abuse. Each week, half were punished for late delivery and 57% were scolded for broken goods. As Table 3.43 demonstrates, abuse of child porters is widespread.

Table 3.42: Frequency with Which Child Porters Face Various Types of Psychological and Physical Abuses (in Percentage)

Frequency	Verbal abuse	Use of humiliating words	Physical abuse	Punishment for late delivery	Scolding for broken goods
About daily	23.4	33.6	10.0	37.5	14.3
About weekly	43.4	38.4	20.0	12.5	42.9
About monthly	24.1	22.4	10.0	37.5	28.6
During the last two months	4.1	3.2	10.0	-	14.3
During the last six months	2.1	-	40.0	-	-
Not within the last six months	2.8	2.4	10.0	12.5	-
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	145	125	10	8	7

It is clear that child porters are very accustomed to facing psychological abuse at the hands of service users. Adult and child participants revealed the negative consequences of such abuse: porters are likely to be isolated from the rest of society in both their villages of origin and their places of work. They reported that child porters hesitate to speak and interact with their peers and with other people because they feel alienated and inferior. They are easily identified by their appearance (ragged clothes) and possessions (*doko* and *namlo*). Adult porters in Kalimati said that service users do not address them in the usual respectful manner, using “timi” or “ta” instead of “tapai”²⁵. They said that the risk of physical abuse at the hands of service users was slight but that portering itself was physically risky and occupational hazards many.

3.7.9 Relationship with Employers/Service Users

Portering is done on the basis of free labor contracts, meaning that after a child porter completes a job for one service user, he or she is free to choose another service user. For this reason, the nature of a porter’s relationship with his employer changes from one job to the next. To gauge the nature of this relationship, child porter were asked how often service users had refused to pay the agreed rate. Overall, 27% had been under-compensated at least once, with 24% of those under 14 and 30% of those above 14 reporting that they had been cheated (Table 3.43).

In general it was short- rather than long-distance porters, male rather than female, and out-of-school rather than school-going child porters who reported greater rates of having cheated out of their wages. *Janajatis* and children from dysfunctional families also reported higher rates. In terms of region, the highest rates were reported in Kathmandu Valley (64%) and central and western regions (36%).

²⁵ *Ta*, *timi*, and *tapai* are Nepali words for “you”. “*Tapai*” is used with social equals; the other two appellations with inferiors.

Table 3.43: Incidence of under-compensation: Percentage and Number of Child Porters Reporting Having Been Underpaid by Service Users by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		Total	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Type						
Short-distance	27.6	170	38.6	171	33.1	341
Long-distance	16.2	68	13.1	84	14.5	152
Sex						
Female	15.6	64	7.1	42	12.3	106
Male	27.6	174	34.7	213	31.5	387
Currently attending school						
Yes	21.5	200	27.2	180	24.2	380
No	39.5	38	37.3	75	38.1	113
Family condition						
Normal	22.4	183	26.8	194	24.7	377
Dysfunctional	30.9	55	41.0	61	36.2	116
Caste/ethnicity						
Caste groups	18.4	49	28.6	70	24.4	119
Janajatis	28.6	126	33.8	139	31.3	265
Dalits	20.6	63	21.7	46	21.1	109
Region						
Eastern	25.7	167	27.0	111	26.3	278
Kathmandu Valley	-	1	63.6	44	64.4	45
Central and western	42.9	28	32.7	49	36.4	77
Mid- and far-western	4.8	42	5.9	51	5.4	93
Total	24.4	238	30.2	255	27.4	493

3.7.10 Provision of Social Security and Occupational Safety

National legal frameworks and labor rules and the institutional arrangements exist to enforce the implementation of their provisions provide protection against child labor in general and against the worst and hazardous forms of child labor in particular. The government line agency which looks after the security of child porters is the District Child Welfare Board, but most board officials interviewed during the study were indifferent to the plight of child porters and unaware that it is, in fact, hazardous and classified as one of the worst forms of child labor. Some NGOs and social organizations work in the sector of child right awareness, running program which, among other things, establish and mobilize child rights clubs. By survey area, some of the particular organizations and activities are as follows.

Survey area	Organization	Major activities promoting the safety of child porters
Khotang, Jalpa	Jana Sewa Samaj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formed child rights clubs in schools and mobilized them to protect child rights protection, - Conducted a baseline survey of child porters in Jhapa District and launched the Naya Bato Naya Paila Program focusing on child porters, - Initiated a scholarship program so child porters could go to school full-time

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In cooperation with World Education awarded 191 child porters annual scholarships in kind (school bag, uniform, and stationery), each worth NPR 2000 - Gave the families of about half of all scholarship recipients (those who attended regularly) a support package of NPR 5000
Nerpa, Khotang	Bal Sewa Samaj	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducted a child-to-child program in 10 VDCs of District, working in the child rights sector, but not directly with child porters
Okhaldhunga	Sahash Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worked for child rights, but had no program focused specifically on safeguarding child porters
Dolakha	ECARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worked for child protection and child rights through child and youth clubs and their networks but did not directly target the issues of child porters
Khopachangu, Dolakha	CWIN and Rural Development Tuki Sangh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formed child rights clubs, provided scholarships and material support to school children from poor and backward families, - Did not implement any program to safeguard child porters though the organization is aware about the existence of child porters in its working area
Ramechhap, Manthali	DEPROS Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoted child rights and provided educational support to school children from backward and poor communities but did not directly target child porters
Kaski-Baglung	Seto-Gurans Child Development Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved in child rights and education promotion programs but did not implement any measures designed directly to safeguard child porters

While the social protection network for directly safeguarding child porters is weak, the porters' community itself is very supportive and a pattern of mutual cooperation prevails, as the responses of child porters to a question about whether or not there would be anyone to help or rescue him or if he or she were unable to carry the load to the destination. Overall, 65% (70% and 59% of those under 14 and 14-17 years old respectively) affirmed that, indeed, someone would come to their aid if they needed (Table 3.44). Other than the fact that younger children were more likely than older children to report that they had a potential rescuer from difficult circumstances, there was little variation across selected characteristics. Clearly, the majority did in fact work under some level of protection from networks of their relatives, fellow villagers, and/or friends.

Table 3.44: Availability of Rescuers: Percentage and Number of Child Porters by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		Total	
	% yes	Total no. yes	% yes	Total no. yes	% yes	Total no. yes
Type						
Short-distance	70.0	170	59.1	171	64.5	341
Long-distance	70.6	68	59.5	84	64.5	152
Sex						
Female	67.2	64	64.3	42	66.0	106
Male	71.3	174	58.2	213	64.1	387
Currently attending school						
Yes	71.0	200	55.0	180	63.4	380
No	65.8	38	69.3	75	68.1	113
Family condition						
Normal	68.9	183	58.8	194	63.7	377
Dysfunctional	74.5	55	60.7	61	67.2	116
Caste/ethnicity						
Caste groups	69.4	49	45.7	70	55.5	119
Janajatis	68.3	126	64.7	139	66.4	265
Dalits	74.6	63	63.0	46	69.7	109
Region						
Eastern	71.9	167	59.5	111	66.9	278
Kathmandu Valley		1	56.8	44	57.8	45
Central and western	82.1	28	77.6	49	79.2	77
Mid- and far-western	54.8	42	43.1	51	48.4	93
Total	70.2	238	59.2	255	64.5	493

The survey inquired about the types of safety measures these children adopt to lessen the potential physical hazards of their occupation, including the pressure of the load on the forehead, back and waist pain and chafing of body parts though long exposure to a heavy load. These include means such as distributing a load to different body parts (forehead, shoulders, and back) and supporting the weight while taking a short rest to normalize heavy breathing and sweating. The majority of children (54%) reported that they use no safety measures at all, while the 44% who do all said they used a local measure untested in terms of the modern science of occupational health safety (Table 3.45).

Table 3.45: Adoption of Safety Measures While Portering: Percentage and Number of Child Porters by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		Total	
	% Adopted	Total (No.)	% Adopted	Total (No.)	% Adopted	Total (No.)
Type						
Short-distance	35.3	170	43.3	171	39.3	341
Long-distance	63.2	68	60.7	84	61.8	152
Sex						
Female	57.8	64	64.3	42	60.4	106
Male	37.9	174	46.0	213	42.4	387
Currently attending school						
Yes	45.0	200	54.4	180	49.5	380
No	34.2	38	36.0	75	35.4	113

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		Total	
	% Adopted	Total (No.)	% Adopted	Total (No.)	% Adopted	Total (No.)
Family condition						
Normal	45.4	183	49.0	194	47.2	377
Dysfunctional	36.4	55	49.2	61	43.1	116
Caste/ethnicity						
Caste group	46.9	49	58.6	70	53.8	119
<i>Janajatis</i>	38.9	126	38.1	139	38.5	265
Dalits	49.2	63	67.4	46	56.9	109
Region						
Eastern	35.3	167	36.0	111	35.6	278
Kathmandu Valley	0.0	1	34.1	44	33.3	45
Central and western	46.4	28	51.0	49	49.4	77
Mid- and far-western	73.8	42	88.2	51	81.7	93
Total	43.3	238	49.0	255	46.2	493

The safety measures child porters identified and those that the study team observed included placing a soft cloth pad on the forehead under the rope of the *namlo* to relieve pressure, binding a *patuka* around the waist to prevent back pain and chaffing, placing a “plank” of sorts, in between the load and the back of the waist, carrying and using a *tokma* (in the case of long-distance porters in Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga; Khotang, and Chatara, Sunsari); and adding *khakan* to a *dhakar*. In Kalimati, Kathmandu, child porters protected their backs with a thick foam pad wrapped with plastic sacks.

A substantially higher proportion of long- than short-distance porters adopted some form of safety measure and among both types of porters girls were more likely than boys to use safety measures. *Janajatis* were less likely than caste groups and Dalits to take precautions. In terms of regions, it was child porters working in Kathmandu valley who were least likely to adopt safety measures while those in the mid- and far-western regions who were most likely.

3.8 Work and Schooling

Studies have demonstrated that when children combine work (for wages) and schooling, they ultimately choose to enter into the labor market prematurely at the cost of their schooling. A school-going child who must participate in the labor market is often late to school and his or her attendance is irregular. Their progress is slow and their performance suffers because working tires them and because they neglect their homework. Often they are overlooked by teachers. The end result is that they opt to drop out of school (UNICEF, 1997; ILO/IPEC, 2004). Because of this close relationship between work and schooling, concerned UN organizations attempted to harmonise international commitments to ensuring a basic level of education to all, enforcing a minimum age of entry into labor market, and eliminating the economic exploitation of children. The thrust of three key international documents-the ILO Minimum Age Convention, the UNCRC, and the World Declaration on Education for All (see below)-is that children, at least those under 16, should attend school full-time and not work. However, in marginalised communities and in ultra-poor families, economic pressures and other reasons make it difficult for children to attend school full-time. Their earning power is too valuable and the cost of school too much, so they are pushed into work.

ILO Minimum Age Convention	Article 32 of the UNCRC	World Declaration on Education for All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognizes the link between the age of primary school completion and the minimum age for employment, - Ensures that no child is employed full-time below the age of compulsory schooling, - Fixes the minimum age of employment at 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocates that children be protected from economic exploitation, - Urges governments to regulate and enforce minimum age, hours and conditions of employment, - Provides for children's right to free primary education; and - Suggests child education encompass a wide range of skills and knowledge, not simply basic numeracy and literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declares that education is a fundamental right and a necessity for overall human and national development, - Declares that the basic learning needs of all children, youths and adults should be met

3.8.1 Relationship between School and Child Porters

Only about 3% of the 493 child porters surveyed have never been enrolled in school but nearly one-quarter (23%) are not currently attending school. These figures suggest that child porters' access to school is virtually universal. School communities and teachers, especially those of child-sending districts, are aware that some children who are enrolled in school also work as porters, either in local or external markets or going outside. In some instances, including in Khurkot, Sindhuli District, and Harkapur, Okhaldhunga District, school-going child porters are very conspicuous: they wear their school uniforms while carrying loads. Teachers said that their efforts to end this practice had failed because child porters had no other wearable clothes. In some cases, teachers called children who regularly worked as porters out of the classroom, introduced them to the study team, and instructed them to share why they were compelled to work. Teachers are also well-informed about other aspects of the plight of child porters: they know that they perform poorly, that they attend irregularly and that, ultimately, they drop out, many before completing their primary education. Teachers admitted that, due to the scarcity of resources and lack of provisions for giving special attention to children who need it, schools are unable to understand the needs and aspirations of child laborers in general and child porters in particular.

Besides documenting the perspective of school teachers and community people regarding the relationship between school and work among child laborers in general and child porters in particular, the study team asked the school-going child porters they interviewed individually if they had ever repeated a grade and if they had gotten a scholarship or other educational support in the last school year and how they managed to both go to school and work.

