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The Prevalence of Child Vulnerability and Its Nature: An Analytical Study on Bangladesh Perspective

Md. Abu Shahan

Research Associate, Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO), Bangladesh

Corresponding Author: Md. Abu Shahan; Email: shahan.sw@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Child vulnerability refers to the conditions where children have not the ability to protect themselves from harassment, maltreatment, and malnutrition which could weaken. This study has tried to reveal the prevalence and the nature of child vulnerability in Bangladesh, and the root causes of child vulnerability have also been explored and debated and discussed throughout the article. However, the study is narrative and qualitative in the manner and secondary data have been used to develop and support the arguments for the study. As findings, the study has also found that children are at great risks due to some notable reasons, such as excessive academic pressure, the worst form of child labor in the working place, disability, child trafficking, and natural disasters which led them to be victimized with maltreatment and malnutrition which is more prevalent in the rural and urban slum areas. Moreover, climate change and disasters have been playing an adverse role to increase the prevalence of children's vulnerability in Bangladesh. In conclusion, the study suggests that decision-makers and policymakers need to be more conscious and responsible to revise the existing legal frameworks and their effective implementation for the protection of children against vulnerability.

INTRODUCTION

The definition of a child is a relative and varied issue all over the world. According to UNCRC (1990) individual below 18 years is considered as a child. On the contrary, the government of Bangladesh defined children below 14-18 years through its different legal frameworks and policies. Children of certain ages deprive of their basic needs and rights (Arora et al, 2015; Wahedi, 2012) which makes them weak and defenseless. Deprivation of rights is seen in various types of harassment, abuse, and exploitations at the institutional, organizational or societal level (Mohajan, 2014). Society oftenest neglects and avoids children's expectations and opinions. Moreover, other social organs like family, religions, culture, customs, and traditions mostly do not give attention to the voice of the child.

In many cases, children cannot raise their internal problems like an adolescent and physical problems before the elder members or opposite gender. As a consequence, children become unable

to take part in self-development activities and also unable to protect themselves from vulnerable situations. A vulnerable situation refers to the situation where someone be weakened and insignificantly defended (Arora et al, 2015). The situation makes complicated the surroundings to live healthily and independently. Child vulnerability is seen in the negative experiences in terms of education, morbidity, and malnutrition (World Bank, 2005). The experiences reflected in the physical and psychological disorders like illness, HIV/AIDS, disability, malnutrition, and mental retardation lead them to vulnerable future lifespan.

The vulnerable children suffer in the future different types of problems such as infant and adolescent mortality, low immunization, high malnutrition and diseases, low access to health services, low enrollment in school and performance, high dropout rates, intra-household negligence, deprivation of foods and care, harassment, violence, abuse and maltreatment, economic and sexual exploitation, and inadequate care and protection

(The World Bank Institute, 2004). They have poor ability to overcome the problems due to weakening family and flimsy societal conditions. Family and society, in the developing countries, have economic scarcity and dependent on the subsidy of other countries or donors. The government of the countries cannot take all necessary initiatives to protect the children falling to vulnerable conditions with abuse, exploitation, harassment, and malnutrition (Mohajan, 2014; World Bank Institute, 2004).

As a result, the children of the countries are suffering multi-diversified problems and challenges which make them more helpless and vulnerable. Nevertheless, the non-government organizations, civil society organizations, and government have taken initiatives to protect the children from sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment through formulating and implementing legal frameworks and policies. However, this paper has explored the prevalence of child vulnerability and its nature in the context of Bangladesh.

METHODS

This is a qualitative based study with the help of minimum statistical data and an entire narrative manner. Mainly content analysis of various types of documents regarding child vulnerability has been used. Secondary data sources like articles, journals, reports, newspapers have been used in the study to meaningful, more relevant, and make concrete to the research purposes.

The study identifies the gap of comprehensive data and evidence in the context of violence and child abuse. The study identifies the reasons for the improper implementation of existing laws, policies, and international commitments. The study also measures the level of engagement of communities, educational institutions, elected representatives, and concerned authorities in eliminating the children's vulnerability. More specifically, 1) The study fulfill the comprehensive data; 2) measure the extent of vulnerability and abuse of children, and 3) reveal the level of community and concern authorities' engagement in reducing child vulnerability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Children and Child Vulnerability

