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**DEVELOPMENT POLICIES FOR STREET CHILDREN
IN BANGLADESH**

A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Abstract

UNICEF reports and daily newspaper reports suggest that street children are excluded from existing child rights facilities in Bangladesh. To examine the situation of social exclusion of street children, this paper examined the development policies for children in Bangladesh to understand how the existing policies can protect street children's rights and how they could enjoy country's currently available facilities. It explored the linkage between education programs, child rights in Bangladesh and inclusion of street children in development policies to improve their situation, besides it's pointed the weakness of policies for not showing expected outcomes. The paper used United Nations Convention of the Right of Children (CRC) as a theoretical base and data had been collected from analytical review of available literature on child rights and child education in Bangladesh along with government and international organizations reports regarding this matter. The findings of this work demonstrated less concentration about street children in development policies for children, together with not covering all street children in running projects. The analysis advocated education as a prior policy for them to ensure the fundamental facilities and protection as a child in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Convention of the rights of children, Street Children, Development Policies, Education, Bangladesh.

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Chapter – 1

Introduction, Theory, Data Collection, Method and Ethical Consideration

This chapter discusses about general introduction of the thesis, theoretical framework, data collection process, methodology and ethical issues.

1.1. General Introduction

General introduction of the paper formulates the aim and background of the thesis, framework of it, purpose of the thesis, the theoretical base, research questions, criticism of sources, findings, analysis of main argument, and the contents of thesis.

The aim of this paper is to address rights and condition of street children in Bangladesh with the intension to gain greater concentration on them. Bangladesh signed and ratified United Nations Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC) in 1990 marking that all children have right to life, survival and development, in national agenda (UNICEF, 2008b) and the country had shown its success in increasing primary school enrollment rate which was 85.5% in 2008 and 92% in 2011(World Bank). The paper describes what is child right according to the CRC and links child right idea and practice to the context of Bangladesh then narrows it down to the context of street children in Bangladesh. Moreover the paper shows that how laws and practice about child right issues in Bangladesh came from 1200 AD Muslim era to present constitutional law. Additionally with other development policies currant ‘National Child Act 2011’ and ‘National Education Policy 2010’ has taken child education seriously in Bangladesh. Moreover Government Budget gave greater emphasis on education enrollment of every child with school age by setting up ‘Millennium Development Goal’, ‘Education for All’ campaign and ratifying ILO conventions. In this way the country made primary education free and compulsory. Besides the country made some changes and increases concentration to the vocational education to include vulnerable children and to remove child work but Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics reports on street children revealed that street children are still remained socially excluded without having basic rights assurance and guidance.

Moreover primary education enrollment rate of street and slum children are less than half (UNICEF, 2008a) compare to the national primary school enrollment rate. In addition, UNICEF and daily newspaper reports also suggest the lower presence of street children in national government policies (UNICEF, 2008c). Furthermore UNICEF explained risks of street children in terms of protection (Ibiden) although Bangladesh government is operating

several development policies for children, like 'Food for Education', 'Birth Registration', 'Vaccination', 'Early Child Education', 'Vocational Training', 'Anti-Child Labor' programs, HIV programs, safe water, sanitation facilities, 'Child Awareness Program', 'Protection of Children at Risk', 'Legal Protection in National Agenda', in a way of ratifying Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC), with their own project together with international organizations and United Nations child agencies donation and projects.

This paper aims to find the way of benefiting street children with current development policies.

The framework of the paper contains the present situation of street children in Bangladesh from the context of CRC to the national context of rights of children, country's existing development policies and child right facilities. Within the framework, the research pointed the problems of street children in their daily life, the level of social exclusion and miss-behavior of adults together with country's improper, discrete development policies for them. And finally the paper argues that education policy could include street children in society and could facilitate them with country's presently available facilities.

The purpose of this paper is to link education enrolment and street children's right in order to demonstrate how street children could enjoy benefits of other development policies for children in Bangladesh through schooling, since the country had taken education enrolment of children with school age seriously and making progress in it. Previous work on street children and on education had done separately and education had not pointed as prior policy to operate other child development policy jointly. Moreover the paper showed present proportion of street children in running projects and in education system in Bangladesh. It also pointed the weakness of development policies for children and reasons for not showing expected outcomes.

The paper tries to answer that, how street children could enjoy existing child rights facilities in Bangladesh. By following this question the paper continues in studying about what is child right? What are the international development policies for child right? What is the situation of child right in Bangladesh? What are street children? How the situation of street children in Bangladesh? What are the works of UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP and ILO for street children, government works for street children to come up with what kinds of works had been done for street children in Bangladesh? Which child rights development policies are there in Bangladesh in relation to global child right policies? What are the existing child right facilities in Bangladesh? Are street children remains in the agenda of national policies or they

are not given that much importance or they are absent? Who are giving importance to these children and in which way? How development policies could be favorable to street children?

Data had been collected from UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, ILO published reports and government statistical reports along with literature, newspaper articles and television reports about this matter. Photos and interviews of street and working children have been used from secondary sources as well as from newspaper articles to draw a view of their life status. Although I am agree with the Tobin's argument that in this "era of globalization and technological advancement, media have a great capacity to influence thoughts and values of person than any other time in the history of civilization" (Tobin, 2004: 139) and media used children for more "appealing" and "attractive" stories to serve their commercial objectives (Ibid: 140). But I have taken data and information from newspaper and television reports because at least they gathered some voice of children what I could use in my own idea of representation.

The research found that Bangladesh is operating several development policies to improve the condition of child right and some special project also running especially for street children but those policies and projects are not covering all children of the country or each and every street child. Moreover different international child agencies and different branches of the government are operating child right program and project separately and in separate field. Running too many programs and projects by different organizations and agencies for ensuring child rights, is difficult and also costly for a country like Bangladesh. Besides separate child right programming have the risk of not to cover everybody or everyone of a special group. For example, although Bangladesh recently formed Child Act and Education Policy with lots changes and concentration on child rights but it had not achieved the goal of hundred percent children with school age in school or every children under concentration, which is visible in higher percentage of child work and lower presence in school (UNICEF, 2008a). The policies which had taken especially for street children like 'Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children' (BEHTRUWC) and 'Protection of Children at Risk' (PCAR) is not covering each and every of them.

Furthermore the study found that in terms of development policies for vulnerable children, the country has great influence of international child agency. UN child agencies and other international agencies are active in Bangladesh by publishing yearly reports and funding government programs together with their direct own project for ensuring better child right facilities. International child agencies are directly funding the policies like 'Birth

Registration', 'PCAR', 'BEHTRUWC', therefore international child agencies funding also could turn and add concentration to the country's policies.

The research also found that although policies for child right development had been taken in the government agenda theoretically but have no clear plan about how government will fulfill the targets and how they will solve the problems. Moreover the existing policies gave little emphasis on street children as they labeled these children hard to reach and floating children. Nonetheless the paper suggests that ensuring rights of every child is government's duty and advocate to do it in a single way through education because through education, all other policies could be linked up and no child will be out of it. In that way the research analyzes how development policies could fit in one way through education policy for street children in Bangladesh together with present improvement and lacking in education policy to ensure better right facilities for them

The analysis explained that CRC's child right idea and running development policies of Bangladesh government could run simultaneously through education program and could benefitted street children by all facilities of the policies of Bangladesh. Since government is working for hundred percent school enrolments for children, if this program truly plans to cover each and every child, then other development policies could be run more convincingly and conveniently through schooling. In that way the paper gives special emphasis on education policies because implementation of recent policies suggests that Bangladesh is fruitfully working to achieve Education for All Goal, as gross education enrolment in 2011 is ninety two percent (World Bank). Moreover linking and operating all child development policies through schooling will be cost effective and could ensure benefits of every street child. Even it is showed in ILO publications that higher education enrolment had revealed lower child work rate so education could successfully remove child work while engaging in work is obvious for survival of street children. Hence the paper is giving special emphasis on education program as a way to ensure street child right in Bangladesh and influencing country's policy makers to ensure education for all street children.

The paper also discussed about some of the reasons of education policy failure or less successful for street children compare to the national rate of education enrolment. And the results came that, after completion of basic primary education very small amount of children were included in vocational or technical education through education projects and policies, therefore enrolling in school anticipated a waste of time to the street children and to their guardians (if they exist) which made a tradeoff (losing one to gain another) between child work and child education. Moreover running different policies apart from government like

early informal learning in open air failed to attract street child for long time because they are aware about the output of this learning which was discovered in street child answers in 2003 survey about reading and writing skills, and most of them forget reading or writing for not to practice (Ahmed et al, 2003). The paper pointed that all government and non government schools had introduced early learning which is very important and fruitful for street children as they remain without guidance to enroll directly in formal education system, thus running early child education in separate way from school system had not done much as children are forgetting the lessons later.

