

**YOUNG STREET CHILDREN IN DHAKA:
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF 6-8 YEAR OLD CHILDREN ABOUT
LIFE AS STREET CHILDREN IN DHAKA CITY**

**A thesis presentation to the
Institute of Educational Development-BRAC University**



Presented by
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Science in Early Childhood Development

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2014

Ethical Approval Form

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Student Name: Md. Jabadul Hoque

Title of the Thesis: Young Street Children in Dhaka: Perceptions and experiences of 6-8 year old children about life as street children in Dhaka city

1. Source of the population
2. Does the study involve (yes or no) ✓
 1. physical risk to the subjects no
 2. social risk no
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 1. Nature and purpose of the study
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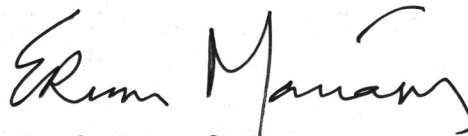
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The Research Checklist indicates:

- Approved without amendments
- ✓ Approved with advice to research
- Not approved. Resubmission is required

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Name of the student: Md. Jabadul Hoque

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Date of Thesis Submission to the Committee:

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- ☒ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Fail

Thesis Committee Signature:



Approval from the Supervisor

In my judgment the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree and is therefore ready to submit his/her thesis to the Thesis Committee.

Ferdousi

Signature of the Supervisor

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved father and mother for their sacrifice to me.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Children living in the street are an increasing phenomenon in developing countries.

As in other developing countries, there has been a rise in street children population in the urban areas of Bangladesh. Street children all around the world are the most vulnerable and excluded in society. Their rights are continually violated. Life for street children is a painful experience. However, of most research on the situation of young adolescents, a very few studies analyze how life on the street is experienced by young children. Thus the objective of the study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of 6-8 years old street children about becoming and continuing as street children in Dhaka city as well as their felt needs and future expectations.

This was an exploratory qualitative study for which the case study method was followed. Study area was Gubtali of Dhaka city. Data were collected through in-depth case studies and informal observation. The study used purposive sampling method in selecting the sample. Two groups of street children- “on the street” (who return to family at night) and “of the street” (who stay on the street) were selected, two in each category. Two were boys and two were girls.

According to the findings of the study, poverty was the main underlying cause for choosing life on the street by the young children. Poverty was created due to broken family, being orphaned and homeless due to natural calamity. Lack of parental care was another cause. Moreover, some parents sent their children on the street for additional earning. The study found that all of the children studied earn either by begging or collecting wastes or by doing both. The study revealed that children *of the street* struggle more than children *on the street* for their survival. Though different

organizations are working for street children, most of the services for them were out of their reach. It was found that children in the study did not consult doctor for any of their illnesses due to lack of money. It was also found that foods, shelter, education and health care were their common greatest needs. Most of the street children wanted to be educated and to work in the garments factory to earn a living.

Children are the hope and future of our society, but street children and their future are at risk. Street children are often perceived in a negative light. Children are on the street not because of their fault but for the fault of society. The government and other stakeholders should implement the conventions on child rights as well as the national plan of actions to protect fundamental rights of children, including street children. In addition, services/ intervention programs initiated by GOs, NGOs and INGOs should be available for all young street children to ensure their rights, promote their well-being and to help them become self-supporting.

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List of Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASD	Assistance of Slum Dwellers
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DIC	Drop-in Center
GO	Government Organization
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
ICDDR, B	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
IED	Institute of Educational Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non Government Organization
NGO	Non Government Organization
PCAR	Protection of Child at Risk
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
WASA	Water Supply and Sewerage Authority

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

“My father used to take drugs. One day while under the influence of drugs, he shouted at my mother and left home for Khulna. He took away everything from home and married again. After marriage, he did not come to my mother any more. My uncles married off my mother again. My own father came to take me but my mother did not let me go. My step father used to love me a lot at that time but now he does not anymore. My step-father does not want me to stay at his home. If I stay, he scolds my mother and beats her. For this reason, I left home and came on the street” (Ahmed et al., 2011, p. 8). This is a statement of a 15 year old street child. This scenario tells us how a child became a street child. The experience of every individual street child is different and unique in its own way.

The numbers of street children are increasing day by day around the world (Ray, Davey & Nolan, 2011). Bangladesh is not an exception too and thousands of children on the street of Bangladesh are being denied their rights. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), every child is entitled to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (Unicef, 2009). But children living on the street are deprived of their childhood and basic human rights. They do not get appropriate care and have no or inadequate access to medical care and education, although these are important for human resource development (Sayeed, 2011). Children living on the street are also vulnerable to abuse

and exploitation (Unicef, 2009). As in other countries, street children in Bangladesh are often victims of physical, verbal and mental abuses (Milky, 2000).

All children have the right to grow up healthy, happy and safe; to enjoy education, and develop to their full potential; to be respected in dignity and worth; and nurtured with a strong sense of belonging (Ray, Davey & Nolan, 2011). The street children have the rights to live like others. To ensure their rights, the situation of street children should be known. Most of the research on street children in Bangladesh seems to focus on prevalence rate and the lifestyle of adolescent street children. Not enough emphasis is placed on qualitative studies to explore the experiences and perceptions of the young street children. Therefore, this study tried to explore the perceptions and experiences of young street children about their life and future expectations.

This paper is presented in four chapters. An introduction, operational definition, statement of the Problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research topic and research questions are presented in chapter one. Chapter two is furnished with literature review. In chapter three, research methodologies which includes research approach, participants, research site, data collection method, data analysis, ethical issue and limitation of the study are discussed. Chapter four presents results, discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

1.2 Operational Definitions

It is useful to explain how two key terms used in the study are defined for the purposes of this study on street children and their perception about their own situation.

Street Children: As generally understood, street children are those who are forced to live on the street in urban areas. The most common definition of street children is ‘any girl or boy who has not reached adulthood, for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland and so on) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood, and who is inadequately protected, directed, and supervised by responsible adults’ (Ray, Davey & Nolan, 2011). According to Unicef, street children comprise of two groups: *children of the street* and *children on the street*. ‘Children of the street’ are homeless children who work, pass time and sleep on streets. They are totally on their own, living with other street children or homeless adult street people. On the other hand ‘children on the street’ work all day in the street, pass their times, eat and go back to the family at night for sleep. For this study the children of both groups (of the street and on the street) and who are aged 6-8 years are considered as street children. If they are brought under appropriate intervention at this stage, the chances of positive outcome and influencing the course of their life in a positive way are considered greater. It can be mentioned here that an intervention was taken by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF, 2013) with local partners in Pakistan to expand access to pre-school and early grades and to improve school quality showed a very positive effect on children’s enrollment, attendance and promotion which were mostly attended by disadvantage children. According to McCain and Mustard (1999), the first few years of life of a child’s development are important in setting the foundation for lifelong learning, behavior and

health outcomes. This would be an appropriate time for bringing children into an educational and social support program. Since early years are very crucial and early childhood education and development is considered to be the most important level for social, emotional, cognitive and physical development (Murtaza, 2011).

Perception: According to Wikipedia, perception is the collection, identification, organization and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment. Similarly, Pomerantz (2003) explains that perception is the process how an organism attains awareness or understanding of its environment via organizing and interpreting sensory information. (as cited in Er et al., 2012). The concept of perception involves the psychology of an individual's thoughts (Van Boven et al., 2009). It helps us to understand how humans live, learn, work and perceive their environment (Ingold, 2000). This study will help us to understand the thoughts of young street children about their life in the street and their felt needs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The phenomenon of street children is global, alarming and escalating (Le Roux & Smith, 1997). It is difficult to determine an accurate statistical picture of street children (Kids Rights, 2012). However, it is estimated that tens of millions of children live or work on the streets of the world's towns and cities (Unicef, 2012). A report by the Children's Society in the UK found that 100,000 young people run away in the UK each year (Rees & Lee, 2005). There are an estimated 1 to 2 million street-involved youth in USA (Kidd, 2003). Numbers of street children are growing rapidly in Africa and Asia (Ray, Davey &

Nolan, 2011). According to Asian Development Bank, there are around 25 million street children in Asia (Singh & Purohit, 2011). Many Asian countries have noted significant rise in the number of street children. According to one source, over 12 million children live on the streets of India (Indian Railway Children). In Bangladesh, the estimated street children are more than four lacs (Unicef, 2008). On the other hand, according to a study conducted by the Government and the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Bangladesh had about 674,000 street children in 2005, and Dhaka alone had about 250,000. Nearly half were age 10 or under, and nearly 80 percent were boys (Unicef, 2009). A baseline survey of street children in Bangladesh (2003) found that 55 percent of street children live in Dhaka city. The study also found that among all street children surveyed, 97.56 percent are boys and 2.44 percent are girls and 48.7 percent are of age 11-14 years, 26 percent are of age 14-17 and 25 percent of age 5-11 years (Ahmed et al., 2003). Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies projects that in 2014 the total street children will be 1,114,754 and in 2024 it will increase to 1,615,330 (as cited in Nawaz, 2011).

