

## Nature and Causes of Street Girl Children Victimization in Bangladesh: From Intervention to Policy Implications

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**Abstract:** Street girl children in Bangladesh face multifaceted victimization, including physical abuse, sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, and deprivation of basic rights. This study examines the nature and causes of their victimization, drawing on socio-economic, cultural, and institutional factors. Poverty, family disintegration, gender discrimination, and inadequate state intervention are key drivers that push girls onto the streets, exposing them to severe vulnerabilities. The absence of robust child protection mechanisms exacerbates their victimization, leaving them without legal or social support. This article also explores existing interventions, including governmental and non-governmental efforts, and evaluates their effectiveness in addressing victimization. Despite various programs, gaps in policy implementation, lack of coordination among agencies, and societal indifference hinder meaningful change. The study emphasizes the need for a comprehensive policy framework that integrates legal protection, rehabilitation, education, and economic empowerment to prevent victimization and ensure long-term welfare. Through qualitative analysis, the article highlights the urgent need for a multi-sectoral approach involving policymakers, law enforcement, civil society, and international organizations. Addressing structural inequalities and reinforcing child protection laws are essential for mitigating the plight of street girl children in Bangladesh. The findings provide insights for policymakers to develop sustainable strategies that prioritize prevention, protection, and rehabilitation, ensuring a safer future for these vulnerable children.

**Keywords:** Street Children, Victimization, Gender Discrimination, Child Protection, Bangladesh, Policy Intervention, Social Vulnerability, Exploitation, Rehabilitation, Human Rights.

### 1.1 Introduction

In recent years, child victimization is a great psycho-social problem in Bangladesh with the increasing rate of population, poverty, and floating children. Due to poverty, girls and women are more vulnerable. When we are at a traffic signal in the city, we will see children rushing up to sell various items. Some are selling flowers and sweets, or carrying stacks of books in their thin arms; others wipe the windscreen of cars with dirty rags and beg for money. Many of the children on the streets are little girls. The reality behind the scene is very grim because activists say most of these girls have been abused. Every minute, one girl child is abused in Bangladesh. Though Bangladesh ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which recognizes children as anyone below the age of 18, it is

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based on four general principles of non-discrimination and the best interest of the presents the present trend of girl victimized children in Bangladesh, its nature and causes with consequences. This also depicts the national and international measures to protect the rights of children.

## **1.2 Concept of Street Children**

Street children are used as a catch-all term, but covers children in a wide variety of circumstances and characteristics. Policymakers and service providers struggle to describe and assist such a sub-population. Individual girls and boys of all ages are found living and working in public spaces, and are visible in the great majority of the world's urban centers, 'Street children' is a term for children experiencing homelessness who live on the streets of a city, town or village. The definition of street children is still debatable, but many practitioners and policymakers use UNICEF's concept of boys and girls, aged less than eighteen years, for whom "The Street" (including unoccupied dwellings and wasteland) has become home and/or their source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised.

## **1.3 The Concept of Victimization**

The concept of victim dates back to ancient culture and civilizations. Its original meaning was rooted in the exercise of sacrifice- the taking of the life of a person or animal to satisfy a deity (Karman, 1990). Over the centuries, the word victim came to have additional meanings, so as to include any person who experiences injury, loss, or hardship due to any cause. A review of the definitions of "victim", listed in the **American Heritage Dictionary**, illustrates the breadth of the accepted meaning of the term "victim".

- Someone who is put to death or subjected to torture or suffering by another.
- A living creature slain and offered as sacrifice to a deity or as part of a religious sacrifice.
- Anyone who is harmed by or made to suffer from an act, circumstance, circumstance agency or condition: victim of war.
- A person who suffers injury, loss, or death as a result of a voluntary undertaking: a victim of his own scheming.
- A person who tricked, swindled, or taken advantage of a dupe.

Victimization is a highly complex process encompassing a number of possible elements:

- The first elements compress what are interaction may have taken place between offender and victim during the commission of the offence, plus any after effects arising from this interaction or from the offence itself.
- Secondly, it encompasses the victim reaction to the offence, including any change in self-perception that may result from it, plus any formal response that he/she may choose to make to it.
- The third elements, consists of any further interaction that may take place between the victim and others.

## **1.4 Concept of Child Victimization**

Child abuse or victimization is doing something or failing to do something that results in harm to a child or puts a child. Child victimization can occur physical, sexual or emotional, neglect or not providing for a child's needs, is also a form of child abuse. Child victimization can occur in Child's home or in the organizations, schools, communities, workplace where the children interact with.

In the social work dictionary, child victimization defined as ‘Child abuse or victimization is the recurrent reflection of physical or emotional injury on a child through intentional beating, uncontrolled corporal punishment, persistent ridicule and degradation or sexual abuse’.

### 1.5 Types of child victimization

The world Health Organization distinguishes four types of child maltreatment or victimization: physical, sexual, emotional and psychological, and neglect. However, there are several ways of victimizing child as Physical victimization; Sexual victimization; Psychological victimization; Family Violence; Neglect (Supervisory Neglect, Physical Neglect, Medical Neglect, Emotional Neglect, Educational negligence, Abandonment).