Table 3.46: Grade Repetition: Percentage and Number of Child Porters by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			Both		
	% repeaters	% non-repeaters	Total no.	% repeaters	% non-repeaters	Total no.	% repeaters	% non-repeaters	Total no.
Type									
Short-distance	43.6	56.4	163	40.1	59.9	167	41.8	58.2	330
Long-distance	61.2	38.8	67	58.8	41.3	80	59.9	40.1	147
Sex									
Female	45.2	54.8	62	35.7	64.3	42	41.3	58.7	104
Male	50.0	50.0	168	48.3	51.7	205	49.1	50.9	373
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	30.6	69.4	49	42.0	58.0	69	37.3	62.7	118
Janajatis	49.2	50.8	120	51.1	48.9	133	50.2	49.8	253
Dalits	62.3	37.7	61	37.8	62.2	45	51.9	48.1	106
Family condition									
Normal	50.6	49.4	178	46.8	53.2	190	48.6	51.4	368
Dysfunctional	42.3	57.7	52	43.9	56.1	57	43.1	56.9	109
Region									
Eastern	51.6	48.4	159	58.3	41.7	108	54.3	45.7	267
Kathmandu Valley			1	41.5	58.5	41	40.5	59.5	42
Central and western	42.9	57.1	28	29.2	70.8	48	34.2	65.8	76
Mid- and far-western	42.9	57.1	42	40.0	60.0	50	41.3	58.7	92
Total	48.7	51.3	230	46.2	53.8	247	47.4	52.6	477

Of the 493 child porters interviewed, 477 (97%) had, at one point, studied at school. To assess their performance and their relationship with the school community, all were asked if they had repeated any grade, with the assumption that non-repeaters were likely to have a good relationship. Nearly half (47.4%) of all child porters, regardless of age, had repeated a grade, with younger child porters more likely than older ones to have stayed back (49% versus 46% are repeaters respectively). This high rate of repetition no doubt serves as a disincentive to child porters to attend school. The proportion of repeaters is highest among long-distance, male, Dalit and *Janajati* child porters and those who live in the East (Table 3.46).

The majority of school-going child porters study in the primary grades (grades 1 to 5). The government has a number of provisions to give scholarships to certain children studying at this level, including Dalits, deprived and endangered communities; girls, and academically exceptional children. In addition, a number of social welfare groups and NGOs provide children of deprived communities with various educational supports, mostly in kind. These include uniforms, stationery, and bags. In fact, it is believed that the majority of primary school children in remote rural settings get either some form of scholarship or schooling support.²⁶ As Table 3.48 shows, of the 380 child porters who currently go to school, just 38%, 45% of those under 14 but just 31% of those above 14, receive some type of scholarship. Irrespective of age group, short-distance, female, and Dalit child porters are more likely than long-distance, male, and *Janajati* and caste group child porters to get scholarships or other forms of educational support. Children from dysfunctional families are also more likely recipients.

²⁶ Though they were captured and interviewed in urban areas of market centres, all the school-going child porters are enrolled and study in village schools.

Table 3.47: Receipt of Scholarships or Other Support for Schooling: Percentage of Currently School-Going Children by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristics	<14 years			14-17 years			Total		
	Yes	No	No.	Yes	No	N	Yes	No	N
Type									
Short-distance	50.7	49.3	138	36.3	63.7	113	44.2	55.8	251
Long-distance	32.3	67.7	62	20.9	79.1	67	26.4	73.6	129
Sex									
Female	60.3	39.7	58	36.1	63.9	36	51.1	48.9	94
Male	38.7	61.3	142	29.2	70.8	144	33.9	66.1	286
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	42.2	57.8	45	16.1	83.9	56	27.7	72.3	101
Janajatis	30.1	69.9	103	28.1	71.9	96	29.1	70.9	199
Dalits	76.9	23.1	52	67.9	32.1	28	73.8	26.3	80
Family condition									
Normal	42.0	58.0	157	29.6	70.4	142	36.1	63.9	299
Dysfunctional	55.8	44.2	43	34.2	65.8	38	45.7	54.3	81
Region									
Eastern	37.3	62.7	142	17.1	82.9	70	30.7	69.3	212
Kathmandu Valley	100.0		1	41.9	58.1	31	43.8	56.3	32
Central and western	61.1	38.9	18	40.6	59.4	32	48.0	52.0	50
Mid- and far-western	64.1	35.9	39	36.2	63.8	47	48.8	51.2	86
Total	45.0	55.0	200	30.6	69.4	180	38.2	61.8	380

In response to a question about how they managed to porter and to go to school, about four-fifths of the total (81% and 78% of those under 14 and aged 14-17 respectively) said that they work when there is a long holiday (for the festivals of Dashain and Tihar and during the summer and winter) and when school is out of session (after final exams in March and before the new session begins) (Table 3.48). Long-distance, female, and Dalit child porters as well as those from normal families are more likely than their counterparts to work during these periods. In terms of region, all child porters from the mid- and far-western region and about 78% from the eastern region porter during long holidays and when school is out of session.

All child and adult porters who participated in FGDs also said child porters did work on school days and that they worked only when school was out of session or when there was a school holiday. Women porters interviewed in Bajhang District said that children did not porter on school days and noted that since the new session of school had started, there were no child porters in Bajhang. Likewise, children carrying slate to Patan, Baitadi District, said they would not work after school resumed, as did the child porters captured in Jitegadha, Kalikot District. Child porters from Gharti Gaun, Rolpa District, interviewed in Kalimati said that they would return home in a week, when the new session began. They claimed that they had arrived in Kathmandu only after taking their final exams. School teachers in Khurkot, Sindhuli District, however, claimed that children in the vicinity of the school at Sele Ghat (between Sindhuli and Ramechap districts) worked during all seasons, even on school days, though they did work before and after school hours.

Table 3.48: Percentage of School-Going Child Porters Who Work Only When School Is Out of Session and During School Holidays by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		All ages	
	% working only when there is no school	Total no.	% working only when there is no school	Total no.	% working only when there is no school	Total no.
Type						
Short-distance	77.5	138	73.5	113	75.7	251
Long-distance	88.7	62	86.6	67	87.6	129
Sex						
Female	86.2	58	91.7	36	88.3	94
Male	78.9	142	75.0	144	76.9	286
Caste/ethnicity						
Caste groups	84.4	45	75.0	56	79.2	101
<i>Janajatis</i>	77.7	103	76.0	96	76.9	199
Dalits	84.6	52	92.9	28	87.5	80
Family condition						
Normal	82.2	157	78.9	142	80.6	299
Dysfunctional	76.7	43	76.3	38	76.5	81
Region						
Eastern	78.2	142	77.1	70	77.8	212
Kathmandu Valley		1	54.8	31	56.3	32
Central and western	61.1	18	71.9	32	68.0	50
Mid- and far-western	100.0	39	100.0	47	100.0	86
Total (% and no.)	81.0	200	78.3	180	79.7	380

To sum up the schooling experience of child porters, it is important to note that while they do go to school (only 3% have never attended and of the 77% who currently attend 80% work only when there is no school), almost half (47%) have repeated grades and fewer children than their poverty and marginalization suggest should actually get scholarships or other educational support (just 38%). In places where there are large populations of child porters, awareness among school communities about students who porter for family and personal reasons is high.

3.8.2 Schools Available in the Villages of Child Porters

According to government policy, every ward in Nepal must establish at least one primary school or otherwise ensure that there is a primary school within a half-an-hour walking distance while every VDC must have either a secondary or lower-secondary schools in the belief that the availability of nearby school services to will ensure the enrollment of all school-age children. Of the child porters interviewed, only 5% said that there was no school of any type in their village (Table 3.49). Nearly 85% (86% of boys and 75% of girls) said there was a primary school in their village and 69% and 67% said there were lower-secondary and secondary schools respectively. When it comes to higher secondary and the vocational and technical schools, however, the availability of services drops considerably, to just 29% and 6% respectively. Long-distance child porters had the highest rates of non-availability of any schooling facility (8%), a result of their living in very remote areas; the next highest rate was found among child porters under 14 (6%).

Table 3.49: Availability of Different Types of School Facilities in Villages of Origin: Percentage of Child Porters by Type of Portering, Age, and Sex

Type of school	Type		Age		Sex		Total
	Short	Long	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	
Primary school in own ward	84.8	84.2	83.2	85.9	74.5	87.3	84.6
Lower-secondary school in VDC	71.3	63.8	70.6	67.5	62.3	70.8	69.0
Secondary school in VDC	71.0	58.6	63.4	70.6	67.0	67.2	67.1
Higher secondary school in VDC	33.1	20.4	24.4	33.7	23.6	30.7	29.2
Vocational and technical school in VDC	8.5	0.7	4.6	7.5	5.7	6.2	6.1
No schools at all	2.9	7.9	5.7	4.1	4.2	4.7	4.5
Total*	341	152	238	255	106	387	493

*The sum of each column does not add to 100% because each figure is the proportion of those saying 'yes' in each case and there may be multiple yes's. The value in each cell refers to percentage of the column total (the number of respondents).

About the schools in which they study, child porters who participated in informal talks and in FGDs made the following claims.

- There are no benches or desks to sit at; students either sit on the dusty floor or bring something from home (a *pira* or *gundri*²⁷) to sit on.
- Teachers tell us to read but do not help us understand the difficult things written in the textbooks.
- There is no sports equipment like balls or rings.
- In a single classroom, there are students from two or more than two grades.
- A single teacher may have to teach more than one class simultaneously, moving from classroom to classroom.
- Books are not available at the beginning of the school year.

3.8.3 Attitudes Towards the Education of Child Porters

Attitudes towards the education of child porters vary. Most children said that they thought they ought to study full-time but that household exigencies and lack of income meant that they could not devote themselves to their education and thus that they did not perform well academically. Some thought that there was little point in studying as there was no guaranteed of a service-sector job (*jagir*) afterwards. They reasoned that since they would have to do labor later, they might as well start doing it as children. Others pointed out that they had to earn money to survive using whatever means possible.

To assess child porters' attitude towards their potential in education they were asked if they thought they would be as academically competent as non-portering children in their neighborhoods and schools if they were provided with better a better learning environment. Almost all (93%) said they could do as well, with those aged 14-17 years slightly more likely than those under 14 to say that they would excel (94% versus 92%) (Table 3.50). Child porters, it is clear, have a resoundingly positive attitude towards education; they feel that all they need to shine is a home and school environment conducive to studying.

²⁷ A *pira* is a mat for a single person to sit on; a *gundri* is a mat for two. Both types of mats are made from the husks of maize cobs and paddy straw. A *pira* is also the name used for a low seat constructed of three pieces of wood.

School teachers blame both the attitudes of child porters and their parents' poverty and ignorance for children's irregular attendance and insincere application to their studies and, ultimately, their poor performance. They suggested that parents do not supervise their children closely enough but just let them do whatever they like. They said that while parents and school teachers had to work together to bring children on the right track, but that ignorant parents, mostly from *janajati* and other marginalized communities prefer that their children earn than that they concentrate on their schooling.

Adult porters and the parents of child porters were not able to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of the trade-off between children's portering and schooling. They said only that it was necessary for children to attend school and to study but that the state of the family, poverty, the unemployment of other family members, and the inadequacy of their household income compelled children to work as porters.

Table 3.50: Perceptions of Personal Competence in Studies: Percentage and Number of Child Porters by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years		14-17 years		Both	
	% Yes	No.	% Yes	No.	% Yes	No.
Type						
Short-distance	92.9	170	94.7	171	93.8	341
Long-distance	89.7	68	92.9	84	91.4	152
Sex						
Female	89.1	64	95.2	42	91.5	106
Male	93.1	174	93.9	213	93.5	387
Caste/ethnicity						
Caste groups	93.9	49	94.3	70	94.1	119
<i>Janajatis</i>	92.1	126	94.2	139	93.2	265
Dalits	90.5	63	93.5	46	91.7	109
Family condition						
Normal	92.3	183	93.3	194	92.8	377
Dysfunctional	90.9	55	96.7	61	94.0	116
Region						
Eastern	94.6	167	92.8	111	93.9	278
Kathmandu Valley		1	93.2	44	93.3	45
Central and western	89.3	28	98.0	49	94.8	77
Mid- and far-western	83.3	42	94.1	51	89.2	93
Total	92.0	238	94.1	255	93.1	493

3.9 Health Hazards Associated with Portering

The *Methodological Manual on the Rapid Assessment of Child Labor* claims that one major limitation of rapid assessments of child labor is that they do not adequately document the work-related health hazards to participating children (ILO/UNICEF, 2005). Portering is hazardous in that it requires carrying heavy load for long hours walking on heavily-trafficked roads and steep and narrow foot trails in the high hills as well as fording rivers and crossing suspension bridges. It does not, however, require that children work in a confined space and under conditions of bondage. The health risks of this occupation include falling while carrying a load, thereby incurring fractures of limbs, and the risk of slipping down a cliff. The long-term occupational hazards might include growth retardation, skeletal deformities, spinal injury, joint problems, respiratory illness, and so forth; these possibilities need to be studied through an experimental and participatory design.

3.9.1 Nature of Illness

The health problems child porters reported that they had experienced while working included fever, flu, and headache; back and waist pain; neck and shoulder pain and strain; knee and joint pain; and chest and stomach pain. As Table 3.51 shows, 74% of the 493 interviewed had suffered one or more of these illnesses while working. Rates varied between a low among those aged 14-17 (71%) to a high among girl porters (84%). Back pain and neck pain are the most common health problems: 50.5% and 49% respectively reported that they suffered from these conditions. For all types of illness, younger children more than older, female more than male, and long-distance more than short-distance porters were likely to report having suffered.

Table 3.51: Illnesses Suffered While Working: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Type of Illness	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Back pain	52.5	48.6	64.2	46.8	46.3	59.9	50.5
Neck pain	54.2	44.7	50.9	48.8	46.0	56.6	49.3
Joint or knee pain	43.7	41.6	46.2	41.6	37.8	53.3	42.6
Fever, headache, or flu	33.6	38.8	29.2	38.2	30.2	50.0	36.3
Chest, or stomach pain	20.6	23.1	22.6	21.7	23.8	17.8	21.9
Any of the above illnesses	77.7	70.6	84.0	71.3	71.3	80.3	74.0
Total*	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

*The sum of each column does not add to 100% because each figure is the proportion of those saying 'yes' in each case and there may be multiple yes's. The value in each cell refers to percentage of the column total (the number of respondents).