The paper is presented in five chapters, where chapter one is introducing the aim and objective of the paper, why research topic had been chosen, findings of the thesis, main argument, fieldworks and data collection, ethical consideration and theoretical framework. Chapter two begins with a brief description of Bangladesh about how the country emerged to the present independent territory, to understand the laws and practices over there, it continues with the description of child rights according to CRC, followed by the international conventions and measurements. The third part of chapter two describes child right ideas and practices in Bangladesh, together with recent laws, acts and policies regarding this. Chapter three begins with the definition of street children worldwide about how they defined differently by different scholars and it followed with the definition of street children in Bangladesh and their numbers in different division in Bangladesh including total numbers. Moreover this chapter continues with the reasons of child migration to street together with their living and working status on the street. It ends with sexual and other vulnerability of children in the streets besides resistance and negative behavior from law enforcement agencies. Chapter four initiates the argument of emphasizing education policy for street children, it continues by describing present education structure in the country, recent changes, and improvement, it also represents education enrolment of street children and why it is not working expectedly for these children together with reasons behind education policy failure for street child. Chapter five concludes the paper.

1.2. Theoretical framework

Theoretical frame contains the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC) as the fundamental base and from there the paper analyses the national practice of child right in relation to the convention, to look at country's effectiveness of implementation CRC, current

level of effectiveness of child rights and the relevance of improvements in child rights (Svevo-Cianci, Hart, Rubinson, 2010: 45).

The convention adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 20th November 1989 and came into force from September 2, 1990; it is the only international human rights treaty that nearly to the universal ratification, except only Somalia and the USA, although there is activities appears towards ratification among nations (Svevo-Cianci & Lee, 2009: 1). The 54 articles of the convention undoubtedly introduced the first attempt to promote and protect child rights from basic rights to the right of sufficient health care, right to protection from sexual abuse, neglect and exploitation, right to education, privacy and freedom of association, expression and thoughts and right to live a reasonable standard life (Sgritta, 1997: 376). It is the first international legal instrument about child right.

The convention aimed to implement a common law for every child everywhere to ensure full range of human rights, “it recognizes significance of liberty, privacy, equality, and nurturance as rights essential to preservation of children’s integrity as individuals” (Melton, 1991: 343). The principles of the convention are ensure non discrimination to any child, devotion to the best interest of child, the right to life, survival and development and respect to the views of children (UNICEF, 2008a). According to the CRC, all these principles should be adopted by every country for every child who has signed it. Moreover through international organization CRC Committee will monitor every country about how they are implementing child rights, all State parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights of the children are being implemented. The convention also mentioned that, all states should ensure birth registration of every child to protect them from trafficking and economic exploitation, providing mental and physical health care together with child educational rights and adoption (CRC, 1989). Melton argued that, obviously there is no assurance that all country will maintain the responsibilities according to the convention, but if government considers the convention seriously, it could be a blueprint for policymaking on children’s issues besides it offers guidance to the country and to the child agency (Melton, 1991: 343). Thus to get the base idea about child rights the study used CRC to analyze how child right could be and what areas should be covered and by whom.

However there is wide criticism about CRC that, it brings little changes in practical, which countries had ratified it just filed papers about changing in child policies and become a champion of caring child rights without changing anything in practical childhood of their countries (Sgritta, 1997: 377). Additionally the convention could be summed up with so called three Ps, protection, provision and participation, where child right is entitled with some

and restricted from others, again protection may cause negligence to their right of liberty (Sgritta, 1997: 377). The convention also criticized that it represents western idea of childhood and child right (West, 2001:2). But country like Bangladesh have huge impact of international convention and agencies as most of the project of right based programming operated directly or indirectly through the funding or inspiration or advising of international agencies and United Nations together with government. Recent National Education Policy 2010 and National Child Act 2011 in Bangladesh is formed by the recommendation of CRC therefore the research used the convention as a theoretical base to look the situation of street child in Bangladesh and available child facilities in the country to find the way to include street child in mainstream society. An special emphasis is given on education policy about how the convention says about education and how Bangladesh is implementing education policy for ensuring better child rights even how within education policy street child could be included in society and better facilitate or actually facilitate by all state facilities entitled for them. Therefore the paper gives emphasis on article 28 and article 29 of the convention to get an idea, at least theoretically, how education policy should be and what is the international standard.

In article 28, CRC addressed that all state should make basic and primary education mandatory and complimentary to all, higher and vocational education available and should take steps to ensure attendance in school by reducing dropouts (CRC, 1989). Furthermore article 29 addressed that all educational programs should be directed to develop child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential also develop the respect for human rights and basic freedoms (CRC, 1989). The article also addressed, education should give the preparation of child for a responsible life in a free society by understanding peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, friendship and should develop child's respect to the parents, own culture, country and civilization (CRC, 1989).

Bangladesh is improving birth registration and primary education enrollment quantities as a process of registering number of children for ratifying the CRC. By registering children with birth registration or school registration government implementing food and nutrition program, water and sanitation program, vaccination and awareness rising program which is also a guideline from the CRC. Therefore with the framework of the CRC the paper analyzes the rights and risks of street children in Bangladesh and social inclusion of them.

1.3. Data collection and method

The paper is based on analytical literature review by following qualitative method as a research strategy because quantitative data had not collected or generated (Bryman, 2004:266) by myself directly from the field; rather the paper is dealing with secondary sources for data. Documents had been used as sources of data since it's realistic. Moreover the qualitative approach helps researchers to address social problem and have possibilities of widespread influence among policy making community (Silverman, 2006:305). Therefore as research strategy I have choose qualitative method in analyzing exclusion street children in Bangladesh to address this social problem and to gain attention of policy makers regarding this issue.

To find the answers of research questions I started searching published articles about child rights and child education in Bangladesh from November 2010 to February 2011, from the Lund University online library 'LibHub', newspaper articles also had been collected at that time. I examined Bangladesh government documents on child education policy, child right policy, government statistical reports about street children along with UNICEF, World Bank and save the children UK's published reports about child right, street children risk and situation in Bangladesh.

Daily newspaper reports and Bangladesh government statistical data had been used as primary sources. UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO publications about child right, child education in Bangladesh and World Bank publications and statistics on same issues had been used. A review work on child education and on street children in world had done to understand the context of street child and emphasis was given on south Asian context and the situation of other developing countries like Nigeria, Tanzania since the situations are similar to Bangladesh to understand the problems of street children. The study focused on Bangladesh government 'National Education Policy 2010', statistical reports about child education from 2000 to 2010. ILO publications about child work in Bangladesh were also examined to understand the situation of street working child and type of work. Literatures about child education, child migration and urbanization had been used to analyze the relations of street children with migration.

The paper analyzes published newspaper articles and government statistical reports to represent exact figure of street children with places, their living conditions, risks and working conditions and always chose the most recent version of the reports.

Most problematic matter is, for the shortage of time and funding I am not able to go to Bangladesh to collect materials directly by myself and the country is newly in a way to digitalized all their works thus there were difficulties in collecting government reports and

documents because most of government websites were under construction. In addition very little academic works had been done on child education and child rights in Bangladesh and mostly unavailable in electronic version.

However I have succeeded to manage the information I needed and got three most important articles on children on Bangladesh, one is Giani's article on child migration and other two is on street children in Bangladesh of Conticini and BBS. As well as two national newspapers 'The Daily Protom Alo' and 'The Daily Star' was also important source of my primary data. Moreover among government documents two recent policy 'National Child Act 2011' and 'National Education Policy 2010' gave the paper clear view of country's very recent position about child right. Furthermore ILO and UNICEF publications had been used to support the research argument of education as an emphasized development policy for street children in Bangladesh to ensure basic rights and to protect from vulnerability together rising awareness about rights.

1.4. Ethical consideration

I am aware about child research methodology and ethics and related publications from child watch international research network. It would be my great pleasure if I could hear voice of street children directly about my thinking but have tried to focus on their voices from other scholars work and from newspaper in order to gather children voices and views as much as possible within the time limitation of a master's thesis. I have used street child's interview from published articles and from newspapers by properly referencing. The only telephone interview I had done with my cousin in a very informal way just to realize and indicate real picture of school's pressure on a child.