A human being is treated as children at a certain age according to law, policy, convention,

and customs. The definition is varied from culture to culture and country-wise. For instance, the children act of 1974 of Bangladesh defines the 16 years old of a person as children. On the other hand, the UN convention on the rights of the child defines children as fewer than 18-year-old individuals. Age variations are seen as acute for employment in the different laws and policies in Bangladesh. For example, the employment act of 1938 does not permit children in engaging in employment less than 12 years except for an apprentice while the factory act of 1964 does not allow children employment below 14 years in factories. Moreover, the anti-woman and children oppression (Amendment) act of 2003 defines children less than 16 years while the court of wards (Amendment) act of 2006 provisioned the orphan of 18 years or above, has the right to claim the property or sell it which is supposed to be legally inheriting (Mohajan, 2012). Precisely, according to the existing laws of Bangladesh, the age of children varies from 14 to 18 years for admission to employment. In the study, any individuals are defined as children below 8 years old.

Vulnerability refers to the conditions where someone being weak or poorly defended (Arora et al, 2015). The vulnerability of a child is defined as the condition of being exposed to risks and defenseless than other segments of the population. This definition is dependent on certain ages 0 to 18 year's individuals. They can be vulnerable in depriving of the basic needs, exploitation, abuse, and neglect, violence, infection by various diseases like HIV and VIRUS, and malnutrition. Precisely, World Bank clarified vulnerability in the following ways "*The group of children that experience negative outcomes, such as the loss of their education, morbidity, and malnutrition, at higher rates than do their peers*" (World Bank). According to WB, vulnerable children can be categorized in various forms such as street children, children in the worst form of labor, children affected by arms conflicts, children affected by HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities, local orphaned and vulnerable children groups.

These children have not the ability to claim their rights and have not access to a healthy environment. They also have not certain of their basic rights fulfilling (Skinner et al, 2006). They deprive not only of basic rights like food, clothes,

shelter, treatment, education but also face multi diversified and crucial problems like physical abuse, sexual harassment, exploitation, violence, disability, and impairment. Children who have not able to protect them from these kinds of harmful condition are recognized as vulnerable. They are the most fragile segment of the population and are bearing immeasurable difficulties which hamper their childhood development and adult in the future.

The Prevalence of Child Vulnerability

Child vulnerability refers to the extent of threats and risks is imposed on children. Vulnerability starts with depriving them of rights and discrimination. It is observed that child vulnerability more likely is seen among the street, adopted, refugee, disabled, and minority children. According to UNCRC (1990), children are vulnerable when they face discrimination (articles 2), living out of children (articles 20), adopted (articles 21), refugee (articles 22), disabled (articles 23), displaced (articles 25), and children of minorities or indigenous people (articles 30) who are facing diversified problems (UNHRHC, 2020).

These vulnerable children are facing diversified problems such as malnutrition, social ignorance, politically vulnerable, and deprived of education rights for example, vulnerable that jeopardizes children's health and well-being, such as the chronic illness of a parent, or other family factors (Schenk et al; retrieved from UNICEF on 2020). Researchers argue that the chronic illness of a parent is deeply connected with the disability of a child. Disability increases the mistreatment and negligent experiences of a child (Paquette et al., 2018). Some children are especially at risk of violations of their rights because of an aspect of their identity or circumstances like having a disability or because they have no family. Similarly, children with disabilities continue to experience greater adversity and poorer outcomes. They are over-represented in institutional care settings, particularly in transition economies (ODEC, 2017; Berens and Nelson, 2015). They are more likely to experience mistreatment, particularly neglect (Paquette et al., 2018), and are at higher risk of bullying victimization (Emerson, 2012) and violence (Jones et al., 2012).

They have lower educational attainment, particularly children from lower socio-economic backgrounds of a family (Sentenac et al., 2019).

The study reveals that the pattern of a household increases the degree of children's vulnerability in family life. As seen, while older children may care deeply for their younger siblings, they may be unable to cope with the responsibility of household decision-making and have to make enormous personal sacrifices that threaten their own development (Donald and Clacherty, 2005). These children are more likely to experience violence and sexual abuse, child labor, and denial of their civil and political rights. The right to non-discrimination is also important here, particularly for girls and minority groups. Disabled children, refugee children (particularly those who are alone), and children in conflict with the law are just some examples of children afforded special protection under the Convention of the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments (CRIN, 2018). These groups of children suffer mental health difficulties and maltreatment (OECD, 2019).

The prevalence of mental health difficulties and malnutrition is dominant across the world. A study proved the prevalence of mental difficulties among 5-17 years children associated with a number of disorders such as hyperactivity, autism, eating disorder, repetitive behavior, and significant impairment (ibid). The difficulty among children and adolescents is increasing day by day (Moffitt et al., 2010; West and Sweeting, 2003). The reasons for increasing the difficulties are related to many factors such as rising wealth and income inequalities, weakening of the family unit and support systems, Internet and social media, perceived inferior social status, poor body image, and high academic pressures (Bor et al., 2014).