Well above 75% of the children who had fallen ill, regardless of the type of ailment involved, said that they had suffered either within the week or the month before the interview. More specifically, 83% of 249 children had suffered from back pain, 85% from neck pain, 78% from chest or stomach pain, 76.5% from fever, headache, or other flu-like symptoms, and 75% from knee or joint pain within the week or month before the interview. The fact that these rates are so high suggests that these are the recurrent health problems of child porters.

Table 3.52: Frequency of Illness: Percentage of Child Porters by Type of Illness and Time

Last occurrence of the illness	Type of illness				
	Back pain	Neck pain	Knee or joint pain	Fever, flu, or headache	Chest or stomach pain
This week	42.6	56.4	43.8	38.0	42.6
During the last month	40.6	28.8	31.4	38.5	35.2
During the last 2 months	8.4	7.0	15.2	8.9	12.0
During the last 6 months	3.2	3.7	5.7	8.9	7.4
Earlier than the last 6 months	5.2	4.1	3.8	5.6	2.8
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (N)	249	243	210	179	112

Child porters who participated in FGDs also mentioned that they commonly suffer from back, neck and knee joint pain, and that if they carry a load on an empty stomach, they also experience chest pain. As for the frequency of suffering, they said that health problems are common and can occur at any time.

3.9.2 Nature of Treatment

About 25% of child porters visited a health facility (of any type, whether a hospital or health posts or private clinic or doctor) for treatment, while 59% either recovered after resting (35%) or did nothing (24%) (Table 3.53). It is clear that the practice of turning to health services is limited.

Table 3.53: Treatment Sought: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Nature of Treatment	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Recovered after rest	40.2	29.0	48.3	30.4	30.7	43.0	34.7
Did nothing	30.7	17.7	25.8	23.8	23.6	25.6	24.3
Visited a hospital or health post	11.1	28.0	10.1	22.4	24.8	8.3	19.5
Bought and took medication on own	6.3	7.5	4.5	7.7	7.9	5.0	6.9
Visited a private clinic or doctor	4.8	6.5	3.4	6.3	7.1	2.5	5.6
Took medicine given by adults or friends	3.7	7.0	2.2	6.3	3.9	8.3	5.3
Visited local traditional healers	3.2	4.3	5.6	3.1	2.0	7.4	3.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	189	186	89	286	254	121	375

Adult porters look at such health problems as usual and do not seek treatment; instead, they rely on their own experiential knowledge to recover. Child porters are likely to follow their example. In addition, child porters lack are generally unaware of the services that local health facilities they provide. Only if home remedies do not work and the suffering becomes intolerable are child porters taken to a health facility.

3.9.3 Accidents

The very nature of their work makes porters prone to accidents. They are at risk of falling with a load and either being crushed by its weight or breaking or straining limbs as well as being strangled by the tumpline when a load falls. Child porters also reported other hazards, such as slipping off the ledge of from narrow foot trails, falling down, being struck by odd-sized objects (falling from the hill or from the top of the bus while unloading items). As Table 3.54 shows, the risk of falling is great: 45% have fallen at least once and 35% claimed that it is common to fall at least once a season. The rates of falling are highest among long-distance porters (51%), boys (48%), and older children (47%) and lowest for girls. Long-distance porters are also most likely to report that they get injured every season (41%).

The types of injuries they experienced include muscle strains, fractures of arms and legs, cuts caused by carried objects, stubbing their toes and losing a nail, being hurt by a stone falling from a cliff, and being hit by trucks reversing for loading/unloading.

It is clear from their reports of fall and injuries that child porters are at considerable risk from occupational hazards.

Table 3.54: Frequency of Falling and Injuries: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Frequency of falling and injury	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Frequency of falling							
Never	57.1	52.9	67.0	51.7	57.8	48.7	55.0
Sometimes/at least once a season	32.4	37.3	30.2	36.2	32.0	41.4	34.9
At least once a fortnight	5.9	3.9	2.8	5.4	4.7	5.3	4.9
At least once a week	3.4	4.7		5.2	5.0	2.0	4.1
Each time a load is carried	1.3	1.2		1.6	0.6	2.6	1.2
At least once in experience	42.9	47.1	33.0	48.3	42.2	51.3	45.0
Total no.	238	255	106	387	341	152	493
Frequency of injury							
Never	67.6	64.7	69.8	65.1	68.6	60.5	66.1
Sometimes/at least once a season	30.3	32.2	30.2	31.5	29.0	36.2	31.2
At least once a fortnight	2.1	1.6		2.3	1.5	2.6	1.8
At least once a week		1.6		1.0	0.9	0.7	0.8
Total no.	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

3.10 Living Conditions at Work

The living conditions of child porters while they are work were assessed through structured interviews, discussions, and observation of the places child porters slept or rested during the day and at night. Short-distance porters working in nascent market centres or transit areas reported that they slept at home though some slept in small hotels, under the thatched roofs of tea shops, sheds and shacks. Girls who were carrying slate in Patan, Baitadi District, for example, returned home in the evening, as did children in Khurkot, Sindhuli District. In Ghurmi and Jayaram Ghat, Udayapur District, in contrast, some returned home while others slept in various places in the markets themselves. Children in Kathmandu Valley said they stayed in rented rooms or in sheds in the Kalimati vegetable market. Long-distance child porters tend not to have fixed arrangements though some do have particular destinations they strive to reach for the night.

3.10.1. Places and Hours Slept

Irrespective of background attributes, 51% of child porters sleep at home, 19% in rented rooms, 17% in houses along the route, and 13% in hotels or tea shops along the route (Table 3.55). Girls (82%) and younger porters (60.5%) are most likely to sleep at home and among long-distance porters, 51% sleep in houses along their routes.

Table 3.55: Where Child Porters Sleep at Night While Working: Percentage by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Place nights are spent	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Hotel/tea shops along the route	13.9	12.9	2.8	16.3	12.0	16.4	13.4
Houses along the route	16.8	16.9	9.4	18.9	1.8	50.7	16.8
Rented room	8.8	27.8	5.7	22.2	25.8	2.6	18.7
Own house	60.5	42.4	82.1	42.6	60.4	30.3	51.1
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

Child porters often start working early in the morning (4-5 a.m. in Kalimati, Kathmandu District) and, in the case of long-distance porters, continue until dusk. Though children were not asked directly how many hours a night they sleep, they were asked what time they went to bed at night and when they set out for work in the morning. Most go to bed between 8 and 9 o'clock in the evening and set out for work between 4 and 7 o'clock in the morning. How late they sleep in the morning depends on the type of porter they are and where they work. In Kalimati, Kathmandu District, and other vegetable markets, the peak hours of work tend to be between 3-4 a.m. and 9-10 a.m.; after that, work is available only occasionally. Long-distance porters like to tackle the most difficult and steepest uphill sections of their route in the morning before the sun shines fiercely.

3.10.2 Food and Nutrition

All porters, irrespective of age, sex, and type, eat the same basic food items at different times of the day. For breakfast, the majority, except for long-distance porters, have tea or milk with biscuits or other bakery products (47%); popcorn, *roti* (flatbread) and vegetables are consumed by 22%; 13% have leftover rice; and 12% have nothing at all. Rice, lentils and vegetables (*dal-bhaat-tarkaari*) is eaten midday by 85%. Among long-distance porters, 19% and 8% eat vegetables with *roti* and *dhindo* (millet or corn buckwheat porridge) respectively. Long-distance porters prepare their own food with items they carry with them, whereas short-distance porters who commute daily from home or live in rented rooms eat food their families or they themselves prepare. For an afternoon snack, the majority of child porters eat popcorn and soybeans (*makai-bhatamas*). In the evening, child porters again eat *dal-bhaat-tarkaari*, *roti* and vegetables, or *dhindo*. With 12% not eating breakfast (and breakfast being a very light meal in any case) and 35% not eating an afternoon snack, it is clear that a substantial proportion eat only twice a day.

Table 3.56: Types of Food Eaten at Different Meals: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Food Item by Time to Eat	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Breakfast							
Tea/milk, biscuits/doughnuts	44.5	48.6	30.2	51.2	54.8	28.3	46.7
Popcorn, <i>roti</i> and vegetables	22.3	22.0	31.1	19.6	10.9	47.4	22.1
Leftover rice	16.8	10.2	13.2	13.4	15.0	9.9	13.4
Nothing	11.3	11.8	20.8	9.0	12.3	9.9	11.6
Chickpeas and beaten rice (<i>chana-chiura</i>) and egg	5.0	7.5	4.7	6.7	7.0	4.6	6.3
Midday meal							
<i>Dal-bhaat-tarkaari</i>	83.2	86.3	85.8	84.5	93.8	64.5	84.8
<i>Roti</i> and vegetables	7.6	6.7	9.4	6.5	1.8	19.1	7.1
<i>Dhindo</i>	4.6	0.8	1.9	2.8	0.3	7.9	2.6
Popcorn and soybeans, potatoes	0.8	2.0		1.8	0.6	3.3	1.4
Nothing	1.3	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.3	1.0
Instant noodles, <i>thukpa</i> , <i>samosa</i> ²⁸	2.5	3.5	1.9	3.4	2.6	3.9	3.0
Afternoon snack							
Instant noodles, <i>momos</i> ²⁹ , <i>thukpa</i>	42.9	39.2	31.1	43.7	46.3	28.9	41.0
Nothing	32.4	36.5	52.8	29.5	34.6	34.2	34.5
Popcorn and soybeans	12.6	11.0	5.7	13.4	4.7	27.6	11.8
<i>Chana-chiura</i> , <i>alu-chiura</i> (potatoes and beaten rice), egg	8.8	9.8	6.6	10.1	10.3	7.2	9.3
<i>Dal-bhaat-tarkaari</i>	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.4	4.1	2.0	3.4
Evening meal							
<i>Dal-bhaat-tarkaari</i>	84.5	89.8	76.4	90.2	91.2	78.3	87.2
<i>Roti</i> and vegetables	9.2	7.1	19.8	4.9	7.9	8.6	8.1
<i>Dhindo</i>	6.3	3.1	3.8	4.9	0.9	13.2	4.7
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

Children working as short-distance porters in market centres said they ate three or four times a day, whereas long-distance child porters and short-distance porters who commuted from home ate just two or three times a day. The difference may be attributable to the ready availability of food in market centres, whereas long-distance porters need to reach a village or a rest stop with hotels and tea stops³⁰. Almost all the child and adult porters spoken to during informal conversations and FGDs averred that neither the quantity nor the quality of food consumed was sufficient, especially given the hard labor they performed.

About the frequency with which they eat “high-value foods”³¹ like meat, fish, eggs, milk and milk products (ghee and yoghurt), and seasonal fruits, the majority (55% and 57% respectively) reported

²⁸ *Thukpa* is a noodle and vegetable soup; *samosa* is a deep-fried dumpling stuffed with potatoes and other vegetables.

²⁹ *Momos* are a steamed dumpling usually stuffed with buffalo meat.

³⁰ Places where they can gather firewood, perhaps borrow a pot from locals, cook a meal, collect drinking water, and take a lengthy break

³¹ Porters, both child and adult, as well as other individuals who engage in manual labor believe that eating meat, milk, ghee and seasonal fruits gives them extra energy. This idea of “high-value foods,” thus, is a social perception rather than a nutritional one.

that they consume meat and dairy products foods either daily or once a week. They consumed fruit much less often: just 37% daily or weekly. While long-distance (39%) female (44%) and younger child porters (52%) child porters are substantially less likely than their short distance, male and older counterparts to eat meat products daily or weekly, they are more likely to eat dairy products with that frequency (Table 3.57).

Table 3.57: Frequency of Consumption of Meat, Dairy Items, and Fruit: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Frequency of eating “high-value foods”	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Meat, fish, or eggs							
Daily or weekly	51.7	61.6	44.3	60.2	64.8	38.8	56.8
Once a month	39.5	27.8	37.7	32.3	28.7	44.1	33.5
Less than once a month	5.9	6.7	11.3	4.9	5.3	8.6	6.3
Never	2.9	3.9	6.6	2.6	1.2	8.6	3.4
Milk and other dairy products							
Daily or weekly	51.3	57.6	61.3	52.7	51.6	61.2	54.6
Once a month	30.3	22.4	21.7	27.4	24.9	28.9	26.2
Less than once a month	13.9	12.2	11.3	13.4	15.5	7.2	13.0
Never	4.6	7.8	5.7	6.5	7.9	2.6	6.3
Fruit							
Daily or weekly	27.3	46.7	39.6	36.7	41.6	27.6	37.3
Once a month	46.2	36.5	36.8	42.4	36.7	51.3	41.2
Less than once a month	23.5	14.1	19.8	18.3	20.2	15.1	18.7
Never	2.9	2.7	3.8	2.6	1.5	5.9	2.8
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

3.10.3 Clothing and Personal Hygiene

Child porters are conspicuous for their clothing and possessions. Their clothes were often ragged and invariably dusty and stained, as if rarely washed. Some child porters in rural areas were wearing their school uniforms. Most (82%) wore plastic sandals and only a few (9%), shoes. Long-distance, older, and male child porters were more likely to wear shoes. Two percent worked bare foot (Table 3.58).

Few child porters bathe regularly, especially short-distance porters in market areas, who live in groups in cheap rented rooms poorly supplied with water. Long-distance porters and porters who live in riverside markets like Jite Gada, Kalikot, and Ghurmi, Udyapur) bathe frequently, even daily.