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has declared general principles for protecting children from all forms of discrimination. Having ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Government of Bangladesh is committed to protect its children and ensure their well-being. Bangladesh has also ratified two optional protocols of the CRC as well as ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. In addition, the National Plan of Action against the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children including Trafficking was approved by the Cabinet. Under these

policies, the Government is obligated to respond to children's needs in terms of health, education and legal protection. National Education Policy (2010) has emphasized free and compulsory primary education for all. Moreover, the National Children Policy (2011) has given priority for protection and rehabilitation of the street children.

Together with Government of Bangladesh different non- government organizations have taken initiatives for the welfare of street children. Protection of Child at Risk (PCAR) project was initiated in April, 2007 to protect the street children and children without parental care by Unicef and its partner organizations. Aparajeya Bangladesh is one of the NGOs working with Unicef to deliver the PCAR project across Bangladesh (Unicef, 2008). Assistance of Slum Dwellers (ASD), SHAPLA NEER and some other national NGOs are working with International Non-Government Organizations (INGO) to implement different initiatives in Bangladesh.

It is recognized that street children constitute one of the most vulnerable and marginal groups in Bangladesh. They grow up as abandoned and face many challenges on the street. They are not nurtured to be good citizens who can do something for the country (Clark, 1982). They are victims of sexual abuse, physical torture and trafficking (Khair, 2001). Moreover, they engage themselves in different crimes which are hazardous for themselves and other people (Macdonald, 2008). They are in vulnerable situation, especially those who are in early childhood age. The experiences of early years have lifelong influence (Mishra, 2005). So the present study intended to know the causes of becoming a street child and continuing as one. In addition, it tried to understand their felt

needs and future expectations, which may help to plan and initiate need-based interventions to bring them into mainstream. To the extent this can be done, these children may have a chance to grow up like other children.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to know the situation of young street children of Dhaka city. The present study tried to focus on street children's experiences, the obstacles and challenges they face on the street. Knowing their real situation, their perception and what needs they felt is important for taking need-based initiatives for them by the government and non-government organizations. This is also important for further work on young street children. Therefore the objectives set for this study were:

1. to know the perceptions of street children about life as street children in Dhaka city - particularly, about becoming a street child and continuing as one.
2. to explore the experience of survival of street children in Dhaka city.
3. to understand the felt needs and future expectations of street children of Dhaka city.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In Bangladesh a number of studies have been conducted to analyze the situation of street children. Those studies focused on older age groups of street children or street dwellers. There has been little exploration of the situation of early primary years (6-8) street children in the context of Bangladesh. Thus the study intended to understand the causes

of becoming street children at an early age and continuing as street children in Dhaka city.

Government and non-government organizations are taking initiatives to respond to needs of the street children. To take appropriate initiatives for the street children, especially for the younger age street children, it is essential to know their perceptions, experiences and felt needs. At least 25% of the street children in Bangladesh are estimated to be 5 - 11 years old (Ahmed et al., 2003). Children of younger age are not likely to be on the street independently. It is appropriate and necessary that the young street children are reached as early as possible and their situation known in order to bring them under appropriate intervention which will produce positive outcomes for them and protect them from harm.

An intervention named Community-based Learning Support Centers (LSC) was taken up in 2007 by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF, 2013) in Bihar, one of the poorest states of India, to help street children. The findings of the study showed that the LSC children averaged 60 percent higher in numeracy and 65 percent higher in language skills than government school children. At the same time, this early intervention provided the foundation for later living and learning. The child who develops in early years can be a better citizen (Mishra, 2005).

It was hoped that the findings of the present study would help policy makers and program implementers to plan appropriate interventions for young street children. Moreover, this study also indicated need for further research on early age street children of Bangladesh.

1.6 Research Topic

Research Topic: Perception and experience of young street children about life as street children of Dhaka city

A growing number of street children are seen in urban areas of Bangladesh. Among them about 25 percent street children are 5-11 year old and 55 percent live in Dhaka (Ahmed et al., 2003). According to another report, nearly half of the street children are age 10 or under (Unicef, 2009). Street children go through various experiences and these experiences are different from those of normally developing children. Their vulnerable situation demands appropriate intervention in order to ensure their full potential. Therefore, it is essential to know the causes of becoming street children, their thinking and experience as street children, their felt needs and expectation.

1.7 Research Questions

The research questions of this study were

- What circumstances and conditions placed the children on the street as explained and narrated by the children themselves?
- What do the street children think about continuing to live on the street?
- How the survival needs of the children meet?
- What are their felt needs?
- What do they expect from the community and from service organizations?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Situation of Street Children in Global Context

The phenomenon of street children is considered to be a significant problem facing children today in both the developing and the developed world. Several studies have been conducted to know the situation of street children. A study looked into the family background of street children and their parents' perception in Aracaju, Brazil. According to the study, most of the participants were single parents, members of female headed families living in slums or low cost housing, with high levels of illiteracy, drug use, unemployment and a history of migration. The study also showed that most of the parents got financial support from their children and were aware of the dangers of the street (Abdelgalil et al., 2004).

Another study in Izmir, Turkey found that nearly all the children lived with their families; but a small percentage (5.8%) had begun living permanently on the street, thus cutting ties with their families. Moreover, a significant relationship was found between living on the street and the age of the children, the father's education and the father's use of alcohol (Yilmaz et al., 2011). Living permanently on the street may depend on the family relationship. A study conducted by Unicef in Palestine found that the street children do not sleep on the street, they have homes to go and they maintain some level of relationship with the families.

There are different causes behind driving children to the street. A study on street children in Zimbabwe found that reasons for being street children are economic and social – need to earn an income, being orphaned, abuse by step father/ step mother/relatives, inadequate care and support by parents or guardians and peer pressure (Unicef, 2001). Another study conducted by Ray, Davey & Nolan (2011) found that, children come on the street due to poverty and social exclusion, conflict, disasters and climate change, migration and urbanization, cultural attitude and behavior, violence against children, lack of access to quality education, exploitative and hazardous child work and HIV pandemic. As per kids report (2012) published by KidsRight Foundation, numbers of street children are growing due to population growth, intensifying urbanization and migration, particularly in the developing world. On the other hand, children are pushed to the street for living and working by many factors, such as poverty, domestic abuse or even the idea of freedom that is thought to be found on the street. A study in South Africa found that children suffered severe emotional and physical and material deprivation in their family contexts before moving to the street (Macdonald, 2008).

Street children have different perception about their street life. According to a study in Zimbabwe, about 28.5% street children felt hopeless and helpless. They mentioned that they had no other option concerning what to do about their lives except to live on the street. Nearly 26% mentioned that their lives on the street were tough, 20.8% felt fatalistic and mentioned their lives were bleak and without a future (Unicef, 2001).

Street children face different challenges regarding their basic needs. A study in Tanzania showed that, none of the street children had permanent or fixed accommodation. About 60% sleep on the street or on the pavement quite close to shops or other commercial building and another 14% spend their night at bus and railway terminals. For street children, bathing or taking shower is not considered to be very important. None of the children take bath more than twice a week. They use Indian Ocean water and public bathrooms and water from leaking pipes. More than two thirds of the children used public toilet facilities available in the city (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). According to kids report (2012), the main challenges street children face in the Philippines are access to health care and services, dangerous working conditions, violence and abuse from both civilians and government officials, and accessing an adequate standard of living.

Usually street children have very little opportunity to access education services. A study on street children in Zimbabwe found that over twenty five percent (25.5%) of the street children had never been to school. Slightly over twenty percent (21.9%) had some lower primary education (Unicef, 2001). In 2009, a survey was conducted at Juba in South Sudan to know the situation of street children. According to the survey, only 12% of the street children were attending school on irregular basis and majority of street children (63%) did not know how to read and write (EMDH, 2009). Another study in Kenya showed that, a major cause of the street children phenomenon is the lack of access to basic education and drop-out due to poverty and harsh effects of the structural adjustment program initiated by the World Bank Group (Ouma, 2004).