High academic pressure and switching job placement of parents make them more vulnerable. They are more likely to have changed schools, switched curricula, and in some cases experienced an interruption in schooling. This can negatively influence academic proficiency, well-being, and health care (OECD, 2017). Health care or treatment facilities have to be ensured for the children by family or concern people (UNCRC, 1990) but it is seen that they are victimized by maltreatment. Maltreatment includes household poverty (Slack et al., 2004), high neighborhood poverty (Farrell et al., 2017), overcrowded housing (Cant et al., 2019), social isolation (Gracia and Musitu, 2003),

intimate partner violence (Zolotor et al., 2007), and parental substance misuse (Kepple, 2018). In addition, parental understanding and ability to respond to children's needs is relevant and is informed by parents own experiences of being parented (Howe, 2005), disability, behavioral problems, and poor child-parent attachment (Maclean et al., 2017; Howe, 2005).

Specifically, a systemic review of the long-term effects of childhood physical and emotional abuse and neglect recommends a causal relationship with a range of psychiatric disorders, drug uses, sexually transmitted infections, and risky sexual behaviors (Norman et al., 2012). Based on a limited number of country studies, a 2009 systematic review estimated that each year around 4-16% of children are physically abused; one in ten children experiences neglect or emotional abuse; and 5-10% of girls and 1-5% of boys are subjected to penetrative child sexual abuse over the course of childhood (Gilbert et al., 2009). In the childhood period of 5-17 ages', physical abuse and mental depression among girls and boys are higher in out-of-home children. In many cases, children in out-of-home care reside in family-based foster care (general and kinship care) or residential care (small residential units and larger institutions).

They face many challenges, for example, the additional burden of worrying about their parents' well-being, moving homes, changing schools, and leaving friends and supportive adults behind are associated with developing insecure attachments, emotional and behavioral problems, mental health problems, poor educational outcomes, and failed adoption and family reunification (Jedwab et al., 2019). Due to the socio-economic and cultural unfavorable patterns of Bangladesh, children are compelled to work outside of the home. Data explored that working children are immensely abused either sexually or physically by employees or colleagues or other culprits in and outside of the workplace. The employers often tortured physically and sexually abuse the child workers (Mohajan, 2014).

Child workers also tolerate the tortures and abuses, eventually, engage them invulnerable and risky activities. A report claimed that there is 150 million child labor and about 10% percent of them are engaging in a vulnerable and risky forms of activities. among them, 81% of the children are

working to meet their family needs while 60% are working in the daytime and 40% are working in both day and night shifts (The Daily Star, 2017). Additionally, 28 percent of the total population is children and among them, two million children work in perilous and hazardous conditions (The Daily Star, 2018). UNESCO clearly reported that 39.7 percent of children are engaged in agriculture, 30.9 percent in services, and 29.4 percent in the industry sector (UNESCO, 2018).

The worst form of activities include the fishing and production of bricks, forced begging, forced smuggling, and drugs, commercial sexual exploitation by child trafficking (BILA, 2018). Children are bound to be engaged in these worst forms of activities due to poverty particularly in urban slum regions. It is seen that 15% of the child workers are working for their guardian's interest while 10% are not enrolled in school (The Daily Star, 2017). In child beating, Bangladesh is in the top position in the world and physical punishment starts in their homes for instance, among school-going children, 91% reported that it takes place at their schools. Sometimes the female students become extremely victims of sexual behavior by male teachers (Mohajan, 2014).

Children also become a victim of physical abuse during arrest and interrogation, and children accused or convicted of crimes are often held with adult prisoners from whom they are vulnerable to abuse. Street children and child sex workers always fall victim to verbal, physical, and sexual abuse from police, gangster, and the general public (Mohajan, 2012). The general public, especially by the local young teaser, teases female child especially young girls for example, making sort video film and images recorded by the eve teaser and they spread it on the various websites on the internet. When the recorded video of the girl will be watched, then she cannot go outside freely and ultimately will be self-killed from to live of shame of eve-teasing (Mohajan, 2014). Moreover, most parents are not aware of the negative impact of early marriage and parents do not hesitate to arrange early marriage. As a consequence, children's health both mental and physical is deleteriously affected and makes them more vulnerable (Mohajan, 2014). Besides, the deleterious situations of children, academic pressure, disability, child trafficking, child labor, maltreatment and malnutrition, child

trafficking, child crimes in arms and drugs, climate change, and natural disasters make immensely vulnerable them.

