

**EARNING A SMALL LIFE IN A BIG WORLD :AN
ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF STREET CHILD LABORERS IN
YANGON, MYANMAR**

PHYU THAW

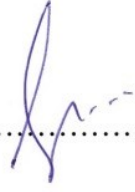
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OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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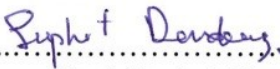
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Thesis
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YANGON, MYANMAR**


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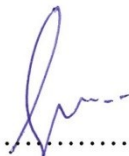

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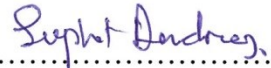
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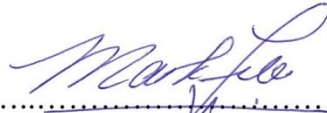
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EARNING A SMALL LIFE IN A BIG WORLD :AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF STREET CHILD LABORERS IN YANGON, MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the issue of child labor in Yangon since Myanmar is a developing country with nearly 33% of children aged 7 to 16 who are working as the child laborers. In this study, the researcher treated Street Child Labor (SCL) as a form of child labor. Street child laborers are engaged in informal street work activities which raise issues on their life and health.

The objectives of this research were to explain the causes of SCLs, to examine the earning life circumstances of SCLs, to explore their health risks, and to understand how SCLs cope with their health risks. A qualitative ethnographic study was conducted for the period of five months with 15 SCLs. The data were collected through in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, snapshot interviews and observations. This study considers critical medical anthropology as a theoretical perspective for understanding the influence of social, economic and political factors related to the causes and health consequences of SCLs.

The results showed that children were motivated to work by themselves and/or required to work for their family when the family is in financial crisis and at the same time they demonstrated the survival skills to overcome their hardships. The data indicated that SCLs suffered from deterioration in their physical, mental and social health due to inadequate nutrition, unhealthy environment, work-induced illness, stress and anxiety, and bad social dealings. The findings concluded that bearing too much financial responsibilities and earning through 3 Ds (dirty, dangerous and degrading) street occupations, and independent and freewheeling lifestyles leave SCLs in a state of poor health. The conclusion may be that SCLs simply neglected their health and received no medical treatment since the cost of health care in terms of medicine, consultation and transportation fee became the significant barriers for those who lived and struggled of their basic needs.

Results indicated that plausible recommendations are parental awareness, free, compulsory and quality education, night school/mobile school, vocational school/apprenticeship training, and free health care through outreach program.

KEY WORDS: CHILD LABOR/STREET CHILDREN/WORKING CHILDREN

137 pages

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMA	Critical Medical Anthropology
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
My-PEC	Myanmar Program on Elimination of Child labor
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
SCL	Street Child Laborer
UNCRC	United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

One of the global issues challenging at this age is the increasing prevalence of children leaving school and working to earn a living for themselves and/or for their families. Instead of being at school and preparing for a productive adulthood, with the potential of better future, the young boys and girls are losing their childhood. New estimates indicated that 168 million children worldwide are child laborers, making up almost 11% of the global child population, 85 million children in hazardous work (International Labor Organization, 2013). From the international perspective, most of these child laborers are found in the Third World countries, and more than half of the working children are in Asia. In low-income countries, nearly one in four children participated in employment that endangered their health and development (UNICEF, 2014).

Through various sources of data, child labor remained prevalent and increasing in practice in Myanmar. According to Maplecroft's Child Labor Index, Myanmar was listed an unexpected 3rd among 197 countries in child labor prevalence by 2014; just ahead of Eritrea and Somalia (Bhusal, 2015). UNICEF's latest survey data from a 2006 study found that nearly 33% of children aged 7 to 16 had jobs in Myanmar (Saber, 2015). The estimate produced by ILO for child laborer in Myanmar was 10.6 % in 2012, but in the same year, UNICEF reckoned that 18 % of children aged 10 to 14 from poor families were engaged in employment.

It was enormous to search general information about child labor but it was not easy to learn it with a lot of controversies, arguments in defining it and the forms of child work and inconsistent data through scientific articles. In this situation, researcher quite relied on the acknowledged organizations and their webpages such as UNICEF and ILO to refer the information and statistics. More importantly, the particular group of street child laborers has not been prioritized as the problems in

comparing to the children who worked in the factories. Among the scientific studies, very few researchers have had interest in the experiences of street child laborers focusing on their life and problems and health related issues (Johansson, 2009). More obviously, limited anthropological study on child labor has been done in the aspects of children's experiences. Therefore, it was plausible to investigate the phenomenon of street child labor to offer evidence for the possible measures in the situation of Myanmar.

1.2 Why study Street Child Labor (SCL) in Myanmar?

International Labor Organization (ILO) states that child labor has long been recognized as a significant violation of basic child's rights and a substantial barrier to the national development. In Myanmar, a tangle of labor laws do not ban children from work, according to Liaison Officer (Ms Piyamal Pichaiwongse) from ILO office Yangon. Moreover there is nothing clear on the age at which you can start work and the laws are not applied" (International Network Times, 2015).

According to My-PEC, Myanmar was the 178th ILO member state in 2013 to ratify the instrument for the elimination of some forms of worst child labor, including slavery, trafficking, the use of children in armed conflict, child prostitution and pornography and illicit activities. However, the state has not yet ratified ILO convention No. 138 on the minimum age for work and has neither developed specific programs to address the issue nor enacted a single piece of legislation to protect child labor and ensure their well-being and development. On top of that, local authorities have neither been trained nor sensitized to the concept of child labor. In a recent study done by My-PEC, the government representatives, civil staffs and policemen interviewed were unable to describe how the provisions of the UNCRC work or how it translates into domestic law and enforcement.

The ultimate determinants of child labor are a complex interaction among various factors acting at the different levels. First, poverty seems to be the cause of child labor in Myanmar. In a country that was strongly ruled by a military dictatorship for almost five decades, an inactive economy and inadequate education system left

many families in poverty. According to various sources, the population of Myanmar who lived in poverty was anywhere between 26% and 37.5% (Cho, 2015). In pursuing education, it has been said that Myanmar struggled to keep children in school. According to UNICEF data from 2008 to 2012, roughly 90 % of children aged 6 to 10 in Myanmar attended primary school. That number, however, dropped off sharply by 58% of adolescent school boys and girls in secondary school (Larson, 2014). According to data from the 2014 census, there were an estimated 4.4 million under 18 years who do not attend school in Myanmar (International Network Times, 2015).

When Myanmar began major economic and political reforms in 2011, more factories, shops and services like restaurants, tea-shops and hotels opened up in the cities, as a result, they needed a cheap and reliable labor force, irrespective of age. Moreover, once rural livelihoods in various parts of the country are further compromised by some forms of civil disorders like protests, crimes and demonstrations to public or government, climate factors and natural disasters including floods, fires and storms like Cyclone Nargis in 2008, migration from rural to urban area was proceeding on an enormous scale. Like many other developing countries, incapability of government in the urban city has resulted in high rates of adult unemployment with a large number of families living on the edge of poverty, accelerating the children's entry into the workforce (Abdullah et al., 2014)

The impression of child labor was quite inferior and uncooperative by social workers from both local and international organization, strongly believing its negative impacts on future opportunities of the children. However, child labor was acceptable and seen as a character building-up, by some societies where 'obedience' and 'kind attitude' are prized and as an educational activity in the absence of formal schooling. In addition, child's rights "the right to life, the right to be developed, the right to be protected and the right to be inclusive" were not often valued in Myanmar where families' welfares are the priorities of children rather than their individual comforts. This context in Myanmar is also a social cultural influence that adult power requires children to pay respect to their elders.

Concern for children's safety and protection is a global issue since children were subjected as the highly vulnerable segments of the population. However, some children were forced to work in the worst forms of labor such as commercial

sexual exploitation, physically dangerous jobs, street-based occupations and tasks and illegal economic activities where violate their human dignity and threaten their personal development (KC, Gurung, Adhikari, & Subedi, 2001; Liebel, 2004). It was also noted that child labor has the adverse effect on their health since all kinds of activities that they were engaged in as child labor consumed their energy and well-being during their childhood.

Finding showed that the children who work had typically more unpleasant physical and mental health status than the children who go to school in the same age group (Nanda, 2008). In poor circumstances, the common characteristics of child labor belong to financially disadvantaged children whose bodies were not properly nourished so they were more fragile than the normal children when they live under vulnerable nature and type of work, extensive working hours and risky work environment. The younger children are involved in the risky job for longer duration, however, they are not aware of health hazards caused by the nature of the job (Gandapur et al, 2014).

According to ILO (2011), a particular Street Child Labor (SCL) is a highly concentrated form of child laborer, becoming an alarming issue in the society nowadays. Urbanization is a basic factor behind SCLs. While street children became a growing social phenomenon, it was important to know whether the problem was about street children or children in employment. Many of them are not street children in the strict sense since the majority of these SCLs return home at night and provide critical financial support for their families (Goel, Bansal, Parashar, Pant, & Goel, 2012). Study also indicated that a significant number of children are directly affected by poverty, tied up into any kind of vocations on the street (Iqbal, 2008).

As far as street children were concerned, children “on the street” group were relatively more dominant and younger than their match “of the street” counterparts, but the pressures and survival strategies of children who work on the street were similar to those of “of the street” group (Kombarakaran, 2004; Woan, Lin, & Auerswald, 2013). It was also argued that the street children quite often financially prospered and were better off and got better health than their working counterparts who live at home but give all their income to family.

Similar study showed that SCLs were not resilient enough than street living children. For example, in a comparative study conducted with 1,000 children by Wright et al. (1993), they were separated into two groups; one was comprised of street laborers who live at home and the other group was made up of street living children. They were surprised to find that the street living children had somewhat better nutrition and physical health than street working children (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014). As it would be the case, SCLs who work for their poor families were not as strong enough as children living with the peers on the street.

Speaking of the duration of working, SCLs spend increasingly their time in the street for enough income and gradually adjusted to the street than home and became habituated with street cultures and norms that encourage them to stay on street and not return back to the home as long as the streets supported them financially (Pokharel, 2013). It has been found that one out of ten street child laborers, the street does become home. Significantly, children who work in the street were more susceptible to employ in marginal and illegal work, such as begging and stealing or pickpocketing, drug dealing and child sex work that led children to end their lives as criminals and victims of abuse and with great dangers (de la Barra, 1998).

It is said that laboring outdoor is becoming 3 Ds job; dirty, dangerous and degrading and also hard work because children are exposed to extreme weather, traffic, and violent people that can inevitably impact on both physical and psychological health problems (Das, 2012). However, SCLs were unlikely to utilize health care services if they got health problems as they were highly itinerant (Gandapur, Shahab, & Qureshi, 2014). It is also the fact that children and their family cannot afford to treat the illness. In the lack of adequate and reasonably priced health facilities, this increased the burden for SCLs because they need to work long or do extra work to earn more money to compensate for the treatment cost (Joshi, Shrestha, Shrestha, & Vaidya, 2011)

Children who are earning from mobile street works are ubiquitous in the major cities of Myanmar. Although there was not data on that group of child labor, it is estimated that the proportions are on the increase from an observational point. Also, the state have not established laws enacted child labor; not particularly in self-employment and street-based work activities conducted by the children. It was also

noted that past studies have dealt with mostly the formal sector of work and most scholars have conducted research with street children, not closely examined child laborers within the context of street jobs, even though the cases of SCL could be slightly intersecting with street children investigation. Yet no inclusive and comprehensive research has also been attempted about street child laborers in Myanmar.

All of that said, the researcher brings this ethnographic study which will uncover to better understanding about street child laborers under the issues of economic and political situation and also attempts to locate causes in terms of socio-cultural and family background that define the poor of Myanmar society. Intuitively, this study was also involved to discover the complexity of the ways children performed on the street and in their daily activities or social dealings in the particular location of the city, at the certain time of the day and with specific group of people. Ultimately, this research explored the intensity of children's experiences on different types of activities working on the streets, health problems and their coping ways. These are the reasons why this study is of importance and it might also include some plausible recommendations that might be helpful to support a SCL to rebuild their life, health and development.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General research objective

To study the life, work and health situations of SCLs in Yangon.

1.3.2 Specific research objectives

- 1) To identify the family, social and cultural background determining children to be SCLs and underlying problems.
- 2) To examine the daily life circumstances and working conditions of SCLs
- 3) To explore the health risks of SCLs.

4) To understand how SCLs cope with their problems and health in their life.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 General research question

What causes SCL and how does earning in the street affect their life, work and health?

1.4.2 Specific research questions

- 1) Who are the SCLs in Yangon and what cause them SCLs?
- 2) What is a day in the life of SCLs like?
- 3) How does the earning life affect to their health?
- 4) How do they cope with their life, work and health situation

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Concept of child labor

It is commonly seen that children are vulnerable, weak, immature and nurturing human beings. It can be said that immaturity of the children should be trained deliberately through socialization process to become competent human beings. Therefore, children were institutionalized by family, school and other organizations to introduce with learning activities (Cheng, 1997). Behind this rationale, children were sent out to work as early as possible as an opportunity to learn something from the societies.

However, the concept of child labor is not as simple and straightforward as it may appear. It is a social predicament and an incident obstructing the normal and holistic growth of a child (ADDISU, 2008). Therefore, the grave concern of child labor was an increasing phenomenon for the today-world's societies. Celik (2009) expressed the belief that once children are economically active and productive, they would be involving any kind of jobs regardless of illegality, even enduring in hazardous conditions. Concluding other international bodies, SCL in this study would be defined as the followings.

What is Child?

Age 18 is the dividing line between childhood and adulthood according to ILO and UNCRC so children are recognized as persons under 18 and have the right to special protection (International Labor Organization, 2011)

What is Child labor?

According to ILO, the term “**child labor**” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development

ILO convention no 138 defined three critical minimum ages with different types of employment:

- Age 13 for light work.
- Age 15 for ordinary work.
- Age 18 for hazardous work.

First, no person under 18 should undertake work that includes health-threatening or hazardous activities. Second, the minimum age for full time work is set to 14 years of age for developing countries and 15 in other countries. In all cases full-time work must begin only after the age of completing compulsory education. Third, the minimum age for light work is set to 12 for developing countries and 13 in other countries. At this age the child can do some ordinary work outside of the household, but the work has not to interfere with schooling. The child may also enter into vocational training. Finally, if a child is under 12–13 years of age, he or she should not be active in the labor market, but may still undertake duties within the household or under the guidance of the parents and as a part of the socialization process, provided the work does not interfere with schooling or pose a threat to health.

The following graphic illustration showed that activities listed in gray areas are considered child labor, activities in white areas are not (Grimsrud, 2011)

Table 2.1 Defining child Labor

Up to age 18	Dangerous or hazardous work	Full-time work	Light work in the labor market; vocational training	Light work in the home under the guidance of the parents and as a part of the socialization process, provided the work does not interfere with school or threaten health
Up to age 14/15 or the age of completed compulsory education (if higher)				
Up to age 12/13				

What is Street child labor?

According to ILO, SCL is the child who engages in the sale and service sector economy in the least hospitable job site —the streets. Those children are categorized in the “potential worst form of child labor”.

Through informal sector which are assumed to be the main harbor of child labor in Myanmar, especially in major city Yangon, the jobs or other earning activities on the streets are readily available for the children. To put it simply, children who came to the street in quest of their livelihood to support themselves or to take money to their home and normally they had a base home to return to after work, are called SCLs.

In this study, the researcher defined street child laborers “children performing any street earning activities which are considered to have violated the children’s right and demeaned their dignity, deprived their childhood, denied their education and detrimentally affected their physical and emotional and overall well-being and development”.

2.2 Underlying factors of being street child laborer

2.2.1 Issues related to family and family economic situation

“...The biggest problem is poverty, believe me, we're not buying anything, we don't go anywhere, we don't do anything at all ...” (35 year old mother of a working child)

There was a growing evidence that high concentration of children on the street performing unskilled informal economic activities indicated a severe child poverty rate in urban area (Kempe Ronald, 2005). Although poverty is not the only determinant of child labor, children from poor households are far more likely to be engaged in child labor activities than are children from non-poor households (Blunch & Verner, 2001). Occasionally, families in impoverished conditions were struggling with basic needs of survival (Mert & Kadioğlu, 2014). In relation to difficult financial position, children were pushed with or without force to make earnings for the household payment. According to ILO, child labor commonly may represent around 20 per cent of the household income, and as poor families spend the majority of its income on food, consequently the children's incomes are crucial. It was quite clear that poverty was the main contribution to the grave problem of child labor (Ali & De Muynck, 2005; Anarfi, 1997; Nanda, 2008).

It is important to know that child laborers in Yangon are often children of migrant parents or migrants themselves, coming from all the regions around the country; 43% from somewhere else in Yangon; 35% from Ayeyarwady region; 35% from Magway region; and small unrecorded numbers from Bago region and Kachin state (My-PEC, 2015). Nowadays, there are rampant in group of poor coming from the villages due to rapid urbanization and industrialization, in looking forwards to the better opportunities. However, local authorities are not prepared for the creation of formal employment opportunities. The security of a family's livelihood in the rural area can be threatened by, for example, harvest failures and job loss or death of an income earner are not uncommon in the city dwellers. Under these stressed circumstances, it is common for the children to be pushed to workforce earlier (Johansson, 2009).

Being a child laborer might be a result of dysfunctional family such as parent quarrels, abuse by step parents, father's use of alcohol and domestic violence, including the beating of wives and children, ending up miserable living conditions, ultimately to leave home (KC et al., 2001; Mello et al., 2014; Nanda, 2008; Yilmaz & Dülgerler, 2011). In more serious but rare cases, child labor can be a result of selfish and irresponsible parents, for instances, parents sell their children into prostitution or bondage for financial benefit (Johansson, 2009)

The evidence also repeated that poor children were often obliged to work in respect of single-parenthood that has risen due to death or divorce or separation. My-PEC (2015) noted that 7% of child workers said that their mother and 20% said that their father had passed away. Those families are commonly among the poorest and especially in urban areas the woman may have to work outside the household with the result that the children are left alone or stay with elders. For example, boys with single mothers are more likely to work outside in order to contribute to the family incomes.

It was a well-known knowledge that there is the relationship between household size and the prevalence of child labor among the poor in developing countries. A common debate is that children from large households are more likely to be engaged in employment than children from small households. It made sense that parents invest less in their children's schooling through large household sizes, children's educational participation and progress in school may decrease. However, not all children in the same household are deprived equally. Many societies send their boys to school, not the girls and the older siblings are more likely to be sent to work than the younger ones.

Education and occupation of the parents is another important factor behind child labor. The more education parents, particularly mothers have, the less likely they are to let their children work (Johansson, 2009). In almost all cases of child labor, their parents' economic position was not secure because of low-skilled and less-earned job and the majority of both parents of these child workers was with lowest to no education. When such parents are likely to have had only limited, possibly hopeless experiences of education, they may actively disapprove of academic attainment and ignore the importance of education. The results showed that the youngest children had

to combine work and school as the mother primarily decided for the need to work. If those parents would have known what a great outcome education can give, they would have tried to keep their children in school in any circumstances (Tew & Jones, 2004).

Work often prevents many children from going to school. Comparatively, child laborers who studied in school are unlikely to present in class regularly. The study claimed that a child's working on the street for one hour lowers his school performance by 4%. This increases lack of interest toward learning and ends up the risk of poor academic success and finally children quit the school as they were mostly incapable to integrate both school and work that was occurred typically for long day (Mert & Kadioğlu, 2014). This was a chicken-and-egg situation.

Last, but not least, children who quit school trapped pre-mature labor because of monetary constraints since they could not afford for school fee. The study done by My-PEC showed that grade 5 was the last grade children mostly could attain so 78 % of children ending up in labor have been reported that they reached not beyond the primary or early middle school since the cost of education increased at higher grade. Therefore, lack of compulsory schooling is a considerable factor leading children to the street for any availability of job.

All the above mentioned push factors such as poverty, economic needs and income loss, adult unemployment, marital disharmony, parental education and occupation, lack of compulsory education and academic success, are all interrelated each other and have not to be understood within a single factor.

2.2.2 Cultural factors

Social cultural influences and children's aspiration and desire are two noticeable pull factors. First of all, child labor was not barely widespread at the present day but have been common in the earlier time since the majority of the key informants studied by My-PEC reported their experiences of early age working, usually in jobs alongside their parents when the education opportunities are rare and they were of the belief that children earning was 'normal' and 'necessary' "to help struggling parents". So it needs to be noted that a culture of child labor was created in modern Myanmar, shaping the custom of relying on children before they reach adulthood. My-PEC also indicated the fact that contributing to the family income and helping to pay family

debts is a cultural trait that drives the children to engage work, making difficult to eliminate child labor across the country.

The study concluded by Mert & Kadioğlu (2014) also said that “buying something from the children on the streets, paying more than the worth of what is bought and praising the child for what he/she is doing are also behaviors that make the streets attractive for children”. Unanimously, this was also reported by Saberi (2015) that the issue of child working were ignored across the country though Myanmar was recently ranked first in the World Giving Index 2015 honorably with respect for being readiness to volunteering, kindness and helping to strangers and giving donations. For example, ordinary customers at teashops or restaurants would not hesitate to receive services from the young or teenage waiters. Result indicated that employers have different views and stressed that they employ children to help them meet their basic needs (ADDISU, 2008).

Second of all, many children would want to work even if they did not have to. Even if poverty were non-existing, some children still would like to take part in productive work. The ILO declares that work is an essential part of life, i.e. a way to participate in society and the economy. Non-exploitive work makes children feel more mature, independent and incorporated in society at large. Many children find it fun to work when the work gives them social interaction. In most cases, children deliberately went into the workforce by themselves without receiving a request or even a force by anyone since they thought themselves as a part of family unit and willingly gave a hand for family monetary needs. . Many children also believed that work is the right thing to maximize the benefits, feeling proud of standing on their own feet and a good way of learning something indispensable that they could not study at school to become a competent and prosperous adult (Bourdillon, 2006; Johansson, 2009; Liebel, 2004).

Though they did not hold the view that their works were reasonably proper and pleasant and perceived the hazards and negative impacts of work on their health and education attainment, it was not possible for children unemployed when they need to find money to pay the costs. Some narrative quotes were picked up:

“...What working is ... learning, how to use your time and how to deal with people”

“...it's cool being able to help. It's a kind of ... challenge”

“If we did not work,’ they say, ‘we would live in an economic crisis that would be worse than the one we are experiencing today...”

‘If we earn no money, we cannot look after our teeth, and we can forget about attending school.’

‘If I will not beg, how will my mother, father and me face the hunger?’

While some children were critically thinking that earning on their own and contribution to family income made them feel a sense of self-esteem and special for improving career prospects, some also commented that their role and status were enhanced within the family when they earned, they were less treated badly like beating even if they did wrong with something (Marcus & Harper, 1997). Other characterizations of children being on the street for any gainful vocations were due to peer pressure, seeking adventurous outside their environment and interesting to learn trade deal (Woan, Lin, & Auerswald, 2013).

2.3 The earning life of a SCL

Generally speaking, the life styles of street child laborers make SCLs to spend all they earn or give to the family. The majority of children’s income is used up for daily family meal and other living costs though they have a hard time struggling to gain a certain amount of money every day. It was also argued that the income successes or failures of street child laborers often become the center of their parents’ positive recognition or disapproval (Strehl, 2010). Parents put a lot of financial responsibilities on the shoulders of their children and are disappointed or become angry when their expectations are not fulfilled. Children feel pressured and will become more hesitant about going home after an “unsuccessful” day of work or unless a quota of income has been met. In other employed situations, their advanced annual money is taken out by the parents or guardian then they have been working as a bonded labor until the contract ends.

Findings emphasized that there were some cases that children did not know how much they earned from their job. In the case of street-side teashop and restaurant, very young children were likely to miscalculate their monthly salary if they

were absent days for illness or other matters occasionally then cut some amount of their income according to their working hours. Some children also reported that they could earn little in street-based stalls as a worker because such kind of informal service works paid less to the children when they were already entitled to a daily meal and accommodation as a working package (My-PEC, 2015).