Street children are generally exposed to dangerous and unhealthy conditions and suffer from a variety of illnesses. A study report (2011) about street children published by Plan and Consortium for Street Children reveals that children, who start life on the street at an early age, are likely to be at high risk of malnutrition. The report also states that street children are subject to a number of specific physical, mental and sexual health risks. Physical health problems may be related to work or to injuries. Skin infections are also common due to lack of washing facilities. Children may suffer from infectious disease, such as malaria, TB, dysentery and hepatitis where these are endemic. A study was conducted in India to know the perception of street children regarding health, illness and health seeking behavior. The findings of the study indicated that the health conditions of working street children were miserable and majority of the available health services were out of reach of street children. In addition, there were multiple obstacles faced by street children in accessing health care services (Nanda, 2008). The vulnerability of street children to HIV/AIDS has been shown in studies in different countries. A study in Africa found that orphans and street children are affected by HIV/AIDS (Chama, 2008). According to HIV/AIDS forum, the street children and child laborers were particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS due to the high incidence of sexual abuse and exploitation.

2.2 Situation of Street Children in Bangladesh Context

Street children are found in most of the major cities especially in developing countries (Khan & Hesketh, 2010). In Bangladesh, poverty, natural disasters, river erosion, flood, famine and rising water level affect most of the children of poor and marginalized families. So, a large number of children are driven to the capital city and other towns for

survival as they face huge suffering due to broken family and natural calamities and take shelters in the streets in different cities and towns, including Dhaka and Chittagong (Khair, 2001). According to another study, the main cause for leaving home was the violence inflicted on children by parents, step-parents, relatives and other members of the community (Conticini & Hulme, 2006). According to another study conducted by icddr, b, the main reasons of becoming street children as stated by all age and sex groups of children were pull factors and push factors. The pull factors were peer pressure, fascination for street life and enormous freedom at street life. On the other hand, push factors were broken-up family, lack of parental care, poverty and work place harassment (Uddin et al., 2011).

Street children are involved in different occupations for their livings. According to a survey, the most frequently mentioned activities by the street children were: collecting old papers, cooli/ minti, tokai, begging, helper, hawker, shoe-polishers, sellers of flowers etc. A small percentage of street children were involved in theft, snatching, pick pocketing, sex worker, drug business etc. (Ahmed et al., 2003). Another study showed that, the occupations of all categories of children were more or less the same. The street children involved with multiple occupations, such as *tokai*, scrap scavenger, beggar, hawker, sex worker, thief and daily laborer. Most of the street children who participated in the study reported that their main occupation was *tokai* (Uddin et al., 2011).

Street children survive, rather than live on the street. According to the baseline survey (2003) most of the street children eat only to satisfy their hunger and they do not think

about healthy diet. Similar type of findings were found by the study conducted by icddr,b. According to the study, children of all categories buy food from roadside shops and food vendors at footpath under the open sky. They sometimes collect leftover foods from restaurants and while scavenging scraps (Uddin et al., 2011). Baseline survey (2003) reveals that most of the street children have no suitable sleeping place and have no access to bath. Those street children who do not have permanent sleeping place generally sleep in the bus stand, market place or on the street. Most of the street children (61.9%) sleep with other children. In addition, 84 percent street children have no winter clothing (Ahmed et al., 2003). According to another study, more than one third street dwellers use public toilet for bathing and rest of them use river, lake, WASA / tube-well. The same study also disclosed that the street dwellers use water from government supply (WASA) for drinking. Moreover, the study found that majority of them (62%) use public toilet (Ahmed et al., 2011).

Most of the street children suffer from different health hazards and suffer from variety of illness. The baseline survey (2003) revealed that more than 57 percent street children reported that they felt sick and the most common sickness in order of frequency of respondents were fever, water borne disease and headache. It was also found that more than 74 percent street children did not consult doctor due to lack of money. According to another study conducted by icddr,b, both male and female street children of all categories often suffered from fever, cold and cough, various types of eye disease, headache, pain in stomach, hands, legs, eczema and injury by dog bite. In addition, the street children of all categories were found to be very reluctant about the treatment of any of the health

problems due to lack of money. They seek treatment only when they suffer severe cases (Uddin et al., 2011).

Street children also do not have easy access to education. According to Unicef (2008) report, primary education enrollment of street and slum children are less than half compare to the national primary school enrollment rate. Although primary education is free and mandatory in Bangladesh, related indirect cost and lack of government school in city areas made child work more preferable than education (as cited in Nawaz, 2011). A baseline survey of street children in Bangladesh (2003) revealed that about 61 percent street children never attended any formal or non-formal school. 76.4 percent street children could not read and only 23.6 percent street children could read. Moreover, the survey found that 82 percent of street children who had first job prior to their street life stopped their school education in order to start their first job (Ahmed et al., 2003). On the other hand, government of Bangladesh have formulated education policy where special emphasis have been given on street children and ultra-deprived children for easy access and retention in schools. According to national education policy (2010) "Special provision like free admission, free education materials, free lunch at schools and stipends will be arranged to attract and retain these children in schools. Effective measures will be taken for their safe protection within the schools."

At the same time, National Children Policy (2011) committed to ensure security and safety of the children against all forms of violence, physical, mental and sexual abuse. However, Children living on the street are particularly vulnerable to abuse and

exploitation. They are often abused or oppressed by police. A study conducted by BRAC found that street children were apprehended by police and physically abused more frequently than adults (Ahmed et al., 2011). According to another study, harassments of the street children were common. Harassment experienced by the street children included: physical, mental, sexual and economic. The children of 8-12 year age group experienced more sexual harassment than the younger children. Sexual harassment mostly depended on their living or sleeping place, workplace and the people with whom they were working. They were mostly harassed by their employers, the police, passers-by, their peers, local *mastans*, aged addicted people, rickshaw pullers, members of DIC staff and clients (Uddin et al., 2011).

Though the street children have many difficulties and live an insecure life, they have some expectations for future. According to a study, more than two-third of them wanted to study and have skill development training in income-earning activities. The study also found that, street dwellers expected help for housing, food and getting jobs which were their common problems (Ahmed et al., 2011). To fulfill these expectations, different organizations are working with street children. However, the baseline survey (2003) found that only 8 percent children were aware about organizations which provide assistance to street children and only 6 percent visited such organizations.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Participants

A total of four street children were selected for the study from selected location of Dhaka city. Among them three were from “on the street” children group and another was from “of the street” children group. As defined for this study, “children on the street” return to family at night, whereas those “of the street” make the street their shelter. At the same time, two selected street children were girls and another two were boys.

3.2 Research Site

Study location was Gabtali, Mirpur of Dhaka city. Street children were found in this area. Gabtali is a big bus terminal where many street children live and work. This was conveniently accessible; data collection from this area was convenient for the researcher.



Fig: Map of Dhaka city

3.3 Research Approach

This was a qualitative study in which researcher used case study method to explore the perceptions and experiences of 6-8 years old street children of Dhaka city. The rationale of choosing the qualitative approach was to investigate in-depth data about the study. In-depth case study and informal observation were conducted to collect data. All the collected data was descriptive and non-numerical. At the same time, case study provides a real life stories about the street children. Due to time and financial/ resource constraint,

it was not possible to work with large sample. So, case study method was used for this study.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The researcher himself collected data and all the field notes were prepared and maintained by him. Four street children were selected who spent a minimum 6 months on the street in Dhaka city with their consent. Researcher collected data from each participant in three days. Researcher spent reasonable time to build rapport with the participants. To collect data, the researcher talked to each participant minimum two times. First time the researcher discussed with the participants about the objectives of the research and several questionnaires from the case study guideline. Second time the researcher discussed with the participants what they said during the first time as they can remember and completed the rest of questionnaires. At the end, the researcher rechecked to match his interpretation with the participants. Discussion was conducted with the help of case study guideline. The length of each day discussion was 40 to 50 minutes. Discussions were conducted by the researcher with selected street children at a mutually convenient place and time. During the discussion, clearly stated but open ended questions were asked and sensitive and misleading questions were avoided. The responses were recorded with written notes (field notes). The researcher also observed and recorded the non- verbal behaviors on the field notes as they occurred. Researcher's views and feelings were also recorded immediately after the discussion. Informal observation was also conducted. All journal and analytical memo were recorded and reviewed without delay.

3.5 Role of Researcher

In qualitative research, researcher is the primary data collection instrument. Researcher's personal values, assumptions, skill, knowledge and experiences influence on the result of the research. In this research, researcher played the main role to communicate with the participants, data collection, analyze and interpret data.

The researcher has a postgraduate degree in Physics. Moreover, he has been working in education sector with NGO for more than sixteen years. For doing this he had experience of working with disadvantaged children and slum dwellers. This experience helped him to collect, analyze and interpret data.

Researcher took different strategies for validity of the research. He took experts' help to prepare and finalize the research instruments. He also did field test to finalize the instruments. At the same time he spent reasonable time for rapport building and data collection from the selected street children.