The Nature of Child Vulnerability and Key Factors

1. Academic Pressure

Academic pressure refers to the situation where a load of class, exams, home works, and teachers warnings is excessive on students in educational institutions both government and non-government. The capacity of load management of the child varies from one another (Thakkar, 2018). As such, which is comfortable and manageable to one child is harmful and deleterious for another child which is seen in the result. The pressure is generated by both sides like teacher and parent. In general, a teacher tries to complete syllabus within schedule time according to the academic calendar. Similarly, parents expect the best result from their children by emphasizing and putting books loaded on them without considering their capacity. Both of the pressures stipulate children to engage in more studying, and force to obtain better result in the examination (Poddar, 2020).

These excessive study loads can increase psychological and physical problems such as depression, anxiety, nervousness, disorders which in turn affect their academic result. The problem like anxiety is found in 8% of the adolescent and children over the world which is emerged due to parental pressure and academic study load (Thakkar, 2018). These pressures increase the level of mental stress which makes them vulnerable to severe depression and suicidal tendencies (Poddar, 2020). The tendencies are increasing day by day among the children under tremendous pressure to perform and to obtain the parental expected results in the examinations (Mitra, 2019). Unfortunately, it is the parents who are responsible for this, and severe pressure on their children. Parents have to be more conscious and careful of the children's expectations to reduce the academic severe pressure and vulnerability.

2. Disability

According to the act (2001), a person who is physically enable or mentally disordered by birth or accident or by maltreatment and totally or partially inactive or enable to lead a normal life for that inability or mental disorder is considered as disabled (Bangladesh Disabled welfare Act-2001).

Similarly, the disability is a state of physical, mental, social, economic, political, and all completely different literally handicapped that deprived of rights, unable to satisfy obligations to identity, family, society, and state rather obsessed by others for his survival (Mannan, 1996). Moreover, the data on the prevalence of disability from the world perspective is quite anxious and frightening. World Bank group revealed that about 15% of the total population is experienced some form of disability. Recently, COVID-19 adverse impacts on health, education, and transport facilities increase the risks of vulnerability for person with disabilities.

During COVID-19, a disabled people depends on those transportation methods may not be able to travel even for necessities medical appointments, and are deprived of basic necessities. They are suffering socioeconomic adversities such as deprivation of education and health rights, lower level of employment, and higher rates of poverty. Poverty amplifies the vulnerability of disability through malnutrition, insufficient access to education and health facilities, hazardous working conditions, unfavorable environment, inadequate access to safe water and sanitation facilities, lack of employment, and lower wages, and high cost of living with a disability especially for the children with disability.

Children with disabilities are suffering critical complexities, for instance, inadequate access to meal programs and assistive technologies, lack of access to resource personnel and recreation programs, and deprivation of basic health facilities such as water, sanitation, and hygiene. They are losing their educational rights due to the adverse impacts of COVID-19 through inadequate access to educational equipment, electricity, and the internet (World Bank Group, 2020). All these barriers increase the risks of the vulnerability of children with disabilities, and violated their legal rights for protection against violence, exploitation, and abuse. A study revealed that violence against disabled children occurs at an annual rate of 1.7 times greater than a normal children (Global Campaign of education, 2011). They are more likely to be the victim of rape or physically abuse and are deprived of legal interventions, protections to law enforcing agencies like police (Simons, Dodd, 2004).

Similarly, a study on disabled students in Bangladesh revealed that disabled female students in the slum are likely victimized by rape and physical violence. They are oppressed and tortured by culprits and naïve persons in society due to their physical impairment and poverty (Shahen, 2020). They are less like to obtain police interventions, legal protections, and preventive care against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment. Simultaneously, concerning angle towards disabled, an identical study found that regarding 55% respondents accept disabled well, 63% did not suppose that disabled were a burden to the family and they urged to present further privilege to them by providing additional security on road, reserved seats within the transport like bus, train, separate hospital, health center, and colleges. Girls with disabilities are significantly a lot of at risk of social discrimination and neglect. The disabled area unit is sometimes excluded from existing governmental and non-governmental development programs (BBS, 2015).

This portion of the population is very often neglected by society and classmates. Their life became depended to others, and cannot lead a normal educational life as the normal students do (Shahen, 2020). The main cause is that nobody is helpful to them to overcome their difficulties. But the outlook of the family, classmates, and society about the disability is changing positively day by day.

