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THE PARADOX OF THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENT IN BANGLADESH: GOVERNMENT- NGO INTERFACE

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Abstract

Children living on the street are the most vulnerable, exploited and who face the highest risks in Bangladesh. As a special group of children in grave situation these children are helpless being deprived of the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, and clothing and psychological supports. In the absence of the fulfillment of these basic needs, mere survival of the child becomes impossible and they grow up as unwanted members of the society. In Bangladesh many children are exposed to the scourge of poverty and deprivation. The unacceptable health, nutrition, education and social conditions, exposure to abuse, violence and child labor combine to produce a relatively large number of children in especially difficult circumstances. Against this backdrop, Government of Bangladesh has introduced this problem through Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children's Environment (ARISE) project of Ministry of Social Welfare and experience NGO with the financial assistance of UNDP. This study is designed to understand the dimensions of the problem, assess the physical, psychological, social and basic needs of the street children for their growth and development, and finally to have an empirical database to help formulate the future national policies and programs for addressing the problems of the estimated street children and to recommend interventions for Government - NGOs working for street children in Bangladesh.

Key Words: Vulnerable, Children , NGO , Collaboration , Interface

1. INTRODUCTION:

Children migrants with or without parents became street children who are the most vulnerable groups and suffer from human deprivations of all forms and are often abused. These children, both boys and girls are school dropped out or didn't go to school and are inadequately protected for whom the streets, unoccupied dwellings, wastelands etc, become as their only shelters and sources of livelihood.

Bangladesh is experiencing a high rate of urbanization paradoxically with a low of industrial growth. The total number of street children in the urban areas of Bangladesh estimates as 682,882 by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS: 2004). Children living on the streets fall into several categories depending on their socio-economic conditions and living status. Street children live with their families on the streets and also many of them including girls live on their own are either orphans or abandoned by their parents. According to the Department of Social Services (DSS), 45% street children live with their parents, 18% maintain contact with parents and 24% have no contact with the parents. Street children also live in slums with their parents or distant relations estimated as 51% who everyday come to streets; work at launch terminals (13%), in market places (9%) and on railway platforms (8%)[1].

At present only 12% of street children are being covered by the NGOs. Government policies and services are inadequate in reach and to meet the needs of the street children **4** . The government projects on street children are few, short term and focusing on certain needs rather looking at the issues in a holistic manner. However, the government seems committed to improving the situation of street children, it yet to formulate an appropriate policy or to allocate resources to address the street children issues. About 61% street children have never attended any formal or non formal schools. This implies that the overwhelming majority of street children have had virtually no education. They are also vulnerable in terms of their health needs and health-care-seeking behaviours.

The street children are often work as waste pickers, potters, helpers, hawkers, shoe shiner, beggars, etc. A small proportion of them are also involved in theft, snatching, pick pocketing, commercial sex work, drugs, police informing etc[2]. Girls and boys who work on street do not have access to formal education and have limited scope of acquiring vocational skills. Therefore, they become trapped in a cycle of low-skilled, low-income employment that further pushes them into the vicious cycle of inter-generational poverty[3]. More than half (53%)

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[1] Ahmed, Mahiuddin (2004), Education For Street Children: A Case Study of Chetona Bikash Kendra, CDL, Dhaka

[2] Ahmed Kazi Saleh . et. al.(2003), A Baseline Study on Street children of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka

[3] World Bank (2006), Dhaka: Improving Living Conditions for the urban Poor, Dhaka.

[4] CSC. (2001, December). -----. Paper presented at A Civil Society Forum for South Asia on Promoting and Protecting

of the street children earns only Taka 10–20 (about a quarter US dollar) a day. Around 27% works under an employer, and among them 61% are compelled to work longer hours and 52% are tortured by their employers.[4]

The scenario described above confirms a situation whereby the children on the street are the most vulnerable, uncared and underserved. Despite current governmental and nongovernmental efforts theycontinue to be excluded from the mainstream of different development programs. Among the most neglected of the urban poor are the increasing numbers of children who depend for survival on the streets. Within the context of the UN Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), street children have been identified as surviving in 'grave situation' and being amongst those whose rights are the most commonly violated. Living on the margin of society, relying entirely on their own efforts, and with no one to care for them, street children remain as the most vulnerable group.

the Rights of Street Children. Retrieved form http://www.streetchildren.org.uk/reports/Bangladesh%20Child.doc.

2. MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of Most Vulnerable Children on the Street seems to be complicated rather perplexing. The presence of street children in Bangladesh is a symptomatic of under development. The main causes of such underdevelopment are cited as chronic poverty, unemployment, over population, landlessness, illiteracy, natural disasters like floods, typhoons, cyclones, river erosion, etc, malnutrition, exploitation and social conflicts in the rural sector. Recently these antecedents forced the rural people to migrate to urban centers for employment opportunities, better livelihood, social security and welfare. But this continuous migration from rural to urban areas results in an uneven and unplanned urban population growth. These migrating families in search of alternative employment are forced into more vulnerable and tragic situation.

Sometimes children and women are lured into migration from rural homes to the cities and towns with the promise of giving jobs. When they reach the cities they find that no such jobs are available as promised to them. Very often they are forced into prostitution or allowed to work household as aids; they do not get what is due to them as wage in

recognition of their hard labor. As a result, many of them run away and take shelter on the street and start more hazardous life including begging, rags collection and other odd jobs. In the non-formal sector, many of the children work on the streets that are very often termed as 'Street Children.' These children are often referred to as '' floating'' children because; they have no-where to go and nobody to belong to. In Bangladesh, floating child is called *'tokai'*. **6**

Many of the street children in the cities are victims of family break up, increasing rural poverty and landlessness. Children as young as six and seven arrive in cities by ferry, launch and boat from their village homes often unaccompanied, to face the hazards of city life alone and remain unaided. Many of these children are approached by prospective 'employers' –from shopkeepers and hotel owners to pimps and *mastans*. **7**

6.Tokai is a commonly and verbally used term showing alters negligence and disrespect the floating children processing by picking up from here and there as collecting bits of things by picking up from here and there is collecting bits of things by picking. It is the floating children, scavenge, collect scrap of metal, broken glasses, empty tin cans and paper from the garbage in the cities.

