

# **Socio-Cultural Situation of Street Children and Their Expectations about Future <sup>1</sup>** (*Example of Diyarbakır City*)

**Mülazim Karakuş**  
Expert Researcher

**Dr. Samettin Gündüz**  
Abant İzzet Baysal University  
Turkey

## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study of children living and working in the street is to examine their socio-cultural conditions and future expectations. This study is a descriptive research in scanning model. In order to collect data, Semi-structured interview method, which is a method among the Qualitative data collection methods, has been used. The study group is composed of 70 children living and working in the streets of Diyarbakır district. Children have been reached with the help of snowball sampling method. The data which is obtained in the study has been coded with the help of an expert, then encoded and processed by the researcher. As a data collection tool, an interview form which is composed of 39 questions and developed by the researcher has been used. In encoding data, the content analysis method has been also used in the research, which is generally used in qualitative researches. Among the interviewed children, sixty-seven of them have stated that they were born in Diyarbakır while three of them have stated that they were born in a city other than Diyarbakır. Two-thirds of the interviewed children have stated that they live in slum neighbourhoods and come from a family of low-income. An important part of the children have stated that they suffer violence in the family while seventeen of them have not wanted to answer this question, so this indicates that suspicion of domestic violence is higher. Interviewed children have stated that they are mainly from Bağlar, Fiskaya, Ofis and Balıkcılarbaşı districts in Diyarbakır. Thirteen children have stated that there is a criminal person in their family while eleven children have stated they often run away from their house. Only one of the children has stated that he lives in the street day and night. It is a very important finding in terms of this research.*

**Keywords:** Street children, socio-cultural situation, expectation about future

## **Introduction**

Different descriptions and classifications have been made in the issue of street children in world-wide researches. However, these definitions made by different researchers vary in themselves. It is thought that this difference comes from the fact that there is no specific boundary between the classes and children in this category constantly change places.

In our country, the concept of street children consists of children who are defined as “criminal child”, run away from home, quit school, left by their parents, or the ones whose parents have died and Roman children, like in many other countries. (Atauz,1990) this usage indicates that the concept of “street children” is a roof concept.

According to Philips (1994), it is very hard to make a specific definition of street children. Street children can also deal with such jobs as selling something in the streets, parking, auto washing, shoe painting which are not related with any organisations, while they can also involve in illegal activities such as prostitution or any other things. Although these children, whose ages are between 6 and 15, have a home to go, most of them begin to live in the streets day by day.

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was prepared from the Project “Socio-Cultural Situation Of Street Children And Their Expectations About Future” witch was supported by the Abant İzzet Baysal University

Almost all of them come face to face with abuse, discrimination and violence, which seriously threaten their physical and psychological developments. In most of the countries, working children are called as “street children”, which is a definition that recalls criminality, being left, running away from home or quitting school. (Phillips, 1994, adapted by: altuntaş, 2003:21)

Definition of street children composed by a Danish research group and adopted by European Council of Street Children Studying Group: “Children, who are under the age of 18 and live in the street environment for a short/long period of time, can be defined as street children. These children wander around from here to there and maintain their relations among their own friends in the streets. Officially, they can show the address of the house where their parents live or any social welfare institution as their address. What is most striking is that they have either limited relations with their parents and teachers or have no relation with them.” (Uluğtekin 1997, adapted by: Geçer,2006).

Towards the end of ‘80s, UNICEF made a dual distinction as “children in the streets” and “children of the street” with the ideas from Southern America experience. This distinction is as the following:

Children in the streets: ‘They are children who are supported less and less by their family and obliged to shoulder the budget responsibility of the family by working in the streets and bazaars. Their houses are no longer their game and cultural activity places or daily living places for these children. Although the streets are the places of these children where they can continue their daily lives, most of them return their homes in the evening. In spite of the fact that their family relations corrupt, they are bound to their homes and continue perceiving life from the view of their families.’