The nature of street employment is highly likely to expose the hazards to the small, young and vulnerable children. The common street hazards on its work nature were like a physical environment (hot surface), a psychological environment (street abuse, violence and exploitation), a marginal task (begging or rag picking), a general practice (smoking, drinking and substance use), a condition of work (excessive hours). A crucial fact to remember is that almost all work carry some risks but sometimes children are not aware of their risks. For example, many young children were not aware of their potential hazards when they were selling things on the street corner for long hours under extreme weather, or they were looking for recyclable things at the dumpsites.

As in the discussion earlier of the background of family, SCLs are most possible to live in slum area and have been already vulnerable because their living and family situations were considerably poor and exposed to unhealthy environment, typically in bad quality, crowded housing and poor sanitation (International Labor Organization, 2011). It was suggested that street child laborers frequently suffered from malnutrition because of poor health and eating habits since they did not know how to eat healthy meals, for example, they were not health conscious and consuming fast and junk food and cheaper foods or foodstuffs nearby stalls regardless of sanitation even if they could earn well in some other days. According to Anarfi (1997), getting a daily meal is one of the independent activity of street child laborers, only 8 % of children said that they were provided meals by the parents and majority of them (86 %) reported they got their own food.

The researchers pointed out that street child laborers were often personally acquainted with other children in the same situation. There are some studies highlighting about strong peer support system of street child laborers. Frequently children mentioned that they could make friendship with other children and work and protect each other and play together during their working hour. Some children also

believed that work became an opportunity to share idea and support each other financially, mentally and spiritually when they were in need (Ali & De Muynck, 2005; Johansson, 2009; Liebel, 2004).

Evidence also indicated that the dangers were not only physical conditions but also psychological hazards such as stress, long hours, isolation, intimidation and other emotional disasters (International Labor Organization, 2011). According to Ali & Ali (2015), the problem of violence and abuse was quite rampant in the life of street child laborers. Children notified that they were mistreated either physically or verbally by grownup people including guardians, family relatives, police officers and customers. It was also suggested that children working long hours on the streets lead to many hazards including sexual, emotional and physical abuse, 50%, 50% and 65%, respectively (Celik, 2009).

Children have been usually working the jobs that are only appropriate for the adult people. Since they were engaged in such kind of works, their psychological, physical and social health were affected. There is a fact that children's employment at the childhood life is possibly harmful to their growth and development which could offer a future well-being in the rest of their lives (Johansson, 2009). The following figure showed why children are at risk.

Children's risk is increased because they:

- Lack work experience, and may not make well-informed judgements;
- Have a desire to perform well – children are willing to go the extra mile without realizing the risks;
- Learn unsafe behaviors from adults;
- Might not be carefully trained or supervised;
- Lack status and find it difficult to speak out about their rights; and
- Try to appear as if they understand, when actually they don't, so as to appear competent.

Figure 2.1 Why children are at risk (International Labor Organization, 2011)

2.4 Health related issues of SCLs

The study done by Nanda (2008) in Delhi has highlighted that diseases and ill-health impacts were predisposed to street child laborers because of their working conditions. The researcher found that the common medical problems were ranging from the minor common cold to major injuries, accidents, malnutrition, diarrhea, abdominal pain, respiratory infections, skin diseases and mental illness (Singh & Purohit, 2011).

The study found that unfavorable environmental conditions actually led to get sick and other health hazards for SCLs, for instances, inaccessibility to sanitation facilities and health knowledge and care in the street of their workplace. Results also indicated that child scavengers had to collect rags exposing them to terrible weather for lengthy time in daytime so they frequently suffered from headache because of intense sunlight and often caught the cold during winter and the rainy season because many children could not wear the thick coats since they did not have anything to make warm. Similar finding also emphasized that many children in this line of work got dermatological infections due to contaminating with germs from the rubbish dump. Another problem particularly for street vending children was accidents because they had to always escape from the polices from time to time or sometimes they chased suddenly to catch the buyers and probably fall down on the street and get injured and unfortunately hit by the vehicle (Thapa, Ghatane, & Rimal, 2009).

In the case of India, the data showed that approximately 12.6 million children were in hazardous street employment, being violated their rights and unprotected many risks, susceptible to abuse, exploitation and neglects (Nanda, 2008). In the case of marginal jobs, rag picking, for example, people felt quite reluctant to meet with children and sometimes treated badly to such children because of their dirty and untidy appearance (Pokharel, 2013). Findings also pointed out that the child who do rag picking were exposed to the police, junkyard owners and criminal gangs, living in the tough life that instilled them violence and abuse and made them highly exposed to unhealthy behaviors and lifestyles (KC et al, 2001).

It was notable that more boys seemed to work on the street rather than girl children since “the true incidence of working girls may be hidden by the nature of their work, which tends to be less visible than the work of street boys” (Pokharel,

2013). Evidence from India and South America of the magnitude of exploitation, oppression and child sexual abuse experienced by working girls is overwhelming (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). Woan, Lin, & Auerswald (2013) argued that some girl children bargain sex for earning money in the street. Researchers supported the fact that sexual harassment and abuse cases occurred mostly in girls who work in the street and 42% of studied girls expressed their experiences of first sex encounter. As Celik (2009) pointed out, 87.8 percent of girls working on the streets had been exposed to sexual assault. The same study concluded that the girls in the study were found to be significantly more likely to be sexually assaulted when they had no formal education and worked for more than eight hours per day.

It was also true that health risk behaviors like smoking, drinking and substance use were common in street child laborers to be against their hungry, stress and pressure (Kombarakaran, 2004). Similar study found that most of the children were insisted by their close friend and became addicted to drug, alcohol and cigarettes and desired to get supply daily in the case of scavenging job (KC et al, 2001).

It was concluded that their type and intensity of work in the street and unhealthy habits and risk behaviors were attributed to many health issues and their life styles made them to spend all they earn or give to the family and they never worried for health that actually might harm them in the near future (Thapa et al., 2009). The studies have been attempted to notice some kind of hazards from street working by the children, according to International Labor Organization (2011) by the table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Selected lists of common street works, hazards and consequences

Tasks	Hazards	Potential health consequences
Porter and transport	Heavy loads; long hours; unsanitary conditions; poor access to food; long distance from home; violence; exposure to alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and adult language and situations; sexual exploitation	Musculoskeletal problems; lacerations and blistering; diarrhea and other bacterial- and viral-based illnesses; nutrition deficiencies; depression; addiction; psychological harm; sexually transmitted diseases
Outdoor shop work such as vehicle repair	Toxic fumes and liquids; acids from batteries; clutter; slippery floors; sharp objects; heavy and dangerous machinery; loud noises	Respiratory diseases; nausea; burns; injury from falls; cuts and scrapes; exhaustion; skin rashes; hearing loss
Scavenging; trash and recycling collection	Sharp objects; contaminated objects; moving traffic; vehicle exhaust; bending; heavy loads; long hours; extreme weather; street crimes	Infectious diseases such as tetanus; joint and bone deformities; blistered hands and feet; lacerations; back injury; muscle injury; breathing difficulties; frostbite; sunstroke and other thermal stresses; dehydration; death or injury from moving vehicles
Street-corner food sales	Street crimes; hot surfaces; long hours; extreme weather	Injury from assault; heat stroke; exhaustion
Street environment in general	Exposure to violence, smoking, alcohol and sex	Physical and mental harm; addiction

2.5 Experience of health care and treatment

Child laborers are of the common belief that illness was what exacerbated them to fight their daily survival when they were paused from work and health was what favored them to increase their effort to work and get good earnings (Ali, 2005). Results indicated that children were very sensible to decide what made important to their situation since they survived in life with insufficient income but demanding needs. As a result, this prioritization was more impaired and dangerous for the consequences of their health because children did not use the money on health care and delay to take treatment (Amoah, 2014).

Though street child labor coped with their enormous health problems, they gradually resisted the illness as long as they stayed longer in the street and rarely met with the physicians and did not visit health centers or clinics and sometimes were prescribed medicines by chemists or self-medicated and they neglected the sickness and treated like not serious case and usual burden which everybody encounters. Results during an interview with children mentioned that they kept minor cuts and wounds with no treatment and did not recognize as the health issues even if the illness immobilized them (Woan, 2013; Amoah, 2014). The following narrations are given by street child laborers

“I have a special body...whenever I have a cut, it heals without treatment... it healed by itself. I did not have to do anything to it” (13 year old boy)

“I cannot afford to stay at home for every small illness.... I need money to buy food every day so I always strive to work....I only rest when I am severely sick” (17 year old girl)

Even if some children seem healthy without any potential harms, those little children came back to home with fatigue and lethargy at the end of the day because of the intensive nature of their work. When children got sickness, they often faced some hurdles to receive the treatment. Participants described that the severity of illness and financial position were major parts to making a decision to seek medical care but some children were decided by the parents to receive the treatment. In most cases, they were given home-made remedy or drugs over the counter for primary cure and gave it a wait to get better or if the illness still continued longer than anticipated or got worse, they might be found secondary care (Ali, 2005).

With a sense of togetherness and kinship, they were able to try to fix the problems, conflicts and difficult situation in their own term regardless of the consequences of their lives that were harmful to their health and development in the future since they were no and limited knowledge and physically vulnerable through experiencing unhealthy life styles (KC et al, 2001). It was said that peers were playing a role in care seeking behaviors but insufficient knowledge on signs and symptoms frequently happened to wrong diagnosis to their friends and incorrectly treated with their leftover medicines which they got healed for their illness. This innocent but uninformed practices of sharing drugs greatly endangered for the children during their illness to make them worsen with the diseases or suffer from more side effects (Amoah, 2014).

As noted earlier, children who work on the street frequently reported about the receipt from not any to inadequate medical treatment when they were not well. Particularly, children informed that they faced difficulties in monetary term to utilize the medical treatment. If they were not feeling well, they chose to see a local doctor who could be paid nothing or a minimal service fees or healed by themselves. When it was time to go to a specialist, they were necessary to borrow the money (Ali and De Muynck, 2005). It was concluded that health expenditures, poor social class, inferior status, discrimination of health provider, doubt on service and remoteness to health facilities and limited time to get treated (long waiting time at clinic) due to absent from work were all barriers for disease therapy and preferences for local healing or own remedy (Woan, 2013; Ali, 2005; Nanda, 2008).

2.6 Conceptual framework

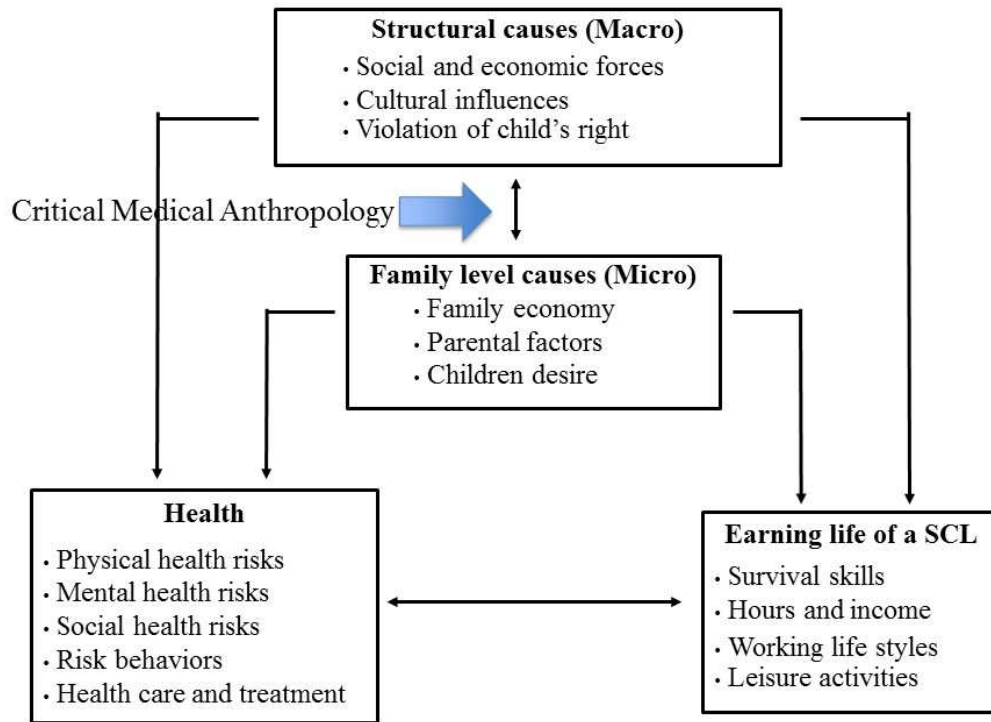


Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework

2.7 Theoretical perspective

2.7.1 Critical Medical Anthropology (CMA)

Medical anthropology, in critical perspectives explains that social inequality and power are primary determinants of health and health care. CMA, therefore, reinforces societal needs for the optimal distribution of health resources. From the standpoint of CMA, health can be defined as access to and control over the basic material and nonmaterial resources that sustain and promote life at a high level of satisfaction. CMA examines health issues within the context of encompassing political and economic forces that pattern human relationships, shape social behaviors, condition collective experiences, reorder local ecologies and situate cultural meanings (Baer, Singer, & Susser, 2003).

CMA also emphasizes on understanding how health is produced by social structures, organizations and the economic and political processes. It was imperative to identify how economic and political processes have the impacts on health and well-being resulting from distribution of health resources and services and determinants of societal conditions. It would be fair to say that health resources were not equally accessible to people from all walks of life. Basically, the health risk of particular groups of unfortunate people with disadvantaged, neglected, impoverished conditions were affected access to health resources and hindered their lives through the political power of biomedicine ((Winkelman, 2008)).

CMA challenges the political power of biomedicine that enables defining poor health status as individual responsibility (genetic, personal, moral) and deny the reality of social causes in inequality then CMA proposed to moderate the biomedical power that perpetuate class-determined disparities in health and fail to address the conflicts and dysfunctions in institutional structures that affect health through inequality and discrimination (Winkelman, 2008).

CMA seeks to understand the social origin of all disease because CMA views disease a social as well as a biological product since disease etiologies are instrumental in bringing political, economic, social structural and environmental conditions in all societies. Disease in this approach is seen as both biological and social, and the critical analysis is meant to discover the relationship between the biological and social roots of the disease. Rudolf Virchow argued that the material conditions of people's daily life at work, at home, and in the larger society constituted significant factors contributing to their diseases and ailments. Thus, he concluded that "the improvement of medicine would eventually prolong life, but improvement of social conditions could achieve this result even more rapidly and successfully" (Winkelman, 2008).

CMA also emphasizes a world systems perspective for understanding factors affecting health both within and outside the health care system. This included addressing the relationship of broader societal ideological and political trends to medical care and how power and resources affect health across different levels (Winkelman, 2008).

As aforementioned, from the standpoint of CMA in examining the health problems and life conditions of street child laborers, these could not be simply seen as medical problems with established clinical solutions but societal problems with complex cultural dimensions. Their health conditions are generally not directly caused by biology (genetics, viruses, or bacteria) but rather by the effects of individual and collective cultural behaviors. This approach provides language and evidence to communicate about power dynamics and consequently potentiates political and social change for a vulnerable group.

2.7.2 Theoretical application

Child labor is an important aspect of social and economic reality. It is a manifestation of structural problems of poverty, family collapse, and violation of children's right. The main concern is basically the kind of work children are doing, some of which is dangerous, and may cause physical and psychological damages or may even threaten the child's life. Children are engaged in child labor for a variety of reasons, from the result of poverty to children's own desire (ADDISU, 2008). The topic of child labor has been investigated to understand its nature and extent from some perspectives to empirical ways in the interest of the intensity on its different practices (Abbasi, 2013).

Through investigating the root problems determining child laborers and their lives and predicaments of working situations, it could not be explained only at the individual and family level because laboring outside the family keeps children away from parents' sight and reaching for protection from risks and that is about the issues of power, inequality, oppression, exploitation which can be explained by social structure, economic and political processes. In this regard, it is important to study street child laborers from critical perspective in medical anthropology to understand how their life and health situations, both of which are deeply rooted in underlying causes of poverty and ultimately in social and cultural background and political situations.

CMA provides a concept for analyzing macro-micro connections. On a micro and macro level, examining street child laborers can include exploring how children live and work under conditions that violated their human dignity and

threatened their personal development. However, the amount they earned are very low that children have to often make difficult choices with their limited resources, for example, this often includes buying cheaper, less nutritious and unclean food over more expensive but more healthy food. The inability to consume adequate necessities including food and often safe and sufficient water lead to greater health problems, such as malnutrition, or diarrhea. This scenario demonstrates how health problems on a micro-level may occur as a result of earning in poor circumstances, which is a macro-level problem, since the government in the absence of policy on protection of child labor to ensure well-being and development of children. Health care among street child laborers demonstrates ways in which CMA explores both macro and micro-level impacts of health and can be useful in gaining a holistic understanding of a particular problem.

Child laborers are likely to be cheap, expendable, and highly disorganized laborers on the street, taking odd jobs as they can for minimal pay and without health benefits or occupational safety protections. From CMA stance, economic circumstances of health and disease, which is essential to a clear understanding of the needs and voices of street child laborers, vulnerable segment of the population would be counted. The approach of CMA advocates assistance to the street child laborers and their families who struggle to address medical problems through challenging the biomedical establishment and capitalist medicine.

In the face of the continuing and increasing inequality confronted nowadays, the significance of fieldwork to reach the child laborers who were barely access to public institutions and activist approach to this fieldwork, which may assist in addressing their needs, becomes more fundamental all the time. For this research, CMA will make better sense of the life events, problems of marginality and health experiences of street child laborers through social level which is creating the social environments which contributes to the social shaping of children's experience, the social construction of children's life, and the social production of potential life risks and health issues and their coping ways to problems.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Nearly one year ago, I spend my time in the street and active observing the children who work on the streets of Yangon. My work is studying that particular children to see their reality of life survival from street earning. I called them “Street Child Laborers (SCLs)” in this study. I visited everywhere I know that SCLs will exist and meet some new SCLs. After a little bit of time period, I felt more confident to start my recruitment process for the current study. In the five months, I spent hours with the children, their peers, employers, family members, and other people in their surrounding and collected data while they were working and playing, indeed earning their lives on the streets.

The causes and consequences of street child labor were quite complex. It is important to understand that different types and nature of street work and the experiences of children in performing their daily activities and the problems and health related predicaments cannot be oversimplified. It is commonly said that poverty breeds child labor but child labor practices are also considerably related with socio-cultural traditions as well as narrow educational opportunities. The life circumstances of street child laborers could not be simply explained and need to dive deeper to understand their problems. It is ultimately a violation of children rights in terms of childhood, education, health and social protection.

With practical considerations, there is a particular need to get inside the unique culture of street child laborers to understand how the world actually appears to them. It is also said that children are the best and important sources of information about themselves to provide the knowledge of situation thoroughly (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). Therefore, this research would be more compatible to see qualitatively the earning life of street child laborers based on their working experiences. To gain the richest data about the life and problems of child laborers on

different nature and type of street work, this study set out “ethnography” as the prime research approach. To meet the research objectives, the strength of long and in-depth nature of ethnography allowed the researcher to conduct the study on the basis of a good rapport with street child laborers to get a wide range of data from street child laborers (Cheng, 1997).

3.2 Research setting

Yangon was selected as the study area because it is the most developed city of all state and regions in Myanmar and also the largest economic and trading hub. As a result of democratic transformation in 2011, some changes in economic policy created more foreign investments and also people are coming to find jobs from rural to urban or/and urban to urban, making Yangon increased population. Being a diverse and cosmopolitan urban setting with many economic activities predominantly taking place, Yangon represented a destination area for child laborers from all areas around the country. Itinerant street-based work was highly popular and complex among child laborers and an enormous number of those children were seen everywhere in Yangon.

At a quick glance along Yangon’s streets, the majority of SCLs roamed around to sell things in different directions chasing after people into moving vehicles and bargaining at the top of their voices to persuade customers to buy their items. Another group of SCLs earn livelihood at the road-side teashop with the full jumbles of plastic tables and chairs to give services to the customers. Also, it is not unusual to encounter with children who are begging at any street corner, from younger ones to older ones who even carry another baby to make people tempted to donate them money. Some children were looking for recycled plastics and bottles in the garbage bins and dumps for their daily survival and others earn life from the causal manual jobs at either inner or outskirts of the city. Therefore, this geographical location allowed the researcher a wide base of possible respondents and their daily experiences from which relevant data can be gathered.

According to systematic observation of the known areas where street child laborers congregate and undertake their earning activities, that made the study possible

to cover more than one geographical area. Therefore, one market place, one teashop, two public transport places (boat way and rail way) and one industrial zone were selected purposively as the research locations. Covering different locations was not intended only for differences in street work activities but also to bring up the workplace backgrounds in which issues may be alike in one form and vary in another.

3.2.1 Dala ferry terminus and its street child laborers

The first location is Dala jetty which is very congested through river transport. The bus gates near the ferry terminal is the busiest and most lively part of the town with travelers and motorbike carriers of young, middle, old aged men. The fact of being common occupation for them is that first some work with their own bike while some are hired and some are buying it with high payment installment. Since it is a key public area and motorbike is so much popular these days, taking traditional trishaw (slow vehicle) rather. Smaller boats can be chartered for commuters in a hurry. At both sides, there is each of a small ticket selling room and passenger waiting hall. While people are crowded there, there is a child beggar who comes and begs daily.

Like other common public transport stations, the men and women rushing to catch the ferry while different types of vending either fixed stalls or mobile vendors along the road were busy with their deals. Apart from that it was also not uncommon to come across some beggars (mostly old person and buskers), and sometimes small gambling groups (playing money games such as card or dice or board games on the sidewalks and also tons of public transport agents who are searching the passengers to make sure as many itineraries as possible since most of the trips are adjacent townships with only 2 or 3 hour driving time. Another highlighted observed occupation is being porter, adult porters are legally appointed and some are working as an odd job. Among these laborers, some of them are middle-aged certified labor but not a very few porters are children.

Recently it also became a sort of touristy place as an outskirts which is next to Yangon so it is so accessible for the foreigners to make a half-day trip. Early in the morning, at about 5 am, the ferry pushes off from Dala for the first time. It will make the journey 45 times which were going back and forth from Pansodan (Yangon downtown) to Dala (peri-urban) area, with different intervals, 5 minutes, 15 minutes,

20 minutes and 30 minutes respectively, until 9:00 pm. There are 3 boats (Cherry 1, 2 and 3 - the name of boat and its numbers) but only two of them are operated daily and one of them is alternatively given a day pause.

With the maximum capacity of 2000 people on the new boat with two storeys, funded by JICA, it was a place for a lot of vendors who vary in terms of genders and age and sell different sorts of items from mobile sim cards to fruit snacks. Since almost all of them live just at that town, it is quite accessible to come to the boat by taking the bike and sell things. The particular vendors are the ones who are selling boiled eggs. There are roughly 20 egg vendors on 2 ferry boats daily, sometimes more than that. Among all vendors, it was not uncommon to meet some child laborers. The development of social networks and the assurance of daily capital loans and “sell and pay later” system may encourage people of any age to pursue vending eggs on the boats. However, people choose eggs as an optional item depending on purchasing prices and amount of capital and financial loan accessibility.

In the study, the researcher recruited one beggar, one manual loading labor, two vendors, and two porters who come from the immediate vicinity of the town to earn near the ticket counter, the jetty lane and on ferry boat.



Figure 3.1 Boat arrival at Dala ferry terminus (Research setting 1)

3.2.2 Train station and its street child laborers

The second location the researcher chose is Railway Station which is the British built train line that connects Yangon Central station with inner city suburbs, impoverished towns and semi- country villages in a long loop with major stations. After some of upgrading the train transport system it became popular as a place of touristy and more attractive to the local commuters to use heavily as an affordable and convenient public transport than road bus transport.