7. Mastan means local gang stars.

In the process of urbanization and pauperization, the migration of rural poor to urban areas is increasing in Bangladesh. Changes are taking place not only in the family structure but also in kinship relations putting the parent and child in the different worlds and also in the different classes. This dramatic change in the parental relationship leads to insecurity for the children. Consequently, creates a new vulnerable group of children in urban areas called Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) offer. They live and grow up on the margins of the society, in an estate of neglect and deprivation, often without guidance.

As signatories to the CRC, state parties are required to bring their legislation into line with its provisions. In Bangladesh, appropriate legislation is in place, but mechanisms for effective implementation are absent. State parties too often lack either capacity or financial or other resources such as a cadre of trained social workers. Similarly, a country's social context may be adverse to the realization of child rights, such as where the public or some state

apparatus (e.g. particular, are perceived as nuisances, if not lesser beings. Some misconceptions are articulated in suggestions that children's rights are about children staying up late and 'disrespecting others' going out and taking drugs (which are not in the CRC) rather than rights to protection from abuse, torture and exploitation. Sensitization and training need to involve a variety of social grouping.

With respect to implementation of the CRC, two principles predominate, protection and participation. Protection is fundamental and constitutes the main reason for seeking interventions suggesting more preemptive approaches in enabling the development of children's skills and knowledge and in building support structures and mechanisms that improve children's environments, making them safer and less vulnerable. One aspects of protection is preventing children from moving to the street. Protection demands children's participation. A careful analysis of the street children phenomenon reflects a number of immediate, underlying and basic causes. Available literature on street children in Bangladesh from academic presentations, journal articles, books by researchers and situational analysis and survey reports, show a plethora of causal factors and effects to the street children problem. There is tension between the principles of protection and participation, given that adult's perceptions of protection and dangers may be quite different from those of children. But children's participations in protection is crucial for any intervention to be effective: what appears risky and dangerous to adults (especially those with secure homes) may be negotiated safely by children. A clear paradox is the removal of a child from the street for his or her safety and subsequent placement in a family home or other accommodation that is abusive and exploitative. In some cases, children might be better off on the street because available alternatives bring no real improvements to their lives (or best interests). Such decisions, however, can only be made through careful analysis of a child's particular context with the active participation of the child, again according to his or her capabilities to participate in decision-making. However putting into practice the principles of the best interests is not easy, particularly in institutional or bureaucratic settings. *Figure 1* shows the Casual Analysis Framework of street children. **(Ref Figure – 1)**

3. ARISE: A HOLISTIC. GOVERNMENT- MGO INTERVENTION FOR STREET CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

To bring meaningful and long lasting changes in the lives of street children, a holistic programme approach is needed. Plan Bangladesh aims to improve the quality of life of these deprived children through interventions keeping focus on education. Eventually, a model for serving this vulnerable population Government and NGO intervention introduced in Bangladesh since 1999 through Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children's Environment (ARISE) which is tripartite initiative of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Department of Social Services, NGO and the United Nations development program (UNDP). A deed of Agreement has been signed on 30 September between the Ministry of Social Welfare, United Nations Development Program (UNDP and ERD for the execution of the project BGD/97/028. The project started moving in 1998 based on the recommendation of UNDP sponsored meetings and workshops of NGO, GOB Donor and Apex bodies to address the crucial needs and problems of the street children in Bangladesh in order to enable them to integrate with the mainstream of the society.

As per the provision of the TAPP and project document the project activities are being implemented by experienced NGOs through sub contacting with financial assistance of UNDP. There are 9-partner NGOs of ARISE project working for Improving Street Children's Environment. Following table : 1 shows that the list of 9 partner NGOs of ARISE and their targeted number of street children in Bangladesh. **(Ref Table – 1)**

Management of the Project:

The project is implemented by the Department of Social Services. There is a national steering committee headed by the Secretary, Ministry of social Welfare and a project implementation Committee headed by the Director General, Department of Social Services. Besides there is a Tripartite Review committee, headed by the Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare to overseas the implementation and performance of the project.

While the national capacity in this sector at the present time lies mainly with the NGOs, this project is designed to transfer this know-how as well as promote new strategies for the Government to more effectively

address the needs of the street children in accordance with the UNCRC.

National Steering Committee:

The National Steering Committee (NSC) has been formed to review the progress of the works as per work plan, which advices for timely implementation of the project activities. It is a 10 member committee headed by the secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, other member's are representatives of UNDP, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Planning, IMED, Planning section of Ministry of social welfare and National Project Director, ARISE (Member Secretary). The Committee generally meets quarterly.

Project Implementation Committee:

The project Implementation Committee is headed by the Director General of the Department of the Social services as Chairman of the Committee and includes 10 other members of different sectors. These are from the Ministry of Home, Ministry of Planning (Planning and IMED Division), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare , Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives , Director of programs ,Department of Social Services ,UNDP representatives and the national Project Director, ARISE as member secretary of the committee.

The committee is responsible for arranging proper implementation of all project activities including performance of the project personnel. It also reviews, evaluates and monitors the progress of implementation of the project from time to time.

*Tripartite Review Committee***:**

The Tripartite Review committee (TPR) is a 12 member committee and the Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare is the Chairman of the Committee. Other members of the Committee are Secretaries of the ERD and IMED, Division Chief of the Planning Commission, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Director General of the Department of Social services, Deputy Secretary (program), Ministry of social Services, Deputy Chief (Planning), Ministry Social welfare, Director (program), Department of Social Services, National Project Director ARISE ,Senior Deputy Project Coordinator ARISE, Dhaka.