Children of the street: ‘They are in a smaller group that deal with the daily life without being supported by their families. Although these children are generally called as “having been left”, they can have left their families as well because of such reasons as insecurity feeling, not being wanted or exposing violence ... Their connection with their homes is cut down... They have no families.’ (Taçon,1985, adapted by: Ennew, 1998:15)

(UNICEF, 1986:13) made a broader and more comprehensive definition about it. In this new definition, UNICEF explained the concept of street children in three groups as the following:

1st Group: Children who are constantly in relation with their families

Most of the children in this group come from poor families. Despite the daily difficulties of the families, the majority of the children are in touch with their families. These children work under the control of their families in the morning and then return their homes in the evening.

2nd Group: Children who are barely in touch with their families

Only a few of the children do not have continuous family relations. Although these children have weak relations with their families, these relations have not been completely cut down yet. Children still identify themselves with their parents and siblings. Children, who spend their time selling something in the streets or just wandering around and returning back their homes at night, are defined as “children in the street”. This group is divided into two sub-groups. The ones who work outside their cities and send money to their families as well as the ones who have very weak relations with their families.

3rd Group: Children who have no relations with their families

The number of children in this group is less, but they come from the poorest part of the society. They have no relations with their families and they try to survive on their own. They spend 24 hours of the day in the streets. While some of them have limited relations with their families, the others are completely left alone. The most proper definition for them is “children of the street” (Atauz,1990).

### **Problem Sentence**

What are the socio-cultural situation of the street children and their expectations about future? (Diyarbakır example)

**Aim of the Research**

The aim of this research is to examine the environments of the children in the first group, defined as “children in the street” according to UNICEF’s definition in the ‘80s, who work/live in Diyarbakır streets and the attitudes of the people towards them, to examine the obtained data by taking the socio-cultural situations into consideration and to determine the elements in descriptive ways, which force the children to live in the streets.

In order to achieve this aim, answers will be searched for about the questions below.

1. What are the personal features of the street children?
2. What are the features of the families of street children?
3. How are the lifestyles of street children in the streets?
4. What are the indications about physical abuse which street children come face to face in their families?
5. What are the expectations of the street children about future?

**The Importance of the Research**

It’s expected that the data obtained from this research, in which street children’s socio-cultural situations and future expectations are examined, will help us examine the streets where these children live in socio-cultural and economic terms in order to produce a permanent solution in this issue. The results of this research are important in terms of understanding what these children think, what kind of a future they are dreaming for and what kind of families they have.

Moreover, in terms of taking preventive precautions, the data obtained from this research will help us create a model towards risky families for especially Diyarbakır. It’s also expected that it will help the researchers and local administrations in their efforts to create a risk map for the risky regions of Diyarbakır.

Findings giving information about children’s education level and their attitudes towards teachers and school managers are of high importance in terms of its giving to teachers about how they should act towards these children and so that Ministry of National Education can develop proper education programmes for them accordingly.

When it is taken into consideration that most of the children work in unhealthy environments and in unqualified jobs, it is hoped that the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour as well as the Ministry of Family will derive benefit from the results of this research.

**Premises of the Research**

It has been presumed that data collection methods and tools which will be used in the research will be effective and proper for achieving the goal.

**Limitations of the Research**

This research has been limited to the children aged between 7 and 18, called as “children in the street” according to UNICEF’s definition in the ‘80s, who are lesser and lesser supported by their families, shoulder the budget responsibility by working in the streets and bazaars and return their home late.

The research is limited by 2010 term (June, July, August, April).

Because of such costs as transportation, accommodation etc, the research is limited to 70 children in the city centre of Diyarbakır.