The service hours are from 3:45 am to 10:15 pm daily and the services were very crowded and passengers have to stand during rush hour while some carriages were almost deserted in the day time when the trips are for the semi-urban areas. Trains are going clockwise and anticlockwise and 2 types of trains are intermittently operated, one is old-fashion but renewed train and the other one is modern air-conditioned train. There are 7 platforms with small ticket office and passengers waiting seats on the platform.

By tradition there are a lot of platform vendors who hop from one station to another to sell things on the train. This made the train station lively and crowded. Apart from central station, there are also food stalls along other stations. At the central train station, however, vendors are more than any other stations and the large (probably two third) proportion of vendors sell drinking water but some also sell sunflower snacks, tissues, fruit jam snacks, betel-chewing packs and cigarettes. Therefore, the supply of water bottles is high since there were more than 10 water sellers than other sellers because they can invest only a few amount of money but can increase the profit. However some people try to sell other items since they do not want to overlap things and compete each other even though they need to invest more. In summer, more people sell water though their selling items are not fixed and so much depend on seasons and the amount they are able to invest. From morning around 7 am to evening 5 or 6 pm, a lot of vendors including children can also be seen, selling, walking, chatting and playing on the platforms of central train station.

In one major train station, there was an area produced hand-made wares and its street child vendors. This area is located in North Okkalapa Township out of downtown Yangon. Most of the families made wooden birds cages, brooms and brushes and let the poor household vending through “sell now-and-pay later” their

products. Therefore, more and more people got the opportunities to take them downtown to sell. This also made some children the chance to earn earlier when their families were in financial problems. Some quit school while some earn after school and during holiday. Among the different products, children went out with bird cages for sale. Children ride the rails to have birdhouses for sale. The boys and girls pile on to the train, loading their wares under the seats and then using the carriage.

Through the context of train station, two child vendors on the platform (one girl vending drinking water bottles at central station and one boy vending ice candy stick at another station) and two street child vendors and one trishaw driving child (trishaw is a sort of slow vehicle but the common mode of transportation in Myanmar) at one of another main station.



Figure 3.2 Yangon central train station (Research setting 2)

3.2.3 Industrial zone and its street child laborer

The reason why one more industrial zone for particular SCL is quite unique which is related to poverty, appearing squatter settlement and the prevalence of child labor through construction sites and factories. First of all, the internal migrant workers from both the rural and urban areas of either nearby or far from Yangon cannot afford to buy land and house as they do not earn enough, so they have to rent

rooms. In addition, due to the rising prices of house rental and goods, lack of accommodation, daily commuting difficulty, and for some economic opportunities they started building small temporary tents nearby construction sites or factories.

Dagon Myo Thit - Seik Kan (harbor) township is regarded as one of the industrial zone, appears temporary tent for migrants on the illegal area (invaded land). That place is illegal squatter settlement with 1500 households. That area has existed since a long time ago but scattered all over the place. 5 years ago, some household moved to that place and accommodated here and there therefore slowly many houses occupied and established as 93 squatter. In the quarter, most of the family members worked as laborers at the stone/brick/sand wholesale field alongside the rivers. Although the work nature is obviously hard, all men, women and children came to earn either by carrying stones or refilling them into baskets and lifting and putting on the shoulders of the ones who carry to unload from a ship at a jetty port. At the same township again, some children also earned through picking recycled things from the streets behind the houses and garbage dumps. From the context of peri-urban and slum area, two SCLs (rag picking child and pebble carrying child) was chosen for the study.



Figure 3.3 Workers carry baskets filled with pebbles while unloading from a ship at a jetty port in Yuzana (Research setting 3)

3.2.4 A whole sale marketplace and its street child laborer

The market is just outside of Yangon's downtown. This is a big wholesale market of vegetables, fruits, flowers, fish and any other grocery items which are transported from all different part of Myanmar. Basically the working hour is both day and night but night is more dynamic, busy and crowded and full of buying and selling with coming and going of vehicles from all over the places. Inside the market, the daily routine of worker carrying heavy bags and boxes of various groceries on their shoulders or by trolleys, arranging things and loading and unloading the items from the trucks, were employed at different shops and grocery and veggie stalls. Since most of the items are fruits and vegetables and the drainage is poor, the lanes between the rows of shops are quite wet in these rainy days and messy with throwing things and lots of perishable rubbish and mud and people packed. In this certain area, there are several working children who earn some amount of money for a day by collecting veggies, salted dry fish and other recycled things from the market dumps and waste collected shops.



Figure 3.4 Vegetable wholesale Thirimingalar Market in Yangon (Research setting 4)

3.2.5 A corner teashop and its street child laborer

Tea culture is widespread in Myanmar. Each corner has a tea shop, or in other different terms; tea center or tea house. There are numerous tea shops available along the sidewalk, which are existing either at the inner city or outskirts of Yangon. These tea shops are the perfect places for people of all ages and gender to meet and relax. Even though it is just a teashop, they do serve instant coffee, milk tea, snacks, and cigarettes and furthermore, they offer free green tea. The surroundings of it is quite noisy, with the buzz of people chatting and music.

The waiters who are running round and serving the customers are more often young boys. They need to be aware of "kissing sound" to attract their attention to take orders from customers. In both urban and rural areas, every tea shop has a child working as a waiter. It is not unusual to recruit children as their working staff in the tea shop. Many of children stopped studying or some were denied schooling and only a few children works during their holiday. The tea boys are the waiters, the runners, some tea makers and even the cleaners that keep the whole business functional for the benefit of the tea shop.

Many of them grow up in the teashops; in the surrounding of the cigarette smoke, tea cups-hot kettles, wooden tables and plastic chairs; "the kissing sound" that the customers make to call them. Apparently, employing children to wait on tables is not taboo. People do not feel strange ordering from waiters who are children.



Figure 3.5 Street side teashop in Yangon (Research setting 5)

The following table is described research location and SCLs who carry out different the street work activities.

Table 3.1 Distribution of children by street work activities and research setting

SCLs	Research setting						Total
	Dala ferry	Yangon train station (Central station)	Yangon train station (Sub-station)	Industrial zone	Wholesale market	Tea shop	
Porter	2						2
Beggar	1						1
Vendor	2	1	3		1		7
Manual loading labor	1			1			2
Rag picker				1			1
Teaboy						1	1
Trishaw driver/bus conductor		1					1
Total	6	2	3	2	1	1	15

3.3 Ethnographic field work

3.3.1 Access and entry to the field

During the preliminary field work, the researcher grew her professional network through World Vision Myanmar and Sonic International Organization

(Myanmar) which are implementing street and working children projects through drop-in center and out-reach activities. Once the researcher explained the details about the research and her background (e.g. as a MA student) and institutional affiliation to respective program manager, they suggested the researcher some places to find out different types of SCLs.

3.3.2 Seeking and approaching to the street child laborers

First the researcher accompanied the field staff and just observed their out-reach activities. While they are performing their field operation, the researcher talked with other people in the field and approached to some SCLs with no preconceived idea about their origin. Beyond out-reach activities, the researcher also visited different places in search of SCLs. The approaches to reach out to potential SCLs varied, from buying their goods, spending time in the teashop they work, doing chitchat with those SCLs and other neighboring people and asking basic information about them.

The key objective of this initial ethnographic work was to seek for informants in a familiar way for meaningful participation (incorporating issues of trust, ethics, and collaboration) and learn their way of life as a part of the research process (Caine, Davison, & Stewart, 2009). After the first 3 or 4 weeks of field work, the researcher come up with the general idea of what they do and where they live and how they earn. Once the researcher became aware enough, it was ready to enter children's world to study their street earning experiences.

3.3.3 Sampling and recruitment process

Aiming for sample size and its criteria in ethnographic research is to provide rich information that could answer the research questions. However, care and attention was given to the adequacy to the size of the samples until no new data or insights were produced (Fetterman, 2010). The sampling procedure was relied on personal observation, organization experiences and professional recommendation since there was no context specific data of children involved in street based activities. However, it was also considered that recruiting children in the same establishment might result in early and quicker saturation as children would probably share similar working experiences and the same idea and thoughts from one another. Therefore, the

researcher tried to meet with children from different location and different type of street child labor activities.

The criteria for street child laborers were taken into account by the following considerations. First, the children were aged between 7 and 16 years, because this age group were engaged in the workforce recently, according to national census data in 2014 and also the category commonly widespread within the definition of a child who is under 16 years in Myanmar. Second, the children have been employing fully at informal street-based job for a significant period of time. Third, the children were not going to any formal school or quit school at least one year before. However, the researcher excluded the children who are attending school and/or working part time and/or engaging at any vocational trainings. However, all the cases might be heterogeneous in terms of their age, sex, family economic status and demographic background, and type and duration of earning on street jobs.

Before the recruitment was done, the employer was asked to allow the researcher to study his employee in the case of teashop. In some cases, consent was not given by the parents although children were willing to cooperate in the study. In other cases, parents had a good understanding on research purpose and let their children to participate but children themselves feel uncomfortable to take part in the study. After all, 15 children are selected through purposive and snow-balling sampling. And all the recruitment process was possible through the voluntary participation and readiness of the parent and SCLs themselves for providing consent.

3.4 Research methods

3.4.1 Participant observation

Sometimes it was occurred to the researcher that children could not give full adequate information during the interview or they may make up things or copy what they have been told to say by adults. Participant observation, therefore, made it possible to see, listen, engage and reflect on what was going on first hand and gain a deeper insight into verbal and non-verbal communications and events within all the

life circumstances of street child laborers (Okoli & Cree, 2011). According to the best single phrase description of “deep hanging out”, the researchers spent with one SCL around one hour in a location where he/she earn and observed his/her activities (Crang & Cook, 2007). In the certain circumstances, the researcher cannot keep observing in one location but have to accompany with SCLs such as rag picker and bus attendant while they move around to earn and observe them and their surroundings.

The observations were also repeated at different places of work, at different times of the day, on different days of the week. However, participation was based on availability and willingness (Okoli & Cree, 2011). Although the researcher applied both participation and observation for some SCLs, it was not possible to participate in the earning activities of other SCLs so the researcher observed only from a distance. This was happened with some vendors, manual labor and teaboy who cannot favor any opportunity for the researcher to take part in their earning lives. However, some vending street children allowed the researcher to participate so the researcher got the chance to assist them with their selling work. In the cases of porter child, sometimes they need the researcher to be their judge in the game competitions and sometimes to watch and take care of their stuff not to lose when they play around.

However, the researcher was done participant observations to varying degrees, from just regular formal contact with SCLs to lengthy full immersion (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). Not only the researcher was doing participant observation as her field work, but also everyone was interested to know who the researcher was, where she had come from, what she was doing and why, and what she was going to do with the information she got. They really played as a role of observers. Depending on how much the researcher immersed into participation and observation, people also showed curiosity and often asked the questions and tried to make sure the questions to be answered by the researcher until they got a great deal of satisfaction from the answers.

Generally, the distance between two places (wherever home or work setting) of the researcher and the SCLs was a constraint to commute to reach to the field. That is the only thing the researcher missed out some moments to do participant observation, particularly in the morning that is the important time of the day to earn

better for some street jobs. In this regard, in-depth interview is a supplement to have rich and depth information.

3.4.2 In-depth interview

Along with participant observation, interviewing has been a primary means in the attainment of data (Crang & Cook, 2007). Interviews complement participant observation to enable the researcher to check what children say against what they actually do (Della Porta, 2008). On every occasion the researcher with an SCL, the researcher have to wait until he/she was free to talk. When they make a break for any situation; just sitting, doing nothing moment, time for playing with friend or making a move to another place to improve their earning, the researcher followed them and approached to them and asked questions related to his/her income and working hours and the nature of earning and the relationships with those around him/her and spent more time for waiting and interviewing alternatively.

At times the interviews took place in their busy noisy workplaces and street corners where conversations with children were rushed and interrupted at any time, and moved off to sell their things. Therefore, the researcher also visited the children's home and met and talked with them and their parents. Although home setting was slightly formal than street-based venues and working environments and also has a shortage of space, it was good since children were not interrupted to lose their time, money and effort that could consumed during interview.

The researcher also felt that children could not talk freely in front of their parents or other people, but then again, the researcher tried to find other ways around; waiting the time people left or asking parents' approval to do the interview in a quiet place for the sake of recording. In this situation, the researcher and the SCL visited to the nearest, non-crowded teashop or food stalls and had a good table not to get interrupted by comings and goings of the people and continued the interview.

However, the researcher have to meet with a group of child porters since they always stay and work together. At that time, they got fun and freedom and showed desire to be the first speaker when the researcher raised a question and threw the talk open. However, they are told to meet for the in-depth interview separately upon their availability whenever elaborations, or ongoing and repeated talks and

sometimes lengthy discussions were required from each SCL to provoke rich information. Basically, the researcher met with the children 4 or 5 episodes.

3.4.3 Key informant interview

Key informant interviews were another sources of information to cover the local descriptions of SCLs' lives and street earning experiences and health conditions under the context of economic and political influences. In addition, KII was operated as a method not only to assess credibility of SCLs' responses but also to collect the data that SCLs did not answer or to add exclusive knowledge and information about the situations of SCLs in Myanmar. Five key informants (one male and four female), with more than 3 years of experiences in child protection programs were involved in the research. They are also currently employed in different NGOs working with children.

Upon some advanced calls, appointments were settled, and then personal meeting was arranged for individual interview. Each interview took around 45 minutes to one hour. The language used during interview is only Burmese and the researcher also asked them to keep recording along the interview. First the researcher was open to any discussion and then substantiated her current findings by each of key informants. While analyzing the findings, all the data collected from key informants was triangulated with primary information from SCLs who are the major informants in this study. All key informants were not only cooperative but also suggested to reveal their names and functions.

1. Mr Zaw Myint Oo (Social Worker, SONNIE _ International, Myanmar)
2. Ms Sapal (Community Development Facilitator, World Vision Myanmar)
3. Ms Khin Thu Thu Aye (Program Assistant, IOM Myanmar)
4. Ms Phu Wai Myo (Project Coordinator, Care Myanmar)
5. Ms Lae Lae Min (Deputy Project Coordinator, Myanmar Red Cross Society)

3.4.4 Snapshot interviews

The researcher also employed some snapshot interview with one community members, one employer, one policeman, six parents of participants, and two mothers of non-participants to get as much comprehensive and context-specific data as possible. At one visit, the policeman elaborated their so-called plans “*no street vendors, no public nuisance*” that is currently putting into action. Although they do not like to do because they know children and their families are facing economic hardship, they cannot help because they got a mandate for it. Otherwise, it would affect their work like losing job or demotion or transferring to other remote places. In addition, a woman who stayed at the ferry terminus was reached out and she provided a comprehensive story of a child beggar who was recruited for the study. Furthermore, two mothers of non-respondent offered information about the ground situation of children earning life at the train station. Last but never least, respondents’ parents were also a valuable source to dig for more information on the features of SCL, their own children.

3.4.5 Participatory techniques

Since all recruitment was done, it was possible to closely interact with the children by asking them to stay and go with them to everywhere they moved for work and chitchat through sharing and exchanging life stories with each other. At some visits, researcher brought her camera and let them to know about camera and give it a try taking photos. Often, the researchers had meal together with SCLs during their lunch break. At times, researcher became a caretaker to watch their belongings while they were playing with friends and sometimes got involved in their game competition as a judge. These are the ways that not only encouraged children’s active engagement with particular issues of the research but also enabled children to convey their own experiences without controlling over the topics or agenda.

Whenever they got a visit from researcher, SCLs feel relaxed for being with her because the ways she speak, dress and behave are as familiar and close as they are. The researcher created a kind caring and friendly relationship, appreciating for what they have done regardless of the type of earnings, and giving some insights about their jobs to realize that different children have different abilities regardless of

working or studying. That was described in the next chapter. Some children addressed the researcher “aunt”. While some called “sister”, some thought the researcher is a teacher since the beginning the organization introduced them and continued to call like that. Overall, both the researcher and SCLs felt tide and clam and also embraced a more friendly communication with each other over time.

3.5 Research tools

3.5.1 Researcher as a tool

The researcher employed herself as the ethnographer being a human instrument. By using different methods, the researcher came into the world of children who have been working on the street that had established a particular culture for those children. Children become the instructors and researchers become the pupils”. To understand children, the researcher was required to learn from them. To become a member of the children’s world and to experience events, the researcher participated as fully and humanly as possible with this group of children and their social surrounding at their working place.

3.5.2 In-depth interview guide

The After the systematic review for past literature and revisiting the research questions, the in-depth interview’s questionnaire was developed. Basically, the researcher allowed SCLs to talk freely without structuring the interview but the checklist was prepared to make sure covering the contents and not to miss out any information from each children to meet the research objectives. During the interview, the researcher also used non-verbal behavior such as keeping eye contact, nodding head, and sound (like “Mmm”, “Aha”) and verbal reactions (could you please tell me more about that?) which indicated that the researcher was really listening and interested in what they shared with the researcher.

3.5.3 Observation guide

The researcher employed observation as one of the data collection instruments so as to explore the type of work children were engaged in, the way they performed their day to day duties, the suitability of their living and working environment, whether the work they performed was beyond their physical capacity, and the proportionality between their work and their age. Moreover, a great deal of information was collected during the socialization among the street child laborers themselves and between them and their employers and adult people (ADDISU, 2008, p. 15).

3.5.4 Other research instruments

The During data collection in the field, the following things are essential to involve;

1. Camera
2. Note book, pen, pencil
3. Recorder
4. Laptop computer
5. Student ID

3.6 Process of data collection

The data was primarily collected from in-depth interview with individual SCLs at their workplaces and houses, snapshot interviews with parents, employers and some neighbor community members and discussion with key informants from some NGOs. The field work including preliminary observation, was done by the researcher during July-November 2016. Table 3.2 showed the number of participants engaged (gender specific) for each data collection method while Table 3.3 demonstrated how the data was collected to answer the research questions.

Table 3.2 Process of data collection

Data needed	Methods	Respondents
Socio-demographic background of the street child laborers	In-depth interview Participant observation	SCLs
Issues-related to family Issues related to family economy Issues related to parents Issues related to children) Socio-cultural influences	In-depth interview Key informant interview Snap shot interview	SCLs Key informants Parents/employers/ community members
Survival skills Hours and income Working life styles (nature, food, cloth and shelter) Leisure activities (Recreation and free time)	In-depth interview Participant observation Participatory techniques	SCLs
Physical health risks (Work-induced disease and potential accidents) Mental health risks (stress and anxiety, exploitation and abuse) Social health risks (social relationship)	In-depth interview Key informant interview Participant observation Snap shot interview	SCLs Key informants Parents/employers/ community members
Health awareness and behavior Taking medical treatment Access to health services Decision making for health care Family and social support	In-depth interview Key informant interview	SCLs Key informants

3.7 Process of data analysis

Basically, data analysis was done during the field work through ongoing a review of the data collection progress. The process included reading literature, writing the field notes and conceptualizing the results. Analysis was done by understanding SCLs' experiences from their perspectives on being SCLs and the types of street work they engaged and related risks and health problems and the survival and coping situation of their problems. Various forms of information were interpreted not only from the narratives of the children but also from non-verbal communications, presenting their lives of each and every child.

During the field work, it is not possible to analyze without writing the field notes in a disciplined and diligent manner from day to day basis. At the end of the day, hours of recording, jotted notes or small notes of observations and other documents like photographs were written in as much detail as possible in the field notes. Since the researcher expected to spend long day in the field, what was happening from the morning to the last moment spent in the field was described in the field note. The interviews were transcribed and translate them into English and kept it properly in the computer files and always updated as a backup for the later analysis and reporting.

At the same time, the researcher constantly read and reviewed and classify the data and analyzed to see what themes emerged. By doing so, the researcher noticed some of the gaps, to put more information from future interviews but also rich observations helped to contribute to the overall developing picture. After the termination of field work, systematic written field notes were analyzed again. Researcher employed thematic analysis for the text data by identifying themes and building up the analysis in the most cohesive manner. Through more in depth, the contextual meanings were then classified the categories that represent similarities and differences to provide a broader understanding of the phenomenon of SCLs.

This process was done by the systematic classification of coding and identifying themes or patterns. Once the data set was reviewed, transcripts were coded; the first stage by open coding which is the initial classification and labelling of the subject. It was about sorting and categorizing the way participants addressed a number of different issues, topics, ideas, thoughts and information into the similar key themes. By open coding, the codes were identified by the researcher's examination and

questioning of the data. After that, the results of open codes were used for axial coding to identify important and general concepts of the study. The researcher ultimately looked for various analytical core concepts related to the earning lives of SCLs.

3.8 Quality control of the data

It is widely recognized that the validity of findings or data is a significant issue for qualitative research. The primary “validity question” which qualitative researchers have to address is “Are we accurately reflecting the phenomena under study as perceived by the study population?” (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). Though a number of different ways have been suggested to verify the qualitative data, triangulation was employed in this study to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research outcomes. The original purpose of triangulation was to seek confirmation of apparent findings. Therefore, all the data were triangulated through different qualitative methods (in-depth interview, participant observation and key informant interview) to get more comprehensive insights into the phenomenon of street child laborers.

3.9 Ethical consideration

The subject in this study was about the vulnerable group of children so the researcher was highly considered some ethical conditions such as seeking the informed consent, keeping confidentiality and negotiating privacy. From recruiting children to collecting data through interview and participating with their events, a great amount of caution and thoughtfulness was taken into account. Due to power dominance, it was always the issue about the gaps between adult investigators and children as the respondents (Mauthner, 1997).

3.9.1 Seeking informed consent

Experts often assumed that “children are not competent enough to give their informed consent, that this needs to be gained from a more competent adult”

(Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010). Consent from parents was the preferred choice. However, in the case of teaboy whose parent lived away, the researcher considered the employer as an adult person who has responsibility for the child or young person's safety, security and wellbeing. While guardians were asked for permission, children were also informed in a child sensitive way and they were not forced and respect was paid to their own decision to obtain their assent to participate in research. Therefore, guardian consent was used in conjunction with both written and oral children's assent by using very simple and understandable language for the children.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

During an interview with children, the researcher let the children know that all that what they said was "just between you and me". Therefore, the researcher made a personal commitment to protect their information in the strictest confidence. Any written versions of any findings captured in the study with children were not included their real names. To do so, the researcher used invented names for each and every child who participated so that their real identities were not distinguishable. Moreover, the data involving the names, activities, events and locations documented in field notes kept in a separate, secure computer files with limited access.

3.9.3 Privacy

The essence of participation of the children in the research was based on their desire and convenience so it was purely voluntary (without force, warning and persuading). For the best interest of the child, both the site and the timing of the interviews were determined by the children. Especially, they were asked to select the place of interview (home, work place or a neutral place) to secure for their privacy and freedom. The researcher also informed them that they are able to withdraw from the interview at any stage upon their wish if they were not feeling comfortable to continue. More importantly, some serious questions that might be difficult or uncomfortable for the children were asked in a delicate manner and also their responses were treated gently. If they kept hesitate to talk and showed silent, the researcher realized the situation and the topic was changed.

3.9.4 Beneficence of the research participants

In the interest of children's rights, this research considered the well-being of children, for example, enhancing awareness of the guardian to take care of or pay attention to the children's problems and health needs and to protect them from the harmful conditions of work. On top of that, the researcher tried to make sure the children have a sense of satisfaction for taking part in the research as a helpful service which can inform society, individuals, policy and practices about the health issues surrounding their lives.

3.10 Study period

This study was divided into 3 phases of field work: the entry or initiation/familiarization stage, the concentration of data collection period, and the closing phase, covering a 5 month period of data collection. First, the research learned to familiarize with the children and to hypothesize a wider view of the context for the months to come. After that the researcher devoted another extensive three months for systematic gathering of the information by using multiple research tools. The remaining one month was spare to make sure clarifying, completing and solving the contradictions of the data for the set research questions and to exit from field in a proper manner, without any consequences to the children.

