

## Nat'l seminar on Street Children : Observation and Task Ahead

A national seminar on 'Street Children of Bangladesh: Observation and Task Ahead' was held at the auditorium of Dhaka Ahsania Mission at Dhanmondi in the capital on July 7, 2014.

There are about 11 lakh street children across the country, speakers said. While growing up, they face discrimination and injustice. Taking advan-

Dhaka Ahsania Mission president Kazi Rafiqul Alam chaired the occasion. The inaugural session of the seminar was attended by the secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Tarique ul Islam, as the chief guest. Maruf Momtaz Rumi, the country co-ordinator of KNH Germany, Md Omor Faruk, the national proj-

as special guests.

Kazi Ali Reza, the director of Public Relations Department (PRD) of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, read out the key-note paper.

Dhaka Ahsania Mission has been working for welfare of disadvantaged street children for a long time.

It is implementing vari-

### CONTENTS

#### DAM at work

Call for donation to rehabilitate street children	2
Journalist Training on Health Care held in city	3
Training on laborer skill development	4
Escape From the Curse of Drug	5-6
Foundation training for trainers	6
Street children in Bangladesh: Perspective & steps ahead	7-8

Rights, and as a partner of government, the first chil-



tage of the weakness, a section of people engages them in various criminal activities and risky jobs. As a result, their normal growth is hindered. They called upon people from all walks of life to come to the aid of the street children to get rid of the phenomenon.

ect director of Child Sensitive Social Protection in Bangladesh, Department of Social Services, Shamima Begum, the deputy police commissioner, Victim Support Centre, and AFM Faruque, the director of the Non-Formal Education Bureau, were present

different projects to provide them with psychosocial support, shelter, balanced diet, general education, healthcare service and free themselves from hazardous jobs. Based on the past experiences and in light with the National Child Policy and the Charter of Child

dren village of Ahsania Mission Children City was established on 300 bighas of land in Panchagarh in 2011 with assistance from KNH Germany. A total of 10,000 disadvantaged street children would be rehabilitated under the programme.



## Call for donation to rehabilitate street children

Well-off people have been requested to come forward to donate towards the rehabilitation of the street children in the country. Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) President Kazi Rafiqul Alam came up with the appeal while addressing a press conference on Saturday at DAM's auditorium in Dhaka.

Sharing the salient features of the unique initiative - Ahsania Mission Children City at Panchagor-composed of 10 Children-Villages of 1000 street children each, DAM President said, approximate cost of each village is taka 13 crore, and it is not possible on the part of the Mission alone to construct the Children City. He requested the rich people to donate any amount of money they want towards the construction. There are provisions to donate a whole building, a part of it or even a floor or a room to serve the humanity. He said Zakat funds are also accepted for the distressed street children. The Children City is long-term project - unique in its nature. Street

Children of 06-18 years of age are enrolled there and are given vocational and extracurricular trainings on top of regular education. Sharing his experience of building successfully the Ahsania

Mission Canter Hospital with help of mass people, DAM President said, DAM has gained the confidence of the common people and it does not break its promise to work for the distress humanity.

DAM president concluded his remarks by calling upon the media to extend their support in publicizing the appeal for donation for the Children City.

## Stakeholder meeting in Barisal

A stakeholder meeting of every one project of Dhaka Ahsania Mission was held in Barisal on 13 July 2014. The meeting was held at the divisional health training centre of the city. Barisal Civil Surgeon Dr. A.T.M. Mizanur Rahman was present as chief guest while Muladi Upazila Family Planning Officer Dr. Mizanur Rahman Presided over the meeting. Deputy Civil Surgeon Dr. Amolendu Biswas and ADAB President Ranajit Datta were present as special guests.

The project coordinator of every one campaign project Md. Zahingir Hosain, Project Coordinator of School Feeding program Md. Nasir Uddin Ahmed, Chairman of Saint Bangladesh Kazi Zahangir Ahmed and Muladi Upazila Educational officer M.A Abdul Jalil also delivered their speeches. Health service related activities will be implemented at 10 schools in 1<sup>st</sup> phase and in 2<sup>nd</sup> phase

another 10 schools of Muladi Upazila.