Tripartite Review committee is a policy level committee involved in policy formulation and progress of the project based on the APR and takes decisions on recommendations to improve the design and implementation of the project in order to achieve expected results. A TPR reviews /assesses usually held at least once a year.

A TA Management Team comprising one Senior Deputy Project Coordinator and Seven Divisional Coordinators and a Team of Consultant on Health, Gender , Education, Vocation Skills and Policy Formulation for the street children supports the project headed by the National Project Director

The problem of Street Children is deep rooted. So the Government alone cannot address the problem. As a result, the policy planner strategically decided that the NGOs working in the field of street children, with a view to enable them to prove upgraded services to the street children in line with the UNCRC. Therefore, the initiative was taken and finally partnership has been developed through sub contracting 9 NGOs working in 6 Divisional Cities of Bangladesh i.e.4 NGOs in Dhaka and one in each of Khulna, Barishal,Rajshahi, Chittagong and Sylhet divisional cities .

Sector of Intervention of ARISE:

Following figure shows the ARISE activities and flow of activities which were implemented by the NGOs for street children in Bangladesh in (**Ref Figure 2 and 3**):

ARISE ensured Child Rights and Standards :

The 1989 United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has been ratified by almost every state in the world, including Bangladesh. The convention provides rights based framework for intervention in the lives of children, including street children. It establishes universal standards for children's rights to dignity, freedom from discrimination, survival, development, protection and participation, with overall consideration given to the best interest of the child. Protection and participation are the two key principles for implementation of the convention with respect to street children. Protection is the main reason for intervening in the lives of street children. It includes immediate protection from danger, abuse and exploitation, but also covers more long-term, proactive approaches designed to promote development of children's skills and knowledge, build support structures for children and lessen their vulnerability. Table: 2 shows that the ARISE intervention on the basis of United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). (**Ref Table – 2**)

After intervention of ARISE, a favorable environment congenial to the healthy growth and empowerment of the street children is

created and capacity building of government agencies and NGOs working with the street children in accordance with the principles of UNCRC is achieved. Table 3 shows the impact of ARISE project. **(Ref Table – 3)**

A PRA sessions were organized with the stakeholder groups (GO and NGOs) . A total of 6 sessions were conducted following techniques of PRA and FGD with three different stakeholders group of the project e.g. the representative of GO/NGOs, their beneficiary street children and with some non beneficiary street children and a group of poor parents of the street children .using Rapport Building, Social Mapping, Billboard Voting ,Case study, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and SWOT Analysis techniques. After analysis following findings were found which are mentioned in the table 4 **– (Ref Table – 4)**

RECOMMENDATIONS: -

Micro level Recommendation for Policy Development

- Ensure that street children programs are an integral part of CRC implementation in order to ensure that CRC implementation also makes a measurable impact on improving the lives of street children. Create greater space for direct participation of children, their families and communities in decision –making process that affects their well being.

- Promote inter-sectoral linkages programs through regular reviews and evaluation of all National Policies and Plans of Action related to health, nutrition, and education and shelter sectors with the view to mainstreaming street children's concerns within these policies.

- Recognize and ensure that the primary responsibility of meeting the needs and aspirations of vulnerable groups such as street and working children lies squarely with the government at national and sub-national levels. It has a distinct role to play in policy and program formulation, legislation, regulation and facilitation of implementation. Correspondingly, *NGOs can play only a supplementary role* of advocacy, social mobilization, demonstration of new and more effective approaches, and sharing of good practices to influence the updating and refinement of national policies and programs.

- Lobby for and *enhance the role and involvement of government at all levels* in improving the well-being of street children with greater emphasis and focus on issues such as HIV/AIDS, child labor, child abandonment, child abuse, commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking, children with disabilities and children affected by conflict.

- *Review and sharpen the existing definitions of 'street children'* in order to acquire a uniform understanding of term among all stakeholders.

- *Make juvenile justice administration more effective* by bringing national laws into conformity with the CRC, strengthening and improving the enforcement infrastructure; abolishing corporal and capital punishment for children under 18 years; providing quality statutory legal aid to assist in the defense of children; setting up high quality counseling services in course of law, police stations and custodial care institutions; providing adequate scope for non-custodial sentences; making judgment process time-bound thus minimizing the duration trial time.

- *Undertake appropriate research* into multi-dimensional aspects of the street children phenomenon including those street children conscripted or forced into the streets by armed conflict with the view to ascertaining policy and program directions.

Macro Level Policy Recommendations for the Rural Sectors

Rural to urban migration especially the children alone or with their parents or relatives are a regular feature in our country due to different reasons. The poor parents in the urban areas compel their children to work to generate family income. So, if this situation is allowed to continue then the number of street children will be increased and as a result their future will be ulceration. In this circumstance, the policy should be adopted to stop/ reduce the migration of disadvantaged children from rural to urban area as a preventive measure. On the other hand, the disadvantaged children who already been in the urban areas difficult circumstances, some effective policies should be adopted to overcome their

situation as curative measures. In this situation the policies have been suggested for the reduction of street children as well as for their overall welfare in connection with rural –urban migration context.

⇒ Poverty alleviation programs should be encouraged as well as strengthened in rural sectors in close cooperation of GOs, NGOs and POs to stop the flow of rural to urban migration of the rural poor. Street children as a special group will have to given the required priority in government policy/ programs, particularly in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) currently being prepared by the Bangladesh Government.

⇒ Compulsory free subsidized vocational along with the non-formal primary education should be provided especially for the dropouts and non-enrolled children in education program at the rural level to develop their skills.

⇒ Rural based small-scale industries should be encouraged to provide employment for the skilled children so that their tendency of migration from rural to urban areas may be reduced.

⇒ Counseling, motivation and employment opportunities should be institutionalized

with the partnership effort of GOs and NGOs for not to disintegrate our traditional joint family system so that the children can get proper care, affection and socialization at their childhood level in the kinship system.

