

 <p>ISSN 2631-2131</p>	<p><b>Homelessness and identity construction among street children</b></p> <p><b>Sudarshan Joshi</b></p>
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### **Abstract**

*This paper aims to explore the process of identity construction and its form among homeless street children. In order to explore the process of identity construction and its forms this paper reviews key literatures on the issue. The study is comprehensively based on secondary information using the thematic analysis of five elements activity, food, looks, name and places. Based on the contents analyzed the identity of homeless street children constructed through the process; where they live, what they do, what they eat, what they wear, where they sleep, what name they call and what they look. Therefore, Homeless street children, Rag picker, Magne, Khate, Sadakchap, Bebarise, Tuhuro have the collective identities and the identity of any individual is multiple and fluid. The key forms of identities observed are five in number: - activity, food, looks, name and places. They live in street or public place. They do begging, collection of garbage, thieving and racking others. They eat junk and unhealthy food bay begging. They wear dirty cloth roughly.*

### **Keywords**

Homeless, Street Children, Identity Construction, Form, Activities, Place, Food, Looks, Name,

### **Introduction**

Homelessness and identity construction among street children, is a study of the people who do not have their identity. It is a study of identity less identity of people. Specially who does not know or does not have formal or official name and address. They live in street or public place. They do begging, collection of garbage, thieving and racking others. They eat junk and unhealthy food bay begging. They wear dirty cloth roughly. Homeless street children, Rag picker, *Magne, Khate, Sadakchap, Bebarise, Tuhuro* have the collective identities and the identity of any individual is multiple and fluid. Homeless means not having a home, without a home (Robinson A. F., 1999) the life is going on with lots of ups and downs. Generally, the homeless are those who do not have

permanent and fixed houses (Aoki, 2008) and family or relatives. These are the human beings. They have heart like others. They have mind to think and enjoy. They have skin to feel cold and warm. Unfortunately, they are far behind such human necessities. Thus to identify the process of identity construction of such human being the study is being prepared.

## **Research Objectives**

The objective of this study to analyze the process of identity construction and the forms of identity among homeless Street children.

## **Methodology**

I have collected five literatures on the identity of homeless street children. The five literature themes were focused on identity construction and form among homeless street children based on the differences in socio-cultural context the arguments were found to varying each other. I identified the major theme of identity discussed in different literature and categorized them as thematic categories. Major themes identified were process and forms on identity contraction of homeless street children are activities (doing, abnormal, begging, theft), food (what they eat), looks (rough & dirty), name (others call, nickname) and place (where they eat, live, sleep).

## **Homeless**

Homeless means not having a home, without a home (Robinson A. F., 1999). Generally, the homeless are those who do not have permanent and fixed houses (Aoki, 2008). Similarly, another research says about the homeless are those people who sleep, eat, work and undertake their daily activities in the public spaces and the loss of family contact, the problem of depression and isolation leads to a life of poverty (Pérez-Bermúdez, 2009). This study describes about Homeless are living independently in the street because of being landless, homeless (Greif, Barrett, Lee, & Meredith, 2008). Researchers offer many different definitions and descriptions of the street children are known after various terms, in northern developed countries they are known as homeless (Raikhola, 2015 ).

## **Street Children**

The study find out street children is the street, the place that performs the functions of the home where they sleep, eat, work, play and die (Dryjanska, 2014) and the term of Street children are a unique group of children who work, live, and/or sleep on the street or public places and are basically deprived of parental love, care, and understanding (shrestha, Mukunda, Joshi, & shrestha, 2014). As same as this definition was formulated by Inter-NGOs in Switzerland in 1983 and “street child,” used by the Commission on Human Rights in 1994, was developed in The 1980s to describe “any girl or boy” for whom the street (in the broadest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc (Council, 2012) and, “street children” were categorized as either child on the street, who worked and sleep on the street and went home to their families at night; children of the street, who lived on the street. UNICEF has defined three types of street children are Street living children, Street working children and children from street families (Unicef, 2012). So the question is how various like the state, organizations, the media, and the street children themselves and other people have contributed to the processes of creating and consolidating homeless street children’s identities (Onta-Bhatta, 1996).