3. Child Trafficking

According to the UN convention against transportation organized crime, any activity leading to recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or a position of vulnerability is treated as trafficking. Different types of trafficking ways are adopted by traffickers such as coercion, luring, duping, abducting, and kidnapping (Mohajan, 2012). In most cases, victims are compelled to involve in unethical activities due to social and economic constraints which make them vulnerable such as aspiration for high social status, unemployment, poverty, and personal economic profit. Moreover, trafficking is the third-largest sector of profit for organized crimes following arms and smuggling. Expanding the arms and smuggling business, traffickers allure the poor urban and rural people to get money and compelled them to work in

prostitution, drug couriers, smuggling, and even, organ transplant (Mike and Park, 2002; Sarkar, 2011).

A study simulated that about 30 million women and children have been trafficked from the Asia region to other parts of the world, and traffickers seem this region is the main source of human trafficking of the world. Asian country like Bangladesh is facing trafficking as a big concerning factor in recent years. A study argued that women and children are trafficked to India, Pakistan, And Middle east countries, and are forced to involve in sex trade, domestic work, hazardous factory works, forced marriage, camel jockeying, and some of the cases, children were killed for organ harvesting (Mohajan, 2012). In a broader sense, girls are commonly married off to elderly men. Similarly, girls from ethnic minorities and lower caste groups are more at risk of trafficking (Ejalu, 2006). The government of Bangladesh strongly has taken necessary legal frameworks for recovery and rehabilitating the trafficked persons, especially women and children. The Governmental organizations and non-government organizations have been tasked to rehabilitate the recovered girls and women through social reintegration.

4. Child Labor

In Bangladesh, 28 percent of the total population is children and among the two million children work in perilous and hazardous conditions (The Daily Star, 2018). A study revealed that 39.7 percent is engaged in agriculture, 30.9 percent in services, and 29.4 percent in the industry sector (UNESCO, 2018). This amount of children are engaged in different forms of agricultural activities for instance farming, harvesting, and processing crops, tobacco, raising poultry, grazing cattle, gathering honey, and harvesting tea leaves, drying and processing fish, fishing harvesting, and processing shrimp.

It is also observed that child labor is engaged in many forms of industrial activities such as quarrying and mining, including salt, producing garments, textiles, jute textiles, leather, leather goods, footwear, and imitation jewelry, manufacturing bricks, glass, hand-rolled cigarettes, matches, soap, furniture, aluminum products, metal products, plastic products, and melamine products, ship breaking, welding, construction, and breaking bricks, and stones. Moreover, it is seen that children

are engaged in various kinds of services including domestic work, working in transportation, pulling rickshaws, and street work, including garbage picking, recycling, vending, begging, and shoe repairing, working in hotels, restaurants, bakeries, and retail and grocery shops, repairing automobiles. But it is a matter of regret is that children are engaged in a lot of worst activities including forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of bricks, forced begging, use in illicit activities, including smuggling and selling drugs, commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced domestic work (Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2018). Children are bound to be engaged in these worst forms of activities due to poverty (Shahen and Alam, 2020). Those children are especially vulnerable to adversities of inequalities including poverty of the family or the community.

5. Maltreatment and Malnutrition

Child maltreatment is defined as public health problems or harmful activity to individuals below 18 years which is considered as a part of violation of their human rights. It is also a part of a range of violence, harm, and exploitation of children at all spheres of life like individuals, institutional, and societal levels. Individual inadequate productivity and resource constraints are responsible for creating the violence, harm, and exploitation of children (Wahedi, 2012). According to UNCRC (1990), the violence and exploitation of children are treated as a part of violation of human rights and deprivation of child treatment and nutrition. A study revealed that all the children are not equally cared for and not feed nutritious foods due to their family poverty (Shahen and Alam, 2020). All of them are compelled to engage in hazardous works and harmful activities to health for livelihood (Wahedi, 2012), most of the cases, for fulfilling the family needs and poverty (Shahen and Alam, 2020). Engaging in hazardous works deprives of a healthy childhood, and children are victimized to maltreatment. In many cases, maltreatment of children is created due to illegal activities (Wahedi, 2012) and biased to political leaders (Mohajan, 2014). Wahadi (2012) claimed that law enforcing agencies like police picked up the children from the street for political demonstrations by violating children's liberty and protective care as guaranteed by the existing laws of the government.