Policy Recommendations for the Urban Sectors

⇒ There is an urgent need to increase the budgetary allocations for addressing programs targeted to street children, the number of partner NGOs should be increased at least by three-folds for increased and better coverage of street children.

⇒ Laws to protect the street child from abuse have to be given top most priority. The legal system has to be restructured if necessary to make the laws more effective to protect the street children from the abuse and oppression by the police.

⇒ Shelter cum vocational training program should be institutionalized at the urban sector for the development of skill of the street children. The subject of the training should be production oriented so that they can get employment after the attainment of their skills.

⇒ Special training program on cooking for disadvantaged girls should be provided along with the non-formal education. Moreover, social education, personal hygiene and cleanliness courses should be given at the same time.

⇒ Communication network should be introduced by the initiative of NGOs at the urban sectors. The nature of communication will be over telephone to the law enforcement agencies when a street children and maidservant are being abused by their employers and the community people.

Micro Level Specific Policy Recommendations

⇒ The exiting service providing organizations/institutions to the street children should be strengthened so that they are capable of running sustainable innovative pilot projects of good practices to cater to the fundamental needs of the street children, such as shelter/half way homes, food and nutrition , drop in centers, functional literacy, marketable vocational training, health care and sanitation, poverty alleviation through income generating activities, psychological counseling, especially for adolescent girls who are often sexually abused.

All existing and potential service providing agencies to the street children should be equipped with adequate physical, financial and skilled human resources so that they could support the empowerment of the street by offering opportunities for their skills development and productive future through a comprehensive system of support and Community Development Fund (CDF) program.

⇒ Street Children are the most vulnerable, assets less, homeless, uncared for and underserved segment of population of the society **,** should be brought within the policy parameters of the mainstream national development programs. Therefore, an alternative policy for the development of street children should be formulated to recognize their basic needs and thus make them productive human resource in line with the government commitment to the UNCRC.

⇒ Awareness building on vital issues including child trafficking should be focused through print and electronic media and other means of communication like plays, cartoons, posters, dramas, folk songs, video and documentary films, storytelling, etc in order to sensitize the policymakers planners and other concerned community people.

⇒ Possibilities of running mobile holiday/off time schools for the street children in public places like market corner , railway and bus station, launch terminals, plazas, parks etc may also be reviewed and taken into consideration.

⇒ Street children will be organized as youth media group to effectively contribute in awareness raising through performing street drama, campaign, rally etc.

⇒ All the existing potential service providing organizations to the street children should be equipped with adequate physical, financial and qualified personnel so that they could provide a comprehensive support for the empowerment of the street children.

⇒ The channels of information sharing, exchange of ideas and experiences, regular inflow of communication between the GOs, NGOs and POs should also be strengthened to minimize gaps between the support services available and the actual need of the children.

⇒ A separate *Street Girls Hostel* could also be arranged with special provision for toilet and bathing facilities as well as privacy for resting and sleeping in security . Separate hostels or shelter-homes be established to ensure empowerment of the most vulnerable girl-children who are living on the street and frequently become victims of physical and sexual abuses to anti social elements including local mastan(muscleman) and police as well. Opportunities should be developed to accommodate them, in safer homes or shelters, with psychological counseling in order to compensate for their mental and psychological trauma for being the victims of sexual harassment. Through this process they could be made productive human resources and empowered through educational programs and productive skills training to enhance their capacity to get employment and independent livelihood.

⇒ In *Rescue and Legal aid* sector, establishment of mobile rescue units to street children for reunification with families or sending to NGOs, shelter homes and maintain liaison with legal aid agencies and NGOs as Ain O Salish Kendra for providing legal aid to those street children who need legal protection. To eliminate /reduce unnecessary disturbance created to street children by police measured should be taken. ⇒ Develop a referral system which can be uniformly applied by law enforcement, lawyers, judges, and social service providers to provide legal and social services to street children who report sexual

crimes, and train these professionals to identity and refer street child victims to appropriate services.

⇒ To strengthening the capacity for employability of the trained street children in the sense of high likeliness of the service package to produce specific job and income generation effects in the field Provision of Vocational Training and Job Placement would be following logic: **(Ref Figure– 4)** To this end a **Job Related Service package** whose logic is the following figure 4:

To improve the quality of life and future prospects of street children replicable model that will directly reach to children and promote their education, livelihood, health and protection like figure 5; **(Ref Table – 5)**

Source: Plan Bangladesh 2011

⇒ *Basic Primary Education Completion in primary education:* the children between ages 8 to 14 who are illegible for primary education will be covered by this intervention. These out of school children will undergo with a bridge course to make them prepared for entering primary school. The duration of bridge course will appropriately be designed by the technical Adviser and his/her team. The infrastructure belongs to Govt. Primary Education

Department or other NGOs will be associated to accommodate the course and further relation will be developed with Govt. to get the children enrolled in primary school.

The children are living in street to meet their livelihood requirements. To ensure their attendance in school and bridge course there might require financial assistance for their food and lodging. There should be an arrangement of temporary rehabilitation of the children for their regular study. A conditional cash transfer will be one of core strategy to support the children in mainstreaming education.

During the tenure in primary school the children will have extra support through Tutorial classes beyond academic hours. This course will enable them to perform better in school

a) Education for livelihood (14-18 years) (YED strategy)

The children who are not eligible for primary education will be offered with

functional literacy in a very child friendly manner for developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills to ultimately equipped them better in terms

of reading and writing basic things as a process of empowerment that would help them to fight against the odds they are facing in their day – to – day live. In most cases, these youth children work in different area of employment without having appropriate skill. They start as an apprentice and gradually become skill person. But most of time in the beginning neither they chose their appropriate job nor they are capable in literacy and numeracy resulting possibility of exploitation every day.

b) Education for health

Because of living in the street they are very much reluctant on personal health care and personal hygiene resulting effected by communicable diseases. In case of severe illness they didn't find the right place for medication and counseling. Especially at reproductive health age they became more vulnerable. These children will be supported through raising awareness on personal and reproductive health and referral place for treatment thus they will be linked with Govt. health post and others NGOs facilities.