Table 3.3 Research project time frame

	2016							2017					
	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
IRB approval/Field preparation													
Preliminary observation													
Obtain participants													
Ethnographic field work													
Ongoing data analysis													
Exit from the field													
Draft 1 of manuscript													
Draft 2 of manuscript													
Draft 3 of manuscript													
Thesis defense													
Finalized thesis													

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This paper reports the qualitative findings based on the field work done in Yangon. The study is about children in Yangon who are as young as nine have started to earn a living through street employment which is easy and accessible and less regulated. They are called Street Child Laborers (SCL). They are visible everywhere, ranging from street vending with petty self-employment, working as tea boys, hard manual jobs, bus attendants, the porters to begging and scavenging. Their workplaces are at the train and ferry terminuses and on the polluted pavement, in the roadside shop in Yangon. The ultimate purposes of this research are to explore the earning life of SCL: to discover the underlying factors of being SCL from their perspectives, to capture their personal experiences on different types of street-based occupation and related risks and health problems and how to deal with them.

Overall, the data shows all about an earning life of SCL; who SCLs are, where they are from, what they do for a living, where they works, how well they do it, and how much they make. The data gathered in this study came up with the results that were separated into five sections which are aimed to answer the questions that this research addressed.

- 4.1 Demographics characteristics of SCLs
- 4.2 Individual profile of SCLs
- 4.3 A day in the life of a SCL
- 4.4 Health risks from street work activities
- 4.5 Health care and treatment
- 4.6 What caused SCL

4.1 Demographics characteristics of SCLs

According to the inclusion criteria, children aged between 7 and 16 years were expected to be studied. Thus the children in this research were above 10 years to 15 years old who were mostly in the workforce. From the five different locations, fifteen SCLs with different nature undertaking street activities were included in the study. Fifteen SCLs; one 11 years old, three 12 years old, four 13 years old, two 14 years old and five 15 years old SCLs were chosen to participate. Speaking of gender, 4 girls and 11 boys were involved in the study, but girls are more likely to be reserved for domestic chores than boys who have been obviously engaging in any economic activities at the outside of the house.

Almost all the respondents have their parents, but one with single father, one with step-father and another two with grandparents. All of the SCLs were living in primarily nuclear family but from small to large household of 3 to 9 members. Findings also suggest that birth order among sibling cannot emphasize to the likelihoods of child labor because they are different positions in the family. 2 SCL are the eldest ones and another 2 are the youngest ones and the rest of SCL are in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th eldest position respectively.

In terms of initial working age, most of the children started working before they turned to their tenth birthday. In the study, three SCLs started working at the age of 8, five SCLs at 9 and another five at 10 and only two SCLs worked at 11 years old. Though the study did not find obvious difference in the initial working age between boys and girls, all the children in any case started working under the legally allowed minimum age. Therefore, SCLs have a great deal of working experiences; one SCL has been engaged at work for almost 5 years while the rest of them are established 2 years or 3 years or 4 years of working experiences while they are still quite young.

Speaking of schooling, eighteen percent of children (one girl and all boys) attended school in the past. One girl was never enrolled to government school but attained non-formal street-based education supported by an INGO for a basic literacy while the two girls were denied their education at all. The highest attainment of learning is grade-4 primary level and only one third among fifteen respondents passed it. However, almost half of SCLs are not able to read and write in a proper manner although they are supposed to be literate through primary level classes of government

school. Study concluded that earning became the immediate result of dropping out of school for all SCLs where two boys and one girl have been working since they are studying.

Table 4.1 Profile of individual SCL

Name	Street work	Gender	Age	Birth order	Educational	Initial working age	Experiences (in years)
Mr. Help	Porter	Male	15	4 th	Grade 4	10 yrs.	Two
Mr. Tricky	Porter	Male	14	3 rd	Grade 1	10 yrs.	Four
Mr. Sport	Vendor	Male	14	2 nd	Grade 4	9 yrs.	Five
Mr. Style	Vendor	Male	15	4 th	Grade 4	11 yrs.	Four
Mr. Strong	Manual labor	Male	15	2 nd	Grade 1	10 yrs.	Five
Ms. Vocal	Beggar	Female	12	2 nd	DE	8 yrs.	Five
Ms. Paragon	Vendor	Female	12	Youngest	NFE	10 yrs.	Two
Mr. Charm	Vendor	Male	13	Youngest	Grade 3	9 yrs.	Four
Mr. Gypsy	Trishaw driver	Male	15	2 nd	Grade 4	10 yrs.	Five
Mr. Smart	Vendor	Male	13	2 nd	Grade 4	9 yrs.	Three
Ms. Honey	Vendor	Female	12	5 th	Grade 3	9 yrs.	Two
Mr. Hero	Manual labor	Male	13	Eldest	Grade 1	11 yrs.	Three
Mr. Thrilled	Rag picker	Male	13	3 rd	Grade 2	8 yrs.	Five
Mr. Keen	Tea boy	Male	11	2 nd	Grade 1	8 yrs.	Three
Ms. Angel	Vendor	Female	15	Eldest	DE	9 yrs.	Six

DE – Denied Education

NFE – Non-Formal Education

In brief, 4.1 illustrated the different types of street work activities and research sites where children are widespread to work and then 4.2 described the summary of respondents' information. Now 4.3 is going to provide some vivid case stories of SCLs to demonstrate their daily life in a distinct manner.

4.2 Individual profile of SCLs

4.2.1. Mr. Help – 15 year old, Porter

He has been working as a porter on Dala jetty for four years and now he is definitely the most experienced and senior one in children group. Every morning, he came to the jetty by renting out a bike from his home which is a nearby slum quarter. Child porter like him are called “Gan Bar”, literally meaning “the porter who work unofficially” because there are adult porters, official laborers. Around 5 or 6 pm, he usually adjourned his earning course.

4.2.2. Mr. Tricky – 14 year old, porter

He managed to be on the jetty in the morning around 5 am or 8 am. He didn't fix when he should reach. It took him more than 30 minutes on foot. He and his father came together and had breakfast on the jetty as soon as they arrived. After that they worked separately at different sides. His father worked at Yangon and he was at Dala jetty. He worked together with other 3 or 4 other porters, some are the same age but some are older than him.

4.2.3. Mr. Sport – 14 year old, peddler (selling eggs)

He has to get up 4 am and be ready on the boat at 5 am and started a day to sell eggs until the eggs were sold out so his working hour is pretty irregular, roughly from 6 to 7 hours. It is a tedious process of selling eggs on the boat every day. Once he has finished all eggs, he has to buy the fresh eggs for the next days and they will be boiled and then cooled and packed. Since he cannot do packing well, his mother and sister assist him.

4.2.4. Mr. Style – 15 year old, peddler (selling traditional medicine)

He is quite different from other vendors since he moved to the city without accompany and earned through various street works for more than 3 years. “*Aung Mingalar*” highway bus station is his sleeping place at night. At the moment, he is vending on the boat. Every day he has to get up around 5:30 in the morning and be on the road by 6 and goes to his supplier to take packs and bottles of herb medicine. As a mobile street vendor, he goes to the places that he has never been to sell.

4.2.5. Mr. Strong – 15 year old, manual labor (carrying rice bags)

He does even remember the things he has done before. He worked at a restaurant as a waiter and he helped his mother selling postcard. Last year, he took up the job for trishaw driving. As he was tired of cycling trishaw, he returned it to the owner then looking for many other jobs and lately he was a hard labor in the construction site. Now he has to get up around 3 am to reach to the jetty where he works as early as possible. Until noon, he carry rice bags from the dock to the container truck at a workshop near Dala jetty.

4.2.6. Ms. Vocal – 12 year old, beggar

She begged in some public areas _ the ferry terminal and city park. She is not carrying any utensil and just imploring people (both local and foreigners) by loitering in front of them. She works every day and needs to spend a lot of time on streets which are cruel and hazardous. She begs not only in the day time but also at night going around and sometimes on the over bridge nearby. In some moments her mother shows up at where she always begs to receive the money she has earned and orders her to beg hard and well.

4.2.7. Ms. Paragon – 12 year old, vendor (selling drinking water)

She always leaves home around 6:30 am and comes to train station but it takes a brief walk since it is not far from his residence. If she gets some money after selling a few bottles, she will have breakfast. Like other vendors, she walks up and down the platform by chanting loud to attract attention and enhance sales. Sometimes

she has to do station hopping when it is not possible that she can keep at the central station and sell only at the platform.

4.2.8. Mr. Charm – 13 year old, vendor (selling ice bars) peddler

His job is quite mobile and needs to get on and off from one train to another and earns on the train. If he just stays at the same place, other vendors will have the edge over him. So he has to find the ways to increase his sale. When he is in good mood, he might go further. He tried to earn through vending of different street food according to time and situation. During summer, he sells yogurt and sometimes when there are many ice bars peddlers, he sells some seasonal fruits which are sliced into pieces and gets earned that way.

4.2.9. Mr. Gypsy – 15 year old, trishaw driver and bus driver

After having his breakfast, he starts his day at 7 am and waiting passengers and sending them to their destination. Around 11:30 he will take a lunch break. If he still want to drive he will return to work after lunch or if he does not want, he will go around with friends or do nothing and then at 5 pm probably he will leave to the bus stop to join as bus assistant but this is his second job. Before that he also earned by doing various jobs, from collecting the vegetables at the station and selling back to rag picking, tea-boy and waiter at the restaurant.

4.2.10. Mr. Smart – 13 year old, vendor (peddling bird house)

He is one of the SCL peddling bird houses going around downtown residential places. Every day he takes 7:00 am circular train from an outskirts of Yangon. Commuting home from other routes like buses is not easy because he cannot carry and transport things. He is not selling at nearby places of his home because people know the wholesalers and they can buy houses for cheaper prices. Therefore he always goes to the places as far as possible and even the places some other vendors cannot go.

4.2.11. Ms. Honey – 12 year old, vendor (selling bird house)

She is peddling bird houses in the street. She comes down accompanied with her cousin brothers. Sometimes she cannot go out selling only because she does not have any money to buy the houses in advance. Previously peddlers like her have "take it and pay later" system from the dealer, but some people are not trustworthy and not paying regularly so the dealers no longer believe them. Thus she also lose the opportunity. On those off-days she has to do a lot of domestic chores that cannot be accomplished by sickly mother.

4.2.12. Mr. Hero – 13 year old, manual labor (carrying stones)

He is a child manual labor, carrying stones in the construction site. He lived with his family in the illegal squatter settlement where almost everybody survives on that particular causal job. However, labor demand depends on the extent of stone purchase which is only high in dry seasons when the construction projects are increased and also the transportation for stones is not as risky as rainy season due to frequent storms in the sea. On top of that, laborers like him are frequently unemployed and employed with very low wages during the time of unemployment crisis while some Chinese employers carry their stones with the machines these days.

4.2.13. Mr. Keen – 13 year old, scavenger

He is a boy earning from collecting waste materials. Normally his working day is not hectic like other SCLs. He can sleep in and head out at 9 am because adult people usually collects things at nights so opportunities are out there for children like him to work in the day time. Every day he goes out more than 2 times and maximum 4 times, but it depends on how much he must have earned. Hoping to get something more to sell, however, he usually goes out again and again. Once he has earned the target he wants, he won't go any more times. At the end of the day, everything he has collected would be sold at a local junk shop.

4.2.14. Mr. Thrilled – 11 year old, teaboy

He has to work seven days a week from 4 am to 7 pm (a regular setup for Myanmar's tea boys). Every day he wakes up at 4 o'clock in the morning and work all

day, with a few breaks around evening but if there are many customers, he has to serve till the shop is closed at 11 pm. He am the only one waiter working in this small teashop but he is multi-tasking as waiter, or cook, or cleaner; from taking orders for the customers, filling the teapot, cleaning the tables, washing the dishes to collecting and disposing the wastes.

4.2.15. Ms. Angel – 15 year old, vendor (collecting and selling waste vegetables)

She has a busy schedule daily. She is woken up at about 4 am by her father and started the day leaving her small hut at a slum area across the Yangon River. She has to scurry to collect early morning wasted vegetables in the whole sale market. Once the collecting is done, she just headed back home to prepare the vegies for sale. She has to clean all the vegies scraps and remove total unsaleable things and sort and grade by category and finally she is getting ready to peddle.

4.3 A day in the life of an SCL

4.3.1 Skill for survival

Work is a gift SCLs can handle. It is concluded that finding of this study demonstrated that survival for daily income needs a certain amount of skill. Different kinds of skills that children possess are also examined but these skills are not always untold by the children but observed, for examples

As a child beggar, she can identify the potential donors and can read the people and also know the importance of playing the role of “poor pitiful me” to provoke client’s emotion to give her money easily.

As a child vendor, they know the art of dealing and negotiating skills, but the mobile child vendors has more challenging skills than child vendors who could be stationary. They know how to take care of themselves and avoid their potential risks, when they cross the road or when they get on train, for example.

As a manual laborer or porter boy, they have a physical strength and work hard even in the event that some adult persons are not able.

As a tea-boy, he can do quicker calculations than others, while even an adult person needs a time to do so.

As a rag picking child, he is making the environment to be free from waste. It is not only a job to fill stomach but also doing good deeds at the same time (collecting wastes is a good thing to act) if they don't steal the things from others though some people think this is not a decent job.

On top of that, street works appear to earn with great competition to access to customer (in the case of vendors and porters) and to search for the dump sites and get their hands on it first (rag pickers). Obviously this often led to conflicts and quarrelling in the context of street and worst of all they are antisocial with other competitors and made group and stayed together with who they know or their colleague and shared the market together but fight for survival with other people. The following 4 case studies will demonstrate this context of competition.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor

"I have to work hard to sell out the frozen bottles before they thaw... Usually I have to compete with others to get the customers....I have some rivals ...so I cannot keep myself here and have to go around on the train..."

2) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

*"Once the boat arrives, I have to find quickly passenger who might take my service, otherwise he will have to wait another boat...so our motto is **"be first, be fast, don't dilly-dally"***

3) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

"...if I am a bit late, the vegies are not there and other people will have collected already..."

4) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

"..See! This place is already searched by anybody so it looks chaotic....no point to go search again....I should have come earlier..."

To overcome day-to-day constraints related to earning, SCLs have to learn to know about the people and understand how to deal with the particular people. It is interesting to note that SCLs generated slangs from their street working culture to

name the people. There are very helpful slang around the environment of street child porters. According to them, some nick names for the different types of potential person who can hire their service as a porter, are given on their own ways. For examples, "Taw Kyaung" means "young single ladies", "Ma Lal U Kyaung" means "people who come from the countryside", "Myo Par" means "stupid urbanites". While they may probably approach to the first two types of person, he definitely avoid some city men because they normally pay less. By distinguishing these names, they take some considerations by themselves to choose the potential ones for their services, and ask for the fees. Mr. Help, 15 year old, porter said

“I have to be tactful to receive more people hired my service by understanding the nature of people...”

4.3.2 Incomes and hours

When it came to income, the amounts are pretty irregular and different from each work's pattern, different condition, time and season. It can roughly say that an SCL can earn from minimum 3000 kyat (nearly 3 dollar) to maximum 6000 (nearly 6 dollar). Most of SCLs have their specific target amount per day although the amount varies a lot and is quite volatile from day to day. The variation is largely thought to be due to several other factors that need to be considered such as their tactics and hard work, enabling conditions like favorable weather, tipping from customers, people's charity, good amount of investment, and pure luck.

Unlike wages-based labor, some SCLs have to make sure to bring back their parents' expected/targeted amounts of money for a day. Children have to hand over all they earned every evening. Parents depend pretty much on their children's income. For some reasons, children have to lead and became breadwinner for the entire family, in those cases family will get into trouble if they don't work. The following 3 case stories describe this scenario.

1) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“Before I left to work, I would ask mother in advance how much tally she wanted. Then I would try to get that amount no matter what and I won't stop carrying till the target met...”

2) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

“Actually I have to buy an ice bar for 30 kyats and I sell back for 100 kyats so I got 70 kyats as a profit...at least I have to finish 60 bars, then I will earn 4000 kyats a day...”

3) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old, beggar

“I have to beg all day to get at least 5000 kyats that my mom is needed....sometimes I am too glad when generous people pay more and some foreigners give me a dollar..”

SLCs also explained the conditions which are either favored or hindered their income level. First of all, weather play a crucial role in their earning life because most of them were weather-dependent for their occupation. Certainly, summer season is more beneficial to them because of job security in such a way of having more options and more opportunities to earn. Some children need sunny days that are suitable for their mobility of street work, particularly for itinerant vendors. Likewise, the hottest time is desirable for the child who sell drinking water to increase consumption of their stuff, whereas the scavenging child is not happy with the sunny days. In fact, rainy season appears to be the preferred times of the year and gives more opportunity to earn better for him. At the same time, some were answering in between yes and no for their desire. Among all cases, the following 4 responses belong to the above contexts.

1) Ms. Honey, 2 year old, vendor selling bird houses

“...the problem is rain....if it rains suddenly, I have to find the nearest teashop not to allow the rain to get wet my stuff so I cannot sell and my earning will be affected....so I prefer sunny days to rainy days...”

2) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, drinking water vendor

“If the weather favors me, I will sell more, especially at the mid-day or at the sunny days because people are thirsty at that time... actually everybody selling bottled drinking water hope for hot sweltering days ...(giggling)”

3) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“Speaking of fine season, raining days are better than hot days...I would get more waste in rainy season than dry seasons....and when it rains, I feel fresh and have fun collecting in the rain.....what’s more, the bottles inside the bushes flow with

rain water and float in the ditches and reach to the bank so I can grab easily and get many things as well.....”

4) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“...I am in between of like and dislike about rain...I don’t like rainy days because we don’t have jobsbut I like rain when I have to work, when I am sickly tired while carrying stone....so there is nothing worse than not raining....at that time I prayed for becoming rain....I always hoped raining...”

Similarly, children also mentioned their important earning time of the day, what they called is “peak time of working” which is related to gaining more profit. For example, a boy vendor said why morning is more important for him to make a good sale.

“I have to hit the road very early to get to my vending spot around 7 am because the chance of getting more customers is in the morning so I even have a good profit before noon...the sale always goes well that time” (Mr. Style, 15 year old, vendor)

Another aspect related to earning well is the total cleverness and hardworking of SLCs. Children have learned how to earn money in their own strategies. Since they got a certain amount of working experiences in the street, they understand their job, how to do, what to do and also what not to do to increase their income. For some more understanding of their earning ways, the following interesting case studies of 3 boys are brought light. The first boy elaborated his ways of asking the clients to pay high prices for his services. The second boy explained his earning ideas upon the extent of work and the goodness of people. The third boy narrated his experience of scavenging to be able to obtain treasured wastes which can be deserved to make more money.

1) Mr. Help, 15 year old, porter

“I rarely declare the fee...I only let the clients decide how much to pay...I will tell them...“a sin pyay tha lo pay” (at your convenience) or “pay chin tha lout pay” (up to you)...”

2) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

“...it differs from passenger to passenger and loads and weight of things...but I ask more money from some well-off customers.....some people

deliberately receive my service because they want to pay money and sometimes I was paid more than it's worth...they also appreciate my hard work as a child..."

3) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

"When I start scavenging, I have no idea how to collect the marketable things like beer bottles... I got all wastes ...Now I know where to go and find large waste items....my earning is increasing from a few penny to a quite regular income after three years of experience....."

The following quotes from two girls are also about pure luck and fear of police that affect their income during working days.

1) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, vendor)

"It occurred to me that nobody will buy a single bird house all day...on some lucky days I can finish all houses and earn a lot....at that day I am over the moon...."

2) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor)

"If I do not encounter with the police while I am collecting vegie, I will get more and benefit more...."

But then again, two cases are exceptional with extreme income. One is the tea-boy, waged laborer, with a fixed amount of monthly salary. Among all other types of street jobs, he was paid least although they received accommodation and meal which are considered by employer as payment for work. In contrast, the manual laborer who carry stones earns most while the other SCLs' incomes were almost equal to the rate of an ordinary non-skilled casual adult worker who might expect to earn from 3000 to 5000 kyats per day. When the researcher asked the teashop owner about the chances of salary increase for teaboy, he said

"The rate of paying salaries to children depends on the previous teashop experiences, performance of children and employer's personal decision...."

Moreover, not only SCLs earned money directly but also they can make the benefit cash or material from being paid in kind. In the case of teaboy, some people tip him and others also gave him clothes and food. Mr. Sport, 14 years old, vendor shared his experiences of persuading the people to buy his stuff.

"At times I convinced customers to make a sale for the eggs, saying that I haven't had meal yet because I cannot earn well today, then they will give me some food or money even if they won't buy the eggs..."

When it came to spending, parents expected to receive the money children earned every day. They could not be possible to save up some little amount to buy for things themselves. Some of them only keep a small portion from their earning to buy foods. When time came, parents/guardians expect to receive the money from the children and ask the children to make sure daily payment with a specific amount of money to hand over. When they want something later they will again ask the money from their guardians. This is the way children spent their income for the entire family, but not totally for themselves.

Similarly, condition of working hours belongs to a day in the life of a SCL. A working day of a SCL is pretty irregular but long, from dawn to dark, approximately from 6 to 12 hour a day, regardless of having busy or less busy schedules and sometimes it is even longer than an adult laborer can do. They are most likely to work overtime or compete each other and try not to take break time or free days because they are obliged to work hard to deal with income shortfall to pay debt or to avoid debt due to income instability of the family. It was clear that the girl who is forced to beg has to earn in the street for long working hours. In the self-employed vending children, they will come early to work and adjourn at the very late time. The worst of all is about the case studies of a tea-boy who did not even get any day-off and even time off, not for a week, but for months, and a SCL who works two jobs at the same day, trishaw driving in morning and bus attendant at night. The followings remarks from 3 case stories will also make the reader understood why SCLs go further, or they work longer.

1) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“...when I cannot find enough well-earned materials, I have to go out 3 or 4 times or keep walking and collecting for 5 or 6 hours per time till getting pricy materials...”

2) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

“...the more stations I can go, the sooner I will finish then I can go back home, sometimes I even do second round to earn more money....and I don't need to be concerned for left over because the owner allows to keep them in their fridge for the next days...”

3) Mr. Sport, 14 year old, vendor

“...I do not like the idea of borrowing money since I have seen my mother get nervous by the time to pay back....if I cannot finish eggs, I will lose profit so I will not have enough money to purchase eggs for the next days, at that time my mom has to borrow the money...that’s why I don’t care I am late, but I do care the leftover of my eggs...”



Figure 4.3 Earning life of child street vendors

4.3.3 Working lifestyle

It was understandable that SCL and their job nature and environment facilitated to create their own ways of earning and culture of street working. The ways of earning of SCLs demonstrated their lifestyles and actions they take. The amount they earned and the circumstances they encountered in the workplace also affected how they behave for a particular action. Unlike other forms of child labor, SCLs enjoy a total or unlimited freedom through earning in the street. Through a key informant discussion and participant observation, there was a few understanding about their lifestyle.

“They talk what they want to talk....

They swear what they wish...

They live active and free style...

That’s why they are happy...

Who on earth will be happier than SCLs...”

It is found that SCLs have no idea and are not able to have a choice on what they like most about street work. The most they care is money though. The chance of hopping from one work to another is quite high for the reason of getting more money and more freedom. The bottom line is that the more money and freedom

they got, the more likely they will take this job. That's why their past experiences are connected to their lifestyles and preferences to continue their current work. For example, self-employed children regarded their work as the ideal job rather than salary based jobs. They did not feel like working for another person and following rules and procedures. On top of everything, their salary is remained unchanged even though they work hard while they can increase income from their self-employed jobs as long as they work hard. One gave a positive comment on his job whereas another SCL made the negative remarks about his previous jobs.

1) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

"I like working for myself because nobody can control me..... nobody forced me to do it.... even my dad cannot tell me anything related to work....I will tell my dad if I am not feeling well then I will take rest, it is totally fine not to work for some days ...however I cannot do that way in other person's job..."

2) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

"I worked three jobs before, just to give them a try with the hope of having regular employment and income....in one shop, one restaurant and one teashop....but I could not work there for long...the first thing is they paid less so I did not think it's worth to keep to support my family....and also I did not like working under the boss who rules what to do and what not to do.....next I had to put aside money to travel to work....worst of all employer didn't provide enough and proper meal ...no meat and fish, only vegetables...so I had to spend extra money for food ...how could I bring enough money back to home at the end of day..."