### Iftar Mahfil in Khulna

Ahsania Mission Khulna Unit organized discussion meeting and Iftar Mahfil on 11 July 2014 in Khulna. Executive President of Ahsania Mission Khulna Unit and Editor of local daily Anirban Principal Ali Ahmed presided over the discussion meeting, held at the Khulna Mission Office. General Secretary of Mission Md. Abdul Hamid facilitated the program. Parliament Member Mizanur Rahman Mizan was present as Chief Guest. Moreover, Dr. Anwarul Karim, Prof. Abdullahel Baki, Prof. Momtaz Ali, Dr. Md. Abdur Rasid, Hafez Imdadul Haque, Mir Afzal, Mir Zakir Hosain, Abdus Sobhan Chowdhury, Ahsan Habib and Teacher of Northern University Rabiul Islam spoke on the occasion.

# Journalist Training on Health Care held in city



With the assistance of Save the Children, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) organized a day-long Journalist Training on Health Care in city on 21 July 2014. Senior Sector Advisor, Health and Nutrition of Save the Children Dr. Golam Mothabbir presented an overview of Health and Nutrition Condition in Bangladesh. Senior News Editor of Bangla Vision Masood Kamal and the Special Correspondent of

Daily Prothom Alo Shishir Moral conducted sessions in the journalist training. Shishir Moral analysed the using statistics effectively which includes where to find the most credible numbers of reporting health matters, How to relate numbers to a human story, How to effectively compare national data with international ones and Global moments as a tool to share key messages. Senior News Editor Ma-

sood Kamal described the basic journalism concepts and skills which includes 5 Ws and 1H, Writing features, Interviewing key people and Public health messaging. In another session he described about the group work on Identifying contents for Broadcast, Print and Online news which include Interview techniques for impact news for health matters, Writing effective features with a focus on public health related matters, Creating content for online news, Using social media to make promote online news and Blogs, Twitter and Facebook page.

The Director of Dhaka Ahsania Mission Kazi Ali Reza rounded up and kept the closing remarks in the program. DAM Deputy

Director Iqbal Masud delivered the welcome address.

Kazi Ali Reza said, a radical change has been witnessed in journalism. In prior many people got involved in this profession willingly but now most of them are taking this as profession. Journalism was not adopted in a specific bit in prior but now it has been segregated. In journalism the main issue is the proper data and information. If data and information are not placed in proper place the report is not accepted to mass people. Data Collection in prior was difficult but now it has been eased due to technology.

The training was held at the City's Mohammadpur YWCA auditorium.

In the training different strategies of making a attractive report were analyzed. A total of 28 journalist from print, online and electronic media took part.



# Training on laborer skill development

A 3 day long training on laborer skill development and earthquake resilient building construction strategy was held from 17 to 19 July 2014. The training was jointly conducted by Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) and Concern Universal to enhance the construction process of the masons and bar-binders at HBRI bhaban at Uttara in the city. It is noted that to strive with the disaster and reduce the disaster risk, it is important to increase the skill of field implementers. Like, masons and bar-binders with their enhanced capability can build a disaster protective building.

The training was conducted as part of the work plan of DEPEICO-7 of South Asia. Under this

**BUILDING A DISASTER RESILIENT BANGLADESH** is being implemented with the finance of ECHO and Cord Aid and with the technical assistance of Concern Universal Bangladesh and NARRI Consortium. Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) is implementing the project.

On the concluding day of the training centre Eng. Aftab Uddin Ahmed, the Chief Guest of the program and President of Bangladesh Association of Construction Industries said, the more training on this issue will increase the capability of masons and bar-binders specially in the city areas. Moreover, Sanjukta Sahani, the Project Manager and the head of Disaster Risk Reduction Unit of Concern Universal Bangladesh and

also the special guest of the program said, our effort would be successful if you who took the training from here can implement your learning into the working field and building collapse will be reduced. On behalf of Concern Universal Bangladesh and Dhaka Ahsania Mission she thanked every participants and others supporters for a successful completion of the three-day long program.



# View sharing meeting in Jessore

A view exchanging meeting on the role of law enforcement agency to protect the children and women during trafficking, was held in Jessore at the Police Super office of

Jessore on 16 July 2014. Missing Child Alert (MCA), a project jointly implemented by Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Plan Bangladesh organized the meeting. Re-

gional focal person of Dhaka Ahsania Mission Khairul Islam presided over the meeting Superintendent of Police (SP) Anisur Rahman was present as chief guest. Addi-

tional Police Super K. M Ariful Islam and Foyez Ahmed, Assistant Police Super Reshma Sharmin and Syed Mostofa Kamal spoke as special guests. The area coordinator of MCA Project Rafiqul Islam delivered the welcome address. Project Coordinator Advocate Ferdousi Akther Presented a subjective issue based paper and Training and Advocacy Coordinator Zeba Afroza facilitated the program. A total of 35 Sub-Inspector (SI) of 9 Thanas of Jessore District participated in the program.