Table 3.58: Footwear Worn by Child Porters While Working: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex and Type of Portering

Type of footwear worn while working	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Plastic sandals	88.2	75.3	95.3	77.8	89.1	64.5	81.5
Shoes	4.2	13.7	1.9	11.1	2.9	23.0	9.1
Shoes and plastic sandals	6.7	7.8	0.9	9.0	5.0	12.5	7.3
None (mostly barefoot)	0.8	3.1	1.9	2.1	2.9	0.0	2.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

3.11 Personal Habits of Child Porters

Child porters' personal habits with regard to the use of chewing tobacco, smoking, drinking alcohol, and using other intoxicating substances, including cannabis and glue (sniffing) were evaluated. Children who were interviewed individually tended to deny these habits, but participants in FDGs were more forthcoming. Children in Khurkot, Sindhuli; Ghurmi, Udayapur; and some in Okhaldhunga said they drank alcohol, smoked and chewed tobacco. Some *Janajati* and Dalit mentioned that their caste/ethnicity allowed them to use such substances (Box 6). Altogether 32% admitted to using alcohol (*jaad* and *rakshi*³²) and 17% to tobacco product; no child porter admitting to using any other intoxicating substance (Table 3.59). Older children are twice as likely as younger children to smoke and chew tobacco (23% versus 11%), but the extent of drinking is more or less the same. Though tobacco usage is about the same for long- and short-distance porters, drinking alcohol is more common among long-distance porters. Male and out-of-school child porters also have higher rates of alcohol consumption.

Table 3.59: Smoking/Tobacco Chewing and Drinking Habits: Percentage of Child Porters by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			All ages		
	Smoking/ tobacco chewing	Drinking	No.	Smoking/ tobacco chewing	Drinking	No.	Smoking/ tobacco chewing	Drinking	No.
Type									
Short-distance	11.8	27.6	170	22.2	27.5	171	17.0	27.6	341
Long-distance	7.4	42.6	68	23.8	39.3	84	16.4	40.8	152
Sex									
Female	1.6	14.1	64	2.4	11.9	42	1.9	13.2	106
Male	13.8	38.5	174	26.8	35.2	213	20.9	36.7	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	6.5	33.0	200	16.1	26.7	180	11.1	30.0	380
No	31.6	26.3	38	38.7	42.7	75	36.3	37.2	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	6.1	4.1	49	27.1	12.9	70	18.5	9.2	119
<i>Janajatis</i>	11.1	44.4	126	18.0	40.3	139	14.7	42.3	265
Dalits	12.7	28.6	63	30.4	32.6	46	20.2	30.3	109

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			All ages		
	Smoking/ tobacco chewing	Drinking	No.	Smoking/ tobacco chewing	Drinking	No.	Smoking/ tobacco chewing	Drinking	No.
Family condition									
Normal	109	31.1	183	23.7	309	194	175	31.0	377
Dysfunctional	9.1	34.5	55	19.7	32.8	61	14.7	33.6	116
Region									
Eastern	11.4	40.7	167	20.7	47.7	111	15.1	43.5	278
Kathmandu Valley			1	27.3	22.7	44	26.7	22.2	45
Central and western	7.1	7.1	28	12.2	18.4	49	10.4	14.3	77
Mid- and far-western	9.5	14.3	42	33.3	15.7	51	22.6	15.1	93
Total	10.5	31.9	238	22.7	31.4	255	16.8	31.6	493

Box 6: Smoking and drinking is common

A 16-year-old child porter belonging to the Rai *Janajati* community interviewed in Okhaldhunga Bazar claimed that he neither smoked nor drank. When asked why if, by ethnicity³³ he was allowed to drink, he did not, he explained, “If I start drinking now, I will get addicted to alcohol. If my teachers and school friends saw me smoking and drinking, what would happen then? For these reasons, I totally eschew these things.” Later, however, the field investigator saw the same boy walking down the street puffing on a cigarette. On another occasion, a group of children who had been carrying cement sacks over the suspension bridge across the Sunkoshi River toward Sele Ghat of Ramechhap marked the end of the job by ordering drinks of *jaad* at a temporary hut erected just to sell liquor. In FGDs, some child porters said they drank to celebrate a good trip and good earnings; others said that alcohol helped relieve the tiredness they experienced after a long day of work.

3.12 Incidence of Cheating

Since child porters are, past studies and the present study suggests, more naive and honest than other child laborers, it is relatively easy to cheat or loot them. The survey inquired if and how often interviewees had been cheated by service users, adult porters, and co-workers in the last year. Some 14% of child porters in total, 15% and 12% of those aged 14-17 and under 14 years respectively, said they had been cheated of their earnings and looted of the good they carried goods or other belongings. Regardless of age, experiences of cheating are more common among short-distance, male, and out-of-school porters and those from dysfunctional families. Those who work in urbanized areas like Kathmandu Valley and the central and western regions are also more likely to have been cheated or looted than those who work elsewhere.

³³ Unlike groups like Brahmins, Rais are considered a jand-raksi-khaane jaat, or an ethnic group for which alcohol consumption is not just acceptable but part of many socio-cultural practices.

Table 3.60: Experience of Being Cheated or Looted: Percentage of Child Porters by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			All ages		
	% Yes	% No	Total no.	% Yes	% No	Total no.	% Yes	% No	Total no.
Type									
Short-distance	14.7	85.3	170	18.1	81.9	171	16.4	83.6	341
Long-distance	4.4	95.6	68	9.5	90.5	84	7.2	92.8	152
Sex									
Female	7.8	92.2	64	9.5	90.5	42	8.5	91.5	106
Male	13.2	86.8	174	16.4	83.6	213	15.0	85.0	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	9.5	90.5	200	14.4	85.6	180	11.8	88.2	380
No	23.7	76.3	38	17.3	82.7	75	19.5	80.5	113
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste groups	10.2	89.8	49	18.6	81.4	70	15.1	84.9	119
Janajatis	11.9	88.1	126	15.1	84.9	139	13.6	86.4	265
Dalits	12.7	87.3	63	10.9	89.1	46	11.9	88.1	109
Family condition									
Normal	10.9	89.1	183	14.9	85.1	194	13.0	87.0	377
Dysfunctional	14.5	85.5	55	16.4	83.6	61	15.5	84.5	116
Region									
Eastern	11.4	88.6	167	9.9	90.1	111	10.8	89.2	278
Kathmandu Valley			1	29.5	70.5	44	31.1	68.9	45
Central and western	25.0	75.0	28	20.4	79.6	49	22.1	77.9	77
Mid- and far-western	2.4	97.6	42	9.8	90.2	51	6.5	93.5	93
Total	11.8	88.2	238	15.3	84.7	255	13.6	86.4	493

Most child reporters who had been cheated or looted reported that the perpetrator was unidentified persons (34%), service user (*sahu*) (25%), or drunkard (17%), but a few said they had been victimized by porter friends (13%) or adult porters (11%) (Table 3.61). Most long-distance (60%) and female (40%) child porters were cheated by strangers, while short-distance porters were equally likely to report having been cheated by strangers as by employers (29% each).

Table 3.61: Perpetrators of Cheating or Looting: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Perpetrator of cheating or looting	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
Stranger	31.9	35.2	40.0	33.0	28.6	60.0	33.9
Service user (<i>sahu</i>)	29.8	22.5	13.3	27.2	28.6	10.0	25.4
Drunkard	17.0	16.9	20.0	16.5	17.3	15.0	16.9
Porter friend	8.5	15.5	6.7	13.6	14.3	5.0	12.7
Adult porter	12.8	9.9	20.0	9.7	11.2	10.0	11.0
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total no.	47	71	15	103	98	20	118

3.13 Self-Perception of Having to Work as a Porter

Interviewees were asked what they felt about having to work as a porter from such a young age. This question was intended to indirectly probe their awareness about their rights and their inclination toward education. Over three-quarters (76.5%) opined that working as a porter was not good and that they felt sad about having to do it; the remaining 23.5% said it was good or okay (Table 3.62). While there was little variation by age (with 76% under 14 and 77% 14 and above expressing unhappiness with their job), long-distance porters were likely to feel worse about the job than short-distance porters, regardless of their age. Females aged 14-17 years and school-going porters were also more likely than average to be unhappy. Overall, regardless of the variable considered, over 70% were unhappy about having to work as a porter.

In FGDs, children porters opined that it was not good for them to work as porters for the reasons of child rights, education rights and, to some extent, health rights. Children noted that legally they were not allowed to work under the age of 16 and that it was their right to go school. Though they had not heard of the concept of “education for all,” they did know that education is the right of children. Most participants also mentioned that working from an early age harms future health.

Table 3.62: Self-Perceptions about Working as a Porter: Percentage by Age and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	<14 years			14-17 years			All ages		
	% feeling bad	% good/okay	Total no.	% feeling bad	% good/okay	Total no.	% feeling bad	% good/okay	Total no.
Type									
Short-distance	71.2	28.8	170	74.9	25.1	171	73.0	27.0	341
Long-distance	86.8	13.2	68	82.1	17.9	84	84.2	15.8	152
Sex									
Female	71.9	28.1	64	81.0	19.0	42	75.5	24.5	106
Male	77.0	23.0	174	76.5	23.5	213	76.7	23.3	387
Currently attending school									
Yes	76.0	24.0	200	82.8	17.2	180	79.2	20.8	380
No	73.7	26.3	38	64.0	36.0	75	67.3	32.7	113
Family condition									
Normal	74.9	25.1	183	77.3	22.7	194	76.1	23.9	377
Dysfunctional	78.2	21.8	55	77.0	23.0	61	77.6	22.4	116
Caste/ethnicity									
Caste group	77.6	22.4	49	78.6	21.4	70	78.2	21.8	119
Janajatis	73.8	26.2	126	76.3	23.7	139	75.1	24.9	265
Dalits	77.8	22.2	63	78.3	21.7	46	78.0	22.0	109
Region									
Eastern	78.4	21.6	167	74.8	25.2	111	77.0	23.0	278
Kathmandu Valley	100.0	0.0	1	77.3	22.7	44	77.8	22.2	45
Central and western	71.4	28.6	28	77.6	22.4	49	75.3	24.7	77
Mid- and far-western	66.7	33.3	42	82.4	17.6	51	75.3	24.7	93
Total	75.6	24.4	238	77.3	22.7	255	76.5	23.5	493

3.14 Desire to Participate in Vocational and/or Skill Development Training

Giving due respect to the principles of the ILO Minimum of Age Convention, Article 32 of the UNCRC and the Education-for-All Declaration, that no child should be in the labor market or being prepared for entry into it, the study team asked only those child porters aged 16 and above whether they would like to participate in skill development and/or vocational training if they were selected. The premise behind the age limit on this question is that only a child of 16 is old enough to seek employment after being trained. Regardless of the variable considered, at least 88% of respondents would like to participate in such a program (Table 3.63). The lowest rate—88%—was recorded among child porters belonging to dysfunctional families and the highest—100%—among the 31 child porters from central and western regions. The near-universal desire for training suggests that child porters have no inclination to continue portering if they get the opportunity to do something different.

Table 3.63: Desire of Child Porters Aged 16 and Older to Participate in Vocational and/or Skill Development: Percentage by Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	% yes, would like to participate	% no or not considered	Total (no.)
Type			
Short-distance	95.0	5.0	101
Long-distance	93.5	6.5	62
Sex			
Female	90.5	9.5	21
Male	95.1	4.9	142
Currently attending school			
Yes	94.0	6.0	117
No	95.7	4.3	46
Family condition			
Non-Disturbed	96.7	3.3	121
Dysfunctional	88.1	11.9	42
Caste/ethnicity			
Caste groups	91.3	8.7	46
Janajatis	96.6	3.4	88
Dalits	93.1	6.9	29
Region			
Eastern	94.0	6.0	67
Kathmandu Valley	93.8	6.3	32
Central and western	100.0	0.0	31
Mid- and far-western	90.9	9.1	33
Total	94.5	5.5	163

3.15 Future Aspirations of Children

Children's future aspirations are presented in Table 3.65. School teachers serve as role models of good people in society, so it is not surprising that a majority (29%) (more girls than boys and more younger than older children) expressed a desire to be a school teacher. The second most common desire (seen among 13% overall and 14% of boys) was to serve in the army or police force (including British, Indian and Brunei forces among some child porters in the East and around Pokhara and Baglung).

