PAPANDA

Exploring the Basic Needs of Street Children in Pabna Municipality

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to explores the impact of residence and education status on the basic needs of street children in Pabna Municipality, Bangladesh. In contrast, the goal of this study is to discuss the level of education attained and residence consciousness of street children residing in the Pabna Municipality. The research was carried out by quantitative method using a convenient sampling technique, in which 88 children living on the streets from various Pabna Municipality areas took part in total. The socioeconomic status of the street children in Pabna Municipality is shown by the study, as is the situation of deprivation concerning their place of residence and level of education. Our findings designate a strong correlation between the lack of stable residence and poor access to education and the heightened vulnerability of these children to meeting their basic needs. The main reasons respondents don't go to school and live in unsanitary areas like slums, stations, and markets are poverty, parental death, and divorce. The research underscores the need for comprehensive policy interventions focusing on improving the living conditions and educational opportunities for street children. Our study contributes to a broader awareness of the socioeconomic challenges faced by street children and offers a framework for policy and practical solutions in Pabna Municipality and similar urban settings.

INTRODUCTION

Street children are those who reside on streets, sidewalks, or other public areas (WORLD HEALTH, 1993). These children usually live in temporary shelters, such as on roadsides, under bridges, or in other unsafe and unsanitary environments. Street children often lack access to regular education, health care, and clean water and are deprived of basic human rights like safe shelter. These children are compelled to live on the streets due to a variety of reasons, like as poverty, family conflict, a lack of education, or the death or absence of a parent. Children are as innocent, pure, and lovely as a lamb's blossom and as pure as a waterfall (Khanal, 2019). But, many times, they make a living by begging, selling small items, or doing other odd jobs. This situation puts them at physical, mental, and social risk.

The UNICEF defines of street children refers to homeless, reckless, and perilous boys and girls under the age of 18 who settle on the streets as a means of subsistence (Hakim, 2016). Children who reside or labor on the streets for the majority of their childhood whether with or without family are considered to be in street settings (Mahtab & Selim, 2023). UNICEF has classified into three categories

of street children: (i) street living children, who are homeless after running away from their families; (ii) street working children, who spend most of the day on the streets fending for themselves but regularly return home; and (iii) street family children, who are homeless while living with their families (Hakim, 2016). The situations of the street children various globally, but common challenges, include poverty, homelessness lack of education, and vulnerability of exploitation.

The United Nations (UN) estimates that there are still 150 million homeless children in the globe (Chowdhury, 2017). In south Asia country Bangladesh, an estimated 600,000 children are homeless, with 75% of them residing in Dhaka, the country's capital (Street children in Bangladesh, 2019) and Those children stand for the bottom rung of the social structure in a place where 50% of people live in poverty (Street children in Bangladesh, 2019). Street children in Bangladesh, a developing nation, are linked to the unquenchable human need that coexists with poverty, which is the primary cause of issues with poverty, family breakdown, housing and education (Hassen, 2018). Among all the districts in Bangladesh, Pabna is the small and environmentally most diversified district, where famous developmental organizations cooperate for the purposes of improving the livelihoods of street children and the economic vulnerability of vulnerable sectors. However, they are facing many difficulties in their daily lives (Zarezadeh, 2013). The unfortunate thing is that not all street children have received any help from the developmental organizations (Eade, 1997).

At present, to the best of our knowledge, there seems to be no report or information about the status of street children, such as their residence and education status. There is no evidence of knowledge regarding the street children in Pabna Municipality. This paper addresses the questions, how do the socio-economic status, living & educational conditions, and difficulties faced by street children in Pabna city interrelate and contribute to their overall life experience and future prospects? This study therefore proven the interrelation of socio-economic status, living and educational conditions, and the various difficulties faced by street children in Pabna City create a complex web that significantly affects their life trajectories. The paper makes the following contributions, the ultimate goal is to provide a set of evidence-based recommendations that can enhance the lives of street children in Pabna Municipality, ensuring their right to safety, education, and a hopeful future. This research not only enriches the academic conversation on street children but also provides valuable guidance for policymakers, social workers, and NGOs to create and execute improved programs for the well-being of these vulnerable children in Pabna and beyond.