Chapter-2

Child Rights

This chapter discusses about child right, it begins with the context of Bangladesh and continues with the formulation of child right internationally in a separate way from human right, together with international conventions and measures about child rights. It follows with national ideas and practices about child rights and ends with national policies for the rights of children.

2.1. Context of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a densely populated country of South Asia with 147570 sq. km of geographical area and 146.6 million people (BBS, 2009) which makes it world's seventh most densely populated country (IRIN, 2008). Consequently urban population was estimated 33.1 million and child population was estimated 42.3 million at 2003 (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, 2008:4). As well as UNDP estimates that, about 49.8% population lives below poverty line where 36% lives with income less than \$1 a day and 82.8% lives with income less than \$2 a day (Ibiden).

The present constitutional territory of Bangladesh was under Muslim Rule from 1201 to 1757 AD (BBS, 2009). After then the territory came under British rule with the defeat of last sovereign ruler (Ibid). The British ruled this territory as a province of India called Bengal and Assam from 1757 to 1947(Ibid). After termination of British rule the territory became a part of Pakistan for the purpose of religion and named East Pakistan (Ibid). Majority, about 88% of 164.4 million (World Bank, 2010) peoples are Muslim and over 98% of them speaks Bengali (BBS, 2009). The country got independence from Pakistan and named Peoples Republic of Bangladesh in 1971 after nine months liberation war (Ibid).

Bangladesh formed its constitution in 1972. It has seven divisions, 64 districts and Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh where Chittagong is the main port city and second important place called business city of Bangladesh.

The country rated as developing country in the world, an active member of United Nations and making its progress by setting up Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger within 2015 (World Bank) along with reducing child death, in which the country already achieved good progress and owned prize for it from UN. Moreover ensuring education for all is another main agenda for the country which it trying to achieve under MDG.

Development agencies like World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, Save the Children UK, CIDA and ILO are active in Bangladesh. These organizations published yearly reports by analyzing government steps in development, besides they work directly in the field together with government. These organizations reports and funding directly influence government decisions and outcomes. The country recently lanced a program called digital Bangladesh with a motive to publish national reports and ensure all the citizen services through online and websites. Statistical reports are not conducted very often by Bangladesh government, not in every year rather development agencies are active in publishing country development reports every year.

2.2.1. International Child Rights

Working on implementing human rights worldwide, the world leaders of United Nations (UN) realized children under age of 18 need special cares for ensuring their rights (UNICEF, 2008a). Children should be treated in separate way because their need and context are different from adult (Ibid). By realizing this, in 1989, United Nations General Assembly adopted a convention for child rights, to lawfully combine whole world together, to ensure children rights (Ibid). According to CRC, less than 18 years old would be categorized as child. Consequently the CRC came into force on 2 September, 1990 and it was ratified by 193 countries, including all members of United Nations, except United States and Somalia, until December 2008 (Wickenberg et. al, 2009). From then the whole world got a common concept about child right.

The CRC was the first legal instrument for combining world together in ensuring children full range of human rights- civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights (UNICEF, 2008a). The aim of CRC is to implement a common law for every child everywhere to ensure full range of human rights. The principles of CRC's are, ensuring non discrimination to any child, devotion should be given to the best interest of child, all the children have right to life, survival and development and all should have respect to the views of children (Ibid). 54 articles with two optional protocols, CRC describes basic human rights for children that everywhere every children have right to survival; to be fully developed; to be protected from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; to participate fully in family, social and cultural life. According to CRC all these principles should be adopted by every country for every child who has signed it. Through international organization CRC Committee monitor every country about how they are implementing child rights. Even all States parties are obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on how the rights are

being implemented. States must report initially two years after acceding to the Convention and every five years thereafter (CRC, 1989). Therefore, after CRC children are recognized as different category from adults and given importance in a separate way that, they should be respected and to have opportunities for development and security also participation and influence. Moreover other conventions and international policies had taken to improve child right condition worldwide.

2.2.2. International Conventions and Measures

Some conventions and international policies which are related with child work and child education are given below:

ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 (1973)

According to the convention minimum age of employment is no less than the age at completion of compulsory schooling, which should not be less than 15 years (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, 2008: 14). A country with insufficient economic and educational facilities may consider an initial age of 14 years (Ibiden). National laws may permit the employment of children who are aged 13-15 (or 12-14 where the minimum age is 14) in limited light work, which does not interfere with their development or does not affect their attendance at school (Ibiden).

ILO Worst Form of Child Labor Convention No.182 (1999)

Working more than forty three hours per week or in specified hazardous condition when children aged five to seven, are referred as “hazardous child labor” (Ibid : 12). The convention requires countries to implement time-bound measures to eliminate the WFCL (Ibid: 14).

Millennium Development Goals (2000)

Millennium Development Goals had set up development agenda for developing countries, with targets for 2015. It consists with eight goals and most relevant goals are achieving universal primary education goal and eliminating gender disparity in terms of access to primary and secondary education (Ibiden).

Education for All Goals (2000)

“Global education agenda outlining six goals to meet the basic learning needs of every child, youth and adult. Most important goals are: ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly

girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic communities have access to free and compulsory primary education; equitable access to appropriate life skills and lifelong learning programs; and ensuring quality of education in all aspects so that measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills” (Ibiden).

Global Taskforce on Child Labor and Education for All

“This is a collaborative partnership of key stakeholders (ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Global March against Child Labor), in the area of education and child labor. The main objective is to assist developing countries in eliminating child labor and achieving education for all by 2015. The Global Taskforce will work on strengthening knowledge on the link between child labor and education; advocacy and social mobilization; and policy coherence, program support and developing partnerships” (Ibiden).

Global Campaign for Education

“A civil society movement that aims to hold governments to account for their promises made to provide education for all (ensuring every girl, boy, woman and man has the right to free, quality public education). The campaign was formed in 1999, is active in over 100 countries across the world, and brings together civil society organizations, trade unions, child rights campaigners, teachers, parents and students. The international secretariat headquarters is based in Johannesburg (South Africa) with two smaller offices in London (UK) and Washington (USA)” (Ibiden).

Understanding Children’s Work

“As part of broader efforts towards eliminating child labor, the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank initiated the inter-agency research project, Understanding Children’s Work, in December 2000. The project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, unanimously adopted at the 1997 International Conference on Child Labor, which laid out the priorities for the international community to address child labor. The Agenda specifically identified the crucial need for better information on the child labor phenomenon. The project also responds to the need articulated at the Oslo Conference to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination among the three partner agencies in the child labor field” (Ibid: 15).

Plenty of research done by organization like Understanding Children's Work, inter agency research co-operation project between ILO, UNICEF and World Bank group demonstrate that higher rates of working children also have higher rates of children not attending school (Ibid: 16). All these policies and organizations are working in Bangladesh to improve child right condition in the country.

2.2.3. Child rights in Bangladesh

Although Bangladesh signed and ratifies UN Convention of the rights of children (CRC), child right practices and laws are still there in relation to social and cultural aspects. Cultural practices have great influence on country's law but theoretically the country reformed its child laws recently.

Before emerged as an independent country in 1971, Bangladesh was ruled by Pakistani constitution which mainly follows Islamic law 'Shariah'. According to Islamic law child becomes an adult at puberty level which is 12 for girls and 15/16 for boys (Siddiqui, 2001:10). Besides, marriage registration law is also different for male and female in Bangladesh, its 18 for girls and 21 for boys (Giani, 2006:2). After independence there are two Child Acts have passed in national parliament one was on 1974 and another is in 2011, in the mean time country generally operated its development projects by 'Five Years Plans'. In 1974 'Child Act', Bangladesh declared under age of 16 as child (Ibiden). Bangladesh signed and ratified CRC in 1990 marking that children have right to life, survival and development in national agenda (UNICEF, 2008b). After that it adopted Child Act 1994 by recognizing the convention.