Table 3.64: Future Aspirations: Percentage of Child Porters by Age, Sex, and Type of Portering

Future aspiration	Age		Sex		Type		Total
	<14 years	14-17 years	Female	Male	Short	Long	
School teacher	32.8	25.5	34.0	27.6	28.4	30.3	29.0
Army/Police	13.4	12.5	7.5	14.5	13.2	12.5	13.0
Doctor/Nurse	12.2	10.2	29.2	6.2	12.0	9.2	11.2
Driver	6.7	11.4	0.0	11.6	10.0	7.2	9.1
Businessperson	5.5	10.6	3.8	9.3	5.9	13.2	8.1
Government service	8.0	7.8	0.9	9.8	8.5	6.6	7.9
Social/Volunteer worker/Leader	2.5	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.6	2.8
Engineer/Pilot	2.1	2.7	0.0	3.1	1.5	4.6	2.4
Technician/Electronic repairs	0.8	2.4	0.0	2.1	1.8	1.3	1.6
Tailor master	1.7	1.6	4.7	0.8	1.2	2.6	1.6
Lawyer/journalists	0.0	2.0	1.9	0.8	1.5	0.0	1.0
Artist/Poet/Writer	0.4	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.8
Trekking guide	0.4	1.2	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.6	0.8
Foreign employment	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.8
Skilled farmer	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.6
Not able to say/Not thought about/Don't know	13.0	5.5	15.1	7.5	10.6	5.9	9.1
Total	238	255	106	387	341	152	493

Another 11% wanted to be a doctor or nurse, with 29% of girls aspiring to be a nurse. In response to a question about why they wished to be nurses, girls said that nurses were great persons (*thulo manche*) in society. In reverse, too, when asked how a person could become a *thulo mnache*, a common response was becoming and serving patients. Some 9% in total, and more among short-distance, male and older child porters said that they would like to become a driver. As motorable roads penetrate ever more remote hilly areas, more children aspire to be helpers on vehicles (*khalasi*) as they see the transport sector as exciting and a good way to earn money. About 8% each would like to be businessmen and government service holders. Other, less popular fields child porters aspire to work in include social work, politics, engineering, aeronautics, mechanics, tailoring, journalism, law, art, trekking, and foreign employment. Almost none said they wanted to go into agriculture (which is the main occupation of most of their households) and 9% were uncertain. Not one child porter mentioned making portering his or her future occupation. They do not believe that portering has any social prestige or occupational identity and all would like to move out of this sector.

The future aspirations of child porters are more or less are practical and, if attention were paid to them, these could be met.

3.16 Characteristics of Portering

Children begin portering for two reasons: family compulsion (poverty) or personal desire. No third party (mediator, trafficker, or other person) is involved in their getting involved in the work. They are free to choose whether or not to carry a load depending upon their mood, the wage rate offered, and the nature of the goods to be carried. For this reason, no child porter feels compelled by an employer, service user, contractor, or mediator to work. From the perspective of a labor contract or other sort of agreement, portering is a very free occupation in which to work.

However, child porters do feel it is hazardous in that they often have to carry very heavy loads in comparison to their physical capacity, especially in the case of short-distance porters, who often carry indivisible items like wardrobes and sofas.

3.17 National Estimate of Child Porters

Child porters are a mobile population which is difficult to access in part because they are elusive when they are not working. Several sampling methods have been devised to capture mobile populations and yield representative estimates, including the capture-recapture approach, which makes it possible to estimate the size of a population for which a comprehensive census is impossible and to produce data representative of that populations (Jensen and Pearson, 2002). The validity of the estimations of the capture-re-capture approach rests of four assumptions:

- The population studied is closed, meaning that it is not affected by birth, death, or migration during the sampling process,
- No individual's probability of being captured is zero,
- Individuals already surveyed are clearly identified, and
- Having been captured once does not effect the probability of being recaptured (Jensen and Pearson, 2002).

Applying the estimation methodology described in Section 1.4.3 and monthly variations in the capture and re-capture of child porters, the study team devised a monthly index of variation in the number of child porters (Table 3.65).

The seasonal index for child porters exceeds 100 in the months of Asar, Shrawan, Bhadra and Chaitra. The demand for child porters increases in the monsoon months of Asar and Shrawan (June and August) for two reasons: children are out of school due to the long summer vacation and porters gets more work during the rainy seasons as road conditions deteriorate and vehicular flow declines. The major festivals of Dashain and Tihar fall in Bhadra, immediately after the rainy season and transactions in essential goods increase. Finally, Chaitra is a busy period for child porters as their finals exams have just ended and the new school year not yet begun.

Table 3.65: Monthly variations in the capture of child porters

Month	Average days of work	Monthly index (<i>i</i>)
Baisakh (April-May)	11.8	95.93
Jestha (May-June)	11.5	93.49
Asar (June-July)	14.5	117.88
Shrawan (July-August)	15.4	125.20
Bhadra (August-September)	13.2	107.31
Aswin (September-October)	11.9	96.74
Kartik (October-November)	11.8	95.93
Mangsir (November-December)	12.2	99.18
Poush (December-January)	11.0	89.43
Magh (January-February)	11.0	89.43
Falgun (February-March)	11.9	96.74
Chaitra (March-April)	13.5	109.75
Average of average	12.3	

Based on the monthly variation index, the study team made three estimations of the total population, a high, a medium, and a low variant. The high estimate (a 15% recapture rate) is 21,380 child porters, of whom 16,783 are males; the medium estimate (a 20% recapture rate) is 15,995, of whom 12,556 are boys; and the low (a 25% recapture rate) is 12,828 child porters, 10,070 boys.

Table 3.66: High, Medium, and Low Estimates of the Populations of Long- and Short Distance Child Porters by Sex

Variant of estimation	Short-distance			Long-distance			Both short- and long- total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
High	11,232	3,643	14,875	5,551	954	6,505	21,380 (100%)
Medium	8,403	2,725	11,128	4,153	714	4,867	15,995 (100%)
Low	6,739	2,186	8,925	3,331	572	3,903	12,828 (100%)

The high, medium and low estimates correspond to various seasons of portering, as are described below.

- The high estimate is for the months of Asar, Shrawan, Bhadra and Chaitra (whose seasonal variations are more than 100), when the probability of recapture may be as low as 15% due to the almost daily involvement of most child porters,
- The medium estimate refers to the months of Baisak, Aswin, Kartik, Mangsir and Falgun (whose seasonal variation is 95-100), when the probability of recapture is about 20% because only a moderate demand for portering and children are in school.
- The low estimate refers to the months of Poush, Magh and Jestha (whose seasonal variation below 95), when the probability of recapture is about 25% and very few child porters are working.

Of the 493 child porters captured for individual interviews, 70% were short- and 30% long-distance porters. This same rate of distribution was assumed to estimate their respective national populations for the low, medium and high estimates. (Appendix B for an estimate of the number of child porters by districts of survey and gender and type of porter.)

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary of the Major Findings

The three objectives of this assessment were to identify the extent to which children under the age of 18 work as porters at the national, development region and district levels; to document the physical, psycho-social and developmental hazards of portering for the children engaged in it; and to enhance understanding of the socio-economic, cultural and family circumstances which account for the demand for and supply of child porters to local markets. The analytical basis for seeing child portering as a hazardous form of work lies in Article 32 of the UNCRC, which calls for the protection of children against economic exploitation in work that is hazardous or interferes with their education or is harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development; the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) of 1973 and Convention No. 182 and Recommendation No. 190 regarding the worst forms of child labor. These UN conventions define the nature and conditions of work which, if undertaken by persons under certain years of age, constitute the worst forms of work. All these conventions agree on the need for synergy between the ages at which basic education is completed and entry into employment begins and urge state parties to make national legal reforms, including the adoption of policy and legislation upholding the Education-for-All Declaration.

As recommended by the ILO/UNICEF manual on conducting rapid assessments of the worst forms of child labor, the study team used a variety of research methodologies, including semi-structured interviews of child porters, FGDs with adult and child porters, informal talks, KIIs and institutional survey. The team also relied on observation to assess the working conditions of child porters and the occupational hazards they are subject to. The survey sites were mapped to determine core and peripheral areas of child portering. The assessment is based on interviews with 493 child porters (412 and 81 conducted in core and peripheral areas respectively and 238 and 255 conducted with child porters under 14 and aged 14-17 respectively); eight FGDs with a total of 60 child porters; six FGDs with a total of 35 adult porters; 14 KIIs with school teachers; and consultation meeting with district-level line agencies (the Chief District and Women's and Children Officers and the District Child Welfare Board). Ten field investigators carried out the field operation during April and May, 2011. The results of the survey are presented both descriptively and analytically with ample substantiation of key points with qualitative responses and observations that identify common explanatory variables.

About one-fifth of child porters are girls and another one-fifth are under the age of 14. The proportion of girls under 14 is higher than that of boys under 14, indicating that girls begin portering at earlier ages than boys do. Child porters are drawn from all social groups, though the highest proportion are *janajatis* (54%), followed by caste groups (24%), and Dalits (22%).

More than half (52%) of the interviewed child porters had registered their births but 18% had not and 30% did not know. More female than male and more short-distance (57%) than long-distance (41%) child porters were registered their births.

The most child porters were enumerated in eastern districts (56%), followed by mid and far-western districts (19%), and central and western districts (16%). The least were found in Kathmandu Valley (9%). About 70% of those under 14 were enumerated in the East, suggesting that this region is where portering by children is most prevalent and where they originate. Of Nepal's 75 districts, 40, most in the eastern hills and mountains, had populations of child porters at the time of the survey. The fact that only 8% were living outside their places of birth implies that the vast majority of child porters are involved in temporary or seasonal migration.

Child porters, irrespective of other characteristics like age and gender, were most often from joint families, with an average size of 8.3 members, much larger than the national average of 5.3. About 5% and 8% reported that their families included step-parents and step-siblings respectively. Nearly 6% said that their parents are from different caste or ethnic communities. About 15% of all fathers and 4% of all mothers, and more among short-distance and *janajati* child porters, had married a second time.

Almost all (94%) of the 493 child reporters, but more girls (97%) than boys (94.5%) are literate and only 3% (16 children) had never enrolled to school. About 77% of those interviewed currently attend school, more girls (89%) than boys (74%). Most of the 20% (97 children) who had dropped out left school before completing the primary level for reasons like helping with household work, a lack of interest in studying, guardians not sending them, and the distance of their school. Of the out-of-school children only 44% wanted to go back to school.

All child porters came from families with a poor standard of living, as measured by their housing conditions; ownerships of land, household assets, and livestock; agricultural operations; and food security. Indicators of housing quality-number of rooms and stories and existence of a separate kitchen-demonstrate that two-thirds of child porters are from poor households. Though the proportion of child porters coming from landless families is small, the majority are from families with small landholdings and poor-quality land. About 91% of the child porters' families keep some type of livestock, most often cattle (80%), sheep and goats (68%) and buffaloes (47%). The most commonly-possessed amenities are a radio and a telephone or mobile.

The main source of family livelihood is agriculture, though considerable numbers earn a living from agricultural wage labor, self-employment in non-agricultural sectors, and portering. Agriculture labor is the main secondary occupation, followed by portering. The majority of child porters are from families which do not experience year-round food security. Nearly half (48%) of child porters said their families were in debt, mainly to local money lenders; another 22% were not sure if their families had taken loans or not.

More than three-quarters (77.5%) of child porters said that their families got drinking water from safe sources and 63% said that they had some type of toilet facility. In terms of educational infrastructure, 85%, 69%, and 67% of interviewees reported having primary, lower-secondary, and secondary schools respectively in their ward or village.

Migration and Social Networks

Using the disparity between a child porter's district of birth and district of interview as the indicator that migration had occurred, the study team found that one-third of child porters are migrants overall and that all child porters working in Kathmandu Valley are migrants. Those in Kathmandu are mostly from eastern hill districts, districts surrounding the valley, and Rolpa and Bardiya districts. Older child porters (those aged 14 and above) are more likely to be migrants than younger ones (40% versus 25%) and males are more likely to be migrants than females (36% versus 21%). Bhojpur, Solukhumbu, Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Sindhuli, Dolakha, and Sindhupalchok are core districts which send out child porters; while the three districts of Kathmandu Valley as well as Sunsari, Dhankutta, Udayapur, Ramechhap, Kaski, Surkhet and Kalikot districts are core receiving districts. Jajarkot and Baitadi are other core districts with many child porters but it is native, not migrant, children who are employed.

Factors which push children into portering include family poverty, the engagement of adult family members in portering, the behavior of step-parents and parents' peer influences and pressure, difficulty in studies and failure of school exams, lack of money to buy things desired, and the availability of opportunities. Those that pull them include entry into the sector; the chance to switch occupations; the possibility of making one's own money; the opportunities to see new places, go to the movies and buy things desired; and the enjoyment of working in group and living a free life without the restrictions of home and school.

Social networking is a major contributing factor introducing children to portering. In 55% of cases, at least one adult family member, usually a parent or elder sibling, of child porters works as a porter, and the likelihood is greater among child porters under 14 and female and long-distance porters. Migrant child porters are accompanied either by their relatives or by persons from their own neighborhood or village. In the workplace, porters from a particular locality maintain a support system and, to a certain degree, look out for each other.

Only about 8% of all child porters, and more of out-of-school child porters as well as those from dysfunctional families or working in Kathmandu Valley, worked in another form of child labor before beginning to porter. In terms of past work experience, 96% and 89% of younger and older children respectively either only studied or studied and helped out with household chores. For most, then, taking a job as a porter marked their entry into the worst forms of work.

Working Conditions

The youngest age at which any interviewee began portering was seven, but, on average, children start portering at twelve-and-a-half. Children under 14 on average take up the occupation at the age of eleven-and-a-half while those above 14 began before they had turned 14 years. Short-distance porters and males started slightly than the average. Key informants and adult porters also placed the age of entry at around 11-12 years of age and noted that they began young to learn the occupation and to help their parents.

On average, the 493 interviewees had worked for about 22 months, 16 and 27 months among the younger and older age groups respectively and 18 months and 30 months among short- and long-distance porters respectively. Children in the mid- and far-western regions had worked significantly longer than those in other regions-more than three years on average.