Objectives if the study

The main goals of this study is to evaluate the scope and type of uses of street children in Pabna city. The studies examine the socioeconomic factors, their difficulties of residence and educational traits of street children who, from a young age in Pabna, contributed to their current scenario. The study's particular goals are:
1. To find the socioeconomic condition of street children
2. To highlight their ways of living and portray the present living conditions
3. To identify the challenges of street children to pursuing education

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hakim, (2016) study was conducted to assess the health and nutritional status of street children in Dhaka City. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews with 80 street children, using a well-structured questionnaire featuring both closed and open-ended questions. The sample was selected through simple random sampling and the pilot study revealed that approximately 65% of the street children are underweight. Around 77.5% are children, with 22.5% eating three and two meals daily.

Furthermore, 85% of the children reported washing their hands before meals, and 60.5% bathe daily. In the last three months, 61.3% experienced various illnesses.

ZINIA (2020) examined the health awareness and educational levels of street children in Dhaka City. Using a sample survey strategy, data was collected and analyzed from 108 street children through a mixed-methods research approach. The study highlights the socio-economic conditions and deprivation faced by these children in terms of their health and education. It calls on the Bangladesh government and willing collaborators to protect these vulnerable children, who represent the country's developing and valuable future, and to help improve their quality of life.

Moon (2022) explored the lifestyle of street children in Dhaka City. This study was conducted using the survey method and face-to-face interviews with 100 participants aged between 5 and 18 years. This paper utilizes secondary data from both publicly available and undisclosed research reports, journals, books, records, and qualitative documents. It discloses the respondents' sociodemographic profile, parental and family profile, economic profile, socioeconomic and psychological problems, health issues, and the circumstances surrounding their upbringing as street children. The recommendation is for the government to take suitable and impactful measures to safeguard street children from their distressing circumstances.

Eshita (2018), explored the health issues and healthcare-seeking behavior among street children in Dhaka City and conducted using the conveniently methods and face-to-face interviews with 150 respondents. This paper used the cross-sectional study in research methodology. This study reveals majority (84%) of respondents are using the unhealthy toilet and open aired and majority of respondents (68.1%) received treatment from medicine shop for the health seeking and very few responded go to MBBS and clinic. The Government should create an awareness and ensure participation to reduce their health crisis issues.

Kamrul Hasan (2020) found uncover the factors contributing to drug addiction among street children in Khulna City. Conducted with a survey sample of 120 street children, the research employed descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and binary logistic regression to identify influential factors. Findings revealed a significant drug addiction rate of 59.2% among respondents. Factors such as peer pressure, easy access to drugs, sexuality, family dynamics, parental circumstances, and parental negligence were implicated. Urgent measures are required in Bangladesh to mitigate drug addiction among street children.

Abdul Hakim (2015) conducted to assess the nutritional status of street children in the 12 Upazillas of Tangail district in central Bangladesh. The study involved 120 street children selected through random sampling. It was a cross-sectional study. The findings revealed that 66.67% of the children were underweight, while 33.33% had normal weight. Additionally, 34.97% of the children were engaged in various forms of work, while approximately 65% were not involved in any work activities. The majority of the respondents, 85.5%, reported having three meals daily, while 14.5% reported having two meals daily. It is imperative to implement effective interventions to transform the lives of these vulnerable street children and provide them with a safe upbringing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research design has been employed in this study to examine the research objective, involving a survey method, and questionnaire used as primary data collection tools with general findings. The study's data was collected from primary as well as secondary sources. This research primarily focused on examining the residence and educational conditions of street children aged 7–16. These children either reside on the streets, work there, or spend the majority of their time

in such environments. The selected areas for interviews were city intercept points like Pabna rail station, Khan Bahadur market, Rupkhota cinema hall, Rasel Park, Pabna law college campus, Bus Terminal and others location of town through using the convenient sampling, 88 respondents. SPSS was used as a statistical tool to sort, code, and analyze the quantitative data that were gathered from the field. The descriptive analysis focused on highlighting the living conditions and educational status of street children in the study area.

Ethical considerations are one of the most important parts of the data collections tools. Data were collected from street children who consented to participate in the anonymous survey. The data were kept strictly confidential and were guaranteed not to be used beyond this study. Participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary, and they could withdraw at any time without any pressure or fear.

RESULTS

Table 1. Age Distribution

Age of Years		
	Frequency	Percent
5-7	12	13.6
8-10	29	33.0
11-13	31	35.2
14-16	16	18.2
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 1 presents that there were 88 respondents from around Pabna Municipality and the analysis begins with a brief summary of demographic data such as participant age, gender, and income. In this figure, the age of street children indicated that 13.6%, who are belonging to 5-7 years' age group, followed by 33.0% to 8-10 years' group. 35.2% respondent's age lies between 11-13 years and18.2% is above 14 years old.

Table 2. Gender Distribution

Gender-Male or Female		
	Frequency	Percent
male	65	73.9
female	23	26.1
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

In Table 2, the result shows 65 male respondents, constituting 73.9%, and 23 female respondents, making up 26.1% of the total.

Table 3. Source of Income

Types of work		
	Frequency	Percent
Beggars	52	59.1
Hotel boy	10	11.4
Rag Picks	21	23.9
Others	5	5.7
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 3 shown, making up 59.1% of the total, there were 52 beggars in the street. Hotel boy 11.4%, and also 23.9% of them worked as a rag picker which is a very unhygienic work and others 5.7% respondents engage with various works. From the analysis, it's clear that the largest group are the beggars, followed by the rag pickers. The hotel staff make up a smaller proportion, while there's also a smaller miscellaneous category labeled as Others. This distribution highlights the varied representation among within the survey respondents.

Table 4. Income Levels

Per day income		
	Frequency	Percent
Less than 50 takas	8	9.1
Less than 100 takas	26	29.5
Less than 200 takas	31	35.2
Over 200 takas	23	26.1
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 4 shows that 9.1% of the street children earn less than 50 takas daily and 26.1% of the respondents earn less than 100 takas per day, 35.2% street child and a larger number of respondents earn less than 200-taka daily income and second large number of respondents earn more than 200 takas daily that's 26.1%. This shows a trend where a larger percentage of respondents spelt within the lower brackets (less than 100 and less than 200 taka). The proportion of respondents spending over 200 takas is notably smaller compared to the other brackets.

Table 5. Acceptance rate of Basic Needs

Acceptance rate of basic needs		
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	13.6
No	76	86.4
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 5 presents that, there are two segments. "Basic Needs fulfill (Yes)": 13.6% and "Basic Needs fulfill (No)": 86.4%. "The diagram illustrates the distribution of respondents regarding the fulfillment of basic needs in our survey. Notably, a significant majority (86.4%, n=76) reported not fulfilling their basic needs, while only a small portion (13.6%, n=12) indicated that their basic needs were met.

Table 6. Living Conditions

Living with family or without family		
	Frequency	Percent
With Family	24	27.3
Without Family	64	72.7
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

In Table 6, the results show that it seems like a comparison between respondents with family and those without family. Among the 88 total respondents, 24 (27.3%) have family, while64 (72.7%) do not. This information suggests a significant majority (72.7%) of the respondents are without family, while 27.3% do. A pie chart representation would visually illustrate this disparity, showcasing that the larger portion of the respondents falls into the category of "without family" (72.7%), while the smaller portion represents those "with family" (27.3%). The pie chart would essentially depict the proportion distributions of respondents in each category, highlighting the dominance of without families in the surveyed group.

Table 7. Reasons behind their living alone

Reasons for their living alone	Frequency	Percent
Death of Father	25	28.4
Death of mother	12	13.6
Divorce	33	37.5
Disagreement	18	20.5
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 7 shows the distribution of the respondents which 28.4% of the respondents, accounting for 25 individuals, faced the loss of their fathers. This loss might have contributed to their current situation status as street children. 13.6% of the respondent, totaling 12 individuals, experienced the loss their mothers, potentially impacting their situation and leading to living on the streets. The largest group of 37.5% respondents, a group of 33 individuals, cited divorce as factor in their lives, which might have contributed to their current living situation as street children. And the disagreement of 20.5% respondents, totaling 18 individuals, faced disagreements, which could have been within their families or communities, possible leading of their current circumstances of living on the streets. These statistics illustrate various familial and social factors contributing to the vulnerability and living conditions of streets children, highlighting the diverse range of experience and challenges they might have encountered.

Table 8. Current Residence of Street Children

Current residence place	Frequency	Percent
Station	23	26.1
House	21	23.9
Slum/colony	33	37.5
Market	11	12.5
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 8 present the current residence of street children. The grape shows that 26.1% of the respondents, totaling 23 individuals, are current residing near or around stations, possible seeking shelter or opportunities around transportation hubs. 23.9% off the respondents, a group of 21 individuals, might be staying in their houses, 37.5% respondents accounting for 33 individuals, currently live-in slums or colonies, indicating significant portion residing informal settlements or improvised areas. and 12.5% respondents, a group of 11 sample, are currently located around market area, possible due to availability of resources or potential sources of income in these locations.

This data underscores the diverse range of place where street children find residence, from more structured areas like stations and houses to informal settlements like slum and colonies. Understanding their living situations can help tailor interventional and support system's to address their specific needs and challenges.

Table 9. Level of education

Level of education		
Level	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	50	56.8
Primary	29	33.0
Lower Secondary	9	10.2
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 9 outlines the education levels among a group of individuals, potentially street children at Pabna City. According to the diagram, the highest number of respondents are illiterate and it is 56.8% of respondents, totaling 50 individuals, have no formal education or are unable to read and write. and the other hand the lowest number of respondents, have completed education beyond primary school and its only 10.2% at a lower secondary level. The education rate fluctuates around 10.2% to 56.8%. 33% of the respondents, a group of individuals, have complete primary education indicating basic literacy and numeracy skills.

This breakdown suggests a significant portion of the respondents lack basic education, with a majority being illiterate. It highlights the need for educational interventions and support to improve the educational status and opportunities for these individuals, especially those living in vulnerable circumstances like street children.

Table 10. Reasons behind the decision not to attend school

Reason for not attending school		
Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Poverty	42	47.7
Death of parents	23	26.1
No interest of study	16	18.2
Negligence of parents	7	8.0
Total	88	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 10 presents various factors contribute to children not attending school. Poverty, affecting 47.7 % of respondents, serves as a major barrier due to limited financial resources, leading to a lack of access to educational facilities or necessities. The death of parents, impacting 26.1% creates emotional distress and can lead to financial m instability, disrupting the child's education. The lack of interest of studies, at 18.2 %, may arise from inadequate engagement or relevance of the curriculum, impacting motivation to attend. Parental negligence affecting 8%, involves a lack of parental involvement or guidance, which can result in children not attending school regularly due to a lack of support. These finding highlight how socioeconomic, financial, and personal factor interest to hinder children's educational participation and emphasize the need for multifaceted interventions to address these issues.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the socio-economic and demographic status of street children in Pabna Municipality, illuminating the underlying challenges faced by these vulnerable individuals. The data, collected from 88 street children, reveals significant trends regarding their age distribution, gender, income sources, living conditions, and education levels, all of which contribute to their marginalized status in society. This section discusses these findings in detail, comparing them to existing literature and offering a broader perspective on the issue of street children.

The findings reveal a dire socioeconomic state among street children, with a staggering 86.4% of respondents lacking access to basic needs like food, clean water, shelter, and healthcare. This lack of resources places them in a precarious situation where survival is a daily struggle. Deprivation of these basic needs not only affects their physical health but also their mental well-being, as prolonged neglect and malnutrition can lead to both immediate and long-term adverse health outcomes. These findings emphasize the urgency of welfare initiatives focused on delivering essential resources to street children, as their current socioeconomic conditions are unsustainable and contribute to their marginalization in society.

Similar studies echo these findings. UNICEF (1997) noted that many street children lived on the footpaths, often heavily affected by drug use. Ali et al. (2004) highlighted that Pakistani street children faced severe poverty, exploitation, and abuse, with significant rates of malnutrition, including 20% stunted growth and 12% experiencing wasting. Alem & Laha (2016) found that street children often live without basic amenities, facing harassment, abuse, and exploitation from both law enforcement and other street dwellers. The findings of this study differ by emphasizing the magnitude of resource deprivation and its compounding effects on both physical and mental health. While previous studies identify risks like drug use, abuse, and malnutrition, our research provides a broader understanding of how the lack of essential resources perpetuates a cycle of vulnerability and marginalization for these children.

The study sheds light on the harsh realities of street children's living conditions, where 72.7% of them are separated from their families. The loss of family support is often due to parental death (28.4%) or divorce (37.5%), highlighting family disintegration as a significant driver of homelessness among children. This absence of family leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and neglect, exposing them to heightened risks. Many of these children are forced to find shelter in slums, stations, or markets, where they lack safety and stability. Their precarious living conditions underscore the urgent need for safe housing alternatives that can offer street children not only security but also a supportive environment to foster their growth and well-being.

The findings of this study align with previous studies, such as those by Zahiduzzaman (1998) and Sitienei & Pillay (2018), in showing that street children face severe risks, including abuse and exploitation. However, the study uniquely emphasizes family disintegration—due to parental death or divorce—as a primary cause of homelessness, highlighting a deeper structural issue. While prior research calls for family reintegration and support, our study also stresses the need for immediate safe housing alternatives, offering a more comprehensive approach to supporting these vulnerable children's well-being and growth.

Furthermore, the study found that the educational barriers for street children are considerable, with over half (56.8%) of respondents being illiterate and only a small fraction (10.2%) achieving lower secondary education. Major obstacles, such as poverty (47.7%) and the loss of parental support

(26.1%), prevent these children from attending school. Many are forced to prioritize work over education due to financial pressures, while others lack the necessary resources or support for schooling following parental loss. Additionally, a lack of interest in studying (18.2%) points to a disconnect between the educational system and these children's unique needs. Addressing these barriers requires inclusive educational programs that are flexible and context-specific, enabling street children to integrate into a system that can adapt to their circumstances and offer pathways toward educational success.

Similar studies reinforce these findings. Hossain (2001) noted that most street children saw lack of education as a primary obstacle to improving their lives. Bermudez et al. (2021) observed that, despite limitations, some street children continue schooling, supported by programs that reach underserved populations. Anangisye & Xu (2022) found that school-age street children in Tanzania are often dropouts who see the value of education for employment, yet lack universal access limits their prospects. The findings of the study is uniquely emphasize the compounded effect of poverty and parental loss on educational access. While prior studies show some children's motivation to learn, our research underscores the urgent need for adaptable programs that accommodate street children's financial and social challenges, enabling them to pursue education and break cycles of poverty and marginalization.

Recommendations

Numerous difficulties and problems still need to be examined and verified. Urbanization and industrialization are related issues associated with children living on the streets. In this instance, the following problem Sum of the areas that should be considered for research to provide useful outcomes contributing to the current state of the vulnerable children's circumstances and improve Bangladeshi society's environment.

The following recommendations will be more effective in ensuring the proper development and welfare of street children

1. It is essential to identify the social factors that lead children to live on the streets and, if possible, work to mitigate these causes.
2. Rehabilitation programs should be established, and supported by a special fund from the state and donor agencies.
3. Ensuring their basic needs is crucial so they do not have to focus on earning a living at such a young age.
4. Education and vocational training should be provided to these children.
5. Street children should be prioritized in all child-focused programs, as they are the most vulnerable and at risk.
6. The government and non-governmental organizations should take necessary steps to provide legal aid to street children.

Prohibit hazardous work for children and establish safe and appropriate forms of child labor.

Finally, for these suggestions to be effective, a comprehensive action plan should be developed by a specific organization, whether governmental or volunteer-based. Additionally, it is the moral obligation of wealthy individuals to contribute to this humanitarian effort.

CONCLUSION

The residence status and education of street children in Pabna Municipality, Pabna District, are critical determinants of their ability to meet basic needs. Street children often face unstable living conditions, which exacerbate their vulnerability and hinder their access to essential resources. This

precarious residence status directly impacts their health, safety, and overall well-being. Furthermore, education is a pivotal factor in breaking the cycle of poverty and marginalization. However, the lack of stable residence and supportive educational infrastructure significantly hampers these children's academic prospects. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including providing secure housing options, ensuring access to quality education, and implementing targeted social support programs. By addressing these fundamental needs, the community can pave the way for a brighter and more sustainable future for street children in Pabna Municipality.

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