# Escape from the curse of Drug

The curse of drug abuse threatened to consume Shumi, 16, (not a real name) but she was saved in time, unlike hundreds of others in the country whose lives are being ruined by drugs.

The teen is now a recovering drug user who undergoes treatment at the Female Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre of Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) at Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur in the capital. She started doing things she never thought she was capable of doing. She saw a different side in her that she liked very much and which was not something projected upon her by her family or people back home. She is becoming herself, on her own.

When this writer asks her to share her story, she said, "I feel excited to be asked to share my story and I am wonderfully strong to be able to tell it. Before going into the rehabilitation programme I could not have done this. The shame and embarrassment I felt was huge. I still feel the shame and embarrassment occasionally but I also feel great pride in what I have achieved."

In 2011, Shumi started using drug when she was a student of class-IX. One day one of the school girls came up to her and asked her if she wanted to hang out with them. She became very excited and scared at the same time. She bunked the class and went with them. She saw that they were taking Yaba. This was her first experience with Yaba. She felt very hyper and started behaving rebellious. Ultimately, she got into a lot of trouble at school and lost a year. When her father learnt about the tsunami incident, he arranged her marriage with his eldest daughter's son, twice her age, against her will.

Shumi could not escape the marriage and became a victim of child marriage. However, the marriage didn't last for even one year due to non-cooperation of Shumi. Her humiliated father then got herself divorced from her husband.

Out of frustration, Shumi became totally depended on drug. She took drug as a way to forget her problems. What started out as a social habit, turned into an all consuming need for Yaba. For two years, she lost control of her life. As time passed the sense of pleasure gradually became a terrible burden that threatened her very life. Finally, when the torment became too much, her father got her admitted to the female drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation centre in May this year. "I was terrified, but the staff and residents were so caring and welcoming that I hesitantly started my journey of healing and self-discovery" recalls Shumi. "I know that the staff care about me and are concerned about my future."

"I lived in a friendly atmosphere. I learned lots of things during my over two-month stay. I learned such things as anger management, relationship and communication skills and relaxation techniques. I learned to trust and to be trusted; now I have some true friends and a wonderful support network. I feel that through the programme, I have a new chance at life and I have choices".

Shumi, no doubt, was given a new lease on life at the centre where she remained drug-free for more than two months.

Jahanara, 40, is another housewife staying at the centre for over two months where she says she got a new self. She told that she had become a drug user from her second husband, a habituated drug user. She was forced to remarry by her parents because they did not accept her love marriage with her first husband who was jobless. A child was also born out of the wedlock. Because of stubbornness of parents, Jahanara became addicted to Yaba. But despite her horrific experience, she considers herself among the lucky ones.

After a residential stay at the AMIC centre for two months, she said: "I would have never imagined a life without Yaba but I now know that it is possible. Here, I have been given a gift it's about believing in ME." She is now excited about the second chance she has been given.

There are too many stories like those of Shumi and Jahanara. Sadly, unlike the two, many do not have a happy ending. Over the last few years the standard of living has plummeted dramatically leaving many struggling to survive. The misery that has resulted provides fertile ground for high-risk lifestyles like drug abuse. Amidst the current social and economic environment, hope is being superceded by an atmosphere of despondency and despair. For many, drugs serve as a solution to their problems.

An estimated five million people in the country, most of them young people, are drug users. About 8.9 per cent of the injecting drug users (IDU) are bound to be HIV positive (HIV prevalence among IDUs has increased

from 1.4 per cent to 4 per cent to 8.9 in a certain area in central Dhaka) and around 83 per cent have Hepatitis C infection, according to Dhaka Ahsania Mission sources. As the number of drug users is increasing every day, a humanitarian crisis looms with the growing threat of HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS cases are linked to intravenous drug use.

Many female drug users are sex workers and participate in high risk sexual activities. They use a cocktail of drugs. They fall victims to frequent physical abuse and have difficulty in accessing proper facilities and treatment.

Over the past few years the number of newly registered cases has increased to a great extent. Since 1990, DAM is working to prevent drug and HIV/AIDS through its network of several hundred community based branch committees involving youths, students, teachers, NGOs, various clubs and local administration. The network is spread all over the country.

