

City

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Fight against begging needs joint efforts

Prothom Alo roundtable told

Staff Correspondent

As previous efforts like restricting beggars' presence in certain areas or sending them to the rehabilitation centre failed to eliminate the practice, there should be coordinated efforts of government and non-government organisations, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

Speaking as chief guest, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Annisul Huq stressed the need for creation of a demographic database of the country's beggars.

To help eradicate child begging, the mayor on his part has taken initiatives to set up 200 schools in Dhaka's north where street children can study.

The discussion, "Role of Corporate Sector and Civil Society in Eradicating Child Begging", was organised by the Prothom Alo in association with Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) at the newspaper's office.

Dr Nishat Fatima Rahman, coordinator of Psychosocial Lab, Institute of Educational Development at Brac University, said that to keep children drowsy during begging, they were given sleeping pills.

"They are fed sedatives at an age when their brains need to remain more active," she said, adding that these children could not grow up naturally and got involved in destructive activities like bombing later in their lives.

Mahbuba Nasreen, director of the Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies at Dhaka University, suggested including parents as a target group to stop child begging.

Shagufa Anwar, chief of Communication and Development of United Hospital Ltd, called for stopping the able-bodied persons from begging.

Joint Secretary at Ministry of Social Welfare MM Sultan Mahmud said that to make the capital free from beggars, they sent them to the Beggars Rehabilitation Centre in Mymensingh, but the initiative failed because beggars fled the centre.

Mayor Annisul Huq said DNCC would give assistance to solve the problem and invited the participants of the discussion to come up with specific plans.

ASK Executive Director Sultana Kamal said her organisation would like to serve as the secretariat if a coordination committee was formed to eliminate begging.