**Literature Scanning**

Since the concept of street children was arisen in early ages in the west, the first studies about it were generally of West origin. Western researchers and authorities, who encountered with this problem in early ages, tried to produce solutions within the frame of social state mentality in order to overcome the problem. However, there are few studies within the frame of social state mentality in Turkey. Because this problem was arisen late in Turkey and ignored for a long time. Most of the studies in Turkey are about situation detection rather than producing solution. Below are some of the literature studies in Turkey and in the world.

A research about “Street Children in Ankara and Şanlıurfa” was prepared by Atauz, (1990) upon the request of UNICEF. In this research, it was aimed to analyse the conditions of street children in Ankara and Şanlıurfa, define the specific features in their environmental and psychological variants and above all, try “street children model” applied by UNICEF, within the conditions of Turkey and adding new subcategories if necessary. In this research, upon the request of UNICEF, 20 children for each category among the three categories determined by UNICEF, and totally 60 children were assessed. The ages of children in Ankara are between 6 and 17 while it is between 5 and 17 in Şanlıurfa. 6 of them are female while 55 of them are male. 7 children in Ankara are illiterate while this rate is 11 children in Şanlıurfa. % 37 of the children in Ankara have stated that they work for supporting their families financially by working in irregular and marginal jobs.

“Research for Diyarbakır Street Children” conducted by Atauz, (1997) is a project headed by Diyarbakır Leo-Lions Club and carried out by MD 118-U Administration in order to produce solutions for the conditions of street children in the city. This project was arisen from the necessity of making a scientific action research in order to create effective interference strategies and programmes as well as determining the conditions of children. Before the research started, the number of street children in Diyarbakır had been tried to be determined. In this sense, 2370 children were determined in Diyarbakır and % 10 of them (200) was taken into consideration to create the research cosmos. % 62, 5 of these children are aged between 8 and 13. Twelve of them are female while 188 are male. % 96, 5 of their mothers are illiterate while % 54 of their fathers is illiterate. % 94 of their mothers and % 57,5 of their fathers is unemployed. In this research, the first working age has been determined as five. According to this data, it is clear that the child begins working before starting school. In this concept, the percentage of not going to school at all can be high.

60 children living in the streets were interviewed by Yılmaz (1998) in order to determine the socio-demographic features of the children who are in the third group of UNICEF definition, having no relations with their families (children of the street). The ages of the children, who are the subject matters of this research, are generally 15 (% 25,0), 14 (% 18,3) or 16 (% 15,0). %21,7 of the children have never been to school while %58,3 of them have quitted the primary school and %80 of them have not completed their primary education. %63,8 of the children have stated that they have run away from the school. What is interesting in the research is that %50 of the children have stated that their parents frequently quarrel, which shows us the availability of domestic violence. 45 mothers (%75,0) and 7 fathers (%11,7) are illiterate while 9 mothers (%15,0) and 26 fathers (%43,3) are illiterate. Children, who are the subject matters of this research, live in the streets between 6 months and 6 years. But most of them is between 18 months (%30,0) and one year.

A qualitative research was conducted by Altıntaş (2000) named “Children Working in Ankara Streets”. In this research, it was aimed to determine the reasons of working, socio-demographic features of the children, their family structures, working conditions and risks they might encounter. Within this frame, 80 children and 10 families were interviewed in depth. The regions in Ankara where most of the children work as well as children selling handkerchiefs and “simit”, collecting rubbish and painting shoes were chosen.

Considering the age average, children were classified according to their jobs and general age distribution was seen as between 7 and 15. While all of the children in other group are male, %50 of the children selling handkerchiefs, chewing gum or flower are female. The majority of the ones painting shoes were reported as having quitted school. All of the children come from families that have no regular income. The age of working was determined as between 8 and 10.

In the research, the subject of which is “Street Children in the Concept of Globalisation, Poverty and Violence” conducted by Sayita, Alada and Temelli (2002) in İstanbul, 34 street children were interviewed face to face. In these interviews, a social service expert was employed as a moderator in order to increase the credibility of the interview. These children are aged between 14 and 18. Their education level is low and most of them have quitted school either before the 5<sup>th</sup> class or while in the 5<sup>th</sup> class. %47,1 of the children are from the families immigrating from Eastern Anatolia. Except for the four of 34 children, all of them use thinner and bally.