3.6 Sampling Procedure

Non-probability purposive sampling technique has been recommended for qualitative research and this technique was employed in the present study. Purposive sampling procedure involves selecting elements based on the researchers' judgment about which elements facilitate the investigation (Adler & Clark, 2010). Participants or sites selected using the purposive sampling technique was chosen because it meets pre-established criteria (Merriam, 2009). This study also used convenience sampling, one of the types of non probability sampling, where participants are accessible and relatively easy for the

researcher to recruit (Adler & Clark, 2010). Therefore, this study selected the sample based on location and availability of the respondents.

Inclusion Criteria

- Age group of the street children was 6-8 years.
- Exposure of street life for at least 6 months in Dhaka city.
- Willingness of children to participate in the study voluntarily.

Exclusion Criteria

- Did not match the set criteria.
- Children who refused to participate.

3.7 Research Instruments

The following instrument was used to collect data:

A set of case study guideline was constructed. In case study of the street children, the focus was on their perception and situation which placed them on the street, experience of survival on the street, their felt need and future expectations.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is an important part of a study. It requires intensive hard work of a researcher to maintain a logical and systematic interpretation of the data collection. There are specific steps to analyze and interpret qualitative data. This process includes deep concentration in the interview transcripts, field notes, and others collected materials. Then the researcher systematically organizes these materials into relevant themes and patterns that tell a logical story to write the report (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Data of this study was managed from the start of the data collection procedure. In this study, all data was collected through in-depth case study and informal observation. Every day after coming back from the field, field notes were reorganized. After data collection, data was checked manually to rectify any mistake and missing data. Missing data was collected again. At the same time, through reading the text margin notes were made and initial codes were formed. Then the case and its context were described. Categorical aggregation was used to establish themes or patterns. After that, the direct interpretation was used in line with the research questions and the findings were summarized. Conclusions and recommendations were presented based on the findings.

3.9 Ethical Issues

All ethical issues related to research had been addressed in this research. The following ethical concerns were considered:

- An approval was taken from Ethical Review Committee of IED-BRAC University to conduct the study.
- Researcher did not force/ influence the participants to participate in this research. Only those participants were included who were agreed to participate in the study voluntarily.
- Oral informed consent was taken from the respondents.
- Researcher gave assurance to the participants that no identifying information obtained about them would be released to anyone outside the study.
- Participants were given freedom to withdraw them from the study at any stage.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

Guideline for case study had been checked and reviewed by IED faculty experts. A pilot testing of the guideline was conducted with appropriate sample to ensure reliability of the instrument. For member validation, the researcher rechecked after discussion with the participants what they said and its interpretation. For triangulation, the researcher used informal observation and he asked the same question in different way to the participants. Appropriate method, techniques and ethical issues of data collection had been maintained for authenticity and validity.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study arises from the limited time, resources and requirements for fulfilling the academic requirements for the course. It is an exploratory study to have some understanding of the problem and research methodology as an academic exercise. Due to time constraint, the researcher had to collect data on holidays and there were gaps in communication with the selected participants. The researcher's official job responsibilities and politically uncertain situation during the course of the study added to the difficulties. As a result, the researcher had some difficulty in selecting participants and had to accept those who were available.

Another limitation was that the researcher had to be indirect to ask about sexual abuse related questions to these young children. At the same time, the participants were not spontaneous about the issue.

It was planned to collect data from each participant in three days. Data were collected from three participants in the planned way. Another participant was not available at study area after one day of data collection from her. Due to time constraint, a new participant was not selected.

Data were collected for the study only from the street children of Gubtali bus stand area. Experiences of street life might vary in different locations of Dhaka city. The constraints and the sample limitations have to be kept in mind in drawing conclusions from the study. For future research on the problem a larger sample and different methodology should be considered.

CHAPTER IV: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Structure of the Case Studies

The objectives of the study were to explore the young street children's perceptions and experiences about life as street children in Dhaka city-particularly, about becoming a street child and continuing as one. The focus was on understanding the children's survival experience and strategy, felt needs and future expectations. The findings of this study are presented as case studies. The case studies include the demographic information, circumstances and conditions which placed the children on the street, their perception about street life, and survival needs of the children. These also include safety and security issues, children's felt needs and future expectations.

4.1.2 Case Studies

Case 1

[Name: Joy (pseudonym), Age: about 8 years, Boy, Duration of working on the street: about 1 year]

The name of the 8 years old boy is Joy (not real name). Two brothers, father and mother were the members of his family. His father was a cobbler and mother was a housewife. When the boy was too young, his father came to Dhaka from their home district Khulna along with his family. The main reason was to earn more money. In Dhaka, his father was really earning more and their days were going well. One day his father left Dhaka for their village at Khulna. But he did not come back. Afterwards, they came to know that he

got married again and was staying with his new wife. As his father was the only earning member of their family, they had no other way of income. His mother tried her best to get a job. As she was illiterate, she failed. On the other hand, they had to pay house rent and to buy food for their living. At last, Joy along with his elder brother came on the street one year ago for their living.

On the street, the boy has to work for a long time. In the morning he comes out on the street, collects the wastage, especially the plastic bottle, and sells those to the scavenging shopkeeper (Vangari dokanders). According to him, the shopkeepers cheat them and do not give accurate price of his supplies. With the money he buys food and returns home with food. His mother cooks food and they eat together. He takes some rest at noon. In the afternoon, he comes again on the street to collect wastages. When he gets more wastage, he sells those, otherwise he takes the things home. Next day he collects again and sells those together. For more earning, he also begs. He begs money, foods and drinks from the people at the bus stand and from the passengers. He also begs fruits from the fruit sellers. Usually he collects wastages and begs at Gubtali bus stand area.

Sometimes he goes to Amin bazaar, Dipzol and cow hat area. These areas are close to Gubtali bus stand. There he can collect more wastage. Every day he has to work for 6 to 7 hours and earns 50 to 100 tk. For doing this he has to walk and to remain stand up even in a sunny or rainy days which are suffering for him. Sometimes he gets injured while collecting wastages like broken glass and other sharp things. For keeping himself free from this danger, he knows that he has to use sandal/shoes. However, he does not use sandal/shoes most of the days as he has no usable sandal. On the other hand, he puts the

hazardous things in a safe place so that others can get advantage to be safe. He did not experience any sexual abuse. Sometimes older street children and people beat him. It is very painful for him and he becomes angry with them. Even in these circumstances, he has to work on street for their living. He gives his earning to his mother to maintain the family.

He lives with his mother along with his elder brother in a slum where they have to pay Tk. 1200 as house rent. There they have opportunities to use water for bathing from a well. On the other hand, they have to buy drinking water which cost Tk. 5 a jar. He usually eats two times in a day. But when he is unable to earn money, his mother does not give him food. He is convinced with her mother's attitude. He thinks that they need more money as they have to pay house rent. When he becomes sick, he takes rest and does not go for any treatment. His mother rarely buys medicine for him. He has not enough money to go to a doctor or buy medicine. As he does not have enough time, he does not brush his teeth regularly. He uses paste or coal to brush his teeth. They use bamboo made toilet and sometimes he uses soap or others things after using toilet. When he works on the street, he sometimes uses the toilet of the mosque or the convenient open place. For winter, he has not enough warm clothes. He uses two shirts to protect cold as they have no ability to buy warm clothes. In leisure time he usually plays.

Before coming on the street he used to go to school and he can read some alphabet. However, he can not write alphabet well. He wants to go to school if he gets opportunity. According to him, education is important to succeed in life.

He did not get any help from any organization. However, people help him individually. He is very unhappy about his father as they are suffering for his activity. He will be happy if anyone helps him to arrest his father and handover to police to punish him. He does not want to stay on the street because people do not like them. They think that most of the street children involve with illegal activities and they take drug using the earning on the street. He agrees with the opinion and he thinks that a number of street children take drugs. He also thinks that there are some street children who are not involved with illegal activities. According to him, education, food, health services and shelter are his greatest needs. These will be helpful for him to live well at present and for preparation to a better life in future. In future, he wants to be a garment worker to earn for his living.

Case 2

[Name: Siraj (pseudonym), Age: about 8 years, Boy, Duration of working on the street: about 1 year]

His name is Siraj (not real name). He is about 8 years old. When he was too young, their family came to Dhaka from their home district Barisal. There were four members in their family. He has a younger brother and he is about 2 years old now. His father was a rickshaw puller and mother was a house wife. Most of the days, his father did not go for work and their family was in crisis. His father often engaged in quarrel with his mother and used to beat her. His father also used to beat him when he was too young. About two years ago his father left them and married again. Now his mother works in others' houses and they live with their maternal uncles. He has three maternal uncles. Two of them work as helper of public vehicles and another one collects wastages with his wife on the street.