This situation creates fear among children and family members which make gradually negative impacts on child development. Childhood development is mostly dependant on nutrition, diversified food supply, and proper treatment. But 20.5% percent of the people of Bangladesh live under the poverty line (BBS, 2019 cited in Prothom Alo) and do not fulfill their family nutrition and deity diversity in the daily food menu. As a consequence, children of poverty-prone families suffer malnutrition. Researchers argued that malnutrition begins from the family in a form of depriving of nutritious foods, vegetables, and lack of deity diversity. The deprivations of children of their health rights are seen in the adult period while adult faces difficult health problems like vulnerable physical structure, psychological disorders, and maladjustment.

6. Climate Change and Disasters

Climate change affects not on the pressure of economic, social, and natural resources such as rising food prices, spreading the diseases and illness, natural resources scarcity-but it affects directly the development of the children such as health, nutrition, education, emotional, and social wellbeing at local and household level (Jones, 2011). They are the most vulnerable part to the impacts of climate change in both rich and marginalized families Children from rich households are less affected by the adversity of climate change than poor families (Reeve, 2015). Similarly, rural children are affected in different ways to urban children in developing countries.

In developing countries, it is assumed that climate change affects directly children's physical and basic needs like food, shelter, clothes, treatment, and education rather than on long-term impacts like coping capacity and adaptation strategies of the children. A report proved that climate change, droughts, and floods destroy food sources and livelihoods that increase the vulnerability and deprivation of children. The deprivation and disparities in health, education, nutrition, and protection systems exacerbate the risks to children during natural calamities like floods, droughts, and phenomena (UNCC 2016). According to UNISDR, The majority of the lives are lost to disasters over the world. Another report revealed that 88% of the people are affected by natural disasters over the period of 1975-2008 while

61% of the total fatalities and 47% of total economic damages (ADRC, 2009).

It is seen that the frequency of natural phenomena of storm, drought, cyclone, and warmer temperature are leading to the higher rates of damages and loss of life in Asia and Pacific countries including Bangladesh (UNICEF, 2011). Added to this, the nature of the risks of children vary from country to country, for instance, children of the affluent countries especially in America and the European continent are less affected and vulnerable than poor countries especially in Asia and African countries. The governmental and non-governmental organizations in the countries are working on different policies to protect the rights of children during and after post impacts of climate change. The government, nongovernment, and civil society organizations are putting more emphasis on short-term needs mitigating activities rather than long-term coping and adaptation strategies of the children with climate change (Jones, 2011).

It is the responsibility of the international community's to protect the children from the vulnerability of climate change by ensuring their rights during and after post impacts of climate change whose voices are seldom heard (Reeve, 2015). Their vulnerability is to be worst by continued climate change which is seen during natural calamities (Lawler and Patel, 2012). Natural calamities exacerbate the risks of children which lead them to the most victimized and at downstairs of the vulnerable groups in developing countries like Bangladesh. The geographical location of Bangladesh is in a natural disaster-prone area, and most of the disasters like floods, cyclones, droughts, tidal surges, tornadoes, earthquakes, river erosion, waterlogging, raising water and soil salinity are occurring over the country. The southern coastal part of the country is frequently affected by cyclones, tidal waves, tornadoes, and soil salinity where about 25% of the population resides and the northern part is frequently affected by floods, river erosion, droughts, earthquake, and waterlogging. The children of 40% of the total population live in the areas where natural calamities are occurring frequently which exacerbate their risks (UNICEF, retrieved on 3/2/2021). Because children have low ability than an adult to cope and adapt to the adversity of natural calamities occurred by climate change. In that duration of disasters, children are the

most vulnerable to dislocation, sexual exploitation, child labor, trafficking, and unsafe migration. A report revealed that 4.7 million people were displaced due to disasters, 50,000 to 2,00000 people were displaced due to river erosion, 60% of the people are prone to flooding, and 70% of Dhaka's dwellers are environmental migrants over the country (UNICEF, 2016). The government has taken initiatives to protect the children against violence, exploitation, and migration of the children by implementing various programs with collaboratively working with nongovernmental national and international organizations.