Finally all people under age of 18 are considered as child is declared in 'National Child Act 2011'. But ministry of women and children affairs is still together in Bangladesh. There is no separate ministry or child right commission in Bangladesh. Initially human rights commission deals the issues of child rights but they do not deal in the sector of child empowerment or decision making. Child has been translated by development agencies and government of Bangladesh as 'Shishu' in Bengali which only refer new born and infants (Giani, 2006:3). Again for teen ager it uses 'Kishore' in Bengali, for 14-18 years old (National Child Act 2011). Birth registration was not that much efficient before 2007 in Bangladesh, government made birth registration compulsory from 2007 and made it mandatory for any kind of job, admission and other public service (Chowdhury, 2007)

Initially parents inform about the age of their child and send them school when they thought their child is ready for it (Blanchet, 1996). At all, social systems and adult child

relations are extremely gender hierarchical both within and outside the family (Giani, 2006:3). Parents specially father decide matters related on child future and development, men have special authority over their wives and children, raising up also different for boys and girls where girls expected to be passive and polite while boys trained as future leaders (Ibiden). Property right is also different for boys and girls which follow Islamic law ‘Shariah’.

However ‘National Child Act 2011’ in Bangladesh made an up to date child act for ensuring child rights in Bangladesh by emphasizing early child education, freedom of expression, child friendly school environment and abolishing all forms of physical and mental punishment from school (National Child Act 2011). But recognition of children as a different social group and ensuring freedom of thoughts and expression is not established yet, which government expressed as a plan and will be implemented slowly (Ibid). Besides minimum age of working in Bangladesh is 14, this is made up by ratifying ILO convention of child labor, and expressed to abolish all forms of child works within 2018 (Ibid). But abolishing of child home servants, street children and child begging had not given concentration in child act, engaging in this type of work or in any work always possible in Bangladesh as children thought as an economic assets to the adults.

2.2.4. Children as an economic asset in Bangladesh

Children are often seen as an economic asset in Bangladesh (Cain, 1977) especially if a male child. Adult consider children as an extra work force and child work as initial stage to join full workforce (Giani, 2006:4). Bangladesh has ratified ILO Child Labor Convention 182 and any children could engage in work when he is 14 (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, 2008). In employing children from 14 at work employers have to follow (in theoretically) ILO conventions about working hours and recreational facilities for children.

The adult child hierarchical relation and adult decision together with control over children work and choice perceived children as an economic asset, and new born child added economic value in family (Giani, 2006:4) especially male child. Moreover hard core poor families adopt children as earner to the household for reducing economic vulnerability, while UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO research found that only 8.1% family will slightly enter into poverty after removing child earning (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO; 2008:10).

At least, some development policies had been taken to improve the situation of child work and child education in Bangladesh.

2.2.5. Policies taken by Bangladesh government for child rights

Here are the development policies for children that are active and operating until at present in Bangladesh.

Primary Education (Compulsory) Act 1990

“Primary education was made free and compulsory in respect of both enrolment and attendance to all children. Compulsory primary education committees with six members were set up at local level. The committee had the responsibility of ensuring the enrolment and attendance of all primary school aged children in their locality. However this committee was not successful instrument for implementing compulsory primary education in recent years” (Ibid: 17).

National Child Act 2011

Bangladesh has formed National Child Act 2011 with the correction of age limit as child. New child act prepared with the recommendation of CRC and tried to address rights of children by considering CRC’s principles (National Child Act, 2011).

National Education Policy 2010

Bangladesh introduced national education policy 2010 with some major emphasis on teacher student ratio, pre primary education in all school, enhancement of primary education from grade V to grade VIII, introducing new forms of vocational and technical education and monthly allowance along with food for education program (National Education Policy, 2010).

Food for Education program (FFE)

Bangladesh introduced Food for Education program (FFE) in July 1993. This project provides monthly food grain for free if any family judged as poor and has at least one school going child attending school that month (Meng & Ryan, 2008: 1).

Child Work Policy

Compulsory primary education enhancement up to grade VIII is closely related with the minimum age of child work according to ILO minimum age convention no. 138. Now children under age of 14 could not engage in commercial work in Bangladesh and after completion of primary school till grade VIII children generally aged 14 as minimum age of

grade I enrolment is 6. The country is also a signatory and ratified member ILO Worst Form of Child labor Convention no. 182.

Millennium Development Goal (MDG)

With MDG Bangladesh set up its goal that by 2015 the country will ensure hundred percent primary education enrollment for children with quality education.

PCAR

Bangladesh government introduced a program name PCAR (protection of children at risk) in 2007 but about 94% of street children are remaining out of any government or non government coverage (Daily Star, 2008). “UNICEF took over the PCAR project (previously called ARISE) from UNDP in 2007. UNICEF seeks to improve and expand the protection, education, health and development opportunities for children living on the streets. In 2009, in total about 8000 children will benefit from PCAR interventions in 68 open air schools, 18 drop-in centers and three emergency night shelters out of so far:

- 7,800 children received health care services 6,900 children have completed the six month course on non formal education
- 6,200 children have received life skills training
- 2,900 children availed drop in centers’ services including emergency night shelters
- 820 children received vocational/skills training
- 631 children were placed with jobs and/or self employed
- 476 children received need based psychosocial support
- 241 children were reintegrated with their families or communities
- 47 children received legal aid support” (UNICEF, 2009: 5).

Basic Education for Hard-To-Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project

This project is financed by UNICEF, SIDA and CIDA.

General Objective:

To enhance the life options of the urban working children and adolescents to access their rights to education, protection and development and participation

Specific Objectives:

- To provide quality non-formal, life-skills-based basic education to 200,000 urban working children and adolescents ages 10 to 14 years of which at least 60% will be girls.
- To provide 20,000 (out of 200,000) urban working children and adolescents (13+ age group) with livelihood skills training, and access to support systems to ensure optimal use of life-skills-based basic education to improve their life.
- Advocate at City and National levels for education, social and economic policies in favor of working children and their families and for protecting children from hazardous working environment.
- Increase awareness of all relevant stakeholders to act in favor of progressive elimination of child labor (BEHTRUWC, 2010).

Birth registration

Bangladesh introduced the birth registration act 2004, the country made birth registration mandatory for every citizen and started birth and death registration project supported by UNICEF and funded by Netherlands and the European Commission (IRIN, 2008). Moreover it will help government to ensure basic rights of the citizens. Forty percent of total population had received a birth certificate within 2008 and another thirty percent had been registered already and will get their certificate but the remaining thirty percent which are described as hard to reach, mobile or invisible from mainstream society are under way to register in Bangladesh (IRIN, 2008).



Photo: [Shamsuddin Ahmed/IRIN](#)

There are thousands of sex workers in Bangladesh who live and die unrecorded, most of whom have no place to sleep

The country is giving importance through the international organization on birth registration to stop early marriage, ensure workers rights, protect underage children from sex work and trafficking also to protect children under age of 13 to bearing criminal responsibility (IRIN, 2008). It is always difficult to prove children age in terms of protection by law moreover child marriage and missing children are also evident (IRIN, 2008). UNICEF is working for link up the birth registration process with children immunization services and education enrollment (IRIN, 2008).

Chapter – 3

Street Children

This chapter contains the definition of street children by different scholars and it followed by the definition and category of street children in Bangladesh. It describes the living and working status of street children the country and various occupations they are involved in, together with their vulnerabilities and abusive behavior from adults and especially from the members of law enforcement agencies.

3.1. Definition of Street Children

Street children have been characterized both as brave, given their “remarkable survival instincts and courage in [their] daily struggle” (Verma, 1999: 5), and hopeless, because of the “aberrant families who abandon, abuse, or neglect” them’ (Aptekar & Ciano-Federoff, 1999:35). In the 1990s, many researchers shifted their work from describing the street child problem to drawing on child-centered and child-rights perspectives to understand children’s relationships with their social environments, at the same time the number of street children started to increase globally (West, 2001:1). However, advances in methods for these investigations did not accompany these shifts, and the resulting literature was a mass of case studies on individuals or small groups of children (Nalkur, 2009:1014). West argues that the tendency of globalization is relevant with the increase of the numbers of street children globally from 1990 and the internationalization of child rights, he also claimed global economic reforms for this tendency such as reducing state welfare services, he gave examples of Britain and Mongolia where street children increased after cut down of welfare issues (West, 2001:1, 2).

Moreover, according to Nulkur, street children are distinctively successful in their plight to “survive” life on the streets, by quoting other scholars definition, he also defined that street children promote multiple survival tactics, including aggression, drug abuse, and violence (Nalkur, 2009:1014). They are characteristically independent, as they do not respond to authority and are rarely held legally accountable for their actions (Ibiden). Their gang culture prompts a group identity that is both frightening and repulsive to others (Connolly & Ennew, 2001). Consequently, Lugalla and Mbwambo defined street children as “culturally rootless,” referring to their rural backgrounds and their tendency to maintain no ties to their families (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). Most have renounced their home language, are illiterate, and have not gone to school’ (Nalkur, 2009:1014). As well as street children are defined in many

ways and with many Bengali terms in Bangladesh, in relation with their living and working pattern.