## Identity

Identity is related to personal and social identities (Deaux & Snyder, 2017), collective identity of the Nepali street children like *khate* (Raikhola, 2015 ) and the notion of identity as social representation based on the social reality of a group's identity (Dryjanska, 2014). The term of identity related to "street children" and its various mutants such as "street kids", "street boys", "parking boys", "carwashers", "teenage beggars", "street bums", "children on their own", and "*mutibumba*" refer to a complex phenomenon (Unicef, 2012). UN Convention Annex 1.3 Article Eight codified identity includes nationality, name and family. Another description of negative identity of *Bebarise, Khate, Magne, Sadakchhap* are nowadays generalized to all street homeless people with children who work, live, sleep and spend their life and all-time on the street and public area in Nepal (Ghimire, 2014).

## Theoretical Review

The street homeless children have many identities, they working as vendors, scavengers, car watchers, "barkers," beggars, and so on, and sometimes through illegal activities such as those of snatchers, pickpockets, drug sellers and prostitutes. The street homeless are the symbolic and representative product of globalization, so the identities of street homeless people related to political, economic, social, cultural ideologies and development (Aoki, 2008) and it recognizes that the identity of any individual is multiple and fluid (Mccarthy, 2013).

The study describes the street children to classify and identify so many little lives: "street children", "children in a street situation", "children on the street" and "children at risk". In Kathmandu valley, they are living in different places. There are as many reasons for being on the street as there are street children. Whenever we think of the word 'Street Children' we visualize a child involved in petty trade or carrying goods, shoe shining, begging, sleeping on the corner of the street, collecting garbage, sorting the leftover as their food, etc (Ghimire, 2014). Identity refers to how street homeless children answer the question, "Who are you?" This research has argued that identity is related to the personal and social identities base on the level of identities (Deaux & Snyder, 2017).

The street homeless children are invisible in internal self-identities but they are routinely identified in the scholarly and political spheres as individuals, who displayed certain behavioral and social characteristics like disaffiliation, transience, and poverty (Greene, 2014). As same as another research find out the visible and invisible causes are associated with the homelessness of children, which in fact forces them to spend their life on to street? The main causes are: family breakdown, poverty, natural and manmade disasters, physical and sexual abuse, exploitation by adults, urbanization, overcrowding and others (CBS, 2011).

There are also a considerable number of street children in Nepal trafficking continues to be a problem. Rapid and uncontrolled development of urbanization has led to a dramatic increase in the number of street children, with children being attracted to urban area. Assume that the reasons for migration to the city are diverse but include the death of one or both parents, poverty, illiteracy, domestic abuse alongside the perceived attractions of city life. They earn form "rag pickers" and the most common reason given for being a street children were prior abuse and neglect (CWIN, 1990).

The study further revealed that the shelter homes were not actually offering right environment for the street children. The study further explored the challenges of the sustainability of the rehabilitation framework. The study find out that the government and civil society take a pro-active approach while rehabilitating street children in shelter homes in South Africa for sustainability (Richer, 2019).

### Empirical Review

In the empirical way the study, according to the Nepal Labour Force Survey 2008, there were about 7.77 million children in Nepal between 5 to 17 years of age, in which, 50.7 % were boys and 49.3 % were girls. That number has growth for broken families have been apart by xix economic hardship, leaving children to fend for themselves. Children are often seen begging, or working in the streets, cafes, petrol stations; sometimes well into the night (Khanal, 2014).

A study by CWIN in 1998 estimated that there were approximately 5,000 street children in Nepal with an estimated 300-400 new children ending up on the streets annually (CWIN, 1998). The history of Street homeless children used to start live in street since 1640s to present in America Plymouth congregational church (Fischer, 2011).

### Thematic Analysis and Discussion

Process of identity construction and its form among homeless street children are given below.