4.3.4 Leisure activities

It is clear that SCL did not get the adequate amount of free time and much relaxation although they can take some time to enjoy with their friends at their workplace. However, this condition is different from one SCL to another child even if the type of job was alike. The two case studies have a similar context; earning as the first priority, assisting parents as the second thing and playing as the last thing they can do at a total free time.

1) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, hard manual labor

“From very early morning to till noon, I was in the workplace and then I came back but again I helped my mom selling postcards and only in some evening I can hang out with my friends....”

2) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, bird house vendor

“During off-days I have to assist mom running errands and do laundry for the whole family....nobody can do if I do not because my mother will feel cold and pain in her leg when she gets wet....only after I finished, I will play sometimes with my friends...”

However, some children spend their free time with their friend at the workplace, doing things like roaming around, swimming in the river, playing street games, sharing the pleasure of humor, fighting each another in the sense of intimacy and connection but some SCLs do leisure activities at home only when their work is over; such as playing computer games at the nearest internet shops or watching TV at their home or neighbors or relatives' houses or some boys play soccer with their friends.

In connection to leisure occasions, friendship mattered for SCLs. They always well described their time with friend; what they did with their friend, how they spent with her friend, why they got fun when they worked together. Four SCLs shared their best experiences of doing leisure activities while they are earning.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, street vendor

“Instead of keeping at the platform, sometimes I take train journey up and down with my friend and that made us more enjoyable....I feel like earning effortlessly...”

While she is pointing at her best friend....she continued

“...we are very close, we sell together and play and eat together and mostly fight together...hehe...”

2) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“...it is always great if the day goes with my friends...making fun each other take away getting tired before I notice....the more, the merrier actually...”

3) Mr. Help, 15 year old, street vendor

“...we do whatever we likewe fight, we play dices and we swim together”

4) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, boy scavenger

“Many times I go out with my friends to collect things because of not being lonely as I went alone...”



Figure 4.2 Staying in group with other senior and junior porters



Figure 4.3 Going out with friends to collect waste

4.4 Health risks from street work activities

Obviously, there are the significant negative health impacts from the street jobs which involves long working time, oppressive working environment, and high demand of earning outcome. As a consequence, the prompt risks or accidents, and worked-induced sickness are the common physical health risks which are connected to unhealthy lifestyles and risk behaviors while engaging street activities. On top of that, also the emotional and social health risks resulted from anxiety and stress, and/or exploitation, violence and abuse, as well as social relationship would be counted to examine the negative health outcomes from earning a life in the street. The following findings indicate the physical and psychosocial consequences of street earning on health and well-being of the young children.

4.4.1 Work-induced illness

There is no point to deny that all types of street work activities in this research involve a lot of physical labor. From general to specific, the most frequent ailments of SCL are fever, cough and diarrhea which are apparently connected to their earning nature and context. Since these are just only symptoms and also common illness, it is fairly difficult to differentiate whether these problems are attribute by work or not. However, some of the children informed that they got sick because of all working day and weakness.

It is suggested that SCLs generally feel exhausted when they return home from work. The street earning activities children performed are also low-skilled and repetitive. Most of them are vendors but they are so roving and always need to take a distance walk and spend many hours in the street. As a consequence, their legs were always induced by walking pains when the work is over. Body aches especially backaches and growing pains in the leg are the physical suffering of work, resulting from carrying heavy loads over their shoulders and waist.

From laboring outdoor, children are suffered particular health-endangering problems by the exposure to extreme weather. Sunburn, fatigue, lethargy, weakness and headache are the common heat-related illness when children have to work under the intense sunlight. Similarly, they also catch a fever and cold when they earn on a rainy day. These are some brief quotes from 5 case stories. Until some jobs are similar,

the complaints about illness are not alike. Added to that, some of them have to work in more unpleasant conditions than others as they performed heavy labor outdoor. They complained as follows;

1) Mr. Gypsy, 15 year old, trishaw driver

“I feel weak and ill if I work non-stop day and night...”

2) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor

“...my legs are tired and heavy after whole day long walk...”

3) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor

“I always get headache and pains all over the body when I return from work...”

4) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, roving vendor

“Returning home I am almost collapsed from a long walk on the sweltering days...”

5) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“These days my legs are terribly painful...once the stone baskets are on my shoulder, my knees become shaking then I can't barely move my legs....”

4.4.2 Malnutrition

Findings suggest that SCLs do not have nutritious or balanced diets even though SCLs can usually get some amount of food to eat. Evidently, skipping the meal due to the greediness of work is the major cause of poor nutrition among SCLs. In addition, they belong to unhygienic conditions because of their unhealthy lifestyles. If the examples of porters and manual laborers are taken, the results show that they take bath in the river (according to them, it is just swimming and playing with friends in the river). Once they finish swimming, they do not change the clothes and do not stay dry, and end up getting cold and fever that can suppress their appetite.

Another common health risk behavior related to malnutrition is skipping meal or late meal while they are earning since working hard is greatly affected their daily income amount. They eat meal for fullness, not for balanced diet which is far less attainable than in their knowledge and budget. The following sentiments expressed in the quotation represent that foods are not always at the disposal of SCLs as a result their dietary intake is inadequate since this habit is connected with income

level and earning status of a day. Arguably, all of the quotes gave the profound understanding of the nutritional impacts on children from their ways of earning.

1) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, vendor

“I wouldn't have a thought when I will have lunchnormally I skip....enough with breakfast and I will have dinner when I am back....but if I earn well, I will have some snacks...”

2) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

“I do not stop working just only for eating and I get into habit of having late lunch...”

3) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

“The demanding time of the day is around 1 or 2 pm....this is the time buyers or traders coming back after purchasing their wares from market then they might require assistance to carry their stuff to their vehicles so they will employ us for a fee...I have to keep patient waiting them....that's why it is less possible to eat before that time...”

4) Mr. Smart, 14 year old, vendor

“I have to give all the money to my aunty....if I make a good sale, I will buy a meal... or I will only live on snacks on bad earning days....if I had breakfast at home, I will eat nothing at all....I do not want to pay her less at the end of the day....”

5) Mr. Hero, 14 year old, manual labor

“I work at early morning so I cannot eat breakfast but I eat lunch if I finished work...I am used to it though...during breaks I might have some sweets and snacks like biscuits...”

On top of that, malnutrition is a combination of several factors and conditions. As per the researcher's observation, children are working in the street where there are unhygienic conditions such as absence of sanitation facilities and lack of hygienic clothes and no wholesome food and safe water. Since they earn in the street, they only eat street food that are not hygienic enough and they are also not able to drink safe water, which usually causes them abdominal illness. Ms Paragon said that her diarrhea makes her sick because the street shop she eats everyday does not cook well the meal but this is only her choice since the shop is not only cheap and okay but also being near the working platform.

“Sometimes, I got abdominal upset because their foods are not well-cooked and sometimes I ate spoiled fish-sauce before I notice”

4.4.3 Potential accidents and risks

Another observation in the street was the potential accidents which might probably put SCLs at immediate risk. Precisely, quick running over to cross between speeding the cars just to reach to the residential places and get customers is one of the dangers faced by these mobile child vendors every day although actual road traffic accidents were not recounted in the course of research. In the case of vendors at the train stations, walking between platforms and jumping on and off the train could turn out to occur the worst harms in any moment during their working. Similarly, another scenarios of risks and accidents are dangerous to SCLs like Ms. Angel who is highly likely to get ferry accident while commuting for work, Mr. Keen who is at the risk of animal bite while scavenging and Ms. Vocal who has the chance of being a victim of trafficking while begging.

1) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“Raining, on the other hand, is not good because of the risk of snakes and other animals like tiger mosquitos or bees....Umm I have been bitten by dogs for two times and pricked by the iron nail for one time...”

2) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

“While crossing the river, our small craft can turn over at any time because of the strong wind and the big waves”

3) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old, girl child beggar

“I was asked by some people to follow them to take money....”



Figure 4.3 Earning life of a porter **Figure 4.4** - Earning life of a scavenger

4.4.4 Stress and anxiety

It is found that SCLs seem happy and proud of their earning life and try to see positive about their jobs. However, feeling of stress and depression was also found in the SCLs although it was not as visible as physical harms and ill health. Basically, children complained about what made them worried and stressed. It is found that they were concerned about their earning which can be called financial anxiety. It should not come as a surprise that the context and nature of street work caused SCL unsatisfied with their work activities especially when the settings from earning involved the bad experiences in their daily life. Through understanding the earning life of SCLs from the following 5 case studies, the effects of negative emotion outweigh the effects of positive one.

1) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

“I am proud to work because this is the job that brings food to us every day...”

2) Mr. Sport, 13 year old, vendor

“No matter what, I live my life happily....I earn as much as I can ...No worries...when the time came, my eggs will be over....even if I cannot finish, we can make curry for our dinner”

3) Mr. Help, 14 year old, porter

“When I am happy is getting more payment for carrying light stuff....what I am disappointed is getting less payment for carrying heavy stuff....”

4) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, girl vendor

“When I cannot earn, I am really depressed....all day long, high volume of chanting and painful walking, getting tired in the sun but no customer, no selling, no money....at that time, I do not even want to go back home as the debt came to my mind”

5) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, boy porter

“I cannot much patient and also frustrate my work by the time a crowd of people are pushing me and I almost fall over sometimes and people walk past me so I can barely move and wait them for some time...”

Similarly, it was also clear to pinpoint that some children got distress as the emotional risks from their work. The chance and the mount of risks or benefits will be different according to the environment and the people they have to deal, even if they are employed in the similar nature of work. There are two case studies of SCLs who have two contrasting uncomfortable feelings affected by emotional overwhelm from their work. On one hand, they were really sick of their job but on the other hand, they feel terrible to lose earning to support their families. According to *Mr. Thrilled*, he cannot give up his job although he got a bad experience in relationship with his current employers until he has been working for more than two years. But according to *Mr. Hero*, he thought that his job is too much tired in comparing with other street jobs, at the same time he wanted to maintain his job and also at the same time as long as he earned well. They mentioned both desirable and undesirable terms.

1) Mr. Thrilled, 11 year old, teaboy

“I want to be home again...I can work either in my village or previous tea shop....I like my previous boss because he treated me well and was never upset me with me when I did wrong...In fact he granted me the privilege of being the youngest worker... I can even eat what I like....I didn't have such kind of situation here”

“But I cannot run from work as I am dreaded the people and places that I do not know in this big city Yangon....also I have to continue working as long as my parents ask me to do...”

2) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“I will not be alright to live a day without carrying stones and my shoulders get itchy for that day...ha-ha... I got stressed not because I have to work hard, but because I won't have a job for the day....to me, the harder, the better...”

“But I also feel like to ever give up this work when I was deady fatigued and lethargy on some sweltering day”

Another important observation was the fear of SCLs that would be the day they might be arrested by the police, the greatest fear of all time. Children definitely concerned about police custody during their work since they knew how tough it was from their earning experiences. Though every SCL feels anxious about police custody as an everyday problem, the following narrations would be quoted as the more prominent cases.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 years old, vendor

“I hate the police. These day they are very strict, not allowing the vendors to sell on the platform. They often chase us so we have to run ad go hiding them and cover our stuff”

2) Mr. Vocal, 12 years old, beggar

“I will never let myself to be arrested....if the police got me, it must be difficult for my mom to receive me back....if I cannot earn, she will get into trouble....”

Most important of all, SCLs are feeling insecure with the residential condition. Generally, the dwelling situations of SCLs are either rental or homeless, both legal and illegal. Most of the place are slum dwelling, dwelling at the door way, night-stop at the bus terminal, working class housing or illegal makeshift tent. In this situation, children are old enough to worry about their insecure living; either a notice that will be given by the authority to move from the place or inability to pay for a house rental or the ultimate risk of being onto the streets and becoming homelessness. These scenarios match with the living conditions of Ms. Vocal, Ms. Angel, Mr. Style and Mr. Hero.

1) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old, beggar

“It's terrible when it rains at night, we get wet and can't sleep but we don't have anywhere to move out...”

2) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, girl vendor

“The authority told us that we had to move out the place...I have no idea where we can live and we cannot even rent a place...”

3) Mr. Style, 15 year old, vendor

“...I have some sleepless nights since I was worried as if the police would arrest us while I am sleeping... then we have to find another place to live”

4) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“My mother has to pay monthly housing rental fee which is fairly costly and the owner never understood our struggles and want to receive payment at the last day of every month...and she would never get delayed to collect rental fee if we cannot pay at the right moment, we have to move away from the place immediately...”

4.4.5 Exploitation, violence and abuse

SCLs are prone to encountering with some abusers while they are working in the street. Even though some are working together with their parents or acquaintances who can take care of them, all the arrays of street activities occurred to SCLs to be exploited by the people and their environment. Some of the forms are negligible but some are intolerable even if SCLs themselves did not see them as oppressive circumstances.

There are a few examples to understand those exploited cases. Some adult vendors attempt to keep the things the children sell. *Mr. Sport* mentioned that his eggs were stolen before he knew. *Mr. Keen* said that some people bully him in such way of name calling when he approaches to their houses and collects a bit of useful material near their houses. Not surprisingly, he is verbally maltreated since most communities in Myanmar suspect the children who earn through rag picking as the thieves when they become visible around their house to collect the recycled waste materials. What people called him in local way was “kout-to” which literally mean “picking thief”.

“In the street some people shout at us "thieves are coming here.....hey you stay away from our houses” (Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger)

Another similar story told by scavenging child was the chance of getting assault by people of grown-up or late adolescent scavengers. Therefore, it was important to understand that street activities were closely related to age position.

However, it is not always the case when the duration of engaging in street work and the wide ranges of street working experiences also became another consideration. For example, not everyone, but three SCLs; 2 porters and one vendor quote their experiences of victimization.

1) Mr. Help, 15 years old porter

“I was not intimidated by adult porters but my friend often bullied me...this guy is expert and he worked 3 or 4 jobs...so I have learned from him though he is younger than me...”

2) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

“We are bullied by seniors....we again bully our juniors...we bully each other within our group, sometimes I was victims but at another time I was perpetrator”

3) Mr. Smart, 13 year old, street mobile vendor

“When I go with some other guys who are older than me...because they know the roads...I was always intimidated to share some profits with them.....they think that they give me a chance to access to the customers so I can make more salesin fact it is bullying...”

What was worst are the case stories of another two SCLs; teaboy and hard manual laborer. It was evident that tea-boy has physically abused by the teashop owner and also some abusive customers while other tea customers treat well and give him small tips that he can buy some food while stuff like clothes are also offered by some neighbors. Though the two circumstances happened at the same time in the same job, he no longer want to take the bad with the good. The information from child manual labor is also equally important but more connected to labor exploitation. Apparently, manual causal laborers always need a job to survive so some employers keep taking advantages on him. Like other manual labors, he has to work under the supervision of team managers. In this situation, some managers tried to manipulate the price when people demand for work. Labor exploitation was obviously there. The following quotations are told with regrets by the teaboy and the manual labor.

1) Mr. Thrilled, 11 year old, teaboy

“There is no day I am not beaten by my boss if I did something wrong.... some customers badly shout at me and lay the arm on my head if they are not satisfied with the service I give them.....sometimes people leave tips for me so I can buy snacks and some give me clothes....actually the bad outweighs the good to work here”

2) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“It rarely occurred to us that team supervisor paid well...the prices per basket are always changing according to the number of laborers...especially the rate was decreased than normal when more people come because of favorable conditions, for example, if they accept our own basket which is a bit smaller than their order-made....for them no need to worry for labor to finish their work on time.....but I have to take the job for money... I cannot be chooser”

In the situation of begging in the street, the girl in the study has also been treated badly by the authority. During in-depth interview, she said desperately

“If I keep staying at boat ticket station and ask money from the passengers, the manager shouted at me very badly and attempted to put me away from the place so I try not to see the manager...because....I am really afraid of him...” (Ms. Vocal, 12 year, child beggar)

Apart from being abuse in the workplace, girls are more likely to get domestic abuse than boys. The two girl SCLs have the experiences of some domestic abuse by parents. Even though both of them have similar dissatisfaction originated from their psychological and physical harm caused by scolding and physical abuse at home, begging girl faced more suffering because she is coerced to earn enough. They said

1) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

“My father beats me very hard when he gets drunk...I do not love him like before...”

2) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old, child beggar

“When I was not in the mood to beg, my mom often told like "don't you go begging till now?" If I earn less, she always scolded me saying that "you do not work hard since you just play around, do you?" I am terrified of my mother's disappointment to me”



Figure 4.5 Earning life of child manual labor and child beggar

4.4.6 Social relationship

Through the nature of street based activities, what was really good was the considerable social environment and group atmosphere of work. For examples some of them are not working isolated and at least they work along with their friends or other acquaintances and also supervised by their parents and relatives. Environment that they were in profoundly influences SCLs in either good or bad ways. However, they know both their favorable and unfavorable situations by experiences and how to deal with them. From the perspectives of SCLs, some has good relationship with people or try to get on well with the people and even can deal with, exploitative conditions while others do not trust on the people through their working relationship. For example, Mr. Charm looks charming and got affection from the passengers and train staff and even police. He said

“I know most of the staff on the train and they do love me and I also help them with what they ask me to do, therefore unlike other vendors, even police do not take the money from me for vending fee on train....I also have regular customers and they buy only from me and wait until they saw me...working on train is not only vending skills but also people skills...”

In fact there are both good and bad people and different social dealings throughout their earning course. The following two cases supported the finding that how the earning life of SCLs were shaped by their social relationship.

1) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor

“I was employed in the current job with the help of my brother’s friend. He is really like my brother and very nice to me and care for me....we always go together

and come back together....even I finished first, I wait him until he finished his work....at work, he always speaks out for me....”

2) Mr. Style, 15 year old, vendor

“I have friends and people to hang out and some are very supportive but some are cheated on me and taught me bad habits like drinking and playing casino...”

4.4.7 Health risk behaviors

As I have argued elsewhere, SCLs can do the same job like adult workers and their earning style is always in the context of competition and expectation, they always end up getting harms to them. They behaved it because they did not realize what impacts would be there on return. At the end, risk behaviors are apparently there; both tangible behaviors of drinking alcohol and using glue which is the cheap drug for SCLs and intangible behaviors like skipping meal or delaying meal time which are affected by the circumstances of street works.

Through reviewing the findings, some risky behaviors can be identified as follows;

- Working at night
- Sleeping outside where it is not safe
- Going to the dangerous environment

For examples, the trishaw driver spends in the street working extra time at night and sleeps on the trishaw while the scavenger went to the risky places where he can collect wastes exposing dangerous environment whereas the roving vendor goes further and walks a long distance and gets home late or sleep outside from time to time.

1) Mr. Gypsy, 15 year old, trishaw driver

“I did not return home some nights and worked till late night and sleep on the trishaw by making myself ease on it lighting a mosquito coil on the ground...”

2) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“....normally I find rags in the street...but if I do not get enough things till I am taking a long time, I will go into the bushes at the back of houses and dump sites and drains where I can find rags quickly but not safe for me to do so....”

3) Mr. Smart, 14 year old, roving vendor

“I am always getting late and sometimes I can’t even catch up the last train so I have to sleep at the stations....it has happened to me every now and then...”

Another observation was that some SCLs do not wear any protection when they work in the street. Outside they are exposed to intense direct sunlight, but no hat in the head and no flip-flop in the feet according to their preference. It was also found that the habit of bare footing caused sores and ulcers on their legs. Especially vendors and scavengers have such kind of experiences.

1) Mr. Smart, 13 year old, scavenger

“I am not used to wearing the hat....I have one but I don’t like to wear it...”

2) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

“I often got foot irritation and pain since I walk and work in the rain with no shoes...”

3) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“I never wear flip-flop. When I go and collect in the ditch, flip-flop always stuck in the mud...but I’ve got iron-nail pricking for 2 or 3 times but it usually goes away after a few days”

Last but never least, the findings also indicated that not everyone but two boy SCLs got the habit of drinking, smoking and drug use.

1) Mr. Gypsy, 15 year old, trishaw driver

“I sniffed glue...feel like I am addicted to it...but smoking is not my kind, sometimes I join brothers from work for drink”

2) Mr. Strong, 14 year old, manual labor

“I didn’t smoke and didn’t use any drug....but I usually drank alcohol with my friends”

4.5 Health care and treatment

I would argue that SCLs do not see their work as a challenging thing or/and a demanding part of their life even if they were engaged in unprotected working condition and unfavorable environment every day. The data said that SCLs got not

only physical harms but also psychosocial pressure and stress. At the end of the day, they always give comments that health problems are not the priority in their earning life. It can be generally concluded that health care and treatment is not as important as earning of a day. Deciding whether to treat or to earn depends on the four main components; 1) health perception and awareness, 2) decision of taking medical treatment, 3) access to health care and 4) self-care and family support.

4.5.1 Health perception and awareness

The data indicated that SCL embrace the feeling of happiness on their working life and they also have strong positive views on health when they are earning on the street. They believe that healthy living is having happy and productive working life. Some of them also have the opinion that street works help them healthy because the activities involve a lot of walking which is just like doing daily physical exercise. At the same time, other SCLs believe that their health would be poorly affected by their work. The following narratives made these findings realized.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor

“If I get happiness, I will be healthy....I would feel not well and not happy if I cannot come to the station for a day”

2) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

“I think I am fit...I walk in search of passengers...I carry things....look like I am doing exercises...even my muscles have become stout...Look! How strong I am now”

3) Mr. Keen, 14 year old, scavenger

“I think I am not healthy...I am going outside all day long, collecting rags which is very dirty...I will get the diseases because I am not eating good food, sometimes I am skipping meal...sun always makes me headache and fever”

Primarily, some SCLs have some awareness about health and related risks of their street works but seem limited in awareness of the short and long term consequences of their health. Even if they know, they do not pretty much care for themselves because they want to maximize their earning in every possible ways while some SCLs paid attention to health to keep them fit. Understanding the following four

case studies, it was a phenomenon, both positive and negative of health perception and awareness by SCLs' own words.

1) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, vendor

"I cannot go out every day and have to take rest for some days especially when I am not well and get painful leg which is caused by walking long hours..."

2) Ms. Angel, 12 year old, vendor

"I need to take some days off after working at raining days ...if I worked continuously I would get ill and could not work later....if could not earn, this will turn out to be more daunting and stressed about money...."

3) Mr. Style, 15 year old, vendor

"I do not care health and even I am not afraid of death....all I care is to be able to earn a great deal of money..."

4) Mr. Gypsy, 15 year old, trishaw driver

"I know I have got bad health habits...but you know everybody will get sick whether they care about their health or not....some people get more frequent ill even if they are caring their health a lot..."

4.5.2 Decision of taking medical treatment

Speaking of decision making for medical treatment, majority of children follow what their parents want them to do. In most cases, they told their parents or guardians how they feel when they do not feel alright in their workplace. However, some SCLs decide by themselves and also prefer to manage by themselves, not just because they do not want to let their parents know but they do not want them to be worried about them.

1) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

"My dad decided for everything....when I catch a fever, I actually do not want to visit the clinic but he will take me to see with the doctor..."

2) Mr. Help, 15 year old, porter

"...I decide myself...but if my mother knows that I am not well, she will tell me to visit the clinic....in fact I will be alright on the next days after taking some drugs from the chemist ...I will go to work as usual ...then I will even forget my sickness after some time..."

In the case of a boy street vendor who lived individually, he had a different story. He said as follow

“Since I live alone in Yangon, I will make the decision for myself...who cares for me?” (Mr. Style, 15 year old, vendor)

4.5.3 Access to health care

When children feel ill, they can access to health care which is consulted by general practitioners who they can find out anywhere. There is health care by private doctor or medical professions but there has not been provided freely by the government. Added to that, some cost-sharing public hospital or health center is located in inner city where they can find difficult to access. In this situation, transportation cost after the opportunity cost of regular earning is considered as another barrier of accessing to the health care.