Swart and Williams used pictures in their research about ethical values of the street children from Johannesburg. Within the scope of this research, 69 pictures were collected from 36 children. These pictures reflected their opinions about goodness and badness.

Among the ones reflecting badness, 32 of them reflected physical violence, 27 of them reflected robbery, 20 of them reflected murder, 12 of them reflected smelling adhesive substance, 12 of them reflected maladjustment, 8 of them reflected mercilessness towards children, 5 of them reflected driving dangerously, 4 of them reflected mercilessness towards animals, 2 of them reflected criminal activities, 2 of them reflected disrespectfulness and one of them reflected arson. The number of the pictures reflecting badness outweighs the number of pictures reflecting goodness. (Ennew, 1998:72-73).

In a research conducted in five regions of Zimbabwe on 260 street children, it was aimed to collect practical information necessary for supporting the development of street children as well as encouraging and supporting their rights aimed by national strategy. So, 135 street children were interviewed in Harare region, 55 in Bulawayo region, 27 in mutare region, 28 in Gweru region and 12 in Kadoma region. 220 of the children were male while 40 of them were female. %56,9 of the children work and sleep in the streets, %31,4 of them return their home at nights and almost %12 of them (%11,8 indeed) sleep both at home and in the streets. As for the age distribution, the density is in 11-15 age group with the percentage of %42. 2. Children generally deal with beggary, car guarding, broking in taxi stops, washing cars, accompanying the blinds and selling something in the streets. %55,9 of the children come from community areas while %38,3 of them come from cities. %25,5 of the children have never been to school while %21,9 of them study between 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> classes in primary education and %38,2 of them study between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> classes. Among them, there are also the ones who study high school 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> classes.

In this research, as well, socio-cultural situations of the street children and their expectations about future were analysed in order to contribute the solution of the concept of street children. When considering the results of this research together with the results of other researches conducted in Turkey, it can be stated that in Turkey the majority of the street children go back their home at nights. So, it is clear that UNICEF's definition does not reflect the reality in Turkey.

### **Model of the Research**

This research, which aims to determine the socio-cultural situation of the street children and their expectations about future, is a depictive research in scanning model. Scanning models are the research approaches which aim to determine a past or current case as it is. (Karasar,2006).

In this research, semi-structured interview technique has been used which is a qualitative data collection technique. In semi-structured interviews, questions are asked in the same order. But the person is allowed to answer in the timeline he/she desires. In such interviews, explanations about questions can be made if necessary. (Uzuner, 1998, adapted by: Yıkmiş,2006).

### **Working Group**

Working group of the research is composed of children living within the central region borders of Diyarbakır, registered in 75. Yıl Child and Youth Centre as well as 70 children not registered in any centre aged between 7 and 18. Children have been chosen through snowball sampling method, which is a method used when the elements cannot be determined through simple sampling or scanning methods (Simon, 1974 adapted by: Atauz 1990: 11)

### **Data Collection Tool**

The interview forms developed by the researcher have been used in order to collect research data. In the level of developing interview forms, questions used in similar researches before have been analysed and relevant questions have been developed.

### **Data Collection Process**

The research started with taking the list of regions (from a social staff in 75. Yıl Child and Youth Centre) where these children mostly live. Children in Seyrantepe, Bağlar, Ofis, Airport crossroad and other crossroads were found and began to be observed. In this research, much help came from a local researcher in Diyarbakır and a social staff in Centre for Struggling Against Drugs. Children were interviewed from 8 am to 2 am.

The researcher approached the children without thinking about what they did or how they looked like and the children were accepted as they were. The researcher also collected rubbish with two children aged 8 and 9. As a result of this, much trust and respect occurred. Children helped the researcher under every condition with their all sincerity.