Table 1. Identity Construction

Name	Place	Title	Process	Forms(Types)	Finding
(Dryjanska, 2014)	Rome	Negotiating Identities	sleep, eat, work, play and die	Collective, group's, & social Identity	Notion of identity as a social representation.
(Raikhola, 2015 )	Kathmandu	Life of Street Children	The children on the street, of the street & Abandoned	Khate, Sadak Balbalika, dust of the street	the challenges they face as well as the complexities of the street-child.
(Losantas, 2019)	Belgium	Identity Construction-	Cell phone, face book, social media	digital identity	Identity construction by social media like face book
(Onta-Bhatta, 1996)	Nepal	Contested Identities	Lives, eat, survive, activities in the street	local identity; <i>Khate</i>	Subject of Anthropology.

(Pokharel, 2013)	Nepal	A Study about Street Children	Child labor, trafficking, migration	ethic, educational, collective identity	The children on the street are carrying the identity of current Nepalese society and if we let them go the Nepalese identity goes along with them.
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(Study, 2021)

The above table 1. Gives the brief information of Process of identity construction and its form among homeless street children. Dryjanska (2014) explains the process of identity construction of homeless street children with the specified activities like sleep, eat, work, play, and die in the street. Their activities in eating, sleeping, working and playing in the street create the identity of the street children. The study finds there are three- collective, group and social identities of the street children. It represents the place identity.

Raikhola (2015) says the process of identity construction of homeless street children with the steps like the children on the street, of the street & Abandoned. Their types of identity are *Khate*, *Sadak Balbalika*, and dust of the street (Negative Identity). The study finds out the identity challenges they face as well as the complexities of the street-child. Losantos (2019) reported the steps on the identity of street homeless children with mobile. The study finds out the digital identity construction by social media like Facebook. The street children’s identity related to digital identity construction by activities. In the context of Nepal entire street children do not have the second hand mobile phone. So it may not be applicable in Nepal.

Onta-Bhatta (1996) discussed the process of identity construction of homeless street children with the specified activities like Survives in the street has little or no family contact has no adult care, Involves in various antisocial activities including thieving, pickpocketing, basic needs unsatisfied begs or is subject to exploitation as a laborer, Lives either alone or with those in similar positions, Works as a *khate* (slang for garbage, rag or plastic picker and street smart on solving hassles with the police and out-witting other people. The study finds out the Contested Identities of street children is an anthropological subject it covers local identity like *Khate*.

Pokharel (2013) argues the process of identity construction of homeless street children with the specified theme like Child labor, trafficking, migration. The types of identity are ethic, educational, and collective identity. The study finds out the homeless children on the street are carrying the identity of current Nepalese society and if we let them go the Nepalese identity goes along with them. The research focus on the identity construction of street homeless children by looks with physical disabilities is lying on a street and almost naked, without shoes and covered with dust. It also assured that every child has a right to their name and identity.

**Activities**

Dryjanska (2014)’s notion of identity is a social representation that links with child slavery and human trafficking on the street. Whatever a street child does in the street are normally the activities

denoted by him. Such activities are sexual (illegal), working and living in the street and public place constructed the process and form of identity.

Raikhola (2015) said, activities like rag picking, collecting and selling plastics in garbage, begging, glue sniffing and also enjoying with friends on the street. These activities form the identity and construction. Losantos (2019) actively using social media platforms, especially what's app and Facebook, Facebook interactions shape their digital identity. Street Children are deliberately using the mobile gadgets for social networking. Using of Facebook, or what's app are also the activities to create or construct identity in the street. Onta-Bhatta (1996) says the street children's activities like, burglary, pickpocketing; snatching theft, etc. are all increasing in our society. They pick plastic; sleep with dogs, thieving in the street and public place. That is why all these activities of street children construct negative identity.

Pokharel (2013) found that street children conduct different social practices in different places based on their strategies of life such as maintaining "ontological security" and dealing with daily difficulties. They start doing hard and difficult activities for their survival that ultimately leads many of them to die in childhood. Therefore, difficult livelihood strategy constructs activities of street children. That gives the identity.

Summary of study of process of identity construction and form of identity between street homeless children and their activities would include that the activities of eating, slipping, hardworking and illegal also gives the identity.