Moreover, children asserted that they were fit in their working life and did not need to take any special care and just get treated over the counter mostly and their illness cannot also sustain in their body. The thing is that some of them have never visited any doctor or health center in their life simply because they do not need that. Also the funny thing is that they are reluctant to see the doctor because they are afraid of needle injection. In the other cases they like to have injections but they do not choose because it is expensive.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor

“If I feel sick, germs cannot stay longer in my body...”

2) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor

“I cannot think of the time that I needed to visit the clinic...so far I haven't got any serious disease...”

Even if they need to get treated, the first attempt to treat the illness is self-medication by all participants' response. Some children go to the chemist shop and ask medicine by telling their symptoms but some children even know the drugs they have to take for illness. The findings from the interview indicate that children are considered clinics or health centers as the places they do not belong to.

1) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, vendor

“We have lots of clinics and drug stores near here....we can afford for counter drugs... but visiting physician is costly....money matters....2000 or 3000 kyats for consultation fees could make enough meal for the entire family...”

2) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

“We have local doctor near the house...and also 2 or 3 grocery stores where I can buy medicines.....which one I choose if I get ill? Certainly I will only choose the grocery store which I have to spend almost nothing...”

In addition, most of the children took pills (Decogen – a sort of brand name which is popular and commonly used among most people) when they get sick.

1) Mr. Help, 15 year old, porter

“I took Decogen at the last time I felt ill...”

2) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor

“I buy the drugs from store....you know "Decogen" that will make me feel better shortly...”

4.5.4 Self-care and family support

As prior mentioned, the results from this study suggested that most of the children somehow neglected their health even by themselves since their main focus is to earn money to contribute family income. In some cases, even their parents were not informed about the status of health problems for either the great concern of money factor or feeling of less seriousness on illness. Speaking of the parental care, just being parent naturally seemed enough to care their children. However, difficulties encountered in the workplace of SCLs and SCL's feeling and even coping with risks and health problems were no or less paid attention by the parents. They did not notice to what extent children are affected from work. What they concerned is to get the money from children at the end of the day.

“Sometimes, my parents did not even know and ask where I am working...our family notion is "Take care of yourself, if you get something bad, you have to manage your own”...” (Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor)

It seemed inevitable that some SCLs always have the tendencies to run away from home when they live within unhappy family environment such as parental

fight and domestic conflicts. Some of them felt hopeless as they did not get much attention and care from their parents although they have to work and financially support for family.

I have some days that I go back home late and sometimes do not even go back at all, especially when my father gets drunk and makes argument with my mother....Recently I was desperate to run away from home and stayed at my friend's house (Mr. Keen, 14 year old, scavenger)

Naturally, SCL were getting resilient in unprotected environment and learned how to keep secure themselves. In other words, SCLs are capable of overcoming their difficult circumstances and find ways out to make them safe in earning life. For example, a girl street vendor at train station explained her experiences on dealing with menaces of open street work, sobering to realize that the train could not stop immediately unlike cars so she can probably fall off from the train anytime. The following quotes are the experiences of 4 SCLs.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old vendor

"Having risks depends on how I get on and off the train...I keep myself safe so I don't hop onto Japan train because the steps of carriage are steep and the doors are closed automatically..."

2) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old beggar

"Ohh I am pretty strong and healthy and I do not need even to take the medicine....need no special treatment and recover slowly by going around and playing..."

3) Mr. Charm, 13 year boy vendor

"...when I feel like I am not well in an evening after work, I take medicine right away as I am back home and go to sleep early and then I will feel good in the next morning..."

4) (Ms. Honey, 12 year old, vendor)

"I will not go out for selling at the next days and have to take rest..."

4.6 What causes SCLs?

Child labor is a multifaceted phenomenon and there are some different reasons of becoming SCLs from becoming street children throughout the process of data collection and analysis. The primary reasons why children came to the street for earning activities were explored by factors at the household level through issues related to economic situation of the family, issues related to the parents and issues related to the children and cultural factors are explored. In the next chapter, however, the external factors linked to the family and cultural factors will be explained by social structure of poverty, economic and political processes of family collapse from the perspective of Critical Medical Anthropology.

4.6.1 Issues related to economic situation of the family

The frequent comments of SCLs related to their earning are all related to experiencing economic difficulty of their family such as coping with low income level and suffering from debt. Poverty was obviously there, with the families in hand-to-mouth situation to survive on the basic needs. All case studies belong to this scenario. The following four quotes from three boys and two girls pointed out that an existence SCL came into play in the situation like deprived financial status of family.

1) Mr. Help, 15 year old, porter

“Only my father’s income was not enough for the whole family”

2) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“My mom worked here with the lowest income...”

3) Mr. Thrilled, 11 year old, teaboy

“We had a financial hard time...we had times starving in some days...”

4) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor

“Mostly our finance is such a mess...what we earned is what we spent...”

5) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

“The money is coming and going and never stay with us...”

The other 3 responses also showed that children start to work in the street to sort out family’s economic hardship once they realized inadequate income of the household and the need of financial contribution.

6) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

“... ‘a day without my income’ was difficult to manage things for my parent”

7) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

“...This is the job that I can bring the food for us every day...”

8) Mr. Sport, 14 year old, vendor

“I earned for my mother since my father pay very little to her...”

Similarly, the child choose to beg because the mother let her out to beg simply because it is an easy option to earn a living. That’s why, it would not be possible for her not to beg because the money she took home made a bit difference in particular to their daily meals.

“When I cannot give money for her food during her childhood...yes maybe in her age of 6 or 7 year old...since that time she just got into habit of asking money from acquaintances or the people she knows and gradually she dared to ask money from more and more people and until now she earned that way.....ohh if she is not going to beg, who will give the money for us....I am breastfeeding and we cannot stay hungry...so we have no choice..” (Mother of a girl child beggar)

As both cause and effect of poverty, children of these families have to take a part in a main role to pay for the debt, since debt makes worse as children are born to poor families with the impact of repaying debts on household incomes. It is found that most of families of SCL have regular repayment for debt and children must work because their income was indispensable especially to pay for the family debts. The circumstances of family’s debts are not escapable and this was usually happened not only as parents have no financial literacy or poor financial management but also due to other factors like financial needs for daily expenditures.

In the case of a girl street vendor, she narrated that her mother was cheated for money. She helped one of her acquaintances to get a loan in which her recommendation and personal responsibility is needed for the whole loan application process. It was cruel since the borrower ran away and did not repay the money. At the end, her mother has to pay back the money on behalf of borrower and left her family in debts since the amount of repayment including the interest was pretty high. Finally they end up borrowing money from one lender to another. The cycle seemed endless

taking from one and giving to another. In this way they were quite difficult to get rid of their debts life and made them poorer and keep her earning in the street.

“My mother was manipulated by one of her acquaintances....since that time, we were in a very rough financial position...we are still paying back those debts...at times I even have no money to refill the stock of bird cages” (Ms. Honey, 13 year old, street vendor)

Based on another 2 case studies, it was a brutal truth that children have to live in such a way of both poverty and spiraling debt which was the best and immediate solution to the problems of income shortfall due to job insecurity, incurring debt, accommodation stability, habit of gambling, complicated financial affair outside the family and subsequent investment after confiscation of goods by police.

1) (Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor)

“When we are in need of money, we have to borrow...how can we survive without debt?...usually when the police keep bottles, we lost profit so we get the loan to replace our goods for the next day...that’s why we stick to water bottle which is small cost....the more invest, the greater risk to lose money”

2) Mr. Hero, 15 year old, manual labor

“It is not possible that I do not have to work since we have debts to pay when we spent while both of my father and I were out of occupation...”

Last but never least, living in poverty is unquestionably the significant barrier for pursuing education. In the worst cases, impoverished families could not even afford to send their children out to school at school-age and considered that education is costly. Schooling needs to be spent a certain amount of money even though education is nominally at no cost for school gates. Therefore, shortage of family finances has a great impact on the satisfaction of children’ school experiences. To illustrate, children from the poor family feel not good to attend school together with other peers who have no problems with pocket money, uniform, stationaries, lunch box, and financial contribution for in-class activities. Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor explained his school experience and how it affects to quit school.

“I could not take lunchbox to school because my mom did not cook....my parents also cannot give me money to buy food....later I was sick of going to school as

I have no meal at lunch time then I started to play truant...then I totally quit the school”

On top of that, extra tuition fees was a terrible headache for parents with low income while basic school needs have been questioned for poor households. Since they did not receive a proper care and support from their parents, their interest on study was fading fast; they stay away from class after they lose motivation to study and subsequently they decrease their school performance. Under those circumstances, the poor children end up to leave school earlier because of the economic failure to fulfil children's needs. Finally children find a way out to involve in money-earning activities to supplement family needs because they have nothing to do and study but to earn. It can be suggested that cost of education contributes to children taking up employment earlier. Obviously minimum school-leaving age of SCL in this study was 8 year old.

4.6.2 Issues related to the parents

Apart from family economic issues, other parental factors act as drags on causing child laborers. Speaking about parental causes, the research looked at parental education and employment, attitude and preference to study or to earn and other family problems such as parental sickness.

First of all, parents' level of education are regarded as illiterate, learned (non-formal – monastery education), incomplete primary level, complete primary level and above. Particularly, illiterate parents are less likely to encourage education which they lost or never get it when they were in their children's age. Similarly, parents graduated from monastery education or merely able to read and write do not support their children's education than parents studied through formal education although they did not even complete for the primary level.

Next, parental attitude and decision play an important role in contributing child labors. From the interview with parents of SCL, some declared positive attitude of schooling and negative attitude of working. In reality, parents appear selfish and they are less concerned about their child's study and show approval and preferences to work. However, it was unexpectedly found that not all the parents were discouraged schooling and encouraged working. A few of them have the respect/appreciation for

schooling and a great concern to provide their children a good education for a better life. It can be argued that lack of schooling is induced by negative parental attitude and education. The two street vendors shared their experiences which are different stories; one is supported by parents to enjoy schooling while the other one is neglected by parents to end up working.

1) Mr. Sport, 14 year old, street vendor

“Actually my mother insisted me on going to school and gave more pocket money and my dad send me to school and picked me up when it was over every day...”

2) Mr. Style, 15 year old, street vendor

“My father was only busy with his work and his gambling and never asked about my school performance...my mom needed the money...so I was employed at a paddy field...”

Moreover, the results showed that lack of employment and low or unskilled jobs of parents are loosely related with the cause of child labor. 9 out of 13 mothers of SCLs are housewives and do household chores at home and one of SCL's mother passed away when he was very young. The rest made a living through vending, begging, odd job work, and municipal staff. Except one father who is suffering from a chronic disease and two unemployed father, one imprisoned stepfather, most of the father had jobs but unskilled work such as vending, casual labor, fisherman, trishaw driver and plum tree climber. As a result, children start working outside the house and earn money for the household when parents as unskilled laborers earn less income which is not enough for the entire family.

On top of that, every SCLs' family has the parental issues related to single parenting, parental illness or disability, fathers' drinking which were the huge hurdles to survive them in poverty-stricken circumstances. One or both sick parents affected children to take more financial responsibilities and/or replace the financial role of sick parent not to get their family into trouble.

1) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, street vendor

“My parents have chronic diseases, mother with diabetes and father with leg pain”

2) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, street vendor

“My mother became only a breadwinner since my dad was getting stroke...now when she cannot work because of her joint pain, we replaced her position”

Worst of all situations, parents did waste money on ‘booze and fags’ like drinking and gambling behavior and it push children to work in the street. There was no comparable for both drinking and gambling problems of father. Three of SCLs’ fathers involved in gambling acts such as playing cards, two digit lottery and casino game and the other two fathers had a habit of heavy drinking. To be precise, such addicted behaviors and neglectful acts of household head was not a person’s deal but a dreadful family collapse in term of losing money, reducing family income, parental fights or making trouble for the family, ignoring children. Ultimately, parental factors were a big push for becoming a child laborer as a main bread winner.

1) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“My father drink anytime, either day or night...he is quite addicted to alcohol....until he is not feeling well, he won’t stop drinking.....he always finds me to collect the money...”

2) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, street vendor

“I am fed up with my father....he is drinking all the time...sleeping, sitting in front of TV and doing nothing....never thinks of money struggles.... such an alcoholic idiot...”

3) Mr. Style, 15 year old, street vendor

“We used to have the financial well-being...but my father spent on gambling that made our family lost everything and stayed in debt...”

4) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor

“My dad’s is quite addicted to gambling of different kinds, from local games like playing dice with other trishaw drivers to amusement centers...sometimes he picked a quarrel with other players...neither he supported financially nor worried for the family... he only made troubles.... father is not good...only mother is good...”

4.6.3 Issues related to the children

Two issues related to children; poor performance of schooling and motivation for earning are suggested. First of all, the data showed that SCLs used to have the bad experience in studying such as difficulty in understanding lessons and negative reaction or lack of attention of teachers which made them to think school boring and felt like they did not belong to the class. This was definitely the fact that some SCLs quitted school after failing several attempts of exams. Added to that, lack of interest, boredom, little ambition on schooling are the main factors to discontinue schooling for SCL. According to *Ms. Honey's* narration, it is quite clear to understand this context.

“I wonder why teachers want to teach better students....they've already performed well in class and earned good scores in exam....I am fed up with the neglect of the teachers...”

The solid finding from the majority of SCL is that they were not restricted to study solely for the reason of working. To put it another way, SCL did not abandon schooling with the intention to work, but other reasons like inspiration to make money, disapproval for studying. First they just quitted school mostly because they cannot perform well at school or they were not enrolled school at all. The following 3 case studies seem reasonable to assume that work was just followed by lack of enrollment or discontinuation in school.

1) Mr. Gypsy, 15 year old, trishaw driver

“I cannot concentrate on my study but can earn money...now I am a proud drop-out”

2) Mr. Syle, 15 year old, vendor

“I don't think our village school is good ...I feel bored at school ...I think city is better than village to earn money and acquire knowledge...”

3) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

“I also used to join to free school but lately I left because I was not uncomfortable to study together with the younger children in the same class...even the oldest one's age is 4 or 5 years younger than mine....I only should earn money”

4) Mr. Sport, 14 year old, vendor

“I feel no regret for quitting school because I prefer working over school where it is compulsory to study whole day with timetables. In contrast, work makes me get freedom...”

Similarly, a key informant claimed the collective reasons which are quite consistent with the respondents’ answers to lack of schooling. She said that

“Not all SCLs are discouraged school by their parents but they are not interested enough in study, as a result they do not want to work hard in school then stop schooling”

Lastly, childhood illness was a new interesting fact that children were supposed to end schooling and work for the family after some time since there was an age gap to return to school. Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor said

“While I was at KG, I was got frequently ill and at that time my mother was a labor in the city center....so whenever I feel ill she could not come back to see...there was too much absence from classes...finally my mom withdrew me from school”

It would be assumed that children are asked by their parents to work, however, some parents did not even notice their child is working. Once their child brings every little penny to home, they know but it is no wonder that they do not mind the children since they get extra income. Therefore, there is no doubt that children choose to work with some hidden motivations like the rise of family income, paying for family debts, avoiding the cost of schooling although the decision to work comes from their parents formally. In fact, children feel a sense of gratitude towards their parents even at a very young age and see themselves as a responsible person so they believe that their working is the only way out for another income source to help with family poverty. That’s why, it should be acknowledged that children have passion or desire to earn money even without any request or any force.

To put it in in the children’s perspective, SCLs have a strong sense of earning regardless of what they do in the street because they understand the situation of parents’ financial difficulty and also burden for cost of schooling. More specifically, they naturally want to work and have good heart to help families and also got motivation to do better in the future. They rarely consider taking up the

employment as a bad thing. To increase family economic status or to decrease family debt, the interviewed children stated that working is indispensable and perceived that their earning role is important even if they disapprove of their job.

Economic activities on the street consisted of a crucial livelihood opportunity for the minor street workers of this study. That's why they want to keep the current job but simultaneously, they also have an intention to get some vocational job or find a work that is more rewarding and beneficial as a learning to earn in a good amount of income, ultimately for the betterment of their life. Taking into account of the diversity in children's purposes and insights which were positive about their work, it is generally concluded with the six main motivation themes that emerged from the in-depth interview. The following motivation reasons describe to realize why they are engaged at work to earn money.

Motivations for survival and basic needs

1) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old, beggar

"If I don't want to do this, what else can I do? I cannot read, I do not know calculation, but I know how to beg...I realized our situation...no begging, no food...so I do not feel embarrassed to beg..."

Motivations for sense of family responsibility

1) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

"I feel like being responsible for mother, brother and sister and I cannot want to see my mother crying in front of me...so I have left home and find any possible job and get some money back to home at the end of day..."

2) Ms. Honey, 12 year old, vendor

"Now I do not really want to see fall all the heavy responsibilities only on my sister's shoulder because I know how hard she has to work every day..."

3) Ms. Angel, 15 year old, vendor

"I have great sympathy for my parents because they are disabled so I want to take care of them..."

4) Mr. Keen, 13 year old, scavenger

"There is no point to keep myself in school while my elder brothers have been working for the family...I think children has to work when the parents cannot work..."

5) Ms. Paragon, 12 year old, vendor

“My mother earned when she was able...now is my turn

Motivations for taking care of younger siblings

1) Mr. Help, 15 year old, porter

“Since my sister got married and my two eldest brothers lived with my grandmother and studying, I became the eldest to look after my brother and sister...I love them and want to be able to fulfil with whatever they need...I did not worry that I stopped studying but I worry for them...they should go to school and get an education..”

2) Mr. Smart, 13 year old, vendor

“I have to be able to stand on my feet since I do not have any parents but still have younger sister. She will need my support later...”

Motivations for the skills for future working life lives

1) Mr. Tricky, 14 year old, porter

“I am much physically stronger like a man and more resilient than I was before and have learnt to carry loads of bags to the bus station and arrange them for the passengers, knew more people, also became good at negotiating...I am now confident that I can stand on my own feet...when I grow up, I want to be a supervisor of all porters or a carpenter..”

2) Mr. Charm, 13 year old, vendor

“What if my dad die suddenly? I have already learned the skills to earn money. Now I am learning by working...”

Motivations for sibling rivalry

1) Mr. Style, 15 year old, vendor

“When my brothers worked in the city, they got more money than they earned in our village. So I also want to show them I can earn as much as they do so I told my mother and left home to earn in the city...I can do anything if I get the money...”

2) Mr. Gypsy, 15 year old, trishaw driver

“When I saw my brother earn money and buy things with his own money, I also want to do like this and want to earn more than my brother....I thought money is more important than learning...”

Motivations for self-worth

1) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, manual labor

“I always said to some of my friend like “we need to have a job so we can be proud of ourselves....if I could get any job I would work....making my parents stop judging me and looking down on me is not worth, but making them proud of me...”

4.6.4 Cultural factors

Like other issues, cultural factor is also one of the main cause increasing the prevalence of SCLs. In the present culture of Myanmar, children working is a skill to acquire to prepare for the future while children can learn from the parents during their childhood. This is claimed by not only parents and children but also by the employer who is interviewed in this study. One father mentioned that early working experience will make the child to remember childhood struggles and sensible.

“He will value and spend money wisely when he grows up and does well....that is why one of the best ways for children to learn money management is to ask them to earn and be responsible for their own money....” (Mr. Charm’s father)

Two mother commented about the necessity of work and see positive on their children’s working.

“There is nothing wrong with working by children if they are able to earn...my parents and I worked in the past....now is my daughter’s turn...” (Ms. Paragon’s mother)

“When I was young, I had to leave school and work because of family’s poverty...now my children do the same like I was in their age...I want them to grow self-esteem from vending which I believe as a decent work” (Ms. Honey’s mother)

At the current age, street based informal works are not only preferences but also common practices for the poor children and their family to make money in more accessible way. One mother of non-SCL informed that most of the children in the vicinity of her home are supposed to work in the street since their families are quite poor to fend for them.

“Lately selling bird houses became popular for the children because children are able to earn more than adults do.....one thing is that children can

negotiate with the customers to have a good price....some people try to help children through buying things from them... ”

Ms. Paragon, 12 years old, vendor claims that an existence of street vending is a perfect suit for them to earn money within their financial accessibility.

“Street vending is good for me...here is train station, people are commuting and I am vending which is my opportunity to gain money with little financial capital”

An adult porter also share the interesting information of how and why children come and work as a child porter in the jetty.

“Mostly they come along with their working parents because they are no longer attending school....as you see, their parents are porters and vendors and some beggars...when children are at the jetty, they just played with some other boys....day by day when they saw other carrying things and get the money, they also want to do so.....but for some children they assist their parents vending so they also became vendors...they sell eggs or fruits or drinking water or some snacks...it is how children turn out to be street laborers....”

Interview with another 3 SCLs in similar setups also explained their experiences which seem related to economic and socio cultural forces that pull them to work in the street.

1) Mr. Strong, 15 year old, street worker

“Right after dropping school, my mother asked me to accompany her to sell postcard. First I didn't do anything and just sat somewhere near her working and observe how she was selling but later I knew how to sell and worked together with mother....”

2) Ms. Vocal, 12 year old, beggar

“Whenever my mother begged out, she took me with her....since that time I just followed what she did....”

3) Mr. Hero, 13 year old, manual labor

“One day the women next door suggested my mother to let me go together with her and collect garbage....at the end of the day she paid a few pennies....since then I earn money....”

In the case of teaboy, employers really do the maximization of profit from minimization of wages by employing child labor although they convince that they try to help children and their family from out of poverty. The owner saw this situation as tolerable by saying:

“We find it difficult to deploy adult workers with the amount we can pay and only children can be employed easily....I think children working is normal....I also worked as a waiter in his age, now I have my own teashop....” (A male owner of the teasho)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the discussion centers on findings, theoretical implication of critical medical anthropology, followed by methodological discussions, and then the conclusion focuses on the recommendation for policy development, and further research.

This research was conducted in different areas of Yangon city, both downtown and suburb area which were deemed prevalent to encounter SCLs. From July to November 2016, I have interviewed 15 children who earn life in the streets. The issue of SCLs to be analyzed through the perspective of critical medical anthropology would be focused on broader connection of social, political, cultural and economic factors that were affecting the earning lives of SCLs. Finally this study brought to light who SCLs were and why they were engaged in street works and how they earned in the streets and also revealed their experiences that were represented by health and risks they faced and how they dealt with those problems.

5.1 Why children become SCLs

Child labor is such a complex phenomenon. There is no single factor that cause children to be child labor. At the most primary level, adult family members especially parents make decision regarding how children' time will be allocated between leisure, schooling and household chores and income activities (Bagchi, 2010). That would say that family and parents are the center of the fact that causes child labor but the result has not made in isolation because household decisions are always linked to the external factors like economic, social, cultural forces in a particular context.

5.1.1 Issues related to the family

First of all, I would argue that no children came to work without financial struggling. I found that children became child laborers when their income was an indispensable contribution for their family. When they were asked the reason why they work, the very first answer was “my family is poor and we do not have money” and then followed by “I want to support my parents” or “my parents asked me to help” or sometimes “I drop out school so I have to work” or similarly “I don’t want to study but I want to earn money”. It can be generally concluded that children were obliged themselves to work when their family income were not sufficient by their parents and financially poor. Therefore, the finding obtained was generally consistent with other studies suggested that poverty is a major contributing factor for becoming child laborer (Blunch & Verner, 2001; Johansson, 2009; Mondal, Dalal, Sahoo, & Biswas, 2016). According to the study done in Tanzania, it was a strong correlation that poverty is the major cause behind child laboring, just simply as a contribution to the family (Johansson, 2009).

Subsequent findings loosely related to economic inadequacy of the family are as follows; poor education of parents, unemployment or unskilled labor of the parents, followed by the conclusion that these working parents fall in debt in the circumstances of financial difficulty. In this study, parents of SCLs were not illiterate but they possessed low education level and earned through unskilled jobs which they would get paid less. It was also found that some parents were incapacitated, with chronic illness or disability. During the course of poor family income, the most plausible decision for the parent was to send out their children to the street where it was easy to work with no or little money, either self-employment or more informal jobs.