3.2.1. Street children in Bangladesh

The widely accepted definition of street children comes from UNICEF in Bangladesh. UNICEF defines street children as ‘who is of the street and on the street’ (Aktar, 2004), that means who works all day in the street pass their times, eat and go back to the family at night for sleep are children on the street and those who work, pass time and sleep on street are children of the street.



Source: © UNICEF Bangladesh/Shehzad Noorani

Therefore children living, working and passing their times in streets with or without parents is called street children, these floating children usually eat, sleep and work on the street may live in one place and sometime move to other place. They generally sleep at footpath, railway station, bus station and in other public places at night and found in district and thana (Sub district) headquarter (Ahmed et al., 2003:3). The Bengali term of street children is ‘Pathshishu’ and informally people used ‘Tokai’ to address them, ‘Tokai’ means rag pickers who use to collect waste paper, bottle, shoes and other item from road and dustbin. These floating children are also named as disadvantaged children, hard to reach children, urban working children and children at risk or in need of special protection to associate them with support and reintegration (Conticini & Hulme, 2005:4).

Although any reliable surveys have not been conducted for the actual numbers of street children but it predicted to be increasing day by day (Daily Star, 2008a). Here the table

shows the number of street children in main six districts and total number in Bangladesh at 2005.

Location	Number of street children
Dhaka	249,200
Chittagong	55,856
Rajshahi	20,426
Khulna	41,474
Barisal	9,771
Sylhet	13,165
Bangladesh (total)	679,728
Bangladesh (total projected for 2014)	1,144,754
Bangladesh (total projected for 2024)	1,615,330

Source: 'Estimation of the Size of Street Children and their Projection for Major Urban Areas of Bangladesh 2005' commissioned to BIDS by ARISE, Cited from UNICEF 2009

IN Bangladesh cities are overcrowded with plenty of slums, squatter settlements and pavement dwellings (UNICEF, 2009). Children in Bangladesh are living on streets with their parents or without parents if they have been orphaned or abandoned by parents (Ibid). Children also run away from home and shifted in street due to poverty and physical abuse of parents or caregivers (Ibid). Other reasons of child migration to street are related with urban migration and causes addressed as natural disaster, low working condition and limited working facilities in rural areas which forced children to migrate in city streets with or without parents.

3.2.2. Child migration to street in city areas

A baseline survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics reported the reasons of children migrating to street, where majority of their respondents shows poverty and hunger as the main cause of street migration (BBS, 2003). Other reasons of child migration to street are stated as run away from home, step mother/father, earn money, no one look after them, abuse respectively (BBS, 2003). At all, economic poverty remains as strong argument about child migration in city areas. National reports and surveys also represented economic poverty and

economic shock such as land erosion, floods and shortage of food as the main reasons of children migrating to street (Conticini & Hulme, 2005:7). In Bangladesh it is argued that low income and lack of income opportunities in rural areas compel children to migrate city areas to contribute their household income (Ibiden).

However Conticini argued that economic factors and shocks are only played very limited role in decision of children migrating to street where non economic factors are evidently high in this decision (Ibiden). Such as collapse of adult child relation especially with parents or care giver in terms of emotional bonding (Ibiden). He emphasized on 'run away' children where alleviation of economic poverty could be a partial solution, as the decision of child migration not only process of vulnerability but also process of empowerment and freedom (Ibid:9). So beside economic matter as pull factor there are family environment for children are remains as strong push factor in migration of children in streets.

Whatever the reasons of child migration to street are, their living and working conditions are as worst as vulnerable without guidance and protection.

3.3. Living and working condition of street children

One of the national daily newspaper reported on street children that, they are found in bazaars (Market Place), commercial areas, bus terminals, hotels and parks, on the pavements, around the stadium and they try to earn a living through collecting garbage, breaking bricks or pushing rickshaws, some of them work in roadside tea stalls while some are just beggars, some street children are involved in petty crime where some underworld gangs use the street children in drug peddling, snatching, toll collection and in other crimes (Daily Star, 2008a).

“Fatema, who is 9 years old, works at Rampura ‘kacha bazaar’ (Vegetable Market), she collects fish from the fish market and sells them to earn money. The men who work in the market treat the children shoddily and inhumanly. The child was crying and saying to me: "I went to the bazaar to collect fish apa, the shopkeeper poured ice-water (thanda borof ar pani dale dicche) on me and slapped me. I could not collect any fish. What will I eat today apa (Sister)” (Daily Star, 2009).

“Kalam does not know his identity. He cannot remember his parents, not even have any near and dear ones. He was born and grown up on a road at Hazaribag in the city. The 10 years old boy feels his mother most whenever he becomes sick. During his sickness in last month, he was crying by the name of mother on the roadside. He could not go to a hospital with his very little money or could not buy his own food or any medicine. Nobody paid

attention to him. Kalam's mental and physical agony was culminating thinking the fate of one of his peers who died untreated after suffering from this sort of fever. He left on the roadside with high fever, chill, rigor and repeated convulsions. After 3 days, one kind passerby did notice and admitted him into the Mitford Hospital with his own money. It was also found that the street children are also habituated to professional blood donation which fuels the spread of transmissible diseases" (The Daily Star, 2008a).

The photograph below is showing a female child hawker who use to sell lemon during traffic signal. This is very common scenario of the streets of Dhaka where lots of children sell cheap goods and beg, in a risky way during traffic signal.



Source: UNICEF Bangladesh, Shehab

The baseline surveys conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and by other organizations or by researcher groups show a small number of interviewee or sample size. Therefore it is difficult to draw the actual picture of working and living condition of street children though it is imaginable that how vulnerable situation those children could face in childhood without association of state, society or other agencies. Besides, researcher founds hesitant, unwilling interviewee as they fear about interview, being tired at day times who work at night and being engaged in work at night time (Ahmed et al, 2003:8). Even most of the younger street children do not know their actual age, occupation, income level, parent's income, when they left from home (Ibiden). As well, most of the street children engaged in sex work, pick pocket, drug business, theft and do not report about their occupation in front of researcher, they like to report other works if their activities are anti social (Ibiden). Their living status depends on their earning and work and most often they move from one place to another place.

Living status

Street children usually move from one place to another place for better working facilities, sleeping place and for weather. They often have to sleep on street, park, railway and bus stations, government buildings, they have to change open sleeping place due to rain and in winter time. Night guard, other guards and police made difficulties for street children in sleeping. Basically street children love to live with their street friends together as Conticini estimates social relationship with peers as main livelihood asset of street children (Conticini, 2005).

The baseline survey conducted on street children at 2003 represented the living status of street children in many places of Bangladesh and the most important reasons reported by those children for moving the living place was having better working facilities while majority of children move from one place to another for better work, second major reason was identified to have better sleeping place at night and other reasons was avoid police harassments, stay with friends was reported respectively (Ahmed et al, 2003: 20, 21). The survey demonstrated that maximum street children do not use any beds or anything for sleep and some other uses cloths and jute bags for sleeping at night, they change their sleeping place from street to stations and other accessible government building during rain (Ibid:23). Bathing facilities was reported accessible and most of them bath everyday though toilet facilities are very limited and a significant number of street children use open place for toilet (Ibid: 24).

80% earnings of these children are being spent on food, some reported to beg food from restaurant and even some collect food from dustbin (Ibiden). In addition 39% of street children reported to have two meals in a day followed by 3.1% have one meal in a day and 0.7% said sometimes they starve a day and most children go to bed at night without having food at least one or two nights in a week (Ibiden). More than 80% street children said they do not have any winter clothing and high proportion of them became sick in winter for not having cloth (Ibiden). While more than half of street children reported they feel sick and fever as common sickness followed by water borne disease and headache, usually no one look after them during sickness even though some reported to being looked after by friends (Ibid:21). Majority of them consul the person in the pharmacy and took medicine from him while very limited number of them even heard about organization and facilities associated for them for health care as well as for other issues (Ibid:21, 24).

There is no official statistics about drug user among street children but a large number of street children spend their money on drug and when one of them is asked about reasons for using drug, he replied “addiction is very good thing and it doesn’t harm body” while his peers agreed with it (The Daily Star, 2008b). At all street children engages in different types of works for their survival whither paid or unpaid and if paid, they spent their money both for basic needs and for other causes.