Urban and Rural Comparison

The total urban population in the least-developed countries was estimated to be 2.9 billion in 2014, and the figure is projected to reach 5.2 billion by 2050 (UN, 2015). The study reported that there are existing disparities in socio-demographical characteristics between urban and rural areas of Bangladesh (Srinivasan et al, 2013). For example, health, nutrition, and education are more available in urban areas than rural (Srinivasan et al, 2013; Hossain, 2007) except for slums in urban areas (Raju et al, 2017). Due to existing disparities, the pattern of child vulnerability is a more sensitive and claimable issue in urban slum regions (ibid). The overall situation of vulnerability is more prevalent in the rural areas in terms of health, nutrition, educational rights, child marriage, wife-beating, eve-teasing, and social negligence (Srinivasan et al, 2013; Raju et al, 2017). On the other hand, human trafficking, education, working environment, sanitation, quality of foods, early marriage, physical and mental torture, and recreational facilities are not available and not accessible for children in urban slum areas of Bangladesh (Raju et al, 2017; Mohajan, 2014; Hossain, 2007; UNICEF, 2009). Researchers argue that governments in developing countries generally have had a poor record in designing, financing, and implementing policies, rules and regulations, and in providing services in both urban and rural areas, resulting in conditions and outcomes that may be socially inefficient and inequitable (UN Habitat, 2016).

Laws, Ordinances, and Policies

The children act 1974; children's act 2013 (act no.24 of 2013); child marriage restrained act 2017; the Bangladesh labor act 2006 (has replaced the employment of children's act 1938; factories act

1965; and the children (pledging of labor) act 1933); the suppression of immoral traffic act 1933; the penal code 1860; women and children repression prevention (special provisions) act 2000; the divorce act 1869; the vaccination act 1880; the Parsi marriage and divorce act 1936; the married women's property act 1874; the Hindu widow's remarriage act 1856; the Muslim personal law (Shariat) application act 1937; and the Muslim Wakf validating act 1913. Laws are implementing to protect the child from various types of suppressions and vulnerable situations like early marriage, forced employment, oppression, accidental causalities, widow ship, and deprivation of property rights (ministry of women and child welfare, 2021).

The Bangladesh Shishu academy ordinance 1976; Bangladesh abandoned children (special provisions) (repeal) ordinance 1982. The ordinance played an essential role in establishing an academy for children to develop their potential creativity and power. The Shishu academy is implementing different types of service-oriented programs to increase the children's mental development, for example, special training, establishing a library, museum oriented exhibition, books, and newspaper publication and boosting (Bangladesh Shishu Academy, 2021).

National child policy 2011; Children Rules 1976. Government formulates and passes the laws, ordinances, and policies for the protection of its citizen's rights and governs them. But it is observed that some countries' national child protection systems are not yet mature, for example, Mexico's (Government of Mexico, 2019). The government of Bangladesh adopted the laws to protect children from vulnerability and to ensure their rights. However, all the laws and policies are concentrated on children's protection and rights. Literally, these laws and policies have ensured children's rights and have eliminated child abuse, but in a real sense, children are not getting proper benefited and are not protected by these laws and policies. They are not getting fully sheltered under the laws and policies for example they are oppressed physically and are beaten by law enforcement agencies (Mohajan, 2012).

Human rights activists blamed the law enforcement agency for unlawful activities to children. They also argued that children are abused

and vulnerable due to the lack of proper execution of children-related laws and policies in Bangladesh. The study has reviewed the relevant laws and policies of child protection from vulnerability and has identified the gaps in laws and policies for proper execution to ensure children's rights. After analyzing the existing legal frames for children, the study revealed that the punishment duration and compensations for child abuse or harassment are not rigid and are not appropriate to the current situation. In major cases, the oppressors get easily bail and move freely. On the contrary, the victims are threatened repeatedly by the culprits and oppressors. As consequence, general people blame the law enforcement agency with the government for unethical behavior and harassment through physical tortures and economic oppressions.

Community Engagement in ensuring children's rights and minimizing the vulnerability of child both boys and girls in society is a very important and elementary factor. The engagement removes the social superstitions and problems related to children's vulnerability. In some cases, people protest against the insecurity of school-going children, for instance, a study claimed that an adult person was killed by the youngest male eve-teasers (Mohajan, 2012). Perception is that a male teacher raped a schoolgirl in the personal chamber of the school premises. The victim was lost her bravery and mental stamina to continue her advance study. Precisely, in most cases, children of 5-17 years are abused by culprits in the social, institutional, and family atmospheres. Policymakers argued that general people should be involved to reduce children's vulnerability. Community people are more conscious, but not enough, to protect from the vulnerability of children (Mohajan, 2014).

The content analysis explored the reasons for low engagement of the community in the process such as muscleman, political connection with oppressors, extrajudicial killing, biasness of law enforcing agency, and depreciation of family and social values. Precisely, children need strong protection by executing the existing laws, policies, regulations, and engaging the community and other stakeholders (Schenk, 2009). Community, government, civil society, and other stakeholder's role to prevent child abuse and eliminating children's vulnerability is essential and is verily affecting improvements in child and family

wellbeing. The study explored the community and other stakeholder's roles to reduce children's vulnerability. Concisely, child vulnerability can be reduced by strengthening community engagement in protection against violence and ensuring their rights.