He did not feel good at home as his mother had no attention to him. One day he came to Gubtali with his uncle. Then he came several times to Gubtali and became friend of street children. One day, one of his friends offered him to collect plastic bottle for earning. He agreed and joined with them and became a street boy about one year ago. At the beginning of his street life, he returned home at the end of the day. Now he lives on the street and goes home at few days interval. His mother knows about his street life. He sleeps at bus station alone or with other street children. For sleeping, he does not have to pay. According to him, many people sleep in this bus stand. He uses paper or jute sack as bed.

On the street he has to suffer several difficulties. In the morning he wakes up and washes his hands and face. Then he collects wastages and sells those in shop. With the money, he eats in a low cost hotel. Then he takes rest or sleeps. After that he sometimes begs. Some days he works but some days he does not work. On an average he can earn Tk. 30 to 60. Usually, he eats two times a day. He rarely starves. Sometimes he begs foods from the people of the bus stand. He also shares food with other street children who are his friends. If he can save some money, he gives some money to his mother to help his younger brother. He does not brush his teeth regularly. He uses public toilet and for that he has to pay money sometimes. He also uses convenient open place as toilet. He sometimes uses soap or other things after using toilet. He does not take bath regularly. He goes to nearby river for bathing. He also uses WASA water for bathing if he gets a chance. He collects drinking water from restaurants of the bus stand which is not purified. This water is

generally not used as drinking water by the customer of the restaurants. According to him, these are good water and do not cause any disease. In the winter, he uses old clothes. According to him, there are several dangers on the street and he got injured several times when collecting wastages. He knows that he has to wear sandal or shoes to protect him from broken glass or other sharp things. However, he does not use as he has no sandal/shoes now. He said that he had lost his sandal several times. To avoid accident on road, he passes the road very carefully and uses safe places. Sometimes other street children steal his collected plastic bottles. Moreover, sometimes older street children beat him. When he become sick, he goes home and takes rest. When he becomes seriously ill, his mother buys medicine for him or takes him to government hospital.

In leisure time, he likes to sleep and to play with friends. On the street his best pleasure is to play and move to and fro with friends. He dislikes most to collect wastages. However, he has to do that for living. He cannot read or write. He got himself admitted into a school but cannot continue as he stays on the street. He wants to go to school if he gets opportunity.

He gets some support from organizations. An organization provides foods sometimes at Gubtali bus stand and he gets food from them. Another organization arranged a picnic for street children and he enjoyed very much there. According to him, his greatest needs are a paying job, clothing, education, food, shelter and healthcare. Sometimes he does not feel good on the street and his mother does not like his street life. So he wants to leave the street. In future, he wants to be a driver.

Case 3

[Name: Sabina (pseudonym), Age: about 8 years, girl, Duration of working on the street: about 10 months]

The name of the about 8 year old girl is Sabina (not real name). They came to Dhaka from Bhola few years ago. They are four sisters and three brothers. One of her sisters got married and lives with her husband. Two sisters work in a garments factory. One brother is a rickshaw puller and another brother, who is immediate elder to Sabina, is a street boy. Another brother is too young. Her father was a vegetable seller. He was a diabetic patient and died one year ago. Her mother worked in a garment factory. Now she sells vegetables in a kitchen market of Dhaka. Among seven brothers and sisters, four are literate. Sabina came on the street about ten months ago with her brother who is a street boy. Before coming on the street she helped her mother in household works. Her elder sister told her to go on the street to earn. Earlier she worked on the street with her brother but now she works independently.

Every day she works on the street about 5 to 6 hours and rest of the time she does household works. Sometimes she also helps her mother in kitchen market to sell vegetables. On the street she usually collects wastages and begs from the people of Gubtali bus stand area. She does not like to collect wastages at all. So, she begs most of the time now. She earns Tk. 30 to 100 per day and gives all the money to her mother to support her family. Sometimes, she also uses some money from her earning to buy food for herself when she becomes very hungry on the street.

She does not like to work on the street. They have different earning sources as all family members are involved in earning. According to her, their earning is not enough to maintain family expenditure well. So, she has to work on the street. According to her, she has to work in the sun which causes her bad headache. On the other hand, in the rainy days, it causes cold. On the street there have some danger. She has no sandal to use when she works on the street. Sometimes her hands and legs are cut by broken glass and other sharp things and she got injured 3-4 times during her work on the street. She said, *“People do not like street children and they sometimes become angry with me when I ask money to them”*.

She lives with other family members about 2 KM away from Gubtali in a semi urban slum area. She comes to Gubtali and returns home on foot every day. She uses safe way to pass the road. They have to pay Tk. 1200 as house rent. They can use tube-well water for bathing and drinking. When she works on the street, she drinks water from restaurants. She eats three times a day. She does not brush her teeth regularly as she cannot remember to brush. She uses coal to brush her teeth. When she works on the street she uses public toilet and she does not has to pay money for that. According to her, the younger children do not need money to use public toilet. She does not use soap or other things to clean after using toilet.

She did not get any mentionable help from any organization. Some organizations provide foods to the street dwellers at Gubtali, but she rarely gets food from them. However, individual people helped her. She does not feel good on the street and she wants to leave

the street life. According to her, food, shelter, education and healthcare are her greatest needs. If she gets an opportunity of food and shelter, she wants to get admitted in a school. In future she wants to work in a garments factory like her sisters to earn money for living.

Case 4

[Name: Marzia (pseudonym), Age: about 7 years, Girl, Duration of working on the street: about 7 months]

Her name is Marzia (not real name). She is about 7 years old. They lived in Faridpur in a village near a river. Due to river erosion, they lost their home and they became homeless. Her father is no more and her mother is physically disabled. For living, she along with her mother came to Dhaka. Before coming here they lived at a Mazar. She has been living on the street with her mother for more than half a year. She begs foods and money at Gubtali bus stand area. She likes street life because she gets food and money from here. She begs almost whole day. Most of the time, her mother cannot move. Her mother also begs. Sometimes she takes rest with her mother. She gives all the money to her mother which she gets from the people. Her mother uses part of the money and saves the rest. She does not know how to read or write because her mother did not send her to school. If she gets a chance, she wants to go to school.

At night, she usually sleeps at bus stand with her mother. For that they don't have to pay. They usually use paper and some clothes as bed. Sometimes they change their living place. She eats one time in hotel with money. She also gets some foods from people. She

did not starve last seven days. In winter, she uses old clothes collected from people. She does not take bath regularly. She collects drinking water from restaurants. She has nothing to brush her teeth and she does not clean her teeth regularly. She uses public toilet of bus stand and does not use anything after using toilet. When she becomes sick, she takes rest and does not go for any treatment. She had been suffering from fever and cold for last fifteen days but could not take any treatment due to lack of money.

She does not get help from organizations but individual persons help her. Her greatest needs are shelter, food, education and healthcare. She does not want to stay on the street. If she gets opportunity, she wants to be educated and serve as a garment worker.

4.2 Key Findings

4.2.1 Circumstances and Conditions Placed the Children on the Street

The causes contributing to children leaving home and seeking a life on the street are diverse. The study children cited a number of reasons for being on the street. The finding of the study revealed that one out of four participating children came to streets for lack of parental care which was created due to broken family. When asked about the reasons for moving to the streets the child responded, *"My father used to engage in quarrel with my mother and beat her. One day he got married again and now lives with his new wife. My mother works in others' houses. My mother had no attention to me. I did not feel good at home. I came to Gubtali several times and became friend with street children. I began to work with them for earning. At the beginning, I returned home at the end of the day. Now I work and stay with them on the street. I like to play and move to and fro with the"* (Case # 2, Date: May 10, 2014).

One child indicated that the reason for her to be on the streets was being orphaned and homeless due to natural calamity and another child came on the street due to being orphaned and for additional income. At the early age children take some responsibility of the family. One child said *"We, the two brothers; father and mother were in our family. My father was only earning member of our family. Our days were going well with the earning of my father. Suddenly we heard that he got married again and left home. Now he lives at another place with his new wife. My mother tried to get a job in different places, but she failed. At last, along with my elder brother, I had to come on the street to earn for living"* (Case # 1, Date: April 26, 2014).

4.2.2 Children's Perception about Street Life

Most of the street children wanted to leave the street due to various difficulties and negative attitude of people they face. A child said "*I have to work for a long time in the sun/rain which is difficult for me at this young age*" (Case # 1, Date: May 2, 2014).

Another street child said, "*I have to work in the sun which causes bad headache. On the other hand, in the rainy days, it causes cold to me. Moreover, I have to walk four kilometers everyday for come from and return to my residence to work at Gubtali bus stand*" (Case # 3, Date: May 23, 2014). A (*of the street*) child said, "*Sometimes I do not feel good on the street*" (Case #2, Date: May 16, 2014). Another child said "People do not like street children" (Case # 1, Date: May 2, 2014).