Working status

Children in urban areas without effort of family and no supervision of law are under great threat now a days; in informal sectors employers are interested about children, due to cheapest labor and at all no bargaining power, ready to work long hours (Ahmed et al, 2003:xi).



Photo: Durdana Ghias, Cited from Daily Star

“Rubel was pushing a rickshaw full of sacks and a man was sitting on the sacks. Though 12 years old, the malnourished boy looked not more than 10 years of age” (Daily Star, 2008b).

BBS 2003 baseline survey found that first work of majority of street children was beggar, paper picker, hawker, flower seller, garage worker, cooli (who carry goods) and helper, followed by domestic worker and agricultural worker (Ahmed et al, 2003:15). Even most of children in Dhaka city work without payment just for food and sleeping place. In 1st May, the daily Protom Alo done an interview session on a market place and almost all the child worker replied that they are working without payment for the same reason (Prothom alo, 2011, accessed on 1st may 2011).

The photograph below is showing a little girl preparing flower for sale in a street footpath.



Source: dhaka-pic.blogspot.com, March, 2007

The average age of these children in engagement of work is 7.81 years and 50% of them started working at the age of 8-11 years while 42% started working before 7 years old, consequently the major reason of starting work was poverty (Ahmed et al, 2003:15). More than half of street children said their parents sent them for work and a significant number of street children were domestic servant before coming to street therefore it indicates that working as a domestic servant made them vulnerable which later shift them to the street (Ibiden). As well as majority of children works 8-12 hours per day followed by more than 12

hours and 83% of them works 7 days in a week (Ibid:18). Despite of long working hours and no off day at all, the children earn \$3.50 to \$4.50 per week and the earnings become better with the age (Ibiden). About 56% of street working children do not like their works and the rest like their works because of earning ability for food cost and very little like their jobs because they can help their family (Ibid:15).

They often injured in work, the nature of injury is mostly cut/wounds followed by back pain due to heavy work load and suffered for injury from less than one week to more than three months (Ibid:21). Almost every street child reported to not use any protection during works (Ibid: 22). Apart from first work as a beggar, street children are also compelled by adults to beg.

Street children as beggar

Street children are being using as street beggar in Dhaka city. So called gang leaders are compelling alone street children to beg for them by torturing and by making the children disable. An arrested gang leader had reported to the police that they injured the kidnapped children and intolerably torture the children to make disable beggar (Prothom Alo, 2010). He also reported that if they see any children walking on the street who do not have any parents or guardian, they kidnapped those children, store in a big ball and gave them very little food which made this children look like an skeleton and people use to give them money when they saw a child like this and all the money goes to the gang, they also cut hand and leg of children to make them disable (Ibid). These gang have good communication with police and after reporting, police do not arrest them, the children also been threaten about police from the gang member if they rejected to do what the gang members telling to do (Ibid).

After those incidents high court of Bangladesh declared the removal of child begging from Dhaka city and asked government to show causes about why child begging by making them disable is still not stopped and had not taken any steps for this with having law (ATN news, 2011). Street children are also used as picketer in political and other general public protest.

Street children as picketer

Recent capital market fall protest of general public in Bangladesh had been reported and broadcasted that, street children (locally called 'Tokai') are throwing stone in the office building of capital market. Although these children do not have any relation with protest, may they don't know why they came to the event but they do what they told to do. Most of the

time in front of police they are throwing stones, breaking things in public protests (Daily Janakantha, 2011).

Besides poor living and working condition, street children had to remain under sexual and other vulnerabilities.

3.4. Sexual and other Vulnerability

UNICEF reported, children living on the streets are mostly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation even if they live with their families because for poverty and lack of services parents are not in a position to provide appropriate care to their child (UNICEF, 2009: 2). These children on the street grow up without suitable accommodation, protection, education, health care, food, safe drinking water, security, supervision, recreation and guidance (Ibiden). Often these children work in hazardous and low-waged jobs to support their families for survival as well as doing work without education trapped them in a cycle of low-skilled, low-income employment which pushes them into the cycle of poverty (Ibiden). According to UNICEF these children frequently find themselves the victims of sexual abuse and risk of HIV infection, physical torture and trafficking (Ibiden). Criminal networks also engage street children in commercial sex work, smuggling, stealing and distribution of drugs and weapons which leaves no other options to many children (Ibiden). This hardship and abuse of life made the children reluctant and distrustful which later become difficult for the service provider to help them (Ibiden).

Moreover, ECPAT global monitoring report on Bangladesh reported that “Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) continues to be a widespread problem in Bangladesh, although there are no reliable statistics on the extent of commercial sexual exploitation of children, it is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 to 29,000 victims of CSEC in Bangladesh, about 27,000 Bangladeshi women and children have been forced into prostitution in India, and around 40,000 children from Bangladesh are involved in prostitution in Pakistan. Government statistics usually bracket women and children together with no distinction by age.

Despite the limitations in quantifying the problem, a growing number of qualitative studies and reports by national and international organizations have provided a sound base for understanding the nature, extent and causes of CSEC in Bangladesh.

There are indications that in recent years the incidence of the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the country has changed. In addition to child marriage and traditional/customary laws that contribute to the commercial sexual exploitation of children,

more incidences of child trafficking for sexual purposes, child prostitution, and child pornography are evident.

It appears that the majority of Bangladeshi children forced into prostitution are based in brothels, with a smaller number of children exploited in hotel rooms, parks, railway and bus stations and rented flats” (ECPAT, 2006: 11, 12). Along with sexual vulnerabilities children in the street often faces negative behaviors and torture from the member of law enforcement agency who suppose to protect the children.

3.5. Law enforcement agencies behavior towards street children

The photo below has taken from an article of guardian which covered the news of garments worker strike and the headline was ‘children beaten by police as they joined garment workers strike’ (Gardian, 2010). Though child work under age of fourteen is banned in Bangladesh but many more could be found in different factories (Gardian, 2010). Instead of taking children in safe place during strike, police are beating them.



Source: Gardian, 2010. Photograph: Munir Uz Zaman/AFP/Getty Images

Almost in every survey and reports, street children reported about rude behavior of police.

"Whenever I go out to collect bhangari (recyclable goods) with a sack on my back the police beat me up suspecting that there are cocktails or other explosives in the sack," said Rana, a 12-year-old boy who has left home to live with other street children at Paltan in the city” (Islam, 2007).

“Lovely is a ten-year old child. She left her house two years ago. Her father used to beat her mother and as a child she could not bear the pain. She left her house, came to Dhaka by launch and got lost in this big city. She stayed for one week in Kamalapur rail station without any food. The policemen used to beat her. After seven days of starvation, she got some food that was thrown out from a hotel. She met a man who brought her to the drop in centre” (Daily Star, 2009).

In BBS survey 2003, one fifth of the street children reported they were arrested by the police and 50% arrest had no reason (Ahmed et al, 2003:19, 20). Nobody reported about any good behavior or information or help from police rather they had been threaten from older persons of police arrest (Prothom Alo, 2010).

Chapter – 4

Education Policy and Street Children

This chapter discusses about education policy for street children by briefing about education structure of Bangladesh, recent progress, facilities and probabilities for children within education policy, enrolment of street children in education program and some reasons for education policy failure (not achieving the target of each and every school age child in school).

4.1. Education as a special emphasis for development policies for street children

Children living in the street have to take care about themselves whether they with or without parents because for poverty and working situation, parents are not in that position to take good care of their children. Therefore country's existing policies for children can not directly benefit to street children as there is no valid statistics about street children and for living in street they are actually in out of society. As well as running so many programs separately like education, nutrition, HIV, sanitary and pure drinking water facilities, vaccination etc for ensuring child rights issues is difficult for a third world country like Bangladesh where major populations lives below poverty line.

Education is the most cost effective possible way for Bangladesh to mainstreaming street children in the society and to ensure their rights according to the country's law and policies since the child right programming could be operated under education policy. School enrolment could be useful registration process for government to count child population and simultaneously could be helpful to operate development policies throughout school. Early learning facilities can really improve formal education of street children as most of them live without parent's supervision and guidance which was necessary before to admit in formal school system. In addition learning with joy can impact on their aim of life and can give them idea about their rights in the country.