### **Place**

Dryjanska (2014) describes the place that performs the functions of home (where they sleep, eat, work, play and die) as locations, where they can be found. They live in complex zones. so it creates the place identity of street children. Raikhola (2015) find out that street children live on the street, sleep and who work in the street & suffer on the streets. Therefore, the place constructs the identity of the street children. Losantos (2019) says the street children and young who are daily lives on the street. Therefore, the place also constructs the identity of the street children. Onta-Bhatta (1996) describe the street children sleep, eat, lives and other activities on the street. Hence street children where they eat, sleep, eat the place represent the identity. Pokharel (2013) focus on street life, which is on-street without any protection and supervision. Therefore, the place also constructs the identity of the street children. Discussion concluded that normally street children work, eat, and sleep in the street and public place. Therefore, the specified location where they act such activities denotes the place so it creates the process of identity construction and form of street homeless children.

### **Food**

Dryjanska (2014) describes the street children eating they do not fulfill their basic needs, such as proper nutrition or safety. Raikhola (2015) says it represents seek shelter, food, and a sense of family, hunger. Losantos (2019) explains the food but research focuses on social identity. Onta-Bhatta (1996) used to begin the streets, or eat the food thrown away especially during feasts. The *khate* identity according to street child hinged upon doing rag-picking and spending all the earnings on food and fun. Pokharel (2013) says they don't have proper food. Discussion included in the issues of food pattern the street children eat whatever they get street livelihood strategy about their

experiences, eating behavior on the street creates the process and form of identity construction of street homeless children. Street people must be managed before visit Nepal 2020(Badal, 2019).

## Looks

Dryjanska (2014) they look like poor children, broken off contact. Raikhola (2015) look as poor societies alike and uncivilized. Losantos (2019) analyze the street children identity depend on looks like clothing (dirty). Onta-Bhatta (1996) say they looks dirty. Pokharel (2013) empirically explain about the street child "A boy that looks younger than ten with physical disabilities is lying on a street. The boy is almost naked, without shoes and covered with dust" in normal cases street children looks in dirty and in proper clothes. The discussion presents in an analytical way, the situation of street children that looks by others construct the identity. Therefore, the situations of street homeless children (like dirty cloths, uncivilized) normally contribute to shaping their identity.

## Name

Dryjanska (2014) explain social identity depends on local communities represent them by name as chinchas (bugs) in Colombia, marginais (criminals) in Rio de Janeiro, polillas (moths) in Bolivia, bui doi (children of dust) in Vietnam, saligoman (bad boys) in Rwanda, and mosquitos (mosquitoes) in Cameroun. Raikhola (2015) are known as homeless-youth, runaways or even throwaways in developing countries. Khate, ragpicker, sadak balbalika, the dust of the street, Losantos (2019) use the name street children only. Onta-Bhatta (1996) found the name *sadak balbalika* or street children, in this research maximum use the name *khate*. Pokharel (2013) generally refers to the term '*Khate*', *sadak bal balika* and rag pickers.

In summary a future line of study finding that process and form of identity construction of street homeless children by the name. Everywhere in the world the different languages community has given or calling negative names to the street child, which construct the name identity.

## Conclusion

The identity of homeless children is constructed in multiple ways: activities, food, looks, name and place where the street homeless children sleep, die, and appearance. Thus, the major way of constructing identity is how they manage their life. Based on the contents analyzed the identity of homeless street children constructed through the process; where they live, what they do, what they eat, what they wear, where they sleep. Therefore, homeless street children, slum, *bebarise*, *khate*, *magne*, *magnate*, ragpicker, *sadakchap*, *Tuhuro*, *vikari*, are collective identities. The key forms of identities explore are five in number: - activities, food, looks, name and place. They live, eat, and sleep in a street or public place. They beg collection of dust, thieving, and racking others. They eat junk food, unhealthy food. They wear dirty cloth roughly. They are calling by *bebarise* (without family).

Based on the content analysis of the reviewed articles this paper comes to the conclusion. The calling nickname "Khate/Bebarise" constructed the identity process and form in four ways;- local identity (Onta-Bhatta, 1996), negative identity (Raikhola, 2015 ), place identity (Dryjanska, 2014), Nepalese identity (Pokharel, 2013) it is similar to *Mccarthy* theory argues that the identity of any individual is multiple and fluid (Mccarthy, 2013). Therefore, the street homeless children have

their collective negative identity. Thus it is recommended that they must be placed and properly identified and right to name and identity.

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