Out of four participating children in this study, three children wanted to leave the street now, if they have an option. According to a child, "*I want to leave the street and be educated if I get the opportunities of food and shelter*" (Case # 3, Date: May 30, 2014).

However, one child did not want to leave the street as she gets food and money from the street by begging. She wanted to leave the street in future.

4.2.3 Survival Needs of the Children

Three street children (*on the street*) participated in the study live with their families in slum or low cost areas. On the other hand, one child (*of the street*) lives in the bus stand. He reported that he does not have to pay to sleep in the bus stand. He said, "*How many people sleep here! We do not have to pay money to sleep here*" (Case # 2, Date: May 10, 2014). He uses paper, jute sack etc. as bed.

Most of the study children reported that they usually eat 1-2 times full meal a day.

Children (*on the street*) eat with their parents, though they are also responsible to collect their own foods. A child said, "*one day my mother did not give me any food as I was not able to give her money on that day*" (Case # 1, Date: May 9, 2014). On the other hand, child (*of the street*) eats at low cost hotel when he can earn to bear the cost. It was seen that the street children beg foods when people eat or drink in the bus stand. They also beg fruits from the fruit shops and collect leftover fruits from nearby fruit shops. It was also seen that street children form groups and the members of the groups give foods to each other. Both the groups (*of the street and on the street*) reported that they take drinking water from restaurants which are supplied by WASA when they work on the street. They think that these are safe water for drinking. A child said, "*These are good water. Many people drink water from here. It does not cause any disease*" (Case # 2, Date: May 17, 2014). Sometimes they (both the groups) beg drinking water and soft drinks from the people who drink those in the bus stand area. The study children reported that generally use one set of cloth. During winter they wear old sweater collected from people. Sometimes their parents buy old warm clothes for them. A child said, "*I use two shirts in the winter as I have not enough money to buy warm clothes*" (Case # 1, Date: April 26, 2014).

It was found that street child (*of the street*) does not take bath regularly. When he gets a chance, he uses water of WASA for bathing. He also takes bath in the nearby river. On the other hand, children (*on the street*) reported that they take bath regularly at their home

and they use water of well or tube-well. It was found that they do not brush their teeth regularly. When they brush, they generally use coal or ash because most of them are not able to buy paste due to lack of money. It was also found that the child (*of the street*) uses public toilet of the bus stand. Children (*on the street*) also use public toilet of the bus stand when they work on the street. Sometimes they have to pay for using public toilets. They also use convenient open place and toilet of the local mosque. Children (*on the street*) have to use unhealthy toilet where they live with their family. Most of the street children reported (both groups) that they do not use soap regularly after using toilet.

The study found that when they become sick, they only take rest and wait for recover naturally as they are not able to afford the cost of medicine. According to a child *"I have been suffering from fever and cold for fifteen days. But I have no money to buy medicine"* (Case # 4, Date: May 3, 2014). They rarely go to government hospital for treatment or buy medicine from local pharmacy only when they get seriously ill.

4.2.4 Safety and Security

From the study it was found that each of the street children had the experience to get injured several times from broken glass and sharp things when they collected waste materials. The children cited that they know that they should use sandal/ shoes to protect themselves. But usually they do not use as they have no usable sandal/shoes. A child (*of the street*) said *"I lost my sandal several times, so I don't want to buy sandal anymore"* (Case # 2, Date: May 17, 2014). A child said he was aware enough to remove hazard things for safety. He said, *"I put hazardous things in a safe place so that others can get*

advantage to be safe” (Case # 1, Date: April 26, 2014). The children also cited that they also feel insecure due to lots of vehicles on the road. However, they pass the road carefully and use safe ways.

4.2.5 Exploitation and Abuse

It was found from the study that sometimes children were beaten up by older street children and other people, however, none of them mentioned any kind of sexual exploitation. They also did not claim about police to abuse them physically.

4.2.6 Services Available to the Children

The street children participating in this study did not get mentionable help from organizations. Most of the services for them were out of their reach. But they reported that they get money, foods and clothes from individual people.

4.2.7 Felt needs and Expectation

Food, shelter, education and healthcare were their common greatest needs. In addition, one child wanted to get paying job and another child wanted legal support to punish his father who left them. All of them also wanted to get admitted in school and wanted to be educated, if they get opportunity. Especially, the girl participants were more eager to go to school. Out of four participating children, three children wanted to work in the garments factory to earn a living in future and another one child wanted to be a driver in future.

4.3 Discussion

Thematic analysis is performed to summarize the findings from the cases. The findings are discussed under seven themes in order to answer the overall research questions.

4.3.1 Circumstances and Conditions that Placed the Children on the Street

The study showed that there were several causes to become street children at the early age. According to the findings of the study, poverty was the main underlying cause for choosing life on the street by the young children. Poverty was created due to broken family, being orphaned and homeless due to natural calamity. A study conducted by Khair (2001) in Bangladesh found the similar kind of causes for choosing street life. The study explored that poverty and natural disaster affect most of the children of poor and marginalized families and they are driven to the capital city and other towns for their survival.

The present study also found that the lack of parental care due to broken family and neglect of children was direct cause to push the child on the street. It was also found that the young children had to take the responsibility of the family as they had no other way to live. In addition, most of the participants' had single parent, female headed families and there had some influence by the family members to work on the street to earn for living. Sometimes parents send their young child to the street for extra income. From one case, the present study found that there were seven members of the family and five of them were engaged in income generating activities. Even then the young girl was forced to work on the street by the family members for additional income. There was another street

boy in that family. His income from the street might influence the family members to send the young girl on the street. Though, the girl argued that they needed more money to maintain the family well.

4.3.2 Children's Perception about Street Life

It is found from the study that the most of street children are not happy about their street life. They want to leave the street as they face various difficulties on the street. They have to work for a long time in a situation which is difficult at this young age. At this early age, children expect love and affection from their parents. Children (*of the street*) are separated from their families and they are deprived from the attachment or bonding with their parents. It was also found that the street children can understand that the people's perceptions about the street children are not good as they involve in different illegal activities. These phenomena help them to think to leave the street. On the other hand, who has no other options and feel better on the street, does not want to leave the street.

4.3.3 Survival Needs of the Children

Finding of the study showed that, the children (*on the street*) live with their family in slum or low cost areas as they are not able to bear the cost of housing. A study conducted in Brazil also found that most of the street children were in slums or low cost housing (Abdelgalil, et al., 2004). On the other hand, the child (*of the street*) lives in the bus stand. He usually stays with other street children. At this age the street children do not change their sleeping place frequently. But a study in Tanzania found that none of the street children had permanent or fixed accommodation. The study revealed that most of

the street children slept in the street or in the pavement quite close to shops or other commercial building and some spent their nights at bus and railway terminals (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). A baseline survey of street children in Bangladesh (2003) also found that most of the street children have no suitable sleeping place.

The baseline survey (2003) found that most of the street children eat only to satisfy their hunger and they do not think about healthy diet. It was found from the present study that most of the street children eat 1-2 times full meal in a day. Children (*on the street*) have to collect food for the family and they eat with their families. On the other hand, children (*of the street*) generally eat in low cost hotels when they can bear the cost. They are not aware about the healthy diets. This is one of the causes of malnutrition of street children. A study nsorconducted by Ray, Davey & Nolan (2011) found that life on the street at an early age, are likely to be at high risk of malnutrition. They also take different strategies to cope with the problem faced on the street. The mentionable example is to share food among the members of the group. They are happy to satisfy their hunger in any way. They rarely starve as they can collect food in different ways from the bus stand area.

Like foods, street children have to struggle to meet the need of cloths. Generally they are not able to afford or collect more than one set of cloth. Those who are not able to buy or collect warm clothes, they use two shirts to protect themselves from cold. They are satisfied about the clothing in the winter. A base line survey (2003) revealed similar findings that most of the street children had no winter clothing.

The present study revealed that street children suffer from variety of illness. However, they do not take any treatment. They believe that they have to take rest to get well naturally. They practice it as they are not able to afford the cost of medicine and available free health services are not so easy for them to access. When they get seriously ill, they rarely go to government hospital for treatment or buy medicine from local pharmacy. Same result was found from a study conducted by ICDDR, B. According to the study, street children seek treatment only when they suffer severe cases (Uddin et al., 2011). A study in India also found that the health conditions of working street children were miserable and majority of the available health services were out of reach of street children. In addition, there were multiple obstacles faced by street children in accessing health care services (Nanda, 2008).