The global perspective of child rights policies first comes from CRC to ensure, protect and promote children rights everywhere in the world specifically education, and the right to be free from all kind of exploitive activities that harm child's physical, cognitive and social development (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, 2008: 14). Secondly there is ILO convention, as street children survival is closely related with child work since they have to work for bearing their living cost or to support their families. Later it comes about Millennium Development Goal (MDG), Education for All (EFA) program and other international organization like UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank for their initiatives to ensure child rights. Bangladesh is

signatory and ratified person to CRC and ILO conventions and an active member of United Nations for which UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank are also working alongside government to progress child right situation. At all Bangladesh could ratify the conventions and could successfully implement international organizations policies through education because education systems and facilities could support that.

4.2.1. Education system and facilities in Bangladesh

THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BANGLADESH															
Age	Grade														
25+	XX														
24+	XIX			Ph. D	PostMBBS Dipl	Ph. D(Engr)		Ph.D(Medical)							
23+	XVIII			M.Phil	M.Phil(Medical)			Ph. D (Education)							
22+	XVII	MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA		LLM	M B B S BDS	MSc(Engr)		MSc(Agr)		MBA	M.Ed & M A(Edn)	MFA	MA(LSc)		
21+	XVI	Bachelor (Hons)	Masters (Prel)	LLB(Hons)	BSc.Eng BSc.Agr BSc.Text BSc.Leath	BSc.Eng	BSc (Tech.Edn)	IBBA	B.Ed Dip.Ed & BP ED	Dip.(LSc)	Karni				
20+	XV		Bachelor (Pass)												
19+	XIV														
18+	XIII														
17+	XII	Secondary	Examination			HSC									
16+	XI		HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION							HSC Voc, C in Ag	C in Edu.	Pre-Degree	Diploma in Comm	Diploma in Nursing	Alim
15+	X		Examination		SSC	TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational		ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS							
14+	IX	SECONDARY EDUCATION													
13+	VIII	JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION													
12+	VII														
11+	VI														
10+	V	PRIMARY EDUCATION													
9+	IV														
8+	III														
7+	II														
6+	I														
5+		PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION													
4+															
3+															

Source: BANBEIS

“The present education system of Bangladesh may be broadly divided into three major stages, viz. primary, secondary and tertiary education. Primary level institutions impart primary education basically. Junior secondary/secondary and higher secondary level institutions impart secondary education. Degree pass, degree honors, masters and other higher-level institutions or equivalent section of other related institutions impart tertiary education. The education system is operationally categorized into two streams: primary education (Grade I-V) managed by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) and the other system is the post-primary education which covers all other levels from junior secondary to higher education under the administration of the Ministry of Education (MOE). The post-primary stream of education is further classified into four types in terms of curriculum: general

education, madrasah education, technical-vocational education and professional education” (BANBEIS, 2006).

Bangladesh formed new education policy in 2010 and it says that confirming basic education for all is constitutional responsibility of country and right of every person in Bangladesh, in that way the government gave high emphasis on primary education (National Education Policy 2010: 4). The education policy formed by considering constitution of Bangladesh and universal child right convention and it had targeted of hundred percent primary education enrolment within 2011- 2012 (Ibid: 1,5). The education policy also mentioned to enhance basic primary education from grade five to grade eight within 2012 and children could have vocational training and education after completing primary education, in addition number of vocational and technical training center will also be increased (Ibid:16). Students after completing primary education till grade eight could enroll in government and non government vocational and technical institute (Ibiden) but primary education had been made mandatory and will be provided for all in Bangladesh.

4.2.2. Primary Education

“Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh is mainly responsible for policy formulation, supervision, planning, monitoring and evaluation and initiating legislative measures relating to primary and non-formal education. Bangladesh has been trying relentlessly to uphold the cause of education for all since its emergence as an independent country. Article 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh stipulates that primary education shall be the responsibility of the State. To bear this responsibility primary education in Bangladesh underwent a great deal of changes and development during the last decades. Bangladesh is a signatory to the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) held at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990. Bangladesh is also a signatory to the Summit of 9 high Population Countries held on 16 December 1993 in Delhi. Bangladesh participated in the World Education Forum meeting held in Senegal, Dakar in April 2000. The Government enacted Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1990, created a separate Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) in 1992, introduced compulsory primary education program in 68 Upazilas in 1992 and expanded this program all over the country in 1993” (MoPME, 2009-2010). At present primary education program made some progress.

Recent Progress in primary education

The teacher student ratio is not balanced in Bangladesh therefore the two years progress in primary education report published that government are recruiting new teachers in vacant post and they recruited 1852 head teacher together with 51289 assistant teachers within 2009-2010 (MoPME, 2010). Moreover private primary school establishment, management and registration process had been made easier to encourage set up of private primary schools (Ibiden). Furthermore to increase percentage of poor student admission and presence, prevent drop-out and work of school going child, in addition, to improve quality of education government is giving 100tk (\$1.40)¹ per month to the parents and for more than one children of same parents are getting 125tk (\$1.76) and the number of recipient of this monthly allowance had been increased from 4.8 million to 7.8 million at present to confirm poor student's education (Ibiden).

In 2010, government supplied hundred percent new books to primary schools previously it was 50%, the government had increased primary school scholarship and had introduced pre primary education from 2010 (Ibiden). In addition, 22833 government primary schools, 7506 registered private primary schools and 869 community schools successfully running pre primary education, all the material for pre primary education had been served and government had plan to run pre primary education in every school within 2011, the teachers recruitment and other necessary training for teachers will be done within 2011(Ibiden). Besides government is setting 1500 addition primary schools in different villages and they constructed sanitary toilets, cyclone center, arsenic free tubewells together with reconstructions and additional rooms for schools.

The table below is showing the number of formal system primary schools characterized by a diverse typology (based on 2008 figures), in Bangladesh at 2009 along with number of teachers and students. Types 1-7 are under the jurisdiction of MOPME (about 86% in terms of total enrolment), while types 8-10 are under the jurisdiction of MOE (about 14% in terms of total enrolment) (ASPR, 2009: 8).

¹ Note: \$1=71tk

tk = taka, Bangladesh currency name.

Type of primary Schools	Number of schools	Number of teacher	Number of students
1. Government primary schools (GPS)	37,672	182,899	9,537,571
2. Registered non-government primary schools	20,083	76,875	3,472,799
3. Experimental schools	54	221	10,346
4. Community schools	3,263	8,772	388,051
5. Non-registered non-government primary schools	966	2,460	99,564
6. Kindergarten	2,987	16,980	226,187
7. NGO schools	408	763	25,872
8. Primary sections of secondary schools	1,139	13,021	270,790
9. Ebtedayee madrasahs	6,726	28,227	919,065
10. Primary sections of dakhil, alim, fazil and kamil madrasahs	8,920	35,707	1,051,360
Total	82,218	365,925	16,001,605

Source: ASPR, 2009: 4.

Another steps of government is school feeding activities, they feed 0.6 million students in different area together with 0.5 million in natural disaster affected area with 75 gram high protein biscuits in schools days (MoPME, 2010). And with the help of European commission this program is expanding in poor areas for 2 million more, and along with World Food Organization Bangladesh government had taken a project of school feeding in extreme poor areas of sub districts which will cover 2.64 million more students (Ibiden). Vocational and technical education systems also improved by the government in National Education Policy 2011.

4.2.3. Vocational and technical education

Bangladesh new education policy 2010 declared that it will include pre vocational and information technology education in primary education level and every student have to complete the 8th grade of primary education (National Education Policy, 2010: 15). Student interested in vocational and information technology education can admit on that system. Who will not join in the main system they can receive a six month training program and can own

national competency level one (Ibiden). By completing 9th, 10th and 12th grade student can receive national competency level 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Students after completing SSC or completing national competency level 4 can enroll in diploma programs and after completing diploma students could enroll in gradation level by adjusting credits (Ibid: 16). With this policy government is trying to make faster qualified and trained population and for this they are planning to expand apprenticeship curriculum with establishment of vocational and technical institute in every sub district (Ibiden).

Besides improvements in primary education and vocational education the country also introduced ‘child to child approach’ and ‘learning with joy’ programs.

Child to child approach

Child to child approach is a child centre programming specially running by UNICEF for the school readiness on time. Children who are already in school will encourage younger children to enroll school on time, it's a child to child trust based program which developed at the University of London's Institute of Education and first used in health sector (UNICEF, 2009: 21).

Learning with joy

The learning facilities that most children are getting free of cost from government or other agencies are not reaching to street children. Such as educative programs like ‘Sisimpur’, ‘Meena Cartoon’ broadcasting at the country's national television and helps children to learn basic lessons like counting, alphabets with joy, besides these are child centered programming which makes children aware about their responsibilities and safe guards.