Challenges for Child Protection

There are some factors that lead the children more vulnerable and deprive of a healthy and safe environment such as domestic violence, physical abuse, exploitation within family, society, street, working place, educational institutions, and also in the justice system of Bangladesh (Save the Children Bangladesh). Although the UNCRC stipulates that children have the right to sufficient food, treatment, quality education, development the potentialities, opportunities for play and leisure, and to protection from physical abuse, neglect, violence, exploitation, and assistance from the state (Wahedi, 2012).

The government of Bangladesh incorporated the UNCRC of 1990 with formulating the first child policy in 1994. After that, the government adopted many policies, ordinances, and laws in with accordance the UNCRC to protect the child from all kinds of discrimination and exploitation, and also to develop their inherent potentialities. Regretfully, researchers and human rights workers claimed that children are not getting a safe environment in Bangladesh due to negative attitudes toward them and biased justice system (Save the Children Bangladesh; Mohajan, 2014; Wahedi, 2012). The judicial system is politicized and controlled by the government. As a result, the law enforcement agencies do not care about anybody and do misbehave with suspected children and victims. In most cases, law enforcement agencies abuse and exploit the children during arrest and interrogation (Mohajan, 2014). A study revealed that there are plenty of cases against children in Bangladesh and made them in prison with criminals (Mohajan, 2012).

The society and community do not accept them as normal and as a consequence, soft-minded children become criminal in future. Some nongovernment organization and civil society organization have prolonged their helping hand and have implemented interventional projects to rehabilitate and mainstreaming them. Human rights workers identified those activities as tokenism and insufficient to mainstreaming them. They claim that

the rehabilitant and developing the children includes vast activities from fulfilling the basic needs to modifying the governmental policies and laws (Wahedi, 2012). The policy and decision-makers and professional agencies need to be more concerned about the protection of children from sexual exploitation, abuse, and sexual harassment.

CONCLUSION

The individuals below 18 years are considered as children. It is observed that children are most likely to be vulnerable due to their inherent and surroundings unfavorable stimulants. The vulnerability of a child is the condition where children are at risk and unable or poorly defended against violence, harassment, abuse, disability, malnutrition, maltreatment, and psychological problems like trauma. Physiological and psychological disorders impact children's personal growth and development in family, institutional, or societal spheres. Family is the most vital and elementary means for protecting them against violence and malnutrition. Moreover, the parent's job is deeply interrelated to child vulnerability. Parent's transition from place to place makes bad impact on children's life from personal to academic. The frequency of parent's job placement and duration of staying also are responsible for hampering the children's education and creativity. The changing environment of schooling and accommodation play a vital role to foster the vulnerability of the child.

Concisely, the weak relation amongst family members, quarreling, father-mother separation, ostracized or boycott, and conflict in tribes, and alarming involvement in social media increase the vulnerability of the child in the family and social life. Recently, researchers warned that children's involvement in social media is increasing day by day. Reversely, involvement of social media negatively impacts on child is seen in the addiction to chatting, virtual sex talking, virtual abuse, harassment, and publicity of personal issues. Excessive engagement in social media like FaceBook, Twitter, Immo, and Whatapp increase some mental problems such as loneliness, depression, avoidance, and creates a negative attitude among children which lead them to suicidal activities and make them vulnerable. Moreover, parents have to be more conscious and careful to the

children's expectations to reduce the academic severe pressure and vulnerability. Those children are especially vulnerable to adversities of inequalities including poverty of the family or the community.

The deprivations of children of their health rights are seen in the adult period while adult faces difficult health problems like vulnerable physical structure, psychological disorders, and maladjustment. Moreover, children with disability cannot lead a normal life as other do, and society and community do not accept them as normal. As a consequence, physical and psychological disorders are prevalent in their future life. The physical and psychological disorders are aroused due to many factors like climate change and natural disasters in Bangladesh. As such, children lose their rights and fall into a vulnerable situations during and post disasters periods. In that period, they are physically abused and are deprived of basic rights. It is found that some non-government organizations and civil society organizations have prolonged their helping hand to rehabilitation and mainstreaming through implementing recovery and development interventional projects. Researchers also claimed the community engagement to protect children against violence and malnutrition by strengthening and enhancing their roles in protection and ensuring their rights. The policymakers and decision-makers need to be more aware and attentive to the response to the vulnerability of children through formulating and implementing relevant policies and laws by law enforcement agencies.

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