An effective relation and collaboration will be built up with Govt. Primary education to get the children in mainstream education through optimal use of Govt resources. A good referral system needs to be established with Govt. health department and related health post for availing health services.

A collaboration with local Govt. and NGOs to sensitize them towards street children issue eventually helping local resource mobilization for the sustainability of the project. Lobby and Advocacy with Govt. in this project aim to increase Govt. allocation and supportive policy formulation for the street children. In this endeavor use and support from media both electronic and print will be explored. The project will also undertake operational research finding of which with recommendation to be shard with media and national policy makers. Industry owners and multinational companies will be aware on street children issues and to receive support from them for various king of vocational training easing for employment in the formal sector.

CONCLUSION:

The response of the problems of street children has been gaining momentum in the recent times both with the initiative of

national government and private sectors including NGOs with substantial support from the international agencies. As a sapling needs the right amount of sunlight, water, air and additional nutrients to grow into a fruitful tree, in the same way children need love , respect, support and encouragement and opportunity to become confident and successful adults. We have to desire to provide this to street children. We are heading towards the new millennium, where we desire to strengthen the process of intervention with vulnerable children on the streets. We also aspire to work towards the empowerment of these children client group by advocating their rights. Most important in breaking of poverty is providing these youth and their families with income and a sense of power in their lives. One way to do this is through training, which will allow these youth to function within society and earn an adequate living for themselves and their families. Eventually these strategies may prevent the children of tomorrow from having to work on the streets.

The national government cannot alone tackle this gigantic problem unless some dedicated and committed NGOs and POs supplement or complement the government's efforts towards resolution of this social problem. For the matter, government organization (GOs) concerning this problem should come forward to an understanding with the capable NGOs and POs through establishment of networking or linkages for addressing these problems phase wise on pilot basis with limited command areas.

A multidisciplinary approach is always a better proposition than a single one. For that matter, a multidisciplinary approach fostering the cooperation between the GOs and NGOs including POs, social activists, media, etc may be an alternative strategy. Since the street children issue is an intricate and hazardous problem, press and electronic media along with other means of communication like posters, cartoons, plays, storytelling, etc may be utilized to increase awareness and sensitize the policymakers and public at large on the gravity of this vital problem.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1- Casual Analysis Framework of street children Phenomenon

Causal Analysis Framework

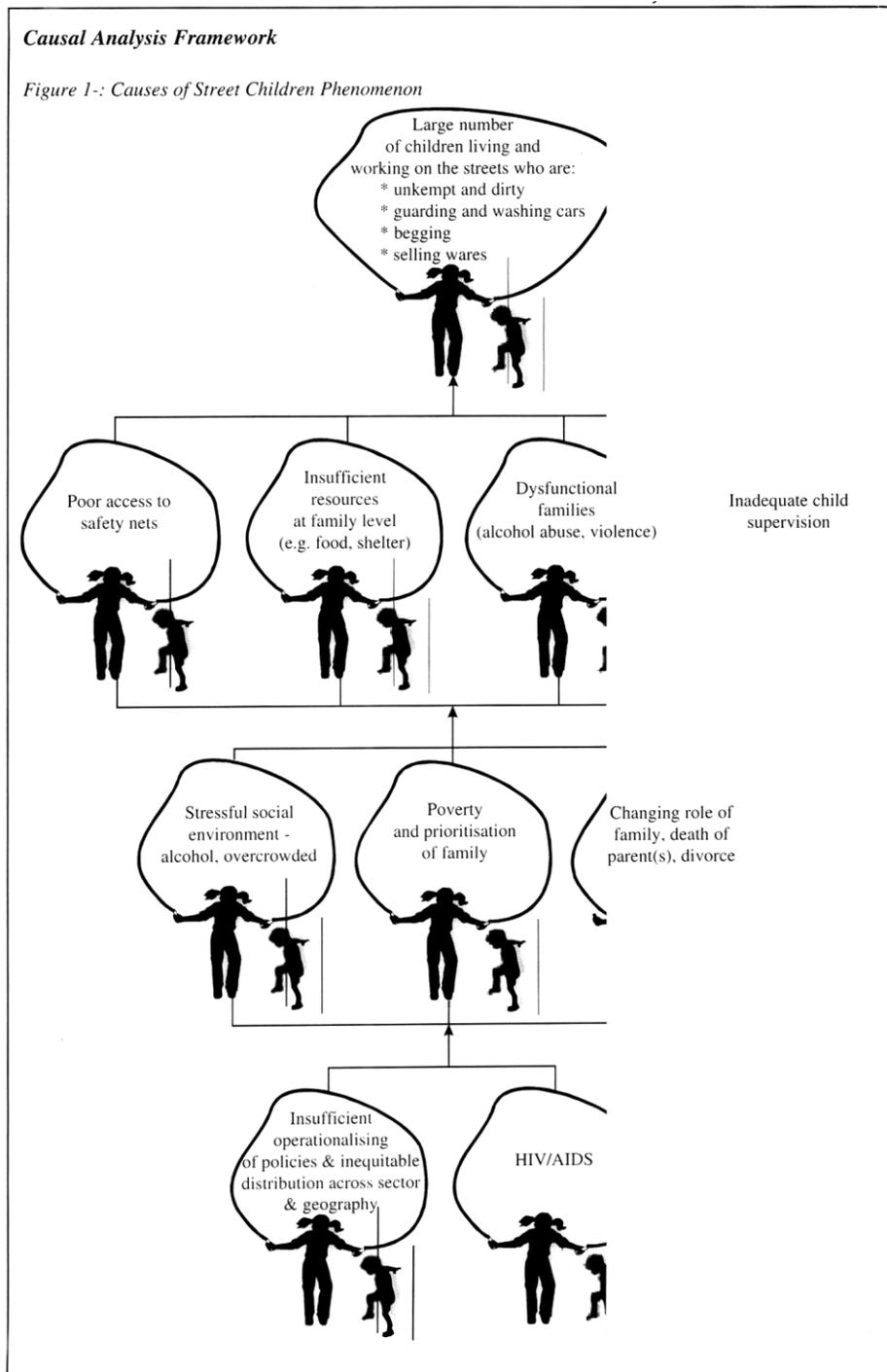*Figure 1-: Causes of Street Children Phenomenon*