With all these improvements in education systems, education enrolment of street children had not improved until now.

4.4. Education enrolment of street children

Surveys conducted at 2003 on street children found that 60.7 percent street children never attended any formal or non formal school (Ahmed et al, 2003:12). 82 percent children, who had attended school, stopped it, to join their first job even before they were street children (Ibiden). The survey showed that 76.4 percent street children could not read and 75.8 percent of street children could not write at all (Ibiden). However 39.3 percent of street children ever attended school and among them 22.6 percent attended class I but not completed class I, 28.8

percent completed class I, 23.2 percent completed class II, 13 percent completed class III, 6.7 percent class IV and 5.7 percent completed at least class V (Ibiden).

Among the reasons for not attending school the following four were found to be important according to the survey:

- Parents did not send: 44 percent of never attended children mentioned;
- Parents/ Family could not afford: 31 percent of never attended children mentioned;
- Had to work for the family: 9 percent mentioned;
- School education was not important: 8 percent mentioned.

It is noticed that poverty and ignorance about the importance of education were the main causes for not going to school (Ibib: 13).

As well as the street children reported the reasons for currently not going to schools and “the most important reasons were:

- Cannot afford school cost: 41 percent mentioned
- Because of work: 38 percent mentioned
- School education is not important: 9 percent mentioned
- Parents did not send, and now the school age is over: 7 percent mentioned

It can be inferred from the above responses that school for the majority is possible through motivational work and financial support” (Ibiden).

Moreover the survey found that these children don't have clear idea about education but they considered education as an helping element for people in gaining skills and 80.2 percent said that they gave importance to education where 19.8 percent reported that they don't give importance to education and schooling, however, 83 percent showed interest about attending school if opportunity given (Ibiden). Consequently 95 percent of street children showed their high interest and eagerness to acquire skill training if provided only 5 percent had not shown any interest, the preferred job was driver in first position, mechanics in second and garage worker was third to them (Ibid:14).

As well, there are weaknesses in development policies for children which failed to improve education enrolment of street children.

4.5.1. Why these policies are not working to increase education enrolment and other opportunities for street children

The paper discussed that education can give clear idea about child rights to the children; can ensure safer, healthier life with accumulating government services for children. But all the policies taken by Bangladesh government is not ensuring that all the children are getting equal

access in government services as because government have no valid statistics in every year therefore policies taken by state most of time follow previous projection where in real there is much more. As well as the paper discussed that, government had taken policies together with international organization to improve the situation of child rights to ensure hundred percent school enrolments of children with school age in its policy papers. But the research found that all the policies are not really targeting hundred percent children including street children.

First of all the National Child Act 2011 and National Education Policy 2010 had not targeted to mainstream hundred percent street children by confirming that there will be no children in the street without state supervision, though those policies addressed food for education as a policy to keep street children in school but in city areas government school are very limited comparing to the number of children. UNICEF gave total number of street children in Dhaka are 249,200 (UNICEF, 2009) in 2005 which could be said out of formal government school education. There is no apparent policy that could cover all the street children under schooling program.

Besides the policy taken to provide basic education for hard to reach urban working children is only targeting non formal education for 200,000 urban working children and life skill training to limited number out of them where in Dhaka city there were more than 200,000 street children at 2005 (Ibid). In addition, PCAR project is also targeted and benefiting very limited number. But all these development policy could work if government target to cover all the street children under schooling program. As all government school had opened pre primary education, there is no necessity to provide non-formal education in a separate way. Research also found no linkage in all development policies. State and development organizations sometime together sometime separately are working for different issues like HIV, Nutrition programs, non formal education, sanitation, safe drinking water. But all these issues could be done under schooling program in a joint way.

At all, some major reasons are addressed for education policy failure for street children.

4.5.2. Major reasons for education policy failure

There is push factor which forced children to migrate in the street which the paper discussed about reasons of child street migration. Moreover pull factor working together for which most of the children engaged in work. In 2004 total 3.9 to 5.3 million children in primary school aged children was categorized as extreme poor on various criteria (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, 2008: 19). According to UNICEF, UNESCO and ILO, the push factors that children engaged in work rather than school are:

- Extreme poverty
- Death of earning member in family
- Parental divorce
- Abandonment of children
- Economic shocks
- Catastrophic health problems in family
- Natural calamities.

And the pull factors are:

- Work opportunities for cheap and unskilled labor relative to the inaccessibility of school.
- Economic benefits of sending child to work are greater than that of going to school (Ibiden).

Here comes the tradeoff between child work and child education. As because, all state policies are not targeting hundred percent children for quality accessible education and required training for later occupation, most of street children and their family prefer child work as the best way to survive. Although primary education is free and mandatory in Bangladesh but related indirect cost and lacking of government school in city areas made child work most preferable then education. In addition, there is no assurance that every child could admit in school and could have training for post education occupation. As a result, street children and their parents or relatives (If exist) think that, why should children spend time on education, they easily could be expert in work if they spend time in working instead of education and obviously will earn from work.

In addition, reasons for not attending school was estimated including being busy with household economic activities (16.3%); having to work for wages (9.6%); are weak in education (8.2%); have not found it possible to study or have been unsuccessful in exams (7.2%) (UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, 2008: 24). While it is quite clear that the affordability of education and economic poverty of the household are critical obstacles in children attending school, children are also not going to school because they perceive themselves as being weak students or have been unsuccessful in exams (Ibiden). This indicates a problem in the way schools assist students and how inclusive and effective they are in responding to students with different abilities (Ibiden).

Moreover present formal education system from grade I in Bangladesh start with formal examination, grade sheets and definitely with previous knowledge of reading and writing, students need guidance at home after school to pass in the examination. Furthermore

schools do not have satisfactory implementation of learning with joy, early education, and child to child approach. From primary level schools have merit list systems which make competition among children and required strong supervision and guidance. Such a competition in this early age could impact on children mind that they feel themselves loser or weak in education. Therefore it becomes difficult for street children to find joy in learning in school in formal education system if their parents are illiterate or have no parents.

‘Teachers always give home task which students had to cover at home with guidance of either parents or someone elder literate person. Students have three exams yearly and finally they got a merit position which called ‘roll number’ according to the performance of yearly final exam. All these exams need proper guidance at home for which parents always give pressure to the children’ (Ankan, 11 years old, notes taken during telephone conversation).

Although recently in 2011 government is planning to introduce early learning in every school but no increase in number of school in city area for covering floating children (National Education Policy 2010). Teacher student ratio is also very much unbalanced which prevent quality education with proper supervision and guidance.

Chapter – 5

Conclusion

The paper formulated with street children archive reports in Bangladesh and tried to find the suitable way for their social inclusion. And it suggested education as the prior way for mainstreaming street children and hence analyses the education systems and child right development policies and projects in the country. It found one of the criticisms of CRC's being true here. And that is, although the policies for child right are there in Bangladesh government's agenda in policy paper but there is lots of gaps in implementing. They just made the policies with the recommendations of CRC committee and international organizations but had not done a central plan with future projection about how to do it.

The findings revealed that one policy is operating vaccination in slums and streets another is working for sanitation plus some other is working for early child education, anti child labor, food for education, suddenly, just for some days not in a regular basis. And plenty of children remain out of all those policies because the country has no valid up to date statistics with future projection. For population census this country has to wait for outside funding (Nagorik news, 2011). Even the number of street children had counted, not all of them getting benefits from running policies, besides there is no clear plan about the projected number in future. Moreover review of child policies found that, the country yet had not taken any preventive or protective plans for street children.

The paper tried to demonstrate the picture of street children life in Bangladesh in order to focus on the necessity of their social inclusion, guidance and right awareness. It pointed that although law enforcement agency can help street child by guiding or by protecting them from other torture and vulnerability done by adults, but not helping only because of clear strong law, focus and strict instructions from the government. Moreover learning with joy could really attract children in school consequently 'Meena Cartoon', 'Sisimpur' and other joyful equipment could be effective to attract street children in school and aware them about rights since these programs are child centered. Furthermore problems like child begging, child rape, child prostitution, long working hour without payment, no facilities for treatment and sanitation should prevent and protect by state. The country has these facilities and laws but street children are out of these just for less concentration and absence of central, joint planning.

The paper argues that in order to protect street children from vulnerability and prevent child worse works also provide them country's child facilities with awareness, education is

the way. It advocates that compulsory primary education act should be implemented strictly for every single child; consequently government should establish available residential schools for free of tuition fee and law enforcement agency could ensure the policy in field.

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