As a consequence of income insufficiency, children had to work to pay off the family debts although some of them could not determine the complexity of family debts. The majority of the SCL’s families had the debt payment for which their parents had borrowed when they were in need of money to make the big purchase or the urgent solution or the rental imbursement. These results have the similarity with previous finding that children probably came to work for their families to pay back a debt (Mert & Kadioğlu, 2014).

I would also argue that the more the parents are literate, the more decent street activities children will work. For examples, it was observed that SCLs of poor literate parents especially mother were engaged in street based activities like begging or rag picking while SCLs of more literate parents earned self-employed street vending. It was also demonstrated that poorly educated parents were practiced abysmal family conditions like violence within family, drinking habit, criminality in terms of drugs or gambling. Therefore, this is in complete agreement with past literature saying that there are several causes that affect family income; absence of secure parental employment, poor management of earnings because of alcoholism or other issues (Le Roux & Smith, 1998).

The results also showed that school enrollment was a hurdle to live without enough household income. It emphasized to be the need of child labor when family cannot live without their earning. Education was a right, something that all children deserved. When the children were asked why they had abandoned their schooling, almost all mentioned the need to make money for their families as a primary reason for leaving school. Children abandoned school by their own choice, though with their parents' consent. The results matched with the fact offered that child labor is competing for choice of schooling among children in developing countries (Ersado, 2005). However, one interesting finding that discourage children for schooling which is equally important to the reason of family economic difficulty is the role of education structure which is poor functioning with long- rooted tuition system.

With a few exceptions, step-parent case and single-parent case seemed to be the reason to push SCLs to the street based activities. This finding corresponded with the fact that single parenthood and entry of the step parent served to combine with financial needs of the family to put children at work (G.K. & Talinay, 2015). It can be concluded that the less parents took responsibility, the greater children were borne bear financial burden as a replacement role. I would argue that failures of the parental care and support were as equally important as family economy as the most influencing causes of child laborers.

One of the SCLs said that "we are working not for food but for shelter". That is possible to describe that families without shelter have to struggle considerably not to get a house but just be able to pay for a monthly rental. In this situation, each

and every family members' inputs mattered to save up for the accommodation fees when parents are poorly earned or unemployed. It was proved that poor families must have to rely on the children's work and the children's contribution which is needed in circumstances of income inadequacy.

Although the study did not point out that work is not beneficial for the children, SCLs' works in this research are quite repetitive, boring, exploitative and risky. Therefore, the findings are not much in agreement with past studies which have shown that child work is a learning way (Bourdillon, 2006), socialization process (Liebel, 2004), career prospect (Marcus & Harper, 1997), and gainful vocation (Woan et al., 2013).

However, earning money served the ritual that children must fulfill the duties of the families. From the perspectives of children, children deliberately chose to work since they realized that their families depend on their work. It was also conferred that children viewed their work positively and also have vocational preferences rather than persistence to education which they think as their future asset. SCLs strongly felt the moments of financial gaining (the taste of money) from labor rather than learning asset by work. The situation was supposed to turn out more negative when they lost the opportunities to earn. Although it is the most secret, the case was little known by the past studies.

5.1.2 Cultural factors

In the course of research, the cultural factor was one of the crucial power of causing and increasing SCL. At the present culture of Myanmar, people assume that children working is a gainful performance to get a good future for children through earning. This was justified not only by parents and children but also employers and community members. It is apparent that children are learning from work, assisting the family against poverty which are the robust traditional concepts. Generally speaking, accessibility to street work activities and employer's preference are also socio-cultural contributing factor to remain SCL prevalent.

As poverty has been observed over decades, parent, recruiters and children themselves feel that working underage is normal obligation and just responding to the demand for household financial need. While children believe that they are helping out

their family, their parents also agree them to work to contribute family income since they suppose working is a training. Those findings are closely similar to the work of Woodhead (1998) that children recognized the fact that parents desired them to work and expected them to contribute their income. It is that SCLs follow their parent's footsteps. In other words, they did the exact same work as that of their parents used to work.

The results also showed that children tend to work in the street when there is a substitution and/or handing over and/or sharing the responsibilities needed for the existing job of their parents. It seems reasonable to assume that some people and parents see children as street professions, having them to earn from street works which are quite easily accessible. It is predictable that a SCL who has a close connection with the one who has street work experience (either family members or non-family member) is easy to land a self-employed job. This finding agreed with the statement that children gravitate toward street work because one or more close family members has experience in urban street work and street vending or they found their first street work in the city through the assistance of a family member (Offit, 2008)

Moreover, there was a persistent belief that children should be employed for the so-called idea of helping child laborers' family rather than exploiting children to get their cheap labor. It was also the fact that children could be recruited more easily than adults in informal sectors of work. In the case of teashop, there is a great tendency of hiring children across the country which is now more widespread than before as there is a scarcity of cheap labor. The teashop owner held the view of what child employment as win-win situation if they are helping to the children of poor families and also they get cheap labor since children are manageable and work well and obediently with the orders.

5.2 Earning life of a child

It is a common knowledge that children are less competent than adults because of their underage, small size, lack of physical strength and experience make them less competent than adults. Therefore, street labor is considered especially dangerous for children. However, I found that the knowledge of SCLs about the nature

of street work is encyclopedic so they are able to navigate streets efficiently, have close relationship with other vendors, customers and other adults to avoid exploitation and violence on the street and give them the opportunity to do more income. Therefore, adult parents have to rely on their children to provide the income.

SCLs in this study were working in very diverse circumstances. Except for one teaboy, they are petty self-employed or service street laborers with or without being accompanied by their parents or friends. However, they had performed as a wage labor at some stages in their earning life, but they seemed to accept that they were better off working independently on the streets. By the observation, it can be argued that some street works are more decent than the others if the risks would be equally involved. For example, I would like to rate the most decent one to the least as of been compared according to the nature of work; vendor, porter, trishaw driver, manual labor, tea-boy, scavenger and beggar. It has been concluded that SCLs are doing activities with less and insecure income and low social economic status but activities like very low moral status such as stealing things or prostitution did not occur to SCLs with only one exception, begging which is morally unacceptable.

In that study, the author claimed that the patterns of children's work are irregular and adaptable and their occupations are unorganized and easy-going in nature. It was also found that SCL who had more street work experience had greater potential to move from one job to another. Based on the finding, job shifting is possible when they do not appreciate their income and restricted working styles. Since the entry into street jobs is easy and can be worked irregularly, they can start every street work as a random opportunity. If they like the job, they will keep working or if they do not like, they will move to the greater ones. This result was in line with the argument about the inconsistencies of street work earning by SCL (Hungerland, 2007).

According to child porters, they were classified into two categories. The first category are children carrying loads over long distances and the second are the ones working short distances in areas such as markets, business center and bus stations (Johansson, 2009). SCLs in this research fall in the second category of child porters who carry loads for short distances at the jetty. Since the distance did not matter for SCLs of this study, how big stuff and how many times they were asked for service only affected their earning.

In current study, the majority of SCLs are child street vendor. They came to work since they were supposed to help their parents' jobs or sale pitch (if parents are street vendors) instead of deciding by themselves to work in the street. Therefore, it should be distinguished between children's work and children's help to understand the perspectives and choice of children since it takes a lot of children's effort in either ways. It is also suggested that street vendors are better off than SCLs with other street activities, however they need to self-finance for the next selling that is not the concern for the other SCLs who need only their labor. Moreover, they are always observed by their parents, not only for protection, but also for restriction. As a result, they cannot do anything with their own earning and cannot decide on what to do and how to manage with their income.

Virtually, the daily income of a SCL is larger than a typical adult's income among the working poor. The average amount of an SCL is from 3000-6000 kyats because it varies from day to day. It is also substantial depending on the type of work though. However, results showed that age of entry was also counted. For example, teaboy worked at a very young age so his income is less than other. Therefore, this finding corresponds with the assumption that the earnings of a child will be poorer when he/she entered to work at an early age (Gustafsson-Wright & Pyne, 2002).

According to the scholars, there are two ways SCLs contribute their income to the family; parents' assistant as an unpaid worker and direct payment out of their income. Except for 3 SCLs who spend on themselves only, the rest of all cannot keep/save their own money and need to hand over to their parents, which made them financially insecure. It seemed to me that they are unpaid laborers because all the money he gets goes immediately into the hands of the parents and were used only for family expenditures for basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter, no necessarily for themselves, not for their education, health, and development.

As long as SCLs are gaining financial benefit from their street work, the idea of engaging as SCLs from the insider view of SCLs themselves was really self-motivated. As a matter of fact, most of them preferred to earn in the street rather than being at school. They were the early school-leaver even without completing their primary education. However, they got inspired by their work as long as the street gave opportunity to get money and also they can enjoy their leisure in the street as great as

possible which is not something they can get from school. Excluding a few cases, they enjoy the activities they performed in the street than the studies they performed at school.

For most of SCLs' view, street works made them satisfied to earn their life because street became not only a place to earn money but also a zone to meet their friends and also adult people who they think can protect them and help them to learn new things. In my perspective, they seem to lose their childhood opportunity and violate their right to get education, play and make time with the family. Finding showed that hard work has occupied much of their childhood and they have no time and no ways to do recreations. This is corresponded with the report that child labor does impede children's leisure time and recreational activities during their working time period (Dimeji Togunde & Carter, 2008).

On the surface, SCLs are generally similar to street living children who earn their lives for 24 hours. In this situation, there is the overlapped meaning to differentiate between street working children and street living children. This is supported by the study showed that there is a solid connection between the two groups since living life in the street begins with street work (G.K. & Talinay, 2015). Unlike behaviors of children living in the street, all of SCL in this study earn money morally. Within 5 months from both interview and observation, I am assure that they have never stolen things from people, shops and houses. Even in the case of scavenger, he asked the household owner to let him in to get the things. According to him, one person's trash is another person's treasure. However, people inclined to condemn him on suspicion of thief not because he was detected to steal, just because others in the same line of work behaved that way.

It can be concluded that there are three reasonable points that children can end up street living children or permanent unskilled street laborers in a sense that children are forced to become adults quickly. First, street itself became a culture of earning for vendors and other wage earners by spending a substantial amount of time in the street, and working together with the friends and acquaintances and becoming close relationship with other people in the street. Second, street work makes them to meet survival needs and also fun and self-worthiness. Third, street work helps them to find ways out to temporarily escape from the frustration of family problems.

From what I learned through the course of my research, one of the most intolerable views about them is that long working on the street will push children away from their families and will make them preferring freedom and street community where they are paid. Therefore, it has similarities between current study and past studies that demonstrated the benefits of informal socially undesirable street work that defined “freedom of being your own boss” and of ‘defining your own work schedule’, to be ‘independent and free’, to be ‘earning my own money’ and ‘not to be exploited’.

5.3 Experience of SCLs’ health risks and health care

It is clear that the implications of health impacts are enormous because health is not merely absence of disease but as an elastic concept that have to be considered in a larger socio-cultural context. Evidences showed that earning in the street hamper their health over time. Throughout the course of data collection, their health experiences of SCLs are loosely connected with their working circumstances in the street. Therefore, finding concluded that the earning life of individual SCL involve similar hardships and the consequences of hard labor on young bodies and the pressures of street work negatively influence on the SCLs’ health although there was the few evidence on actual health related problems.

As I mentioned in the result session, there are a great deal of negative health related consequences from engaging in the sales and service sector economy in the urban streets as a street vendor, trishaw driver, bus attendant, manual labor, porter, teaboy, scavenger, and even beggar. In some studies, children employed in this sector are regarded as “street children” or “children of the street” who run away from parental or guardian abuse, leaving them to earn a life on their own (Dimeji Togunde & Carter, 2008).

5.3.1 Physical health risks

First of all I would argue that SCLs have exposed to the hazards of street life since they are small and immature. Although they seem old enough in the time of study, they have been earning from street jobs for a long time. They simply took poor

family economic context in consideration regardless of the nature of street work which might be involved adverse effects. As a SCL, they spend most of their time in the street which put them at physical risks and also bring them vulnerabilities such as exploitations and abuses. They have to earn money through the same amount of adult work or sometimes more than adults do. This matched with the previous data demonstrated that children are treated like the small versions of grownup whose amount of job was greater than adult's labor involvement (Hungerland, 2007).

The current findings also provide the extent of SCLs' work. Unlike street children who have the days that it is possible they would not go out to earn money, SCLs have to work from the time the sun rises until it sets to contribute their income to the family. For a daily target income, they have to work from 6 to 11 hours which is intolerably lengthy for a child. There is no point to deny that hour-long working can increase the dangerous situations in the street and can ultimately impact on physical, psychological and moral hazards of these SCLs. Therefore, it can be concluded that working in the street is one of the worst forms of child labor, requiring long hours of workings and with high risks.

As a consequence, fatigue and muscle stress are the most significant physical health problems by street-based works that involves a lot of nomadic earning. Moreover, some SCLs disclosed that they end up getting body aches and back disorders from their repetitive and strenuous work such as carrying heavy load. The condition would get worsen over the considerable period of time at work and impede their health and growth. Results showed that porter children have to perform very physically strenuous labor, carrying heavy bags and loads although the distance from boat to the destination of their client (normally to the bus station) is not so long. The study done by Goel et al., (2012) provided the same conclusion that manual labor are more harmful for the younger labors than the older ones, therefore, back injuries were more significant in the former ones since a child's physiology is weaken by uncondusive work.

Normally people have three meals, but they do not eat. They are always enough with the breakfast and skip the necessary lunch. My observation is skipping or delaying meal or sometimes having only one meal for the whole day is for being able to meet the target amount for a day which is the first priority task in a day of a SCL's

life. In other words, earning more but eating irregular and/or less are meant not only to be saved the time but only saved the money to increase the amount of income per day. It can be concluded that SCLs suffered from poor nutrition from the result of having inadequate and improper meal while they are not willing to spend much money even if they can earn well. Therefore, this result provides a similarity with other literatures that SCLs are low nutrition despite the possibilities of malnutrition is not tangible and not immediate outcome (G.K. and Talinay, 2015).

In practical consideration, street work became a type of vulnerable jobs that caused children getting fever or other infectious diseases since their immune is depressed from nutrition deficiencies. Added to that lots of physical labor also made SCLs weaker and less effective over time. It was also observed that work exhausts the energy to sustain physical growth and remain SCLs skinny, small and short in their age. This finding supported by evidence that working children were at risk of stunting, wasting and anemia (Arshad, Razzaq, & Mahmood, 2015).

The next finding explored in this study is that SCLs are at constant health risks for poor living and working in unhygienic environment. While SCLs are living in slum like area characterized by lack of basic amenities such as water and sanitation facilities, they will survive with what they have and manage their lives with what they can do. Finding showed that SCLs will go out to other place for defecation at night or bathing in the river that can threaten their health and dignity.

Results also pointed out that SCLs who do begging and rag picking as the main source of income have to stay with low hygiene status with high tendency to get infected. Likewise the rag picking children can be easily exposed to harmful hazards. Participant observation demonstrated that they always go into the bushes and ditches where they can find more rags than the main streets. In those situations, they will be put at risk in term of injury, illness and weakness. This information corresponded with another finding that poor life management skill in terms of sanitation contributes to poor health for SCLs by facilitating the transmission of communicable diseases (Goel et al., 2012).

5.3.2 Emotional problems

Evidence showed that stress and strain has been expressed by their work difficulties and problems although emotional problems are not as visible as physical ill health,. Through reviewing their sentiments from findings, it can be said that SCLs seem miserable in some particular situation as long as they are treated unfairly though they earn livelihood in the family.

Findings indicated that SCLs are manipulated emotionally by some adult vendors since they cannot defend their territory against any competition with them. In term of earning's ability, they have to face with a dissatisfied mother at home whenever they cannot meet the target, or when they pay less than the other days. This confirms previous finding in the literature shown that low earning ability and long working hours breed their feeling of frustration and inadequacy (Bharti & Agarwal, 2013). It has been also collaborated with the result from a study in Peru that the failure of children's income was the case of their parent's disapproval since their expected amounts are not fulfilled (Strehl, 2010).

Similarly, it is crucial to mention that SCL got worry not from the work itself but from the situations that are not favored them to work or can impede the earning. It was illustrated that there are many circumstances that put children under pressure like the day faced with the police who are the number one on their fear's list, the moments encountered the customers who do the pay less but ask for more service, the rainy days that can hamper on sale, hidden emotional abuse by parents or even long working day because of pure bad luck. This finding collaborated the idea of Woodhead (1998) that street working children hope to have the enabling working conditions and they are always expecting the opportunities of shorter hours of working and to be able to spend time for fun.

Issues of psychological hazards such as boredom, or emotional abuse and maltreatment by police or employers or customers or other people in their earning environment may have a negative impact on children. This is similar to Okoli and Cree (2011) study mentioned that SCLs who worked together with other adult vendors also have the experiences of hard and unpleasant time as they are competed each other over customers. However, the same result provide a contrast with the conclusion that

physical confrontations between SCLs and adults were rarely occurred although unserious fights between SCLs were common (Offit, 2008).

Likewise, a girl in the study as a micro-vendor needs to go to wholesale markets early in the morning when it is dark so she is at risk of being assaulted by any offended persons on her way. Basically, SCLs are often treated badly by the police who SCLs face on a daily basis. When children are asked what they don't like or what they fears in the street, their first answer is police. Moreover, the evidence showed that tea-boy has physically abused by the owner and some abusive customers. Their wages and labors are exploited by adult in power and even their own families.

It is also clear that children have suffered from strong emotional attachment to their parents and they treated their parents as an important, powerful and beloved one. It is clear that SCLs are often suffered from being denied emotional support from the family and they could not attain much affection from their parents because of the separation between SCLs and their parent during working in the street from dawn to dark. Rather, my findings showed that they also have the experiences of domestic abuse by their parents. The statement that a child worker may get endangered emotional health as a result of the absence of parental attention upon the child's return home after work was not described before. However, other studies stated that children engaged in the sales and service sector of the labor market encounter problems related to their mental well-being. Stigmatization from the public, feelings of disheartenment, stress and irritability, personality disorders and anti-social behavior, and alienation and isolation from their family have been identified (Dimeji Togunde & Carter, 2008).

5.3.3 Social health problems

Public streets are a real social environment. SCLs became to get exposure with more and more people in their workplace. Social skills are developed with a certain amount of street work experience. Social skills are not only a necessary part of success as a SCL but also a primary requirement of working in the streets, where socializing with the people; workers, customers, and other street regulars like police. The evidence from the findings suggested that social distinction among SCLs is occurred based on the level of experience, his/her place in age hierarchy and how well the child has adapted to street culture.

Study also showed that getting on well with people are the core ways of earning in the street to prevent themselves from bullying by other people and to increase the earning degree as well. These findings agree with the notion that social relationships SCLs foster are essential for them in combating the dangers they encounter while earning in the street and they also made the most of their social skills to make street earning both safe and productive (Offit, 2008). It can be concluded that the physical survival and ultimate economic success of all SCLs is a social process.

Similarly, participant observation demonstrated that some particular areas are not safe for the SCLs in term of criminal cases such as gamblers, abusers, traffickers, thieves (bus stations and ferry jetty) and unpleasant police arrest (train stations, center of tourist attraction), high concentration of vehicles (main roads), physical and verbal abuse (residential streets, for scavenging). However, not all conditions are dangerous in the street because children also met people who are very accommodating for them when they are in trouble, which is one of the outstanding findings which slightly differs from some previous studies.

However, SCLs seemed not as strategic in the sense of earning as street living children who have more street contacts and use more tricky ways. According to the study in Peru, G.K and Taliny (2015) claimed that street children are successful in street earning activities since they have more street contacts and they are also tactic with many possible approaches in convincing people to earn money. Another similarity made by Offit (2008) indicating that street children have multiple social identities that they utilize in front of different people so as to survive and prosper on the streets. From my point of view, this underlines that SCLs get more chances to get exploited and taken advantaged by others since they make a living in a humble way and they know only how to earn the money through working hard which is one of the primary quality of SCLs.

5.3.4 Risk behaviors

I observed that children has seemingly adopted the risk behaviors from their street work such as drinking alcohol and smoking when they see the elder people doing that, working at night, going to the dangerous streets. As it was mentioned in finding section, SCLs can rarely notice what can be harmful to them so they have no

sense of caution on anything they do. With parental supervision, the little begging girl will follow to the people whether good or bad in order to receive money. These are the fact that begging children can be intimidating by the adult person. In the case of vending, SCLs generally sell together with adult worker. Since vendors competed with each other for customers, some adults abused children verbally and sometimes physically. Findings agreed with the fact that work in the open air without supervision of parents might not be considered a particularly healthy environment (O'Donnell, Rosati, & Van Doorslaer, 2005).

However, the results showed that SCLs have less chance to contact with other street children who use drugs or do other risk behaviors or involve illegal and criminal activities, the gang. Their whole days were always exciting and they have been busy with earning and their focus is to meet daily targeted amount. Therefore they do not really have time to do like sniffing glue and a mere thought to spend their hard-earned money to spend on anything. To be exact, most of them did not even notice how sniffing glue exist and what the gang mean. This particular finding is a little contradict with other studies have noted that child laborers tend to keep bad company and are negatively pressured by peers to engage in delinquent behaviors which is the popular concept of street working children (Dimeji Togunde & Carter, 2008)

It is also important to note that SCLs see no longer themselves as a child and behaved like the adults in the case of earning. They believed that they can get money as far as or more than their parents or other grown-ups can earn. This matched with the conclusion by ILO (2011) that going further to earn high income would definitely suffer their well-being both in the short and long run. Being compared to non-working children, SCLs are more likely to copy and follow adult lifestyles although they get narrow peer network that is associated with risky behaviors. That result is consistent to the conclusion that child workers may trigger approving the things which are usually behaved by adults such as betel chewing, cigarette smoking, alcohol drinking, gambling even at the earlier age (Goel et al., 2012).

5.3.5 Health care connected to health risks

It is interesting to note from the current study that SCLs think of themselves resilient and healthy although the ill conditions of work seem to affect them. When SCLs are asked about their experiences of health problems, SCLs see positive things about their work and health. They claimed that they are healthy as long as they can earn well and feel able to solve the risks and health threats. They believe that walking for work is the best thing ever to do exercise effortlessly and keeps them fit, instead of getting them weak and tired. Talking about health concern, only a few of them were somehow aware that they were affected by their activities in the street while the rest of them were equally unrecognized or neglected their health and risks involved. In other words, the proportion that they do not care or they do not know was the majority.

However, my findings point out that when a SCL get sick, he/she will not take the health care. They don't think about the treatment, rather they will think about work which is a priority. When they go for a health care or they take rest at home, they have to skip a day for work. So they will keep working that consumes their energy required to get rid of infection and also depleted the stock of energy by the illness itself. The data said that negligence for health care is reinforced by the decision to work which can get worse the illness while the decision to work is provoked by the worry of the loss of income and the cost of treatment.

However, in SCLs' families, health care and decisions to work might operate as the two-way causal relationship while the nature and experiences of work have the negative impact on physical health. It can be seen that lack of money reinforces a sick child to take no or inadequate health care but to stay working which not only consumes his/her energy required to get rid of infection but also the stock of energy is depleted by the illness itself so children end up being unable to work . However, it can concluded that they are strong enough to cope with their problems and health risks although SCLs are vulnerable in the street-based earning activities and seem to be at risk physically, psychologically and socially.

5.4 Theoretical implication for the issues of SCLs

An understanding about the issues of SCLs attained through the perspective of Critical Medical Anthropology (CMA). With this study, CMA attempted to explore the factors in society that impact health and life circumstances of SCLs. Rather than blaming the poor, CMA demonstrated how the problem of SCL stems from global economic processes and local political responses. From the perspective of CMA, current research findings were discussed through not only micro-structural forces at family and social level but also the macro-structural forces at the greater political economic contexts that are important in affecting causes and consequences of SCLs.