Figure 2- Intervention of ARISE project for street children in Bangladesh
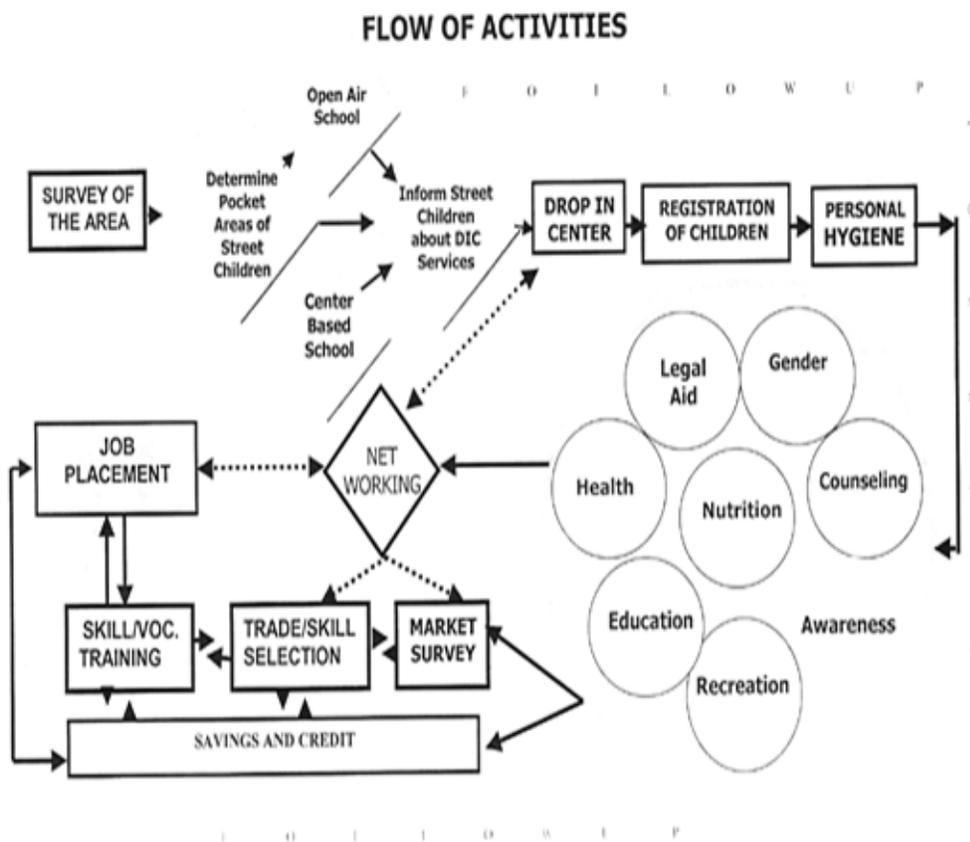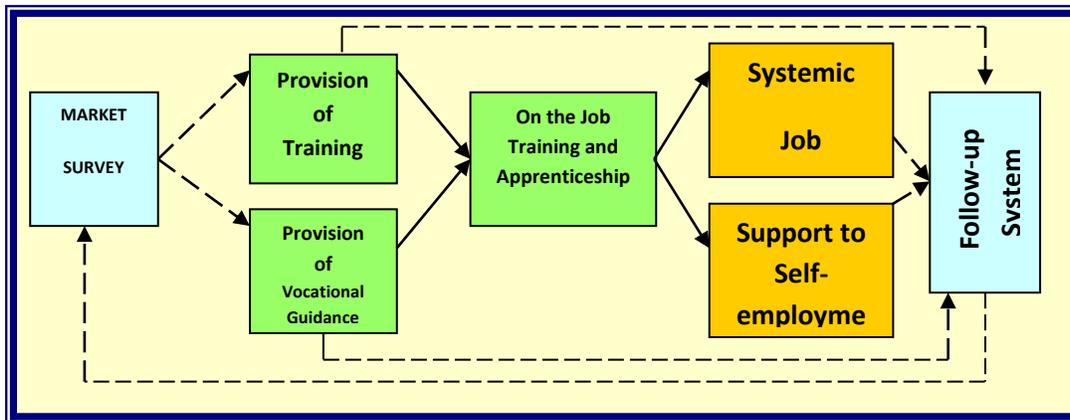