Moreover, contrary to what is stated in some researches, people around approached the researcher with their all sincerity as well and helped him a lot. During the research, no threats were encountered from the children, the environment and people around.

Contrary to what is stated in some researches, children paid attention to the clothes and even the hairstyle of the researcher and liked wandering around with people who were neatly dressed. The research was conducted in 2009–2010 in Diyarbakır with 10 children from 75. Yıl Child and Youth Centre, 7 children from Şehitlik Child and Youth Centre and also 53 children not registered in any centres, totally 70 participants.

### **Analysis of Data**

Data obtained from the research was divided into two groups by being coded by an expert in accordance with the questions in interview forms. Also, nicknames were given to 70 children interviewed in the research. All of the names used in findings are the nicknames given to the children. Then, this data was encoded, processed by the researcher as well as making some statistical proceedings.

Data obtained through interviews was encoded and processed through content analyse method. The views and help of two experts were applied here as well.

### **Findings and Comments**

#### **Gender**

Children, within the scope of the research, are composed of 64 males and 6 females. It is stated that few females or none was available in previous researches. When these researches are analysed, it is seen that the researcher work in another job or has limited time because of the security anxiety. However; in such a research, the researcher should spend more than 2/3 of his day or night in the streets.

In a research conducted in Brasil, it is stated that the researcher spend 24 hours with the children as in Colombia, Philippines and Argentina. (Ennew,1998).

#### **Age**

**Information about the age distribution of children in the research is presented the following Table-1.**

Table 1: Age Distribution of Children

Age	Frequency	%
Age 7	1	1,4
Age 8	1	2,8
Age 9	2	1,4
Age 10	4	5,7
Age 11	4	5,7
Age 12	13	18,5
Age 13	17	24,2
Age 14	8	11,4
Age 15	7	10
Age 16	8	11,4
Age 17	3	4,2
Age 18	2	2,8
Total	70	100

As it is seen in the chart, the ages of the interviewed children change between 7 and 18. The most common is 13 ages with the percentage of %24,2 and 12 ages with the percentage of %18,5. One of the interviewed children is 7 years old while one of them is 8 years old.

Considering that children of 12-13 ages are in their primary education and seeing that the age density in this research is within this group, it is thought that these children are in risk of quitting the school and being completely “street children”.

When current conditions in Diyarbakır are taken into consideration, there is a serious threat towards the children especially aged between 7 and 10. From time to time, these children encounter oral and physical abuse from the craftsmen and public. For the two children aged 7 and 8 within the scope of this research, streets are extremely dangerous; as well as carrying an important risk for them to quit school. Both the Constitution and BMÇHS (United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights) burden the duty of protecting children from these threats upon the government and the family.

### Immigration Situation

Information about the immigration situation of children in the research is presented the following Table-2.

**Table 2: Immigration Situation of Children**

Immigration	Frequency	%
City Centre	12	17,1
İstanbul	1	1,4
Kulp	2	2,8
Lice	1	1,4
Eğil	4	5,7
Ergani	4	5,7
Hani	3	4,2
Hazro	4	5,7
Elazığ	2	2,8
Bingöl	1	1,4
Village	18	25,7
Unknown	18	25,7
Total	70	100

When immigration situation of the children is analysed in accordance with Table-3, it is understood that %17,1 of the children who have answered the relevant questions live and grown up in the city centre of Diyarbakır. %25,7 of the children have stated that they were born and grown up in villages. %25,7 of the interviewed children’s answer is unknown. It has been also understood that a family from Istanbul has emigrated from Diyarbakır to İstanbul before and then returned back to Diyarbakır owing to economic crisis. When the research data is analysed, it is understood that there is also an immigration from other regions and provinces to Diyarbakır. Although not available in official data, it is stated in interviews with the employees working in some of the official institutions in Diyarbakır that Diyarbakır population is around 1,5 million. Considering the immigration movement from provinces to the city centre, it is seen that the density is in Eğil, Ergani and Hazro with the percentage of %5,7. Since the vast majority of the children was born in Diyarbakır, they could not answer the question: “when did your family come to Diyarbakır?”.