The study found that the street children (*of the street*) do not take bath regularly due to lack of facilities. They want to take a chance to use water of WASA otherwise, go to nearby river for bathing. A study conducted in Tanzania reported that the street children use Indian Ocean water and public bathrooms and water from leaking pipes (Lugalla & Mbwambo, 1999). Due to lack of facilities street children (*of the street*) are not interested to take bath regularly. On the other hand, most of them have to use one set of cloth which is difficult for them to dry after bath to use it again. A study in Bangladesh found that street children have no access to bath (Ahmed et al., 2003). It was also found in another study conducted by Ray, Davey & Nolan (2011) that skin infections were common due to lack of washing facilities. On the other hand, the street children (*on the street*) live with

their family in slum area or semi urban slum areas where they use water of well or tube-well for bathing. They take bath regularly.

The present study found that street children of both group depend on WASA for drinking water. They can easily collect drinking water without paying from the restaurant supplied by WASA. According to a study conducted by BRAC, the street dwellers use water from government supply (WASA) for drinking (Ahmed et al., 2011). Though the supplied water by WASA is needed to be purified before drinking, the children are not aware about that. They think, as the customers of the restaurant use this water, and then these are good for drinking. However, most of the customer use purified water and the supplied water of WASA is used to clean the utensils and for cooking of the restaurants. This may one of the causes for suffering from different diseases of street children.

It is found from the study that the street children of both groups use the public toilet facilities of the bus stand. Sometimes they also use convenient open place and toilet of the local mosque. A study conducted by BRAC found that majority of the street dwellers use public toilet (Ahmed et al., 2011). Sometimes they have to pay for using the public toilets. As they sometimes have to pay to use the public toilet, they search options which have no cost. Most of the street children of both groups do not use soap regularly after using toilet. It was seemed that they are not aware enough about the importance of using soap after using toilet. It also depends on the family practice and children in early age learn these good practices from the family. On the other hand, education also plays a vital role to teach how to maintain the hygiene in daily life. As the children were not involved

in education, they are deprived from learning these practices. Using soap after toilet also depends on the availability. Some children said that they use soap when they get it in the toilet. But soaps are not always available in public toilets.

4.3.4 Safety and Security

It is found from the result that most of the street children were afraid about the hazardous things like broken glass and sharp things which cause injury when they collect wastes. Each of the young street children has the experience to get injured several times. They know that they should use sandal/shoes to protect themselves from this danger. However, it was seen that they do not use sandal/shoes. Most of them have no usable shoes/ sandal. This situation indicates that the children are not aware enough for their safety. At the same time, the parents who send their children on the street are also not aware about the risk on the street. Though they do not use shoes or sandal, there have an example of awareness. A child puts the hazardous things in a safe place so that others can get advantage to be safe. This finding indicates that the street children at young age also have some humanity which can help others. This example may be learning or motivation for other street children to do something for the wellbeing of others. They also feel insecure due to lots of vehicles on the road. But they are working on the street for long time and they learn to adapt in street situation from older street children. So, they become street-wise and pass the road carefully and use safe ways.

4.3.5 Exploitation and Abuse

The study found that street children at this young age sometimes were beaten up by older street children and other people. They did not claim against police for physical abuse. Though a study conducted by BRAC found that street children were apprehended by police and physically abused more frequently than adults. It was found from informal observation that the young street children were not involved with illegal activities. It might be a cause to be free from physical abuse by the police.

The study also found that none of the study children mentioned about sexual abuse. On the other hand, it was found from different studies that the street children are abused sexually. According to a study conducted by ICDDR, B, the street children of 8-12 year age group experienced more sexual harassment than the younger children. As the study children were very young (6-8 year age group), they might not experience any sexual abuse or might not have clear concept of sexual abuse. For this reason, they were not spontaneous about the issue.

4.3.6 Services Available to the Street Children

The present study revealed that the street children did not get continuous support from any organization. But they get money, foods and clothes from individual people which are helpful for their living. A baseline survey of street children (2003) also showed that most of the street children did not get support from the organizations and they were not aware about the organizations.

4.3.7 Felt needs and expectations

From the result of the study, it was found that most of the street children who participated in this study wanted to leave the street and they need help for that. They wanted support for food, shelter, education and healthcare which are their common greatest needs. At the same time, a child wanted legal support to take action against his father who left them. Another boy wanted to get a paying job for earning. It can be said that their expectation is to get help which are essential for living. These are the basic needs of a human being and everyone has the right to get those. According to a study, street dwellers expected help for housing, food and getting jobs which were their common problems (Ahmed et al., 2011). The exceptional expectation was to get legal support to punish his father for whom the whole family was suffering. His expectation is to get his father return who was the main earning source of their family.

They also wanted to get admitted in school and wanted to be educated, if they get opportunity. Food and shelter are the first two basic needs to live. The result indicates that the street children are aware to ensure their basic needs to live before enroll in education. According to another study, more than two-third of the street children wanted to study and have skill development training in income-earning activities. It is possible to bring these street children in education by creating a suitable education system for them. This will be helpful to achieve the goal of Education for All.

4.4 Conclusion

Street children are vulnerable and neglected. The issue of street children is created by society; but it is often not even recognized as a problem by society. This is a painful situation for the street children. Street children move to the street mainly because of poverty, often at a very early age. It was found that the street children have a sense of responsibility. Most of the street children took the initiatives to go out and look for work as they felt the needs of their family arising from extreme poverty, an emergency situation or the breakup of the family.

There are many national and international non-government organizations working for the well being of street children. But the services provided by the organizations are not sufficient to reach the large number of street children. On the other hand, different organizations work in different sectors and different locations to provide services to the street children. Lack of coordination among them is a cause of not reaching many of the street children.

Bangladesh has made several national commitments toward children by way of constitutional provision, formulating policies and ratifying different child right conventions. Children are hope and future in our society but street children and their future are at risk. The situation of street children cannot be neglected and regarded as something natural for some of the children in our society. It is the duty of the government to ensure the rights of all children and help them grow up well. GO, NGO and INGO

should take initiatives in a collaborative way for protection and well-being of street children.

4.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings, analysis and discussion the following recommendations have been made.

- The government and other stakeholders should implement the Convention on the Rights of Children as well as the national plan of action to protect fundamental rights of the street children.
- Services/ intervention programs initiated by GOs, NGOs and INGOs should be available for all young street children.
- A strong network and coordination among GOs, NGOs and INGOs is needed to meet the needs of the street children.
- Further research with a large sample and more robust methodology need to be conducted to fully understand and identify the situation of street children and find remedial measures.

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Appendices

Appendix- 1

Case Study Guideline for Street Children

Research Title: Young Street Children in Dhaka: Perceptions and experiences of 6-8 year old children about life as street children in Dhaka city

Date:

Location of Interview:

Serial Number: Child/On-street/Of-street:

Time Started: _____

Time Completed: _____

Section A: Demographic Information

Name-

Age-

Duration on the street-

Age of starting as street child-

Main source of earning/ occupation-

Home district-

Please tell me about your family members (parents' occupation, income, parents' education, number of siblings)

Section B: Circumstances and conditions placed the children on the street

1. What did you do before coming on the street?
2. Why did you come on the street?
3. With whom did you come on the street?
4. Do your parents know about your street life?

Section C: Children's think about continuing to live on the street

1. What are your feelings as a street child/ about street life?
2. Please describe your daily routine/ life.
3. Do you stay with your parents? If not, when and how frequently do you visit your parents?
4. Do you move from one place to another? Why? How frequently?

5. Please tell me your working hour on the street, earning, savings and spending.
6. Whom do you give your earning? Why?
7. Do you like your present work? Why? / Why not?
8. Did you attend any school? /Do you know how to read and write? If not, why did you not attend any school?
9. If you are given an opportunity, would you go to school?

Section D: Survival needs of the children

Shelter, food, cloth and health

1. Where do you sleep (especially, in winter and rainy season)?
2. Who do you sleep with at night?
3. Do you have to pay for sleeping place? If yes, what is the amount?
4. Do you have to change your sleeping place? Why?
5. What do you use as bed?
6. How many times a day do you eat?
7. Where do you usually eat?
8. Have you ever been without food? What about last 7 days?
9. Tell us about your clothing especially, during winter.
10. Have you ever been sick or injured during work on the street? Please tell about last 15 days.
11. What do you do when you become sick?
12. What type of treatment do you take?
13. Do you visit any medical center/ doctor when you become sick?
14. Where do you take bath?
15. From where do you take drinking water?
16. Do you brush your teeth regularly?
17. Where do you go for toilet?
18. What do you use after toilet to clean your hands?
19. How do you spend your free time?

Section E: Safety/Security and Exploitation/Abuse

1. What kinds of hazard do you feel on the street?
2. What do you do to be safe from these hazards?
3. Have you suffered beating/ physical violence? By whom? How about in the past month?
4. Have you ever been exploited/ abused? If yes, what kinds of exploitation?
5. By whom were you exploited/ abused? What was the impact?
6. Have you suffered sexual assault/abuse? By whom? How about in the past month?
7. Are you afraid of the danger of sexual abuse/assault? Have any one you know suffered such abuse?