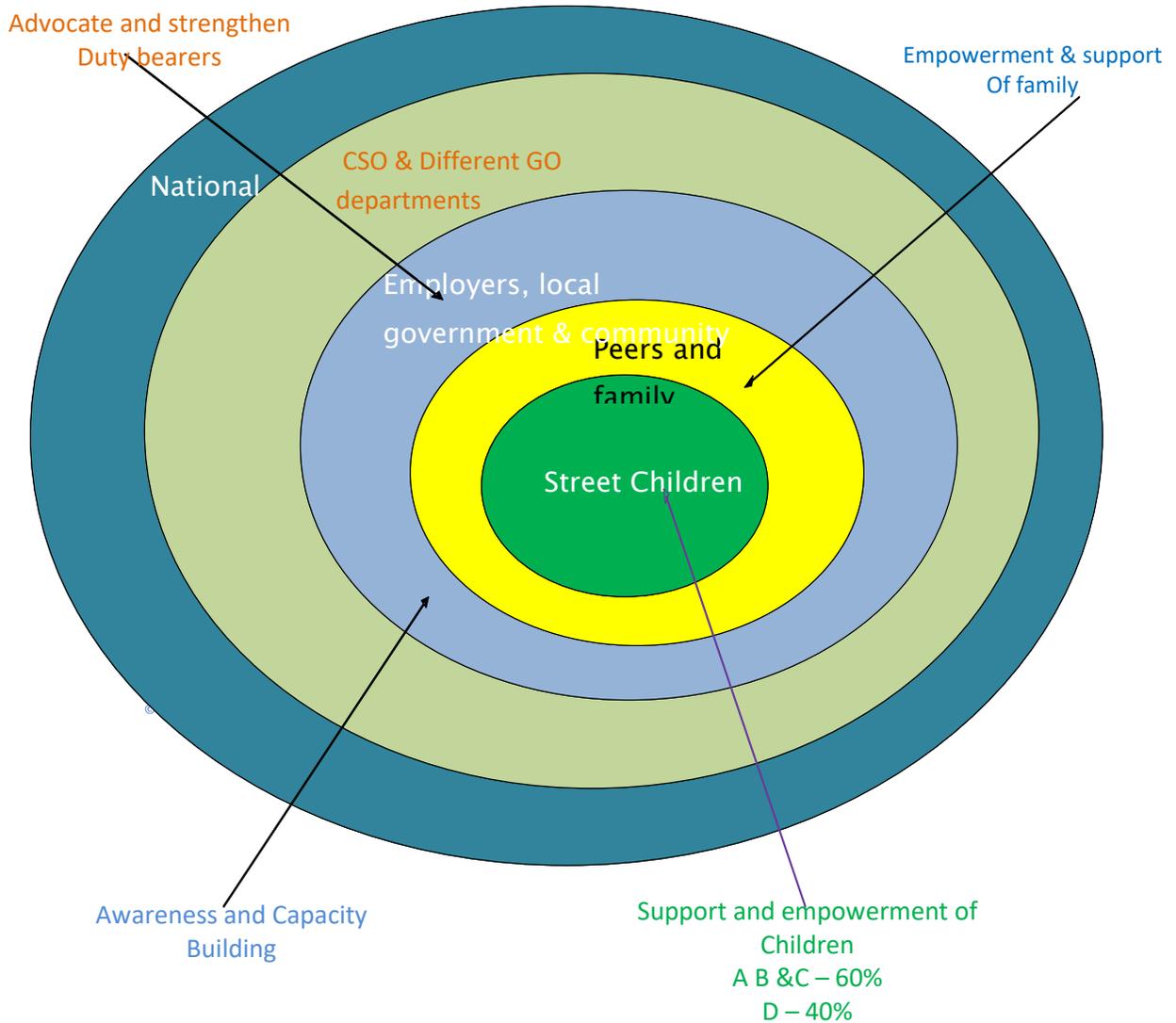**Figure: 3- Flow of ARISE Activities**

Figure: 4 Job Related Service Package

Figure:5 Hollistic Street Children Development Model

LIST OF TABLES:

Table 1: List of NGOs working for street children's Empowerment in Bangladesh

Sl	Project Area	Name of the NGO
1	Dhaka City Corporation Area -1	Aparajeo Bangladesh
2	Dhaka City Corporation Area -2	Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra
3	Dhaka City Corporation Area -3	Population Services and Training Center

		(PSTC)
4	Dhaka City Corporation Area -4	Samaj Paribartan Kendra (SPK)
5	Chittagong	JOGAJOG *Community Development Organization*
6	Rajshahi	Association for Community Development (ACD)
7	Khulna	Alliance for Co-operation and Legal Aid Bangladesh (ACLAB)
8	Barishal	Voluntary Association for Social Development (VOSD)
9	Sylhet	Voluntary Association for Rural Development (VARD)

Table: 2 UNCRC the ARISE intervention

The Rights to survival	Intervention of ARISE
It includes the right to life, the attainable standard of health, nutrition, an adequate standard of living , name and nationality.	- Health Services - Health Education - Recording child name and address. - Family life education through Drop in Centre /Shelter
The Right of Protection	
It includes the right to special care and protection from all forms of exploitation, adult and inhuman or degrading treatment in situation of emergency and around conflict. It also aims to protect vulnerable children.	- Drop in center/ Shelter home - Legal aid support - Psychological Counseling - Vocational Skill Training - Job placement - IGA activities - Integration of children with their

	families. - Rehabilitation of children
The Right of Development	
It includes being educated to receive support for development, care, social security, recreation and cultural activities.	- Formal Education -Inclusive Education - Non formal Education - Mobile Schooling - Theatre for Education - Drop in center/Shelter Home - Recreational Activities - Annual Sports - Exposure Visit - Cultural Program
The Right of Participation	
This right accords the child to appropriate information and the freedom of thought, expression, conscience and religion. Also the rights to develop their own set of values and opportunity to express themselves and their opinions.	- Children's Forum/ Child Brigade - Day observance / Rally - Expression of thought through drawing pictures. - Participation of religions activities - Participation of children in decision making at micro level. - Child to Child Project - Dialogue with formal leaders.