### Education Level

Information about the education level of children in the research is presented the following Table-3.

**Table 3: Education Levels of the Children**

Level	Frequency	%
Never been to school	3	4,2
Primary education 1 <sup>st</sup> class	1	1,4
Primary education 3 <sup>rd</sup> class	6	8,5
Primary education 4 <sup>th</sup> class	5	7,1
Primary education 5 <sup>th</sup> class	17	24,2
Primary education 6 <sup>th</sup> class	9	12,8
Primary education 7 <sup>th</sup> class	12	17,1
Primary education 8 <sup>th</sup> class	9	12,8
Primary education graduate	2	2,8
High school 1-2	6	8,5
Total	70	100

According to Table-3, %4,2 of the children have never been to school. However; it has been understood that these children are literate as a result of the interviews. The density is in 5<sup>th</sup> class with the percentage of %24,2 and in 7<sup>th</sup> class with the percentage of %17,1. The followings are 8<sup>th</sup> class with the percentage of %12,8, 3<sup>rd</sup> class and high school 1-2 with the percentage of %8,5. The least density is in primary education graduates with the percentage of %2,8 and 1<sup>st</sup> class with the percentage of %1,4. The reason why the number of primary education graduates is less is that these children go to western cities for working right after finishing their primary education. It is understood that the considerable part of these children is involved in such crimes as pick pocketing and etc in big cities.

However, in a research conducted by Atauz on 200 children in Diyarbakır 13 years before, the percentage of children who had never been to school was determined as 56 (%28,0). In this research, this rate is very low. The reason of this is considered as the increasing rate of going to school in the region especially in Diyarbakır from 1997 on. The government have started a very intense programme in the field of education from '90s on like in every field in order to break terror effect. With the help of mobile education, the students in rural areas were brought to the centre and the difficulty in finding classes was considerably reduced. Today, there are numerous private schools in Diyarbakır. The education is given by private schools in the percentage of %20. This situation has personally been observed during the process of research. So, the fact that children never been to school are literate is associated with visual and written press and media, the number of which has increased for the recent 15 years. Communication language is Turkish among the public and children. During the interviews, the researcher wanted to speak Kurdish in order to communicate them well but warned by the children to speak Turkish.

### Parents

Information about the parental situation of children in the research is presented the following Table-4.

**Table 4: Parental Situation**

Situation	Frequency	%
Living Together	61	87,1
Living Separately	5	7,1
Father Alive-Mother Dead	2	2,8
Mother Alive-Father Dead	2	2,8
Total	70	100

According to Table-4, the parents of %87,1 of the children is alive and living together. In the interviews and visits, it has been realised that these marriages are the first marriages of all of the parents. The parents of %7,1 of the children are living separately. The others are "father alive-mother dead" and "mother alive-father dead" children with the percentage of %2,8. As a result of family visits, it was understood that the father of one of the children, whose parents live separately, left his family and his four children and began to live with another woman outside the city, another father went to İstanbul and never came back, and another father left his second wife and his 11 children and began to live with his first wife and his 11 children born from this wife.



### Violence towards Child

Information about the domestic violence faced by the children in the research is presented the following Table-5.

**Table 5: Domestic Violence towards Child**

Availability of Violence	Frequency	%
Yes	27	38,5
No	26	37,1
No Answer	17	24,2
Total	70	100

According to Table 5, %38,5 of the children stated that physical violence was applied towards themselves. %37,1 of the children stated that there was no violence within their family towards themselves. %24,2 of the children did not answer.