The time it takes for a child porter to make one delivery is directly correlated with the degree of hazard he or she is exposed to. The average short-distance porter completes a job within one hour and does multiple jobs in a day, whereas a long-distance child on average spends 27 hours making one delivery, thereby exposing the latter to more occupational hazards on each trip. However, since short-distance porters carry several loads each day their total exposure to hazards may be no less. A child porter of average weight, irrespective of type, gender and age, carries 37 kg, with those under 14 averaging 30 kg and those 14 and above, 44 kg. Short-distance porters carry slightly heavier loads than long-distance porters do. Similarly, males carry more than females and out-of-school child porters more than school-going child porters. The average load carried is only slightly greater than the average weight of a child porter. Food, vegetables, clothing items, and construction materials are the most commonly carried goods. Other items child porters carry are stones and slate, wood and firewood, odd-sized materials like GI sheets and pipes, cartons of beer and other alcoholic beverages, and sometimes chemicals.

Although their exposure to life-threatening hazards is high, slightly more than 60% said that they had never experienced a hazard and only 18% said that they had fallen and been injured. About 12% said that they were in constant fear of falling from narrow and steep hill foot trails. Indeed, some long-distance porters said they had seen four or five porters slip and lose their lives. Other hazards they had faced included being stuck en route due to a flood or landslide, hurt by stones falling from cliffs, struck by a motor vehicle, and cut by carried GI sheets. Some (27% overall and 25% and 30% of those under 14 and 14 and above respectively) reported having broken goods in a fall. Males (31%) and out-of-school children (39%) reported the highest rates of breakage. In total, 40% of all porters have faced hazards.

The wages (in current nominal prices) child porters are paid have increased substantially since 2001. The average earnings per working day are NPR 285 though one-third earn just NPR 150-250. Long-distance, male and older porters earn more than average, with 54% of long-distance porters earning more than NPR 250 a day. In group and informal discussions, some children claimed to have earned NPR 2000 or more carrying development materials across a bridge. The maximum earnings reported in an individual interview, however, were much less: NPR 1200 was reported by a male, short-distance, older porter; NPR 1000 by a younger, long-distance child porter; and NPR 800 by a girl. Child porters earn the most when school is out of session after final exams and during the festivals of Dashain and Tihar. Work agreements, irrespective of age, are based on either mutual negotiation (33%) or on a combination of the weight of the load to carry and the distance to destination (67%). No agreements involve any degree of bondage. Some rates are pre-determined by distance and the type and weight of the goods to carry.

Over two-thirds (71%) of child porters give either all (47%) or part (24%) of their earnings to their parents for use in meeting household expenses, while 24% spend the money on their own personal expenses like food and drink, clothing, and mobiles and recharge cards or on education (9%). Some child participants in FGDs said that they saved and sent home some of their earning, while

others said that they were unable to save anything. Child porters who worked with their parents or family relatives, were currently attending school, or were younger or female were more likely to have some savings. In 60% of cases parents decided how children's income was spent; in 37% of cases it was the child porter him or herself who had control over the income.

Verbal abuse and use of humiliating words are most common psychological abuses faced by child porters. Just 4% have been abused physically. They reported being called derogatory names like “khate,” being sworn at, and not treated as other children are treated. About 27% of the total, 24% of those under 14 and 30% of those 14 and above, report that on at least one occasion they were not paid the wage agreed. The majority, however, had good relations with service users and were paid a fair wage. Short-distance, male, *janajati*, and out-of-school child porters as well as those from dysfunctional families and working in Kathmandu Valley and the mid- and far-western regions were more likely not to have been paid than their counterparts. About 46% (43% and 49% of younger and older children respectively) adopted some traditional safety measures passed on by adult porters, including putting a thick cloth under the tumpline, using shoulder straps or a resting stick, placing padding or a plank between the load and back, and tying a *patuka* around the waist.

Work and Schooling

Altogether one-quarter of child porters are unschooled: 3% never enrolled and 23% have dropped out. However, while access to education is near universal, child porters do not do well: 47% overall and 49% of children under the age of 14 have had to repeat a grade. The percentage of grade repeaters is highest among long-distance and male child porters. Of the 380 child porters currently attending school, the majority are in the primary grades. Not as many child porters as one might expect would qualify for scholarships from the government or receive educational support from NGOs actually get assistance—just 38% in the last academic year. Children under the age of 14 were more likely than those 14 or over to be scholarship recipients (45% versus 31%). One reason child porters get so few scholarships may be how irregularly they attend school.

Regarding a question about how they managed to both work and go to school, 81% of interviewees under 14 and 78% of those 14 and above said that they worked only when school was out of session after final exams, during long school vacations, and on school holidays. Both child and adult porters who participated in FGDs reported the same thing—that child porters worked only when there was no school—but school teachers said that children who attended schools near the bus parks of nascent markets (particularly Ghurmi, Khurkot) worked in all seasons, even on school days and even in school uniform. Over 95% of child porters said there was at least one school either in their own ward or in their VDC; 85% reported a primary school and two thirds, a secondary school. The FGD participants observed, however, that the functioning and facilities of these schools were not good: there were no benches to sit on, no desks to write on, and no sports materials. In some cases, no textbooks were available. In addition, the teachers were frequently absent and often insincere. Some teachers had to teach more than one grade in a single classroom. Overall, 93% of child porters interviewed, 92% of the younger and 94% of the older, said that if they had a better environment for studying, their performance would improve and they would be as competent as their non-portering peers.

Health Hazards

The main health problems all child porters, regardless of background characteristic, frequently face while carrying loads are back pain, neck pain, and pain in joints and knees. Other health problems children reported suffering included flu, fever and headache as well as chest and stomach pains. Overall, 74% said that they had experienced some sort of health problem at work, with female (84%), long-distance (80%) and younger (78%) child porters most likely to have suffered. Of those who had been ill at work, the overwhelming majority reported having been ill within the last month. The majority did not seek medical treatment, instead recovering through rest or simply by doing nothing. Short-distance, male and older porters are slightly more likely to seek treatment. Some child porters said that they visited a doctor or other health workers only if adult porters or guardians take them to health facilities.

While 55% said that they had never fallen, 35% said that porters fall at least once a season. The rates of falling are highest among long-distance porters (51%) and also higher than average among male and older child porters. About 34% of the total, 40% of long-distance, and 35% each of male and older child porters reported having been injured while carrying loads. Both the reported and the observed frequency of falling and getting injured indicates that child porters are at high risk of physical health hazards. The types of injury they have suffered include fractures and sprains of arms and legs, cuts caused by the objects they carried, and bruising incurred through collisions with motor vehicles.

Living and Sleeping Arrangements, Food and Nutrition

Half of all porters sleep at home, with females (82%), younger children (61%) and short-distance porters (60%) having the highest rates. Those who do not return home daily sleep, in the case of long-distance porters, in houses and hotels/tea shops available along the trail, and, in the case of short-distance porters, congested rented rooms or in hotels or teashops or shacks or storage sheds.

Dal-bhaat-tarkaari, *roti* and vegetables and *dhindo* are the main foods child porters eat at their midday and evening meals. For breakfast they have tea or milk with biscuits or other bakery items, popcorn and soybeans, or leftover rice with *mohi*. *Momos*, instant noodles, and popcorn and soybeans are the most common afternoon snacks. Long-distance child porters tend to eat two or three times a day; short-distance child porters, or four times. All individuals consulted, child porters themselves, adult porters and key informants, believe that, given the nature of the work they do, neither the quality nor the quantity of food they consume is sufficient. The deficiencies in calories and nutrients might have long-term consequences in the form of wasting and stunting.

In almost all places, child porters are easily identifiable by their clothing and possessions. Their clothes are dusty and stained and often unwashed. While some wore their school uniforms or were dressed in rags, most wore t-shirts and shorts or long pants. A few wore jackets. The majority wore plastic sandals. Child porters bathe infrequently and irregularly; long-distance porters and short-distance porters living in markets near rivers bathe in rivers.

Personal Habits

About 17% of all child porters (11% of the younger and 23% of the older) smoke or chew tobacco. Irrespective of age, about 32% consume alcoholic beverages, making a grand total of 48% with unhealthy habits. Child porters were frequently observed smoking, chewing tobacco and drinking in most survey locations. They were aware on the negative consequences of smoking (specifying, when asked, the likelihood of developing cancer) but said that it was hard to stop since they were habituated. No cases of children being addicted to alcohol were discovered.

Cases of Having Been Cheated or Looted

Some 13%, 12% and 15% of younger and older child porters respectively, have been cheated or looted at least once by employers/service users, adult porters or child co-workers. Short-distance, male, and out-of-school child porters as well as those working in Kathmandu Valley were more likely than other groups to have been cheated or looted. For the most part, the perpetrators were strangers (34%), followed by employers (25%) and local drunkards (17%). In a few incidences, child porters reported having been cheated or looted by their own friends or by adult porters.

Self-Perceptions and Future Aspirations

More than three-quarters of child porters, regardless of background characteristic, think they ought to be in school, not working for a wage and feel that is bad for them to be portering. Of those older than 16, 95% would like to participate in skill or vocational training and not one said he or she would like to be a porter in the future. Most harboured realistic future aspirations, like being a school teacher, serving in security forces; or being a doctor or nurse. Among girls, 34% and 29% respectively would like to be a teacher or a nurse. Other careers they aspire to including driving, business, government service, and repair technicians.

Estimates off the Total Number of Child Porters

Applying the capture-recapture method of estimation, the study team came up with three estimates—high, medium, and low—of the total population of child porters. At the high end, there are 21,380 child porters; at the low, just 12,828. The study team advocates the use of the medium estimate: 15,995 child porters, of whom 12,556 are boys.

4.2 Conclusions

More males than females, more children aged 14-17 years than under 14, and more children from large and poor than small and well-off families work as child porters. While the numbers of long-distance porters has declined with the proliferation of motorable roads, the number of short-distance porters has increased in recently-emerged market centres, bus and truck parks and transit points in hilly areas. Thus, as the road network has spread across the country, so, too, have core and peripheral areas as defined by the prevalence of child porters.

While almost all child porters have access to and have attended school, rates of repeating classes repetition and dropping out of school are high and the availability of scholarships and educational support low. The reasons child porters attend infrequently or drop out altogether include family poverty, parental ignorance, failure in classes, and lack of interest as well as a child-unfriendly

educational environment and limited facilities at school. Child porters are somewhat aware of their right to education, but say their families compel them to participate in the wage-earning activities available. Almost all out-of-school children are keen to re-join school or participate in skill development or vocational training so they can take up an occupation of their choice in the future. All child porters see portering as lacking in prestige and hazardous to their physical, mental and social development; they would rather be school teachers, security personnel, businesspeople, and government job holders. They would like support to go to school full-time in the form of scholarships and educational supports for themselves and income-generating and self-employment schemes for their families. While an observer would suggest that children who both attend school and work as a porter are gradually moving away from education and into the worst forms of work, child porters and the adult porters they associate with claim that child porters work only during periods in which they have many days off from school —summer and winter vacations, holidays for festivals, and term breaks. Child porters claimed that they would do as well at school as their non-portering peers if they had a good studying and learning environment at home.

Some reasons children get into portering are large family sizes, the lack of alternative means of survival, and the involvement of adult family members in portering. Family dysfunctionality (mother or father dead and step-parents at home) also pushes children into portering, as do too little or poor-quality land and too few other household assets to ensure year-round employment and food sufficiency. In addition, the market demand among most travelers and other users of porters' services is for child, not adult porters, because they can be had for less money and because the loads to be carried are relatively small and light.

Most child porters begin at the age of 11 or 12 and carry loads that weigh as much as they themselves do. They are paid by the job and are free to choose the jobs they take at their own will; none are bonded to an employer. They are neither confined to fixed premises nor forced to work excessively long hours. However, long-distance porters do work long enough hours that they hamper their health and growth, and short-distance porters work long hours because they make multiple trips in a single day in order to maximize their income. By definition and condition, portering is hazardous and therefore illegal work: no child under 18 should carry heavy loads along dangerous routes where the chances of falling and the rates of injury are high. Their physical growth impeded by the carriage of heavy loads and a diet low in calories and nutrients, child porters are often wasted and stunted. They frequently suffer from health problems like back, neck, knee and joint pains and frequent fever, flu and headache.

If children have to work to pay for school or to support themselves or their families, they are being exploited by their families themselves. This conclusion is supported by the fact that, for the most part, it is parents who have control over a child porter's income and how it is spent. The majority of child porters work to support their families, meet their school expenses, and earn pocket money.

To sum up, child porters exist in most parts of country due to supply factors like family poverty and income insufficiency, family involvement in portering, and lack of alternative employment as well as demand factors like the desire for cheap labor without written contract. The weak enforcement of legislation regulating the minimum age of employment, lack of understanding what the economic exploitation of children constitutes, and the underdevelopment of educational mechanisms to ensure that all acquire a basic level of education provide the context in which such supply and demand factors can flourish.

4.3 Recommendations

Below are listed recommendations for eliminating hazardous and the worst forms of child labor in general and portering by children in particular by promoting universal access to basic and quality education and support for family livelihoods as well as other measures which will prevent future portering by children and protect and rehabilitate existing child porters.

Education

- The government should make basic education up to a specified age and grade both free and compulsory for all, thereby upholding the fundamental right granted in the Interim Constitution of 2007, Article 28 of the UNCRC, and the ILO Minimum Age of Work Convention.
- There should be a coordinated mechanism among the general public and school communities for tracking how regularly children of school age attend school and identifying and rescuing child laborers.
- School communities and teaching-learning environments need to be made more child-friendly, more concerned about children from marginalized communities and ultra-poor families in order to increase children's motivation to attend school and pursue their studies.
- The school curriculum needs to be modified so that it incorporates a life-skills approach of learning which utilizes local resources and knowledge to foster future self-employment in areas like livestock-rearing, horticulture, and television, radio and/or mobile repairs.
- Child porters interested in participating in vocational training should be rescued immediately and given this opportunity.
- All children from ultra-poor families and marginalized communities should be exempt from paying all educational costs if they maintain a specified level of regularity and sincerity as identified by school teachers and community members.