DAM is a pioneer in drug prevention. Nine female drug users are being treated at this centre. Through regular counselling, these women are being given an opportunity to excel in their everyday work and develop the skills needed to overcome their bad habit. DAM is a member of Switzerland based International Council on Alcohol and Addiction (ICAA) and its president Kazi Rafiqul Alam has been elected a member of the Board of Directors of ICAA.

The younger generation of our society is increasingly indulging in the death trap of drug, said Iqbal Masud, assistant director and head of Tobacco, Drug, HIV and Primary Healthcare Project of DAM. Considering the alarming situation, DAM undertook its drug prevention programme known as AMIC as back as 1990, he said.

DAM mainly organises adolescents and young adults in the vulnerable areas to keep their community free from abuse and illicit



drug trafficking. It also tries to increase social awareness about the consequences of HIV/AIDS. The programme also organises community-based treatment and rehabilitation centres for the recovered addicts.

AMIC is running the centre for treatment and counselling of female drug users including reintegration/rehabilitation of recovering drug users, said Iqbal.

DAM has a plan to build more drug treatment and rehabilitation centres for female drug users in other parts of the country, he revealed.

AMIC female drug treatment centre's philosophy of treatment is based on holistic healing, said Jannatul Ferdous, counselor and trainee clinical psychologist of the centre. Just as addiction affects all aspects of a woman's life, permanent recovery requires a healing of a woman's entire self. For this reason, AMIC's treatment programmes simultaneously strengthen a woman's body, mind and spirit, she informed.

The centre provides alternative therapies and treatment approaches that include group meetings, Yoga, spiritual counseling and holistic techniques, she said, adding: "Our goal is to assist women in overcoming their addiction and prepare for life after drug rehab and a bright future without drug dependency."

Usually, a counselor uses the tactic of therapeutic journaling in order for the addict to direct their anger at the real culprit, the drugs, she informed.

"Like relationships, many addicts have a love-hate relationship with their drugs. Moments of clarity will come about and the mind races on with the shame and control their addiction holds over them. They realise it is a miserable existence but the pull is so strong that they retreat to using to cover up those feelings and

thoughts. Most addicts stay high 24/7 in order to keep the thoughts of remorse and guilt at bay. When they aren't using they occupy their minds by thinking of ways and means to get more. These are the times that can be the most dangerous for an addict. Depending on what phase of addiction they are in they will do almost anything to get the drugs that literally controls their minds. That's why an exercise such as this can be a freeing experience for an addict. And sometimes they realize some resentments and guilt they were harbouring should've been aimed at the addiction itself."

Drug use and abuse results in a number of medical and health consequences that are different or more severe for women than men, said Tuba Musarrat Ansary, another trainee clinical psychologist and counselor at the centre.

"These can include disruption of the menstrual cycle and reproductive function, a higher risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and decrease in immune function. Social and behavioral consequences include homelessness and high-risk sexual behaviors that put themselves and their families at risk. Legal consequences and rising financial costs can bankrupt women and their dependents." She said AMIC staffs are educated in gender specific drug addiction treatment factors and incorporate this training into their day-to-day undertakings with patients. This sensitivity to female-specific recovery needs makes AMIC Female Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre an effective drug rehab for women, she said, adding: "The centre provides services to women from all backgrounds and all ages at rates that are affordable."

*Courtesy : Daily Sun*

## Foundation training for trainers

USAID Agricultural Extension Support Activity (PROJECT) will work in 20 districts in the central and southwest areas of Bangladesh (Barisal, Dhaka, and Khulna divisions) to implement capacity building and support creation of a farmer demand-driven agricultural extension system, supported by information communication technology (ICT). The PROJECT will promote greater intensification and diversification of high-value commercial and nutritionally-rich crops and linkages to markets for sale of quality value-chain products. The focus will be on poor and vulnerable smallholder farmers experiencing food insecurity, with priority given to women farmers, living in increasingly fragile and degraded environments affected by natural disasters and climate change. The goal of the PROJECT is to strengthen the existing agriculture extension system in 20 districts in southwest and central Bangladesh in order to sustainably improve food security and nutrition for 200,000 vulnerable women and smallholder farmers.

The USAID Ag Extension Project already finished its first year successfully. They have conducted their foundation training with more than 300 participants and trainers. The training was divided into 4 batches. It was a six day long training and the main object of the training was to train the project staff about the project objectives, mission and vision and to obtain a clear



concept on community mobilization, ICT, monitoring and evaluation and gender related issues. Also gave a primary concept on facilitation. All kind of Project staffs from different region came for this training but the main focus was on the training of the field facilitators.

The main training features were : Concept on Community & Community Mobilization ,Producer group and leadership, Overview of ICT, Producer group and farmer field school, HR & Finance issues, Value chain, Practice for understanding of idle map for dairy value chain, Baseline result out, Value chain product selection process, Facilitation ,Communications, Definition of Value Chain, Gender Sensitivity, Women Empowerment Framework, Women engagement in the activity, Women Mobility, Monitoring & Evaluation and Team Building.

# Street children in Bangladesh: Perspective & steps ahead

Today's children are future assets. So, we relentlessly work for proper upbringing of children. Children grow up in close association with parents, brothers and sisters and close relatives. In contrast with this universal normal process, there are scores of rootless disadvantaged children in society. Although constitutionally all children have equal rights, still disadvantaged children are deprived, exploited and tortured. Not to speak of their basic rights they are even deprived of their minimum rights. Streets are their abodes. This class of society is engaged in a constant grim battle for survival. Their latent talent wither away at its root. This situation is not expected in a developing country like Bangladesh. Despite the fact, the number of street children is growing day by day. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) / service-oriented organisations are working alongside the government for their unhindered growth and rights.

## **KA) Situation of street children in Bangladesh**

Rootless people take shelter in slums, bus terminals, railway stations and launch ghat (terminals) of major cities in Bangladesh. A large segment of this population is street children. They grow up on footpaths in sheer deprivation and neglect. They are not loved, rather they are neglected and scorned in society. They have no security of life and deprived of education and healthcare service. This is major social problem in our country. The root cause of the problem is poverty, overpopulation, joblessness and lack of education. Their number is about eleven and a half lakh, according to reliable sources.

Because of various deprivations and injustices in our society, they grow up uncared. These children always fall prey to various tortures at family, workplace, on street or at night. Taking advantage of the weakness, unscrupulous people engage them in different criminal activities. Some self-seekers use them in various risky jobs and buy their cheap labour. As a result, normal growth of children is being hindered and child rights are being violated. Gradually, they are being pushed towards a dark and uncertain life.

Usually, the children to whom we see moving on the streets or working around us, are termed as street children.

The Directorate of Social Welfare has defined the street children:

- ☞ Children below 18 years of age who work/live on the streets leaving their families.
- ☞ Children below 18 years of age who work/live on the streets with their families.
- ☞ Children below 18 years of age who work on the streets and go back to their families.
- ☞ Children below 18 years of age who work on the streets and go back to other families.

Children belonging to the first category are most risky. Of them,

girl children are much more risky. According to an information received from a study, the number of disadvantaged children in the country was 6,79,728 in 2004 but the number rose to 11,44,754 in 2014 and it will stand at 16,15,330 (approximately) in 2024 (Estimation of the size of street children and their projection for major urban areas of Bangladesh, 2004, commissioned to BIDS by ARISE).

According to a report of a study conducted by the Ministry of Social Welfare in 2005, 51% children are always rebuked by others and 20% of them fall victims to physical torture. Girl street children are the worst victims of sexual violence. Their number is 46%. 14.5% street children generally fall victims to sexual violence. (Street children in Bangladesh, A socio-economic analysis 2005, ARISE, Dept of Social Services, Ministry of Social Welfare).

Study says children flee from homes due to polygamy of parents, death of parents, torture of stepfather or stepmother, landlessness, lack of shelter, overpopulation in family, poor financial condition, inadequate social security system, child trafficking and grievances of boy children. Exodus of girls towards cities happens following instigation by friends, relatives and neighbours. They take shelter under open sky, on the streets, under the bridges, market places, parks or bus and launch terminals, rail stations and other places. They take up the pursuits of begging, thefts, pick up wastes, become child labour, domestic help, hawker, floating sex workers and drug carrier. They eat unhealthy and dirty roadside food. They are attacked with various diseases such as cold fever, skin diseases, diarrhoea and jaundice etc. Whenever any incident of theft or mugging happens, general people or members of law enforcement authorities torture them on suspicion. Street children are being exploited during political programmes for a long time. Forty-two chil-

dren died in political violence in 2013 only (Manusher Jonno Foundation state of children reviewal 2013). Street children get addicted to various drugs such as 'Gul,' cannabis, bidi, cigarette and dandy etc. They dream to become a driver or petty businessman or at least a registered porter after being adults. They are held hostage to a section of unscrupulous businessmen and politicians.

## **KHA) Service, problem and experience of organisations working with street children of Bangladesh**

### **Protection and development: Commitments of Bangladesh government**

As a state, Bangladesh is liable to establish child rights without discrimination. Following documents ensure child rights:

- ☞ Clause 28 (4) of Bangladesh Constitution
- ☞ United Nations (UN) Charter of Child Rights
- ☞ National Child Policy 2011
- ☞ National Policy for Eradication of Child Labour 2010
- ☞ Child Law 2013
- ☞ Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021

Considering requirements of disadvantaged children, government and non-government organizations are doing various welfare-oriented activities:

### **Services at government level**

Aiming to protect rights of orphans, neglected, distressed and endangered children and their upbringing, welfare, development and rehabilitation, 85 (10,300 children) government Shishu Paribar (child homes) have been established under the Directorate of Social Welfare where orphans are brought up and rehabilitated. Children are being brought up and rehabilitated in six Chhotomoni Nibash (homes for small children-525 children). A daycare programme (8,231 children) has been undertaken by the directorate. There are three centres (3,141 children) for training and rehabilitation of distress children.

Officially, five pre-vocational training programmes have been undertaken. Another programme has been undertaken for protection of endangered children (1,928). An arrangement has been made for rehabilitation of 26,018 children through six training and rehabilitation centres for distressed and floating children (1,900).

Aiming to develop and rehabilitate vagabonds, the Directorate of Social Welfare runs three development centres for adolescents and social criminals. The Directorate also runs six government (vagabond) shelters for implementation of probation and after care programmes. Alongside, it has undertaken Ashrayan (housing) project for settlement of poor landless people.

### **Services at non-government level**

Aiming to develop disadvantaged and backward population across





the country, non-government organizations (NGOs) provide skill development training, financial assistance, rights-based awareness programme to raise the standard of living of children. Alongside, the NGOs work for protection and development of street children. Noted NGOs are Lido, Seep, Jago, Ekmatra, Shishu Palli Plus, Apon, BRAC, Ain O Shalish Kendra, Bangladesh Mohila Ainjibi Samity, PSTC, Street Children's Partners Bangladesh, Incidin Bangladesh, Aparajeo Bangladesh and Dhaka Ahsania Mission. The NGOs mainly distribute food, clothes and toiletries products to them and provide psycho-social counseling, recreational facilities, conducts non-formal/ formal education programme by setting up centres in open space, primary healthcare service, arrange their safe shelter, prevent curse of drug, arrange their reunion with families as well as rehabilitation. In some cases, the NGOs provide legal assistance, create mass awareness for protection of street children, conduct research work, formulate law and policy and do advocacy work for reforms.

However, majority of the activities are dependent on donors and project-based and most of them are of 2-5 years' term. As a consequence, protection of street children and their development always remain uncertain. Beyond this, several voluntary organizations work with disadvantaged children. The organisations are Change the Lives, Mozar School, Road to School, Mitali Foundation, Shishuder Jonno Amra, Daridra Charity and Shudha etc. They conduct child education programmes, organize games and sports events, provide healthcare facilities, distribute clothes and celebrate various festivals with them.

### Ahsania Mission Children City

Aiming to bring back the disadvantaged street children to the mainstream of society by imparting education and training to them till 18 years of age, Dhaka Ahsania Mission has established "Ahsania Mission Children City" in 2011. "Shishu Nagari" will consist of 10 separate "Shishu Gram" (children villages). Every year, 100 children are supposed to be enrolled here. Within 10 years, the number of children is supposed to rise to 1,000. It has been planned to accommodate 10,000 children in 10 children villages thereby forming the "children city." Dhaka Ahsania Mission, in collaboration with KNH Germany, has established the first "Shishu Gram" at Jalapara village under Hafizabad union of Sadar upazila in Panchagarh district. At present, the number of children is 96.

### Law and policy

According to National Education Policy, a street child is entitled to free schooling, free educational implements, free lunch and stipend. Children will be protected in school. Children will get a clear concept on pre-vocational and ICT courses up to class-VIII which will help them grow as skilled manpower. On promotion to class IX, the learner will be given choice of study (clause 24 of National Education Policy). Experiences say street kids lose patience for long-term study. Money is a factor for which street kids do not want to abandon roads. The task of bringing them back to the mainstream of society becomes a tough task.