17 children did not answer this question. The fact that there was no case about this issue in a hospital in Istanbul was found as interesting by Prof. Dr. Oğuz Polat (Polat, 2006) and a research was conducted in this context. As a result of this, it was determined that such cases were not written in the recordings and not reported to the legal institutions by doctors so physical violence remained as secret.

Another fact remaining as secret and not available in the statistics is the emotional abuse of the children. Since emotional abuse is generally not understood, finding a numeral value is really hard in world scale. The difficulty of determining emotional abuse by the doctors is also stated by the researchers. Moreover, emotional abuse leaves deep spiritual effects on children. This kind of abuse is reported to be done mostly by parents.

### Criminality Level in Family

Information about the criminality level in the families of children in the research is presented the following Table-6.

**Table 6: Criminality Level in the Family**

Situation	Frequency	%
Yes	13	18,5
No	39	55,7
No Answer	18	25,7
Total	70	100

%18,5 of the children stated that there was a criminal person in their families while %55,7 of them stated there was no criminal person in their families. %25,7 of the children did not answer this question.

According to the statements of the children stating that there is a criminal person in their families, the criminal individuals are as the following: Cousin, father, brother, uncle. The crimes are listed as burglary, throwing stone to the police in social activities, wounding with knife, selling CDs illegally and selling drugs.

As it is seen in the table, some of the children did not answer this question. It was determined that some of the family members committed such crimes as terrorism, burglary and selling drugs; so these children did not want to answer the question.

### Level of Leaving Home

Information about the level of leaving home of children in the research is presented the following Table-7.

**Table 7: Children's Level of Leaving Home**

Level	Frequency	%
Yes	11	15,7
No	59	84,2
Total	70	100

According to Table 7, %15,7 of the children stated that they left home or stayed outside even if temporarily. %84,2 of the children stated that they never left their home.

In the interviews made with children who left their home, it was understood that most of them left their home for a short period of time. They stayed outside for three months, at the most, and then returned their home. During the research, only one child who constantly stayed outside was observed. This child couldn't go his home because of his fear of father for three years. He answered the question "Where do you live?" as the following:

(Deniz, 17) "Wherever I go... Snow, rain is not a matter of fact for me. I find a building, enter and sleep there. I have five other friends like me. We sleep together. I have a lot of friends. And all of them love me very much. If I get into trouble, all of them gather and come. They love me more than my father does. In this region (Dağ kapı) I have lots of enemies, so I do not come to the centre (ÇOGEM-Child and Youth Centre) so frequently. I come, eat something and go again".

(Hasan, 17) "... My friends and me do not go our home when bored. We stay outside. We sleep at the parks, gardens wherever we find. If there is someone trying to give harm to us, we cut them. We always have knife, pocket knife or choppers. One day, we didn't go home again. We were sleeping at a park. Gateman warned us and then sent us away by swearing. My friend hit the chopper on his foot and we escaped. The man was wounded.

### Effective Cases for Working in the Streets

Information about the effective cases for working in the streets of children in the research is presented the following Table-8.

**Table 8: Effective Cases for Working in the Streets of Children**

Effective Cases	Frequency	%
Economic Problems	16	22,8
Illness of Parents	4	5,7
For Being Bored	2	2,8
Availability of Free Time	1	1,4
Parents' Living Separately	1	1,4
Father's Leaving Home	2	2,8
Deficiency of Money	6	8,5
Unemployment of Parents	6	8,5
Contribution to Family	17	24,2
Desire for Gaining Their Own Money	8	11,4
Not Working	7	10
Total	70	100

According to Table-8, %24,2 of the children stated that they worked for contribution to family budget while %22,8 of them stated that they worked because of economic problems. These groups are followed by the ones working for the desire of gaining their own money, the ones working because of the deficiency of money and the ones working because of the unemployment of their parents.

An 8-year-old child stated that his father was paralysed and his mother did not work, so he tried to work and gain money by collecting rubbish and selling them.