Awareness

- Children, their parents, potential employers of children, teachers, representatives of governmental and non-governmental offices, the media, and other concerned individuals should be sensitized to the minimum ages of employment by the nature and condition of the work involved.
- Information about the forms of work done by children that are classified as hazardous and the worst forms of work needs to be provided to all stakeholders, including government line agencies and rights-based NGOs and community-based organizations as too many are ignorant and, wrongly, did not consider portering by children to fall in this category.
- Child porters' knowledge and practice of health and safety measures need to be enhanced among all child porters and particularly among *Janajatis*, who are the least informed, in order to lessen the levels of occupational hazards.

Poverty Alleviation and Family Livelihood Development

- Children's right to education should be linked to their parents' or guardians' economic rights as only if adult family members can find gainful employment will the need for children's income become negligible. To see more children from marginalized communities and ultra-poor families in school requires, there is a need to promote household-level livelihood programs.

- There is a need for a program which fosters employment and income security among the families of female and Dalit child porters since they have the greatest proportion of ultra-poor families (those whose food sufficiency is three months or less).
- So that they are not exploited by local moneylenders, the ultra-poor and wage laborers need easy access to credit from formal financial institutions.
- Specific policies and a programme of action which address child labour migration, particularly among *Janajatis*, Dalits and dysfunctional families, whose rates are the highest, are needed.
- Providing income and employment security to adult family members is the best way to prevent children from working in hazardous and the worst forms of child labor in general and child porters in particular along with devising and adoption of preventive, protective and rehabilitative policy measures and interventions.

Child Protection and Law Enforcement

- Government agencies, communities, NGOs, and UN agencies need to adopt a coordinated mechanism of tracking children so that all children get the chance to develop physically and mentally before they are old enough to be employed.
- Since field observations revealed that female child porters, of whom there is a sizable number, are at risk of sexual abuse (though no cases were reported), there is a need to develop measures to safeguard them from this threat.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A:

Distribution of Interviewed Child Porters by Districts of Birth and Districts of Enumeration/Survey

District of Birth	Sun-sari	Dhan-kuta	Solu	Okhal-dhunga	Khotang	Udayapur	Sindhuli	Ramechhap	Dolakha	Sindhupalchok	Kavre	Nuwakot	Rasuwa	Dhading	Makwanpur	Parsa	Gorkha	Lamjung	Tanahu	Syangja
Sunsari	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dhankuta	0	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sankhuwasabha	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bhojpur	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solukhumbu	0	0	42	13	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Okhaldhunga	0	0	0	27	0	10	0	8	0	1	0	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Khotang	0	1	1	10	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Udaypur	0	0	0	1	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sindhuli	0	0	0	1	0	6	11	0	0	3	3	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ramechhap	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dolakha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sindhupalchok	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kavre	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nuwakot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rasuwa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dhading	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Makwanpur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Parsa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Gorkha	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0	0
Lamjung	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
Tanahu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Syangja	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

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ANNEX B:

Estimates of the Number of Child Porters in Each District Surveyed

Districts surveyed	No. interviewed			No. captured in the district	Number by Sex and Type				Total
					Sex		Type (distance)		
	Female	Male	Total		Female	Male	Short	Long	
Sunsari	5	12	17	48	71	169	127	113	240
Dhankuta	17	20	37	107	246	289	521	14	535
Solukhumbu	4	39	43	136	63	617	127	553	680
Okhaldhunga	10	43	53	250	236	1,014	755	495	1,250
Khotang	5	31	36	168	117	723	490	350	840
Udaypur	3	30	33	254	115	1,155	1,270	0	1,270
Sindhuli	4	13	17	85	100	325	425	0	425
Ramechhap	3	14	17	74	65	305	65	305	370
Dolakha	3	7	10	77	116	270	0	385	385
Sindhupalchok	5	15	20	82	137	273	410	0	410
Kavre	0	4	4	97	0	485	485	0	485
Lalitpur	1	12	13	44	17	203	220	0	220
Bhaktapur	0	2	2	17	0	85	85	0	85
Kathmandu	0	30	30	150	0	750	750	0	750
Rasuwa	0	8	8	54	0	270	135	135	270
Makwanpur	0	3	3	10	0	50	50	0	50
Gorkha	0	8	8	32	0	160	160	0	160
Lamjung	0	3	3	25	0	135	135	0	135
Tanahau	0	5	5	36	0	180	180	0	180
Kaski	0	9	9	30	0	150	150	0	150
Myagdi	0	7	7	58	0	290	290	0	290
Parbat	0	7	7	47	0	235	235	0	235
Baglung	0	5	5	33	0	165	165	0	165
Palpa	6	1	7	21	90	15	105	0	105
Rupandehi	0	9	9	50	0	250	250	0	250
Dang	1	3	4	57	71	214	285	0	285
Surkhet	10	2	12	60	250	50	300	0	300
Jajarkot	8	5	13	264	812	508	914	406	1,320
Kalikot	4	30	34	547	322	2,413	0	2,735	2,735
Baitadi	17	13	30	284	805	615	1,136	284	1,420
Total	106	387	493	3,207	3,439	12,556	10,219	5,776	15,995

Note: The number of child porters captured in each district does not indicate their district of origin but only their working district or their route.

ANNEX C:

Child Porters Individual Questionnaire

CHILD WORKERS IN NEPAL CONCERNED CENTRE IN COLLABORATION WITH WORLD EDUCATION NEPAL
CHILD PORTERS IN NEPAL: RAPID ASSESSMENT: CHILD LABOUR-2011

Child Porters Individual Questionnaire

Namaste!

My name is..... I am from Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN) Rabi Bhawan, Kathmandu. CWIN is now working to find out the situation of child porters in Nepal and their personal, family and social compulsions and circumstances for working as porters. The main aim of this study is to understand how it would be possible to provide better educational and future development opportunity to such children in the country. In this regard, I would like to ask you something about your self, about household related issues, risk you faced working as porter and about your future aim and expectations. All personal information asked within this questionnaire will be kept confidential according to Statistical Act, 2015 BS. Overall information will be used only for research/ statistical and policy purposes.

Section I: Survey Site information

101. Name and code of survey district and VDC: _____ [][]; VDC _____ [][]
102. Name and code of the route/ market place of the survey: _____; Code.. [][]
103. ID code for the surveyed child/respondent [][][]
104. In general how long does it take you to carry the load up to the destination place?
Within eight hours (short distance)1
Eight hours and more-including night stoppage in route (long distance).....2
105. Market place or travelling route in which you generally work in?
Name of the place or route _____; Code [][]

Section II: Personal Detail of the interviewed child

201. What is your name and caste/ethnicity? Name : _____
Caste/Ethnicity : _____ : Code of Caste/Ethnicity: [][]
202. Gender/Sex of the interviewed child
Male1
Female2
Third Sex3
203. How old are you now? (age in completed years [][]
204. Do you have your birth registration done
Yes1
No2
Do not now3
205. Measure the Children's Height in cm and weight in Kg.
Height:..... [][][]
Weight in KG..... [][]
206. In which district and village were you born?
District: _____ [][]
VDC: _____ [][]
207. Where are you and your family is currently residing/living?
In same place of birth1
In different place of birth2

208. If not in the place of birth, in which district and village are you and your family living now?
 District: _____ [] []
 VDC: _____ [] []
209. Are you married?
 Yes1
 No2
210. If you are married, do you have children?
 Yes1
 No2
211. Do you know to read and write in any language?
 Yes (literate)1
 No (illiterate)2
212. If you do not know read and write, why did not you know it? (*write any two main reasons as said*)

213. Are you currently enrolled in, and going to, school?
 Yes1
 No2'15
214. If currently enrolled in school, which class are you reading in: [] []
215. If not currently, have you ever enrolled and ever read at school?
 Yes1
 No2
216. If ever enrolled to school, which grade have you completed [] []
217. If currently in school, have you received any scholarships or support in the last academic year?
 Received cash1
 Received in kind2
 Received stationeries and other support3
 Received no thing4
218. (*For both currently schooling and dropped of the school*) have you ever studied in the same class for more than one year?
 Yes1
 No2
219. If yes, in which grades did you study in for more than one year?
 a. Grade repeated first time [] []
 b. Grade repeated second time [] []
 (*Go to Q 223 if currently admitted and reading at school*)
220. If you have dropped of school or never been enrolled in school, reasons for dropping out of or never being enrolled in school? (*any two*)
 School/College is far away1
 No interest in reading or repeatedly failing2
 Reading is expensive3
 Needed to help in household works4
 Guardians did not send5
 No use/relevance of education6
 Got married and leave school7
 Got work/employment8
 Death of parents, neglect of step parents of family disturb9
 Others if any (Specify) _____

221. You are currently not enrolled in any school or have dropped of the school, would you like to admit/re-admit to the school?
 Yes.....1
 No.....2
 Don't know3
222. If want to go to school, would you like to be enrolled in local school in village or outside village?
 Local school in the village 1
 School in outside village2
 School of big cities3
223. Which of the following type of school is available in your village?
- | Types of school | Available or not Yes 1, No2 |
|-----------------------------|--|
| a. Primary | [] |
| b. Lower secondary | [] |
| c. Secondary | [] |
| d. Higher Secondary | [] |
| e. Technical and vocational | [] |
224. What you want to be in future (in practical basis) if you are given proper educational and training opportunities?
 The responses: _____
225. If the child is involved in both schooling and portering activities, ask: how could it be made possible for you to fully concentrate in school studies?
 Way out: _____
226. If you are currently enrolled and reading at school, how are you managing the time of working as a porter and going to school? (*do not ask those not going to school*)
 Go to work as porter during school off or holidays1
 Go to school if freed from work2
 Go to work before and after school time3
 Leave school as work is available4
 Others (specify) _____
227. What do you feel working as porter? Write as said: _____
228. Do you feel that you would be equally competent as other non-portering children in education and reading if you were provided with the same family and reading environment?
 Yes.....1
 No.....2
 Not able to say3
 It is a matter of personal capacity4
229. (*If the child is 16 years and above*) Would you like to participate in vocational training to initiate own enterprise/business?
 Yes.....1
 No.....2
 Not decided3

Section III: Family Characteristics

301. Who - female or male - in your family heads the household?
 Male.....1
 Female.....2
302. Are you currently living with your parents?
 Yes.....1
 No.....2

303. Who of the following are there in your family?

Family members	Yes	No	Family members	Yes	No
a. Father	1	2	f. Brother/Sisters	1	2
b. Mother	1	2	g. Step/mother/Father	1	2
c. Spouse	1	2	h. Step brother/sisters	1	2
d. Children	1	2	i. Sister in law, nephew, niece	1	2
e. Grand parents	1	2	j. Other relatives	1	2

304. How many siblings and how many step siblings do you have?

Own brothers[][]
 Own sisters[][]
 Step brothers[][]
 Step sisters[][]

305. (if 2 in Q303a) If your father is not at home, where is he? _____

306. (if 2 in Q303a) If mother is not at home, where is she? _____

307. Were your father and mother are from the same caste/ethnicity?

Of same Caste/Ethnicity1'1309
 Different2

308. If different which caste/ethnicity your father/mother belongs to?

Caste/Ethnicity of Father: _____; Code[][]
 Caste/Ethnicity of Mother: _____; Code.....[][]

309. How many women did your father marry?

Only one (my mother only)1'1312
 More than one2

310. Number of mothers/step mothers living together with your father?[]

311. Is there a step mother living together in your family?

Yes1
 No2

312. Number of men your mother married?

Only one (my father only)1
 More than one2

(if 1 in both 309 and 312, go to Q 316)

313. Are you living in house of step father?

Yes1
 No2

314. How often did you face discrimination/harassment from step mother/father and brother/sister?

Quite often (about daily)1
 Often (more than once in a week)2
 Sometimes (once in two months)3
 Never4

315. What types of discrimination/harassment usually they do you face?

Types of Discrimination/harassment	Yes	No
Discrimination in food, clothes, education, work load and treatment of illness	1	2
Humiliation, neglect, verbal assault and restriction	1	2
Beating/scolding	1	2

316. Who in your family tries to give best care for you?

Mother1
 Father2

- Grand Parents3
 Elder brother/sister4
 Step mother/father5
 Others
317. In your feeling, who in your family mostly neglects, harasses or discriminates you?
 Mother1
 Father2
 Grand Parents3
 Elder brother/sister4
 Step mother/father5
 Others

Section IV: Household Facilities

401. Ownership of the house your family currently living in – who owns it?
 Own house in own land 1
 Own house in others land 2
 House land both others (rent free)3
 In rented house/room 4
 Others(specify)
402. Type of house your family is currently living in?
 Kacchi (all thatched)1
 Kachhi (wall mud stone roof thatched)2
 Semi-pakki (wall mud-stone and roof slate/GI Sheets)3
 Pakki (Cemented wall, roof and floor)4
 Others (specify)
403. How many storey and rooms are there in your house?
 Storey []
 Rooms []
404. Is there a separate kitchen room in your house?
 Yes 1
 No2
405. What is the main source of drinking water in your family?
 Piped water in house yard 1
 Piped water from public place2
 Traditional public tape (Kuwa, Padhero).....3
 Stream/River4
 Tube-well (private)5
 Tube-well (public)6
 Well7
 Others
406. Type of fuel household using for cooking and heating
 Firewood 1
 Kerosene2
 LPGas3
 Bio-gas4
 Dung/cake5
 Charcoal6
 Others
407. Where does your family go for defecation or toilet?
 Pan toilet with safety tank 1
 Pittoilet2
 No toilet facilities (go in open field)3

408. Does your family own and cultivate any agricultural land?
 Yes owns only1
 Yes owns and rented in both2
 Yes others only (*rented in*)3
 Not at all (land less)4
409. If yes (*1 to 3 in q408*) how much land does your family own/cultivate?