- ❧ As per National Child Labour Elimination Policy, special initiatives would be taken for development of street kids, orphans and physically and mentally challenged children. If needed, separate law and work plan would be taken. The policy guideline is formulated entirely for welfare of child workers. Money is a factor to a child worker, but it is not applicable to street child.
- ❧ National Child Policy 2011 gives emphasis on ensuring child rights. Experiences show the level of child rights or deprivation is not always the same. Street children are much more deprived than those who live with family. In the policy guideline, importance should have been given on street children.
- ❧ At present, the existing programmes give emphasis on rehabilitation of street kids. That means, none takes direct or indirect projects or programmes for stoppage of the entry point from where children turn into street children.
- ❧ As a result, the criteria of Minimum Standard of Care is not ensured. As a result, it has become more difficult to bring back street kids to normal life. On conclusion of a project, the concerned organizations take benefit of another project. When a project is wrapped up, the children again go back to the streets.

### Proposed recommendations for greater welfare of disadvantaged children

#### Recommendations for non-government social and service-oriented organisations

1. Regarding shelter, a certain standard should be maintained so that children can live in a spacious and healthy atmosphere. Separate shelter for girl and boy child should be ensured;
2. The work plan should ensure children's education, recreation, clothings and healthcare service.
3. The National Child Labour Elimination Policy guideline should be followed strictly;
4. A policy for overall protection and development of children should be formulated and it should be followed;
5. Special attention should be given so that none can torture any child physically, mentally or harass himself/herself sexually;
6. In shelters, children should be provided with food, accommodation, bathroom, toilet and healthcare facilities free of cost;
7. Arrangements should be made so that drug addict children may get special care and treatment so that they can return to normal life;
8. Moral education as well as moral values should be imparted to children so that they can grow up as worthy citizens;
9. Those who work for disadvantaged children, they should develop a mentality of service as well as enhance their skill;
10. Sphere of service should be extended through mutual cooperation and sharing of experience;
11. Donor-depending programmes should be avoided depending on own resources;
12. Social awareness should be increased to ensure children's basic rights;
13. Psycho-social service of disadvantaged children should be ensured.

#### Recommendations for government organizations

- ❧ Free service of disadvantaged children at government hospitals should be ensured;
- ❧ Measures should be taken by the Directorate of Drug Control to prevent disadvantaged children from becoming drug addicts;
- ❧ Ministry of Home Affairs should play an effective role so that disadvantaged children get fair treatment from police;
- ❧ Arrangements should be made for regular experience-sharing and exchange of opinions at all spheres through coordination of government and non-government measures for development of disadvantaged children;
- ❧ For the interest of disadvantaged children, child-friendly budget should be formulated following exchange of opinion of workers of non-government organisations;
- ❧ Mass media should take initiatives to raise mass awareness in favour of disadvantaged children;
- ❧ Corporate Social Responsibility-CSR regulation should be imposed at a certain rate for disadvantaged children;
- ❧ All concerned should be encouraged to take coordinated social initiative for the interest of disadvantaged children;
- ❧ Separate child directorate should be established under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs;
- ❧ When such a situation arises that children of certain families might come to the streets, these families must be brought to the purview of social security network. If needed, initiatives should be taken to resolve problems with the help of Women and Children-related Standing Committee under local government system;
- ❧ Effective application of law should be ensured to stop child pornography. At the same time, massive mass awareness campaign should be launched;

Aiming to turn disadvantaged children into human resources, technical training/ job-oriented education should be imparted to them in line with the official child policy, child labour elimination policy and child law;

Protection of all children should be ensured as per child law and child policy.

### Conclusion

An ideal work plan should be formulated for greater interest of street children. In light with the work plan, a coordinated framework should be formulated. This calls for (KA) Ensuring child rights, (KHA) Formulating a policy suiting to the needs of street children, undertaking programme and necessary allotments, (GA) Government measures should be taken to stop the entry point of the source of street children; (GHA) Updating information on street children and conducting research is a must as and when required.

We think the future of a country depends on the work plan undertaken for development of children of the country. Not only government alone but all should come forward to this end. If we make a commitment that we would not let a single child come to the street then it would usher into a new Bangladesh.