Table 3: Impact of ARISE project

Pre-intervention status	Post-intervention status
Harassment by the community people Street children were the victim by different	Street children are not faced such kind of harassment while working in the streets.

community people and called 'Tokai' Kangali, Pichchi etc instead of their name.	
Involvement of Crime Previously street children were involved in different crimes.	The involvement at different crime has decreasing day by day. So they are also working mainstream society.
Personal hygiene Street children were unaware about maintaining personal hygiene due to lack of awareness and proper facilities available to them	In the drop-in-center, they avail toilet facilities, teeth brushing, bathing, cloth washing, nail cutting, and hair combing facilities. Therefore, their personal hygiene status has improved dramatically.
Non-formal education Street children were deprived from rights of education due to awareness and poverty	Street children received basic non-formal education and after completing this they are able to read, write, do basic calculation and many of them got admission to the formal primary school
Recreational services Street children had no recreational facilities near to their home or in the adjacent areas. So they were prone to anti-social activities	In the DICs, street children participate in different recreational activities; like: games, play, video show, drawing and painting, singing, dancing, drama. Therefore, there chance of involvement in anti-social activities reduced.
Health services Street children were very reluctant to seek medical advice due lack of awareness and poverty	Street children currently seeks medical advice in any health related problem
Awareness Street children didn't know about primary health care and STD/HIV/AIDS	Through our intervention 90% children know about primary health care, STD/HIV/AIDS, its types, causes, root of transmission and prevention of STD/HIV/AIDS. With their

	awareness, street children also made their neighbors aware on this issue.
Before getting involved in our program, street children didn't know about discipline, rules and regulation, and was used to unruly life style. They were very rude and aggressive.	Now they are discipline and are aware about their behavior. Their aggressive attitude is gradually reducing.
Guardians of the street children's were irresponsible and they didn't know where their children going or what they are doing .	Through our CMC meeting/ guardian workshops, we made them aware about their role as parents and their responsibilities towards their children.
Lack of awareness of community people on street children	Community peoples are conscious and aware of child rights, and in the grass-root level some rights are ensured. Local elite, in the project area is compassionate and helpful to the street children. The community people are aware and promoting child rights • The community people understand the street children issues and the exploited and abusive situation of the children have reduced significantly. The community people are respectful and understand their roles and responsibilities as members of societies toward the street children. The community people come forward to resolve any problems that arise in the respective areas and also come forward with recombination school oriented issues.

	The community person gives dignity to the children
Drop in center/Night Shelter Street children usually passed most of the time on the street, where they were vulnerable to sex work, either forcefully or by exploitation, which usually resulted in sex trade, criminal activities, and child trafficking.	Now they pass most of the time in the drop-in-center and invite their friends to come to the DIC, which reduced their vulnerability to trafficking and sexual exploitation
Counseling Street children were rude, aggressive and frustrated due to poverty, moral degeneration and ignorance which hampered their mental development.	Negative attitude towards their life changed gradually through counseling for street children's. They could identify their own problem and solved them with their own effort
Vocational raining and job placement Most of the street children earned money for livelihood through different hazardous child labor	Street children were provided suitable vocational training for them. After completion of training, they placed with job either in our organizational arrangement or in other organization through networking. As a result their quality of life style improved including their future prospect of a livelihood Children who were earlier involved in the most hazardous forms of labor have changed their occupations and taken up lighter forms of jobs. Children who have been employed are serving as role models to other street children. We have observed that the street children feel valued, confident and a self-drive is being created within them to develop their future lives.
Changing of the life of Street Children	The project staffs are able to build up rapport

	with the street children of project area. It was observed that the behavioral pattern and life style of the street children are being changed,

Table 4: Findings of SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Major Constrains
- ARISE has provided the street children with a wide array of services and initiatives within a comprehensive approach This multi- approach characteristic of the project has produced a 'compact' culture and methodological framework to target Street Children Issues in Bangladesh. - ARISE has supported the growth of a generation of field specialists whose professional capacity has been 'shaped' while they have been dealing	Almost all the Partner NGOs have elaborated strategies and methodologies for copying with the ongoing challenge coming from the implementation of project activities and services, these strategies have not been mainstreamed even within the single NGOs and they risk staying at the level of copying strategies. Even less learning and knowledge gained have been shared, organized and disseminated in the overall project environment. Reasons for weaknesses are as follows: -Lack of best practices collection and dissemination process. -Lack of cooperation between the partner NGOs.	-Short term and uncertainty of the future of sub contract to Partner NGO -Poor budget allocation for DIC/ shelter home facilities particularly food, health services, recreational activities, vocational training allowance and poor materials supply for skill training. -Absence of female paramedics in some cases - Some street children are very difficult to motivate and involve in project activities because of mental disorder, abuse and neglect. -During rain and other natural calamites open air school is not possible. -Pre requisite educational qualifications and age limit of most of the vocational training

with the different phases and activities. -ARISE has pointed the intervention on the street children issue and produced the growth of a certain number of other initiatives which have flourished in different localities, promoted the awareness on the magnitude, criticality and potential threats to the Human Capital of the Nation. -Almost 60000 street children (out of which at least 60% belonging **Strengths**	-Difficulties in networking between the partner NGOs and towards the overall GOs, communities to produce a shared vision and shared methodologies for intervention. -Some weak elements of the monitoring and follow-up process.	agencies is serious hindrance for the street children to get admitted in to vocational training courses. -It is difficult to keep street children for 3 hours a day to open air or center based schools. -It is also difficult to get true information from the street children. -No stipend for higher class education of potential children in the formal school due to age. -Due to poor daily allowance cannot continue vocational training and due to strict employment rules and due to lack of sympathetic attitude from the **Major Constrains**
to the Most Vulnerable Children), has been targeted with the whole range of services or a part of them and a large number of cases are		employer the street children cannot continue in many cases in the placed job. The children are also deprived of fair wages. -Slum eviction by the government displaced and dropped out children from open air schools

currently available for further analysis, revision and dissemination. -Several lessons learned can be drawn by the experiences and a relevant training process has targeted the field staff involved in the implementation of the contracted project activities.		and DIC and other activities. -Some employers sometimes hindered the children from coming to schools or DIC for their own interest to use the street Children for their work. -Discontinuation or drop out and transfer of potential staff due to low salary, uncertainty of job etc. - Sometime central project management imposes the targets without consulting the PNGO management. - PNGO sometimes assign extra tasks to project staff. -No protection from police in case of violence and physical torture and abuse. -House owners are unwilling to let out their building spaces for setting up DIC/shelter home. - Some Partner NGOs have employed low qualified staff due to absence of uniform guideline and criteria for staff recruitment. -Regarding job placement of street children the employers do not trust Street Children. They

		think the children would steal the valuables of their factories or shops.