Measurement of land	Own Land			Rented in Land		
	Biggest unit	Middle unit	Smallest unit	Biggest unit	Middle unit	Smallest unit
a. Bigha, Kattha, Dhur						
b. Ropani/Ana/Paisa						
c. Mato/Muri/Pathi/Mana						
d. Hal/melo						

410. Which one of the following livestock and household utilities/goods your family own?
- | Particulars | Yes | No | Particulars | Yes | No |
|---------------------|-----|----|-------------------|-----|----|
| a. Cow/Ox | 1 | 2 | b. Buffalo/ | 1 | 2 |
| c. Goat | 1 | 2 | d. Sheep | 1 | 2 |
| e. Radio/Cassette | 1 | 2 | f. TV/CD/VCD/DVD | 1 | 2 |
| g. Telephone/Mobile | 1 | 2 | h. Sewing machine | 1 | 2 |
| i. Plough | 1 | 2 | j. Spade/hoe | 1 | 2 |
411. What are the main and secondary sources of livelihoods in your family?
- | Sources of Livelihoods | Main source (only one) | Secondary source (Up to three) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Own Agriculture | 1 | 1 |
| Agriculture labour | 2 | 2 |
| Self employed in non-agriculture | 3 | 3 |
| Labour in non-agriculture | 4 | 4 |
| Portering | 5 | 5 |
| Services | 6 | 6 |
| Others _____ | 7 | 7 |
412. Number of months your family has food sufficiency from the main source of income/livelihoods
 Number of months[][]
413. Has your family taken a loan?
 Yes1
 No2
 Do not know3
 (if 2 or 3, go to section 5)
414. If yes, from where is the loan taken?
 Bank/Cooperatives1
 Local micro saving credit group2
 Local money lender3
 Own relatives/neighbours4

Section V: Reasons for Working as Porter

501. What compulsion has there been for you to work as a porter? (*upto three compulsions as said*)
 a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____
502. Are there other members from your family working as porter/s?
 Yes1
 No2
503. If yes, who from your family are involved in portering job/activity?
 Person 1: _____ Relation code..... [][]
 Person 2: _____ Relation code..... [][]

504. Who from your family took you at first in portering?
(not for carrying goods for own family use purposes but for others to earn money)
 Father/Mother1
 Brother/Sister2
 Step mother/father3
 Other relatives4
 Ownself5
505. Were you willing to participate in the job at that time or it was compulsion?
 I was willing to participate1
 I was compelled to participate2
 Peer pressure3

Section VI: Working Conditions, Hazards and Income

601. For how long have you been working as child porter?
 Year [] Months [][]
602. What were you doing before starting work as a child porter?
 Working as long distance porter1
 Working as short distance porter2
 Working as other forms of child porter3
 Working as family helper4
 Not working, schooling and reading5
603. Age at which you first started to work as child porter (for commercial purposes).....[][]
604. Are there any immediate relatives of yours with who you are working with?
 Yes own parents1
 Yes elder brother/sister2
 Yes step parents3
 Yes other relatives4
 None5
605. How long does it takes on average to complete one assignment? *(Including back and forth time)*
 Hours.....[][][]
 Minutes[][]
606. On average what weight/ load do you carry (in KG or Dharni)? *(Unit measured: KG...1, Dharni... 2, Pathi ../...3).*
 Weight of load[][][]
 Unit of measurement[]
607. What is the size of maximum weight you ever carried? *(Unit measured: KG...1, Dharni... 2, Pathi ../...3).*
 Weight of load[][][]
 Unit of measurement[]
608. What types of life threatening dangers have you faced while walking with your load? *(as said)*
 a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____
609. How frequently do you need to carry the following types of risky/dangerous goods? in which seasons and what rate of wages?

Particulars	Frequency of carrying	Seasons of carrying	Ranges of wage rate
a. Most breakable liquids (oil, liquor)			
b. Material of lead/glass			
c. Frazil and most breakable goods			
d. Galvanized Iron sheets, odd sized metals, rods			
e. Construction materials/cement			

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| f. Chemical substances/medicines | [] | [] | [] |
| g. Other general goods like food and pocketed food items | [] | [] | [] |

<i>Codes for frequency</i>	<i>Codes for seasons</i>	<i>Codes for ranges of wage</i>
In each time of work (daily)..... 1	Winter (Kartik-Falgun)1	Highest 1
At least once in a week2	Draught (Chaitra-Jestha)2	Average2
At least once in a month3	Summer (Asar-Aswin)3	Lowest3
Sometimes4	Festival season (Asoj-kartik).....4	As per negotiation4
Never5	In all seasons5	

610. Is there any person with you (in work) who could rescue you/ help you, if you been unable to carry the load?
Yes.....1
No.....2
611. How often do you fall down carrying your load and what has been your experience of injury?
- | Frequency of Experiences | Fall with load | Experiences of Injury |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Yes in almost all trip | 1 | 1 |
| Yes once in fortnightly | 2 | 2 |
| Sometimes (once in a season) | 3 | 3 |
| Never | 4 | 4 |
612. What type of footwear worn while carrying load?
- | | |
|--|---|
| Shoes | 1 |
| Slippers | 2 |
| Sometimes shoes and sometimes slippers | 3 |
| Sometimes bare foot and sometimes shoe/slipper | 4 |
| Walk in bare foot | 5 |
613. What other safety measures (devices) do you adopt while working?
a.
b.
614. In which of the following places do you need to sleep at night while doing portering work? Are there occurrence of any risk, harassment or dangers sleeping there, if yes what are the harassment/dangers? Place of sleeping Need to sleep there? Risk/danger of harassment in sleeping there If yes type of harassment/dangers
- Yes...1, No ...2 Yes ...1, No ...2
- a. At sides of walking root, trail
b. In caves
c. In sheds of local tea shop/hotels
d. In houses of walking root side
e. In rented rooms
f. Others
615. How often have you experienced breakage and or damage of carried goods?
- | | |
|---|---|
| Quite often (some in almost all trip) | 1 |
| Often (at least once in five-ten trips) | 2 |
| Sometimes (one or two times until now) | 3 |
| Never | 4 |
616. If experienced breakage of carried goods, who generally compensates the loss?
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Own self | 1 |
| Owner of the goods | 2 |
| Guardians | 3 |
| Others (specify) | |
617. Have you ever felt the following types of illness while carrying load or while in work?
- | Types of Illness | Ever felt such ill Yes 1, No.....2 | When you felt the illness last time |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| a. Fever/headache
(including cold, cough) | [] | [] |
| b. Back pain | [] | [] |
| c. Neck pain | [] | [] |

- d. Joint/leg pain (knee) [] []
 e. Chest/stomach pain [] []
 f. Others (specify) [] []

In this week ...1; During last month2; Two months ago3; In last six month4; Before six month5

(if 2 in all of Q617 go to Q620)

618. When you suffer with such illness, what do you do for its treatment?
 Yes go to hospital or health posts1
 Yes go to a private clinic or doctor2
 Yes go to local traditional healer3
 No, seniors or co workers give medicine4
 No, my self buy and take medicine5
 It recovers after some rest6
 Go nowhere and do no-thing7
619. If you fell ill while carrying load (in-route), who takes responsibility to bring the load to the destination and to rescue you?
 Need to carry the load to the destination despite the illness 1
 Family members do it2
 The owner/trader manage alternative3
 Friends4
 Others (Specify) _____
620. In most of the instances what may be the basis of payment of the work?
 Mutual negotiation1
 Weight basis2
 Distance basis3
 Weight and distance basis4
 Other _____
621. On average how much do you earn in a working day? In RS. _____
622. In which season do you earn more from portering activity?
 Write said season: _____; Code of Month/Season []
623. In most of the instances with who is the money you earned/ who keeps it?
 Keep own self/spouse1
 Give to parents2
 Some keep own self and some give to parents3
 Give brother/sister or other relatives4
 Give other co-workers5
 Others (If any) _____
624. Where do you spend/use the earned money?
 In household Expenses1
 In personal use2
 Spend in buying school materials/fee3
 Others (if any) _____
625. Who is responsible for deciding the use/spending of your earning?
 Parents1
 Own-self2
 Step parents3
 Brother/sister4
 Employer (contractor)5
 Others (if any) _____

626. Have you been ever cheated by your co-workers, seniors and other types of child labours and any others?
 a. Being cheated b. By who c. Times cheated during last one year
 Yes 1N o 2 a. _____ b. _____
627. Who did you find cheating you the most - not giving the said wage rate?
 The employers/service users 1
 Non-relative senior workers 2
 None 3
 Others (Specify) _____
628. To what extent you have faced the following types of harassment/assaults from the employers?

Types of Harassment/assaults	Faced or not faced	Yes ... 1, No ... 2	When was last time
a. Verbal assaults for making mistakes	[]		[]
b. Scolding for making mistakes	[]		[]
c. Using humiliating words	[]		[]
d. Giving poor quality of food	[]		[]
e. Punishment for not delivering goods on time	[]		[]
f. Punishment for not delivering goods in good condition	[]		[]

Codes for Last time faced: Facing daily 1; In this week 2; In this month 3; During last two months 4; Within six months 5; Six month or before 6
629. What type of food do you take in different times in a day while in portering work?
 a. Morning (as break-fast): _____; Code of food .. [] []
 b. Mid-day (as day meal): _____; Code of food .. [] []
 c. During afternoon (as afternoon-snacks): _____; Code of food .. [] []
 d. Evening (as night meal): _____; Code of food .. [] []
630. How often do you get chance to eat following food items?

Type of food	Daily	Once in Week	Once in month	More than month	Never
a. Meat/Fish/Egg	1	2	3	4	5
b. Milk and other dairy products	1	2	3	4	5
c. Fruits	1	2	3	4	5
631. Do you have habit of taking following substances?

Substances	Yes	No
a. Chewing tobacco and smoking	1	2
b. Drinking alcohol	1	2
c. Sniffing other substances	1	2

Section VII: Frequency and Seasonality of Involvement

701. In which of the months do you generally work as porter?

Months	Yes	No	If Yes days worked in the month
a. Baisakh (April-May)	1	2	
b. Jestha (May-June)	1	2	
c. Asadh (June-July)	1	2	
d. Sawan (July-August)	1	2	
e. Bhadra (August-September)	1	2	
f. Aswin (September-October)	1	2	
g. Kartik (October-November)	1	2	
h. Mangsir (November-December)	1	2	
i. Paush (December-January)	1	2	
j. Magh (January-February)	1	2	
k. Falgun (February-March)	1	2	
l. Chaitra (March-April)	1	2	

702. When you will be available in this place/market/route next time?
 Today after some hours1
 In next day2
 In next week3
 In next fifteen day4
 In next month5
 Not come again6
703. Are there other children (under 18 years of age) from your family working as child porter?
 Yes1
 No2
704. If yes how many boys and girls are there from your family?
 Boys[]
 Girls[]
705. Do you know of other children of your age from your village working as child porter?
 Yes1
 No2
706. If yes how many boys and girls are there from your village?
 Boys[][]
 Girls[][]
707. Do you know about other children of your age working as child porter in this area but not from your family and village?
 Yes1
 No2
708. If yes, how many boys and girls are there in this area?
 Boys[][]
 Girls:[][]
709. In which months most children come in portering works in this place?
 Months by seasons: _____
710. Who decides if you will be in this or next place in another day/time?
 Myself1
 Parents2
 Other senior porters3
 Other family members4
 Others (Specify) _____

Thank You

Date of Survey Date: _____; Month: _____; Year: _____
 Name and code of Interviewer: Name _____; Code [][].

Any further observation to note:

ANNEX D:

KIIs and FGD Checklist (Adult Porters, Parents of Porters and School Teachers)

- knowledge about presence of child laborers by type in general and extent of child porters in particular in their working area- from their village and from their family
- age and gender dimension of child laborers in general and porters in particular
- seasonality of portering occupation and involvement of child porters in per season

Family background of the child porters

- caste/ethnic dimension
- parents guardianships
- family size
- family functioning – step father/mother
- occupation and income level of parents/adult family members
- why family send children in work in general and portering occupation in particular
- wealth status and family supporting mechanisms
- level of parent's eagerness/responsiveness to send children to school

Working condition of child porters

- what types of loads generally child porters need to carry
- comparison between load size and their (child porters) physical stature
- exploitation they face in work
- food they take in general
- timing of sleep and rest
- harassment, discrimination and punishment they face
- incidences of child porters being cheated by peers and employers
- areas in which child porters spend their earnings
- clothes, footwear and safety measures that available to child porters
- types of association and interaction they do in general, - interaction with non-porter children,
- how schooling children manage their schooling and working time

Ways to prevent children from portering

- reasons market and employers equally desire to employ child porters in their work
- Possibility of porter children re-admitted or giving full time in schooling
- how to make possible/feasible to pull such child from work totally to schooling (family, community and peer environment)
- if not possible, the best suit options for continued/ regular/ quality schooling – to ensure better performance and less hazards of work on children
- besides schooling possibility and effectiveness of vocational training to such children by type of training
- responsibility of market agents and employers that prefers child porter to employ for their future development



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