5.4.1 Social structure and economic and political forces

It is important to view SCL as a response to larger political economic structural conditions that poor children and their families have little control over. Basically all of SCLs in this study were born in poverty and have worked since their earliest years. Looking through the background information of SCLs, the parents of SCLs are poor because they are working class in the societies. They are unskilled laborers so they are sometimes unemployed and leave them job insecurity. It is plausible that they would not get employed in more formal sectors where there might need a school education since parents are poorly educated or uneducated. Their earnings and wages are low. Therefore, it is undeniable that those families with low financial literacy end up living with debt and poverty.

Because of economic needs of the parents, school was a barrier for children in the poor families to pursue even a basic education and their parents also want children to work or agree to work. It is evident that SCLs have to work while other children go to school. It has been found that some of SCLs would like to stop working and continue studying and at the same time their parents also would like them to get a proper education but they do not have choice on their earning life because the situations keep children to work instead of schooling because of the economic reasons.

However, social and economic needs has not planned in a coordinated way in least developing countries like Myanmar although the political change has a huge impact on the population groups which are living in poverty. While familial poverty is

a contributing factor to why children work on the streets, it is only one aspect of the overall forces that drive them to work. Unless the economic and social transformation has taken place selectively for SCLs and their families, the issues of SCLs will still persist since those children are representing the majority of population who live in poverty. Thus poverty is becoming a political issue of child labor.

5.4.2 Individual and collective cultural behaviors

While economic injustices force children to the streets to work, children actively respond to this by transforming the streets into a place where they can beat poverty. Although it was said that children are forced to become adult quickly through labor, they are really providing for the survival of their families and are gaining the skills that are supposed to provide for themselves as adults in the future. Virtually, poor children take advantage of the opportunities available to them and through much hard work and dedication, use the streets to make a better life for themselves and their families.

When it came to laboring at earlier age, most of SCLs in this study believed that they are capable and old enough at the teenage to take care of their parents and young sibling. This is what the culture expected about the responsibility of children even at the young age. The finding was quite unexpected that children are not necessarily forced to work but they actually want to work and they want to assist their family. It was a common finding that bringing young children to the workplace by the parents when they go to work allowed children to assist parents and copy adult work and became child laborers at the very tender age.

5.4.3 Social inequality and power

The concept of inequality in society are at the core justification of becoming SCLs. Children work because of the poverty they and their families face, actually from the result of inequalities in the distribution of wealth. When there is intergenerational inequality within this country, a household is likely to be poor from generation to generation. As a result, the offspring of those households have more chances to become the key actors to maintain the family in survival condition as their parents suffer from inequality and a lack of resources. More specifically, less

employment opportunities for adults, parents with the low paid jobs, unstable income and less educated/unskilled working class plus with not sufficient and not well-funded education system are disable not to depart their children from school to the street to earn money. Ultimately, child labor is transferred between generations.

The issues of SCLs are embedded in social inequality that particularly looked at the dynamics of disadvantage for those with less power. Obviously SCLs do not have power because of inequality. It is elders who hold most power in society. Average age of initial working of 8 years old was meant to tell something about power imbalance between guardians and SCLs. In fact, children are not old enough to decide a big turn in life from studying to working unless they are thinking to be in the street to stay away from home. Obviously, children is essentially an age-based social stratification, which places them in a secondary and disadvantaged position and reinforces their vulnerability. When the employers or/and other adult people treated them badly, they still have to hold on because they do not want to lose/reduce their income.

It has also been demonstrated that the disparities and imbalances of power between children and their parents affected on how their income would be spent for the well-being and development of children. It seems to me that they would like to enjoy street earning life in their own way and would like to spend their own money in buying food they want to eat or exchanging gifts with friends or going to the cinema or playing games. However, children did not have the rights to get those privileges although they put a lot of effort on earning and contributed an acceptable amount of income for the family. Moreover, SCLs were not informed how income is volatile and how family fall into debt problems although they bring money back to home every day. I would conclude that SCLs are considered like an adult so they have to work but cognitively they are not regarded as an adult even if they are already mid teenage.

There is a fact that social inequalities create situations which enhance health and well-being for some social sectors, but at the same time, cause more sickness for others (Levin & Browner, 2005). The result indicated that SCLs are working in the 3 Ds jobs – dirty, dangerous, and degrading. Therefore this is actually what children face because of the inequality. Children who earned ambulatory vending on the street or children selling things on the train or the child who beg around high

risk environments or child laborer with physically demanding tasks like stone carrying are falling under the examples of 3 Ds job performers.

5.4.4 Social and environmental conditions

Although children did not perceive street environment as a place surrounded by many hazards as long as street works gives them more freedom than other employer-based occupations. In this study, some boy SCLs adopted health risks behaviors like drinking, sniffing glues, smoking which are influenced by the social relationships. Rudolf Virchow argued that the material conditions of people's daily life at work, at home, and in the larger society constituted significant factors contributing to their diseases and health problems. Thus, he concluded that the enhancement of social conditions could improve life even more rapidly and successfully the advancement of medicine.

Overall, SCLs got physically, emotionally and socially suffered from work through street environment which involves competitive form of earning, exhausted long hours of working, unhealthy lifestyles, and encounter with ill-treated people.

5.4.5 Access to and control over the basic material and nonmaterial resources

In poor living and working condition of SCLs, there is lack of basic amenities like no bathing facilities, hard access to toilet, scarcity of daily meal and inadequate clothes, for example begging girl wears the dirty oversized clothes many days but no laundry. The hardships of the poor dwelling in slum-like conditions or jetty doorway or guest hall of highway station, also contribute to SCLs to get weaken immunity and might get sick.

Not only material poverty but also the need for the children to work is also related to lack of non-material resources. Virtually, loss of family tie, aggressive family relationships, lack of understanding, affection, security, care and attention are also the significant contributing factors for the choice of children to earn in the street. Moreover, SCLs are also experienced the times that they are most depressed and sad since they are neglected by parents as a result of lack of communication between

parent and children. They also face physical or verbal abuse at home because of the excessive parental authority.

Last but not least, absence of education is a great loss of basic material resources for a child's future. There are three elements embraced in the benefit of education. These components are literacy, intellect, and skills which go hand in hand. Going to school is not only to obtain literacy but also to seek intellect. If a child has no literacy, they will find difficult to acquire the vocational skills in their future. For example, if they do not know the math, they will get the problems with even simple calculations. If they are not even competent with the basic things, they cannot learn more decent vocations and apprenticeships such as carpenter (needs skills for measurement). Moreover, SCLs have limited access to health knowledge because of poor learning opportunities, so they neglect their health and also less aware on their working related hazards and disadvantages.

5.4.6 Access to the health resources

Based on the findings, children have no idea about the accessibility for health care because they believe that their health problems are minor. As a result, they are less likely to gain access for health care if they suffered from major health risks. The decisions for health care mostly depend on their guardian because parents control over access to health care in the sense of spending money for health care. For example, if parents want them to see the doctor, they will go to the doctor but if the parents do not want to go to the clinic, they will not go for the health care.

Moreover, the concept of health perceived by children in this study contradict to the concepts of health defined by biomedicine. Therefore SCLs will not be driven to receive clinical treatment when they fall ill as they believe that their health is not as serious as what biomedical concept explained. In practical consideration, communicating basic health knowledge and giving information about healthy living and lifestyle adaptations is largely neglected for those poor SCLs who are either physically vulnerable or socially deprived in all social groups. In conclusion, they do not have access to health care and treatment as everybody else access in Myanmar who is the highest social group because of the class-determined health disparities which is really affecting the SCLs' lives.

5.4.7 What is it missing from the perspective of CMA?

Children are a very worthwhile population for study so CMA need to expand children issues, not just only studying population in general. Taking political and economic factors into account, it appears that simply realizing that children have to work because their parents are poor and need their contribution so earning is an essential part of children's everyday lives. In fact, SCLs can make a wage above the minimum adult wage for urban casual workers in Yangon, and their minimum/targeted/expected income for a day is far above what many workers, rural and urban, actually receive. Obviously, this income is very essential for the children's and their families' immediate survival.

Having examined the cases of 15 SCLs, it is not difficult to understand hardship earning conditions and life of SCLs as well as the risks and problems they faced from street works because of country economic and social inequality. However, the sheer emphasis on social and economic powers can occur the chance of not being aware children inspiration and cultural obligation in regard to immediate solution to family financial problem and also the rights to learn from work. In this attempt, children will be considered as the passive, weak, incompetent beings and the perception on children as the vulnerable population who have always no control over their own agency will not be moved away so SCLs will always viewed as the object of the parents.

Findings implied that SCLs can figure out ways to minimize their own problems they encountered and can make decision to control over their activities while earning in the street, sometimes with the help of friends and adults or sometimes by themselves. For example, child vendors alert one another to the approach of police to protect themselves and their goods confiscated. It can be said that focusing only on victimization may result in overlooking the resilience of SCLs. Therefore, children should be seen as an agency rather than a victim once they are not favored within the context of lack of family support and poor neglect of the parents and incapacities of the adult family members. Seen from the CMA standpoint, SCLs should be better protected and supported within their working environment rather than generating alternatives for learning opportunities out of their earning which could be the way to make sure the overall well-being of SCLs.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The current results are generalized based on only 15 SCLs who shared their experiences during in-depth interview and combined with researcher's observation and triangulated with key-informants. While the exploration of the experiences of child laborers in the street based context have uncovered some differences and gaps that are considered on the issues of SCL to provide further expanding knowledge and methodological experiences to make understanding about the distinction between the issues of street children and SCLs in this study. Moreover, the perplexed and comprehensive nature of SCLs including the causes and the harmful effects from the individual life of SCLs made the readers to realize social, economic and cultural factors. Analyzing the macro and micro level, Critical Medical Anthropology (CMA) is an appropriate lens to inform the implications for the prevention and protection efforts for street child laborers.

Basically, child labor is a symptom of poverty. If the macro structural causes such as social and economic forces have improved, children going to school instead of working might be increased and the situation of being child laborer would probably die out. A society where people want to see their children learning, performing well in education and healthily to be brought up has to make sure its people to be able to consume basic necessities. Thus, the basic needs of families such as food, accommodation, clothes, education, health care and employment are required to be fulfilled.

It is generally held view that relying on children to meet daily income has been a tradition in the societies with families with lack of basic needs. In fact, the concept of SCL at the micro family level is a consequence of household financial collapse and a decision of altruistic parents towards their children. While parents take a serious role in the lives of SCL, the most frequent findings related to the parents for

being SCL are lack or poor employment status, low education level, attitudinal perspective, and selfish although some few SCLs are motivated to work as a preference or choice over schooling. Not only the lack of money and material things, but also non-material factors such as aggressive family relationships, lack of communication, lack of understanding and affection or the excessive parental power not only affects the occurrence of child labor.

Findings pointed out that all kinds of street earning children performed in this study are more or less dangerous situations and risks to their health, and life. Results indicated that SCLs survive a day to earn money from where they can have negative health impacts like work-related ailments, potential risks and accident, poor nutrition and poor sanitation, stress and anxiety, and exploitation. Finding also showed that SCLs neglect their health and do not access to health care but cope their health and problems in their own feasible ways since they are struggling with money which is more important in their life. Findings revealed that their earning life and health is connected to their working and living lifestyles, amount of wages and duration of working, family support and social relationship.

On the other hand, children are the main source of income for their families and they are significantly well-earned and able to pay the money back to their parents although they earned through marginal self-employment like vending and some marginal works such as begging and rag picking. In other words, their income speaks a lot even though the family was still impoverished with hand-to-mouth existence. However, children are exploited by their own families to work in dangerous situation and unhealthy environment. Finding suggested that SCLs' family has no desire to make the children future better, rather they try to suppress and throw them in oppressive scenario of society for their own benefit.

According to the cases 15 SCLs, they are diverse, the experiences they shared and the situations they encountered are unique. It is not homogenous group like street children who many people believe in our society as delinquent children. Therefore, it is important that they should be treated differently, by taking case by case context. While I am spending with them for five months, I can learn their different skills and also cannot help not to appreciate their ways out to earn better, their abilities of coping for daily risks and their efforts to overcome the situations of exploitation,

deprivation and oppression. I intend this study to hear the voice of SCL in our country to understand their life, work and health risks of the street.

To conclude, children have to carry great burden of financial responsibilities on their shoulder while their lives are suffered from physical, emotional and social health risks. They have lost their identity of being child, their rights for education, and their life in the dirty, dangerous and demanding job. In fact they have skipped their childhood and they became adult quickly. Since this childhood burden with the adult role of earning, children grow up with the least favor for literacy and learning skills that prepare for their future and end up unskilled adult labor. If they produces their own children, they don't have enough income to support their family. Their children then become child labor and the vicious cycle continues.

Ultimately, it is fair to say that a country could be poor not only because it does not have much material resources but also because there is not sufficient capable human resources in order to move the country to develop. Therefore, the huge investment should be allocated for our vast human resources. As the saying goes, the way we treat children in the dawn of their lives is a measure of the quality of a nation. Otherwise, the poor helpless children, the poor unhealthy condition, risk and danger and the dark future are the consequences of the present and the reinforcement the poverty trap among generations.

6.2 Methodological challenges and learnings

I am going to discuss some methodological challenges and learning practices. First of all, some constraints were placed upon my research. First, I did not live in any area by choosing 5 different locations for my research. This was contrary to the traditions of ethnographic fieldwork, but it was a practical and necessary condition for my research. Unlike most traditional village-based ethnographic research, the heterogeneous nature of the city makes it difficult to reside exclusively in one research area, unless the study being undertaken is a specific residential neighborhood. In the case of SCLs, they were living dispersed over the entire Yangon, especially located on the periphery of the city.

The next methodological issue provoked when I went to the field. During preliminary field visit, the researcher just gave a try to reach out without any contact organization, but it was pretty challenging to approach them, get to know them without any outreach touch base and even increase their suspicious level and need time to get trust. Fears of trafficking of local children by adults, were always high in the neighborhoods where I did data collection. Children know their situation better than others and they are even aware of people and trafficking problems because they have a certain amount of years of street working experiences.

During 2 or 3 weeks of initial visits, people thought that I might be a sort of a broker to get them trafficked and they also explained that they have such initial thought at the first introduction of myself about studying abroad. In some situation even other people thought that I was visiting the children so often so they will be trafficked soon. Thus, entering to the field without any contact was less possible to spend time on the street for long time and to get chances to talk to SCLs. Without any association with the organizations who are working with these children, I would not able to continue my data collection.

Another challenging to me is that SCLs and even their parents did not realize what the research means and what they get benefit from research. I have to explain both of them in their own term. For examples, I told them by raising question like what would you do if you want to know about something. Some realized that they have to ask other but most of them cannot answer so I clarify them by saying that I want to know about SCLs and their earning life so children play the key role to give me the answers I want to know. As a result of taking time for building rapport and facilitating children and parents to understand about research purpose and data collection approach, I got only a few respondents to do actual data collections after preliminary field work.

Regarding the data collection method, I found it helpful and interesting to pick up unstructured, informal in-depth interviews as the main data collection method. This interview method was the best one in the particular context of street based interview. Although this method provided broad narrative findings from SCLs' perspectives, it took a lot of patience and time because they are coming and going. For example, in the case of street child vendors, they dashed off and left me behind to sell

their goods so I have little chance to record for conversation, rather write jotted note in my book which is very important to serve as memory points for a later detailed field note. However, I rarely opened my book to write information in front of the children because the sight of pen and paper work can make children nervous and also attracted a crowd.

Caution is warranted regarding the availability of SCLs for extended interviews. Indeed, time is scarcity for the children who have to earn money. In this situation, even the idea of paying money for time compensation has come to my mind for one time. One SCL, beggar was frequently asking me for some money for food and other needs. She and her mother even asked me to help them for the accommodation. However, I never paid anyone, child or adult, for information because it was vital not to pay for information as a researcher. Therefore, I just tried to wait them until they finish or get a little free time so my interviews with a SCL are many times at a day. For each day, I did frequent but brief interviews within a bunch of very short moment of chatting till I get in-depth information. I always bought meal for SCLs whenever we ate lunch together from the same street food shop. Sometimes, I brought some clothes from home. I know that it is only providing gifts in-kind.

Most of the time, interviews were done without scheduling since I decided to visit them at different time of the days. Therefore, when I missed a time to meet children or have to wait children while they are working gave me a chance to do snapshot conversation with the other people who are their parents, other workers and even police officer. From the various information I got during snapshot interviews, I came to more realization about the earning life of a SCL and why they become a SCL.

In my study, pictures are also the useful way for the landscape of their working scenario which can communicate a great deal of understanding the earning life of SCLs. However, I did not take any photographs of the children secretly. Sometimes taking photos was not allowed by other street vendors since they were concerned of posting photos on social media these days, but the case is just because they were not secure for their illegal street vending status that can be banned on. Moreover, some children also did not want the photos of them when they were working. To sort out this situation, I taught children how to take the photos with the camera and let them to take photographs of anything rather than taking by myself. In

considering ethical practice, I have to be honest to present the reality of SCLs' lives. My objective is to listen what they say to me and to observe how they actually earn in the street and how they deal with the people and the atmosphere they work from day to day lives, rather than taking photos of them without consent.

Reflecting my experiences of observation, one of the benefits of doing non-participant observation is that I can notice so much activities going on with the children that I rarely notice while we are having conversation. For example, I can get the idea of the way they interacted with their customers, their peers, and the adult people they encountered while working on the streets. This observation allow me to understand the evidence which is closer to the reality. Another advantage is that I can double-check what they said with what I found and confirm their responses to my questions.

Different ways of approaching to children were engaged in term of availability, street work nature, cooperativeness of the children. Once I looked at the field record, it was found how many visits took to see the children. Throughout the whole period of field work, it varied from 3 to 6 times per children until I thought that they are repeating the sentence and giving me the same kind of information but then again I stopped visiting them and then withdraw from the field without any harm to the children. Therefore, gaining access to SCLs is also a challenge and future research must take into consideration that the children may not be as free as I need them to spare some amount of time for interview.

Last but never least, I had to work hard to access to SCLs. Although I spend mostly daytime for my data collection, I did spend some night, just to observe any changes in environment and to confirm the working schedules of SCLs. To reach out to the itinerant vendors, I did participant observation when they go for selling goods, accompanying SCLs, walking with them together around city squares, asking questions and talking along the way. Indeed, I try to copy their work to immerse their earning life. It seemed to me that time of observation is more than time of interviewing. Moreover, I spent longer time with the parents than SCLs because they have more free time than children, doing nothing or just supervising their children at the workplace.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Awareness, adult education and employment creation

First and foremost, many of the decisions are generally taken by the parents to become the child laborer, and parental attitudes towards child labor could mainly contribute to tackle the issues of child labor. Therefore, my first recommendation is upgrading the knowledge and skills of parents. Parents should be given not only awareness to be able to conscious about the consequences of child labor but also adult functional literacy. Unlike formal education, parents should be provided comfortable platform which is emphasized on their existing knowledge and experience to let them realize their current situation and visualize the future opportunities with their abilities.

To order to meet the proposed outcomes, all funding agencies related to livelihood program, education program and even human-right based program need to pool their resources and all development practitioners should create operating procedure for awareness strategy to make the vicious cycle of poverty and child labor clear for the parents and curriculum for adult education to learn semi-skilled and skilled jobs to improve the ability to earn better. At the same time government should create more job opportunities that will alleviate the family poverty.

6.3.2 Free, compulsory and quality education

Nevertheless, child labor is indispensable in a society with the belief that children earning is 'normal' for the families with severe poverty. It became a tradition of survival strategy which is resistant from the idea of banning children from work. Unlike developed countries, lack of strict regulation, fewer inputs for schooling facilities and absence of quality education are the results of increasing children out-of-school and child labor prevalence. In order to sort out the challenges imposed by this situation, another important step should be done by ministry of education is a strict enforcement of free, compulsory and quality education for all children till 15 years of age.

The most promising strategy for this regulation is to provide rewarding grant to families which sent their children to school and then follow-up subsidy to

existing families who maintain their children at school until high school level which is equivalent to 15 years of a child's age. Children with access to free, compulsory and quality education have little options but to study so the occurrence of child labor will be reduced.

6.3.3 Night school/mobile school

No matter the interventions, best practices and prevention, child labor might still exist in the request that economic situations and the structure of society make it extremely difficult to eliminate SCLs. Therefore, another plausible recommendation is non-formal education such as night schools or out-reach school with flexible the study schedules so that they will have a basic literary for future skilled vocations.

One way of implementing this is to collaborate between organizations who are working for street child labors. Every organization should come up with the updated information of who and where they are currently supporting because some of them are overlapping in term of geographic location. After that they should have a list of children who are not currently going to the formal school and recruit non-formal school teachers who really know the context of poor children and their street work nature and capable to teach them.

6.3.4 Vocational school/ apprenticeship training

However, some older children might not be interested in school-based education, rather motivated to earn. Regardless of diverse street activities, every SCL in this study has their unique skills to earn money. If work is attractive to children, it should be regarded as a learning that represent children's best interest. In this situation, introducing vocational school or apprenticeship training will be more helpful not only for SCLs to make a more decent way of earning and the best out of their long-term life changes and career chances but also for their family for the immediate survival.

To meet these aims, children who cannot attend formal school should be encouraged to learn different skills with their choice. They could be equipped with skills such as carpentry, mechanics workshop, home economics, repairing job, barber

and beauty job, and tailoring. Such particular trainings should be provided through assessing their own interest. At the end of the training, their qualifying skills should be certified and financial capital and start-up tools should be supported for future occupations.

After that, organization should communicate with existing small business owner and recommend children to be recruit as an intern in their occupation to boost the confidence level of children in their learning skills. To be more effective and successful, organization need to be followed by progress checklists of running own enterprise. If they are making progress, another advanced courses should be considered for more comprehensive learning. Or if they are not getting anywhere, their challenges and limitations of doing own business need to be figured out for further solutions.

6.3.5 Outreach free health care

At the end, work affects their overall health and leave them incapable in their adult age due to prolonged years of working in unhealthy environment of the street. However, findings said that children cannot be access to health since they don't have the power in the sense of spending for the treatment. To help mobile SCLs access to health care and reduce financial barrier for health care, free mobile health care should be initiated not only with treatment service but also knowledge providing sessions including life skills.

For undertaking mobile health campaign, health care practitioners including medical doctors should be provided a special training with the inclusive knowledge of the issues of street child laborers. After that, outreach clinics should be launched with the selected medical staff and health educators. Then, children will have access to health care physically and have the regular campaign visits for check-up then they will stay healthy and have health knowledge to prepare for the better future.

6.4 Future research

Basically, this research explored the lives of SCLs who have been earning years ago. Sometimes, their memories are faded and they recalled them hardly. In this situation, one thing the researcher noticed to deal carefully with the children was that their responses are always inconsistent with the information they gave in different times of interview. Therefore, research with SCLs who just entered the workforce lately should be more insightful in getting comprehensive evidences on how they got started working and how they became resilient from their coping ways during earning in the street.

Results found that some children want to return to school while others are motivated to earn money only. At the same time some children stick to one job for long period of time while others shifted from one job to another and a few of them have to rely on the availability of work. In any circumstances, SCLs should be able to communicate their experience of both current and past jobs and their motives to go back to study because policy debates on earning and schooling should be influenced by how children perceive on work and study. With prolonged time period, there is a scope to study on the children's perspectives of child laborers; their own reasons on choosing jobs and which work is the best and how they compare each other and why they prefer one over another and why they want to stop working and study again.

Few of girl data for comparison limited the findings since boys are more visible and concentrated by the nature of street employment and girls feel reluctant to participate and share their experience as well. I assume that the current findings are represented the cases of boys than girls who might get involved at domestic service. Therefore another exploratory study about the impact of child domestic labor should be done from gender perspective since girls are more negatively affected by early engagement of labor than boys. As a result, implications will be more said about gender issues to address the specific intervention strategies for girl child laborers.

As I discussed before, child labor is a survival strategy of poor family and there is intergenerational effect. In this regards, exploring the past conditions of parents and grandparents should be another consideration to validate the vicious cycle of poverty.

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