## Future Expectation

Information about the future expectations of the children in the research is presented the following Table-9.

Table 9: What Do Children Want To Be In The Future?

Situation	Frequency	%
Police	24	34,2
Teacher	8	11,4
Doctor	10	14,4
Having a good job	3	4,2
None	2	2,8
To Be Like Polat Alemdar	1	1,4
Other	3	4,2
I don't Know	19	27,1
Total	70	100

According to Table 9, %34,2 of the children want to be a police. %14,4 of them want to be a teacher. %4,2 of the children want to have a good job and career. One child answered this question unexpectedly by saying that he wanted to be like Polat Alemdar. The percentage of other occupation groups is %4,2.

When they were asked why they chose these jobs, they gave interesting answers. The ones who wanted to be a police said: "Because they have guns, they protect people, in order to catch thieves or just I love to." "The ones who wanted to be a doctor said: "In order to take care of the poor, but I will get money from the rich, in order to heal the ill people, in order to heal my parent, because doctors rescue the lives of people." The statements of the child saying that he wanted to be like Polat Alemdar and kill the bad people were found as interesting and this child was interviewed for 1,5 hours.

## Conclusion and Suggestions

1. In the research, totally 70 children, 64 male and 6 female, have been interviewed. Their ages change between 7 and 18. But the density is between 13 and 17. Children aged between 12 and 13 are in primary school age and the density is within this group in the research. So, it has been concluded that these children tend to quit school and are under the risk of becoming "street children".
2. The majority of the children come from the families having multiple children (crowded). Most of the working children are the first or third child of the family. The reason is that little children don't work until a certain age because of "sexual disturbance, kidnapping or murder".
3. 11 of the children in the research have stated that they have run away from home frequently or from time to time because of various reasons. Only one of the children lives in the streets for 24 hours. Among 70 children, only one of them is located within the concept of UNICEF's "children of the street" definition (the concept of children making streets home for themselves).
4. The majority of the children have stated that they want to become police. This is a very important result. The others are the ones who want to become doctors, teachers and so on. The ones who want to become police give such interesting answers as: "Because they have guns, they protect people, in order to catch thieves or just I love to." But it has been understood in the end that these children are thieves as well. During the observations conducted in research field and the duration of two months spent with the children, it has been understood that police represents power and authority and so gains sympathy among the children.

## Suggestions

1. Services given to street children should be taken from Social Services and Child Protection Agency, a new structure should be established which will specialize in the issues of protective, preventive and rehabilitating and these services should be transferred to this new structure.
2. Calls should be sent to all countries which have the problem of street children and street children should be handled within the concept of "children depriving off family environment" in the 20<sup>th</sup> Article of Convention on Children's Rights.

3. In such big cities as İzmir, İstanbul, Bursa Ankara and Diyarbakır where street children intensively live, night shelters should be built for the children in the safe places of these cities instead of collecting and sending them out or keeping them in dormitories.
4. By the understanding of social state, young children, whose relations with their families have been cut off and who wander in the streets without any control, should be collected and upskilled by turning them into individuals producing service for the society.
5. Law-enforcement officers should take preventive and protective precautions in order to protect children from involving in crimes and terror organisations.
6. In order to understand the problem of street children better and produce solutions, first of all families should be analysed, family structures should be inspected and also cultural structures and values of the families should be understood as well as conducting and supporting researches in this method.

### **References**

- Atauz, S. (1990). Ankara ve Şanlıurfa'da Sokak çocukları. Ankara: UNICEF Yayınları.
- Atauz, S. (1997). *Diyarbakır Sokak Çocukları Araştırması, Uluslararası Lions MD. 118 U Yönetim Çerçevesi*
- Altıntaş, B. (2003), *Mendile, simite, boyaya, çöpe... Ankara Sokaklarında Çalışan Çocuklar*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları
- Geçer, O. (2006). *Türk romanında Sokak çocukları*. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü