

Mojibur Rahman Doftori

**EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOUR IN
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**A Study on the Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in
Bangladesh and Nepal**

Doctoral Dissertation

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Department of Social Policy, University of Helsinki

Helsinki 2004

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father Mr. Joynal Abedin and my mother Mrs. Rashida Akther

ABSTRACT

Mojibur Rahman Doftori

Education and Child Labour in Developing Countries: A Study on the Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Bangladesh and Nepal

Since the 1990s, there has been a remarkable rise of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) concerning the education of child labourers in many developing countries. NGOs follow a variety of approaches when meeting the educational needs of child labourers. Such approaches may complement or parallel public education system. NGO activities in the education sector take place in the backdrop of the state's failure to provide both relevant and quality education for disadvantaged children in many developing countries. The purpose of this study is to systematically examine the role of NGOs who address the issue of child labour in developing countries. For the purpose this study, Bangladesh and Nepal are the representative of countries affected by child labour.

Qualitative research methods including semi-structured and structured interviews, observations, analyzing texts and documents were used when examining the role of NGOs in education of child labourers. Sociological theories of education such as functionalism, reproduction and resistance theories were used in order to shed light on educational deprivation and the educational potential of child workers. Functionalism and reproduction theories were useful for the study. I found resistance theory, particularly the work of Paulo Freire to be the most appropriate when attempting to explain the educational possibilities of child labourers. Actions of the NGOs concerning the education of child labourers are categorized into three broader educational strategies: protective, preventive and skill development strategies to get rid of endless empiricism on the work patterns of NGOs. The following questions were also employed: Do NGOs have the capacity to address needs and challenges faced by child labourers? Do NGO strategies fit with national education sector development? Can the lessons from NGO schools be used for reforming public schools?

Findings from this study suggest that there is a strong potential towards the transformation of education according to policy lessons learnt from the role of NGOs. One of the general basic findings of this study is that poverty should not be a significant barrier towards the education of child labourers in developing countries. The child labour problem in agricultural societies could be resolved by merely rescheduling the students' school hours of attendance and vacations. Rescheduling as such will permit children to carry out their family responsibilities while attending school. There should be specific public policies in place in order to address the "opportunity costs" of children when they are enrolled in school. The educational needs of rural children in general with particular attention given to girls should be a primary focus for schools in developing countries.

This study reveals that the protective educational strategies followed by the work of NGOs are a realistic approach to fulfil the immediate needs of child workers. However, this strategy fails to link its education methods with mainstream public schools. Both preventive and the skill-development strategy are viable solutions regarding the problem of child labour and supporting national education sector development. Both are based on the idea that a context-oriented non-formal education and vocational skill training may work as strong forces to keep underprivileged children in school.

Even though preventive and skill development strategies provide realistic hopes for the education of child labourers, joint planning, training and sharing experience between NGOs and public schools does not exist. This study suggests that there is a need for the government to finance successful NGO schools. This may enhance educational opportunities for the children of economically and culturally disadvantaged households and support educational pluralism. NGO and public schools may complement each other and give children the opportunity to choose between them. It urges for a unified curriculum and a monitoring system for different providers of education. Finally, the study also urges for simultaneous efforts to decentralize and reform public schools in order to strengthen their capacity to become more flexible and efficient by following the best practices of NGOs.

Key words: Education, Child Labour, Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Non-Formal Education, Education for All (EFA), Childhood, Gender, Bangladesh, Nepal, developing countries

TIIVISTELMÄ

Mojibur Rahman Doftori

Koulutus ja lapsityövoima kehitysmaissa: Tutkimus kansalaisjärjestöjen roolista Bangladeshissa ja Nepalissa

1990-luvun alusta lähtien on tapahtunut merkittävä organisoiminen Kansalaisjärjestöjen lapsityöläisille tarkoitettujen koulutusohjelmien kasvuun. Kansalaisjärjestöillä on monenlaisia lähestymistapoja koulutukseen, joka voi myös täydentää julkista koulutusjärjestelmää. Kansalaisjärjestöjen toiminta koulutuksen alalla on seuraus valtion epäonnistuneesta yrityksestä tuottaa asianmukaista ja laadukasta peruskouluopetusta lapsille, jotka tulevat köyhistä ja kulttuurisesti vähäosaisista perheistä kehitysmaissa. Tämä tutkimus pyrkii tarkastelemaan systemaattisesti kansalaisjärjestöjen roolia lapsityövoiman torjumisessa kehitysmaissa. Tutkimuksessa Bangladesh ja Nepal edustavat maita, joissa lapsityövoima on käytössä.

Tutkimuksen kolme eri koulutusstrategiaa tarkastellaan kvalitatiivisten tutkimusmenetelmien kautta. Menetelmiin kuuluu mm. strukturoidut ja puolistrukturoidut haastattelut, havainnointi ja tekstinanalyysi. Sosiologisia kasvatusteorioita eli funktionalistiset teoriat, reproduktio- ja vastarintateorioita on käytetty valaisemaan lapsityöläisten koulutusderivaatiota ja koulutuspotentiaalia. Tutkimusta tukevat parhaiten funktionalistiset ja reproduktioteoriat. Paulo Freiren vastarintateoriat sopivat parhaiten selittämään vaihtoehtoja joita on tarjolla lapsityöläisille kansalaisjärjestöjen vaihtoehtoisissa koulutusmalleissa. Kansalaisjärjestöjen toiminta lapsityövoiman saralla on luokiteltu kolmeen eri koulutusmalliin; suojaavaan, ehkäisevään ja taitojen kehittämisen strategiaan, joiden tavoite on poistaa liiallista empirian käyttöä kansalaisjärjestöjen työssä. Tutkimuksen peruskysymyksiä: Vastaavatko kansalaisjärjestöt lapsityöläisten koulutustarpeisiin ja haasteisiin? Sopivatko kansalaisjärjestöjen strategiat yhteen kansallisen koulutussektorin kehityksen kanssa? Voiko kansalaisjärjestöjen oppeja käyttää valtiollisten koulujen uudistamiseen?

Tutkimus osoittaa, että koulutusta voi muokata ja muuttaa oppimalla kansalaisjärjestöjen roolista koulutuspolitiikan työstämisessä. Tutkimuksen yksi yleinen havainto on se, että köyhyys ja vaikeudet estävät merkittävästi lapsityöläisten koulutusmahdollisuuksia kehitysmaissa. Maatalousyhteiskunnissa on tärkeätä, että koulutuksen ajankohta ja vuosilomat ovat järjestetty siten, että lapset pystyvät toteuttamaan velvollisuuksiaan maataloudessa kouluvuoden aikana. Erityisiä linjauksia pitäisi luoda perheiden tulon menetyksiin lapsen koulunkäynnin aikana. Koulutuspolitiikan pitäisi ensisijaisesti keskittyä vähäosaisten lasten tarpeisiin kehitysmaissa.

Tutkimus paljastaa, että suojaavat koulutusstrategiat joita kansalaisjärjestöt käyttävät, palvelevat lapsityöläisten välittömiä koulutus- ja muita tarpeita. Tämä strategia kärsii kuitenkin puuttuvista yhteyksistä valtion peruskouluihin. Ennalta ehkäisevät taitojenkehittämissstrategiat ovat toimivia ratkaisuja lapsityövoimaongelmaan ja tukevat kansallisen koulutussektorin kehitystä. Nämä perustuvat siihen edellytykseen, että kontekstisidonnainen epävirallinen koulutus maaseudulla ja ammatillinen koulutus saivat vähäosaiset lapset pysymään koulussa.

Ennaltaehkäisevät ja taitojenkehittämisen strategiat antavat realistista toivoa lapsityöläisten kouluttamiseen, mutta yhä puuttuu yhtenäistä suunnittelua, koulutusta tai tietojen ja

kokemusten jakamista kansalaisjärjestöjen ylläpitämien ja julkisten koulujen välillä. Tutkimuksen mukaan valtion tulisi rahoittaa menestyviä kansalaisjärjestökouluja. Tämä voisi kohentaa vähäosaisten lasten koulutusmahdollisuuksia ja tukea moniarvoisuutta koulutuksen puolella lyhyen tähtäimen strategiana. Tutkimus kannustaa yhtenäisen opetussuunnitelman ja valvontajärjestelmän kehittämiseen eri koulutushankkijatahoille. Lopuksi tutkimus kannustaa valtiota hajasijoittamaan ja uudistamaan julkisia kouluja vahvistaakseen niiden voimavaroja joustavuuteen jolloin julkiset koulut saisivat kansalaisjärjestöjen parhaat käytännöt käyttöön.

Avainsanat: Koulutus, lapsityövoima, kansalaisjärjestöt, epämuodollinen koulutus, koulutus kaikille, lapsuus, sukupuoli, Bangladesh, Nepal, kehitysmaat

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Mojibur Rahman Doftori
Helsinki, October 2004

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADAB	Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AL	Awami League
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BEXIMCO	Bangladesh Export Import and Manufacturing Company
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer's and Exporter's Association
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BNWLA	Bangladesh National Women Lawyer's Association
BOEC	Basic Education for Older Children
BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Program
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSAF	Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CCWB	Central Child Welfare Board
CDR	Centre for Development Research
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CPN	Communist Party of Nepal
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
CSW	Commercial Sex Worker
CWA	Child Workers in Asia
CWIN	Child Workers in Nepal
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCWB	District Child Welfare Board
DFID	Department for International Development
DIDC	Department for International Development Cooperation
DIID	Danish Institute of International Development
DNFE	Department of Non Formal Education
DOE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
ESP	Educational Support Program
EU	European Union
FFE	Food for Education
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
GEP	General Education Project
GNP	Gross National Product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GSS	Gono Sahajjo Sangstha
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HMG-N	His Majesty Government of Nepal
IDA	International Development Assistance
IDEAL	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
IDS	Institute of Development studies
ILO	International Labour Office
INFPE	Integrated Non-Formal Education Program
IPEC	International Program on Elimination of Child Labour
ISA	Ideological State Apparatus

IU	Internationale Udvicklingstudier
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDG	Millenium Development Goal
JI-B	Jamaat-i-Islami Bangladesh
MEP	Mass Education Program
MOE	Ministry of Education
NC	Nepali Congress
NCWCD	National Council for Women and Child Development
NEER	Non-Farm Enterprise Extension and Reinforcement
NEPC	National Education Planning Commission
NESP	New Education System Plan
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFPE	Non Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIAS	Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
NNGO	Northern Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
NPA	National Plan of Action
NPC	National Planning Commission
NR	Nepali Rupee
OSP	Out of School Program
PEP	Primary Education Project
RPP	Rastriya Prajatantra Party
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSS	People's Security Surveys
RSA	Repressive State Apparatus
RUC	Roskilde Universitet Centre
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAFE	Social Awareness for Education
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SNGO	Southern Non-Governmental Organization
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SWAps	Sector-Wide Approaches
TEO	Thana Education Officer
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Program
UML	United Marxist Leninist
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPCA	Under-Privileged Children's Association
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USD	United States Dollar
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All

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CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

1.1: INTRODUCTION

Education has received a central significance in the fight against child labour in many developing countries since the 1990s. It is the culmination of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1989 and subsequent global conferences on children's rights and education. The Convention provides a global framework for the protection and the development of children. Children has received a new symbolic significance in non-Western countries because overwhelming majority of developing countries have accepted the Western construction of protected, nurtured and formally educated childhood as an orientation or as a normative value through signing the CRC principles. This development has its roots in the “discovery of childhood” (Ariès 1962) as a separate stage of life in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe and historical evolution of economically “worthless” and emotionally “priceless” child (Zelizer 1985, 3) in Western countries in the last two centuries.

In the early stage of the industrial revolution in Europe, child labour was seen as a remedy to pauperism, idleness and the dependency of children on poor relief (Rahikainen 2004). During the later stage industrialization however, factories required a large number of educated workers due to the introduction of new technologies and an increasing orientation towards productivity. As a result, managerial competency simply put children out of work and into school in order to satisfy the growing demand for a skilled labour force (for details see, Zelizer 1985, 8; Rahikainen 2001, 41; 2002, 73, 2004). This played a central role in the universalisation of primary education and thus the elimination of child labour in Western countries.

However, child labour has been a normal practice in agricultural sector of most of the non-Western countries for centuries. The Western model of modernization led some non-Western countries to industrialisation and others could not catch-up. The historical difference led many of the developing countries to take a different path in fighting child labour in comparison to that of Western countries. Export industries of less developed countries are preferable choice for many children than work in agricultural sector. After the signing of the CRC principles, the existence of child labour in export industries of developing countries was deemed incompatible by Northern countries in terms of children's rights enshrined by the CRC principles.

Threats of trade sanctions and other legislations from industrialised countries forced some Southern countries to dismiss child labourers from export industries. In case of Bangladesh, child labourers were dismissed from their work in the textile industries under the threat of trade sanctions in the early 1990s. The sudden dismissal of children from work forced many ex-child labourers to take up jobs in informal sectors even under worse working conditions. Even though the sudden dismissal worsened the conditions of child labourers, it also opened up a debate on the broader issue of how to eliminate child labour (the issue is discussed in details in chapter 4).

To solve the problems of dismissed children, Southern Non-Governmental organizations (SNGOs) supported by international NGOs and development agencies played a central role in creating innovative approaches for education in order to address the position of child

labourers. Through their innovative efforts, it has been found that basic education¹ may prove to be the most efficient way to transform the living conditions of child labourers. Different studies also support the general proposition that basic education may work as the most effective tool in reducing child labour in developing countries (for details see, Fyfe 1988, 89, 1989; Crawford 1994, 9; Boyden 1994; ILO 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Anker & Melkas 1996, 10; Psacharopoulos 1997 cited in Hazarkia & Bedi 2002, 3; Lieten 2000a, 2000b).

Simultaneously with the adoption of the CRC in 1989 and the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) 1990, there has been an evolving global consensus that basic education will prove to become the prime tool for achieving development goals of economically challenged countries. Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) provided a boost for basic education by setting targets of Education for All (EFA) by 2015 and closing the gender gap in primary education 2005. The tremendous efforts on the part of governments in the Southern countries to expand Universal Primary Education (UPE) since 1990s has resulted in substantial progress in enrolment of children in school. Yet, millions of children in developing countries are not in school and those who enrol, tend to drop out before completing their primary education for filling the basic needs of poor households.

Despite the rhetoric concerning the role of schools in achieving an economic development, nation-building and reforming society, public schools in many developing countries have not been inclusive enough to enrol and sustain underprivileged children. Non-enrolment and drop out of children from school is often blamed on the public school's low quality of education.² There are different perspectives on the capacity of public schools in many developing countries to deliver universal access and quality of primary education (see, Farrell 1982, 50; King & Singh 1991, 5-37; Takala 1994a, 9-10, 1994b, 269, 2001, 25; Samoff 1996, 269-270; Misra 2000, 28; Kabeer 2001, 25; Aggarwal 2004, 182). Centralized and a uniform school system is blamed for not being relevant enough to address the educational needs of disadvantaged children and their families.

In many countries, *Education for All* (EFA) has been interpreted as synonymous with formal schooling. Little attention has been paid to keep underprivileged children in school and meeting their learning needs.³ Referring to the educational scenario in Bangladesh, Styrbjörn Gustavsson (1991, 88) argues that the government primary schools are neither have the intention, nor the capacity, to reach and keep poor children in school. According to Gustavsson, the main problem in achieving UPE is hardly the “poor facilities” rather a “lack

1 “Basic education” has different meanings in different contexts. It is defined as “the knowledge and skills which people need if they are to lead a decent life. It includes both formally taught skills such as reading, writing and calculation and the various types of knowledge and skills needed to function in the local community” (cf. Koopman 1994, 13). In Europe, it is thought to comprise primary and at least lower secondary schooling (Colclough 1997, 3). In many developing countries including Bangladesh and Nepal, it would confine to primary schooling lasting for 5 years.

2 The quality of schooling comprises a complex of factors that includes physical facilities and inputs, teacher availability, effective pedagogy and meaningful curriculum transaction leading to interactive and enabling classroom processes (Nambissan 2003, 125).

3 There are 45 million adults in Bangladesh who do not know how to read or write, and 4 million children remain out of school (Haq & Haq 1998, 56). About 40 per cent of the children who enter primary school in Bangladesh do not complete all five grades (ibid.) Only 80 per cent of the boys and 46 per cent of the girls between ages 6 and 10 are actually enrolled in primary schools in Nepal (ibid. 59). Those who enrol, 65 per cent drop out by the end of primary cycle (ibid.).

of proper attitude” from teachers in the schools (ibid. 49). According to Joel Samoff (1996, 256), it is the education system which “pushes students out” of school in many developing countries. Even those who do enrol fail to complete their primary cycle of education (five years) where a significant proportion of them learn very little (Ramachandran 2003, 959).

As governments have largely failed to deliver education for marginalized children, NGOs have emerged as major players in response to, and the experimentation on child labour in many developing countries (chapter 6 discusses on the role of NGOs in education sector in details). NGOs follow diverse educational strategies to reach un-reachable children.⁴ The role of NGOs in the education sector in developing may appear as paradoxical. On the one hand, they open up innovative ways of serving the educational needs of marginalised children. On the other hand, they are blamed for running parallel educational systems to government and taking over the responsibility of the government in education sector.

NGO activities in the education sector target underprivileged children in general, particularly child labourers and they draw sympathy from international donor agencies. Their work is significant for underprivileged children in developing countries concerning equal opportunity. Even the role of NGOs in the educational sector has increased significantly since 1990s, research on the role of NGOs in education sector is lacking. This is a barrier to the promotion of coherent policies of NGOs and governments in education sector in developing countries. This study aims to overcome the problem and to guide the role of NGOs in the education sector in developing countries.

1.2: AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to fill the intellectual gap in understanding key issues of education for child labourers and to find out what measures in education improve the living conditions of child labourers and potential child labourers. By pursuing this study, I participate in the debate of underprivileged children and their educational possibilities in developing countries. This study hopes to explore pragmatic policies for the education of children from disadvantaged communities so that children can ultimately integrate in the formal education system and receive an equitable livelihood. It attempts to draw a clear picture concerning the complexity surrounding the role of NGOs in education and how they are interconnected within different educational and cultural variables that have considerable bearing on them. As a multidisciplinary study (social policy, comparative and international educational studies and development studies), it aims to shed light on the role of education in improving the living conditions of child labourers. It may also generate strategies which may make education meaningful for both disadvantaged children globally.

The operational aim of the study is to increase the understanding of new realities and aspects of educational approaches in reducing child labour in developing countries. The following research questions guide this study: 1) Do educational approaches followed by NGOs fit with the educational needs and expectations of child labourers? 2) What makes NGO education adaptable to the needs and challenges of child labourers? 3) What are the barriers preventing a maximum impact on education and the lives of children? 4) Do the approaches followed by NGOs fit with the broader scope of national education and an overall national development?

⁴ Most of the NGOs follow non-formal education along with other supportive services. Some do work on shelter-based education and others provide school-based non-formal education and skill training for children. The coverage of the NGOs also varies ranging from community based projects to national based programs.

In other words, how do children from underprivileged backgrounds benefit from education development whether it is from an NGO or public school?

My study does not have a single hypothesis. It has a set of arguments where a hypothesis is revealed. Formal education systems are less sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged children including child labourers in developing countries. NGOs have provided useful educational services to the underprivileged children as the actors of alternative development. However, the usefulness of the NGO-led alternative education has not been able to provide a permanent solution to the problem of basic education, which is probably because of limited mandate of NGOs. Cultural practices (such as religion, caste, gender, ethnicity etc.) may also work as a barrier to educational goals of NGOs. Success of role of NGOs in education sector depends on how they relate their education with further education and skill training in line with national education sector development.

The answers of the research questions are gathered through collection and analysis of data on different NGO strategies of education in Bangladesh and Nepal. Impacts of different types of NGO approaches on children's lives are compared to get concrete answers of the research questions. However, it is difficult to find standard indicators to measure educational relevance and effects of NGOs on the welfare of child labourers. Risto Eräsaari (1985, 1987 & 1993) discussed the problems of analysing wellbeing in general terms. According to Eräsaari, hardly anyone uses the vocabulary of welfare as analytic and organizing principles and welfare has multiple meanings based on contexts. Welfare also depends on historical, political, cultural and economic factors. Whatever concept of welfare is used, the concept 'need' is central in analysing welfare. However, primary needs of human beings are connected with safety, survival and autonomy (Riihinen 1978, 3-4; MacPherson & Midgley 1987, 52-53; Kabeer 1994, 138-140; Törrönen 1994, 98-99).

Amartya Sen's (1980, 1981, 1982, 1987, 1992 & 1999) "capability approach" provides a relevant tool to overcome the problem of "acceptable indicator" of welfare of children for my study. Sen sees education as a key component in the expansion of human *capability*, *choice* and removal of various barriers to freedom. In his approach, education is considered as an individual 'right' and a *means* to meet other needs which may lead to secure and meaningful lives. The 'right' based approach links education with basic human rights, satisfaction of basic human needs, citizenship and viable routes to fairness, justice and empowerment. It is similar to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) definition of human development as "a process of enlarging people's choices" (UNDP 1990, 1).

The capability approach rescues us from utilitarian type of maximisation of happiness and from neo-liberal view of education as a vehicle for *human capital* and *economic growth*. Following Sen's approach, I have analysed the educational strategies of NGOs concerning: 1) their *direct* relevance to children's *functional literacy*⁵ and school completion; 2) their *indirect* role through influencing *economic* possibilities; and 3) their *indirect* role through influencing educational policy change.

I consider children as active sense-makers. Children are neither "*tabula rasa*" (blank slate) nor "*ignorant creatures*" who cannot make decisions on their own right. I argue that children have creative responses to school, household and work, which reflect their distinct identities,

5 A person is functionally literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and community's development (UNESCO 2003, 88).

desires and needs as individuals and as a social group. By considering children as *agents* in their own right may expose a whole range of myths on their work and educational possibilities. To improve the conditions of children through education, it is necessary to take contexts of children into account while designing educational programmes.

1.3: CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Fieldwork of this study was carried out on ten Bangladeshi and Nepali NGOs (five from each country) for a total period of six months (June-November 1999) (list of the NGOs in chapter 6). I used qualitative methodology for my fieldwork. The study has been implemented in three phases: 1) a desk phase, with initial work undertaken at the University of Helsinki, Department of Political Science (majoring in Administrative Science) and later at the Department of Social Policy (and the Collaborative Ph.D. Scheme of the Institute of Development Studies) of the same university; 2) a fieldwork phase undertaken for six months in Bangladesh and Nepal in 1999 (June-November); and 3) finally, writing phase at the University of Roskilde, Department of International Development Studies (where I was a Visiting Researcher for the period of March-August of 2001) and at University of Helsinki, Department of Social Policy during the period of 2000-2004. During the period of 2000-2001, I taught courses at the University of Helsinki, Institute of Asian and African Studies on South Asian development issues.

Bangladesh and Nepal have been chosen for the study because they are more directly affected by child labour than any other country in the region (cf. Falkus et al. 1997, 45). Bangladesh Census and Labour-Force Survey of 1996 found that the total number of child labourers aged between 5-14 years old was 6.6 million or 19.1 per cent of the same age group (Red Barnett 1998, 6). According to a CWIN study, there are at least 1 million child labourers in Nepal of the age group of 10-14 (Pradhan 1998, 37). In Nepal, of the child population in the 10-14 year age group, 57 per cent was economically active (ILO/IPEC 1995, 6).

Bangladesh was chosen for the study because I was born and raised there and I have a clear understanding of the society. Bangladesh has a serious child labour problem. It is also enriched with a vibrant NGO sector working on national development. Nepal has been chosen to find out the similarities and dissimilarities between the roles of NGOs in education sector with Bangladesh. Bangladesh and Nepal represent broader South Asian cultures i.e. Bangladesh is predominantly Muslim country and Nepal is a Hindu country with a strong Buddhist tradition. They are two of the poorest countries in Asia in terms of GNP per capita.⁶ Asia has the largest share of child labour in the world.⁷ South Asia has the largest share of child labour in Asia. The South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude estimates child labour to involve at least 88 million children in the region, and other estimates range from 40 million to over 100 million (Crawford 1994, 2).

There are differences in the level of NGO involvement in reducing child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal. Bangladesh has been known for its huge NGOs involvement in its overall poverty alleviation program since 1970s. Started in 1972 as relief and welfare organisations, NGOs have appeared in overall social and economic development of the country. The growth of

6 According to UNDP Human Development Report 2000, GNP per capita, life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rates of the Bangladesh and Nepal are \$350 and \$210, 58.6 years and 57.8 years, 40.1 per cent and 39.2 per cent respectively (UNDP 2000, 157-204).

7 The number of child labourers between the age of 5 and 14 in developing countries is 250 million. Approximately 61 per cent are found in Asia, 32 per cent in Africa and 7 per cent in Latin America (ILO 1997).

child rights NGOs (which are mainly working with non-formal education and other supportive services) in Bangladesh mainly started in 1990s. Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), an apex body of child rights NGOs has 107 members ranging from community-based to nationally-based NGOs (BNWLA 1999).

NGOs cover 8 per cent of the primary school age children in Bangladesh, most of them are difficult to reach (DPE 2001 cited in USAID 2002b, 6). There are large national NGOs such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh which has about 35,000 schools (Rampal 2000, 2531). Total number of students served by NGOs in Bangladesh is estimated to be 1.3 million and one of such program is run by BRAC covering 1.1 million (Chowdhury, Haq & Ahmed 1997, 117, 141). NGO movement in Nepal is comparatively new, which started in the beginning of 1990s.⁸ In 1995, there were 36 national NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) working on child labour issues in Nepal (CWIN 1995a).

The study was carried out in NGOs programmes located at Dhaka and Lalmohon (Bhola district) in Bangladesh and at Kathmandu, Dharan (Sunsari district) and Nepalgunj (Bardia district) in Nepal. Dhaka, Kathmandu and Dharan were chosen as the industrial urban centres and Nepalgunj and Lalmohon were chosen as the marginalized and rural areas. NGOs were categorised based on their three major educational strategies in reducing child labour i.e. education as protective strategy, education as skill development strategy and education as preventive strategy (different strategies are discussed in details in chapter 6 and 7). I used a snowball method to find out the leading NGOs working on child labour issues in the countries of my fieldwork.

Fieldwork interviews, observations and notes were written in four diaries. Diary 1 (total pages 190) and Diary 2 (total pages 166) contain data from Bangladesh (**annex 1.1**, map of Bangladesh) and Diary 3 (total pages 189) and Diary 4 (total pages 102) contain data from Nepal (**annex 1.2**, map of Nepal). I used group photographs of children of different NGO School in the dissertation to understand realities of children. The photographs provide opportunity for understanding and reflection of the fieldwork. Under the cases of three broader educational strategies of NGOs, a total 100 children were interviewed. Their ages range from 6 to 14 years. Most of them had been working as child labourers or were potential child labourers. They were either non-enrolled or drop outs from public schools mostly from grade 1 and 2. Focusing on the non-enrolled or drop outs from public schools helped me to understand what forced them to stay out of school or forced them to drop out of public schools. Their presence in NGO educational projects helped me to understand what attracted them to come and stay in NGO schools.

The case studies and field notes on children from ten selected NGO projects/programs comprise the main empirical basis for the analysis and conclusions of the study, although additional information from external sources have also been used (list of NGOs is in chapter 6). Various cases were collected in a uniform manner as much as it was possible to picture diverse patterns of cases. The guidelines for case studies provide a checklist of the specific types of questions (questions to children are in **annex 1.3**). Questionnaires were adapted from different sources (including Fyfe 1993, 82-7).

⁸ Restoration of democracy opened up space for NGOs to participate in development management of Nepal since 1990.

1.4: RESEARCH METHODS

In the initial phase, I conducted a literature review on childhood, child labour and educational issues in developing countries. I found childhood sociology very important in describing and interpreting the status of children in both Western and South Asian countries. By comparing and contrasting Literature on ideal childhood in Europe with that of South Asia, I have got ideas on the differences of childhood in two regions. Educational theories i.e. functionalism, reproduction theories and resistance theories shed some light in explaining educational inequality and educational possibilities for disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh and Nepal.

The fieldwork focussed on problems outlined in research questions. I interviewed NGO staffs/volunteers (list of NGO staffs in **annex 1.4** and questions addressed to NGO staffs are in **annex 1.5**). I also interviewed the officials of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare, NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh and Nepal, Western development co-operation officials working in Bangladesh and Nepal (list of the persons interviewed is **annexed in table 1.6**). I also held informal discussions with parents of child labourers, community leaders, social workers, public school teachers, and police officers and crime reporters of national newspapers in order to get a wider view on the prevailing situation of children both nationally and in selected localities of the two countries.

Methods of fieldwork

This study deals with different educational strategies followed by NGOs in reducing child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal. I find qualitative research methods as the most appropriate for this study. Qualitative research methods indicate the changes education can bring to the lives of children. They help to answer the question 'how' and 'why' and focus on people's own definitions of certain situation or issues that statistical analysis cannot (Denzin 1970, 222; Taylor & Bogdan 1984; Armstrong 1987, 7; Bogdan & Biklen 1992, 65; Silverman 1993, 10; Kärnä-Lin 1996; Seidman 1998). Qualitative research methods help me to rely on analytical generalizations. They help me draw an authentic picture of how different educational strategies fit within children's education, work and family conditions. With statistical generalization, I would not have been able to show the impact education on the lives of child labourers.

As the study is concerned with educational process of child labourers, qualitative methods fits with the goal well. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with an outcome or product(s) (Bogdan & Biklen 1992, 31). The main reason why I selected qualitative methods is that it provides opportunity for subjects to incorporate their voice. Four methods were used to collect data and information during my fieldwork: 1) interview through unstructured questions; 2) structured questions; 3) observation; and 4) analysing texts and documents.

I used case studies of three different educational strategies by interviewing child labourers under NGO projects. Case study research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances (Stake 2000, 447). Robert K. Yin (1989, 25) shows different applications of case studies in assessing development interventions. First, case study explains the causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. Second, it describes the real-life context in which an intervention takes place. Third, an assessment can benefit from an illustrative case study of the intervention itself. Fourth, case study strategy may be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being

evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. Life stories helped me to navigate into children's past, present and future and the impact of NGO education on their lives. Thomson argues that life story offer a "compensatory view of the present, attenuated by a vision of the past, and a projection into the future" (Thomson 1993 cited in Blasco 2001, 76). This successfully represents or shows how alternative education from NGOs has had an impact on the lives of child labourers.

Yin writes, "Case studies have been done about decisions, about programs, about the implementation process, and about organizational change" (Yin 1989, 31). I used the cases of NGO strategies as a primary data source. Multiple cases helped me to go deep into the issue of educational strategies that individual children are confronted with. They are often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust (ibid. 52). Every case in this research serves as a specific purpose within the scope of an overall inquiry. I have not chosen case studies as "sampling units". Rather I have chosen case studies as a tool of "analytical generalization".

Before starting my fieldwork, I sent requests to selected NGOs through the University of Helsinki expressing my interest to know the name and address of major NGOs involved in education of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal to map out major actors in this field. It was a *snowball* sampling technique (see, Bogdan & Biklen 1992, 70) i.e. I asked the first informant to recommend other actors in the same field. The questionnaire was sent six months before I started my fieldwork. When I got the responses, I contacted the selected NGOs (representing major types of NGO work on child labour) and relevant contact persons for my fieldwork.

Getting into the field

When I was in the fieldwork countries, I contacted the programme directors of the NGOs and arranged time to visit their schools/shelter homes. I explained my intention to the NGO leaders and later to the teachers/social workers/volunteers of the NGOs before starting my actual fieldwork. In the beginning, the relation with staff and volunteers was on a formalistic basis but as soon as I started to do the actual work, they became informal and friendly with me. I found NGOs doing much needed work on education for underprivileged children in general and child labourers in particular. Before the involvement of NGOs in the education sector, child labourers were almost completely left out by public schools. Even the idea of education for child labourers was considered as ridiculous before the convention of the rights of the child and the involvement of NGOs in education sector. This is due to the cultural construction of childhoods in South Asian hierarchic societies (for detailed discussion see chapter 5.2).

I found child labourers were happy to get the *only* or *second* chance of education in NGO schools. Children considered education as highly symbolic; as a means for being someone in life. It gave many of them hope for taking control over their lives and to protect their rights and to ensure better working conditions. Empirical evidences suggest that NGOs have generated a "new optimism" among the children deprived of public education or who dropped out from public schools. Many children felt attached to the volunteers and staffs of NGOs who gave them the opportunity of education. While NGOs do important work in education for disadvantaged children, their work is less appreciated by respective governments (role of NGOs in development in general and education sector in particular and government-NGO relations are discussed in chapter 6). As a result, governments more or less fail to use the

expertise of NGOs in order to reform public schools in both Bangladesh and Nepal.

Doing fieldwork with children

There are methodological concerns when conducting fieldwork with children and this has been described by Robyn M. Holmes (1998) in his work *Fieldwork with Children*. He described the issue of establishing a rapport with the children, interviewing children and the issue of ethical concerns. I primarily conducted my fieldwork in NGO schools and/or shelter homes. On occasions, I was engaged in fieldwork in public schools and children working in informal sectors who do not have contacts with NGO projects.

Most of the interviews took place in the school and/or shelter home settings in their natural environment. I discussed with children during school intervals and at a distance from their educators. As a result, children were not afraid to talk to me freely. However, there were some problems in interviewing children as they were not used to talk to strangers about their lives. They were socialised in an environment where adults (parents and teachers) take decisions on their behalf. In the beginning, children were shy, but later when they became friendly to me; they expressed their feelings about their work, family and education freely. It is also important to note that in South Asian cultures, children rarely, if ever, are responsible for giving their consent to participate. I had to take consent from the teachers/social workers for children's interview. While I started to do the actual work, I explained and answered all the questions they had and they accepted my explanations.

I adopted a friendly role in order to build a rapport with the children. Speaking Bengali as a native speaker was an advantage when conducting interviews of children in Bangladesh. Basic knowledge of Nepali along with help from interpreters (volunteers and staffs of different NGOs) facilitated an understanding of what the children were saying (list of interpreters in **annex 1.7**). I built trust with them by expressing my positive feelings and desires to be with them and putting them at ease.

Different studies show that good interviews are those where children are treated as equals or as a *quasi friend* so that they can talk freely about their feelings (see, Fine & Sandstrom 1988; Bogdan & Biklen 1992; Corsaro 1985 cited in Graue & Walsh 1998, 107). Unequal power between the researcher and a subject remains a critical issue in doing research with children. I tackled some of the problems by adapting a quasi-friendly role with the children. As it is difficult for children to accept adults as equals, this approach helped me to be tolerated and trusted in children's society. I played with them, told stories to them and listened to their stories. I also told jokes and sometimes sang songs for them and they sang for me. These helped me to gain and earn their trust. They were openly curious about me and asked about my life in Finland and my views on many issues. After being with them for sometime, they interacted with me as their friend and not merely as a researcher.

I requested the teachers to treat me like a student. In the class they were mostly surrounding me and I followed them. It happened that because of the friendship with pupils, many of them invited me to meet their families at their homes (mostly in slums and squatter settlements). I visited their families as much as I could, which helped me to put their situation in another context. Without considering their family background, obligations, aspirations and emotions, it would have been difficult for me to contextualise their work and education. I did not carry out structured interviews with the children. The children's age generally ranged from 6 to 14 years; I found that it was very effective to carry out informal and semi-structured interviews

with them. It was one of the advantages for me to do the fieldwork there because Bangladeshi and Nepali children enjoy the group setting. It seemed that they were spontaneous in answering my questions in a group.

I am well aware of the fact that there is a need to protect the rights of the participants. Especially, it is a major concern for researchers who conduct fieldwork with children (see, Fine & Sandstrom 1988; Sieber & Sieber 1992; Holmes 1998). My research also covers the child victims of trafficking and prostitution. I had to be careful about ethical issues while dealing with children. To be ethically correct, I tried to avoid questions directly relating to some of the pupil's sexual victimisation. Rather, I asked about their families, educational issues and learnt about their victimisation from staff and volunteers. I did not ask them direct questions because talking about sex is associated with shame in Bangladeshi and Nepalese cultures. In this way, I carefully avoided a remembrance of their painful personal experience. I have not used the real names of pupils in the dissertation in order to protect the privacy. The same is true regarding the commercial sex workers (CSWs) I interviewed.

There is a legitimate concern in South Asia that professionals dealing with children may face child molestation accusations.⁹ In every school I visited, I was cautious not to engage in any type of physical contact with children. I confess that it was very difficult for me not to be affectionate with the smiling and friendly children whose lives were under hardships. In this kind of situation, it was difficult for me to remain detached from their realities. As far as the life struggle for children is concerned for a better future, I felt myself as part of their struggle for hope. This must have some influence on my data collection and research findings. I think that rather than being a disadvantage, it was an advantage for my study.

Stages of analysis and question of validity

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging fieldwork data to present what the researcher has discovered. In the beginning, it was a monumental task to analyse, interpret and make sense of the data gathered. But later I put the relationship between the subjects and myself in perspective. By coding categories, I sorted out the descriptive data so that the different topics of data are separated. *Process Codes* (Bogdan & Biklen 1992, 169) helped me to categorize sequence of events, changes over time in life histories of children. I compared the case of different educational strategies of NGOs to find the different educational impacts on children. Comparing the beneficiaries of NGO projects in the fieldwork countries helped me to understand different educational contexts of each country (for details see chapter 7).

To construct reliability and validity of data, I used *triangulation*. It has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verify observation and interpretation (Silverman 1993, 145; Stake 2000, 443). I ensured reliability of the data by using standardized methods to interviews and notes. Validity is interpreted as the extent to which a description accurately represents the social phenomena which it refers (Hammersley 1990, 57). I used documents, interviews and direct observation and key informant information to construct reliability and validity of data. Analysis of case study methods suggest that multiple sources of data meet the criteria for external validity or representativeness than those that relied on only single source of information (Denzin 1970, 13; Yin, Bateman & Moore

⁹ A staff from CWIN told me that a Frenchman who had been running a shelter home for street children in Kathmandu for 13 years was caught red-handed by Nepali police for his alleged involvement in paedophile activities in the shelter home.

1983; Armstrong 1987, 21; Yin 1989, 97).

My frequent visits to the children under NGO projects helped me to understand things more intimately. Multiple sources of data collection helped me to distinguish between what was said and what was really in practice. I have also conducted in-depth interviews of informants other than children themselves. The interviews of the persons not involved in the programme in any capacity, have been regarded as a third source in the study. Moreover, ample literature helped me to get a clear understanding on the issues before I started my fieldwork.

1.6: SOME LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In 1994-95 I had been working as the Dhaka University Reporter at the national news magazine “Bisshobiddaloy Campus” (the University Campus) during my studies at the University of Dhaka, Department of Public Administration. As a reporter of an educational institution, the contrast between educational opportunities of upper class children and slum/street/working children at Dhaka made me interested to conduct research on education of underprivileged children. Rafiqun Nabi’s (popularly known as Ranabi), acclaimed cartoon series “Tokai”, the poor little street urchin since 1978 has also been an inspiration for me to do something on disadvantaged children in the future.

The child cooks of the University of Dhaka student dormitories, known as “pichchis” or the “little one” (8-10 year old) pressed me mentally to do my future research on such children’s educational opportunities. When I visited Underprivileged Children’s Educational Programme (UCEP) School in Dhaka as a reporter, I found its approaches to education as new and promising for underprivileged children. I decided to include education for child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal for my doctoral study to get a broader picture of the fight against child labour in South Asia.

I want to make it clear that this study has some limitations, which reflects the interconnected nature of three broader issues of development discourse. Three major issues the study deals with are child labour, primary education and NGOs. As they are closely linked with the research question, there is the problem with demarcation of the scope of research that deals with the issues of childhood, educational realities in Bangladesh and Nepal and the role of NGOs.

I have restricted my study on educational approaches referring to those policy and project areas, which fall under NGO activities on child labour. Thus I have excluded specific analysis of areas such as public and private primary education. However, NGO activities on education do not exist in isolation from the mainstream public and private schools. Hence, the broader issues of education in public schools, children’s household background and cultural contexts inevitably came to the discussion.

There is confusing statistical data both in Bangladesh and Nepal on the number of child labour and educational achievements and failures of children. Often government and sometimes NGO inflate their data to show their performance in education sector. Enrolment reports are loaded with “ghost students” to satisfy reporting requirements of different agencies, for different reasons. As a result, data on educational achievement may differ among the Ministry of Education, NGOs and international donor agencies. I was not able to rectify the data on incidence of child labour, school completion, repeating in grades, drop out etc. in both Bangladesh and Nepal.

Across South Asian cultures, family is the primary context in which childhood is located and can be understood. Children are rarely considered as competent enough to talk on their behalf. Because of the taboo of talking openly about children's own lives and problems in households or school, this may have a negative impact on my fieldwork data. In Nepal, I found less secondary data available on the research topic comparing to Bangladesh. As most of the Nepali NGOs follow similar strategies in education of child labour, it may appear that this study has focussed less on Nepal.

Even though it is agreed that Universal Primary Education (UPE) is the tool to reduce child labour in developing countries, debates on 'child labour' and 'child work' based on the nature of the work has not been solved yet. I discuss this issue in chapter 4 in great detail. I agree with Santha Sinha's (2000) proposition that all children out of school are by definition child labourers irrespective to the nature of their work. I use the terms 'child labour' and 'child work' interchangeably in this study.

The results of this study will contribute to the educational possibilities of disadvantaged children in general and child workers in particular in developing countries. This contributes to educational policy change in developing countries and takes underprivileged children's concerns into account. The research may guide educational policies concerning disadvantaged children as well as national policies on Education for All (EFA) in developing countries.

1.7: STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into eight chapters. Every chapter has more or less first hand data whereas chapter seven is mostly based on empirical data. **Chapter one** provides the background, research setting and scope of the study. It provides a detailed description of research methodologies and implementation strategies. **Chapter two** provides a theoretical framework pertaining to educational possibilities of child workers. This chapter discusses various sociological theories of education such as functionalism, reproduction and resistance theory and their role in nation-building, national development, economic and cultural reproduction, agency and language of hope etc. **Chapter three** analyses three educational theories in relation to the contexts of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. This chapter discusses the applicability of sociological theories about education in the Bangladeshi and Nepalese contexts. It analyses issues related to history, religion, colonialism and international aid in shaping educational development in developing countries in general and Bangladesh and Nepal in particular. **Chapter four** links incidence of child labour with policies of primary education in Bangladesh and Nepal. Commencing with 'child labour' and 'child work' debate, this chapter explores the evolution of primary education and the role of NGOs within the broader education system. **Chapter five** discusses three specific contexts of child workers i.e. household background, cultural context and school. This provides a comprehensive picture of the failure of public schools in providing equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. **Chapter six** describes the increasing role of NGOs in development in general and the educational sector in particular. It is based on documentary analysis and in certain extent empirical data. The chapter also discusses the underlying philosophy of NGOs in education for child labourers and programme complexities i.e. complementarities and the paralleling of NGO education with that of government. **Chapter seven** presents the empirical data on educational strategies used by NGOs. It divides NGO education projects into three broader categories and analyses their strengths and weaknesses, which is based on fieldwork. **Chapter eight** presents concluding observations and remarks as well as policy recommendations.

Chapter eight also relates the current research with the need for further research on comparative and international education.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF EDUCATION

To explain the limitations and possibilities of education for child labourers, I have discussed sociological theories of education in this chapter. Very few educational theories so far has combined the contemporary issues of NGOs and education in developing countries. I find sociological theories of education i.e. 1) functionalism, 2) reproduction and 3) resistance theories as important in explaining educational deprivation and educational possibilities of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. Functionalism explains the common social goals of education. Reproduction theory shed light on the reproductive role of economic and cultural capital in education and their effects on social hierarchy. Though economic and cultural reproduction is important in explaining educational realities in Western countries, they do not squarely fit with the educational realities of child labourers in developing countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal.

Resistance theorists such as Paul Willis (1977) and Paulo Freire (1985, 2, 1990, 25, 1998a, 9) highlight the aspects of agency in education. I find Brazilian educator Freire's concepts of "conscientization", "dialogue" and "opportunities for hope" as illuminating for my study though they have their origin in a different ideological context. Freire argued that there was no neutral education as such. For him, education was either for domestication or for freedom (Freire 1970, vi). He considered education as a means for cultural struggle to affirm the unrealised potentials of the oppressed groups. In his view, teachers played a vital role in the counter-hegemonic struggle to make education context-bound with the help of other social actors and social movements.

Freire viewed education as the central terrain for organizing knowledge, power and desire in extending individual capacities, reclaiming dignity of human life and social possibilities (Freire 1985, xiii; Giroux 1985, xviii, 1989, 126; Giroux & McLaren 1989, xxi). His notion of hope and struggle are rooted in a language of possibility. His method of education produced spectacular results among illiterate peasants in Latin America and proved effective in improving the literacy of marginal groups in the industrial world. He saw education as a tool for reclaiming citizenship, civic responsibility and democratic public life.

I find the "language of hope" and "language of possibility" as central to the educational prospect for child workers. Even his concepts provide opportunities for education of marginalized groups; they may appear much different from the realities of primary education in today's Bangladesh and Nepal. This is not surprising since Freire's ideas were germinated and implemented in the context of Brazil when popular forces were strong and Cuban revolution fuelled hope of emancipation for the disenfranchised (Blasco 2001, 9). That situation cannot be replicated in present day Bangladesh and Nepal because of the changed post Cold War surge of market economy.

Education in both countries is built upon the imported models of the industrial North. Poor resource base, low internal resource mobilisation and external dependence on development programs have made both countries dependent on bilateral and multilateral aid agencies for their educational planning. The Western model of centrally-run "uniform" educational systems has reached their limits in developing countries (Caillods 1992, 22).

Northern educational models and contents have been increasingly dominated by international financial institutions and funding agencies in the field of education and training in developing countries. The international donor community led by the World Bank has become even more

influential in setting the educational agenda for both the academic debate and for policy solutions in developing countries. Their policies have been increasingly guided by market ethics and technocratic fix of educational problems in developing countries (Buchert 1992, 9; Samoff 1996, 253; Tomasevski 2003, 72). Maribel Blasco (2001, 10) terms this narrow and limiting construction of education as “alarming”.

Technocratic rationality in solving educational problems of developing countries may not bring desired results because of different contexts. Western model of education may appear as part of the problem rather than part of the solution in non-Western developing countries. Emergence of NGOs in education sector is the reflection of the inherent problem of centralization of public education. Scholars highlight the ‘local dimension’ as a policy option to alleviate the crisis of education in developing countries (see, Coombs 1985, 6-7; Coombs & Ahmed 1974, 20; Buchert 1992; Brock-Utne 1993, 87; Negash 1996, 7; Brock-Utne & Garbo 1999, 323).

I find it hard to reconcile theories originated in Western countries with the educational needs and realities of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. However, resistance theory provides opportunity for explaining alternative educational approaches of NGOs. In the following sections, I discuss theoretical debates which have tackled the complex relationship between socioeconomic and cultural origin of students and their educational possibilities.

2.1: FUNCTIONALISM: EDUCATION FOR COMMON SOCIAL GOALS?

The primary theoretical issues addressed in the sociology of education involves functionalism. It considers education as a means for maintaining social cohesion and order. The functionalists argue that societies are held together by an orientation and *consensus of values* governed by social needs and ideals. They see education as oriented towards transmission of social values from one generation to another. In his book *Education and Sociology*, Durkheim argued that education was the means for attainment of certain values and skills “which are demanded of him by both the political society and as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined” (Durkheim 1956, 71). Durkheim argued that education makes people’s conduct consistent with the authority of moral rules. He defined education as the influence exercised by adult generations on those not yet ready for social life. The aim of education in the Durkheimian view was to make students fit into the existing social needs and ideals.

Those students who fail to follow the rules and regulation of society, become ‘anomic’ and live a meaningless life, according to Durkheim. He assumed certain harmonious relationships between the needs of society and state in terms of education. In his words, “education would enable the state to ‘consecrate’ and promote society’s common goals” (ibid. 81). Education in Durkheimian terms was aimed at shaping and training children to obey, respond and become skilful members of the society without threatening existing social order. In other words, education ensured membership and integration in society by directing, correcting and changing behaviour of future generations.

Functionalist theorists also make use of an organic analogy, society according to them, is like a human body. Particular organs have particular functions in harmony with one another. Structural functionalist Talcott Parsons produced a theory of society in which culture, social structure and personality are linked together in a logical and coherent way. According to

Parsons (see, Blackledge & Hunt 1985, 70), school has two functions in society namely, the socialisation of individuals and their allocation of roles within society. In Parsonian view, education engenders new forms of inequality and thus potential division and conflict in society. At the same time, he saw education as tool for preventing conflict and discontent by legitimising such inequalities by slogans such as values of ‘achievement’ and ‘equality of opportunity’ and performing a crucial integrative function. Socialisation plays an important role in spreading value of society through internalisation of social values and ‘role expectation’.

The functionalist approach was fundamental to modernization theory of development. Leaders of developing countries perceived education and industrial development as an inseparable process during 1950s and 1960s. W.W. Rostow (1960) formulated his five linear stages of economic growth model through which traditional societies turn into capitalist society of mass consumption. The objective of education was to raise the level of skills, especially technical and management skills, needed to support economic growth; and to provide an adequate supply of the whole range of professional expertise needed to run a modern nation (d’Aeth 1975, 31-2). People were considered as raw materials to be shaped by education to become useful for national economic development.

Functionalists located educational institutions in relation to wider elements of social structure. They considered social and economic stratification of society as a by-product of modernization process and distribution of wealth, prestige, and power are acquired on the basis of merit. The responsibility for educational failure was blamed on the individuals, not the society; and on the poor, not the rich. Functionalists were positive on the common social goals of education and failed to recognize that it was hard to achieve common social goals in a society. There are opposing interests and ideologies put forward by different groups and it may appear that one group’s gain is another group’s losing. Functionalists failed to see that social stability may be a result of a ‘manipulated’ and ‘illusive’ consensus. They failed to see education as necessary for motivated individuals for their own personal development rather than the sake of national economic need.

Functionalists have been criticized for not taking power, ideology, class structure and economic conditions into account. Erik Allardt reduced the overtly consensual education of the functionalists. Allardt (1965, 8) argued, “...strong pressure towards uniformity exists even in such cases in which there actually does not exist a common conscience. There are, however, strong efforts to impose such a common conscience. The efforts to exert control always imply normative regulations but people may be controlled by economic means or economic sanctions”. The new sociology of education shed light on inequality of education and thus functionalist tradition was thrown into question.

2.2: THE ‘NEW SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION’: INEQUALITY AS AN ISSUE

By the end of 1960s, the criticisms were directed at functionalism which opened up new perspectives in education. Contrary to the claims made by functionalists that school is responsive to the educational needs of everyone, emphasis was shifted to inequality in the economy and how it determined school performance. Central to the so-called *new sociology of education* is the relationship between knowledge, culture, control and power. Scholars argue that education is closely related to power and the right to education is embedded in power-relations (for discussion see, Bernstein 1971, 47; Young 1971; Karabel & Halsey

1977; Apple 1979, 1982, 1993, 1996). According to them, schools embody and reproduce unequal economic and cultural institutions of society. Education defines and controls the conduct of individual children through exercise of power.

The concept of *hidden curriculum* originally coined by Jackson (cf. Apple 1979, 84) was taken up by other scholars. The formal and 'hidden curriculum' is seen as the means of legitimating of dominant ideology as neutral knowledge. It is seen as the means by which dominant ideology is legitimised and naturalised in an apparent neutral manner. It is transmitted through curriculum, textbooks and teaching methods. Scholars dealing with the concept revealed ideological and class, race and gender bias of the apparently neutral knowledge taught in schools both as contents and teaching method (Apple 1979, 1999). This is similar to what Basil Bernstein (1977, 16) terms as "invisible pedagogy", which rest upon implicit hierarchies, which do not require legitimating by explicit and unambiguous values. Bernstein maintained that visible pedagogy involve strong classification, while invisible pedagogy involve weak classification.

Reproduction theories started to develop at the end of 1960s and the beginning of 1970s. They emerged as a result of the disenchantment with the modernisation approach to development which had not produced rapid benefits expected of it. Reproduction theorists consider the main functions of schools as reproduction of dominant ideology, forms of knowledge and highly stratified and class-specific positions in labour market. They blamed the dominant society rather than individual students for their failure in education. Some of the best known reproduction theorists include Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, Nicos Poulantzas, Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu. Within reproduction theory, there are two approaches i.e. education as tool for class correspondence (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu, 1973, 1977, 1997; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) which have guided the class-confirming nature of education.

Education and economic reproduction

Structuralist Marxists relate social, political and cultural relations in society with economic relations. They believe that economic base determines the superstructure i.e. a society's education system, or its form of government, or type of family prevalent at any particular time is a direct consequence of the nature of its economic system (see, Blackledge & Hunt 1985, 113-114). Aronowitz and Giroux (1993) portray schools as reproductive in three senses. First, schools provide different classes and social groups with knowledge and skills they need to occupy their respective places in a labour force stratified by class. Second, schools are seen as reproductive in the cultural sense, functioning in part to distribute and legitimate forms of knowledge, values, language, and modes of style that constitute the dominant culture and its interests. Third, schools are viewed as part of a state apparatus that produce and legitimate the economic and ideological imperatives that underlie the state's political power (ibid. 66).

In their book *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that education is not independent of society; rather, it is tied to society's economic and social institutions. There is a high degree of correspondence between social class, school and work. They argue, "... schools foster legitimate inequality through the ostensibly meritocratic manner by which they reward and promote students, and allocate them to distinct positions in the occupational hierarchy" (ibid. 11). They maintain that schools are the accomplice of economic capital to reproduce social inequalities. To change the educational reproduction in society, they argue for change in the capitalist mode of production. According to them, "Capitalism is an

irrational system, standing in the way of further social progress. It must be replaced” (ibid. 275).

Education and cultural reproduction

Cultural reproduction theorists added new dimension of culture in educational achievement along with economic reproduction. Max Weber argued that class action become complicated because of the existence of status group which is based on “positive or negative, social estimation of honour” (Weber 1961, 187). According to him, along with property, social status played an important role in educational reproduction. According to L. Althusser, schools communicate dominant ideology and reproduce existing power structure and class relations (Althusser 1971 cited in Furlong 1985, 158). Schools are used as a tool for indoctrinating children of different classes to existing power structure of society. As Althusser put it, “no class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the Ideological State Apparatuses” (cf. Blackledge & Hunt 1985, 159).

Pierre Bourdieu (1973, 1977 and 1997) and his colleague (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990) discuss how cultural advantages help reproduction in school. Rather than seeing schools as directly linked with economic sector, they consider schools as symbolic institutions, which reproduce existing power relations in a more subtle way. Power in society, they argue, is not achieved through *crude economic control*, but by the more subtle process of ‘cultural control’ where one class can impose its definition of the social world on another apparently in a neutral process. Working class knowledge is considered as different and inferior by the dominant groups.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that “cultural capital” of the upper classes i.e. a set of cultural outlook that children inherit from their home corresponds with the knowledge taught in school and help them in educational ladders and in professional careers. For Bourdieu and Passeron, it is virtually impossible to correct the initial disadvantages of working class children in terms of cultural capital. Education reproduces and legitimates the class structure by conferring the gift of “cultural capital” on the children of dominant classes. Thus the older system of material inheritance is supplanted by legacy of indirect material inheritance through cultural property.

They see language and use of vocabulary by upper class students help them to decipher and manipulate complex structures, whether logical or aesthetic (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, 73). Social function of education reflects the social and cultural reproduction of regimes of inequality. Children of dominant classes inherently acquire a culture, which is similar to that of school. The teachers are representative of middle-class culture in the school (Gramsci cited in Blasco 2001, 20). This cultural scheme is based on power, though not in appearance. According to Bourdieu,

“By making social hierarchies and the reproduction of these hierarchies appear to be based upon the hierarchy of ‘gifts’, merits, of skills established and ratified by its sanctions, or, in a word, by converting social hierarchies into academic hierarchies, the educational system fulfils a function of legitimation which is more and more necessary to the perpetuation of the ‘social order’ as the evolution of the power relationship between classes tends more completely to exclude the imposition of a hierarchy based upon crude ruthless affirmation of the power relationship” (Bourdieu 1973, 84).

From this point, it can be said that scholastic yield from educational action depends on the cultural capital previously invested by the family. According to Bourdieu, “the economic and social yield of the educational qualification depends on the social capital, again inherited, which can be used to back it up” (Bourdieu 1997, 48). Schools do not exist in isolation from economic and cultural inequality of society. Students come from different backgrounds, embody different experiences but only the culture of dominant groups are transmitted as valid knowledge in school. The culture of subordinate groups is disconfirmed, which have negative symbolic effect on children’s education and job. Working class children’s’ initial disadvantages are perpetuated throughout their school years. Children of the dominant classes have the opportunity to master linguistic codes and relations to language and culture in the ways of talking, dressing, acting, thinking or presenting themselves, which allow them to have a fundamental sense of identity, what other associational groups do not possess. As the teachers usually come from the dominant classes, the knowledge and fashion of middle and upper class children are confirmed and rewarded by teachers.

Basil Bernstein attempted to explain cultural and linguistic incompatibilities between home and school for the working class children. He argued, “...the social structure of the school, the means and ends of education, creates a framework which the middle-class child is able to accept, respond to and exploit” (Bernstein 1973, 51). For the working class children, the primary and secondary socialisation do not fit each other and often become conflictual because they lack *linguistic capital*. Bernstein saw working class children as possessing *restricted language code* whereas middle class children possessing both *restricted* and *elaborated language code* whereas school supporting *elaborated language code*. Working class children use poor vocabulary and have lack of ability in using language as to organise their individual experience. The middle class children on the other hand use rich vocabulary inherited from their family and can organise individual experience through the use of language.

School education is oriented towards universalistic meanings for which the working class children are not compensated. In Bernstein’s words, “If a restricted code facilitates the construction and exchange of communalised symbols, then an elaborated code facilitates the verbal construction and exchange of individualised or personal symbols” (ibid. 151). Schools subscribe the elaborated code, which working class children lack. This put working class children in a “disadvantaged” position in school comparing to their middle class counterparts.

From the above discussion, it may be said that what schools teach has less resemblance with the culture of working class families in terms of their family environment, friends and work. Schools in fact may alienate the children from working class families from their traditional roles. Schools may do the opposite of what they are supposed to do. This validates Durkheim’s proposition that ‘deviance’ is not necessarily irrational – they may equally be seen as a rational response to particular social circumstances (Durkheim cited in Furlong 1985, 75).

Reproduction theorists have contributed to the understanding on the political role and function of education in relation to mode of production and culture in society. Human agency has largely been neglected in reproduction theory. Logically, reproduction in education is never complete because different groups compete to embody their version of education (Bernstein 1971; Apple 1979, 1993, 1999). In Apple’s words, “social reproduction is by its very nature contradictory process, not something that simply happens without a struggle” (Apple 1982,

91-2). Tuula Gordon (1986, 10) criticizes reproduction theories for remaining neutral on gender discrimination in education. Due to the weaknesses of reproduction theories in explaining 'agency', resistance theory in education has appeared as an alternative avenue for educational possibilities of marginalised groups.

2.3: RESISTANCE THEORY: 'AGENCY' AND 'LANGUAGE OF POSSIBILITY'

Resistance theorists have developed a theoretical framework and method of inquiry that restores the critical notion of 'agency'. They include Paul Willis, Paulo Freire, Stanley Aronowitz, Henry Giroux and Michael Apple. They begin with the assumption that schools are essential sites for organizing knowledge, power, and desire in the service of extending individual capacities and social possibilities. The central emphasis of resistance theories is an emphasis on tensions and conflicts that mediate relationships between home and school. Education can be considered as an intensely political phenomenon which reflects political ambitions and rivalry.

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) of Birmingham University argues against the pessimistic determinism of economic and cultural reproduction in education and highlights the importance of human agency even under the context of structural constraints. The centre produced some best known cultural studies in 1970s and 1980s. Paul Willis (1977) of the CCCS by his *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* linked education with class and culture. Willis based his study on participant observation in a tough Hammertown (not real name) secondary school for three years. He raised the question why schools persistently fail to improve the chances of working class children.

He showed how working class kids creatively developed, transformed and finally produced aspects of their larger culture in their own praxis and finally directed them to certain kinds of work. His work primarily concerned with social class as a fundamental factor in structuring life. He showed how a group of students known as 'lads' creatively developed, transformed and finally reproduced aspects of larger culture in a way that challenged personalised opposition to authority and asserted their agency and finally directed them to certain kinds of shop-floor work. Willis differentiated the 'lads' from the school conforming successful counterparts known as 'ear'-oles'. He showed how 'lads' created counter-school culture to create their own symbolic and physical space in school in a different and antisocial manner. The purpose of their creative activity was to explore and come in terms with their situation in school and assert their self-confidence and feeling that they 'know better' than the school.

Willis found a parallel between 'macho' school counter culture and working class shop-floor culture of resistance to authority. As the 'lads' left school, they had a sense of being positively able to choose the conditions of their own existence and they chose hard manual labour. By doing so, they explicitly challenged the reproductive role of school that does not necessarily mean that they would be successful. One major contribution of Willis in resistance theory is that the mechanisms of reproduction are never complete and are always faced with partially realised opposition.

From Willis's study, it can be said that social agents are not only passive bearers of ideology, but also active appropriators who reproduce existing structures through struggle, contestation and partial penetration of those structures. Students not only adopt school culture, but also produce knowledge to rewrite their own histories, identities and learning possibilities. Like

Giddens's *theory of structuration* (Giddens 1979, Chapter 2), it can be said that it is impossible to think about social structure without at the same time thinking of human agency.

Paulo Freire's work gives hope to alleviate the impact of economic and cultural reproduction by making school relevant to disadvantaged people. Freire (1985, 2, 1990, 46) criticised 'banking education' where knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves as knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing. He argued that without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication there is no true education. He developed a bridge between agency and structure, a discourse that stimulates human action amidst structural constraints (Giroux 1985, xviii; Aronowitz & Giroux 1993, 46). He viewed teachers and learners as active agents in understanding, criticizing, resisting and transforming schooling practices.

He saw the culture and contexts of the disadvantaged groups as equally valid as other groups. He advocated that knowledge must be sympathetic to the disadvantaged groups and encouraging critical consciousness among them in the spirit of social responsibility and citizenship. In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Freire suggested that one task of progressive educator is to "unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be" (Freire 1998a, 9). Aronowitz and Giroux highlight the important role teachers have "...teachers have to develop a possibility that can raise real hopes, forge new alliance, and point to new forms of social life that appear realizable" (Aronowitz & Giroux 1987, 161).

Schools need to incorporate diverse and contradictory stories that construct the interplay of experience, identity, and possibility that students bring to classroom (Giroux 1989, 150). The pedagogical value of resistance lies, in part, in connections it makes between structure and agency on the one hand and culture and the process of self-formation on the other (Aronowitz & Giroux 1993, 101). According to Freire and Shor (1987, 26-27), "It has to be situated, experimental, creative – action that creates the conditions for transformation by testing the means of transformation that can work here".

From the above discussion, it can be said that schools not only work as a place for economic and cultural reproduction, but also as a place where the negative impact of reproduction can be mitigated. Common social goals of education enshrined by functionalists are challenged by reproduction theorists. They focus more on class and culture in educational achievement of students. However, there are differences between developed and developing countries concerning the reproductive role of education, which will be discussed in chapter 3. Resistance theorists prove that negative aspects of economic and cultural reproduction in education be mitigated by contextual education. A teacher's role is very important in making changes in school to validate children's contexts.

In chapter 3, I discuss the historical differences between education in Western countries and that of developing countries. I also discuss the relevance of dominant educational theories in the contexts of child workers in Bangladesh and Nepal.

CHAPTER 3: DIFFERENT PATHS OF EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH AND NEPAL

The earlier discussion on relationships among education, class, culture and agency offer some useful points to discuss the educational possibilities of child workers in Bangladesh and Nepal. Education in general has twin goals in any society i.e. preparing students for job and an ideological orientation. The process and content of education are shaped by a group's mission and vision. I argue that even though economic and cultural factors work as barriers to education of disadvantaged children, it is possible to make the structural effects less and open up educational opportunities for them.

However, neither functionalism nor reproduction theories described earlier squarely fit with my empirical findings in different ways. This perhaps is not surprising, since they have emerged primarily in Euro-American contexts. The Western models of education do not always accommodate the educational needs of agricultural societies. They may in fact be blamed for educational failure because they are less adapted to the realities of Southern countries. Historical differences, level of industrialization, religion, colonialism, dependence on foreign aid and cultural factors play important role in shaping the educational characteristics of Bangladesh and Nepal. Those are very important factors to understanding the present day educational realities in both countries.

The key theoretical orientation of this chapter is that *resistance theory* provides the best avenue to explain educational possibility for child labourers by emphasising the role of their 'agency'. It is essential to adopt a contextual approach to education to mitigate the effects of reproduction in education. The Western models need to be adapted to the local realities to make them work in non-Western societies. This does not make Western-oriented educational theories redundant; rather, I deploy them profitably to raise questions and to reveal the educational realities for child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. Figure 1 portrays the three major components of education system in developing countries. As it is indicated in the figure, historical, cultural and religious factors shape education system development in developing countries. After detailed discussion on the issues, I go for discussion on the relevance of sociological theories of education in Bangladesh and Nepal.

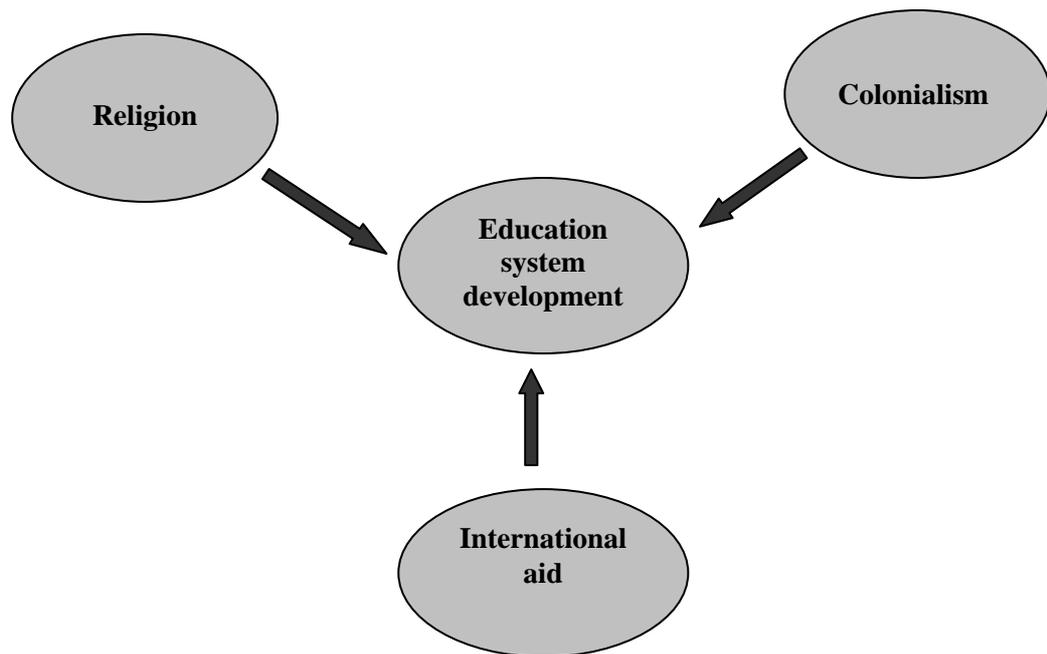


Figure 1: Elements of educational system development in developing countries

3.1: DIFFERENT HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS OF EDUCATION

The history of education in the North and the South are very different. The major differences are linked to the purpose of education. The industrial transformation preceded the rise of educational systems in Europe, and in Southern countries, education systems are considered to be a stepping stone into modernization (Levin 1980, 136; Hoppers 1981, 13). Economists believe that education contributes to *human capital* and *modernization* through the raising of earnings and productivity. According to Theodore Schultz (1963), investing in education was generally proven to be highly instrumental and necessary in order to improve the production capacity of a given population and it also sharpens the decline in absolute poverty.

Schultz's thesis on *human capital* and *productivity* has had major influences on the educational policies in newly-independent Third World countries since the end of the Second World War. Western-oriented education created an *optimism* in developing countries in the 1960s which eroded traditional forms to modernise institutions. Education was aimed at establishing modern organizations which would help in forming the educated middle class that could function as the motor in the development process and as a guarantee against revolutions or other attacks on the State (Lipset 1964 cited in Daun 1992, 69). Superpower rivalry during the Cold War period provided the ideological ground for an educational agenda in developing countries.

Following an economic growth model, developing countries invested disproportionately on higher education to support modern sectors. By following this model, many developing countries failed to solve their developmental problems. Of course, the East and Southeast Asian success of rapid industrialisation should be considered as an exception. For example,

countries such as South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia could use Western education, capital and technology for rapid industrialisation. Rising unemployment for the educated and an increase of landlessness and semi-landlessness in many developing countries force us to question modernisation itself. Emergence of dependency theory and basic needs approach in development in 1960s and 1970 are the manifestation that modernisation path of development in many developing countries did not fully achieve its targets.

Imitation of Western model created dependency for many developing countries. As a remedy for the problem of dependency, import substitution and self-centred development in the Southern countries was required (see, Martinussen 1997, chapter 7). It was argued in *Basic needs approach* that the basic needs of people could be achieved with lower growth rates (Elovainio 1986a, 4-5; Takala & Tapaninen 1995, 18, Kiernan 2000, 198). The emergence of the approach proves that the previous theories were state-centred and focussed less on individual needs.

The education system created a general knowledge base rather than a practical knowledge for agricultural societies. The impact of education on agricultural economy is little in terms of production and human development. In non-Western countries, education may detach students from their agricultural orientation (Hoppers 1981, 82; 1996, 25). Pupils may consider farming as a second-rate activity which is needed to survive in case of unemployment in the modern sector (Hoppers 1981, 92). A modern sector cannot meet the demands of a growing number of diploma holders in developing countries. The expansion of the higher education did not consider the capacity in which, the economy would grow and it created a pool of unemployable citizens in developing countries as a result (for detailed discussion see, Coombs 1968, 81; Farrell 1982, 41; Negash 1990, 87; Caillods 1992, 25; Palme 1994, 139; Awasthi 1996, 77; Grierson 1996, 60).

The majority of school-leavers in developing countries generally maintain their livelihood through either small-scale agriculture or, to an increasing extent, the rural non-farm and the urban informal sector (King 1989 cited in Billetoft 1992, 155; King 1996, 35-6). When the poor cannot sustain livelihood in rural areas, they migrate to cities in search of job opportunities in urban areas and therefore, become part of the urban sub-proletariat. They mostly live in slums and squatter settlements without legal rights on their dwellings. Eviction and harassment are a daily fear for the urban poor living illegally (Kumar 2003, 67). Insecure employment in urban informal sectors combined with the constant fear of eviction and the lack of access to education of children further increase their marginalization in urban society. Diverse educational needs for different disadvantaged groups are often overlooked in many developing countries. Child labour is the manifestation of a serious problem in educational system.

3.2: RELIGION AND EDUCATION

Legacies of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam have had lasting effects on educational development in Bangladesh and Nepal. The content of education was based on religious faith before the arrival of colonial power in South Asia. Previously earning of a living was not the principal goal of education in South Asia (for detailed discussion see, Siqueria 1952). Rather, the goal of education was to build one's personal character, teach respect for elders, authority and religious ideology. Education was exclusively reserved for the higher echelon of Hindu religious hierarchy in classical India. It was considered a personal and family-like process: *guru(s)* taught pupils how to perform religious duties. This, of course, implied a certain

general education such as grammar, texts, simple mathematics, mythology, and perhaps astrology (ibid. 5). Formal education in classical India was almost exclusively the domain of males, particularly Brahmin males.

Education was one of the functions of Buddhist monastery in India. The monastery-based schools were the first mass schools in India. After the fall of Buddhism to Hinduism, the popular mass education declined in India. Upon the arrival of Islam, the ideology of education was concerned with using worldly time in preparation for afterlife (Reagan 1996, 132). Myron Weiner accuses the core values of Hinduism (as well as Islam) has not been a force for mass education in India (Weiner 1991, 6).

In pre-colonial India, caste determined one's family vocation which was passed from one generation to another. As India had a strong caste tradition where very few tried to break with the family profession, education was the monopoly of ruling elites and religious clergy. British rule in India opened up the opportunity for institution-based education. At the end of colonialism, independent South Asian countries introduced mass education based on the British model.¹⁰ It is only after the Second World War; South Asian countries introduced education in their own languages as well as in English. Previously, education was carried out in religious languages i.e. Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, Persian etc. These languages created a wall between the elites and common people (Kaviraj 1992, 54).

Educational achievement is considered as prestigious in Bangladesh and Nepal. There is a general dislike for manual labour and education is seen as a passage to escape manual labour (Myrdal 1968, 1646; Prokaushali cited in Gustavsson 1991). Middle class people are often sceptical of an educated mass people fearing loss of their monopoly in job market. Myron Weiner explains how schools serve to maintain the status quo in India, "At the core of these beliefs are the Indian view of social order, notions concerning the respective roles of upper and lower social strata, the role of education as a means of maintaining differentiations among social classes, and concerns that "excessive" and "inappropriate" education for the poor would disrupt existing social arrangements" (Weiner 1991, 5). These beliefs are widely tied to religious notions of hierarchy and shared by Indian as well as Bangladeshi and Nepalese middle class. This has serious negative implications on the education of children from economically and culturally disadvantaged families.

3.3: COLONIALISM, INTERNATIONAL AID AND EDUCATION

Education for manufacturing clerks

Colonial rule has direct and indirect bearings on the educational systems of Bangladesh and Nepal. Colonial rulers devised an education to serve the needs of colonial administration and focused more on higher education. Carnoy (1974, 100) referred to Thomas Macaulay's philosophical foundation of colonial education policies in British India as, "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and millions whom we govern...a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (ibid.). Education was seen as a device of the British to nurture the indigenous "baboo" class, the status conscious "clerks" and "interpreters".

¹⁰ Nepal was not a British colony like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. It was a dependency and has had influence of British colonial education system.

The “baboo” found contempt in manual and technical work, which conferred lower status (in their view). The aim of colonial education was to fill the lower level jobs of colonial administration with upper class “bhadralok” (gentlemen) rather than technically skilled workforce. Hamza Alavi (1989, 17) termed the Western-educated Indians as “salarial”, those who sought formal qualifications required to entitle them to government jobs, at various levels, and who either occupied or aspired to such jobs.

After independence South Asian countries continued with the previous type of colonial education without much adjustment with the needs of individual learners and the demands of agricultural economy. This education system does not necessarily fit with the social and economic needs of a rural poor and does not promote equity and democratic citizenship. Educated youths become useless in terms of manual labour while formal sector jobs are not available for many. In Nepal, Dor Bahadur Bista argues that to become educated is to effectively remove an individual from manual labour (Bista 1991, 6). Government rationale for education can be considered as a tool for solution or transformation of the problematic attitudes and thinking among masses. Referring to the nature of education in Bangladesh, World Bank staffs view it as tool for “nation-building rather than skill-building” (World Bank 1999, 12).

Even though I don’t agree with Ivan Illich's polemical writing on *deschooling*, it is fair to say that the Western model of education has had an anti-educational effect on society in non-Western societies. Illich argued, “The power of school...divide social reality has no boundaries: education becomes unworldly and the world becomes non-educational” (Illich 1971, 31). Illich's *Deschooling Society* is a relevant starting point on alternative education in pursuit of a just society (Collins 1998, 5). Even though the debate was originated on the schooling in Western world, it is also highly relevant for schooling in developing countries.

In Western countries, the primary cycle of education is considered a ladder for secondary and higher education. It is due to the fact that they have largely been able to universalise lower secondary education. In the contexts of Bangladesh and Nepal, the situation differs significantly from that of Western countries. Primary education is not available to a large number of the school-age children. As South Asian countries follow the Western model of education based on industrialization and modernization, the cores of power are concentrated in metropolitan centres are administered by “high culture” (Nandy 1989 cited in Clarke 1997, 125). Whereas there is a "qualification escalation" (Dore 1997, 5) in the higher studies, there are millions of children who do not have access to primary education. Education has become a tool for achieving credentials for white collar jobs rather than skill development for livelihood in many developing countries including Bangladesh and Nepal.

The drop out rate in primary schools is the manifestation of a personal attempt of pupils to escape from a costly and painful experience in public schools. Even though there exists a provision of free and compulsory primary education in Bangladesh and Nepal, the government role has been mainly limited to expanding the number of school rather than improving the quality of education. This fits with government rhetoric of education for all in the new democratic era politics of Bangladesh and Nepal since 1990s.

External aid and educational expansion

Educational development in developing countries is intimately intertwined with external assistance (see, Takala 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 9, 1998, 322-323; Hoppers 1994, 45; Kokkala 1995, 41). Bangladeshi and Nepali education systems are not based on indigenous models. Schools are strongly connected with the Northern control of content, examination and infrastructure and the use of European languages are ill-suited for the needs of the countries. While European education has transformed itself greatly over the past 30 years, there has not been a corresponding change in developing countries (Kiernan 2000, 197). As different tools of modernization failed to deliver benefits to every community in many developing countries, so is the role of education as a moderniser.

The Cold War played a major role in shaping educational systems in both the countries. At the end of Cold War, governments of Bangladesh and Nepal have been playing a balancing act between external pressure for market reform and internal political rhetoric of education for all. They have been trying to impose uniform primary education for diverse groups of children. External donor dependence of the developing countries gives the donors leverages on the policy-making on education which may limit local perspective in education (King 1991, 14-15; Archer 1994, 223; Hoppers 1996, 65; Brown & Wiseman 1998, 44; Furlong 2000, 7; Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond & Wolf 2002, 24; ADB 2003, IV).

Developing countries follow Western model of education which is important for entry into paid employment in formal sectors. Work-orientation in education is regarded as inferior than academically-oriented education. However, work orientation has for long time been a common element of basic education in the Northern countries that provided role models for school development elsewhere in the world (Hoppers 1996, 25). Unfortunately, many developing countries have less focus on work orientation in education even though this may fit with the socioeconomic realities of the Southern countries. Ingemar Fägerlind and Lawrence J. Saha (1989, 194) question the universal applicability of modern Western model of education in developing countries, "... if learning does occur differently across societies, then expenditure on inappropriate school systems may represent massive wastage and inefficiency".

3.4: EDUCATIONAL THEORIES AND THEIR RELEVANCE IN BANGLADESH AND NEPAL

From the beginning of this study, I was curious about educational opportunities for child labourers. I found that functionalism and reproduction theories provide less optimism on educational possibilities for child labourers. Resistance theory provides opportunities for more optimism for the education of disadvantaged children. Functionalism implies that every child has equal opportunity and an economic means to receive education. The existence of child labour in many developing countries manifests the plurality of educational contexts within societies.

As majority of child labourers come from poor households, this clearly stresses the link between mode of production and educational achievement. It is mainly the NGOs which offer educational opportunities for child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. Empirical evidences suggest that children try to go to school and combine both school and work to improve their living conditions. As formal schools are generally ill-suited for educational needs of disadvantaged children, it is NGOs which provide a *glimpse of hope*. Many children see non-

formal education as an *escape route* from child labour exploitation. This suggests that economic obstacles may not necessarily be only reason preventing poor children from attending schools.

Economic reproduction forwarded by Bowles and Gintis (1976) and cultural reproduction by Basil Bernstein (1971, 1977) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) focus one-sidedly on mode of production and cultural reproduction. In reproduction theories, class remain all pervasive in children's differential educational achievements. As a large number of children can not enrol in school in Bangladesh and Nepal, the dominant classes cannot use it as a tool for hegemony through overt and hidden curriculum like in Western countries. By saying this, I do not imply that schools do not reproduce social inequality, but I argue that it is done in a different manner compared with Western countries.

Debates on education in developed countries have been revolved around school's role as a mechanism for entry into labour market. It is taken for granted that under normal circumstances all children have access to lower secondary schools. The debates have been dominated by the concept of class i.e. middle class children do better in school than children from working class background. The very notion of "working class" presupposes that households have access to formal and regular employment and incomes (Blasco 2001). The same concept of "working class" cannot be used in Bangladesh and Nepal as in Western countries. In agricultural countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal, landlessness is a serious problem and employment opportunities in the agricultural sector are limited. Substantial parts of the population are engaged in 'semi-feudal' form of production with large and absentee landowners. The semi-feudal form of production gives distinct patron-client character to all social relations. Poor people in this arrangement struggle for their most elementary survival i.e. *basic needs*.

In South Asia, poverty has been defined as a lack of means to meet the basic needs of life and has been related to 'want' and 'deprivation' of households. A countrywide national sample survey in Bangladesh found that 60.86 percent of the urban population was below the absolute poverty line while 40.20 percent fell below the hardcore or extreme poverty line (Islam et al. 1997, 289). They do not have access to regular, legally-regulated employment, and consequently, they do not form a 'working class' as in industrialised countries. The urban poor have different access and meaning of school comparing to the 'working class' people in industrialized countries. Children of the rural and urban poor generally remain outside school and engage in work. Western-oriented education is too costly in the framework of poor resource base of Bangladesh and Nepal.

When a large number of children do not have access to school, this makes *symbolic violence* issue less relevant in their contexts. Ineffective and dysfunctional education system fails to fill the educational needs of disadvantaged children and help status transmission and reproduction. Referring to Indian context of primary education, Govinda argues, the locus of discourse on education and cultural reproduction lies, by and large, outside "primary school boundaries" (Govinda 1994, 211). As a large number of children do not have access to primary school, it is difficult to attribute this to what takes place in school process. The same is true in Bangladesh and Nepal i.e. inequality is reproduced more through non-enrolment in school than through school attendance.

However, this does not make the whole concept redundant. *Dalit* (formerly known as untouchables) community children are most marginalized among all children of different

communities. They continue to suffer from all-pervasive social discrimination even in school (Nambissan 2003, 111). Different modes of education i.e. public, private, NGO schools and Madrassahs create class difference in education access and outcome. Access to elite schools, private teachers and coaching centres serve the reproduction goals of upper class in Bangladesh and Nepal.

Empirical evidences from NGO schools suggest that schools may appeal to child labourers compared with work and their home environment (see chapter 7). A child's eagerness for non-formal school of NGOs raises the question concerning the hypothesis of mismatch between 'family culture' and 'school culture'. The notion of cultural incompatibility between home and school overlooks the fact that children may not necessarily share their parent's worldviews or aspirations and they may find schools as more appealing than work and family responsibility (all the cases in chapter seven support this proposition). School has symbolic significance for child labourers and children battle hard to remain in school even against the wishes of their parents and apathy of teachers. Cultural reproduction theory explains very little on the positive contributions of school on children's lives.

Moreover, reproduction theorists hardly consider the inequality of power and status of the members within a family. There is a gap of power between members within families in different communities. In Bangladesh and Nepal, children have lower status in a family comparing to adults. The situation of girls in particular is worse in allocation of food, medical care and education comparing to boys. Patriarchal social values put girls in a disadvantaged position within family in certain cultural and income groups (the issue has been discussed in details in chapter 5). Family is not the 'haven in a cruel world' as it is portrayed in Bangladeshi and Nepali cultures. There are even examples of girls being sold for trafficking by their parents and relatives. This challenges the notion of idealised families in Bangladesh and Nepal. Based on economic and cultural reproduction theories, the following question can be raised, "Is it impossible for schools to reverse the initial disadvantages of children from poor families?"

I argue that resistance theory provides the answer. A democratic new education may reverse the educational deprivation of child labourers. Poverty defines a school failure can be questioned in the sense that, in spite of family poverty, many child labourers go to school. Among them some manage to complete the primary school cycle and many drop out from school. This establishes the fact that non-formal/NGO education can be more appropriate for needs and contexts of child labourers. As NGO schools provide opportunities for education of disadvantaged children, they challenge the proposition "poverty equals non-enrolment" or "school failure" and blame goes to public schools system itself. Child labourers struggle to improve their living conditions through struggle, contestation and partial penetration of dominant power relations. Their struggle support Giddens's theory of structuration that social structure and human agency have reciprocal influence (Giddens 1979, chapter 2). This establishes relevance of resistance theory in explaining educational possibilities of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal.

I find the resistance theory and particularly the work of Paul Willis (1977) on agentic role of children as very relevant when considering educational possibilities for child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. The 'lads' of Willis challenged the middle class-oriented school and showed their ability to reject school. They asserted their identity by challenging the dominant school norms. This does not necessarily mean that they would become successful by doing so. Willis's 'lads' were students of secondary school who dared to challenge the school culture to

assert their identity. In contrast to the 'lads' of Willis, the child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal are mainly the primary school children. Their age mostly range between 5-14 years. Due to cultural factors and young age, many child labourers retreated from public school without challenging the school norms. But that does not mean that they give up their educational struggle.

Paulo Freire provided an important avenue for possibility of adult education for oppressed groups in Latin America and Africa. Freire carried out much of his work within institutional framework of state-sponsored education which has been consistently criticized (Collins 1998, 151). He rejected authoritarian methods in education and advocated democratization of education to ensure social and political responsibility through a dialogical process. He recognised the need of education for periphery to make education universal. He situated his critique to education and educational theory within broader analysis of society. Freire's proposals for pedagogy of liberation are suited for countries in which widespread social injustice exists (Elias 1994, 77).

Freire developed emancipatory education in the context of military rule in Latin America, where there was little room for democratic participation. His method of education produced spectacular results among illiterate peasants in Latin America and proved effective in improving the situation of marginal groups in industrial countries. In Nepal, shortly after the 1950s and once again in the 1990s we see democratic governance beginning to work again. Yet, poverty, caste and geographical inaccessibility are important barriers to education and the participation of marginal groups in education. However, use of Freirian pedagogy by NGOs is rather a scenario what Freire probably did not envisage in the period of radical liberationism. Even though Freire developed his educational philosophy mainly based on adult education, NGOs employ Freirian ideas in education of children too.

Bangladesh was under military-led *quasi democracy* during 1975-1990. Democratic practice has been in existence since 1990s. However, injustice exists in both the countries in terms of social opportunities for the marginalised groups. Instead of caste, class position of households shape educational opportunities for children. Democratic practice gives oppressed groups a voice through electoral politics. The existence of a vibrant NGO sector since 1970s provides an opportunity for marginal groups to have an alternative channel concerning educational opportunities in Bangladesh.

The present day political contexts of Bangladesh and Nepal are not charged with revolutionary zeal like what was seen in Cold War time Brazil or revolutionary Cuba. From this point, it can be said that even though Freirian concepts generate hopes on the education for marginalized groups in Bangladesh and Nepal, the popular forces are not present compared with the 1960s. Success of NGO work on child labour depends on whether they suit the educational needs and contexts of a particular group of child labourers and fit with a community's needs and as well as with broader national goals of education. There are differences in space NGOs have created in national development of Bangladesh and Nepal. As a result, NGOs have differential achievement in education and social sector development in two countries.

Chapter 4 deals with child labour debates in Bangladesh and Nepal and how they relate to primary education in both countries.

CHAPTER 4: THE CHILD LABOUR DEBATES AND EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH AND NEPAL

This chapter describes the evolving issues of combating child labour and how they relate to education policies in Bangladesh and Nepal. Without understanding the link between child labour and education it is difficult to understand the significance of empirical results in the subsequent chapters. This chapter starts with the 'elimination' and 'reduction' of child labour debate and difference between 'child labour' and 'child work'. Then it points to political developments and its impact on national educational policies of the two countries.

4.1: 'ELIMINATION' OR 'REDUCTION' OF CHILD LABOUR?

Child labour has become an important issue in Bangladesh and Nepal since the countries adopted the CRC in 1989. Child rights issues have got new symbolic significance because of globalisation, national context of aid dependence and increased activities of NGOs. By signing the CRC principles, State Parties agreed that children are a separate social group and they are entitled to certain rights and privileges by virtue of their age.

Article 32 of the CRC states, "State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development." The incompatibility between the CRC principles and existence of child labour in export industries in developing countries provoked heated debate in some Western countries in early 1990s. Export industries using child labour in some developing countries such as Bangladesh was the target of consumer boycott, trade sanctions and other legislation of developed countries in the first half of 1990s.¹¹

The Western threat of boycott of child labour products in export industries of Bangladesh and subsequent dismissal of children from factories created shocking situation for the child labourers themselves. In the beginning, the trade sanction approach of Northern countries was criticized in Bangladesh and other developing countries as tool to take away the comparative advantages of developing countries in international trade. Developing countries questioned the political motive of using child labour and labour standards as disguised instrument of "economic protectionism" of the Northern countries.

As Third World labourers are not allowed to choose better employment opportunities of the more developed countries, they are more dependent on local employment opportunities and this dependence is exploited (Kivimäki 1996). Child labour is considered as manifestation of the exploitative labour relations in developing countries. Taking away the rights of children to work may mean taking away the minimum opportunities for their economic subsistence. Many developing countries see child labour as an unavoidable side-effect of underdevelopment and poverty and not the result of conscious policy or neglect. They argue

¹¹ Notable among them is the Harkin Bill. The children working in export industries became the focal point of international attention in early 1993, when American labour and consumer organizations threatened to sponsor a boycott of garments manufactured in Bangladesh. The governmental instrument of this proposed sanction was a Bill placed before the U.S. Congress by Senator Tom Harkin in early 1993. The Bill called for an immediate ban on imports into the U.S. of goods fabricated or manufactured wholly, or in part, by child labour. It also called for punitive measures against imports of such goods (Chawla, 1996, 20).

that appropriate response should be based on expanded access to industrialised country markets in order to raise growth and reduce poverty, not the introduction of unjust trade sanctions on developing countries (see, Lee 1997, 177; Basu 2003a, 95).

Developing countries such as Bangladesh were pressed to ban child labour in its garment industries.¹² As a result of the threat of trade sanctions, a total immediate ban on child labour followed. Between 50,000 and 200,000 children lost their jobs in Bangladesh as a result of Harkin Bill (Bissell 2003, 55). Even though it was aimed at fighting child labour and to protect the interests of children, the immediate result of dismissal was negative on children themselves. Because of the dismissal, many children did not have a choice but to acquire jobs in less regulated and more exploitative occupations (see, Fyfe 1989, 5-6; Boyden & Holden 1991, 127; Crawford 1994, 14; Mattila 1998, 58; Bissell & Sobhan 1996, 3-4; Basu 2003b, 68).

The step proved that any legal ban on child labour based on principles without any corresponding alternatives can paradoxically hurt the best interest of children whom it aimed to serve. According to Alec Fyfe (1989, 128), “Prohibiting child labour...seems paradoxically to make it harder to protect children. If child work is not allowed to exist in law, little can be done to improve it”. It is also a fact that child labour in export industries represents a small fraction of the total child labour in developing countries. Agricultural sector is absorbing the largest proportion of child labourers in developing countries. In Nepal, 97 per cent of economically active children are engaged in agricultural sector (Suwal, KC & Adhikari 1997, 20).

As a result of principle-driven dismissal of children from their work, NGOs looked at how to improve their living conditions. This causes one to question the ‘elimination’ approach to child labour. NGOs started working on dismissed children with mostly non-formal education projects. They work on the premise that if children are in school, they are less likely to be engaged in full-time work. The apparent success of NGOs in improving living conditions of child labourers through non-formal education and other supportive services generated *new optimism* on the possibility of education for underprivileged children. Others stakeholders realized the importance of educational approaches of NGOs and sought cooperation from NGOs.¹³ Special schools were set up by NGOs to educate 10,000 ex-child workers of the Bangladesh garment industries with a monthly stipend of BDT 300 (approximately \$5) for every child before they reach the age of 14. In chapter 6, there is detailed discussion on role of NGOs in education of child labourers.

4.2: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘CHILD LABOR’ AND ‘CHILD WORK’

There have been simultaneous debates in developing countries on what constitute ‘child labour’ and ‘child work’ and how to deal with them. Different frameworks have been proposed for defining child labour to find a solution to the problem. Some define child labour

12 In case of Nepal, the carpet industry was the target of Northern trade sanction in the early 1990s.

13 An education programme for child labour, children below 14 years of age, retrenched from garment industries is in operation since 1996 under the multi-actor Memorandum of Understanding between Bangladesh Garments Manufacturer’s and Exporter’s Association (BGMEA), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Government of Bangladesh (GOB) and has enrolled nearly all the 10000 children identified (GOB undated, 47).

based on the patterns of children's activities.¹⁴ Others define it on the basis of the negative impact of work on children's physical, mental, social and moral development as well as deprivation from educational opportunities (for detailed discussion see, Fyfe 1989, 21-23, 1993; Boyden 1994; Anker & Melkas 1996, 3; ILO 1996b, 3-22; Anker 2000, 258; Lieten 2000a, 2037; Alaraudanjoki 2003). According to Anker and Melkas (1996, 49), child labour involves mainly the questions of children's work in early age, long working hours, hazardous working conditions and insufficient access, attendance or progress in school. International Labour Conference Recommendation 190 in June 1999 defined worst forms of child labour based on harmful effect of work on children's development (see **annex 4.1**).

However, there is no uniform and agreed opinion on what child labour is and how it should be tackled. Any clear distinction between children's work i.e. "child labour" and "child work" is an arbitrary process. There exists literature on distinguishing between "child labour" and "child work" depending on the nature of the work and its impact on children (see, Rodgers & Standing 1981; Bequele & Boyden 1988; Fyfe 1989, 3-4, 1993; Anker 2000, 66; Boyden, Ling & Myers 1998). Child labour is considered as hazardous when it has adverse implications on children's health, growth, psycho-social development and educational opportunities.

It is argued that work of children becomes "child labour" when it takes place outside the family and under hazardous conditions on the basis of remuneration. On the other hand, work takes place in family environment i.e. under family farms or family enterprise is considered as non-hazardous i.e. "child work". This proposition appears to be misleading, because household labour in the rural context can also be harmful for children. It hides the fact that children's work under the protection of family may equally be considered as child labour depending on the nature of work and children's lack of access to education. The phenomenon of prostitution of the Badi girls in Western Nepal suggests that working under own household does not necessarily protect children from exploitation. It can be as hazardous as work outside family.

It can be said that child labour is a sub-set of child work which denotes exploitative relations and hamper children's school attendance. Parents may impose work on children to reduce their own burden of work and reap the benefits of children's work. As Alec Fyfe argued, "Many children make a deliberate choice in favour of 'exploitation outside the home' and control their own earnings, often in the face of parental opposition, rather than endure the 'eternal apprenticeship' of long hours without remuneration under the control of parents" (Fyfe 1989, 72-3).

I argue that child labour is the manifestation of the lack of autonomy and educational choice for children. In developing societies, many children do not have choice and control over their work and education. Many children from poor households work because they do not have an equal opportunity to get education like middle and upper class children. There is a qualitative difference between child labour in Bangladesh and Nepal from that of Europe and North America. Many children in developing countries can not choose the nature and working conditions of their work. Children in Western countries for example, work part-time to earn

14 The activity patterns include (i) domestic work; (ii) non-domestic work, non-monetary work; (iii) tied or bonded labour; (iv) wage labour; (v) marginal economic activities; (vi) schooling; (vii) idleness and unemployment; (viii) recreation and leisure; (ix) reproductive activities. One activity may be dominant for some children, others may divide their time between different activities. If one or several of the first five categories are dominant for a child, she or he naturally has less time to schooling, play and sleep (cf. Anker & Melkas 1996, 3).

extra pocket money upon their choice. Whereas many child workers do not have free time for leisure and play in Bangladesh and Nepal, the work of children in Western countries does not interfere with their leisure and play.

Child work can be considered as valuable for life skills and “neutral” or “beneficial” for children. Non-hazardous child work can sometimes be good for children and their development if it does not affect their school performance negatively. The question is how to ensure well-being of child labourers? There is view that work may give children the opportunity to break the adult control of children and bring mutuality between adults and children. In right circumstances, child work can help children prepare for productive adult life through skill training and building self-reliance, self-confidence and self-esteem (for detailed discussion see, Fyfe 1989, 21; Solberg 1990; Nieuwenhuys 1994; Anker 2000, 257; Lieten 2000a, 2037; Strandell 2001, 95; Burra 2003, 83).

NGO practitioners in Bangladesh and Nepal and their partner Northern NGOs increasingly believe that children’s rights should also include their “right to work”. In the similar direction, Ben White (1996, 11-12) argues for differentiating continuum between “good” and “bad” child labour. White argues that the feasible way to reduce child labour is not ‘removal’ but to transform children’s employment from more to less detrimental, from full-time (or over-time) to part-time, from harmful to neutral or even beneficial. Neera Burra (2003, 74) questions the framework where needs and rights of children are seen as opposite. She argues that within the given context of child labour, children cannot divide their *need for work* from their *right to education*. A large number of child labourers also attend school who appear as pupils rather than child labourers in official documents (Bequele & Boyden 1988, 1).

Santha Sinha (2000, 152-3) criticizes the differentiation between “child labour” and “child work” as there is nothing to prevent children moving from one category to the other. According to Sinha, “Any work done by a child is child labour and the fact that no child is really idle in the Indian context bring one to the logical conclusion that children out of school are, by definition child labourers” (ibid. 168). Her definition solves the problem of missing or nowhere children i.e. children who are not at work and not at school either. She treats elimination of child labour and universal primary education as inseparable process, the success of one automatically leading to the success of the other (ibid. 169). From this point, it can be said that when children are in school, they are less likely to be employed full-time work and work under hazardous conditions. For any credible solution to child labour problem, there is a need to solve the educational problems of underprivileged children and their households. This relates child labour firmly with educational failure of disadvantaged groups in developing countries.

4.3: CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION POLICY

During the 1980s, the debate on child labour appeared as a marginal phenomenon in the context of poor implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Bangladesh and Nepal. In 1990s, the child labour debate re-emerged there in the backdrop of threat of trade sanctions from industrialized nations. Even though the immediate affect of the threat of trade sanction was negative for child labourers, it played an instrumental role in taking child labour issue in national policy agenda of many developing countries. Before this debate, majority of the people in developing countries raised little or no opposition to child labour and considered it as a “natural phenomenon”.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) set the benchmark in implementation of child rights in non-Western countries. The democratization process in many developing countries at the end of Cold War has played a significant role in taking children's right to national policy agenda. The international actions on children's rights to education have helped setting targets to achieve Education for All (EFA) by year 2015. Children and their right to education found a place in the new constitution of Nepal in 1990s. Article 26(8) of the Nepali Constitution declares that the State shall make necessary arrangements to safeguard the rights and interests of children, shall ensure that they are not exploited and shall make arrangements for free education.

Debate on child labour reveals an ideological shift not only in the conceptualisation of 'children' and 'work' but also on the notion of 'poor' in the two countries. The leaders of the two countries have unique proposition on child labour issue. Poverty provides a convenient excuse not to question unequal social relations and the lack of educational opportunity for every child. Rather, plight of children become a resource for governments to attract sympathy and foreign aid which is important for the ruling elites' interests. Child rights as a political issue is avoided and critical question on distribution of power and resources within family and State is ignored in Bangladesh. Blanchet pictures it as, "material needs and that children's right should be seen as a matter of increased welfare, while little attention is paid to the person of child" (Blanchet 1996, 196-7).

Still there are *policy inconsistencies* between children's *minimum age of work* and the *age for completion of primary education* in both Bangladesh and Nepal. The government of Bangladesh has fixed basic minimum age for light work as 12-15 years and for dangerous work 16-18 years following international Minimum Age Convention (ILO 1996b, 43-44). HMG Nepal has fixed it at 14 and 16 respectively. But children finish their 5 year cycle of compulsory primary education at the age of 10 and 11 years respectively in Bangladesh and Nepal. Question can be raised, "Should the children wait for 3 and 4 years for work after completion of their primary education for the sake of government policy?"

4.4: POLITICS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is a predominantly Muslim country with a predominantly ethnic and cultural Bengali population. It is one of the poorest countries of Asia in terms of GNP per capita (see basic facts on Bangladesh in **Annex 4.2**). After the independence in 1971, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) undertook various plans and strategies to improve the primary education system. Education has been considered as an instrument of modernisation and nation-building by different regimes. It has been working as a battleground for rival political parties to represent their brand of nationalism and political ideology.

There is a lack of democratic practices inside political parties in Bangladesh. It is perceived that business people and retired civil and military bureaucrats dominate parliament through the use of their money and power. This makes elections unrepresentative to the aspirations of the majority of people. Political office is used for economic gains by the already powerful. There are a number of loan defaulters, tax evaders and telephone bill defaulters among the Members of Parliament (MPs) in Bangladesh. How can they encourage people to pay tax, telephone bills and repay bank loans? However, due to intense competition for political power between two major parties i.e. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Awami League (AL) since 1990s, primary education has been expanded on a competitive basis in the democratic era since 1991. Even though primary education has been expanded rapidly due to political

rivalry, less attention has been paid to the quality of education in Bangladesh. For better understanding on the educational development in the country, I describe the political developments of Bangladesh since its independence in 1971.

Pre-1975 period

Soon after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, there was a great revolution of expectation on change of living conditions of people who suffered long under the British and Pakistani rule well over 200 years.¹⁵ To build a modern Bengali nation after the legacy of foreign domination, AL regime established a parliamentary democracy in 1972 with the popular ideals of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism. Education was considered as a vehicle for establishment of exploitation-free and socialist “sonar bangla” (golden Bengal). Article 17 of Bangladesh Constitution pronounces that State should take effective measures in “establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law”.

As a reflection of the will of the new regime, 1972-1975 period saw a rapid expansion of primary education through establishment and nationalisation of primary schools. The new regime faced a dilemma of revolutionary rhetoric and Western aid dependence.¹⁶ Maniruzzaman observed that the regime appropriated the new system of “copying the Soviet methods but rejecting its ideology” (cf. Westergaard 1985, 86). After long suppression by foreign rule, “money making” became the prime task of the undeveloped local elites in the newly independent Bangladesh. This showed the opportunist character of the elites there. Famine along with extreme left insurgency made the regime unpopular among ordinary people. The socialist experimentation of the regime failed with the assassination of the independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members by a group of junior army officers.

Era of military-led democracy (1975-1990)

The political change in the country brought fundamental reorientation of the country from a Soviet and Indian satellite to the influence of Western countries. Bangladesh was under a military-led democracy from 1975 to 1990. Two military regimes i.e. General Ziaur Rahman (1975-1981) and General H.M. Ershad (1982-1990) changed Bangladeshi identity politics from a secular and ethnic “Bengali” identity to State-based and *pseudo-Islamic* “Bangladeshi” identity to build political legitimacy and take Bangladesh out of Indian shadow. Education was used as a vehicle for promoting “Bangladeshi” nationalism. The two regimes made constitutional changes to erase secularism by “absolute trust and faith in Allah” and Islam as the “State religion” in 1979 and 1988 respectively.

15 In 1947, India and Pakistan became independent from British rule based on “two nations” theory i.e. Hindus and Muslims are two different nations. Present day Bangladesh was part of Pakistan i.e. called East Pakistan. The so-called Muslim nationalism was used to secure dominance of West Pakistan in the then East Pakistan. In response, Bengali people resisted the domination by using their ethnic and linguistic identity in nationalist movement and finally became an independent nation in 1971 through a bloody war of independence. The Nepali case is different, it has been an independent country since late eighteenth century. During the British colonial rule in rest of South Asia, Nepal had a dependency status.

16 The nature of the regime was “petty bourgeoisie” in character, rent-seeking and easy money attracted the supporters of the regime. Still now, ruling elites of Bangladesh have the similar characteristics.

During General Ershad's rule and afterwards there has been unplanned mushrooming of Madrassa (religious schools) in Bangladesh. Madrassas have been playing a crucial role in national politics as a result of the Islamisation of politics by General Rahman, General Ershad and the Khaleda Zia regime. Religious education was used as a tool for attracting votes of religious people and to beat the secular opposition in electoral politics. General Rahman was assassinated by a group of army officers, who were thought to be the allies of General Ershad.

The Ershad regime introduced more Islamisation of society by Islamising education system to build legitimacy to his military rule. The regime made Islamic studies compulsory up to the secondary level amid strong opposition from secular and left leaning parties (Gustavsson 1991, 19). He also unsuccessfully tried to impose Arabic script on primary schools in the name of religious script in the primary school syllabus.¹⁷ The regime patronised Madrassah education from primary to university level with government recognition. At the same time, the 1980s also saw increasing NGO and donor involvement in educational activities (Hossain, Subrahmaniam & Kabeer 2002). This perhaps, is not surprising, since it is simply the manifestation of Bangladesh's dependence on Western aid. A popular movement led by student bodies and supported by cultural and women's organizations overthrew Ershad regime by the end of 1990.

Democratic era (1991-)

The fall of Ershad regime opened an opportunity for democratic rule in Bangladesh. After the election under the non-party caretaker government, Bangladesh returned to parliamentary democracy again. Since 1991, there have been peaceful transfers of power for the successive governments. BNP and AL are the main political parties dominating Bangladesh politics since the dawn of democratic era. The leaders of the two parties inherited their political careers as widow of General Rahman and daughter of Sheikh Rahman. In fact, there is little difference in the political agenda between the two parties and their leaders. There is little practice of democracy within the political parties. The post-1990 politics of Bangladesh has been dominated by leadership styles of two leaders Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina Wazed.

Because of their rival politics, primary education has expanded on a competitive basis. Both parties are using money, *mastaan* (musclemen) and *hartaal* (strike/shut down as part of political agitation) to mobilize support and capture popular votes. Rounaq Jahan has described Bangladeshi confrontational politics rather well, "As access to state power and its patronage system is key to nurturing powerful constituencies, no party is willing to risk losing political and economic resource even for one term" (Jahan 2000, 29). As a result, establishment and nationalisation of primary school has become a handy tool for building political constituency for different regimes (Siddiqui 1996, 154).

Islam has also become a rallying issue among rival political parties in the democratic era since 1991. It is due to the fact that parties appear not having good policy alternatives for development of the country. It seems that major "liberal democratic" parties of Bangladesh have been competing against each other to prove their Islamic credentials (Hasmi 2002). Islamist parties take advantage of the growing number of Madrassa students in primary,

¹⁷ It is notable that Bengali students laid down their lives on 21st February of 1952 protesting against West Pakistani imposition of Urdu language on the whole Bengali population of East Pakistan. Recognizing the importance of mother tongue as a medium instruction in school, UNESCO has declared 21st February as the "International Mother Tongue Day".

secondary and higher educational levels. Rise of Madrassas have contributed to the rise of fundamentalism in Bangladesh in the post Cold War period. Mushrooming of uncontrolled religious schools and political patronage of religion has helped the small Islamist parties jumping from political periphery to centre of national politics. They are demanding the recognition of Madrassa certificates in equal terms with secular education at every level. It makes the task of secular and unified national educational system development in Bangladesh difficult. It also challenges the founding principles of Bangladesh as a secular and progressive state. The effects of this contradiction will have a far reaching impact on political and economic future of the country in the days to come.

The political competition between the two major parties in the democratic era has made primary education as an instrument for political constituency building. This has resulted in lack of consistency of educational policies of the successive regimes.¹⁸ An additional factor which has helped the expansion of primary education is the increased donor attention and investment in education since 1990s. Donors have been favouring public primary education and role of NGOs in education sector. Increased attention to Education for All (EFA) in Bangladesh is not aimed at promoting children's right, rather it has been used as a tool for shaping national community and fulfilling national needs of development. Western aid agencies have been playing a key role in mediating the role of NGOs in education sector.

4.5: EDUCATIONAL POLICY OF BANGLADESH

Difference in regime types since its independence has been shaping educational development in Bangladesh. Since the beginning of the democratic era since 1990s, government has been serious about implementation of EFA. As a result of different policy interventions, enrolment in public primary schools has been increased significantly. Low quality of education and low levels of survival rates in schools are a significant concern for stakeholders in Bangladesh. Education is highly centralized and there is little scope for ownership and consultation with local government bodies in existing structures. Educational funding in Bangladesh primary education at zila (district) and upazila (sub-district) level is almost completely dependent on the central funding. This is true that *decentralization* in education is more *recentralization*. There are four levels of formal education in Bangladesh.¹⁹ To look at evolution of primary education in Bangladesh, I have made the table below:

18 There have been six education Commissions formed after the independence of the country till date but most of the recommendations were abandoned by the successive governments after political changes. The education Commissions include Kudrat-i-Khuda Commission of 1972, Kazi Zafar Ahmed Commission 1977, Mazid Khan Commission 1983, Mofiz Commission 1988, Shamshul Haq Commission 1997, Moniruzzaman Mia Commission 2003.

19 In Bangladesh, Primary education extends over a five year period (grades I-V) and caters to children in the age group of 5-10. Secondary education consists of three stages: junior secondary (Grades VI-VIII), secondary (Grade IX and X) and higher secondary (Grades XI-XII) and higher education (2-4 years of bachelor degree and 1 year masters degree). Apart from secondary school certificate (SSC), no certificate is awarded upon completion of the primary (5 years) and lower secondary education (8 years). The first public examination takes place at the end of Grade X – known as SSC – must be passed by all candidates seeking to move to the two-year higher secondary level.

Table 1: Evolution of education in Bangladesh

Development Plan	Major educational priorities
The First Five Year Plan (1973-78)	Education as basic right, establishment and nationalisation of primary schools
The Two Year Plan (1979-80)	Importance on teacher training and involvement of local government in education
The Second Five Year Plan (1981-85)	Free school uniform, book and teaching aid
The Third Five Year Plan (1986-90)	Liberal promotion policy for students, target of raising school enrolment
The Fourth Five Year plan (1991-95)	Introduction of compulsory primary education, construction of satellite schools, food-for-education program
The Perspective Plan (1995-2010)	Increased allocation of budget in primary education, involvement of NGOs in education for out-of-school children

The First Five Year Plan (1973-78) acknowledged education as basic right of all the citizens. Many war-damaged schools were reconstructed and government supplied office equipment to schools and educational offices. As part of establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and compulsory education, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) issued a decree in 1973 to nationalise all existing primary schools. As a result, governments assumed responsibility of management and supervision of all primary schools at the cost of local community participation. Primary school teachers became the government employees.

The **Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report of 1974** recommended the major changes in the education system of the new nation. It emphasised that education should be related to work experience and practical application of knowledge. The report of the Commission in 1974 outlined the following objectives for primary education:

- To develop and nurture the child's moral, mental and social personality;
- To bring the child as a patriotic, responsible, inquiring and law-abiding citizen, and develop in him a love for justice, dignity, labour, proper conduct and uprightness; and
- To learn to read and write in the mother tongue, and to be able to count and calculate. To be able to acquire the fundamental knowledge and techniques needed for a citizen (GOB 1998, 6).

The Commission made recommendations for making uniform primary education compulsory up to grade VIII. Its target was to implement compulsory primary education by 1980 and extension of primary education up to class VIII by 1983 (ibid. 7). To make compulsory education available for the disadvantaged children, it suggested for the provision of non-formal education according to the needs of children on a wider scale as complementary to formal education.

The Two-Year Plan (1978-80): The significant aspect of the two year plan was reforming the 51 Primary Teachers Training Institutes (PTIs) and involvement of local government in primary education (ibid.).

In the **Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985)** Universal Primary Education in 44 upazilas (sub-districts) with the assistance of International Development Assistance (IDA) was undertaken. The plan envisaged furniture, free books, slates, teaching aids, building tube wells and constructing sanitary latrines to the schools. It also aimed at providing free school uniform for 5 million girls of the landless labourers and arranging lunch program on selective basis. It created 1834 posts of Assistant Thana Education Officer to strengthen field level supervision (ibid. 8).

The **Third Five Year Plan (1985-90)** targeted raising school enrolment from 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the children belonging to the primary school age by the year 1990 (ibid.). It also aimed to reduce rural-urban gap in educational facilities. To reduce unnecessary expenses in education, the government introduced a liberal promotion policy (for class 1 and 2) so as to stop drop outs due to repeated failure in the same class. During the Jomtien Conference, Bangladesh was in the process of designing General Education Project (GEP) to move forward to EFA goals.

Under the **Fourth Five Year Plan (1991-95)** led to passing of Compulsory Primary Education Act in 1990 in Bangladesh. Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) was created in 1992 to improve access and quality of education. PMED is responsible for policy formulation, while the responsibility of implementation rests with Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and its subordinate offices in district and thanas (sub-districts) (ADB 2003, 5).

In January 1992, the government launched the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) program in 68 out of 460 thanas in the country (GOB 1998, 9). This program has been extended nation-wide since January 1993. The Act introduced the provision of penalty for the guardians of children of school age, who fail to send their children to school. Government established 200 low cost satellite schools for grade I and II to improve access and quality of primary education. The GOB has made a new commitment that in each census village there will be at least one primary school consisting of three classrooms and three teachers.

Under Government Satellite School Program 'feeder schools' were set up within the neighbouring areas of the formal primary schools so that small out-of-school children who are unable to walk a long distance can receive early education in grades 1-2. The aim was to bring school facilities near the homes of children, especially girls, to ensure school attendance. Government also initiated Food for Education (FFE) program to cover opportunity cost of children from rural poor families.²⁰

Non-formal education for the out-of-school children is an important component of the Fourth Five Year Plan. It also kept provision that NGOs can play an important role in successful implementation of the program. The GOB also initiated programs to make schooling for girls up to grade VIII free and provided stipends in the rural schools. It planned for new recruitment of 10, 000 additional teachers (60 per cent women) for the primary schools. The percentage of female teachers in schools increased to 26.92 per cent in 1995 from 20.57 per cent in 1990 (ibid. 10).

20 The food for education program was introduced in 1993 in selected backward rural areas to compensate for the opportunity cost of poor parents for sending their children to school. Under this program, families of 40 per cent of poor students from each school in the covered areas received food grains of 15 kilograms (kg) of wheat or 12 kg of rice per month for sending one child to school, and 20 kg of wheat or 16 kg of rice for sending more than one child to school (ADB 2003, 14).

The **Perspective Plan (1995-2010)** is also the continuation of the previously adopted strategies with an emphasis on increased allocation of resources and more political commitment to primary education and mass literacy. During the period of 1997-2002, GOB has allocated 67 per cent of the educational budget to primary education, which is highest in South Asia (Haq & Haq 1998, 58).

Following the Jomtien commitment, GOB recognized the importance of non-formal education in meeting the educational needs of out-of-school children and the illiterate poor. The Government established Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) to support the NGO activities in providing non-formal education in 1994. Government-NGO collaboration in non-formal education has made rapid progress in school enrolment, particularly through the vigorous efforts of NGOs. DNFE started funding non-formal education for hard-to-reach working children in urban areas in collaboration with NGOs. It was a two year school program for 8-14 year old children which lead children to grade 3 (USAID 2002a, 3). NGOs implemented this program in 11,600 centres in urban slums of the largest cities of the six divisional headquarters.

The Government formulated National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children (1997-2002) to eradicate illiteracy from the country by the year 2006. Since 1996, donor agencies led by World Bank have been pursuing GOB and other development partners to adopt sector-wide approaches (SWAp) of development (USAID 2002b, 14). Since then, there is a strong shift towards Ministry of Education (MOE) ownership and capacity-building in educational planning and development. This has reduced the risk of anomaly and distorting effects of discrete external educational funding without a single framework. However, it has been posing challenges for the role of NGOs in educational innovation.

The **Primary Education Development Plan -PEDP (1998-2003)** aimed at improving quality, efficiency and access in the underserved areas. The project took a sector approach to support Government's agreed five-year primary education program. It worked in collaboration with the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) and through the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). PMED worked in close partnership with non-government school authorities and with NGOs providing primary education.

The **Primary Education Development Plan-PEDP II (2003-2009)** sets stronger mandate through increased donor input in primary education sub-sector. There has been increased donor coordination in education sector through PEDP II. Donor assistance is coordinated and harmonised with the macro plan for basic education of the GOB. This is a shift from project-based approach to program-based approach in education sector. Under the second phase of PEDP, GOB is planning to recruit 35,000 new teachers and 1,000 UAEO in the period 2004-2009.

Even though there have been progressive changes in educational policies after the independence of Bangladesh since 1971, they were abandoned due to change in political regimes. In this background, it is probably no surprise that Bangladesh has not been able to provide a realistic education policy after last 33 years of its independence.

4.6: POLITICS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Nepal is a landlocked country between India and China. It has a distinct culture, which is the unique blend of Hinduism and Buddhism. Nepal is the only official Hindu State in the world. It is one of the poorest countries in Asia and in the world in terms of GNP per capita income (**Annex 4.3** basic facts on Nepal). During 1846-1951, Nepal had been ruled by hereditary Rana regimes and virtually closed the country to the outside the world (Savada 1993, 3-4). In Nepal, education was the privilege of the higher castes and economically well off people for centuries. Being fearful of an educated public as a political threat, Rana regimes followed an anti-educational policy to restrict the right to education for members of higher castes and wealthier strata only.

Ranas were greatly impressed by the British education and culture and sent their youth to British schools in India, and later established a British-type school and college in Kathmandu for their own children. Education was forbidden with penalties for others (Wood 1976, 153). There was only one college in the entire kingdom of Nepal before 1951. During the century-plus rule of Ranas, apart from Durbar (palace) School in Kathmandu and few other Sanskrit and monastic schools, public schools were largely non-existent (Onta 2000). In the 1940s, several primary and secondary schools were opened in different parts of the country. When Rana rule ended in 1951, there were about 300 primary schools and 11 secondary schools in the country (ibid.).

In 1950, King Tribhuvan led a popular revolt, which culminated in bringing down the Rana regime. In the early 1950s, the average literacy rate in Nepal was 5 per cent. Literacy among males was 10 per cent and among females less than 1 per cent (Savada 1993, 93-94). After the political change of 1951, new opportunity arose for the successive governments to fill the educational gap created by Ranas. There was a strong zeal for making at least primary education available for all during 1950s. As a manifestation of commitment of the regime, there was expansion of primary schools with bare minimum facilities. School management was the primary responsibility of the teachers and community members.

Role of State was limited to provision of nominal financial support to the community initiatives. Educated youths offered themselves to teach voluntarily or with nominal pay as a result of their commitment for social change. To bring education under a common structure, a Board of Education and National Educational Planning Commission (NEPC) was established in 1952 and 1953 respectively (Onta 2000). There were four different types of school during this period: English style schools, Sanskrit 'pathsalas', Gandhi-inspired basic schools and monastic institutions like Gompas (ibid.).

During the 1960s, elites became dissatisfied with an education system they believed was not geared to the specific needs of the country and instead a way of promoting status quo (Brown & Wiseman 1998, 6). The New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971 was formed based on the idea of education for all primary school age children for at least three years. In 1975 primary education was made free, and the HMG Nepal became responsible for providing school facilities, teachers and educational materials (Savada 1993, 94). The government paid 100 per cent of the salaries of primary teachers and 75 per cent and 50 per cent of the salaries of the lower secondary and secondary teachers (Bista 1991 cited in Brown & Wiseman 1991, 6). The local community had to build and maintain the physical facilities of the school (a sharing of cost which remains to this day) (ibid.).

HMG Nepal adopted a more liberalization policy of education in the 1980s. As a result, a rapid proliferation of private primary schools and high schools has taken place since then. In 1990, the panchayat system was overthrown by a largely non-violent people's movement and a democratic constitutional monarchy was established. Under the Constitution, there are two Houses of Parliament – an upper house consisting of sixty members and House of Representatives with two hundred and five members. In May 1991, the first democratic political election was held after 1958. The three main political parties emerged after the elections are Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal (CPN)-Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) and Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) (Dahal, Acharya & Dahal 1999, 148).

The democratic political culture of Nepal is weak due to the short period of democratic experience. The mainstream political parties have monopoly of power and wealth. Endemic corruption, criminalization of politics and politicisation of crimes etc have reduced national and local elections into political activities of little value (ibid. 171). Frequent 'non-confidence' motions in parliament have caused unstable government in Nepal. After the incidence of killing of King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya in June 2001, King Birendra's brother Gyanendra ascended the throne. In 2002 King Gayendra dismissed an elected government and assumed executive powers by himself. Since then, Nepal is in political turmoil.

Due to social discrimination of the poor and lower castes and high unemployment and inflation rates, leftists have emerged as the principal challenger to the constitutional monarchy and parliamentary path of governance. Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) has waged a bloody armed struggle to overthrow constitutional monarchy and aiming at establishment of Maoist State in Nepal since 1996. It has caused loss of lives and has had a negative affect on tourism and the national economy. In the beginning, the insurgency began in the mid-Western Nepal, one of the most inaccessible and disadvantaged regions of the country. Maoists have been gaining ground in all over Nepal in recent times. Since the beginning of the insurgency, the HMG Nepal has been considering it as a law and order problem and tried to destroy it with use of police operations. It seems that this approach has not been producing expected result. Maoists have not been carrying out their political and military activities only in Western Nepal but also they have reached to other parts of Nepal including Kathmandu. A considerable part of the guerrillas are composed of lower caste people and untouchable youths.

Education has become a central domain and battleground of the Maoists "People's War". Maoists have been demanding a complete reform of the government school system and the closure of private schools accusing them of charging exorbitant fees. They have taken direct action against private schools forcing them to close down. Strike, threats, disturbances have been preventing hundreds of schools from running smoothly. During the period of 1996-2000, at least 700 private schools have been shut down in various districts of Nepal.²¹ Many students have either migrated from Maoist-prone areas to safer places in towns or have been missing altogether. According to the same source, the conflict is estimated to have left nearly 100,000 students without access to education in Nepal's rural areas.

The government formed a high level Educational Working Committee to look into the educational system of the country. This may have some positive implications for the educational policy shift in favour of the marginalised groups in future. At the same time,

21 The Kathmandu Post, 14 November, 2000, "Maoist violence leaves over 700 schools closed" (In <http://www.nepalnews.com.np/contents/englishdaily/ktmpost/2002/nov/nov14/index1.html>) as of 10 May, 2004.

NGO activities may be affected as Maoists perceive NGOs as the agents of the capitalist and imperialist powers. NGOs involved in children's rights and education repeatedly asked Maoists as well as HMG Nepal to avoid involving students in the conflict. Maoist insurgency will have a decisive role influencing politics and education in the future.

4.7: Educational policy of Nepal

The education system in Nepal has been largely centralized and controlled by a central department in Kathmandu. A highly centralized and inefficient bureaucracy impedes the educational development in the country. From being a symbol of 'privilege' and 'status' for long time, education has also been opening up for the lower segments of the society since 1990, the dawn of democratic era. HMG Nepal has three paths of education: formal, non-formal and vocational education. Formal education, based on credentials is most widespread choice in the hierarchic society of Nepal. Formal education is divided into four levels in Nepal.²² Education system development in Nepal since 1990 is less of autonomous and more connected with project funding from bilateral and multilateral donor agencies as well as lending agencies such as the World Bank. I have drawn the table below to look at the educational evolution in Nepal.

Table 2: Evolution of education in Nepal

Periods	Major educational priorities
Rana period	Education restricted only to royals
King Tribhuvan period (1950-1960)	Education as a tool for democracy and social justice, universal literacy as objective
Party less panchayat regime (1960-1990)	Universal education abandonment and educational recentralization
Democratic era (1990-)	Education for All target by 2015, expansion of school, involvement of NGOs in education for disadvantaged children, international support for SWAps in education

The first five year plan (1956-61) was drafted in 1956. The purpose of primary education was considered as an instrument of nation-building, building social opportunities and preparing loyal citizens to the crown. A single and centrally controlled education era started. Democratic reform in Nepal has significant contribution to the educational opportunities for Nepalese children. Until about 1960, the curriculum was confined rigidly to Sanskrit studies; but later, new subjects were incorporated. The subjects taught at the primary level are Nepali, arithmetic, social studies and physical education in the first three grades, and the additional subjects of Sanskrit, English, Science and Health, and moral education in the latter two grades (cf. Conard 1994, 307). By late 1960s, there was increased centralisation of curriculum and textbook to build a unified national education system. Due to centralization of education,

²² In Nepal, formal primary education lasts five years (Grades I-V) and caters to children aged 6-11. Secondary education comprises three cycles: lower secondary (Grade VI-VIII), secondary (Grade IX-X) and higher secondary (Grade XI-XII). After completion of the higher secondary education, students can go for further education in universities.

educational needs of diverse communities could not be served. Save the Children used a chronology of educational development in Nepal, which I find interesting and use it below (see, Save the Children undated).

1960-1970: The speed and vigour with which the elected government worked was somewhat slowed down by the political change that took place in December 1960 when King Mahendra dissolved parliament, banned political parties, and imposed his direct rule called the “Partyless Panchayat” system. The policy of the previous universal literacy was abandoned and a lower target was established (ibid.). No new educational policy was enunciated for some time, so community participation in education continued at the local level. However, at the centre a new educational system and education plan was prepared to suit the changed political context. The educational administration and political power, was centralised so that the new educational policy could be implemented firmly.

1970-1980: The government announced a National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971 (ibid.). Under the system, all schools running in partnership with the community were taken over by the government. The main objective was to develop mid-level managers and skilled manpower for the economic development of the country. His Majesty Government (HMG) Nepal nationalised all primary schools in 1973 (National Planning Commission 1995, 38). Primary school enrolment rose dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s.²³ There was a gradual but nominal increase in the percentage of literacy, but the relevance and quality of basic education remained low. The NESP proved to be a failure in terms of delivery, and the government had little choice but to allow private schools again, in contradiction to the earlier policy of nationalising all schools and their management.

Democratic era (1990-): The political change of 1990, which restored a multi-party democracy, has brought a new educational optimism in Nepal. The signing of the CRC and the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) guided an expanded vision of primary education in the Kingdom. In 1992, the government constituted the National Education Commission to make policy recommendations for education based on democratic values. Free primary education has been considered as fundamental right to every child.

Due to lack of government resources and capability, successive governments have not been able to deliver goods and services to benefit all sections of society. Since government schools lack efficiency, private schools have been established on a massive scale, not only in towns but also in remote villages. From a very low base of little over 400 schools in 1951 (203 primary, 200 middle, and 11 secondary), in 1993, there were 19,498 primary schools all over the country (ILO/IPEC 1995, 34). Similarly, the number of children enrolled in schools (both primary and secondary) has risen from 8,505 to almost 3.9 million in 1993 (ibid.).

However, in the absence of a clear State policy, these private schools choose their own management system and set their own policies for student fees and teacher salaries. Their costs seem to be decided without a clear basis and appear to be motivated by profit only. Education is focused on examination results – as the private schools boast of their School Leaving Certificate (SLC) pass rates. They get children through exams, otherwise parents would not pay. However, this raises the question of whether that is the sole end of education.

23 In 1951, there were little over 400 (203 primary) schools with 10650 students and in 1993 the number increased to 26,037 (19,498 primary) schools with 3.9 million students (National Planning Commission 1995, 38).

In the **Seventh Plan (1985-1990)**, a separate survey was carried out to find factors behind school drop out rates. It emphasised the activity involving NGOs in the children's education programmes (ibid. 41). This has increased the number of NGOs in educational provisions for the underprivileged children in Nepal.

The **8th five year plan (1992-97)** has given a high priority to basic and primary education. The plan aimed at providing primary education for 90 per cent school going age (6-11) children. The Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) was launched in 1992 to increase the capacity of Ministry of Education (MOE) and local government bodies of Nepal. The project was launched in 40 districts to improve the access, quality and management efficiency of primary education in Nepal. BPEP is a heavily donor driven education project with some funding from HMG Nepal (Brown & Wiseman 1998, 40). It focussed on construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of schools, curriculum reform, teacher training and non-formal education. It also introduced 'cluster system', under which twenty to thirty satellite schools were established under mother school in inaccessible areas. This was expanded in 75 districts of the country. This has added an estimated \$120-130 million, three times much as the first phase of BPEP (ibid.).

During the mid-term review of BPEP I, donors focussed more on quality of education in the country and concentrating on education for the socially disadvantaged children who are not in school. Special need provision included alternative schooling with flexible school hours and emphasis on non-formal education. Emphasis was given on gender equality and inclusion of disabled children in school.

The long term objectives of **Ninth Plan (1997-2002)** have been to provide equal opportunity of education for all sections of society. In recent years, public schools account for 89 per cent of all primary schools in 2000, enrolled 93 per cent of all primary students, and employ 85 per cent of all primary school teachers (ADB 2003, 7). The rest are private schools, mostly for-profit type and some are non-profit. Department of Education (DOE) under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) is in charge of managing primary education through 5 regional educational directorates and 75 district education offices (ibid. 5).

Children who can not attend primary school at the age of 6 can enter into grade 2 and 3 after completion of a 9-month course of non-formal primary education programme popularly known as out-of-school program (OSP). The program was introduced by HMG Nepal in co-operation with United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1984. The project was developed particularly for the young girls of Far Western Region and later it is being expanded for implementation nationally. The literacy classes under the programme takes place two hours a day and the duration of the project is nine months. Apart from government, many international agencies started taking keen interest in expanding these activities through local NGOs. This has given Nepali NGOs a mandate to work in education for the underprivileged children in general and child labourers in particular. On the other side of the spectrum, education remains as the central political concern and a battleground for the Maoist "People's War". They demand for free quality primary education for all. Role of NGOs in education sector and Maoist pressure for educational reform have put education of Nepal at crossroads.

Chapter 5 deals with the contexts of child labourers face in relation to family poverty, cultural practices and school factors.

CHAPTER 5: THREE CONTEXTS OF CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION

In this chapter three interlocked and broader problems faced by child labourers are discussed in order to explain their educational problems and prospects. They are manifested in 1) children's household background, 2) children's social and cultural context and 3) school environment. General discussion on the issues helps me to explain the educational problems and possibilities of education for child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. The empirical work has also given ideas and perspectives to explain the same issues. Child workers' context can be pictured with the figure below.

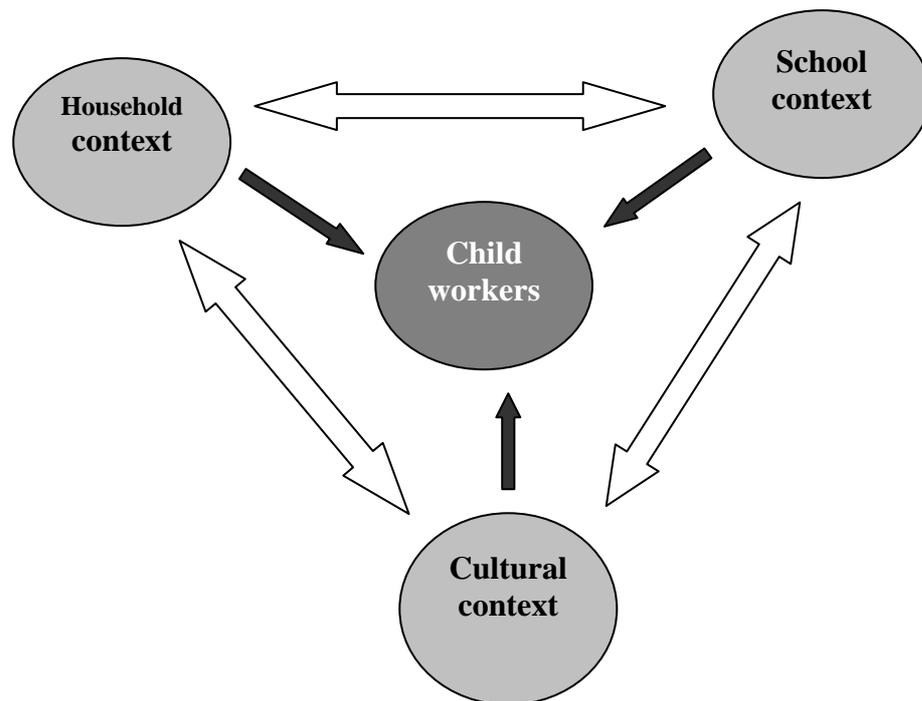


Figure2: Three major determinants of education for child labourers in developing countries

5.1: CHILDREN'S HOUSEHOLD BACKGROUND

Poverty and child labour

Poverty is the main cause of child labour as mentioned in the literature on child labour (for detailed discussion see, Bonnet 1993; Grootaert & Kanbur 1995; Anker & Melkas 1996; Fallon & Tzannatos 1998; Groves & Johnson 2000, 163; Ray 2000, 3517; Tungesvik 2000; Nambissan 2003, 112). Empirical evidences suggest that most of the child labourers come from landless and marginal families in Bangladesh and Nepal. Children contribute to household income in the context of poverty and hardships. As a result of family poverty, many parents prefer sending children to work than school.²⁴

²⁴ In Nepal, for example, 40 per cent of the population lives under absolute poverty (Brown & Wiseman 1998, 19). This severely limits a family's capacity to meet its basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, health care, safe drinking water and education. People spending 70 per cent or more of total expenditure on food in rural and

Even those children from poor households are enrolled in schools also do seasonal work and carry out household responsibilities. The periodic absence from school due to participation in seasonal work is not compensated by the teachers or by their family members. This results in their poor performance in school, grade repetition and finally drop out from school (Nambissan 2003, 122; Subrahmanian 2003, 226). A study in Nepal found that, 39 per cent of children dropped out from primary school because their families could no longer afford to send them to school. Another reason given by 23 per cent families was that the children were needed for household chores (cf. Brown & Wiseman 1998, 26).

Land is considered as the primary source of social security in South Asian countries including Bangladesh and Nepal. There is a positive correlation between landownership and relative social rank (see, Seddon 1988, 118; Irfan 1989; Ahmed et al. 1991, 64; Bertocci cited in Wood 1994, 47). Division and scarcity of land is increasing landlessness among the poor in Bangladesh (Jansen 1983, 2-3). Near-landlessness and landlessness force poor households to take loans from money-lenders on harsh conditions.²⁵ In an agricultural country such as Nepal where agricultural production employs 80 per cent of the population, 30 per cent of the land is arable (Falkus et al. 1997, 65). This put enormous pressure on the rural poor to send their children to urban areas for work.

A study in Nepal found out that three quarters of the landless families do not have a child in school, whereas one or more children from over half the land-owning families attend school (Baidya 1981 cited in Baker 1998, 86). Many children from poor households do not get proper food on a daily basis, let alone educational opportunities. In Nepal, 5 per cent of the children with low food intake went to school comparing to 27 per cent for children with normal food intake (Alasutari 2002, 85). The Education Watch 2001 Survey found that 65 per cent school-aged children from poor households (as indicated by food security status) in Bangladesh were enrolled in primary school, compared with 89 per cent of children from the wealthiest households (Tietjen 2003, 7). Even those children from landless families enrol, attend school less frequently, perform badly and drop out of school.

Timo Kivimäki (1996) tries to find out the root causes of exploitation in global context. Kivimäki sees exploitation as a result of differential initial opportunities that distort the bargaining position and terms of exchange for marginalized groups. According to his argument, an uneducated Finn is not exploited in the Finnish labour market even though his/her income is less due to the fact that he/she cannot do things that require education, because he/she has had equal opportunity in education as other Finns in the Finnish welfare state. In light of his argument, it can be said that a child labourers in Bangladesh or Nepal is exploited in labour market because he had limited or no educational opportunities.

The productivity gap and uneven development between urban and rural areas attract the influx of rural poor in urban areas. In Bangladesh, the poor account for about 50 per cent of its total population, and 37 per cent are counted among the “hardcore” poor, who live in the direst circumstances (Tiejjen 2003, 8). In Nepal, 23 per cent of the urban and 44 per cent of the rural people live below poverty line (National Planning Commission 1998, 203). In countries such

urban Nepal is 68 per cent and 51 per cent respectively (World Bank/UNDP 1990 cited in Brown & Wiseman 1998, 20).

²⁵ For example, debt service of such loans in Nepal is often equal to their entire rice production of a year (National Planning Commission/UNICEF 1992, XI).

as Bangladesh and Nepal, there is problem of governance and decentralisation. In Bangladesh, for example, traditional social structure is characterized by patron-client relations where big peasants control politics at the local level (Westergaard 1993, 13). Those who control power on the state level align themselves with the local power structure and preserve the *status quo* in both state and local level.

This has negative impact on good governance. As a result, the government's development budget is biased. It favours urban and accessible areas at the cost of rural and inaccessible areas (Rahman 2002, 17). "Karnali which is the biggest zone in Nepal out of 14 zones, receives just 0.01 per cent of government budget of Nepal" (interview of Sanu Lal Maharjan, Senior Manager, Redd Barna Nepal, Diary 3, p. 61, 24.9.1999). This manifests regional bias in national development in developing countries. In the name of development, existing inequalities and inadequacies are perpetuated serving the interests of the already advantaged (Hardiman & Midgley 1982; MacPherson & Midgley 1987).

Urban migration

In the context of seasonal unemployment, lack of food security, debt and limited income opportunities force the rural poor to move to urban areas for employment opportunities. From this point, it is said that urban poverty is in fact "*urbanisation of rural poverty*" (Hjerpe & Berghäll 1996, 13). Urbanisation is growing at faster rate than population growth rate in Bangladesh and Nepal. It has been causing huge problem in urban areas as cities are unprepared to deal with them. This is not isolated from the global trend of increasing urbanisation in developing countries. In 1880, only 2 per cent of world's population was urbanised; by 2008, the figure will increase to more than half of the world's population (Economist 2003a). In 2001, a billion people were living in slums - about a third of the world's city dwellers (ibid.). On the present trend, 2 billion people could be living in slums by 2030 (ibid.). Child labourers are the part of the growing army of migrants from rural to urban areas and from agricultural to non-agricultural sector.²⁶

Regional gaps in development are a major problem for development in Nepal. Geographic region-wise, Hills, Terai and Mountain areas have 41, 42 and 56 per cent of the population is below poverty line (National Planning Commission 1998, 203). Whereas Kathmandu has an adult literacy rate of 69.64 per cent, Kalikot district in the Mid-Western Nepal has an adult literacy rate of 19.41 (Brown & Wiseman 1998, Appendix II). **Annex 5.2** shows the difference of adult literacy in different regions of Nepal. There is also a wider gender gap in education in inaccessible areas of Nepal. In the Far Western region of Nepal, women have nearly ten times the risk of being illiterate compared with men (National Planning Commission 1996, 14). Ethnicity/caste also plays a role in educational enrolment in Nepal. The highest enrolment of boys and girls are reported from Brahmin, Newar and Chhetri people in the country (ibid. 17).

Family pattern and size

Size of the household is important in determining children's labour activities and educational opportunities. High fertility rate is positively correlated to the incidence of child labour. It is

²⁶ There is a trend of general increase of children's involvement from agricultural to non-agricultural sector in developing countries (**annex 5.1** shows the agricultural and non-agricultural distribution of child labour in Nepal).

no wonder that large families often also have serious child labour problem as children make good economic sense in the context of economic hardships. In the theoretical debate on population control in India in 1970s, Mahmud Mamdani (1972) argued that birth control would remain a myth since large families made good economic sense in agricultural societies. According to Mamdani, "...people are not poor because they have large families. Quite the contrary, they have large families because they are poor" (Mamdani 1972, 14).

Other scholars have also shown the economic advantages of poor parents having many children in South Asian countries (for detailed discussion see, Jansen 1983, 299; Hartmann & Boyce 1983, 112; Chaudhury 1989, 169; Irfan 1989; Dasgupta 1993, 356; Lloyd 1994; Säävälä 1997, 178). In the context of poverty and basic survival needs, children are considered as preferred commodity by their parents compared with other goods because of their economic utility. High fertility increases the chances that children from large families have to do work to support household income.²⁷ This creates a cycle of poverty and illiteracy which has intergenerational impact.

Education of parents establishes a clear divide between children whose educational chances are poor and children whose educational chances are good (Anker & Knowles 1982, 31; Irfan 1989, 99; Naik 1994a, 48; Patrinos & Psacharopoulos 1995; Ray 2000, 3519; Sengupta & Guha 2002, 1621). Most of the interviewed children under NGO programs told me that their parents had little or no education at all. Kaushik Basu argues that "People who had worked as children are more likely to send their own kids to work than people of equal income who had not worked as children" (Basu 2003b, 72). In the context of poverty and hopelessness child labour becomes a conscious choice on part of the parents (mainly father).

Child labour: a response to emergency

Children are engaged in child labour activities for economic security, and often in response to insecurity and uncertainty in household economic survival (Rahman, Khanam & Absar 1999, 988; Banerji 2000, 797). The insecurity and uncertainty tended to be limited to children's own households rather than widely experienced by the community. They range from illness or death of the main family 'bread winner' (mainly adult male), family breakdown, river erosion, landlessness, flood, harvest failure, family/village conflict etc. Facing reduced household income and increased costs, many parents deploy their children to work as a common strategy of economic adjustment.²⁸ Children's work is the manifestation of a coherent adaptation strategy of households in limited income opportunities.

Globalisation, rapid urbanisation and employment of women, formal education, exposure to outside world through media and national and international migration contribute to weaken kinship ties and social capital in developing countries.²⁹ Weakening of traditional social norms has negative impact on traditional joint family as a unit of care, emotions and material support. The weakening of mutual support and obligation between different generations has

27 According to "From Distress to Delight", 25 Years of UCEP in Bangladesh, about 46.82 per cent and 24.84 percent of UCEP students have family size of 5-6 and 7-8 members respectively.

28 In Bangladesh, the period of rainy season (June-August) and before the arrival of new crop (September-December), the food stock of the poor rural households are exhausted. Expenditure on food remains the sole priority during the periods. Thus, during these months, many poor children are unable to attend school due to participation in income generating activities (Boyle et al. 2002, 85-87).

29 Generally speaking, social capital refers to the benefits of membership within a social network. The accessibility of additional resources through social connections enables poor to meet everyday needs (Narayan et al. 2000, 55).

far-reaching negative implications on the overall wellbeing of children in countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal. As a result, what were once considered as unacceptable becomes socially accepted.

Existence of government in rural areas of many developing countries is felt through the presence of law enforcing agencies and collection of tax. Government machineries are not efficient enough to carry out the administrative tasks in a professional manner. Developmental role of State is limited in such countries. The taxation system is flawed and a big source of corruption for the officials and staffs. The tax base is insufficient and it is the poor who mainly pay tax in developing countries (MacPherson & Midgley 1987, 172). This limits the capability of State to finance education from internal resources.

Problems with poverty thesis

Even though poverty is one of the main factors in children's participation in child labour activities, it alone cannot explain the incidence of child labour in developing countries. Cultural factors such as social hierarchy and untouchability and gender issues also negatively effect children's educational opportunities. Lack of access to school positively effects children's labour market participation. If poverty argument in child labour is accepted, child labour remains as an unquestioned phenomenon. From my experience of the fieldwork, it can be said that poverty cannot totally block children's access to education. All the child labourers in the selected NGO projects in Bangladesh and Nepal combine their work and education despite their family poverty. This phenomenon is often ignored and child labourers with access to school are often equated with child labourers without access to school.

Scholars argue that relationship between poverty and child labour is weak and insignificant (see, Weiner 1991, 4; Sharma, Kumar & Padmadeo 1993, 21; Patkar 1995, 401; Ahmed 1999, 1821; Banerji 2000, 797; Strandell 2001, 91). This is based on the argument that countries with similar level of poverty may have relatively high or low levels of non-school going children and child labourers. Indian State of Kerala, for instance, with a drop out rate less than 1 per cent, has also the lowest incidence of child labour despite its relatively low level of income (ILO/UNICEF 1997). It can be said that the underlying causes of child labour is not poverty itself, rather, unequal distribution of resources within the country, society and households which is supported by social and cultural norms and aggravated by less relevant and low quality of education.

5.2: CHILDREN'S SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Children's social and cultural contexts play an important role in their participation in work and educational opportunities. Conception of age and maturity has far reaching impact on the overall well-being of children in different societies. They vary in their significance and meaning both in different times and cultures (see, Ariès 1962; La Fontaine 1978, 1986a, 1986b, Jenks 1982). Chris Jenks (1996, 69) argues, "Childhood appears in different forms in different cultures in relation to structural variables such as mortality and life expectancy, organizations of family life and structure, kinship patterns, and different ideologies of care and philosophies of need and dependency".

Religion, myths and traditions define childhood and generational role in Bangladesh and Nepal which differ significantly from that of European societies. Children are never accorded with an identity of their own; they remain as an object of their parents' wishes and family

needs in Bangladesh and Nepal. The notion of “citizenship right” (Marshall 1992, 18) and individualisation of children give European children a sense of equality with other members of their society. Children are considered as competent agents and informants on their lives, relevance and experience in the Western countries (see Bardy 1987, 1994a, 1994b; James & Prout 1990; James, Jenks & Prout 1998, 32; Qvortrup 1990, 1994; Alanen 1990, 1992 & 1994). This development is quite a recent phenomenon which is the culmination of evolution brought by industrial revolution in Europe.

Who and what is a child?

The word “child” has different connotations in different societies. Under the Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC) principle article 1, a ‘child’ is defined as “every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to child”. In relations to light child labour, ILO’s Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146) of 1973, defines a ‘child’ as a person below the general age limit of 15 years or in special circumstances 14 years (Fyfe 1993).

Because of cultural and economic conditions, Western conception of childhood may create confusion in non-Western societies. *Shishu*, the Bengali word of child has quite similar meaning that found in broader South Asian folk consciousness, which necessarily means *toddlers* (different life stages in Bangladesh defined by Aziz and Maloney is in **annex 5.3**). Children who have lost their innocence, regardless of their age, are no longer considered as *shishu* by the *samaj* (moral society). Type of work done by boys and girls determine if they are spoiled or not. The young girls who are prostitutes are considered as *noshto meye* (spoiled girls) (ibid. 65).

Distinguishing childhood from adulthood is an arbitrary process across cultures (see, van Gennep 1960, 71; La Fontaine 1986b, 14). Generally, children get the status of adulthood in puberty across South Asian cultures. Muslim boys in Bangladesh get *passage to adulthood* through circumcision, during the age of 5 to 12 years. This makes categorisation of childhood and adulthood much difficult. There is no corresponding rite of passage into adulthood for girls (except ritual of menstruation) and marriage (Kotalovà 1993, 116). Even though State law does not allow girls to be married off before 18, different communities practice early marriage of girls across South Asian cultures. In certain disadvantaged communities and low income groups, girls can be given to marriage starting from the age 8 years.

Caste plays a major role in marking transition from childhood to adulthood and subsequent allocation of roles among the followers of Hinduism in Nepal and Bangladesh. Upper caste Hindu boys get their caste status through their initiation approximately at the age of eight years. In Nepal, Bahun, Chetri and Newari boys get the sacred thread in their life-cycle ritual of transition from childhood to adulthood (Baker 1998). Through initiation, they become entitled to upper caste religious rituals and education. For the lower caste Hindu boys, there is no ritual of separation between children and adults. The status of children differs significantly due to the differences in their status of parents, spatial location (rural and urban) and their religious and cultural beliefs etc.

Bangladeshi and Nepali childhoods

The major difference between European and South Asian childhoods is that whereas European children have their own identity as a social group, children of Bangladesh and

Nepal are hardly considered as a social group or actors in their own right. Family and caste are the parameters of South Asian childhoods (for detailed discussion on South Asian childhoods see, Kakar 1979, 1981). European children enjoy “public childhood” which is the culmination of a process began during the industrial revolution in Europe. Bangladeshi and Nepali childhoods can be considered as “family childhood” and are based on local traditions for centuries. Autonomy and agency of children are considered as outrageous, spoiling for the child and a source of “threat” to the authority and control of father or other adult figures (Bista 1991, 70; Blanchet 1996, 68). There is a general sense of ‘ownership’ of children by their parents. If parents use their authority to control children which contravene children’s rights, the State seldom can interfere in the family matters.

The cultural respect for seniority gives the adults authority over children. Parents may demand labour from their wards and employers can take advantages of the labour of children who are considered as innocent, docile and less troublesome. A study in Nepal found that 71.67 per cent of child labourers are engaged in work because of their parent’s pressure (Child Protection Centre 1997, 15). The same study revealed that 66 per cent of parents controlled the income of their children (ibid. 13). Parents have tendency to control their sons and daughters in rural and disadvantaged communities. As a result of parent’s authoritarianism, there are cases of children run away from parental control in Nepal and Bangladesh. Children from disadvantaged communities may enjoy more freedom comparing to middle class children by virtue of their economic contribution to their families. Work gives children the opportunity to acquire every-day life skills and a sense of control over their lives (Alaraudanjoki 2003; Burra 2003, 82). It is possible because their parents are poor, weak or absent and work give them status to act more independently than other children.

Childhood identity is superseded by their parent’s economic and social position in Bangladeshi and Nepalese cultures. Referring to the behaviour towards child domestic servants by their employers in Bangladesh, Blanchet (1996, 10) provides a powerful and revealing contrast between “servant child” and “master child” who live under the same roof with different childhood identities. The “servant child” does not have opportunity to develop talents and potentials as a person and the “master child” has the opportunity to enter in higher social status identified with school attendance. Some of the middle class people usually do not do humane behaviour with their domestic servants; in exceptional cases, the servants are locked up at home when the employers go outside. For very trivial matters, they torture their domestic servants. According to a crime reporter of a national newspaper of Bangladesh, common people cannot go to police to pursue a case without paying bribe of at least Bangladesh Taka (BDT) 500 (approximately \$8) (Diary 1, p. 72, 15.7.1999). This forces domestic servants and their parents not to go for legal action against the perpetrators.

During my fieldwork in Bangladesh, I met three female rape victims aged between 10-13 years, victimized by adult rapist. As a social norm to protect the honour of the girl’s family, parents of a girl wanted the rapist to marry their daughter(s). Sometimes, marriage takes place voluntarily or by pressure of the rapist on girl’s family. Even though there are strong anti-rape laws in place in Bangladesh, social norms protect the perpetrators. Females also internalize the patriarchal social values and reproduce them. According to Mominul Islam Suruz, an Investigative Journalist of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA), “The brothel town of Narayanganj had a brothel population of 6,000; of them 70 per cent were bonded sex workers. About 70 per cent of the girls in the brothel dreamed to reach the position of *Sardarni*, the owner of sex workers, who regularly abuse them” (Diary 1, p.70, 15.7.1999).

There is a "romantic view" across South Asian cultures that families are cohesive and sharing unit of solidarity. But it hides the biases against children, particularly girls as the power of control remains on the hands of adults, particularly males. Household responsibility, resource allocation and decision-making often fail to take intra-household inequalities in consideration. In certain communities and income groups, children's work and salary are controlled by father. A study in Nepal found that the majority of child labourers were brought to work by their own parents.³⁰ In some cases in Bangladesh and Nepal, girls were sold for prostitution and other hazardous work by their own parents and relatives. This raises the question, "*Do parents always represent the best interest of their children?*" In practice, choice in a household is exercised selectively which is the reflection of power than democratic consensus (Kabeer 1994, 138).

The historical, cultural and political factors that mould childhoods in Bangladesh and Nepal are very different from that of Europe. Even though the governments of the two countries have accepted the principles of individual rights of children, the norms are not rooted in hierarchic and collectivist popular culture. This has created a gulf between the official policies and social response to child labour. At societal level, the CRC principles are considered as unacceptable intrusion of individualistic Western values in sacred domain of family. Individualism is considered as *unsocial* and *unacceptable* social norms in rural societies whereas the CRC professes the principles of *individual identity* and *autonomy* for children. This creates a conflict of value between State and society.

Geert Hofstede (1997) discusses on value systems and cultural differences between individualist and collectivist societies. He argues that cultural values are rooted in the mental software of a large part of the population. It is not so easy to replicate the value system of one country to another. Referring to corporal punishment at school in hierarchic societies, he rightly pointed out that in those cultures it is considered as good for development of child's character. In comparatively egalitarian societies, the same can be classified as child abuse and may be a reason for parents to complain to police (ibid. 35). In collective societies, people run their day to day life as part of the community. It is more important to become a member of a community than being a citizen of the State in collectivist societies. In the trade off between State policy and social morality, the latter is more enduring and compelling on people than the first. Referring to the Bangladesh situation, Blanchet argues, "Whatever new law is enacted, the spirit of application corresponds more with social norms" (Blanchet 1996, 27). This has negative implications for children's right to education.

Prostitution is considered as an act of sin and shame in the mainstream communities in Bangladesh and Nepal. The community isolates people who socially interact with prostitutes. Children of the prostitutes are not given a chance to study in the so-called "normal" schools. The children from *dalit*³¹ communities in Nepal usually face discrimination in school due to the dominant perception of stigma associated with being a dalit. The HMG Nepal abolished age old untouchability by the New National Code in 1963, still the practice continues at the societal level (Dahal, Acharya & Dahal 1999, 208). Childhoods on class, caste, ethnicity and

30 A study in Nepal found that 83 per cent boys and 81 per cent girls were put to work by their father. In case of school enrolment, father decided for 71 per cent boys and mother decided for 71 per cent of girls. Children took their own decision to work only 0.1 per cent cases. Those who enrolled in school, children took their own decision in 22 per cent cases (National Planning Commission 1996, 16).

31 The Hindus who are outside the four castes (Bahun, chetri, basiyas and sudras) are considered as outcastes and they may face humiliation by the higher caste people.

gender prevail over the secular and Western notions of childhood in Bangladesh and Nepal. This has profound negative effects on their education and well-being.

Gender and 'girl child' discourse

Gender plays a central role in determining access to education and the labour market in the both countries of my fieldwork. There is a strong gender hierarchy and bias against girls in health, nutrition, education and many other aspects of life across dominant South Asian cultures. They are guided by patriarchal cultural values and often, poor economic realities. Women's lack of access and control over productive resources impede their freedom of choice within and outside the family. Patriarchal structures (Cain 1985) such as the sexual division of labour, labour market discrimination, inheritance rules, religious norms of behaviour and rules of marriage and family formation facilitate the maintenance and reproduction of gender discrimination against females. As a result, women belong to the most poor and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh.³²

Religious and cultural values support dependent role models for girls and women across South Asian cultures. Indian epics such as Mahabharata³³ and Ramayana³⁴ created strict roles for females as daughter, wife and mother compromising their individual identity. As a result of teachings from religious texts, society expects girls to undertake the defined roles. Bangladeshi culture values women who actively take part in household work and child birth (Uusikylä 1998, 53; 2000, 72). Muslim notion of *izzat* (purity/honour) and *purdah* (seclusion) system thwarts girls' from education, skill-training and personality development mainly among the lower echelon of society.

Because of cultural norms, girls are engaged in family work and are married off early to protect their family honour and to protect family from excessive dowry demands by the bridegrooms. Dowry problems are more prevalent in Nepal than Bangladesh because of it is predominantly a Hindu society. The work of children and particularly, female children is undervalued and its importance is minimized because of their low visibility and their perceived non-economic value (see, Kakar 1979, 8, 1981, 199; Patkar 1995, 405; Nieuwenhuys 1996, 245; Burra 2003, 76; UNICEF 2003, 32). Girls usually work more than boys; receive less resource allocation in their education and personality development in Bangladesh and Nepal. They are considered as care-givers and free workers in household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, child rearing, care of the elderly, collecting water and firewood in rural areas. Child labour practice is gender-biased; for every 100 economically active boys (10-14 years), 143 girls are economically active in Nepal (Thakurathi et al. cited in Suwal, KC & Adhikari 1997, 20).

32 For example, In Bangladesh, some 40 per cent of female headed households belong to the category of hardcore poor, while for male headed households this figure is significantly lower, some 10-15 per cent (Cederroth 1997, 9).

33 According to Mahabharata, duty of father is to give girls in marriage before menstruation, "King Asvapati realizes that his daughter has come of age and must be married, following the law texts which say that if girl sees her menses in her father's house unmarried, the father incurs a sin equal to murder of a Brahmin, and the girl becomes defamed as if she was a woman of low birth" (cf. Parpola 1998, 176).

34 The most honoured and glorious role model for females in Hinduism is that of Sita, the heroine of the *Ramayana*, who left a life of luxury in the royal palace to accompany her husband Rama in his forest exile. She followed him like an inseparable shadow, never questioned his decisions, just abided by him. She got her fulfillment by being the wife of Rama. She underwent a fire test to prove her virtue and later when she was unjustly abandoned by Rama, she endured her fate without once protesting (cf. Nilsson 1992, 103).

In general, South Asia has a “son preference” compared with other regions of the world. Sons are seen as symbol of continuation of lineage and a source of security and hope for aging parents. Religious and cultural values put the females in a disadvantaged position. The advancement of science and technology in the 21st century has not reached every community in South Asian countries. The region has a higher masculine sex ratio at birth, excess *female mortality* throughout the life course, and under-numeration of females.³⁵ In India, for example, the use of modern ultrasound technology since the 1980s has caused *mass foeticide* of girls (Sudha & Rajan 2003, 4361). It is surprising that women of Tibeto-Nepalese communities and lower castes in Nepal enjoy more autonomy than higher caste women.

The lack of educational opportunities deprives girls from knowledge, skills, and capacities and thus they put them in a vulnerable position. Girls generally have less access to family resources (such as education, health care, nutrition etc.) compared with boys in Bangladesh and Nepal. When it comes to the question of investment of limited resources in education of children, poor parents usually decide not to send their daughters to school as they perceive little or no return from a girl's education.³⁶ There is a deeply-rooted cultural perception that there is no sense in educating girls because they are destined to leave for the home of their husbands. Even those who send their daughters to school do so in anticipation of getting a better husband for their daughters. Those who send their daughters to school withdraw them during puberty in order to protect family honour. Part of the middle class Bangladeshis still consider female education on the ground of better child-rearing and domestic management rather than career development for women. Many educated and professional women give up their professions and prospective jobs in order to carry out the culturally-prescribed role of a *wife* and a *mother*.

Girls from lower caste families generally face double deprivation in education by not only being a girl but also being a girl from a lower caste.³⁷ Girls from disadvantaged communities are particularly vulnerable to abuse as factory workers, domestic servants, as trafficked and prostituted when they migrate to urban areas. Abusers often promise money (comfortable life) and marriage to seduce females. According to a study on child domestic servants the majority of homeless people in the urban areas of Bangladesh are composed of beggars, prostitutes and people from female-headed households (Siddiqui et al. 1990).

Legal biases against females

In both Bangladesh and Nepal, there exist a dual legal system i.e. one is common law (based on British legal system) and the other is customary law. Common law is based on secular law and the later is based on religious faiths and traditions. The perpetrators of crimes against females easily escape prosecution because of family laws. Religion and custom regarding criminal law tend to shrink whatever space women were once granted under the formal legal system (Dhagamwar 2003, 1483).

35 Throughout the 20th century, sex ratio grew unbalanced in India, from 972 women for every 1,000 men 1901, to 927 in 1991. In 48 of the India's 577 districts, the sex ratio among children is below 850 (Economist 2003b).

36 Just 18 per cent of the 18 year old females in Nepal could read in the beginning of 1990s (Packalén 2002, 158). The situation has not improved much in more than a decade.

37 A UNESCO survey in 1989 found that whilst the Newars (a high caste), sent 53 per cent of their daughters to school, the Sarkis (a low occupational caste), sent none (World Bank 1991 in Brown & Wiseman 1998, 15). In Nepal, adult literacy for high caste Brahmins living in hill regions is 61 per cent – two and half times more than for the Sarkis, who live in the same area but have adult literacy rate of just 24 per cent (Brown & Wiseman 1998, 15).

Females are disadvantaged compared to males under family law. Muslim law of inheritance favours males. The basic rule is where the sons acquire double the property of the daughters. If a girl is without a brother, she cannot inherit her father's property. A part has to go to a male relative. Under traditional Hindu family law, Hindu women never inherit their parental property. They simply get food and shelter in order to sustain one's life. Law does not allow daughters, widows or other women as legal claimants and recognised successor of property of their father and husband. Thus, Hindu women are in a more vulnerable position than Muslim women. In *Salish* (traditional Bangladeshi village justice system), a rapist is generally charged with small fines whereas State law has provision for life imprisonment or death penalty for the same crime. Religious and cultural norms take over the rights given to women by State.

Usually daughters do not demand their portion of property after their father's death and prefer to keep good relations with their brothers in exchange for a claim to their protection in case of widowhood, abandonment or divorce (Kabeer 1994, 153-154). The death of a husband can precipitate an abrupt descent into poverty for a woman if there are no surviving adult sons to take over her protection and support (ibid. 156).

5.3: SCHOOL FACTORS

Two faces of education

Education has different meanings for children from different communities. The social transformation from a land-based agricultural economy to cash-based economy has changed the meaning of education among the poor in South Asian countries (Kabeer, Nambissan & Subrahmanian 2003, 36-7). Education has been increasingly seen as a 'need' and 'guarantor of rights' for the majority. Wealthier families accept more risk in educating their children because they are more certain to realise the returns to their investment (ibid. 22). Along with bearing the costs of education, upper class families generally have the social network to make sure that their children receive lucrative jobs in civil and military services. On the other hand, economic benefits of education are not readily accessible to poor households due to labour market discrimination and the lack of investment in education.

In the social contexts of Bangladesh and Nepal, education is a tool for easy entry into formal job market, social mobility and social status. Place in a quality public and private school (English medium school, kindergartens, cadet colleges and other elitist educational institutions) guarantee a child's future success in seeking elite job. Relatively well off and influential parents can afford to give extra educational support for their children by means of their economic leverage. As there is more opportunity for private tuition and coaching centres in the urban areas, children from middle and upper class families do better results in the competitive public examinations. From the fieldwork experience, it was found that child labourers could seldom enrol in public school, if enrolled dropped out within first two/three years from school.

On the other hand, centralization of educational system makes it difficult for children from poor families to cope with standardized education. The schools of the rural areas generally have poor performance in terms of good results. The poor parents do not have political power to pressurise teachers to improve school quality. It is understood that because of lack of pressure from parents, quality of public primary education remains low. Child labourers face

discrimination in school and have to reconcile conflictual demands of school, work and home.

It is understood that elites are less interested in sending their children to public schools due to their lack of confidence in them. The devaluation of government schooling since 1980s has been accelerated in 1990s due to need for market reforms in both Bangladesh and Nepal. As a result, there has been a boom for urban kindergartens i.e. private primaries and English medium schools by and for the middle and upper class people. The parents of disadvantaged children often do not see it worthwhile investment to send their children to school because of lack of usefulness of academic-oriented education in their given context. Referring to the dichotomy of academic and work orientation of education in among poor in developing countries, Hoppers argues that while the interest in academic orientation remained, as a result of the increasing crisis in modern economy, parents have begun to acknowledge the additional value of practical skill training (Hoppers 1996, 79). But educational system in many developing countries lack vocational component of education.

The economic difference of the households widens the gap of quality of education between the rich and poor. Referring to Indian situation, Ramachandran (2003, 959) observes that it is the poor who go to public primary schools: those with even modest means prefer to send their children to private schools. The observation is valid for Bangladesh and Nepal as well as all the South Asian societies. English medium schools marks a clear divide between academic and work orientation of primary education. Gustavsson (1991, 84) refers to the unofficial view from the officials from the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh as, “people that matter” transfer their children to the few good government schools or opt for private schools (i.e. kindergartens), and, later on, for schools abroad. Nepali middle and upper classes try to maintain their superior standing in society by educating their children in English medium private schools.

Good public schools are located in the capital city and in district level towns. In certain cases, large amount of donation/strong social network/bribe is needed to enrol children there. Private schools depend almost entirely on parent’s contributions, serving better off families and ensuring much better quality than public schools.³⁸ They are seen as a medium of gaining white-collar jobs to maintain social hierarchy. As a result of decline in quality of rural public schools, disadvantaged children are the losers in the complex struggle of educational survival. Some children from hardcore poor groups in remote areas gain educational opportunities through NGO schools.

Bangladesh has different types of primary schools which follow different types of curriculum (USAID 2002c, 4-5). I find four broader types of primary schools in Bangladesh: 1) general public school, 2) Madrassahs³⁹ (religious schools) and 3) private schools and 4) NGO schools. Diversity of their curricula and teaching methods create graduate with different outlooks on social, political and civic matters. Madrassas have been playing a significant role in education

38 All private schools do not necessarily provide quality education. In Nepal, private schools have a much lower proportion of qualified teachers because most private school teachers are hired on a non-permanent basis (with low salaries and qualifications as well as less bargaining power) (ADB 2003, 18).

39 Madrassah education comprises of five stages in Bangladesh, i.e. Ebtedayee, Dakhil, Alim, Fazil and Kamil levels ranging for 5, 5, 2, 2 and 2 years respectively. Now Ebtadayee, Dakhil and Alim have been recognized as equivalent to primary, secondary and higher secondary levels respectively (Khan undated). The fundamentalist parties have been pressing government of Bangladesh to recognize Fazil and Kamil as equivalent to bachelors and masters degree.

by providing free religious education in Bangladesh.⁴⁰ There is little coordination among diverse education systems by the government. It has been creating sharp divide on social, economic and cultural outlook of their graduates. It is not only the problem of Bangladesh but also of many Muslim-majority states.

There is a disjuncture between education and securing livelihood of the poor. Formal education does not ensure a job in modern sector for majority of the school graduates in Bangladesh and Nepal. School graduates are forced to take up job in rural and urban informal sectors where they do not need literacy skills. In the context of poverty, education may appear as waste of time, money and energy (see, Malekela 1994, 122-3; Palme 1994, 130-1; Anker & Melkas 1996, 40; Takala 2001, 34). As long as there is little hope for getting a high school diploma or employable vocational skills from school, they are not strong motivators for the poor parents to send their children to school. As public schools do not guarantee formal jobs, the poor and the disadvantaged seek it elsewhere. Low-income households find teaching of family craft to children as more important than sending their children to school (Weiner 1991, 76; Negash 1996, 7). As a result, child labour becomes an appealing alternative to schooling.

Poverty and education

Poverty is one of the main reasons why poor parents keep their children away from school. The cost of a child's education is not reduced to zero for poor households when there is free schooling. Parents are discouraged to send their children to school when direct costs of books, uniforms, writing materials, transportation to school, need to be borne by families. Immediate and direct costs of schooling also lower the likelihood of the child ever entering school (see, Sattar 1984, 16; Fyfe 1989, 24; World Bank 1992, 58, 1997, 91; Tilak 1997, 74; Karim, Banu & Akhter 1998, Preface; Lieten 2000b, 2174; Hazarika & Bedi 2002; Basu 2003b, 68).

Theodore W. Schultz (1963) termed "opportunity cost" for family as a "key puzzle" about education in the context of developing countries. According to Schultz, if forgone earnings are not counted, the true costs of education would be seriously underestimated (ibid. 31). In terms of child labour, families have to forgo child's income because of schooling of children. The benefits of education are reaped in the long run whereas poor families live in economic hardships in everyday life. The disjunction between who pays the costs of education and who benefits from it is an important factor in children's participation in work and education. Government policy-makers often ignore the fact that free schooling cannot alone attract poor children if the opportunity cost is not considered. Referring to the Indian situation, J.B.G. Tilak argues, "If opportunity costs are also included, family investments in education are about double the government investment in education" (Tilak 1992, 184).

There is a myth in many developing countries that education is free for every child after universalisation of primary education. In fact, school teachers extract various fees from the students on different occasions such as examinations, annual sports and cultural events and for free textbooks in many developing including Bangladesh and Nepal.⁴¹ The fees are

40 It is estimated that in the 1990s, the Madrassa enrolment was 0.8 million for primary and 0.9 million for secondary equivalent respectively (cf. Hossain, Subrahmanian and Kabeer, 2002, 18). Official statistics claimed 16, 200 primary equivalent madrassah schools and 5,000 secondary equivalent in the mid-1990s (ibid. 18).

41 Although public primary education is free in terms of fees, there are some minimum and annual charges, such as exam fee in Bangladesh (about Tk25 or \$0.43 equivalent); admission and exam fees in Nepal (about NR312 or \$8.3 equivalent) (ADB 2003, 14).

considered as very high by poor households. Parent's annual direct educational cost per child is as follows: Bangladesh (\$12 to \$21 equivalent) and Nepal (\$27 to \$51 equivalent) (ADB 2003, 24).

In the context of poverty and hunger, parents don't think that education for their children till grade of V will bring any benefit for the household. Even if poor children learn to read and write, later on they may forget these skills as there are little opportunities to have reading or writing materials and there is no school library in rural schools (Pelkonen 2002, 102). Parents also see that their children usually don't have chance to even get a secondary school diploma whereas to enter in formal job market requires a secondary or higher secondary diploma. Moreover, education cannot guarantee a job for children from poor households as there are a growing number of educated unemployed people. Parents prefer their sons and daughters to work which is relevant for their income and skill development.

Education is seen as a prerequisite for urban and white collar jobs and as a matter of social status in many developing countries (Rahman, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). Many poor households in Bangladesh and Nepal seldom have influential social contacts (family and friends) so that they can make use of their children's education. Moreover, getting government job is highly competitive in Bangladesh and Nepal, where a powerful relative or bribe may become necessary to get a job. In Bangladesh, "mama" (maternal uncle, meaning "powerful relative") factor and nepotism/corruption are important in recruitment in formal sector jobs. Poor parents fear that education may detach their children from their way of life, traditional respect for the elders and from family responsibility. This contributes to discourage poverty-stricken parents to send their children to school.

As primary schools are nationalised, school teacher may think of themselves as government employees (with permanent job contract) and become busy with their domestic business neglecting their responsibility to teach. Many teachers practice widespread absenteeism from school mainly in rural areas. Local people may think that school belongs to the government and all responsibility belongs to state (Gutavsson 1991, 46). The high quality and private elitist schools are located in urban areas and village public schools suffer from extremely low quality. Those who continue to stay in school mostly they do not do it because of their merit, rather because of their parent's economic strength. The difference between Bangladesh and Nepal is one where Bangladesh has a high drop out rate and Nepal has an excessive repetition rate due to the lack of pre-primary classes to prepare children (ADB 2003, IV).

Discrimination against children from poor households by teachers, their absenteeism from school and an unfavourable school environment ultimately push many children from poor households out of school. With low salary and social status, teachers lose their motivation to teach in school. Children become the ritualistic and passive receivers of lectures. Even completion of 5 year cycle of primary education may not offer children sufficient literacy. This is the manifestation of extremely poor teaching and learning quality in Bangladesh primary schools:

"Repetition and drop out rate remain high, resulting in an inefficient cycle time of 6.6 years. Pupil assessments have found that those who complete the primary cycle perform on average at the third grade achievement level and lack essential problem solving skills; only 5 per cent of class 5 pupils were able to pass primary scholarship examination. Further, attendance rates for primary school are uniformly low, averaging 58 per cent" (Tietjen 2003, 7).

A study of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) in Bangladesh examined a pupil's achievement in terms of terminal competencies at the end of primary cycle found that "less than 2 per cent of the students completing for five years of primary education acquired all 27 competencies tested" (USAID 2002c, 23). Memorization-based education does not encourage any critical thinking among students. Because of the poor quality of teaching and curriculum, the goal of universal primary education is difficult to achieve in developing countries even with economic incentives (Anker & Melkas 1996, 51). A teachers' lack of sympathy for children of disadvantaged households and discrimination as such perpetuates the disadvantaged position poor families.

As the quality of public schools is generally low in both Bangladesh and Nepal, middle class parents take advantages of extra tuition, coaching and notebooks for their wards. Bangladesh and Indian State of West Bengal share common language and culture. A study in primary schools West Bengal found that among children from classes 3 and 4, only 20 per cent of children without access to private tuition could write their names correctly. For those tutored privately the figure was 80 per cent (Rana et al. 2003, 2160).

In traditional rural societies, the consequences of female education are feared because it is thought that it may cause girls to be assertive of their own needs and opinions, which is in breach of the traditional submissive role of girls and women. Also there is widespread fear among rural parents that the mixing of girls with boys and male teachers may cause the loss of chastity of girls and hence the loss of family honour (see, Bowman & Anderson 1982, 34-5; Naik 1982, 152-3, 1994, 49; Hartmann & Boyce 1983, 110; Mahadevan et al. 1989, 190). Even those who manage to send their daughters to school may discover that it is difficult to find the right type of husband for the girls. More studies may result in higher demand for dowry during the daughter's marriage (CWIN, 1995c). As a result, parents find less interest in sending their daughters to school. Parents prefer to send girls to single-sex schools in order to protect their daughter's and family's social honour particularly in the so-called Muslim countries (in fact they are ethno-national States and religion explains little about people's identity). Parents may also be afraid that educated girls will choose their own husband, which is not the norm of lower class families in Bangladesh, for example.

School environment

As in many other developing countries, the rural schools of Bangladesh and Nepal generally do not have adequate supplies of learning materials. They also suffer from poor learning environment. Low quality of teachers and irregular attendance of teachers along with uninteresting teaching methods and inflexible school timing discourage children from attending school. Under these circumstances, those students who support the school ethos do so because they are concerned with obtaining diploma because of their parent's better economic position.

In Bangladesh and Nepal, teachers in public schools and Madrassas use corporal punishment to control students in school. In Bangladesh, there is no legal provision against corporal punishment in school. There are newspaper reports on the *inhuman* punishment of students by school teachers which may even lead to the death of students. This creates fear among students about school and teachers. In Nepal, corporal punishment is prohibited under the Nepal Children's act 1992. However, the law allows parents, family members and teachers to beat a child lightly if it is for the purpose of correcting children's behaviour. *Muluki Ain* (the

Law of the Land) of Nepal states that guardians and teachers shall not be held responsible if they grievously hurt a child in the course of education or defence, if the beating results in death they shall be punished with a small fine (UNICEF 2001, 10). As a result, children may prefer to abstain from school and play or help parents with household work (Subrahmanian 2003, 226).

School curricula are criticized for their urban, middle class and male-biases in many developing countries (Naik 1994, 49; Clarke 1997, 123; Rampal 2000, 2526; Talib 2003, 155). Those are highly prescriptive and moralistic on the needs of the rural poor and biased against females. Instead of fostering basic equality between men and women, the messages given to students in school textbooks often sanction patriarchal social values. School curricula usually portray females in passive and negative light and tend to alienate students from manual labour. Public schools are often unable to utilize average children's everyday experience due to the fact that they are less relevant to the motives and contexts of disadvantaged children.

The typical public schools in the fieldwork countries practice homework and memorisation of textbook as teaching methods. They generally follow a mechanistic approach of teaching without much participation of students in school. Children facing learning difficulties are not compensated by teachers. Rigid age and attendance requirements prevent child labourers from attending school. Parents may feel that what school teaches have little utility in village life. Students rarely participate in class except answering the close-ended questions asked by teachers. Many students of the NGO schools who had opportunity to join public school previously complained that students were rarely allowed to ask question in class, and teachers preferred the selected students in the class at the cost of the majority. In many cases, teachers favoured the private tuition students who come from well off families. Textbooks, learning materials, and teachings methods are poorly adapted to the living conditions of the disadvantaged children.

Empirical evidences suggest that all the children in NGO schools who had the chance to go to public school were given homework by their teachers whereas few had anyone to assist with it. Engaging private tutors for individual children is costly and beyond economic capacity of the parents of child labourers. Children seldom got remedial education provided by school. This culminated in repetition and drop out of children from school. As school teachers come from middle class families, they occupy a position of power and respect in the community. The disadvantaged parents accuse that teachers do not even listen to them (Rana et al. 2003, 2162).

The result is high incidence of non-enrolment, repetition and drop out of children from school. According to a World Bank study on Bangladesh public primary schools, it takes around 9 years of input (mainly teacher's time), instead of theoretical 5 years to produce one graduate of the primary system in Bangladesh (World Bank 1988). In case of Nepal, it takes between 8 and 11 years for a student to complete the five year primary cycle (Brown & Wiseman 1998, 27). Repetition and drop out from school is a waste of money for the poor households as well as for government and a cause for lack of confidence in school. Loss of income opportunity is not a significant deterrent for education of children from poor families. The major question remains on the quality of public schools (Ramachandran 2003, 963).

Schools do not have a sufficient number of teachers in countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal. The average number of permanent full-time teachers per school range from 4.4 in

Bangladesh to 21.1 in Maldives (UNESCO 1996, 30). In Nepal and Bangladesh, women constitute 16 and 27 per cent of the total primary school teachers (ibid. 2528). This figure is below the average for South Asia (31 per cent) and the average of developing countries (51 per cent) (ibid). Madrassahs in Bangladesh have the lowest percentage of female teachers (**table in annex 5.4**). Teacher training is very important for quality of teaching. Many teachers do not meet the minimum educational requirement and training in the fieldwork countries.⁴² In Nepal only 41 per cent of the primary school teachers are trained (HDC 1998 cited in Brown & Wiseman 1998, 31).

Through nationalisation, the job also become transferable, teachers try to secure transfer from rural to urban schools (Siddiqui 1996, 153). This is paradoxical whereas primary school teachers accuse government of paying lower salary, yet most of the primary school budget is spent on teacher salaries. In Bangladesh and Nepal, primary education has been receiving a very large share of government expenditure in education; more than 95 per cent of it is spent on teacher salaries (ADB 2003, 13). There are newspaper reports in Bangladesh that ad hoc teachers in non-government schools get their salaries after 5-6 months or even later.

As teachers have problems in coping with price hike, many take up additional job outside school to make ends meet. Lack of interest in school by teachers is reflected in the fact that almost half of the teachers surveyed in the Indian State of Madhya Pradesh study had other sources of income outside teaching (agriculture, private tuition) (Sudarshan 2000, 64-5). Teachers with high qualifications prefer to work in urban over rural areas. A study on primary education in West Bengal found that “Only 41 per cent of the parents of primary school children expressed satisfaction with the performance of teachers” (Rana et al. 2003, 2160).

The best schools in the studied countries are located in urban areas. There are model primary and secondary schools in each district, where elites send their children for quality education. The economic needs of poor families and concerns of the rural teachers are seldom taken seriously by national education planners. Public school teachers are simply the government employees who follow rules from the Ministry of Education. They are seldom consulted on policies related to improvement of quality of education. Teachers are the mere recipients of national or State mandates placing them at the margin of policy-making and implementation in education (Shaffer 1990; Vera 1990; Tatto 1997).

Teachers often practice unscheduled school closure. Both teacher and student absenteeism is a normal practice in Bangladesh and Nepal. The actual time teachers give in public primary school is low because of a lack of supervision. In Bangladesh, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) school supervisor visits a school twice every week whereas an Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO), the lowest level of supervisor in the system, is supposed to visit at least once a month but often fails to do so (USAID 2002b, 16). Because of lack of monitoring and evaluation, many teachers of public primary school stay away from school.

⁴² In Bangladesh, minimum requirement for teacher qualification in public primary school is secondary school certificate (10 years of schooling) for females and bachelor's degree for males. In Nepal, it is secondary certificate (10 years of schooling) plus 10-month teacher training (ADB 2003, 9). However, the requirements are not generally followed strictly which results in large number of unqualified teachers. In Bangladesh and Nepal the percentage of qualified teachers are 70 and 15 per cent respectively (ibid. 10). The private school teachers in Nepal are generally less qualified than the teachers of public school because the former cannot avail of the government's teacher training facilities.

Due to helping parents in crop season and other household work, many children in rural areas stay absent from school. In public schools, there is little or no adjustment of time for the majority of the pupils or compensation for their studies. As a result, many students cannot cope with others in educational progress. School examinations can be seen as a screening device to throw children from poor households out of school. The result is examination failure, repetition and dropping out from school.

My observations and findings from both Bangladesh and Nepal suggest that those child labourers who had the opportunity to go to public school, many of them faced punishment and humiliation there. There is *school phobia* among many primary students in Bangladesh and Nepal because of dictatorial type of teaching methods. Little errors made by students are seldom tolerated by teachers which make students nervous, humiliated and reluctant to speak in class. This view necessarily shifts the causes of children's repetition, drop out and engagement in child labour from *individual* and *family pathology* to *school pathology* itself.

To reverse the conditions of underprivileged children in general and child workers in particular, there is a need for a different school which fits with the needs and circumstances of them. NGOs have been playing a central role to make education relevant for the needs and contexts of child workers.

Chapter 6 analyses the role of NGOs in development in general and education sector in particular.

CHAPTER 6: ROLE OF NGOS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

This chapter contains discussion on government-NGO relations, underlying philosophy of NGOs and programme complexities. They provide opportunities to locate the role of NGOs in education sector.

6.1: NGOS AND DEVELOPMENT

Emergence of NGOs

Historically, the role of NGOs in development is linked with the failure of state to solve the development problems of many Third World countries. Since the end of World War II, developing countries have been following Western models of development to achieve positive economic change. However, consensus has never prevailed on what development is or should be (Martinussen 1997, 35). Since the 1950s, the aim of development has been to imitate industrial nations of Europe and North America for industrialisation. In developing countries, national economic growth has been considered as the main goal in itself. However, growth does not automatically translate into distribution of wealth among citizens. This has necessitated the role of NGOs in Third World development.

David Korten in his pioneering work *Getting to the 21st Century* highlights the increasingly important role played by NGOs in international development. Korten considers NGOs to be one of the "three mutually dependent forces" in every society along with the State and the business sector (Korten 1990, 95-100). He argues that government play a critical role in maintaining stability and allocating resources from one group to another for public purposes. Business however, plays the role of mobilizing private entrepreneurship in order to produce and distribute goods and services in response to market forces. NGOs also ensure a constant process of self-assessment, experimentation and change in accordance with the evolving values of a group of people. According to Korten, "The society that lacks any one of the three is a deeply troubled society" (ibid. 99-100).

In addition, NGOs transform global institutions by addressing three basic needs of disadvantaged individuals i.e. justice, sustainability and inclusiveness (ibid. 4). NGOs also support and strengthen civil society⁴³ while ensuring development. Governments and international agencies recognise the role of NGOs in local, national and international development. They use a host of synonyms of NGOs such as Voluntary Organisations (VOs), Non-profit organisations (NPOs), Public Service Contractors (PSCs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Grass-root Organisations (GROs), People's Organisations (POs), Private Voluntary Development Organisations (PVDOS), Charitable Organisations (COs), and Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) etc. This is the manifestation of growing importance of NGOs in international development.

There are different schools of thought concerning the emergence of NGOs as actors in international development. They include *the market failure/government failure theory* (Weisbrod, 1977) and *contract failure theory* (Nelson & Krashinsky, 1973). The first theory argues that when private market and government fail to provide "public goods" for a

43 Civil society has been made synonymous with the voluntary sector (or the Third Sector), and particularly with advocacy groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movement agents, human rights organizations and other actors explicitly involved in 'change work' (Rooy 1998a, 15).

significant minority, NGOs step in to fill demand for public goods. Citizens mobilize themselves on voluntary basis through the NGO sector. Weisbrod pointed out that those private goods cannot be substitutes for public goods and there is room left for NGOs to supplement public services.

Contract failure theory emerges on the backdrop of the limitations of market failure/government failure theory. According to the theory, a second condition is needed for non-profit organizations to emerge, namely, the presence of “social entrepreneurs, people with incentive to create nonprofit organizations to meet such demand” (James 1987 cited in Salamon & Anheier 1998, 221). Non-profit firms are in business for more charitable purposes and may therefore be more worthy of trust. In the contractual relationship between government and NGOs, government plays the role of financier and NGOs play the role of service providers.

World Bank defines NGOs as “private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” (Malena, 1995, 13). Others define NGOs as “private non-profit organisations that are publicly registered (i.e. have legal status) whose principal function is to implement development projects favouring the popular sectors” (cf. Tvedt, 1998, 13). However, NGOs vary according to their purpose, philosophy, sectoral expertise and scope of activities (Malena 1995, 15). They may be based on their purpose, function, development ideology, nature of project coverage etc. Asian Development Bank (ADB) differentiated NGOs in Bangladesh according to three major criteria: country of origin, area of operation, and sources of funding (cf. Tvedt, 1995, 11). NGOs working on child labour have sectoral importance on education.

Arguments in favour of NGOs

Because of weak capacity of government institutions to carry out development policies and projects in many developing countries, the new paradigm of development highlighted on local-level and non-governmental development in contrast to erstwhile state-led and national-level developmental approach. Helmut Anheier (1990, 361-374) discusses the comparative advantages of NGO in African context. He compiled four major arguments on comparative advantages of NGOs i.e. the social argument, the economic argument, the political argument and the cultural argument.

The *social argument* states that NGOs try to stimulate the participation of the poor and are able to reach those strata which are bypassed by public service delivery systems. According to this argument, NGOs attach greater equity concerns in development than public sector. *The economic argument* implies that NGOs carry out services more economically than governments and their goal is to provide self-reliance and self-sufficiency. This ensures greater efficiency of NGOs comparing to government institutions. *The political argument* states that NGOs are more "honest" and less guided by political considerations and hence efficient channel for doing development work for the poor and vulnerable. *The cultural argument* stipulates that NGOs are embedded in local culture and are more sensitive to local needs and contexts. Instead of replacing indigenous social structures by large organisations, NGOs try to nurture local organizations within their own cultural context.

Anheier mentions the weaknesses of NGOs and argue that comparative advantages of NGOs outweigh their disadvantages. He pointed out that though NGOs emerged as a response to

emergency operations in the beginning, they increased their importance in Third World development. They have become intermediary organisations located between the state and market on the one hand, and between the local domestic and the international level on the other (ibid. 373). Even though Anheier developed his comparative advantage thesis based on West African context, the same is valid for role of NGOs in developing countries in general.

Different scholars also highlight the comparative advantages of NGOs in reaching the poor and vulnerable groups in developing countries (see Malena 1995; Aminuzzaman 1997, 2; Bebbington & Riddell 1997, 112-3; Rooy 1998b; White 1999, 308; Nylund 2000; Hossain 2001, 47; Siisiäinen 2003, 192). Role of NGOs in development has been widely appreciated by marginalized groups as well as by international donor agencies. NGOs are said to be pro-poor, participatory, flexible, innovative, cost-effective etc. They are considered to reach the grassroots and play important role in influencing and transforming policy changes in the South (see, Clark 1992, 191, 1997, 55-56; Riddell et al. 1994, 10-11; Tvedt 1998, 57; Kalimullah, 2000, 63; Nelson 2000, 478; Mundy & Murphy 2001a, 223).

NGO generations

NGOs have evolved by moving further away from a symptom-based approach to directly, attacking the causes of underdevelopment. David Korten primarily identified the strategic orientations of NGOs in three stages or generations (Korten 1990, 115). They include relief and welfare, community development, sustainable systems development. Later he extends this to include a fourth generation i.e. people's movement to make the scheme complete (ibid. 114-132).

NGO generation one: relief and welfare

The first generation involves the direct delivery of services in order to meet immediate needs caused by a lack of food, health care or shelter. This is characterized as humanitarian assistance which is required of catastrophes such as natural disasters (earthquake, flood etc.) and war, and famine. Religious groups are commonly at the forefront of these types of efforts. Responding to the needs of victims of war and national disaster has played a role in the emergence of an NGO movement in Bangladesh in the 1970s. When considering the weakness of the first generation to address broader goals of development, NGOs redirected their attention to what is described below as second generation strategy.

NGO generation two: small-scale, self-reliant local development

The second generation strategy focuses on building capacity of NGOs regarding the development of people who wish to meet their own needs through self-reliance. Because of their local orientation, second generation strategies are considered as developmental in concept, and are often referred as *community development* strategies. The aim of this strategy is to empower village people for local self-reliance through small scale activities of NGOs. Activities under this category may include preventive health measures, introduction of improved agricultural practices, formation of community councils, digging wells, building feeder roads etc. Korten finds that many of these interventions fail to empower the community and may in fact create long-term dependence on NGO assistance. The third generation strategy has emerged in order to remedy these problems.

NGO generation three: sustainable systems development

The third generation strategy looks beyond the individual community and seek change to specific policies and institutions at local, national and global levels. The need for a third

generation NGO strategy was deemed necessary due to the absence of a lack of a supportive national development system. Third generation strategies involve NGOs working with major national agencies. They help reorient their policies and methods of working that strengthens the broadly-based local control over resources. This strategy may involve the creation of new institutions to provide essential services on a sustained and self-financing basis. NGOs under this generation may work as catalyst of change, rather than service providers. However, the third generation strategy is weak in terms of politically-oriented empowerment. This is necessary in order to build up a community capacity to light up against local injustice.

NGO generation four: people's movements

The scope for the fourth generation of NGOs evokes policy change. Their goal is merely to energise a critical mass of independent, decentralized initiatives to support a shared vision and ideal. The strategy attempts to raise public consciousness and offer an alternative vision which is adequate to mobilise voluntary action on a national or global scale. NGOs supporting this challenge build alliances with other movements for social change and lead to deal with related elements of global crisis.

The fourth generation has created more space for NGOs in international development by connecting them with global movements for social change. As a result, official aid agencies have become interested in providing more development aid through NGO channel in the South (Riddell et al. 1994, 12; Edwards & Hulme 1995, 4; Tvedt 1998, 1; Hudock 2000, 15; Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond & Wolf 2002, 1). This has resulted in an explosive growth in Southern NGOs since the 1990s. There are approximately 20,000 NGOs working in Bangladesh (Economist 2003c). Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), the largest microfinance lender in the world, has 60, 000 employees (ibid.). With respect to the aid linkage of Southern NGOs, Terje Tvedt defines development NGOs as, “an organisation receiving donor funds for development, which is institutionally separated from the government and nonprofit making” (Tvedt, 1995, II).

Criticisms against NGOs

Comparative advantages of NGOs over government agencies in developing countries may not be always the case. Though many would disagree, some see NGOs as the agent of imperialism and grassroots capitalism. All NGOs do not have advantages over government agencies in reaching the poor and vulnerable. There are more than 1,000 NGOs working on education and literacy which receive foreign funding in Bangladesh today, and 500 of them have some sort of education and literacy program (Miwa 2003, 250). The rise of NGOs may not be necessarily an outcome of local and national response to fill the needs of the poor. Rather, it may be the result of increased fund from international development cooperation agencies including Northern Non Governmental Organizations (NNGOs). Primarily, NNGOs used to run their programmes in developing countries and in the recent time, they have taken the back seat and working as a facilitator of local NGOs.

NGO activities in Bangladesh and Nepal have been increasing in different sectors ranging from the empowerment of marginalized groups through micro credit, education and health care etc. Scholars also argue that NGOs do not necessarily reach the poor and meet their needs comparing to government agencies (see, Smith 1987 cited in Anheier 1990, 363; Ferrington & Bebbington 1993, 25; Tvedt 1998, 135-137; Hossain 2001, 65-70; Saifullah 2001, 17-19). Generally, NGOs have been doing excellent job in education of disadvantaged children by giving them alternative education. Even though most of the students under NGO

schools come from poor and landless families, there are also some exceptions. Empirical evidences suggest that several students from an NGO school in Bangladesh came from lower middle class families (Diary 2, pp. 16-19, 27.7.1999).

There are criticisms against NGOs because of their urban bias. In case of Nepal, most of the NGO programs are located near Kathmandu and other urban centres. Few NGOs have much interest in establishing projects in Western and Far Western Nepal, geographically the most inaccessible areas of Nepal. I found an activist volunteer from Denmark who worked in the inaccessible areas of Western Nepal (Nepalgunj) where many of the Nepalese NGOs were unwilling to work. In case of Bangladesh, seasonal "monga" (famine)-prone areas of Bangladesh (greater Rangpur) are often neglected by NGOs in their development programmes. There is criticism among government officials in Bangladesh and Nepal that NGOs are family business, consulting companies and an alternative way of getting personal economic, social and political capital. Officials of big NGOs are criticized for having luxurious lifestyles, working in skyscrapers and driving around pajeros (Dhakal 2000, 93; Miwa 2003, 246).

In the context of increasing importance of NGOs in international development, donor agencies wield excessive power over policies of Southern NGOs. NGOs of developing countries are criticized for being dependent on Northern aid agencies (see, Edwards & Hulme 1995, 8; Tvedt 1995, 22; Moore et al. 1996, 37; Fowler 1997, 17; Hulme & Edwards 1997, 8-9; Rooy 2000, 312-3; Wazir 2000a, 257; Tamang 2003, 22). Excessive dependence on international aid may make innovation of SNGOs difficult. SNGOs may in extreme cases appear as the sub-contractors of international aid agencies who implement donor agenda without much consideration on local contexts.

6.2: EMERGENCE OF NGOS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Since 1970s, there has been a growth of NGOs in Southern countries to fill the development gaps left by government. This is a result of the failure of State-centred approach of development to reach disadvantaged groups. Primarily, NGOs emerged as relief and welfare organization and later expanded their activities in service provisions, advocacy and policy reform and covered human rights, democracy, women's empowerment, environment, children's rights etc. Before the signing of the CRC in 1989, education was hardly an issue for the majority of the NGOs in Bangladesh and Nepal. Since 1990s, there has been a remarkable rise in the role of NGOs in process of educational change (Mundy & Murphy 2001a, 223). NGOs mainly work in the education sector to reduce child labour and promote children's right to education. Increasing role of international NGOs and donor agencies explains the rise of activities by local NGO in developing countries.

Government schools are the main providers of primary education in developing countries. Government-organised education creates uniformity what the members of the disadvantaged communities cannot agree upon. This culminates in the exclusion of the children of poor households from classroom (Meyer & Boyd, 2001, 6). Since the 1980s, there has been a trend of cuts in spending on education under structural adjustment policies. This has negative results i.e. increased segmentation between different types of educational institutions, a decrease in access to good quality education and limitations on those who could afford to pay, as well as a general drop in the quality of education (Hallak 2000, 37).

As children from poor households do not have equal power to benefit from public schools in many developing countries, the role of NGOs in education sector has become *the sole option*

for many. In relation to reducing child labour, NGOs have emerged as experimental/alternative educational providers, innovators and catalyst for change. Regardless of whether NGO schools perform better than public schools or not, they have been reaching the poorest and most disadvantaged children who were not served by public or private schools before. This has generated a *new optimism* on educational possibilities of marginalised groups in developing countries.

Formal schools in many developing countries are blamed for becoming formalistic, hierarchic and credential-oriented and narrow to fit with the educational needs of life (see, Coombs 1985, 20), NGOs provide non-formal education to adjust their education with the realities of the poor. Non-formal education works outside the framework of formal system to provide need-oriented learning opportunities for particular group of population.⁴⁴ Different studies show that countries where public schools are not able to reach everyone, non-formal education may serve the steadily growing learning needs of entire population (see, Coombs 1968, 144; Coombs & Hallak 1987, 98; Hawkins 1982, 422; Elovainio 1986a, 6, 1986b, II; Negash 1996, 9; Kosonen 1998, 58; USAID 2002b, 14).

Different studies have highlighted the paramount importance of NGOs in providing education to erstwhile unreachable groups such as child labourers (for details see, Bequele & Boyden 1988, 21; Haddad et al. 1990, 15; Fyfe 1993, 9; Archer 1994, 223; Abed 1997, 5; Rahman 1998, 1999, 2000b; Swift 2000, 1; Hallak 2000, 37; Wazir 2000b, 24; Mundy & Murphy 2001b, 97; Govinda 2003, 179; UNESCO 2003, 268). This has provided an impetus to NGO activities in the field of education for child labourers in developing countries. NGOs work on building learning centres, sponsoring children, running teacher training courses, producing educational materials and offering flexible teaching methods. NGOs show that it is possible to deliver an educational service to every child irrespective to their family's economic or cultural background.

NGO approaches to education for marginalised children have their shortcomings too. Questions have been raised by program evaluators on their cost-effectiveness comparing to public administration, the sustainability and potential of the scale of their actions, and level of reliable data on their operational performances (see, Hallak 2000, 37-8). NGOs cannot maintain their educational activities for long time, as they are almost completely dependent on International NGOs (INGOs) and other donor agencies. If donor funding is reduced or stopped, NGO activities may discontinue.

Even though there is much alarm among government bureaucratic circles in many developing countries on the increased volume of NGO activities in development, the alternative educational coverage by actors such as NGOs is small comparing to the needs (Takala, 2001, 19; Kabeer, Nambissan & Subrahmanian 2003a, 28). Bangladeshi capital Dhaka has the largest concentration of NGO activities on education, it is estimated that NGOs cover 10 per cent of the educational needs in the slum areas (Red Barnet 1998, 2). Amount of money spent on non-formal education is just 0.3 per cent of the total education budget of HMG Nepal in

44 Philip Coombs and Manzoor Ahmed (1974, 8) distinguished three modes of education i.e. informal, formal and nonformal education. Informal education is learnt through the experiences and exposure to the environment at home, work and play. Formal education is highly institutionalized, chronologically and hierarchically graded education system spanning from primary to university level. Philip Coombs defined non-formal education as, "...non-formal programs tend to be part time and shorter duration, to focus on more limited, specific, practical types of knowledge and skills for fairly immediate utility to particular learners, and to have the inherent flexibility to respond quickly to new learning needs as they arise" (Coombs 1985, 24).

1995 (National Planning Commission 1995, 41). Of this, the foreign aid component was 42.3 per cent (ibid.).

State policies in Bangladesh and Nepal encourage “uniform” primary education as the instrument of democratic citizenship and State’s legitimacy to their populace. Due to the resource and capacity constraints, governments have been forced to encourage non-state actors in basic education. Disillusionment with public primary schools has been the major cause for expansion of NGO activities in education sector. There is a growing recognition among the beneficiaries as well as government of Bangladesh on the role of NGOs in educating disadvantaged children (Gustavsson 1991, 1; Task Forces on Bangladesh Development Strategies 1991, 377; Haq 1997, 43; Alam, Begum & Raihan 1997, 62; Chowdhury et al. 1997, 117; Haq & Haq 1998, 3). There are also claims that NGOs schools have better performance than that of public schools in Bangladesh (see **annex 6.1**).

Democratization in Nepal has opened up opportunities for NGOs to play a complementary role in the development since 1990s (Poudyal, 1995, 32; CWIN, 1995b, 5; National Planning Commission, 1998, 752; Pokharel 2000, 58-59; Rahman 2002, 16; Bhattarai et al. 2003, 43). In relation to education for children, the growth of NGOs in Nepal is rather slow and limited in certain geographical areas (Dhital 1995; Brown & Wiseman 1998; Jha 1999, 17).

6.3: GOVERNMENT-NGO RELATIONS

The relations between government and NGOs are not necessarily as straightforward as one would think. They are shaped by the question of who represent the poor. The relationship is guided by interest which may be manifested by indifference, jealousy, mutual distrust, confrontation, acceptance and partnership. Ferrington and Bebbington (1993) term State and NGOs as being ‘reluctant partners’. Before NGO activities, government schools could hardly reach the children of the poor and vulnerable. Even the governments of developing countries generally lack capacity to provide education for poor and disadvantaged, they try to control the NGOs in education sector. The donor perception of the comparative advantages of NGOs creates resentments of some government officials in developing countries.

According to Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah, government-NGO relation “...depends largely on the values and ideology of those who run the government and as far as NGO leaders are concerned, on their social position and existing power structure” (Kalimullah 2000, 63). There is a problem of politicization of NGOs in Bangladesh. They are divided into pro-government and anti-government clubs which manifest their partisan characteristics. There is a growing political pressure on government mainly from tiny but growing Islamist parties to control NGO activities in the recent years. They see NGO activities as a threat to Islamic values as far as changing role of females in society is concerned. They blame NGOs for being the agents of *Yahudi-Nasara* (Judeo-Christian) moral values which, according to them is anti-Islamic.

On the other hand, progressive parties have good relations with NGO community in Bangladesh. The relations between government-NGOs have evolved from neglect in 1970s to mutual distrust in 1990s. Since 1990s, in the context of declining aid supply, the partnership between government and NGOs has been promoted by international donor agencies (Miwa 2003, 146). Since 1990s, NGOs are actively taking part in delivery of educational provision in Nepal. DNFE initiated education programme for hard-to-reach working children is a manifestation of growing government-NGO collaboration in Bangladesh in education sector.

The relationship has evolved from mutual distrust to indifference and collaboration in certain extent.

Though HMG Nepal has allowed NGOs to work in social fields, there is a tendency to control them. The NGOs are registered under the Institutional Registration Act and work under Ministry of Home Affairs. This is a manifestation of HMG Nepal’s tendency of controlling NGOs. Participation of some NGOs in government non-formal education programme such as *Cheli Beti* is a manifestation of the changing relations between HMG Nepal and NGOs in education sector.

To analyse a wide variety of approaches NGOs follow in education for child labourers, Räd Barnen (Save the Children Sweden) uses three criteria such as underlying philosophy, programme complexity, and temporal orientation (for details see, Tolfree, 1998, Chapter 2). I find underlying philosophy and program complexity as useful for my research, which I describe below:

6.4: UNDERLYING PHILOSOPHY OF NGOS

The first criterion for analysing diversity among NGO programme is based on their philosophical orientation. NGOs have different sets of child labourers as their target groups; hence they have differences in their philosophy and pattern of activities. Some are community-based organizations working with small projects and some are national-based large NGOs such as BRAC. I list the selected NGOs and their activity patterns in Bangladesh and Nepal in tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3: Selected NGOs from Bangladesh

Name of NGO	Target group(s)	Activity patterns
Bangladesh National Women Lawyer’s Association	Victims and potential victims of trafficking and prostitution	Shelter home, NFE, skills training, family reunion, jobs
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	Non-enrolled and drop outs from school	Non-formal education, health care
Prodipon	Child labourers in small industries	Non-formal education
Shoishab Bangladesh	Child domestic servants	Non-formal education
Underprivileged Children’s Educational Program	Child labourers in informal sectors	Non-formal and vocational education

Table 4: Selected NGOs from Nepal

Name of the NGO	Target group(s)	Activity patterns
Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) Concerned Centre	Child labourers in informal sector	Shelter home, NFE, educational sponsorship
Concern for Children and Environment	Child labourers in informal sector	Shelter home, NFE, educational sponsorship
Maiti Nepal	Victims and potential victims of trafficking and prostitution	Shelter home, NFE, skill training, family reunion, job
Social Awareness for Education (SAFE)	Children of so-called untouchable 'Badi' community in Western Nepal	Formal education, hostel facilities, social awareness
Underprivileged Children's Association (UPCA)	Children in urban informal sector	Shelter home, NFE

There are complexities and wider philosophical differences among the ten selected NGO projects/programmes for this study. David Tolfree categorised underlying philosophy of NGOs in three main areas. They are 1) attitude towards child labour; 2) whether children are seen as principally vulnerable or resourceful; and 3) issues of child participation, organisation and protagonism (Tolfree 1998, 17-21). I find them useful and use them based on my experience of the fieldwork.

Attitude towards child labour

Depending on the nature of work, NGOs have different attitudes towards child labour. NGOs working with children in hazardous occupations advocate abolition of child labour as the immediate goal and service provision in education and supportive services as transitional goal. NGOs working on child prostitution and other hazardous work advocate this strategy. NGOs follow this approach include BNWLA and Maiti Nepal.

Others make a self-conscious attempt to project a positive image of child work (non-hazardous child labour) for the self-respect of children and the contribution of them on the family and society. The majority of the NGOs follow this philosophical line in dealing with child labour. This is based on the premise that the impact of child labour can be negative or positive on children based on the nature of the work. Children may feel proud to become able to contribute to family income by engaging in child labour. Child labour turn into exploitation when children work too young, work too long hours, work with little pay, work in hazardous conditions and work under slave-like arrangement. If children are put out of some hazardous work without alternatives, this can turn as counterproductive to the children's best interests.

NGOs work to make child labour less hazardous and even beneficial for children. Tolfree (1998, 17) raises a very relevant question concerning child labour: *is the phenomenon of 'child labour' a problem, and if so, to whom is it a problem?* NGOs argue that it is a problem for the individual child, he or she faces many areas of difficulties – family poverty, restricted

educational opportunities, exploitation and abuse in the workplace, health hazards associated with particular forms of work, hostility and even violence from the law enforcing agencies, and so on (ibid. 17-18). Such children need and deserve protection and a range of services to enable them to cope with hardships they face.

According to a study by Save the Children Denmark in Bangladesh on children in prostitution, 81.81 per cent of girls and boys mentioned the need of shelter to protect them from urban criminal elements. The boys ranked the role of training and education equally (54.56 per cent), while the girls ranked training higher (45.45 per cent) than education (36.36 per cent) (Ali, Ali & Sarker 1997, 80). This data make us to rethink about prescriptive adult views on the needs of child labourers. It implies that children need to be listened to or negotiated with on the issues influence their lives.

Other NGOs frame the problem differently: being a child labourer is not so much a problem but as a solution to a problem. When children of the poor families do not have much resources to spend for the long-term endeavour to get a diploma, discrimination against them in school and lack of linguistic and cultural capital, it is a rational response of children to engage in child labour and drop out from school. Some NGOs even advocate right of work for children and improving their working conditions through giving them right to engage in trade union activities. They criticise the negative public perceptions of children's work and widespread denial of the rights of child labourers (Tolfree 1998, 18). Some NGOs might regard the provision of protective and welfare services as no better than short-term palliative which might benefit some individual children but may also create dependence and sap the children's own initiative and resourcefulness (ibid.). There is danger that these approaches may ignore the structural question of social inequality and distribution of wealth within society.

Are children vulnerable or resourceful?

Working children are resourceful and vulnerable at the same time. Different NGOs have different emphasis on this in their projects/programmes. The protagonist NGOs tend to view children as fundamentally strong and resourceful and tend to build on those strengths rather than highlight areas of their weaknesses. BRAC for example, has developed a program of NFE which reject the idea of rehabilitation programme, preferring instead to base preventive programs on the belief that children are capable and resourceful.

In its educational programme, children take part dialogically with their teachers and learn about society, culture, health issues in addition to literacy, numeric and other basic learning. It focuses on the creative ability of children to change their given situation through non-formal education. UCEP has general and technical education for child labourers, it emphasises that through education and skill training, children can be prepared as valuable human resources and dignified members of the society.

NGO working with shelter-based educational strategies lack emphasis on children's resources. They mainly focus on the vulnerabilities of children and have rehabilitative programmes for them. They provide valuable support services to children in especially difficult circumstances. For example, victims of trafficking and prostitution and urban working/street children need emergency help which cannot be provided only through education. NGOs under this category have less focus on children's own resources and strengths. By focusing on children's vulnerability, some NGOs may increase the dependency of children in their empowerment process.

Children's agency and participation

Children's agency and participation are very important issues in making any project/programme appropriate and effective. Through them, organisations can take children's needs, priorities and resources in consideration, which are very important components of effective programme development. In societies where children are considered as a part of family, society or as underdeveloped human beings, children's agency can be seen there as a challenge to the prevailing hierarchy of society.

In all of ten NGO programmes studied, they all take children's agency seriously at least theoretically in their educational programmes. Adults may manipulate participation of children which may appear to be equal to "token participation" or non-participation (for detailed discussion see, Hart 1992). Children living in NGO shelter homes have less say in the issues that shape their lives. From my observations, it can be said that NGO staffs with shelter homes take all major decisions on behalf of children and take children's consent to validate them. NGOs working only with non-formal education have less rhetoric and appear to respect children's autonomy more. From empirical evidences, it has been found that NGOs in Bangladesh and Nepal take child labourers out for demonstration for demanding their rights. Considering children's lower social status, it is hard to imagine that Bangladeshi and Nepalese children demand their own rights. It is rather orchestrated by the adult staffs of the NGOs, not a decision informed by the views of the child.

6.5: PROGRAMME COMPLEXITY

The second criterion for analysing diversity among NGO programmes is based on their programme diversity and complexity. There is a distinction among NGOs concerning their sector interventions. The five-country Rädä Barmen study on programme diversity has identified two types of NGO interventions concerning child labour: single sector strategy and multiple sector strategy (see, Tolfree 1998, 20). In my fieldwork too, I found that NGOs generally follow similar strategies. Some NGOs follow single sector intervention through non-formal education and others combine NFE with residential care, educational support (school fees, free books and stationeries, uniform, school lunch and free transport) and a range of health and welfare services, play and recreation, counselling, family loans and advocacy at various levels.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) follows purely educational approach in its NFE programme. UCEP Bangladesh combines non-formal education with vocational training. Bangladesh National Women Lawyer's Association (BNWLA) and Maiti Nepal have health care and psycho-social rehabilitation as the primary focus for the child victims of trafficking and prostitution. In their programs, educational emphasis is rather less pronounced because of the special needs of the target group. CWIN has a strong advocacy program along with its rehabilitation programme. Its programmes range from non-formal literacy classes to educational sponsorship program for the selected students in public and private schools. All other NGOs follow a kind of combination of educational approaches along with other supportive services.

Bequle and Myers (1995, 82) characterize interventions on child labour in developing countries into two categories such as long-term "preventive" measures which deal with free and compulsory education for all children and shorter-term "rehabilitative" actions such as

non-formal education and health services targeted to currently working children. Even though they provide valuable understanding on the interventions on child labour, yet they do not draw a full picture of NGO activities on child labour issue. It seems that vocational/skill-development strategy is missing in the categorization.

I have developed a new categorisation of role of NGOs in education of child labourers in three broader strategies. They are protective, skill development and preventive strategies. The first category of NGO programs respond to children's current needs in the context of their work, schools and family situation. The second category of NGO programmes work in facilitating children's personal development through skill-training along with non-formal education. The third category of NGO programs work to prevent children from work through their educational programmes. There is a great deal of overlap among the categories. For example, preventive as well as protective approaches may have developmental impacts too. Most of the NGO programmes illustrated here adopt more than one single strategy, some offering a complex range of different strategies. This new approach may save NGOs, governments and donor agencies from endless empiricism in finding the general categories on role of NGOs in education for child labourers in developing countries.

Protective strategies are employed by NGOs to protect children from their present vulnerable conditions and ameliorate their conditions and help their own initiatives, self-reliance and empowerment. BNWLA, Shoishab Bangladesh, Prodipon, CWIN, Maiti Nepal, UPCA and Concern Nepal follow the protective strategies. Among them BNWLA and Maiti Nepal work exclusively on rehabilitating trafficked and prostituted children and potential victims. Their work includes rescue, food, clothes, medicine, shelter, hostel, legal protection, psycho-social normalisation, non-formal education, skill training, job placement and reunion with family members.

Shoishab Bangladesh works with education to domestic child workers and conscientisation of the employers. Prodipon works with education to the children working in small family-based industries and keeping contacts with children's parents and employers. CWIN, UPCA and Concern Nepal provide shelter, food, education and skill-training to the child labourers who are detached from their families. In emergency situation, children get place to stay in emergency shelter homes for a period of 3-9 months. They also sponsor children's education in public school both for children with and without family.

UCEP Bangladesh educational and vocational training aims at transforming children from child workers to skilled and productive work force. It tries to protect children from further exploitation and open up skilled job opportunities through education and skill training. In this sense, it has both protective and preventive strategies at the same time. SAFE works mainly with the girls of Badi community in mid-Western Nepal, who are much vulnerable to enter in the profession of prostitution. It has both preventive shelter home and education for the vulnerable girls and boys.

Preventive strategies are employed by NGOs to contain the high-risk children's group from child labour exploitation. NGOs identify the high-risk children groups from the community and provide education and other community-based supportive services. BRAC, UCEP and SAFE follow this approach in their programmes. BRAC NFE programmes focus on the rural high-risk target children so that children from poor families do not need to go to work in urban areas in exploitative labour relations.

Most of the NGOs try to arrange non-formal education aiming at ameliorating the conditions of child labourers. Flexible school hours, life-oriented curriculum, counselling, family support, shelter, skill training are some of the initiatives taken by NGOs even though the approaches of NGOs vary. NGOs reject the teacher-centred strategies (at least theoretically) and follow student-centred pedagogy. NGO schools don't give homework burden for children. There is no tuition and exam fees and NGOs provide books, pencils and other stationeries to children. Flexibility in school hours helps many children to combine their work and school attendance. All NGO programmes featured in this study have a pedagogical or educational component. The large majority of the children involved in the programs do attend school (educational programs), many clearly articulated that it is work that enables them to attend school and carry out family responsibilities. For children under this study, learning opportunity in NGO schools was their only or second chance of education.

The study by Tolfree (1998, 33-36) in five developing countries has found four different educational approaches of NGOs in relation to the public education. The four approaches overlap considerably. I find them useful for this study but prefer to classify them in two broader approaches, i.e. *strategies to reinforce and support State education* and *strategies to replace State education*.

Strategies to reinforce and support state education

Strategies to reinforce and support State education provide a means by which children may gain access to state education through the NGO educational channel. NGOs under this category provide non-formal education to children who have never been enrolled in school and those who are dropouts from school. After completing education in NGO schools, children may successfully integrate themselves in public school. BRAC NFEP follows this strategy. It targets children from rural poor and landless families who have been denied educational rights in public schools. It gives children education for three years.

The curriculum is designed to make education relevant for children's life environment and special needs. It spends good amount of time each day on games and fun activities like singing, dancing, story-telling and role playing. With attractive methods the teachers facilitate learners to discuss child and family issues, social and moral values, personal hygiene, food and nutrition, cleanliness, safety and first aid, dwelling and animal care and knowledge about social institutions. After completion of three years of NFE education in BRAC, children may integrate themselves in grade IV in public school. BRAC follows the following approaches in its educational program:

Family motivation and support: In this approach, NGOs motivate families to send their children to school through individual counselling or community based approach. Teachers play a role of social workers who motivate and counsel parents/guardians on sending children to school.

Material support for families: NGOs follow this approach to encourage parents to send their children to school. Due to poverty and a loss of family income, certain NGOs think that it is necessary to support parents in order to attract children to school. BRAC, Prodipon, CWIN and Concern Nepal offer micro-credit to the selected families for this purpose as a vital part of a wider strategy.

Material support for the child: The aim is to meet part of the costs of associated with school attendance, which is especially important for those children who have to work in order to be able to meet the costs of school. This support may include public/private school fees, the costs of uniform, books, writing materials and examination fees. All the ten selected NGOs of Bangladesh and Nepal give material support for education of children.

Complementary curriculum: This usually involves curriculum which is particularly relevant for child labourers especially with an emphasis on life and social skills, work skills, sexuality and health issues, the aim is to make the overall learning interesting and more relevant for children. BRAC, UCEP and Shoishab Bangladesh have their own social studies curriculum along with DNFE curriculum by government. Other NGOs in Bangladesh follow both government and/or BRAC curriculum in their schools. In Nepal, most of the NGOs follow HMG Nepal curriculum for their non-formal education programmes.

Strategies to replace state education

These strategies are based on the premise that state education cannot adequately address the needs of child labourers; hence a long-term alternative is needed. They may turn to be very different from the State education and thus children may have less opportunity to join in public school if they want to pursue further education. It may appear that NGOs under this category create different standards of education for child labourers. NGOs under this category may be accused for encouraging what Bowles and Gintis (1976) term as ‘correspondence’ or class confirming nature of education. On the other hand, if children are not given alternative education under NGO projects, they may be totally left out from any form of education. NGO education under this category is not certification-based. Three broad approaches are found under this category:

Accelerated progression for working children: This is based on the modification of the state curriculum and offering accelerated progression through various grades so that children do not need to do homework. The focus is preparing children to cope with the difficulties stemming from their current work patterns. UCEP, Prodipon and Shoishab Bangladesh, Concern, CWIN and UPCA follow this accelerated progression model.

Part-time learning for young people who cannot attend school: This is based on the premise that children in certain form of child labour don’t have opportunities for learning like other children because of their particular life situations. NGOs arrange part-time education for them so that they have the opportunity to learn literacy and life skills to protect themselves. For example, NGOs have special educational programmes for child domestic servants, children working in home-based small industries, child porters and street children fall into this category. NGOs arrange education for child labourers during children’s work intervals. Shoishab Bangladesh, Prodipon, CWIN, Concern Nepal, UPCA and Maiti Nepal follow this approach although some of them provide educational sponsorship for child workers in public and private schools.

Street-based learning for homeless working children: These approaches are based on the premise that children working in certain forms of child labour are not likely to be able to cope with the demands of a more formal school experience even with much efforts. UPCA, CWIN and Concern Nepal run programmes to offer street-based learning opportunities for homeless working children.

Through the above discussion, diversity of educational approaches is apparent in education for child labourers. Different NGO schools have different curriculum, teaching methods and the relationship between teachers and pupils. NGO approaches either supplement or replace public schools. Particularly BRAC, SAFE and UCEP have special features comparing to other NGOs. They are more supplementary to government education than others. BRAC NFPE programme do not have rehabilitative approach (such as shelter home) in education. It targets the underprivileged children in the rural areas and establishes schools so that they are not left out of educational system because of their economic and cultural status. When children complete their three-year cycle of NFE in BRAC schools, they can successfully enrol in government school in grade IV.

UCEP offers elaborate system of schooling and vocational training, and it tries to place young people in job market after they graduate from UCEP schools. UCEP approach is based on the premise that when underprivileged children get secure remunerative job, it can protect them from exploitation. There is a variety of curricula NGOs follow for their educational programmes depending on the particular needs of children. BRAC for example, follows government curriculum as well as its own social studies curriculum. Its aim is not to create a parallel education system of its own. At the same time, its own social studies curricula help children to get knowledge for solution of their day to day problems. BRAC education can be considered as Freirian.

UCEP on the other hand, runs condensed form of government curriculum to make it fit for child labourers. Government curriculum is accelerated considering the life conditions and needs of working children. The classes are formalistic, which is similar to that of government schools. The purpose of formalistic education is to maintain discipline in order to produce docile workers for blue collar jobs after the completion of vocational education. Some NGOs have their educational programmes for children working in specific sectors and they either follow government or BRAC curriculum without much collaboration.

NGOs provide special short-term education to the children based on their life conditions and then support their education in government school system. Most NGOs follow teaching methods in striking contrast to traditional methods prevalent in public schools. Most of the NGOs follow Freirian dialogical method, at least theoretically, where education takes place between teacher and students as a two-way process. Children are considered as active agents in their own rights, at least theoretically. BRAC follows this dialogical approach (Freire 1990, 25) and other NGOs have more or less the same philosophy employed weakly. In most of the NGOs, teachers play the role of educator as well as social worker. Educators help children's education by contacting and counselling family members and in certain cases, consulting children's employers. UCEP has been able to relate its vocational skill training with potential employers.

From the above discussions, it is clear that NGOs have different perspectives on child labour, children's participation and 'agency'. Their programmes also have complexities: some have shelter-based rehabilitation programs along with non-formal education, some focus purely on non-formal education and others focus on non-formal education and skill training. NGO centres/schools hardly work under any effective regulatory framework of monitoring. Different NGO approaches of education help children to get education based on their contexts. This creates different standards of education for different groups of children without much coordination among NGOs themselves and with government's education sector development plan. By above discussion, it can be said that NGOs generate hope for disadvantaged children

by providing educational opportunities for underprivileged children in general and child labourers in particular. Their strategies differ based on the needs and contexts and have differential impacts.

The Chapter 7, I discuss the three broader strategies followed by NGOs in education of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal.

CHAPTER 7: NGO STRATEGIES IN EDUCATION SECTOR

As discussed in chapter six, the role of NGOs in the education of child labourers can be categorised in three broader categories. These are: 1) education as a protective strategy; 2) education as a skill-development strategy; and 3) education as a preventive strategy. The strategies are not discrete categories and there is great deal of overlap among them. For example, protective strategies may have skill development and preventive effects. And skill-oriented educational strategies may have both protective and preventive effects. The new categorisation is an effort to draw an end to endless empiricism on the role of NGOs in education for child labourers. Whatever activities NGOs carry out in education for child labourers in developing countries, they all fall into the three broader categories.

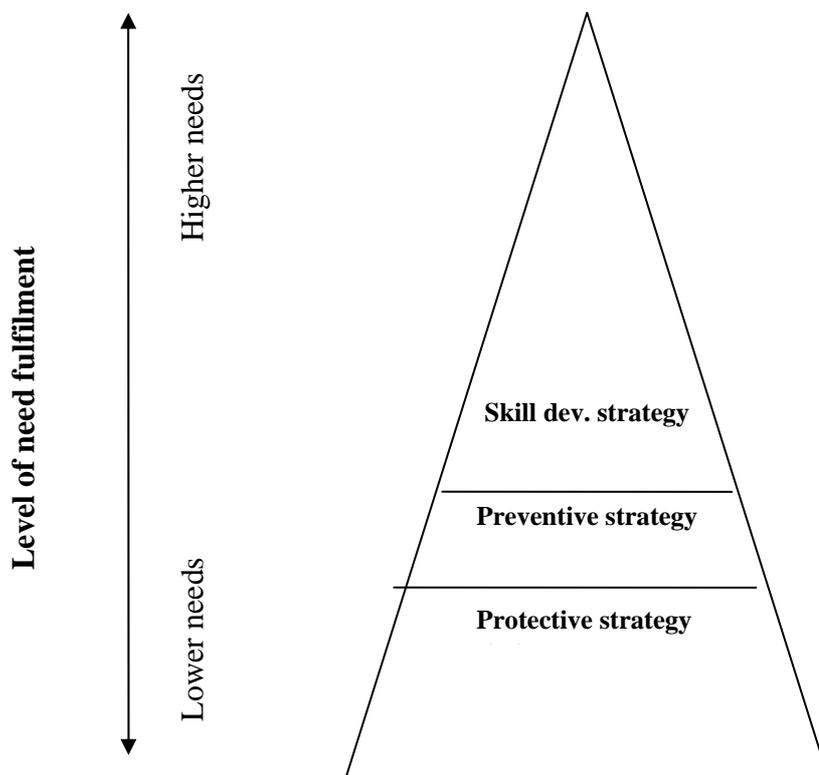


Figure 3: Fulfilment of needs of child labourers by three different educational strategies

7.1: EDUCATION AS A PROTECTIVE STRATEGY

NGOs follow this approach based on the premise that child labourers can be better served by providing them with part-time education. NGOs consider that formal education more or less distant from the target groups. Due to children's work patterns, NGOs see part-time education as more realistic solution for children's immediate needs than the goal of full-time education for them. Protective strategies of NGO in Bangladesh and Nepal can be categorised according to three different target groups. They are education for working/street children, education for the victims of trafficking and prostitution and education for child domestic servants.

Education for working/street children

NGOs provide free educational materials (books, uniforms, pads and pencils), free tuition, stipend and free health care under this category. They arrange school hours based on the needs of child labourers, particularly their off hours from work. The children in this category are mobile and may change their work place and home in squatter settlements. In public schools, this group of children are not usually allowed to study as they can not become full-time students because of their work patterns, their low cleanliness and inability to pay tuition fees. This manifests that schools do not reproduce educational division in Bangladesh and Nepal as they do in Western countries. In Bangladesh and Nepal, economic and cultural reproduction largely takes place outside school boundary.

NGO schools run their education projects to ameliorate the conditions of children left out or dropped out from school. NGOs such as CWIN, Concern Nepal and UPCA have contact centres for children where staffs and volunteers have been working to change children's patterns of life particularly their unclean and unhygienic lifestyles, lack of educational opportunities and street habits. Prodipon and BRAC Urban schools in Bangladesh run educational programme for child labourers without shelter homes.

Children start to go to the centre from their work and wash themselves. They get lunch if they join NFE classes in case of UPCA, an NGO working in Dharan in Sunsari district in eastern Nepal. The major work of NGOs include literacy, health care and hygiene, sex education, children's rights, social rules and discipline, games, music and excursions. Children under this category work in informal and street-based work and have poor working conditions. While working, they face many kinds of work related injuries and also get diseases such as diarrhoea, cold, pain, tuberculosis, scabies and headache. Schools work as a place for rest, play, education and medical centre for them. For the most vulnerable children, some NGOs have shelter homes.

After classes, children have the opportunity to play 1-3 hours depending on their work situation. The centres have facilities to carom board, singing, dancing, drawing, painting, watching TV, listening to radio etc. Prodipon in Bangladesh has a three grade education but in the cases of CWIN, Concern and UPCA they do not have grading system for NFE. In case of CWIN, Concern Nepal and UPCA, after completion of NFE programme for 9 months (being based in shelter home), the NGOs selectively send children to public/ private schools with educational sponsorships. Others are either reunited with their family members or given skill training. NGOs provide tuition fees, books, stationary and uniform, transportation and emergency support for both private and public schools and residential care in private boarding schools. Among NGOs in Nepal, only CWIN and Concern have weak skill training activities. CWIN has training facilities such as paper recycling, Nepali lokta paper, sewing, car washing, wooden kits and toy making, wood carving and fabric painting. Here is a case from CWIN, which represents the general Nepalese NGO approach in educating child workers.



Picture 1: UPCA shelter home for street and working children at Dharan, Nepal

Raja is a 13 year old boy and he is a resident of CWIN Socialisation Centre at Kathmandu. He was born at Banpea near Bhaktapur. He has a brother and two sisters. He comes from a poor family. His father is a painter with a fluctuating income. His mother left home several years ago due to poverty and family disharmony. Due to pressure on him to contribute to the family income, Raja had to work in grazing cattle for others and taking care of his siblings. He dropped out from the local public school in grade II. The school was boring for him, “teachers lectured without asking if anybody understood anything. They gave us lots of homework. There was nobody at home to help me with the work because my father can not read and write. Even if he could, he would not do it because he only liked to beat me, my brother and sisters for small matters”. When he failed in grade II, he felt that it was a great chance for him to get out of school. His father sent his brother and him to a neighbouring town to work as carpenter. The work was very hard. One day he fled the place for Kathmandu.

Upon arrival at Kathmandu, he started to work as hotel boy. As a hotel boy, he had to work uninterrupted 14 hours a day. He got food from the hotel two times a day. He had to sleep with seven other boys on the hotel table without mosquito net. The owner of the hotel promised Nepalese Rupees (NR) 300 per month as his wage. After his work there for one month, the owner of the hotel did not pay him the promised wage and beat him seriously when he protested. As a result, he left the job. After losing the job, he was wandering in Kathmandu and got a job as porter and he had to sleep on the street after completing the hard work in day time.

He met many street children including pickpockets in the city. His new friends initiated him in pick-pocketing. Later he became the team leader of a gang of four. “Whenever I could save some money, I stopped the work for some time. I worked in bus stations and buses. We had lots of freedom: eating good foods, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, watching cinemas etc. Police arrested me three times on charges of pick-pocketing. I was kept in custody with adult criminals. In custody, police beat me seriously. Most of the time my friends (fellow gang members) bribed police to get me out. During the last arrest, I was frightened by police torture”.

After his release, he learnt about CWIN from one of his friends. He has been living in CWIN Socialisation Centre for a year. In the beginning, CWIN was giving him food, clothes and sleeping space. But he had to look for a job to pay for his food and cloth expenditures later. He started to pick rags in the day time with other children sheltered in the socialisation centre to support his own expenditure. “When I get tired, I come to CWIN for rest. Here I get my education. I have learnt reading and writing in CWIN. Teachers teach us on many issues such as social, health issues and urban dangers”.

The CWIN staffs want to reunite him with his family members in his village. They will go to visit his family members along with him, if his mind changes. If reunion is impossible, he will come back to Kathmandu and CWIN will try to send him to public/private school with its educational sponsorship. If

no such opportunity is available, CWIN will give him skill training. He is eagerly waiting for the moment when he will be able to go to school. After getting a reasonable education, he wants to get skill training to build a life without fear of insecurity, violence and exploitation.

He plays different games with his friends in the centre. He got first prize in carom board game and exchanged the prize (a radio) with a wrist watch. He wants to become a gentleman and work as a paramedic. He is already a mini-paramedic in the CWIN centre and he gives first aid to the new and old fellows of the centre. He has been trying to bring his ex-colleagues to normal life. Two of them are already in CWIN. This is significant that CWIN has child to child programme which is a strong strategy. He said, "CWIN has protected me from cheating and dangers of city life" (CWIN Socialisation Centre, Diary 3, pp. 87-89, 27.9.1999).

From Raja's case, it is clear that CWIN has protected him from the dangers of street life and culture. CWIN provides shelter and NFE to Raja and many others like him and help them to improve their behaviour and relationship with the wider society. But it is true that situation of children such as Raja is created by the society. Rather than changing the society, NGOs try to change children so that they can become "appropriate" children (obedient, responsible and skilful without threatening existing social order). Here children give up their individuality to conform to the social norms. It appears to validate Durkheim's (1956) notion of functionalism that society is greater than humans and has existence of its own and it guides people through socialisation. It also blames children and their families for not complying with the standards set by dominant classes.

Raja's case is prevalent in Nepal and to certain extent in Bangladesh in dealing with children working in urban environment. But shelter-based education programme can make children dependent on NGOs in certain extent, which are said to empower them or make them independent. It is also not economically viable to run shelter homes for child labourers for long time. For majority of children, NGOs cannot give viable education or skill training which can have long-term sustainable impact on their life. Even though they save them from existing problems and dangers.

In the case of Nepal in particular, after providing short term NFE, NGOs encourage children to be reunited with their families as a strategy to protect them from urban work hazards and insecurity. But what is the sense to reunite children back to their family members where structural conditions remain the same as before? It may happen that the reunited child may come back to urban centres again for work without finding viable alternatives in countryside. This approach apparently lacks long-term goals and visions.

Bearing school-related expenses such as tuition fees, books, pencils, shoes and dress help children to continue their studies in public/private school. In the case of CWIN and Concern Nepal, nine months of non-formal education may not appear to be sustainable for children and children may easily forget the knowledge they learn from there. How much change the nine-month non-formal education can bring for the lives of child labourers? Not all the children who complete NFE in NGO schools get educational sponsorship from CWIN, Concern and other NGOs to study in public/private school. Those who complete NFE, few of them get further education or vocational skills so that they can get alternative opportunity for livelihood. In certain cases, NGOs provide 9 month NFE to children who are the drop outs from public schools from grade 2 or 3. It may be supported based on the idea that public schools have low quality and studying 2nd or 3rd grade does not provide either literacy or social consciousness. Still it looks odd that drop outs from grade 2 or 3 are given 9 months of literacy by NGOs to make them literate again.

The sponsorship of child labourer's education in public and private schools is an approach followed by most of the NGOs in Nepal. This approach can help children to become part of the mainstream public schools but it is highly selective. How far the children can go with their sponsored education in highly competitive educational market remains a question. Even majority of the child workers under NGO Schools want to continue their studies and have skill training, their further studies remain uncertain. Only selected few children of this category get educational sponsorship provided by NGOs in Nepal. The rest may easily forget what they learnt from 9 month NFE because there is neither reading materials nor opportunities for writing in their real lives. Because of lack of skill training opportunities, only literacy does not provide opportunities for alternative livelihood even though they provide consciousness.

The CWIN/Concern Nepal/UPCA emphasis on school sponsorship suggest that bearing the costs of learning materials and fees can work as a strong force to retain children in school and stop them from exploitative child labour. In Nepal, sponsorship for children to study in public/private school is a general trend among NGOs. Maya is a grade IV student at Balbikas primary school in Kathmandu. She comes from a family of Dallu slum. From the age of 6, she was helping her mother in weaving wool. She did not get any education before Concern Nepal NFE. After completion of NFE in nine months, she has been admitted to regular public school by Concern Nepal. The NGO pays fees and other expenses related to her studies and takes regular contacts with school and the family. Maya helps her mother with weaving in morning and does household work including cleaning pots and home, making food and taking care of siblings. She visits the Concern NFE centre every Friday and gets educational support from the staffs and volunteers (Diary 3, pp. 122-124, 01.10.1999). This shows that educational sponsorship and extra support help child labourers to continue their studies beyond NGO schools.

There remains a serious question on the sustainability of selective and expensive educational sponsorship for child labourers. NGOs in Nepal have very limited co-operation among themselves in co-ordinating their educational projects and as a result, graduates from NGO educational projects have little opportunity for further education or skill training. It is a remarkable trend in Nepal that NGOs prefer to copy similar educational strategies with minimum collaboration among themselves. This approach does not have long-term and sustained impact on children's capability-building and well-being. In Bangladesh, NGOs have more cooperation among themselves and with government.

BRAC has Urban Educational Program for child labourers to help them with non-formal education. It has been collaborating with UNICEF, ILO, and BGMEA to provide schooling to ex-garment child workers, under the age of 14. Kishor-Kishori model schools were specially opened in 1995, for the child labourers in Dhaka and Narayanganj and about 2, 200 child labourers were studying in 'garment school' run by BRAC during fieldwork period.

In BRAC Urban Schools, students with different grades can stay in the same class. When they reach the age of 14, children can go back to work if they want. If ILO finds any garment worker below 14 in any factory, it may refer the child to BRAC School and BRAC admits him/her according to his/her educational level. When children are over 14, they go to school at 07:00-11:00 and can go to garment or other works. Children below 14 get a monthly stipend of TK 300 per month. For the children over 14, BRAC arranges skill training through UCEP and Surovi. In 1999, 390 children completed and 157 were continuing their skill development training in garment, knitting, finishing, electrical, carpentry, automobile and paramedics. With

government support, BRAC started to implement 105 centres for educating hard-to-reach working children. BRAC Urban Program can be pictured through the case of Nurun.

Nurun is 14 years old girl and a student of BRAC School No. 5 at Prabhatibag particularly designed for ex-garment workers. She was born at Debiddar in Comilla district. Her father was landless share-cropper farmer. He has three sons and three daughters. With the income of agricultural work it was difficult for her father to survive with a large family. As a result, he decided to migrate to Dhaka with all his family members and started rickshaw pulling. In the village, all the brothers of Nurun went to public school and subsequently dropped out because they could not continue work and school at the same time. Her father did not send any of her sisters and her to school in the countryside. After moving to Dhaka, he engaged every child in work.

Nurun started working in a garment factory as a helper working 12 hours a day with a monthly wage of BDT 500 (approximately \$8). The work was very hard. If the work was bad, the supervisor scolded her and others using words such as “pig”, “kitten” and slapped them. He said, “If you want to work here, you have to listen to what I say, you have to tolerate beating and hitting”. Later she was dismissed from work after the threat of *Harkin Bill* to protect the industry from retaliatory measures for using child labour. Her parents did not understand the reason of her dismissal blamed her for that. It was a time of nightmare for her.

Later, BRAC teachers contacted her so that she could join in BRAC School designed for ex-garment workers at Prabhatibagh in Dhaka. She got a monthly scholarship of Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) 300 (approximately \$5) and now she is a student of grade V. Under the garment school program, she gets stationary free of cost. When she reached the age of 14 years, BRAC stopped the scholarship. She does not have time to play at home and her parents think that she is too old to play or mix with boys. “I like school. I do not like work. I cannot even talk in the garment factory, let alone play. I come to school regularly even it takes 45 minutes to reach here”.

She chose to work to support her studies after the stoppage of the scholarship BRAC has arranged a job for her in a garment factory. She has been working there for six hours a day and continuing her studies. She works in far more improved working conditions and gets BDT 700 (approximately \$12) as monthly wage from the work. This helps her to give a part of the money to her parents and continue her studies. Her parents are not happy that she goes to school. For them, she could even earn more if she would not go to school. In her words, “My father and mother do not like that I continue my studies. They only want that I earn money”.

She thinks that the work helps her to continue her studies but she also finds that it as a hurdle to do better in school. She appreciates her improved work environment and educational opportunities. When she compares her situation with her fellow workers at the garment factory, she feels that she is a privileged person. Most of her colleagues have never been to school and the majority of the girls are given in marriage at the age of 12 or 13 years. With her income, she has contributed to her parents to buy a black and white television.

She wants to continue her studies in public school after completing her studies in grade V in BRAC School (BRAC Urban Schools have education program till grade V). However, she is not sure how her further education can be arranged. She has to work, help her family economically and continue her studies at the same time. “I hope BRAC will help me to continue my further studies. Without BRAC’s help, I will not be able to continue my studies”.

In the meantime, her parents are pressing her for marriage. But she insists that she will not marry before passing her secondary examination. In spite of future uncertainties, she is more confident about her future than before. She said, “Previously I thought that education was only for children of the rich families. Now I see that it is my right too. Illiteracy is like blindness, I do not want to be like a blind woman when I have my own eyes (BRAC Urban School No. 5, Dhaka, Diary 1, p. 111-113, 18.7.1999).

Prodipon learners at Lalbagh, Dhaka are mostly children working in home-based industries who see school as a place for resting, playing and making friends. In Rozina’s (a 2nd grader) words, “In between the intervals of hard factory work, I feel relaxed in school for an hour” (Diary 2, pp. 71-72, 01.8.1999). She feels very good about the school but she is not happy

about the fact that she can only continue her studies till 3rd grade. However, Prodipon has given her opportunities for hope (Freire 1998a, 9) even though it does not go far enough to have a sustained impact on her. She does not know where she will study next and who will support her studies later. She hopes that Prodipon will help her admitting in any other NGO school or in a vocational school after completion of 3rd grade. This remains uncertain as Prodipon does not have much success in arranging further studies for its graduates in NGO/public/private school. It has been successful in admitting only 5 of its graduates in UCEP schools.

If Rozina is not granted further education or skill training, she may easily forget what she has already learnt from Prodipon School. Prodipon uses condensed syllabus for the class of 2 hours in 2 shifts everyday. The scant education does not give her viable alternative to gain minimum life-skills to protect her from exploitation. In this approach, contents and quality of education are given less importance. Though this approach serves the immediate needs of children but it does not go enough to solve the underlying problems of child labourers.

Education for victims of trafficking and prostitution

Education is secondary to the immediate needs of victims of trafficking and prostitution i.e. girls from disadvantaged families and communities in Bangladesh and Nepal. The victimisation of girls is a direct result of patriarchal social values. It has been noted that most of the girls under this category did not get equal educational opportunities comparing to their brothers.

It is believed that thousands of Bangladeshi and Nepali girls are sold and trafficked in brothels inside and outside borders. Girls and women are found languishing in foreign jails, institutions of safe custody, shelters and detention centres waiting repatriation. As they seldom have legal travel documents with them while being trafficked abroad, it is difficult for them to prove their citizenship for repatriation back to their home countries. For a country like Nepal which has an open border with India, girls become easy prey of trafficking across border.

Gauri Pradhan, the Managing Director of CWIN and one of the leading figures among child rights activists in Nepal claims that in Nepal, “35 per cent of all sexual offence cases are linked to police and political figures” (O’dea 1995, 11). A trafficked Bangladeshi or Nepali girl or women is sold between USD 1,500 to 2,500 in Pakistan depending on age, look, docility and virginity. Police make money out of the trade in South Asian countries. For each women or child ‘sold’, the police claim a 15 to 20 per cent ‘commission’ in Karachi (Munir 2003, 41). According to the 1992 Asia Watch Report of Human Rights Watch, “Double Jeopardy”, more than 70 per cent of women in police custody in Pakistani police lock-ups were subjected to sexual or physical violence.⁴⁵

Trafficking and prostitution of girls and women are closely linked with glamorisation of globalisation and criminalisation of politics and administration. Globalization has distorted traditional moral values of a section of people, which has led to endless profit-orientation. According to Gauri Pradhan, Managing Director of CWIN, “Globalisation has created opportunities in countries such as Nepal but it is not free of cost. We have been entering into globalisation like jumping in pond without knowing how to swim” (Diary 3, p. 38, 21.9.1999).

45 See, Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid (LHRLA) Report: Trafficking of Women and Children in Pakistan (Flesh Trade Report 1995-1996).

The poor have less means for education, health care and other social services in rural areas. The spread of radio, TV, cinema has reached to the grassroots level because of the explosion of mass media in Bangladesh and Nepal in the recent time. It has created a desire among girls and women for better life, which leads them to move to urban areas for jobs. For girls without literacy and lack of awareness of urban dangers, moving to urban areas may make them vulnerable to trafficking and prostitution. Police and legal system treat trafficking victims as criminals, putting the victims under further jeopardy. Traditionally, Bangladesh government denies that its citizens are illegally trafficked to other countries and tries to solve internal prostitution problem by means of eviction order. This put girls and women under further vulnerability.

Mominul Islam Suruz, Journalist and Investigation Officer of BNWLA described the phenomenon of working girls' and womens' vulnerability during new arrival in cities in Bangladesh as: "Polygamy, unplanned family, divorce and abandonment of women by husband is a reality among the poor families in rural areas. The abandoned or divorced women want to work in the rural areas but they are not allowed to do so because of social norms and lack of job opportunities. When they move to cities for employment in garment industry, they find it difficult to survive with a monthly salary of BDT 800 (equivalent to \$13), which is paid irregularly. Girls and women under this condition move around bus stations and cinema halls for job advertisement. Pimps promise them highly paid jobs and then try to sell them in brothels. Purdah can help the pimps to hide the identity of the girls and women while trafficking" (Diary 1, pp. 70, 76, 15.7.1999).

As many girls don't get educational opportunities and they are not allowed to go outside home without father or a brother, this limits their self-confidence and makes them easy prey for sexual exploitation. Middle class girls and women in Bangladesh and Nepal are well protected because of their education and social capital. It is particularly the girls from lower echelons of society who easily fell prey to the traffickers within and across the border.

Khaleda, now a resident of BNWLA home, was sold to a pimp by her father at the age 5. The pimp Rashid took her to Delhi as a domestic servant and raped her every night with his two accomplices. In "safe custody" at Delhi where she lived for 6 years and 9 months, she was raped by 5 policemen. With post-traumatic syndrome (epilepsy), she was taken back to Bangladesh by BNWLA. She has been receiving psychological, medical and educational support. She does not want to go back to her father's family. As a result, BNWLA has given her a paid office job after she has reached to the age of 18 (BNWLA Shelter Home Proshanti, Dhaka, Diary 2, pp. 11-15, 26.7.1999).

In case of Nepal too, similar strategy is followed by Maiti Nepal to deal with the victims of trafficking and prostitution. Anita (19), victim of trafficking to India has been given an office job in the NGO so that she can sustain economically after providing her skill training in cutting, needling and fabric painting. She has been engaged in trafficking prevention camps in different parts of Nepal bordering regions of India (D3, pp. 30-32, 19.9.1999). This can appear that as a rehabilitation and education process, she has become dependent on the organization. But in the given context of little or no action by government on this issue, it can be considered a realistic decision on part of the NGOs.

Patriarchal social values contribute to women's vulnerability. Polygamy, large family, child marriage, lack of educational access for women and children and family violence offer hotbed

for victimisation of girls. Girls without education become the easy prey for the pimps and the traffickers. Many of the victim girls and women finally discover that they are infected with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and other life-threatening diseases. They and their families are stigmatised and ostracised for being trafficked in the society. The general trend of sale and prostitution can be pictured with the case of Rehana:

Rehana is 18 and she has been a resident of BNWLA shelter home. She was born at Taras in Sirajgonj. Her father is a functionally landless and a petty shopkeeper in the village. Her father has a house made of mud. After death of Rehana's mother, her father married a woman. Rehana has three sisters and among them two are married. Her father had to give dowry for the marriage of his two daughters. Rehana used to do household work and her stepmother scolded and sometimes slap and beat her. She was sent to work at rich household in the locality when she was just 6 years old. She was eager to leave her step-mother's rule and sought help from her brother-in-law who worked in Dhaka and lived there alone. He helped her to get a job of helper in a garment factory.

Working about 14 hours a day, she used to get BDT 500 (less than \$9) per month from the factory. After working there for several years, one day she was fired from her job without explanation. She was looking for her brother-in-law who disappeared from the locality without paying the dues in the nearby shop. The shopkeeper asked her to pay the debt of her brother-in-law. This put her in perplexing condition and as a result, she started to weep near a bus stand beside a cinema hall. In this situation one kind-looking woman of her aunt's age appeared to help her. In her words, "*Dalal Beti* (the pimp woman) asked me: why are you weeping here? I said that I have lost my job. Then she took me to her home and promised me a job of BDT 5, 000 (approximately \$90) per month. She gave me some food and then I fell asleep. I don't remember anything after that. When I got my senses, I found that I was sold in Tanbazar brothel with a price of BDT 20, 000 (approximately \$360)".

She was forced to have sex with many customers. In the beginning, she refused to serve the customers and as a result, she was terribly beaten and forced to take alcohol and drugs. She had been living there for three months. Sometimes she had to work for even 15-20 hours a day and had to serve 20-30 men and could not sleep. "There were people of my grandpas age and 12-13 year boys who came to me as customers". Everyday, she used to get BDT 1, 000 (approximately \$18) but the *Sardarni* (her owner) took all the money always. If she would oppose anything she would be whipped by the *Sardarni*. She tried to escape from there many times but in vain. "*Sardarni* beat me and said that I have bought you with BDT 20,000 (approximately \$360). If you flee from here, I will publish your name in *potrika* (newspaper) that you have become a prostitute. Then where will you be able to show your face?"

One of her fellow brothel girl, Parul, told about the ordeals of them in the brothel to one of her regular customers and sought his help. The person informed the matter of under-aged girls forced in prostitution to Bangladesh National Women Lawyer's Association (BNWLA). BNWLA people along with police raided the brothel and rescued 16 girls, all below 18 years. Since then, Rehana has been living in the BNWLA shelter home "Proshanti". "I never thought that I would be free from Tanbazar. Getting out from there is like a new birth for me. But I get cold and fever very often. However, I feel good and safe here". In the meantime, she has been going through medical treatment and literacy classes. "Here I get food, clothes and I have been learning Bangla and Arabic. Now I can write my name in Bangla. I also know *hater kaj* (sewing) and embroidery. From BNWLA, girls were given job in garment factories, those who wanted it".

"I like watching Bangla movies in television and play ludu (dice game on a board), carom board and kanamachi (hide and seek) with the girls at Proshanti. The old girls do not like the new girls here, there is quarrel sometimes". BNWLA tried to reunite her with her family members but her parents didn't come to see her, "My family members will face many problems if I go back home, my parents are afraid that people will not mix with them. My sisters will not find husbands because of me. Then why I should bother to go back home?" BNWLA is looking for a suitable job for her in a garment factory. When it is found, she will move to the job and start a new life (BNWLA Shelter Home Proshanti, Dhaka, Diary 2, pp. 6-10, 26.7.1999).

From Rehana's case, it is clear that for girls, social norms and customs and lack of educational opportunity may put girls in especially difficult circumstances. Lack of educational

opportunities for girls even exacerbates their conditions. For the victims of forced prostitution, the primary focus of NGOs is rescue and rehabilitation. In case of Rehana and other girls, rescue from nightmare brothel environment was their dream. She was one of the lucky few rescued by BNWLA with the help of police.

Medical care and psychotherapy have been helping Rehana to improve her physical and mental health from shocking and traumatic experiences. NGOs are the only actors which help the victims of trafficking and prostitution to go back to normal life. Most of the victim girls' parents were interested in investing their scarce resources only in the case of son's education. Girls who go to school are taken out of school in their puberty to protect their family honour. This proves that socio-cultural values are barriers to education for girls in Bangladesh and Nepal (discussed in chapter 5).

The girls in the shelter homes learn the knowledge of numeracy, literacy and skill training. But the level of education is elementary literacy and skill training which cannot give them alternative job opportunities to become self-employed. If they are reunited with their families, it can mean that they would suffer from same handicaps as before along with stigma of being trafficked and prostituted. There is a need for skill development so that the girls can have income security, which can help them in the long-run.

When the girls are rescued from inhuman conditions, their immediate needs include psychotherapy and medical care. When their situation is stabilised, they are given non-formal education and skill training by NGOs working with them. It has been found that NGOs working on trafficking and prostitution have a weak orientation towards education and skill development. They give priority to rehabilitation and reunion of the girls with their family members. In certain cases, marriage is arranged by the NGOs so that they can start new lives. Marriage as a rehabilitative strategy may appear odd from European point of view. However, in traditional cultural contexts of Bangladesh and Nepal, it is a form of security for girls and women.

Girls are given encouragement and training to set up their own enterprise and become independent. NGOs identify criminals and file cases against the traffickers and pimps. Due to lack of evidence, the criminals get away with the legal battle. The real culprits behind trafficking remain untouched. Due to social stigma associated with trafficking and prostitution, many parents usually do not want to take their daughters back home due to the fear or social ostracisation or in the fear that their daughters will not find husbands.

In Bangladeshi and Nepalese context, the work of NGOs is something new and necessary in dealing with the issue of trafficking and prostitution of children. Both BNWLA and Maiti Nepal provide shelter and education to the vulnerable girls such as daughters of prostitutes, rape victims, abandoned children, orphans, lost and found girls and garment and carpet workers. Maiti Nepal has been able to arrange educational sponsorship for its target group from foreign donors. The girls who have been rescued now work and act as counsellors in the prevention camps and transit home in the bordering areas, in case of Maiti Nepal and BNWLA.

NGO activities on trafficking and prostitution have their weaknesses too. In the lack of state involvement except policing, NGOs play a very important role by rescuing, counselling, medical care, NFE and skill development for children. Reintegration with family members and arranging marriage as a strategy to fight trafficking and prostitution are not that effective

and girls can end up being re-trafficked. The most important lesson is that patriarchal social values and the lack of educational opportunities increase the vulnerability of females. Strong gender sensitive schooling and social awareness on girl's rights to education can play an important role in improving the status of women in society.

BNWLA and Maiti Nepal show that education can be an instrument of satisfying the existing needs rather than the future needs of children. From the cases, it appears that NGOs under the category try to fill girls' immediate needs of shelter, food, medical and educational needs. It manifests Freire and Shor's (1987, 26-27) situated action/education which can transform particular life conditions. This approach has its own limitations due to the fact that the problem is rooted in culture.

Education for child domestic servants

To protect educational rights of child domestic servants, Shoishab Bangladesh has been exclusively working on domestic child servants in Dhaka since 1991. Its program covers education of 2,200 child domestic servants. By considering the reality of child domestic servants and their lack of opportunities for education, Shoishob provides children with learning opportunities that may eventually help them to secure a less exploitative and better future for them. At present there are 140 learning centres of Shoishab in Dhaka including Mohammadpur area.

Children are taught from grade I to III in those schools. There are 20 students in each class and 80 per cent of the learners are girls. All teachers and 99 per cent workers of Shoishab are women. The learning centres of Shoishab are established near the residential areas where child domestic servants are employed. There is no chair or table in the Shoishab School, rather, students and teacher sit on mat in the class. Shoishab follows its own syllabus as well as the combination of syllabuses of BRAC, Gonosahajjo Sangstha (GSS) and government.

Children go to the learning centre for 2 hours from 3 to 5 p.m. and on Friday, there is no class. Apart from basic education, the children receive medical care and are given lessons on etiquette as well as what their rights are. After completion of grade III in Shoishab Schools, children are sent to UCEP for further education and skill training. With the help of the other organisations such as BNWLA and Ain o Shalish Kendra, Shoishob helps domestic servants who have been victimised to get legal aid. In a scenario where child domestic servants are treated with neglect and cruelty, it is a formidable challenge to convince employers to send their workers to school.

Shoishab works as a bridge between employers and child domestic servants and tries to protect the rights of children. It arranges regular employers' meetings to sensitize them about the educational rights of the domestic servants. It has collaboration with government in its Hard-to-Reach working children program. Government pays TK 800 and Shoishab pays TK 200 of the teacher's salary. Here is a case from Shoishab Bangladesh:



Picture 2: A Shoishab learning centre for child domestic servants at Dhaka, Bangladesh

Monwara (15) is a domestic servant and a student at Shoishab Bangladesh School at Mohammadpur in Dhaka. She has been studying in Shoishab School for one and half years. She is a student of pack III in Shoishab School. She was born in Madargonj at Jamalpur. Her father died when she was very young. She has her mother, two brothers and three sisters at village home. She is the youngest of all her brothers and sisters. All his brothers and sister are working to support the family. The family does not have any land except for the house. Her two brothers are rickshaw pullers and sisters are already married in their childhood. Before admission in Shoishab School, she did not get opportunity to go to village school. Her brothers went to school only to drop out within one year. She came to Dhaka City for work at the age of nine. Before moving to Dhaka as a domestic servant, she had been working as a *chuta* (temporary) domestic servant in several rich households in the village.

The present employer's relatives from the countryside arranged the job for her in Dhaka as a domestic servant. From then she has been working in her employer's home as a *Bandha* (literally means tied-up or full-time) domestic servant. "I cook, clean, take kids of the employer to school and do shopping for the family. I get up at 6.30 a.m. and finish my work around midnight. I have to be always ready for service anytime they want". If they perceive that something is not done properly, they *scold* her. Previously they used to *beat* and *slap* her. She was not given mosquito net and she was the last person to eat in the family.

After admission to Shoishab School, *apas* (school madams) have visited her employer's home several times. This has helped improving the living and working conditions of her. During celebration periods (such as Muslim celebration of Eid), the employer gives her the used clothes of his daughter and small amount of money. But the employer does not give any monthly salary to her. "Kaka (literally, "uncle" meaning the employer) has promised my mother that he will bear the expenses of my marriage. He is saving the money from my salary. I get food, a place to sleep and used clothes of my employer's daughter. When my mother comes to visit me, the employer gives her some money, I do not know how much". Work in a house as a domestic servant helps her to have a space in a middle class family and somehow help her mother financially. She watches TV and listens to radio in the employer's home when she gets some free time. It is work, which help her to live in a secure place and have the opportunity to go to school.

Monwara heard about the Shoishab School from one of her friends who is also a domestic servant working in a house nearby. She attends the Shoishab School regularly. The school is just five minute's walking distance. She gets her books, papers and pencils free of cost from Shoishab. "*Apa(s)* (Madams) have taught me reading and writing and knowledge on hygiene, health and social relations issues. Those are very important for me. I like my school because all my friends come from there".

"*Apas* are very friendly and caring for me. I try to attend classes regularly but sometimes I cannot attend because of work pressure at my employer's home. When visitors or relatives of the employer come to

visit the family, I have to do extra work and miss the classes.” She regrets the missing of her classes. Previously she never thought that she would be able to read and write. According to her, “If I could not be admitted to Shoishab School, I would not ever be able to read and write”. If she gets some free time, she reads Bengali newspaper in her employer’s family.

Now she feels very happy because she can read and write. In her words, “before I was like blind even though I had my eyes, but now I have education. I am not blind anymore.” She will continue her studies for another half a year. She wishes to continue her studies thereafter. But she does not know how she can continue her studies; at least Shoishab does not have any education program after completion of Pack III studies. “I hope Sahoishab will arrange a sewing training course for me. I want to become self-employed in the future” (Shoishab School, Mohammadpur, Dhaka, Diary 2, pp. 96-97, 10.8.1999).

Monwara’s case manifests that work as a domestic servant gave her physical security from the tricky, violence and other dangerous city elements found in Dhaka. If she would not be living and working as a domestic servant, she would probably face other kinds of risks in Dhaka city. Yet, this does not hide the fact that she is not paid for her work, the employer gives part of her wage to her mother and part as savings for her marriage. Due to the economic insecurity arisen out of the death of her father, she had to move to Dhaka as a domestic servant. It is only because of the Shoishab School specifically designed for child domestic servants, which gave her the opportunity of education. She would not be able to go to study in other so-called "normal" school outside Shoishab.

Because of the NFE education, she can read, write and do simple arithmetic and calculation. In many lower middle class families in Bangladesh, boys and girls do not have the opportunity to read newspapers, but Monwara has the opportunity to read newspaper at her employer’s home. This helps her and many others like her to protect themselves from dangers of exploitation. Before going to Shoishab School she could not think that she would ever be able to go to school in her life. This is the schools of Shoishab, particularly designed for child domestic servants which show that it is possible to educate child domestic servants. The problem she faces is that she still does not know if she can continue her studies after her pack III studies at Shoishab School. There is no guarantee that she will be able to get skill-training to improve her better job opportunities.

If the employer is the child domestic servant's kin, it is advantageous for the later. It is true in the case of Rubel (15). The employer is a distant relative of him. He thinks that he enjoys extra advantage working in the house of a relative. In Rubel’s case, he has created certain space in the employer’s family that sometimes he is allowed to play cricket with his friends during free times (Diary 2, pp. 94-95, 10.8.1999). Rubel’s case is an exceptional one. In the cases of female domestic servants, they are not allowed to mix and play outside employer's home because the employers are afraid of their physical security. Many middle class people in Bangladesh also don’t consider that a domestic servant has the right to play.

The expectations of the child domestic servants from education are limited and realistic. Sultana is an 8 year old girl working as a domestic servants and studies in Shoishab School. She is a *chuta* (part-time or temporary) domestic servant and she carries out light duties. The employer lived in Europe but now has a business in Bangladesh. He has married recently. The employer’s foreign orientation has helped Sultana receiving good behaviour, lodging and food. Sultana’s mother works as a domestic servant in several places and lives with her after the completion of all her work in the evening. She tries to learn reading and writing from Sultana in the evenings. Sultana is happy about her educational opportunities. According to her, “Children should study and play, this is normal” (Diary 2, pp. 92-93, 10.8.1999).

Shoishab has been playing a pioneering role in experimenting education for child domestic servants, mostly girls. Previously, people were ambivalent on the working conditions and education of huge number of child domestic servants, mostly girls. Referring to the early difficulty of the job to take child domestic servants to school, Ms. Gita Chakroborty, Programme Officer of Shoishab Bangladesh mentioned that in the beginning, “employers considered the Shoishab idea of educating child servants as ridiculous” (Shoishab Office, Dhaka, Diary 2, p. 86, 09.8.1999).

Since 1991, Shoishab has been working with its educational program for child domestic servants, which has proved to be useful for children’s life conditions. Shoishab experience shows that it is possible to educate child domestic servants in the right circumstances amidst all its constraints. Shoishab’s approach of situated learning generates “language of hope” (Freire 1998a, 9, 1998b) for children. But unanswered questions remain. What is the value of grade three education without further education and skill training? What is the use of literacy when children usually do not have the opportunity to read and write anything in their daily lives after completing their studies? Is this education enough for a child to protect his/her rights or has it any lasting impact on children education or skill training? Without further education or skill training, what is the value of shortened three-year NFE?

Protective strategies: general observations

From the cases of broader protective strategies followed by NGOs, there is one general observation that even though NGOs deliver useful services for children in special need, they have weak orientation for children’s further education and skill training. Though NGOs have rhetoric of children’s participation in their projects, it is seldom followed in practice. If they would incorporate children’s opinion on their education, there would have been more focus on further education and skill training for the beneficiaries.

Putting children at shelter homes and bearing the costs of their housing, food, medicine and education are very expensive. It raises the question on the sustainability of this type of projects. Without downplaying the role of NGOs in rehabilitative strategies for children in need, it can be said that NGOs under this category less synchronize their efforts with other stakeholders. As a result, their work may have a less impact on the well-being of child labourers even with much effort. It may appear that NGOs under protective strategies have been providing education for children in accordance with their household economic and cultural status and hence supporting economic (Bowles & Gintis 1976) and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). Indirectly, it may imply that they help maintaining social cohesion and order (Durkheim 1956). On the other hand, it appears that NGOs provide language of hope (Freire 1998a), dialogue (Freire 1990) and conscientisation (Freire 1985) for children through education in their given contexts.

7.2: EDUCATION AS A SKILL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

UCEP follows skill development strategy in dealing with child labour. It aims to provide alternatives to children through non-formal education and skill training program. UCEP was established on the basis of the results of Ahmadullah Mia’s research work *Study on Child Labour in Dhaka City*. A New Zealander philanthropist Lindsay Allan Cheyne initiated the implementation of the recommendations of study in 1972.

The majority of the UCEP students are children working as factory workers, shop assistants, vendor, rickshaw pullers, hotel/mess boys, garbage collectors and porters etc. UCEP has specialised programme designed for child labourers of the age group 6-14 years. It offers four years of basic education in two years and then transfers many of the students to vocational training to impart employable skills. It is a mixture of general and technical education.

UCEP has three types of activities: general basic education, vocational education and job placement/employment support. General education is available for urban working boys 11 years or above and girls 10 years or above. UCEP has 30 general schools in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi City with 20, 000 students. This consists of a three-year course of basic learning, which brings the children to an academic standard equivalent to grade V in public school system. UCEP technical schools have 1200 students.

A one-year bridging course aimed at preparing the students for UCEP vocational training or further regular education. The academic standard of the bridging course is considered equivalent to grade VII under the public school system. The bridging course includes English, Bangla, Mathematics, Social and Physical Science. The learning contents are selected as to meet the general academic requirements and an orientation to market-oriented vocational training. The general features of UCEP general schools are:

Schools in the reach of child labourers: UCEP has its schools near the slums. It provides special facilities for the urban child labourers and slum children who have had no opportunity to attend school or dropped out during early stage of primary education. The education in UCEP is free and it bears all the costs associated with education of working children. UCEP works on providing education and skill training for child workers to save them from intergenerational poverty.

It responds directly to problems and issues faced by children in their current work and help them to acquire education and skills to enter the labour market with better chances for upward social mobility. It allows children to remain in low paid jobs, continue their work and study and improve their future. It has collaboration with industries so that after completing the vocational studies in UCEP School, the graduates can be placed in industries (when they reach the legal workable age).

Flexible school hours: Considering the working children's work hours, UCEP has three shifts in its schools. Each shift has three lessons for a class/grade. This enables children to choose among three shifts in accordance with their needs.

Practical curriculum: UCEP curriculum is different from that of public schools. It has a mixed curriculum of government approved textbooks along with its own non-formal education textbooks. Along with government curriculum, children are taught practical issues such as cleanliness and disease control, social relations, local politics, environmental pollution and children's rights etc. There is no homework in UCEP schools.

Condensed school year: UCEP has condensed its school year into six months to make it fit for working children's special needs. To complete grade VIII, UCEP students need four years.

Teacher student ratio: The teacher student ratio in UCEP general education is 1:30. The teaching method is similar to that of formal school system.

Teachers as social workers: Schools are established at or close to the area where working children are concentrated, living and/or working. Teachers have close contacts with students' family members, employers and community. Before the start of each school academic year, all teachers of the school prepare a list of children as potential students in slum areas. In addition to pedagogy, teachers are given training on life situation of the child labourers and their families, their individual and environmental needs and limitations.

Employable skill training: UCEP provides children with training opportunities to acquire employable technical skills after completing their general education in UCEP School. Children who finish grade VIII from UCEP general education are eligible for UCEP technical education. UCEP also accepts students from other NGOs for its vocational education program. Aiming at providing skill training for working children, it has established three technical schools at Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna.

UCEP training courses are of two and half years in duration. Chittagong and Khulna school has three trades namely: electrical, metal and garments. Dhaka school has fourteen trades: automobile mechanics, textile (spinning), textile (weaving), textile (knitting), garments, tailoring, knitting, printing (offset), carpentry, Welding and general fittings, electronics, electrical, refrigeration and air conditioning and garments finishing. Dhaka technical school has 850 students and the total technical students of Chittagong and Khulna are 500.

Those children who do not get the opportunity to enter in technical school or those who after completion of grade V cannot continue their studies; have opportunity to get admission in six-month UCEP Para-trade skill training. The courses include electrical decoration and house wearing, embroidery and jari, chumki, signboard banner writing, screen-printing, leather crafts and motor mechanic. To combine education, skill-training and employment-opportunities, UCEP has collaboration with public and private sectors industries to employ these children. UCEP vocational education is accredited under Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). BTEB allows the graduates of UCEP technical schools to participate in examinations conducted by the Board. In this sense, UCEP training programme is linked with the structure of the mainstream national vocational education. UCEP has job seekers list where the job-seeking students' bio-data are created and supplied to the perspective employers.

It also has a list from where children can choose and contact a prospective employer. UCEP also has job-hunting week for two weeks every year. In this process, job placement officers along with 2/3 of the students directly contact different industries and recommend UCEP graduates' recruitment. UCEP also arranges employers' day when employers are invited to look at the UCEP education and training facilities and talk to the students. It also arranges on-the-job vocational training for the students in different industries. Here is a case study of UCEP technical student:



Picture 3: UCEP Technical School class, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Shahid is 18 years old and a student of Mirpur UCEP Technical School in Spinning and textile trade. He started his studies in UCEP General School in grade III. After completing grade VIII, he has been enrolled in UCEP Technical School. He comes from a functionally landless family. He has his parents, one brother and three sisters. His father and brother worked as agricultural worker. His mother is a housewife. When they could not sustain livelihood with minimum income in the countryside, the whole family moved to Dhaka. His father started working as a rickshaw puller with a monthly income of BDT 2000 (approximately \$33). The family lives in a small housing at Dhalpur slum, near Syaedabad bus terminal. The slum is a safe haven for muggers and other anti-social elements. Polygamy, child marriage, dowry, family conflicts and family breakdown, drug abuse and prostitution are prevalent in the slum.

Shahid was a school drop out from grade 2 from his village public school at Rangpur. “The teachers gave us lots of homework in the school. Nobody in my family could help me with homework. The teachers beat me in school. What I learnt in government school has little use in my life. *Sarkari School* (public school) was a waste of time”. He could not attend school regularly because he needed to help his father in share-cropping in agricultural work. He failed and repeated in grade II and finally dropped out from school. According to him, “the school teachers taught the children from rich families privately. This helped the children from rich families to do better in school examinations. Teachers did not care for education of children like us”.

In Dhaka, Shahid was working as vegetable carrier to local markets. He worked eight hours everyday beginning early in the morning. He got a wage of BDT 300 (approximately \$5) per month and he gave the money to his parents. "I came to know about UCEP School from one of my friends in the slum. I was talking about going to school and most of the boys from the slum discouraged me. My father did not like the idea that I go to school. When I explained that UCEP education can change my life, he permitted me to go to school and I was admitted to UCEP School in grade III". He does not participate in local events with other children because many of them are involved in petty crime. Work from the early morning was not good for his education in UCEP School and as a result, he changed the job later and took a job as a newspaper delivery boy.

Now he has been working as a newspaper delivery boy early in the morning. He receives approximately BDT 600 (approximately \$10) per month. He likes this work because he can finish work earlier and focus more on his studies. He is positive about his work and study. In the beginning, he did not get much co-operation from his father concerning his education in UCEP. His father was sceptical about the relevance of NGO education which does not give a diploma of secondary education. But when he knew that after completion of his technical education in UCEP School, Shahid would be able to get a good salaried job, he became cooperative with his studies. His father's understanding and support was crucial for continuation of his studies.

After completing the condensed courses in UCEP Dhalpur School in grade VIII in four years, he got admitted in UCEP technical school. "From the beginning teachers are cooperative and friendly to me. I am regular in school because I can choose the timing of his school. After three months, I will graduate from UCEP Technical in Spinning and textile trade".

Before enrolling in UCEP School, he was uncertain about his future and thought that probably he would have to continue vegetable selling work of BDT 300 (approximately \$5) per month. "I will get my certificate after three months and get a job in Bangladesh Export Import and Manufacturing Company (BEXIMCO) promised by UCEP. BEXIMCO will take a total 18 graduates from UCEP Technical School. In the beginning, the salary will be BDT 1500 (\$25) and after several years it would be raised". He wants to take the responsibility of his family members when he gets the job. He wants to take his family out of the slum environment, rent a better house and then take his sisters out of work and support their education. He said, "I did not think before that I will be able to get a good job. But now I am very near it. Everyone needs education and skill development to become productive citizens".

"When my monthly income will reach to BDT 5000 (\$80) and I will have a good savings, I intend to marry an educated and skilled girl. I think people should not have more than two children. Children must be liked and they should go to school" (UCEP Technical School, Mirpur, Dhaka, Diary 2, p. 169-171, 27.7.1999).

Shahid's family is a big and typical village family in Bangladesh. His case validates the earlier discussion on the positive correlation between big household size and engagement of children in child labour in chapter 5.1. As his father owned little land and could not continue to work in agricultural work in village, he had to move to Dhaka. He engaged all his children in work as a survival strategy. Shahid, a school drop out from public school accuses public school of being insensitivity to the needs of child labourers.

In Dhaka, he has been living in a violent slum culture. His father engaged him to work to support the family income. He was eager to go to school and was looking for the right kind of work under which he could continue his studies. After completing 4 year education in UCEP general school, he enrolled in UCEP technical school. He heard that after completion of technical studies, children can get high salary jobs. This motivated him to continue his studies for a period of 4 years. Without this motivation, he would not be encouraged to support his studies by working and sacrificing more income opportunities. When his father thought of a good employment prospect after completion of his studies, he was also supportive with his studies. At the end of his vocational studies, he is with full of dream. He wants to help his

family members when he gets the job in BEXIMCO. To get rid of slum environment, he wants to take his family somewhere out of the slum at the first place. He also wants to take his younger siblings out of work and put them in school. This shows that education has empowered him from within.

For Salma (17), a female student of UCEP technical in electronic trade in 4th year (2 year technical studies), it was even harder for her to continue her studies while continuing her job. She comes from a female-headed household. Without any kind of education in public or private school, she started to work as a domestic servant at Dhaka at the age of 10. She had to do all the household work, go to shop and take children of the employer's family to school. When she realized that she could carry out her studies in UCEP School, she left the *bandha* (tied) work and took a *chuta* (part-time) work as a domestic servant. She started her studies in grade I and when she was promoted to grade VIII, she started to teach as a private tutor for several elementary students. With the money, she has supported her widow mother, brothers and sisters.

She will be graduating from UCEP technical school within six months. UCEP has promised her that it will offer her a job placement in an industry after her graduation. In the beginning, her salary will be BDT 1500 (approximately \$25) and after a year it will be BDT 2000-3000 (approximately \$33-\$50). A high salary job after completion of technical education has worked as an incentive for her and her mother to support her studies under hardships. She is eagerly waiting for her graduation and job placement. She wants to support her family with the money she will get from her work. Her mother is pressing for her marriage now-a-days but she has been resisting the pressure. She said, "Marriage does not solve girl's problems. It is just a social and physical need. Girls should marry after they reach 25." She is confident on her future now. In her words, "Reality is not far from my dream now" (UCEP Technical School, Dhaka, Diary 2, p. 20-22, 27.7.1999).

UCEP has an ex-student who works as a teacher and school administrator of UCEP general school. He is *Mr. Sanwar* (40) who has been working in UCEP Outfall School at Dhalpur slum. He is a very good example of UCEP success in educating child workers. He was born at Chandpur and had a family of 12 members. The big and poor family lost most of its land to river erosion in 1974. His parents moved their house to a new location nearby. He had been studying in village school and dropped out when he was in grade II. Sudden calamity (river erosion and famine in Bangladesh in 1974) shocked him and forced him to look for a livelihood somewhere else to help the family members.

One day he moved to Dhaka in search for a job and took shelter to a boy who comes from his own locality. It is during the 1974 famine in Bangladesh and life was very hard for Mr. Sanwar. At Segunbagicha, where he had been working and living, UCEP started its first school for child labourers in Dhaka. He came to know from a student of the school that by paying BDT 1.55 (approximately \$0.10 in 1974 value) to UCEP, he could get education, shelter and food in UCEP. He went to the garage manager to bargain for a wage of BDT 1.50 (approximately \$0.10) daily but failed and left the job. His mechanic friend admitted him to UCEP School and he started to sell nuts with a small capital given by the boy. Later he changed his work many times from helper of porters and water bearers for restaurants and worked 6-8 hours a day. He started his studies in grade IV in UCEP School and after finishing grade VI he was admitted to the first UCEP technical School for a six-month course on carpentry and electrical.

Due to the needs of the family, after finishing vocational education, he had to move to his village home and he was admitted to grade VII in local school. He had been engaged in agricultural work at night and continued his studies in daytime. He passed his secondary certificate from the same school and moved back to Dhaka to study in Kabi Nazrul College. He had to work to support his family members by working in house wearing. He worked in an electrical company as an accountant with a monthly salary of BDT 500 (approximately \$10). After passing higher secondary diploma, he was successful in admission test for medical college and started to study medicine. But later he found that it would not be possible for him to continue his studies due to the fact that he could not study full time for a medical degree because of high costs of studying medicine and the income needs of his family.

He left Medical College and took a job in a printing press and within one year he was promoted to the post of press manager. He started to save money and by taking loans from friends, he started his own press. In the meantime, he was admitted to a night college and got his bachelor's diploma in 1989. He quitted the press job and joined as a telephone operator in a buying house in 1989 with a salary of BDT 5000 (approximately \$100). Within two years, he was promoted to secretary of the buying house with a salary of BDT 10, 000 (approximately \$200).

Due to the encouragement of one teacher and the Managing Director of UCEP, he left the job and joined UCEP School as an Assistant School Administrator in 1991. In 1992, he was promoted to School Administrator. He is married and has two sons of 7 and 5 years old. His wife is a lawyer. He intends to pursue a law degree by himself along with continuing his UCEP job. He has reached to such a level that his sons will never have to become child labourers (Interview of Mr. Sanwar, Coordinator UCEP General School Dhalpur Slum, Dhaka, Diary 1, pp. 188-190, Diary 2, pp. 1-2, 21.7.1999).

Education as a skill development strategy: general observations

UCEP has made a great difference by educating and empowering child labourers as stated in education as skill development strategy case studies. It does not claim to directly restrict or prevent child labour. Instead it provides educational and skill training opportunities for children. Through UCEP's education and training, child labourers have a chance to raise their socio-economic status, and ensure a better future. Very often the parents of child labourers state that they have little or no choice but to send their children to work. UCEP model suggests that it does provide *viable choice* for child labourers. Pupils of UCEP schools are self-confident about their future comparing to children from other NGO schools. Some of the students of UCEP want to become self-employed. In a country where there is obsession with schools as *factories of diploma* for office jobs, this is a new trend.

In UCEP Schools, chair, table, textbook all are like formal school but there is no homework and physical punishment. It prepares children to get ready for becoming blue-collar employees. Children under UCEP Schools don't stay in illusion that they will be doctors, engineers, judges, magistrates, police officers and so on. Rather, they pursue their studies in UCEP to improve their life-chances so that they don't have to continue the kind of work they are doing at present. Is UCEP promoting a different standard of education for the underprivileged children? Apparently, UCEP educational philosophy may support Bowles and Gintis (1976) thesis that education is tied to society's economic and social institutions in order to reproduce social inequality.

It may appear that UCEP is creating educational apartheid by creating *second rate* education for child labourers. It is also true that if children are not given educational opportunities, they may become the most disadvantaged. Salma's example from UCEP can work as a reference. She could end up as a submissive domestic servant if she would not get the opportunity to get technical skills. Now she is a self-confident girl with technical skill and with a job offer. In the given context of child labourers, UCEP education opens up opportunities of better life for them. We have to keep in mind that UCEP students are the children who are either non-enrolled or drop outs from public schools. Under UCEP educational system, they have opportunity to become productive and competent members of society. It not only empowers child labourers but also breaks the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

When children complete their studies in UCEP School, their level of job opportunity increases and their voices are heard in family and thus, the community. Many UCEP graduates, particularly technical graduates have changed the situation of themselves and their family members significantly. UCEP graduate Mr. Sanwar's experience shows how UCEP has helped him to rise to such a level that his children will never have to think about engaging in child labour. It is also true that alongside UCEP's help, his personal motivation may have played a significant role in promoting him to the middle class social position. However, without UCEP education, he could end up like many other child labourers without options.

Girls in particular have improved their social status significantly through UCEP education. UCEP education has helped raised the age of marriage among its students and they have successfully challenged the detrimental social norms imposed upon them. UCEP graduate girls are taking job in technical fields, which is new trend in Bangladesh context. It encourages other girls towards education, capability-building and empowerment. UCEP not only contributes to the national objective of EFA but also helps working children to become productive human resources in a country obsessed with diploma.

Mahbubur Rashid, the Divisional Co-ordinator of UCEP Dhaka thinks that the conventional public education in Bangladesh is to a large extent does not suit the demands of most children. It is diploma-oriented and it does not focus on enterprise development and rural skill training. He thinks that the most important factor is to provide education and skill training for rural children. "UCEP education makes productive human resources according to the market demand. 95 per cent of our technical graduates find employment in job market, which make them self-confident and productive member of the society. They also have the possibilities to become self-employed. Most of the NGOs are looking after foreign donation without looking for solutions to very serious problems. Donors have no lack of commitment concerning the reduction of child labour but NGOs have the lack of innovation and co-ordination" (Mr. Mahbubur Rashid, Divisional Coordinator, UCEP Dhaka, Diary 1, pp. 164-166, 20.7.1999).

UCEP technical education model is replicated in Nepal by the establishment of UCEP Nepal. Muhammadiyah Bandung, a large national NGO of Indonesia has also started a similar programme with the support of International Labour Office (ILO). UCEP-Bangladesh has provided technical assistance toward strengthening the service capabilities of this organisation in Indonesia.

A tracer study financed by SIDA reveals that the employment rate of government vocational institutes was about 50 per cent whereas the employment rate of the UCEP graduates is 95 per cent (Mia 1997, 40-41). The UCEP graduates do not have typical middle class aspiration to do white-collar jobs; they are readily available to meet the demand for skilled and semi-

skilled jobs. Before UCEP programme, there was no other programme whether public, private or NGO, which have been able to provide relevant skill training for child labourers.

7.3: EDUCATION AS A PREVENTIVE STRATEGY

Comparatively few NGOs focus on the preventive strategies of education in improving the life conditions of child labourers. Among selected NGOs in Bangladesh and Nepal, only two (SAFE and BRAC) follow preventive strategies in the true sense.

SAFE education for Badi girls

Lower social status of girls is a serious problem in Nepal. It is said that children are protected when they work under a family environment. But this notion can be challenged on the premise that cultural traditions or dire economic conditions of certain marginal communities can make girls the victim of child prostitution even under the family umbrella. The Badi girls in Western Nepal are an example of this. Badis are known as a dalit (untouchable) caste, which practice prostitution of girls and women as a means of livelihood.

O'dea (1995, 12-15) describes the history of Badi community of Western Nepal. The community entertained on streets, at homes for marriage and other celebrations, and were patronised by the Ranas in Western Nepal. Their patron cum clients provided them with their basic needs and in return Badi community girls and women entertained and provided them with sex. But sexual service was not the central but part of the whole entertainment package provided. When Rana regime was overthrown from power in Nepal 1950, the rulers and landlords in Western Nepal were stripped off much of their economic and political clout. As a result, they could not continue their patronage to the Badi community anymore.

As a result, the Badi girls and women began to take up prostitution as a means of survival. They started to move into areas such as Rajapur, Nepalgunj, Tulsipur, Ghorahi and other towns where the market demand for sex was expanding. Previously, Badi men were working as makers of musical instruments, their role changed later. Badi men work as support staff for the family sex business as procurers and pimps for their sisters and mothers. Badi sex work is basically a family business and the family is structured around the business. A Badi man can work as a pimp and a mother may negotiate price until a daughter is old or experienced enough to know the appropriate rates for different customers. There is no sense of guilt or negative value placed on sexual transaction among the family members.

In terms of education, in conjunction with social discrimination faced by Badi children in school, Badi girls are under tremendous pressure to conform to family norms. They drop out of school very early to take up their traditional work as a result (Cox 1992 cited in O'dea 1995, 26). Not seeing education without diploma as useful or relevant, many consider that engaging daughters in sex business is alright. Girls as young as 12 years are engaged in prostitution and the percentage of girls engaged in prostitution is 40 percent, according to one CSW from the community in Rajapur.

Januka Devi Pariyar, the Warden of Girl Child Protection Centre at Nepalgunj puts the Badi girl's problems in context, "Members of a Badi family mostly live in one room with 2-3 women, mother, daughters, daughter-in-laws who are engaged in sex work. Children live in an environment where they see their mother and sisters are engaged in sex work. In some cases,

clients force girls to have sex with them” (SAFE Hostel, Nepalgunj, Diary 3, p. 160, 03.10.1999).

With the lack of land ownership and education, the Badi community remains as one of the most marginalised communities in Nepal. “Literacy among Badis is about 10 per cent and the community lives at the bottom of the society”, according to Dilip Pariyar, Executive Director of SAFE who himself comes from the Badi community (Diary 3, p. 132, 03.10.1999). Social attitudes towards girls maintain the existing discrimination. They are excluded by social and political institutions. They are discouraged to visit Hindu temple and take tea in ‘one cup’ used by other castes. Badi community children are discriminated in public and private school by their teachers, students (upper caste) and others.

SAFE works to protect Badi girls from prostitution and has a direct link with the community. It has been working on awareness-raising campaign through education, reproductive health and social issues. The whole community is involved in implementation of SAFE activities. But it was not easy in the beginning. Several SAFE staffs and volunteers were arrested and harassed by police while they were sensitizing the public about the rights of Badi/dalit people, according to Mr. Pariyar.

Later the scenario has changed and police, community leaders, and local officials have understood the importance of SAFE work. SAFE facilitates education for disadvantaged communities in general and the Badi children in particular. Before SAFE’s intervention, it was very difficult for a Badi child to get enrolled and sustain in public schools. They were discriminated and mistreated by students, teachers and staffs of school due to social stigma associated with being a Badi child. They faced double barriers of untouchability and their identity evolved around prostitution.

SAFE has one school and seven hostels for children in different districts like Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Dang in Western Nepal. The only school operated by SAFE is at Nepalgunj. The school has six grades along with nursery class. Only Badi and lower caste and underprivileged children are admitted in SAFE School. After completion of their studies there, children can continue their studies in public/private schools with the support of SAFE. Hostels work as protection centre for children. There are 30 children in each hostel. Children of grade I to college students can stay there.

Children, who are in need of protection and support, are targeted by SAFE social workers, and then educational sponsorship hostel facilities are arranged. The SAFE School has 130 students of whom 50 per cent come from disadvantaged background such as dalit and Muslim families. SAFE follows government curriculum in its primary school with teachers mainly from Dalit communities. The ratio of boys and girls in the school is 6:4. The school time is from 10:00 a.m. to 16:00 p.m. The hostel in Nepalgunj is just ten minutes walking distance from school. There are separate hostels for girls and boys.

Children get shelter, food, education, a school dress and medical support at the SAFE hostel. The hostel works as a kind of human resource development centre. SAFE focuses on personal development of children spiritually, practically and socially. All children call the warden as “Mummi”. Children have social interactions with the community and learn about children's rights, civil rights and social integration. They arrange and participate in cultural activities and sports.

SAFE has plans for skill training for children who have completed their secondary education. The training will include nursing, general mechanic, driving and computer training. Every year there are 3 or 4 students taking the secondary school examination from SAFE programme. During the period of 1993-1997, 27 children were rehabilitated from this home. Among them, several children continued to go to school, several married, got skill training and jobs. Here is a case of a SAFE supported student in Nepalgunj.



Picture 4: A poverty-stricken Badi community at Rajapur, Western Nepal

Rima is 16 and she is a resident of SAFE Hostel at Nepalgunj. She was born at Banguchri at Bardia district in the Badi community. Her mother is a sex worker and she supports her own elderly mother. Due to poverty, there were often quarrels between her parents. Her father left her mother when she was very young, she does not know where he lives now. Rima has one brother and one sister. Her sister is a grade VIII student living at SAFE Hostel. Her brother is a grade I student in a public school. She is the eldest of the siblings.

Rima was a public school drop out from grade III. In the school, she felt humiliated by verbal abuses by upper caste students due to her Badi origin. "Other children did not behave nicely with me because of my mother's profession. I felt very sorry and if I could arrange an alternative job for her. Before moving to SAFE Hostel, I did not get care from my neighbours". She has been living in the shelter home for last 6 years and now she is a student of grade IX under SAFE sponsorship

She feels protected from the bad social environment of home. In the primary school most of the students were from Badi and other disadvantaged communities. The volunteers and teachers at SAFE school help her with her homework. "In SAFE School, all the teachers come from Badi or other disadvantaged communities; there is no question of untouchability in school. Teachers and students are very cooperative and understanding".

After completion of grade V in primary school, she went to public high school for further studies. In the beginning, it was difficult for her in public school because the upper caste students would not mix with her. But due to the SAFE campaign, very few students now care about untouchability. "Education is most important in my life. I go to school regularly". She does not feel harassed by the upper caste students and teachers any more. She does weightlifting and karate with her school friends during her free time in school. When she gets sick, Mummy (warden) and the friends of the shelter takes care of her.

She feels safe in SAFE shelter home. She watches TV, listens to radio and reads newspaper regularly. In her words, "Life could be ruined and I could turn into a prostitute if I would not get shelter home and education here". She wants to overcome the social barriers and for that reason she thinks that diplomas

are necessary. Without diploma and skill training, she thinks that there can be no viable alternative for her. She said, "After finishing my higher secondary, I will need to enter in a skill training program. Without skill training, where will I get a job? Without getting a job, there will be no good change in my life".

She is hopeful that SAFE will provide her skill training opportunity after completion of secondary studies. After getting a job, she wants to help her mother to get rid of prostitution and take both her mother and grandmother to live with her. "I feel a moral responsibility to work for the Badi and other Dalit community girls so that they can escape from bad fate". For that reason she thinks that she will need a compassionate man who will be supportive to her profession (SAFE Hostel, Nepalgunj, Diary 4, pp. 18-19, 07.10.1999).

I met Kumari (20) who has been a resident of SAFE home. Her mother was a Commercial Sex Workers (CSW) and her sister still continues as a CSW. She started her studies under SAFE sponsorship from grade V and during the fieldwork period she was a 2nd year student of the 11th grade in Simantha Inter College near Nepal-India border. She wants to become a social worker and she is hopeful that it will be possible to reach her goal (Nepalgunj SAFE Hostel, Diary 3, p. 166-168, 03.10.1999).

Sita (14) is 8th grader and she is hopeful about her future. She wants to become a lawyer after completing her studies. There is tremendous change in her social surroundings due to the SAFE activities. From a CSW and being illiterate, her mother got literacy under SAFE literacy programme. Later she joined as a community motivator, later a board member and now she is the president of SAFE. Her husband is an upper caste man who after his marriage, took the last name "Nepali" designated for the Badis (Nepalgunj SAFE Hostel, Diary 4, pp. 16-17, 07.10.1999). This is something remarkable in Nepali caste-obsessed society.

Bimla is sensitised by SAFE activities in Rajapur. She is a CSW by profession. She values education for her children. SAFE conscientisation programme in Badi community has helped the community to understand the importance of education for job and social dignity. In her words, "Even if I will not have money, I will educate my only daughter. I want to sacrifice my life for her education. It does not matter if she cares for me or not in my old age, I do not want my daughter to get the same fate as me" (Bimla, CSW, age 30, Rajapur Badi Community, Diary 3, pp. 188-189, 05. 10.1999).

SAFE programme: an analysis

In case of Badi community children, it was impossible to imagine a programme, which would protect them from social stigma and enable them to get educational opportunities in school like other communities. Lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990) put Badi children in a disadvantaged situation in public schools in Nepal. Social and political institutions are not sensitive to the community's needs and contexts. The SAFE provides an example, how children from a disadvantaged and discriminated community can be protected from prostitution. SAFE has generated "opportunities for hope" (Freire 1998a, 1998b) through its "situated" education (Freire & Shor 1987, 26-27) as manifested in the interviews of children.

It may appear that SAFE is fostering "separatism" of Badi community children from the mainstream schools. But where there is deep-rooted social barrier, contempt and violence against the dalit groups, it may be necessary to give them separate education as a transitional step. When there is consciousness in the community and society as a whole on the issue of

children's and lower caste people's rights, it may not be necessary to separate Badi children from public schools and education can be given in the common public/private schools.

BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Educational (NFPE) programme

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) through its Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) programme has been providing basic education for rural children from landless families since 1985. It has the largest national level coverage of non-formal education in Bangladesh. The programme started with 22 experimental school and today BRAC has 34, 000 schools in Bangladesh catering more than a million students. The NFPE programme is designed to meet the educational needs of the rural children who cannot afford to go to school or who have dropped out from school. In 1985, the NFPE model was started as a three-year programme for children between the ages 8 and 10 years. The target groups of BRAC NFPE are those children who are either dropout from school or non-enrolled in school.

A typical BRAC school: A typical BRAC school has bamboo and mud walled room with an earthen floor, a tin roof, and a blackboard. The children sit on the floor on bamboo mats, holding their slates on their knees. The teacher has a stool and a metal trunk that serves as a desk as well as a supply cabinet. The minimum floor space is 336 square feet (BRAC 1997, 3). The schoolhouse is usually rented by BRAC for a nominal sum. In most cases the landowner volunteers to construct the schoolhouse, often with advance rent paid by BRAC. Schools generally don't have their own latrines and tube-wells but these are located near these facilities wherever possible. Children sit on mat in U shape and the walls are with pictures of alphabets and posters on many social issues. Instruction is provided in one-room premises for three hours per day.

Pupils: The students of BRAC schools are the children of the poor and the landless who have been denied education in public schools. To solve the problem particularly for girls, BRAC schools are located near the homes of students and teacher so that it is easier for girls to attend school. This aims to enable children to receive individual attention from the teacher after class hours if necessary. A school consists of 33 students, 70 per cent of whom are girls living in rural areas, within about a two-kilometre radius of the school. For the most part, pupils come from disadvantaged households, their families being landless or owning only their homesteads.

Teachers: Eligibility to become a BRAC teacher depends on a few but important requirements. The teacher must be a married and a local resident of the village. She must also have at least nine years of schooling. More than 90 per cent of the BRAC teachers are women, which is the manifestation of its preference for female teachers. The teachers are hired on a temporary, part-time basis and are paid modest wages. There is one teacher for every 33 pupils. Teacher training includes 14 days of initial training at a residential BRAC training centre and one-day or two-day refresher training sessions each month conducted by BRAC staff at a BRAC office near the teacher's school.

Parents: The parents of most BRAC school pupils are usually illiterate and landless. Parents pay no tuition fees; BRAC provides all pupil and teacher supplies - pencils, notebooks, textbooks, teacher manuals, slate, chalk, etc. Prior to the opening of a new school, parents and BRAC staff meet several times. Parents and teachers discuss the children's attendance, progress, cleanliness and hygiene, the responsibility of parents towards their children, and any school problems requiring parental attention. On average, 80 per cent of the parents (mostly

mothers) attend the meetings (ibid. 3). Teacher builds up strong rapport with their students, visiting their homes and seeing how they live, inquiring after their welfare, and motivating and advising them whenever needed.

Curriculum: BRAC curriculum is designed to make it relevant to children's environment and special needs. BRAC goes beyond the reading textbook as a learning method. It spends a good amount of time each day on games and fun activities such as singing, dancing, story telling and role playing, which help children build self-confidence. The teachers facilitate learners to discuss child and family issues, social and moral values, personal hygiene, food and nutrition, cleanliness, safety and first aid, animal care and knowledge about social institutions.

The current BRAC curriculum spans from grades 1-3 and includes Bangla, mathematics, social studies and English with an emphasis on the practical health and social issues that are likely to be encountered by a typical BRAC pupil. Since the formal school system requires English, the NFPE schools include English in their curriculum during the third year so that children who want to join formal schools later are well prepared. Class time is allocated in the following segments: Bangla (25 minutes reading and 25 minutes writing); mathematics (35 minutes); social studies (25 minutes); and two 20-minute co-curricular activities, which include physical exercise, field trips, singing and dancing.

Flexibility of school: BRAC schools meet for 3 hours per day for 270 days in a year comparing to 220 days a year in public schools (ibid. 3). Classes take place six days a week and the school hours are flexible, depending on the convenience of students and their households. The school schedule allows for a short vacation, which is determined jointly by parents and teachers. Teacher absences are quite low. In addition, BRAC teachers assign little homework and consequently spend a minimum of class time on it.

Classroom environment: Pupils sit on mats on a mud floor in a 'U' shape, with a blackboard and teaching aids at the front of the classroom. Neither the teacher nor the pupils have desks. BRAC has little or no homework for its students. It does not have any formal examination system like public schools. BRAC teachers don't use stick in school like the public schools. Examinations are infrequent and held on the material what have been taught. This pupil-teacher ratio is 1:33 in BRAC Schools comparing to 65:1 in public schools. Pupils are often divided into small working groups in which the advanced pupils help the slower students and all pupils move together through the lessons at the same pace. BRAC materials stress a basically child-centred approach to learning. Instruction in the core subjects is broken up with co-curricular activities, sometimes for as little as five minutes between subjects.

BRAC has educational support program (ESP) for small and grass-root NGOs working on non-formal education. The support includes limited funds, technical, conceptual, human skills to replicate BRAC's NFPE model by other NGOs. With ESP support of BRAC, in 1997 there were 270 partner NGOs administering 2022 schools in 58 districts of Bangladesh (ibid. 22). BRAC is interacting with government agencies in assisting curriculum development. It follows government curriculum along with its own curriculum in its educational programmes. The BRAC learners participate in sports and cultural programmes together with their learning. BRAC has achieved remarkable success in educating the underprivileged children, 95 per cent of the learners attend school regularly and rate of drop out does not exceed 6 per cent (ibid. 32).

Due to poor coverage of education by public primary schools, Madrassa or religious school have increased in significant number in Bangladesh. In almost all-male Madrassahs teach the seclusion of girls and women from the public arena. One of BRAC female teacher's fathers-in-law at Bhola refused to take food from her because she go outside home and meet men while going to school. He suspected that she has become a Christian.

Religious fundamentalists consider activities of NGOs such as BRAC as a serious threat to their religious worldview and political capital. As a result, in 1994, they challenged the BRAC education in this region and burnt one BRAC School. During the same period, an order given by a clergy of a Madrassah in Bhola district led anti-social elements to loot furniture and other properties of 27 schools out of 50 at Daulatkhan. However, the situation is quite different now. According to the Team in Charge of BRAC Lalmohon, "currently, the resistance against BRAC School is 2 per cent comparing to the situation in 1994" (Interview of Tarun Kumar Debnath, team-in-charge, BRAC Education Program, Lalmohon-Char Fashion, Diary 2, p. 165, 22.8.1999).

BRAC tries to educate children i.e. mostly girls in the context of poverty, vulnerability, superstitions and lawlessness. Poly is a rape victim and a student of BRAC School. Her parents are pressing her for marriage in order to remove family dishonour. But she is continuing her studies and she wants to become a BRAC teacher. She said, "I want to become someone. Education has given me the hope to live with courage and dignity" (Poly, Diary 2, p. 151, 22.8.1999). Here is a case of a BRAC student of NFE program in rural Lalmohon on the coast of the Bay of Bengal:



Picture 5: A BRAC School at Lalmohon, Bhola, Bangladesh

Shimul is a 12 years old girl and a student of grade III at East Farashgonj BRAC School. She was born in a landless family. Her father was a share-cropping farmer and he has migrated to Dhaka to work in a *shemai* factory recently. Her mother is a housewife and stays at Farashgonj village at Lalmohon Thana (local administrative unit). Shimul has three sisters and one brother. Her elder sister never went to school and was given in marriage in her childhood. Her younger sister is just 5 years old. Her brother is studying in the public school in grade IV. Before going to BRAC School, Shimul was studying in a *Maktab* (home-based religious school) where she learnt to read and partly-memorise Koran in Arabic without understanding its meanings. She said, "The *Huzur* (religious teacher) used to beat me sometimes".

She has not seen any stick in the BRAC School, she mentioned. She goes to school regularly. She is very happy that school is just 5 minutes walking distance from her home. "We study in BRAC School with happiness and nobody beats us. We enjoy story, poem, and song and dance in our class". This breaks the borderline between education and extra-curricular activities. There is school-drilling everyday before classes. There is no homework. She said, "What we learn in school is related to our daily lives, so we don't have to memorise".

Apa (the female teacher) is always available because she is a neighbour of her. Shimul enjoys school hours and attends school regularly. She can read and write and she is well aware about social, health and sanitation problems and their solutions. She knows how to make oral saline for diarrhoea related dehydration. Upon her insistence, her mother has arranged a sanitary latrine for the family. She knows about the dowry problem in the region and she opposes it.

Besides school, she helps her mother in cooking and doing other household work and takes care of her young sibling. She mentions that she is a very good cook, her mother and relatives tell. This makes her "confident" about her capacity to deal with the real life. "During the harvest season we get vacation from school. I go to pick up paddy working in field. All my school friends also work this time."

She plays *Boumachi* and *Kutkut* (children's game in rural Bangladesh) at the school and at home with her friends. But her mother does not like that she plays with boys because she thinks that Shimul is not a "child" anymore and should care for family honour. This hurts her but as her mother is the only authority figure at home; she tries to strike a balance. As her father is away in Dhaka, this has helped her to built good relations with her mother. About her future, Shimul said, "I want to continue my studies after completion of grade III in BRAC School. After completion of my high school education, I want to become a BRAC School teacher. But I need *Apa's* help to reach there" (BRAC East Farashgonj School, Diary 2, p. 164, 22.8.1999).

Shimul lives in an isolated island of Southern Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal of where people are less literate and more superstitious than many other parts of the country. In this environment, public schools are located in far distance, which in particular does not attract girls due to conservative nature of the area. Parents usually don't feel secure to send their daughters in school in a distant location to protect "*izzat*" (honour) of their daughters. If the *izzat* is lost, it can mean social ostracisation for the family members or less prospect of the marriage of daughters from the family. In this kind of areas, Madrassas are working, which are almost all-male educational institutions. Graduates of religious schools try to impose intolerant and medieval interpretation of Islam in a largely secular and tolerant Bangladeshi society.

As BRAC has schools in the remote areas and it has special focus on girls (teachers of BRAC Schools are females), it is easy for girls like Shimul to attend school. In the home-based religious school, the clergy used to beat students as a teaching method. But she has never seen stick in BRAC School. In this respect, BRAC School is different from the stick-oriented public schools or Madrassahs in Bangladesh. This helps BRAC teachers to gain confidence of the pupils. There is no homework in BRAC School and children learn lessons in happiness so that there is no borderline between education and play. As the school is sensitive on the needs of children and community, it is flexible with school timing and holidays so that it fits with the needs of majority of students and their families. This helps Shimul to stay in school. Flexibility on part of the school saves many pupils such as Shimul from repetition and drop out from school.

Education as a preventive strategy: general observations

BRAC School provide Freirian dialogue (1990, 1998a, 1998b) between teacher, students and parents. This raises hope for Shimul and many others like her and unveil opportunities for hope amid many obstacles. If there would be no school such as BRAC in the locality, girl like

Shimul could easily end up working as domestic servants in the richer family in the village or in towns or cities and also could become victim of different kinds of exploitation.

BRAC education makes children socially conscious about their life situations so that they can have a conscious and safe life within their context. In rural Bangladesh it is usually between grades I to III when most of the students drop out from public school. BRAC intervention at this crucial stage has helped Shimul and many other girls to stay in school. She intends to go to public school after completing grade 3 in BRAC School.

As BRAC model shows that it is possible to educate children (particularly girls) with limited resources, which puts pressure on public school teachers to do a better job in keeping students at school. It is obvious that girls such as Shimul will not be able to hire extra tuition from teachers like the children of rich families. As a result, she may get lower grades in school exams or even may not pass the secondary examinations. Whatever the result is, she is socially conscious and less vulnerable to exploitation whether in rural or urban areas because of conscientisation at BRAC School. To solve the problems of students like her, there is a need for further opportunities for education and skill training in rural areas.

By comparing the cases of protective and preventive cases, we can clearly see that preventive education can prevent children from entering in exploitative child labour. By observation and interviews of children, I think that children enjoy the lessons in BRAC Schools. As most of the BRAC teachers are females, children don't get the father figure, who in Bangladesh context symbolise authority, power and violence. The BRAC education helps children to empower them from within. They get social and health consciousness in the classes and negotiate with their parents and community in changing their family and community environment. BRAC's education prevents children from migrating to urban areas and working in exploitative conditions.

Whereas most of the protective NGOs work mainly to rehabilitate urban-based child labourers, BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Education programme attacks the root cause of the problem. BRAC NFPE program helps children and their families to become conscious about the rural and urban dangers and help them to sustain in the countryside. BRAC students in the remote island of Bhola at Lalmohon are confident about their future. In the remote area where education is an expensive commodity, children of the poor households in general and girls in particular are getting educational opportunities. Some have unrealistic dreams of becoming medical doctors, engineers, magistrates etc. which may become impossible in their given household contexts. However, others have reasonable expectation where some wish to become teachers like their female BRAC teachers and social workers. They have literacy skills and consciousness on hygiene, health care knowledge and family planning.

Education has lowered the prospect of early marriage for girls under BRAC Schools. BRAC NFEP has changed the attitude of girls towards life and work. All of them expressed the desire to delay marriage and become self-reliant. Education has also increased their marriage prospect. It has increased girls' self-confidence and positive self-image like that of Shimul. Because of the gender-sensitive curriculum of BRAC, learners and their family members see girls in a different light. Khondokar Ariful Islam, Senior Regional Manager of Dhaka Urban BRAC was explaining the impact of BRAC schooling on the public schools. He said, "Teachers of public schools are under social pressure to improve their performance due to BRAC success in education" (BRAC Office, Mogbazar, Dhaka, Diary 1, p. 40, 14.7.1999). Most of the BRAC school learners can integrate in the public schools after completion of 3rd grade in BRAC Schools. Many of the early students of BRAC have already been high school

graduates now from public schools. This is due to the fact that the BRAC learners learn reading, writing, numeric and life skills that are basics of school competence.

Following BRAC model, Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has been establishing satellite schools in areas where public schools are located in long distance. The Intensive District Approach to Education for All (IDEAL) project initiated by GOB and UNICEF for improvement of primary schooling has suggested that public schools should follow the BRAC style in school setting, for example using mats in a U shape. BRAC's network of non-formal schools reaches out to more than one million children.

BRAC education challenges the root of superstitions and social ills. Public schools usually carry middle class values and are less committed to structural and social transformation in favour of the poor. Many Madrassa educated people consider BRAC education as a serious threat to their *narrow* religious worldviews. They blame that BRAC education undermines Islamic values by mostly taking girls in co-education school and females as teachers, which are in their interpretation un-Islamic. During 1993-1995 periods, many BRAC schools were burnt by religious fundamentalists in different parts of Bangladesh. However, BRAC reopened its schools in the same areas again with the active support of community members. Now BRAC Schools are so much rooted in the community that the fundamentalists do not think to attack the schools again because of increased community involvement.

BRAC's NFPE provides educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. It does not claim to give quick and radical solution to children's life conditions but at least it builds up literacy and consciousness, which are very important in Freirian terms. It prevents children from urban migration and exploitative work.

In Bangladesh there are about 300 small NGOs working with NFE in collaboration with BRAC in the places where public schools are located far. This is a very good example of NGO-NGO co-operation. BRAC has also collaborated with GOB in educating urban hard-to-reach child labourers. The GOB also subsidises BRAC's NFPE programme because the role it plays in reinforcing public education. BRAC also has collaboration with UCEP for general and vocational education of BRAC graduates. The emerging question is "how to use BRAC experience in public primary schools?" From BRAC's preventive strategies, something useful can be found to solve the crisis of non-enrolment and drop out from school of disadvantaged children in general and child labourers in particular.

7.4: OBSERVATIONS ON THE THREE STRATEGIES OF EDUCATION

From three different educational strategies followed by NGOs, it can be said that NGOs provide the second or only chance of education for child workers. They have opened up a "language of hope" (Freire 1998a, 9) and opportunities for "conscientisation" (Freire 1985, 2) for disadvantaged children. NGOs try to provide alternative education suitable for their economic and cultural realities of child labourers as the case studies manifest. NGOs provide education for child labourers on the basis of citizenship right. However, "dialogue" (Freire 1990, 25) between teachers and students is less practiced, which is manifested in children's lack of satisfaction with the limited educational and skill training opportunities in NGO education projects.

Protective strategy

Protective strategies followed by NGOs raise hope on the new form of education for child labourers. It is the contextual education of NGOs and children's strong desire which make education for underprivileged children possible. Children's parents do not always share their desire for education. Children's views on their living conditions and educational opportunities challenge the dominant perceptions on the education of the poor. It can be said that children and their parents highly value education in Bangladesh and Nepal. It is the question of relevance and utility of education which force parents not to enrol their children to school. Children found education as important for their better self-confidence, skill development and job opportunities.

Cases from the protective strategy suggest that schools not only promote economic (Bowles & Gintis 1976) and cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron 1990) but also play important role in mitigating negative impact of reproduction. NGO schools do not manufacture *manual work-hating* "baboo class" people but provide an opportunity for children to improve their life conditions through alternative/complementary education. However, questions can be raised concerning protective strategies on education: 1) How far the short term of NFE can improve the life chances of working children? 2) Is there any opportunity for further education/skill training for children who complete NFE? 3) Are the graduates of NGO NFE centres eligible to enter public schools? 4) Is shelter-based rehabilitation and education economically sustainable? 5) Does reunion of urban child labourers with family members solve the underlying problems of child workers?

Skill development strategy

From education as a skill development strategy, important issue of vocational education/skill development has come to surface. UCEP experience shows that combination of non-formal education and vocational education/skill training can be a strong motivator to keep child labourers in school and reduce child labour. Skill training builds capability of child workers as valuable human resources in Bangladesh. However, UCEP experience raises several questions: Is UCEP strategy not creating *second rate education* for child labourers and reproducing educational division in society as suggested by Bowles and Gintis? By focusing on education and skill training for urban child labourers, is not UCEP encouraging rural children to move to urban areas without solving the underlying causes of educational problems in rural areas?

Preventive strategy

The preventive educational strategy followed by SAFE and BRAC provides excellent opportunity to rethink the dominant education systems in developing countries. SAFE shows that separate education for dalit children may help children to stay in school. However, it may also be interpreted as fostering educational separatism. Is educational separatism a good option as far as education of dalit children is concerned? It may appear odd to create educational separatism for the culturally disadvantaged children. On the other hand, it may help them to retain in school. If educational separatism is not allowed because of principles, it may ironically hurt the interests of the vulnerable groups. As long as public schools are less responsive to the needs of culturally weak groups, it may be necessary to foster educational separatism as a strategy to save the weak as a short-term strategy.

BRAC's NFPE provides underprivileged children, particularly girls the educational opportunities what would not be possible in public schools. BRAC pupils become socially conscious on their own situations. BRAC has created indirect pressure on public primary schools to become more responsive to the needs of disadvantaged children. It has been creating positive self-image for the rural girls from poor families, which not only serves the goal of Education for All (EFA) but also the goal of social development. BRAC is also facilitating NGO-NGO and NGO-GOB collaboration in facilitating EFA. As it attacks the root cause of superstition and gendered social relations, BRAC schools have become the target of a small group of religious fundamentalists in Bangladesh.

However, after completion of grade 3, all BRAC graduates do not have many opportunities to join in public school. Even if they are successful in enrolling themselves in public school, they may face new problems in the new environment. How to make sure that BRAC graduates can continue their studies in public schools without dropping out? There is no guarantee that with primary education or lower secondary education, the adolescents can be employed in gainful jobs or become self-employed. It seems that vocational education is missing in BRAC non-formal education programme. Can the BRAC graduates with their scanty education get self-employment opportunities in rural economy or they end up becoming child workers in urban areas? How public and NGO schools can be benefited from BRAC experience

CHAPTER 8: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion in the earlier chapters, it is evident that NGOs play a significant role in the education of child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal. This study reveals that poverty and hardships are not significant barriers to the education of child labourers. It also shows that it is possible to educate them, ameliorate their living conditions and open up social opportunities by having schools meet their needs and contexts. NGOs help them to alleviate the structural constraints and improve their living conditions through education. The NGO success in education of child labourers raises serious questions on existing public primary schools of Bangladesh and Nepal. NGOs also create indirect social pressures on public schools to do improve their responsiveness to disadvantaged children.

This study found its hypotheses as true and right. Public schools in the studied countries are not inclusive enough to attract underprivileged children including child labourers. Generally, underprivileged children and their families find less relevance of public schools in their given context. Government schools seldom qualify the children from lower classes to standard jobs. NGO schools try to reverse the situation of child labourers by providing alternative education. NGOs make education more inclusive, productive and democratic. They see education as a 'citizenship right' and a tool for fulfilling the current 'basic needs' of every child. The lessons from NGO schools provide ideas for reforming in primary education system in developing countries to incorporate contexts of disadvantaged children. The findings of the study and its recommendations are discussed below.

8.1: IMPACT OF NGOS ON THE LIVES OF CHILD LABOURERS

The benefits of the NGO intervention in the education sector are both immediate and long-term. Among the immediate results, NGOs provide educational opportunities for children who are left out by public schools. Children learn reading, writing and numeric skills in NGO schools along with a social consciousness on issues such as health care, first aid, nutrition, family planning, civic responsibility etc. These have immediate affects on children's "self-confidence" and on capability to handle day to day affairs better and escape from exploitative social relations. It provides at least hope for better economic opportunities for them. As evidenced from education as skill development strategy, NGO education has been able to provide students with education and skill development and better earning opportunities. Better earning opportunity make children's voices heard in family decision-making.

The role of NGOs in education gives children a sense of being 'somebody' in the society as it is evidenced from three broader strategies followed by NGOs. Impact of the education of NGOs cannot be measured on the basis of input and output as education has long-term benefits on students which can not be measured by cost-benefit analysis. Immediate benefits of NGO education include basic literacy, social consciousness and change of social outlook which may lead to better decision-making for them. NGO schools have increased their student's 'confidence', 'capability' and 'choice' to act in society without being ashamed. All the students of NGO schools, particularly girls in Bangladesh and Nepal expressed their desire to delay their marriage and adopt family planning (birth control). The changes in attitude have positive effects not only on children themselves but also on the future generations.

The role of NGOs concerning education in developing countries deserves due recognition and perhaps this study also represents a lesson to public policy. Even though NGO activities are small-scale generally (except for BRAC non-formal primary education), their success in educating underprivileged children have been indirectly pressing public schools to change their style of education. In this way, NGOs have indirect role in bringing about change in the functions of public schools in Bangladesh and Nepal.

8.2: WHAT MAKE NGO EDUCATION CONTEXT-ORIENTED?

NGO strategies followed in education for child labourers in Bangladesh and Nepal are divided into three broader strategies by the author (discussed in chapters 6 and 7). The classification of NGO activities into the three broader categories helped to escape from endless empiricism concerning the patterns of NGO activities on child labour. From the three different strategies of NGOs, it has been found that bearing the costs of educational inputs such as tuition fees, books, stationeries, transportation and educational sponsorship may help children to go and sustain in school.

As the NGO experiences suggest, school within easy reach, flexibility in school timing along with condensed and adapted curricula may serve children's best interest. Long-term and formal education may not serve the educational needs of children in difficult circumstances. This is particularly true for education of the trafficked children, street children and child domestic servants. Non-formal education and skill training are necessary for them along with immediate needs of food, shelter, health care and psychotherapy.

Protective strategy

Schools can also be a place for resting and playing for certain types of child labour. Situated ness of school with the needs of particular target group of children may give them basic literacy as a means for everyday livelihoods. Protective educational strategies suggest that it may be necessary to separate education of the disadvantaged groups from the mainstream schools as an *ad hoc* measure. When public schools become more sensitive to the needs and contexts of disadvantaged children, it may not be necessary at all.

NGO experiences from Nepal and in certain extent Bangladesh suggest that bearing part of the "educational costs" may help child labourers retain in school. Public policy makers need to address the "opportunity costs" of education when pupils attend school. This can be a major step forward towards achieving education for all and reduction of child labour in developing countries. Even though it may appear as ambitious in the context of developing countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal, government fund should be distributed among the children of poor households who attend school. System of student stipend or loan programme with government guarantee and some form of interest subsidy for low-income households may also facilitate children's school attendance.

Skill development strategy

The combination of non-formal education, vocational training and employment opportunities may work as a strong force to keep working children at NGO schools. Education as a skill development strategy followed by UCEP validates this proposition. Contrasting to public schools, UCEP approach of vocational education has much relevance for child labourers. UCEP approach raises serious question on the relevance of general and religious education in

the context of Bangladesh. Skill-oriented educational strategy suggests that educational system of developing countries should have a strong vocational education component so that it fosters respect for manual labour and enterprise development. This can help underprivileged children to enter in the world of work after completing general and vocational education.

The experiences from the strategy strongly supports the idea that after completion of primary or lower secondary examination, there should be a chance for students to join in government recognized practical vocational schools. This can be a strong incentive for parents to support education of their children. It may appear that this approach help reproduction of the existing social structure as suggested by Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). On the other hand, if it is not done, children may remain outside school altogether and engage in child labour.

Preventive strategy

BRAC non-formal education program provides the best opportunities for children so that they don't need to engage in child labour outside home. This approach is remarkably different from NGOs which follow protective strategies in education sector. The preventive strategies followed by BRAC challenge the root causes of child labour by providing education for children particularly girls from marginalized households. It also challenges patriarchal social values, superstition and ignorance. As a result of BRAC success in targeting the social ills, its schools came under attack from the religious fundamentalists in Bangladesh. Its experiences show that to root out underlying causes of child labour, rural children's educational needs must be targeted. Recruitment of female teachers, innovative pedagogic methods, gender-sensitive curriculum and girl-friendly school and community orientation of non-formal education may have strong impact on education for rural disadvantaged children in general and girls in particular.

8.3: WEAKNESSES OF NGOS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Quality of NGO education

Educational provisions of NGOs may appear as a *cheap alternative* to formal schools and can be criticized for providing *second rate* education which reproduce and strengthen existing inequalities within society. It is criticized that children who complete 5 year cycle of education in public schools learn very little in countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal, what quality of education NGOs can maintain in short courses (one/two/three years) remains a valid question. After completion of NFE, few children get opportunity for further education in NGO or public schools and even fewer get the opportunity for vocational training. NGOs go half way in children's education and do little to maximise their educational impact. All the three strategies suggest that pupils of NGO schools aspired for further education and skill training. Only few NGOs had such programmes which give children opportunities for further education and skill training. However, one remarkable drawback of the NGOs was that disabled children were almost completely absent from NGO schools. This issue requires an immediate and serious consideration as they are one of the most disadvantaged groups of children in Bangladesh and Nepal.

Lack of coordination

NGOs lack coordination amongst themselves which may thwart the maximum impact on children's capability-building. In case of Nepal, there is a tendency of copying NGO programs by other NGOs with little cooperation among themselves. Comparing to Bangladeshi NGOs, almost all Nepali NGOs under the study look similar in their educational approach. This provides less opportunity for diversified and useful policy lessons from Nepal on role of NGOs in education sector. Perhaps, it is not surprising since NGO movement in Nepal itself began since 1990s comparing to Bangladesh's experience since 1970s.

In NGO schools, child labourers may learn how to read and write, but later on they may forget these skills unless they have something useful to read and a reason to write relatively regularly. Except for BRAC non-formal education programme and UCEP Bangladesh, all the NGOs under the study suffer from *lack of linking* their education with further education and skill training. If graduates from NGO schools want to continue their studies in public school problem may arise because of differences in curriculum and standard between government and NGO Schools. There seldom exists any joint planning, training or sharing of experience between NGO and public schools. This mainly takes place in the case of protective strategy than skill-oriented and preventive strategies.

Even though NGOs use their time, efforts and innovation for improving the living conditions of child labourers, their work has less an impact on their target group because of the lack of synergy among themselves. As a result, NGOs remain as *islands of excellence* without being able to bring about broader change in national education policy. Small scale and isolated NGO projects may be good for educational innovation but cannot be enough to secure lasting improvements on children's living conditions. Work of NGOs without coordination with other stakeholders may mean wastage of time, energy and money.

Even though NGO preventive strategies are more complementary to public schools, there still lacks synergy between the two. BRAC School and public schools can be physically near, but they work under two different educational administration. After completion of BRAC education, students move to public schools, which are blamed for being less-responsive to the needs and contexts of disadvantaged children. There is a need for a study on how the BRAC graduates cope with the new environment of public schools.

To overcome the lack of synergy between NGO and public schools, there is a need for taking both of them under same educational authority so that children can easily move and sustain from one to another. This can realistically support national goal of education for all. Even though BRAC Schools operate in the rural areas and show their credibility in educating children from landless and poor families, they do not go far enough to solve the underlying problems of child labour. To attack the problem more effectively, there is a need for rural skill training which could be a strong force to keep the BRAC graduates in rural areas and reduce the vulnerability of child labourers in urban areas.

NGOs are not without dilemmas which reflect their definition and mandate. There is valid danger that if NGOs are much involved with government, they may run the risk of losing their non-governmental characteristics and turn into contractors of government. Partnership-building with NGOs also depends on the availability of government's supportive and enabling environment. There is a general lack of comprehensive and coherent policies on primary education in the framework of national education sector development and poverty reduction

strategy in Bangladesh and Nepal.

8.4: SECTOR-WIDE APPROACHES (SWAPS) TO EDUCATION AND NGOS

The role of NGOs in the education sector is closely linked with international aid. Northern aid to the education sector in developing countries may make NGOs dependent on donor agencies on policy issues and limits their autonomy and innovation. When short-term external fund dries up, the projects may face substantial reduction or even total collapse. To solve this problem of isolated project-based work, donors initiated sector wide approaches (SWAs) to development since 1990s to set individual projects under coherent sector approach to strengthen national ownership of sector programs (see, King 1991, 17; Takala 1998, 319-320, 2003, 15-16; Gould, Takala & Nokkala 1998, 1; Foster 2000; Buchert 2002, 70). This may help putting governments on the driving seat to formulate their educational policy in line with national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

The SWAs is a fairly new and evolving approach to development which has opened up new opportunities and challenges for role of NGOs in education sector in developing countries. The impact of SWAs on role of NGOs in education sector remains a grey area. There is a potential risk that innovation of NGOs in education sector may be squeezed as a result of SWAs. Under the new arrangement, governments are in driving seats to formulate their national education sector development. How will it affect the educational scenario for disadvantaged children in developing countries? As Tuomas Takala (2003) has suggested, there is a need for further research on SWAs in education sector to avoid “lopsided negotiations” among different actors i.e. government, NGOs and donor agencies etc. As NGOs are the sole providers of educational opportunities for marginalized children, there is a need for further research on the role of NGOs in education sector under the SWAs.

8.5: KEY POLICY LESSONS

Educational decentralization and monitoring

The role of NGOs in education for child labourers provides excellent opportunities for policy lessons in the education sector of developing countries. On one hand, there is a need for greater decentralization of public schools to support mechanisms for local planning to give more decision-making authority to teachers, elected local government bodies, pupil representatives and parents/citizens. This may increase the relevance of education to serve the local educational needs of pupils. Public schools should attack gender, caste and other biases in curriculum and teaching methods and become sensitive to the needs of underprivileged children following the examples of NGOs. On the other hand, there is need for strong and unified monitoring and evaluation system for public, private and NGO schools to maintain their coherence. SWAs in education sector are an important step forward in coordination and harmonization of educational programmes in developing countries.

Integrated diversity

In agricultural societies, school timing and vacations should be designed in a way that children may carry out their family responsibilities while joining schools. In developing countries where a large number of children remain outside school, the expansion of formal

education should not be carried out at the expense of NGO schools. NGO schools should be treated on par with public schools in allocation of resources so that they can serve the educational needs of underprivileged children as an interim measure. An egalitarian approach to education is needed to give every child a 'choice' between public and NGO schools. Education for rural children should be highly prioritized in developing countries not only for resolving child labour problem but also for fulfilling children's citizenship right.

Practically, it may appear that governments have been supporting the creation of "educational ghettos" for underprivileged children by allowing different standards of education for different economic and cultural groups. If educational diversity is stopped from an egalitarian point of view, the educational divide between rich and poor may become even more widened. From this point, *educational ghettoization* as a short-term strategy may in fact serve the interests of child labourers. Educational diversity is needed to give underprivileged children an option to choose between different modes of education. There is also a need for multiple mode of learning where public schools are the main but not the only one. Wim Hoppers (undated) terms this phenomenon as "integrated diversity".

State funding for successful NGO schools

NGOs can also forge partnership with government and private sector that does not compromise their autonomy and integrity to bring sustainable change on behalf of the poor and vulnerable. As NGOs face problem with long-term economic sustainability because of their excessive donor dependence, successful NGO schools should get reasonable access to state educational funding as a short-term strategy. They deserve this support as they are providing educational opportunities for the hard-to-reach children. When public schools are capable to address the educational needs of disadvantaged children, there will be no need for NGO intervention in the education sector. There is also a need for a strong focus on rural development and access to the micro credit finance for poor households. They may play a complementary role in reducing child labour and achieving the goal of education for all in developing countries.

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APPENDIXES

CHAPTER 1

Appendix 1.1 Map of Bangladesh (Source: CIA World Factbook at <http://geography.about.com/library/cia/blcbangladesh.htm> as of 01 January, 2004)



Appendix 1.2: Map of Nepal (Source: CIA World Factbook at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/np.htm as of 01 January, 2004)



Appendix 1.3: Questionnaires to NGO school students

1. General background data

- Age
- Sex
- Ethnic/religious origin
- Place of birth
- Education

2. Family structure

- Household composition
- Family type (nuclear, single parent, step-parent, extended family etc.)
- Household head
- Number of siblings
- Position in birth order
- Education of family members

3. Family support system

- Forms, source and amount of income and its distribution within family
- Division of labour within family
- Economic role of children
- Skills/knowledge/contacts of family members in labour market
- Community groups and organizations
- Government services
- Extent of household debt
- Informal support network in community

4. Relations within family

- Solidarity and reciprocity
- Intimacy
- Conflict

5. Physical conditions of housing

- Type/conditions of accommodation
- Size of living space and density of habitation
- Services available

6. Community pattern

- Basic services
- Political and social organizations
- Law and order situation
- Relations with authorities
- Community groups where children gain economic and emotional support

7. Labour activity of children

- Work history
- Occupation
- Characteristics of employer
- Type of contract

Form/amount of payment
Self-employed or wage earning
Task/responsibilities
Who benefits from wage?
Hours and conditions of work
Attitude to work
Alternative sources of livelihood (gift, barter, theft, begging etc)

8. Education of the working children

Previous school attendance
Frequency of attendance in NGO School
Interests at school
Costs of school
Problems at school
Feeling about school
What would make education more adaptable to life?

9. Skill training

Formal/informal training
Relevance of acquired skills
Expectations on future skill development

10. Feelings about situation and self

What they hope out of the prevailing situation
Perception of past, present and future
Meaning of child rights and education
Expectation and dream on the future

Appendix 1.4 Interviewed NGO Staffs

Bangladesh

Enamul Haque, Unit Administrator, UCEP Technical, Dhaka
Ferdausur Rahman, Executive Director, Prodiapon
Gita Chakrabarty, Program Officer, Shoishab Bangladesh
Gulshan Ara Shahin, coordinator, Prodiapon
Hamidul Islam, Deputy Director, UCEP
Helen Rahman, Founder and Coordinator, Shoishab Bangladesh
Jamsedunnahar Dalia, Teacher, BRAC Urban, Probhatibagh BRAC School No. 5, Dhaka
Khandakar Ariful Islam, Senior Regional Manager, BRAC Urban
Mahbubur Rashid, Dhaka Divisional Coordinator, UCEP
Mominul Islam Suruz, Journalist and Investigation Officer, BNWLA
PM Anwar, UCEP
Sabana Sarker, Teacher, Prodiapon School, Lalbagh, Dhaka
Salma Ali, Executive Director, BNWLA
S.C. Sarker, Program Cordinator, NFPE, BRAC
Shamsul Haque, Program Organizer, BRAC Lalmohon Education Program
Tanbir ul Islam Siddiqui, UCEP
Tarun Kumar Debnath, Team-in-Charge, BRAC Education Program, Lalomohon-Char Fashion

Nepal

Anuradha Koirala, Director, Maiti Nepal

Bilamala Poudel, Facilitator, UOSP, UPCA

Bijay Sainju, Program Coordinator, Concern

Bisswo Khadka, Assistant Director, Maiti Nepal

Daya Ram Pokhrel, Community Conscientizer, CWIN

Dilip Pariyar, Executive Director, SAFE

Gauri Pradhan, Executive Director, CWIN Concerned Centre

Januka Devi Pariyar, Warden, Girl Child Protection Centre, SAFE

J.B. Shrestha, Program Officer, Concern Nepal

Kunda Ghimire, UPCA Staff Coordinator

Nilifa Subbha, UOST Supervisor, UPCA

Rupa Dhital, CWIN

Saguni Nepali, President, SAFE

Sakuntala Subbha, Executive Director, UPCA

Sandhya Shresta, Program Officer, CWIN Balika

Subha Raj Pokhrel, Program Officer, CWIN Transit Home, Kathmandu

Tilak Pariyar, Field Coordinator, SAFE HIV/AIDS Prevention Centre

Appendix 1.5 Questionnaire to NGO staffs

1. History of personal involvement in NGO activities to reduce child labour. How the project/program fit with local, regional and national context of child labour?
2. What are important developments in national policies and programs concerning child labour in 1990s? What are the gaps between problem and the response? Have NGOs influenced government policies and programs?
3. What is the changing context of child labour in the last ten years and what it can be in the next ten years in relation to globalization and world criminal networks?
4. What are the target groups of children in your project/program and types of interventions of your NGOs?
5. How the project/program fits with the needs of child labourers?
6. What are the achievements and operating problems of your NGO in local and national contexts and what are the challenges?
7. How about the policy environment of the national government concerning NGO activities on child labour? Is it collaborative or conflicting?
8. Do international policies and programs fit with the local context? How and why?

Appendix 1.6 Interviewed donor agency and government officials in Bangladesh and Nepal

Interviewed donor agency officials in Bangladesh

Mr. Ove Fritz Larsen, Minister Counsellor, Royal Danish Embassy, Dhaka (D1, 12.7.1999)

Mr. Mahbub H. Khan, Program Officer, Swedish Save the Children (D1, 11.7.1999)

Mr. Masud Hassan Siddique, Program Officer, SIDA, Dhaka (D1, 15.7.1999)

Ms. Rina Sen Gupta, Danish Save the Children, Dhaka (D2, 16.8. 1999)

Interviewed donor officials in Nepal

Mr. Esa Hurtig, Charge d' Affairs, Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu (D3, 23.9.1999)

Mr. Sanu Lal Maharjan, Senior Manager, Norwegian Save the Children, Kathmandu (D3, 17.9.1999, 24.9.1999 and 15.10.1999)

Ms. Mona Jansen, Community Development Adviser, MS Nepal at Nepalgunj (D4, 07.10.1999)

Interviewed government officials in Bangladesh

Mr. Lutfur Rahman, Project Director, Department of Non-Formal Education, Government of Bangladesh (D2, 09.8. 1999)

Ms. Nilufar Begum, Director General, Department of Women's Affairs, Government of Bangladesh (D2, 17.8.1999)

Interviewed government officials in Nepal

Dr. Tika P. Pokhrel, Member Secretary, Social Welfare Council, Nepal (D4, 14.10.1999)

Mr. Narendra Po. Uprety, Inspector of Police, Dharan Municipality (D4, 12.10.1999)

Appendix 1.7 Interpreters in Nepal

Subha Raj Pokhrel, Program Officer, CWIN Transit Home, Kathmandu

Daya Ram Kandel, Community Conscientiser, CWIN

Lila Karki, Maiti Nepal

Bijay Sainju, Program Coordinator, Concern Nepal

Noroj Kumar Paudyal, Volunteer, CWIN Socialization Centre

Jhalak Singh Gurung, Social Worker, CWIN Socialization Centre

Nirmal Nepali, Education Program Coordinator, SAFE, Nepalgunj

Tilak Pariyar, Field Coordinator, SAFE HIV/AIDS Prevention Centre

Kunda Ghimire, Facilitator, UPCA

Bimala Poudel, Facilitator, UPCA

Nilifa Subbha, UPCA Staff Coordinator

CHAPTER 4

Appendix 4.1 Worst forms of child labour

- a) Work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- b) Work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;
- c) Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- d) Work in unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents of processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
- e) Work in under particular difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of employer.

(see, Anker & Melkas 1996, 49).

Appendix 4.2 Bangladesh: basic facts

UNDP Human Development Report 2000 ranks Bangladesh 146th among 174 nations. Other indexes are as follows:

Item	Bangladesh
Total population (million)	137
Annual population growth	2.2
Life expectancy at birth	58
Total fertility rate	3.8
Average annual growth of GNP	4.6
GNP per capita	\$370
Population living on below \$2 a day	77.8
Population below national poverty line	49.8
Adult literacy	52.6

Source: (UNDP 2000, 157-204; UNESCO 2003, 300; ADB 2003)

Appendix 4.3 Nepal: basic facts

The Human Development Index (HDI) of the UNDP Human Development Report 2000 ranks Nepal in 144th position among 174 countries. The other development indexes are as follows:

Item	Nepal
Total population million	23
Annual population growth	2.4
Life expectancy at birth	57
Total fertility rate	4.8
Average annual growth of GNP	4.4
GNP per capita	\$240
Population living below \$2 a day	82.5
Population below national poverty line	42
Adult literacy	40.4

Sources: (UNDP 2000, 157-204; UNESCO 2003, 300; ADB 2003)

CHAPTER 5

Appendix 5.1 Sectoral distribution of child labourers in Nepal

Areas	Number	Percentage
Agriculture and cottage industry	4,902,000	86
Service	342,000	6
Commerce and small scale business	171,000	3
Industry	136,800	2.4
Construction	34,200	0.6
Others	114,000	2
Total	5,700,000	100

Source: (ILO/IPEC 1995, 6)

Appendix 5.2 Adult literacy in different regions of Nepal

	Adult literacy rate	Mean years of schooling
Place of residence		
Urban	63.50	4.763
Rural	34.50	2.013
Eco-regions		
Mountain	27.50	1.479
Hill	40.20	2.468
Tarai	35.90	2.174
Development regions		
Eastern	41.90	2.654
Central	35.10	2.214
Western	34.60	1.813

Source: (NESAC 1998 cited in Dahal, Acharya & Dahal 1999, 210)

Appendix 5.3 Life stages in Bangladesh

sisukal Stage of non-reason (abujh); treated tolerantly; mother's care; plays with children of both sexes	Infancy and early childhood 0-5	
balyakal Stage of partial reason (polapan) begins; work or school begins; casual contact with other sex; learns of sex and gender roles	School age	6-10
kaisorer prarambha Budding females especially learn gender roles	Pre-adolescence	11-12
kaisor Gender roles to be followed; sex learned from peers	Early adolescence	13-15
nabajaubon Parental pressure for responsibility on males; girls marry; casual contact with opposite sex prohibited	Late adolescence youth (esp. males)	16-20

Source: (Aziz and Maloney 1985 cited in Blanchet 1996, 45)

Appendix 5.4 Female teachers in religious schools in Bangladesh

	Total	Female	% of female
Madrassahs			
Dakhil	43455	1714	3.97
Alim	13538	322	2.38
Fazil	16072	353	2.2
Kamil	3051	41	1.36
General ed.			
Jr. Secondary	17803	2449	13.8
Secondary	156094	23418	15.0

Source: (BANBEIS in USAID 2002c, 37)

CHAPTER 6

Appendix 6.1

Performance of NGO and government schools in Bangladesh

General performance	NGO	GOB
Female teachers	89%	43%
Teacher absent	2.5%	19%
Teacher-pupil ratio	1:31	1:73
School attendance	90%	66%
School dropout cumulative	16%	35%
Dropout in a year	3%	6%
Completion rate	90%	46%
Repetition	NR	7%

Source: (USAID 2002a, 14)