Section F: Felt needs and expectations

1. Do you get any help from any organization? If yes, what kinds of support do you get from different organizations, community? If no, what kind of support do you expect from organizations, community?
2. Do you want to leave the street? Why?
3. What do you want to do in future/ what is your future plan?
4. List in order of priority your greatest needs – i. shelter. ii. clothing, iii. education/ training, iv. a paying job, v. health care, vi. food, vii. Advice / counseling/ viii. drop-in-centre, ix. others

Appendix- 2

পথ শিশুদের জন্য কেস স্টাডি গাইড লাইন

Research Title: Young Street Children in Dhaka: perceptions and experiences of 6-8 year old children about life as street children in Dhaka city

তারিখ:

সাক্ষাতকারের স্থান:

ক্রমিক নং:

সাক্ষাতকার শুরুর সময়:

সাক্ষাতকার শেষের সময়:

বিভাগ ক : ডেমোগ্রাফিক তথ্য

নাম-

বয়স-

কত সময়/বছর যাবৎ রাস্তায় আছে-

পথ শিশু হিসেবে কত বছর বয়সে শুরু-

আয়ের মূল উৎস/ পেশা-

নিজ জেলা-

দয়া করে তোমার পরিবারের সদস্যদের সম্পর্কে বল। (মাতা-পিতার পেশা, আয়, শিক্ষা, ভাই-বোনের সংখ্যা ইত্যাদি)

বিভাগ খ: যে কারণে পথশিশু হওয়া

১. রাস্তার জীবনে আসার পূর্বে তুমি কী করত?
২. কেন তুমি এই রাস্তার জীবনে এসেছ?
৩. তুমি কার সাথে এই রাস্তার জীবনে এসেছিলে?
৪. তোমার মা-বাবা কি তোমার এই রাস্তার জীবন সম্পর্কে কিছু জানেন?

বিভাগ গ: রাস্তায় থাকা সম্পর্কে ভাবনা

১. এই রাস্তার জীবন তোমার কেমন লাগে?/ কেমন অনুভূতি হয়?
২. তোমার দৈনদিন কাজ সম্পর্কে বল।
৩. তুমি কি তোমার বাবা-মায়ের সাথে থাক? যদি তা না হয় তবে, কখন /কত দিন পর পর তাদের সাথে দেখা করতে যাও?
৪. তুমি কি এক জায়গা থেকে অন্য জায়গায় যাও/ জায়গা পরিবর্তন কর? কেন যাও? কত দিন পর পর যাও?
৫. দয়া করে তুমি তোমার কর্ম ঘন্টা, আয়, সঞ্চয় ও ব্যয় সম্পর্কে বল।
৬. তুমি কাকে তোমার আয় করা টাকা দাও? কেন দাও?
৭. তুমি কি তোমার বর্তমান পেশাকে/ কাজকে পছন্দ কর? কেন/ কেন না?
৮. তুমি কি স্কুলে পড়েছ/ লিখতে পড়তে পার? যদি না হয় তবে কেন তুমি স্কুলে যাওনি?
৯. তোমাকে সুযোগ দেওয়া হলে কি তুমি স্কুলে পড়বে?

বিভাগ ঘ: শিশুর মৌলিক চাহিদা

আশ্রয়, খাদ্য, বস্ত্র ও স্বাস্থ্য

১. তুমি কোথায় ঘুমাও (বিশেষ করে শীত ও বর্ষাকালে)?
২. রাতে তুমি কার সাথে ঘুমাও?
৩. ঘুমানোর জন্য কি তোমাকে টাকা দিতে হয়? যদি দিতে হয় তবে কত টাকা?
৪. তোমাকে কি প্রায়ই ঘুমানো জায়গা বদল করতে হয়? কেন?
৫. ঘুমানোর সময় তুমি কিসের বিছানা ব্যবহার কর?
৬. দিনে তুমি কয় বার খাও?
৭. তুমি সাধারণত কোথায় খাওয়া দাওয়া কর?
৮. তুমি কি কখনও না খেয়ে থেকেছ? গত ৭ দিনের মধ্যে কি এমনটা হয়েছে?
৯. তোমার পোশাক সম্পর্কে বল (বিশেষ করে শীতকালের পোশাক)।
১০. রাস্তায় কাজ করার সময় তুমি কি কখনও অসুস্থ/ আঘাত প্রাপ্ত হয়েছ? দয়া করে গত ১৫ দিনের ব্যাপারে বল।
১১. অসুস্থ হলে তুমি কী কর?
১২. কি ধরনের চিকিৎসা নাও?
১৩. অসুস্থ হলে কি কোন চিকিৎসা কেন্দ্র/ ডাক্তারের কাছে গিয়েছ/ যাও?
১৪. তুমি কোথায় গোসল কর?
১৫. কোথা হতে তুমি খাবার পানি পাও?

১৬. তুমি কি নিয়মিত দাঁত মাজ?
১৭. তুমি কোথায় টয়লেটে যাও?
১৮. টয়লেট হতে এসে কী দিয়ে হাত ধোও?
১৯. তুমি অবসর সময় কীভাবে কাটাও?

বিভাগ গ: নিরাপত্তা ও নির্যাতন

১. তুমি রাস্তায় কী ধরনের সমস্যা বা বিপদ আছে বলে মনে কর?
২. সেগুলো হতে নিরাপদ থাকার জন্য তুমি কী কর?
৩. তুমি কি কখনও শারীরিকভাবে নির্যাতিত হয়েছ? কাদের দ্বারা? গত এক মাসে কি এমনটি হয়েছে?
৪. তোমাকে কি কেউ কখনও কোন খারাপ কাজে ব্যবহার করেছে?
৫. কে বা কারা তোমাকে খারাপ কাজে ব্যবহার করেছে?
৬. তুমি কি কখনও যৌন নির্যাতনের শিকার হয়েছ? কাদের দ্বারা? গত এক মাসে কি এমনটি হয়েছে?
৭. তুমি কি যৌন নির্যাতনের ভয়ে ভীত? তোমার পরিচিত কি কেউ এমন আছে যারা এমন নির্যাতনের শিকার?

বিভাগ চ: অনুভূত প্রয়োজন ও প্রত্যাশা

১. তুমি কি কোন সংগঠনের কাছ থেকে কোন সাহায্য পাও? যদি পেয়ে থাক তবে কোন ধরনের সাহায্য বিভিন্ন সংগঠন ও কমিউনিটির কাছ থেকে পাও? যদি না পেয়ে থাক তবে কোন ধরনের সহযোগিতা তুমি আশা কর?
২. তুমি কি রাস্তার জীবন ছেড়ে দিতে চাও? কেন?
৩. তুমি ভবিষ্যতে কী করতে /হতে চাও?
৪. তোমার মতে কোন চাহিদাটা পূরণ করা সবচেয়ে জরুরী, পরপর সেটা আমাকে একটু বল
ক) আশ্রয়, খ) কাপড়-চোপড়, গ) শিক্ষা/ প্রশিক্ষণ, ঘ) কাজ/চাকুরি, ঙ) স্বাস্থ্য সেবা, চ) খাদ্য,
ছ) পরামর্শ, জ) ড্রপ ইন সেন্টার, ঝ) অন্যান্য।

Appendix-3

Consent Form for Street Children

Title of the Research: Young Street Children in Dhaka: Perceptions and experiences of 6-8 year old children about life as street children in Dhaka city

Researcher: Md. Jabadul Hoque

Purpose of the Research

I am conducting this research as a part of my Masters Degree requirement from the Institute of Educational Development (IED) - BRAC University in order to explore the perception and situation which placed the street children on the street, experience of survival on the street, their felt needs and future expectation.

Expectation from You

If you agree, you will be expected to share your feelings, views, experiences and expectation regarding your street life. I will spend three days with you. In these three days, informal interview will be taken two days and duration of each day interview will be 50-60 minutes depending upon your response.

Risks and Benefits

There is no risk to you for participating in this study; directly and indirectly street children may be benefited in future if any intervention program incorporates your perception and expectation in raising street children.

Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality

All information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. I would be happy to answer any of your queries about the study and you are welcome to contact me.

Future Use of Information

Some of the information collected from this study may be kept for future use. In this case, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of the participants will be maintained strictly.

Right not to Participate and Withdraw

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are the sole authority to decide for and against your participation in this study. You have the right to withdraw your participation in this study in any time.

If you agree to my proposal of participating in my study, please indicate that by putting your signature/finger print in the specified space below.

Thank you for your cooperation.