Among this type of child abuse, neglect is the most common form of maltreatment. According to the 2010 Child Maltreatment Report, the quantities of the different form of child victimization are:

Types of victimization	Percentage
Physical victimization	17.6%
Sexual victimization	9.2%
Psychological victimization	8.1%
Neglect	78.3%

Source: Child Maltreatment Report, 2010

### 1.6 Nature of Street Girl Child Victimization in Bangladesh

Street children do not go to school, instead they sell things on the streets or do other jobs as the parents earn less money or do not work. It is estimated that there are more than 600,000 street children living in Bangladesh. 75% of them live in Dhaka. Although any reliable surveys have not been conducted on the actual numbers of street children but it is predicted to be increasing day by day (Daily Star, 2008). The following table shows the number of street children in main six districts and their total number in Bangladesh in 2005.

Location of street children	Number of street children
Dhaka	249,200
Chittagong	55,856
Rajshahi	20,426
Barisal	9,771
Sylhet	13,165
Bangladesh (total)	679,728
Bangladesh (total projected for 2014)	1,144,754
Bangladesh (total projected for 2024)	1,615,330

Source: ‘Estimation of the Size Children and their Projection for Major Urban Areas of Bangladesh 2005’ commissioned to BIDS by ARISE, Cited from UNICEF 2009

Children are victimized by neighbors, friends, relatives and others. The statistics are mentioned below about picture of the victimization of children in Bangladesh.

## Scenario of Bangladesh Total 1239 Child Abuse in 2011

Percentage	Per child age	Percentage per occupation	Child	Economic children	of the status
Age	% of total	Occupation	% of total	Economic status	% the total
2-5	6%	Student	97%	Lower class	77%
6-9	8%	Other	3%	Lower middle class	10%
10-13	20%			Middle class	12%
14-18	66%			Upper class	1%

Source: Bangladesh Mohila Porishad, 2013

## Perpetrators of child sexual abuse in Bangladesh

Perpetrator	% of total
Close relatives	21%
Neighbors, friends, community people	47%
House tutor	32%

Source: A study report, 2015, conducted by ISWR, DU

The children are influenced to involve in sexual activities by their family members (7.69%), friends (75.38%), owners (26.15%) and so on (ISWR, 2015).

### 1.7 Causes of Girl Child Victimization

There are many factors that cause girl child abuse in Bangladesh. Abuse usually occurs in families where there is a combination of risk factors and the other members of the family when think the girl child as burden, then the victimization starts. Even in some cases, it is also observed that girl Childs are mistimed by their parents and first blood relatives! Outside of that groups of scoundrel work that forcibly engage girl child in prostitution, rape them and sell them out. In comparison to male child, girls are more susceptible to victim by our society, parents, and deceptive group of porn makers, or engaging them in prostitutions. There are some causes for child victimization, such as financial crisis or Poverty; Trust and Relationship Difficulties; Unauthorized child labor; Higher Illiteracy Rate; Early Marriage or Unsocial Marriage; Family Breakings; Degradation of social norms and values; Lack of emotional support; Social isolation Racism; Inequality between man and woman: Lack of parenting skills; Lack of proper application of law; Negative attitude to the street children, orphanage and poor children.

### 1.8 Impact of Victimization on Girl Children

The impact of children victimization upon the children is physical, psychological and social. Children start to suffer from various diseases due to victimization. Psychological problems made them handicapped, lead into depression, and bound to engage in anti-social activities. On the Contrary, socially abused children think them inferior and feels problem in associating with others, making network, and lead to suicidal thoughts. We can have a look on the impact of children victimization: Developmental and psychological effect, Suicidal behavior, Learning and developmental problems. Eating disorders and obesity, Alcohol and substance abuse, Fallings of being worthless, Aggression, violent and criminal behavior, and High-risk sexual behavior. In a study report shows that the girl street children are involved in more criminal activities, such as: snatching (20%), drug addiction (32.31%) and sex work (7.69%) also (ISWR, 2015).

## **1.9 Law and Policies in Protection of Child Rights**

Bangladesh has made lots of initiatives to ensure the rights of the street children. The government of Bangladesh has rectified many international conventions, laws and policies to ensure the Children. Let us have a look on the initiatives of the World and Bangladesh government in recognition of child rights. National and International Laws and policies related to street child are, as follows:

- ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 (1973)
- ILO Worst Form of Child Labor Convention No. 182 (1999)
- Global Taskforce on Child Labor and Education for All
- Global Campaign for Education was formed in 1999
- Understanding children's Work in December 2000
- Child Act, 1974
- National Child Act, 2011
- Constitutional Guarantees
- Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990
- National Education Policy

Bangladesh government introduced a program such PCAR (protection of children at risk) in 2007 but about 94% of street children are remaining out of any government or non-government coverage (Daily Stat, 2008) UNICEF took over the PCAR project (previously called ARISE) from UNDP in 2007. UNICEF seeks to improve and expand the protection, education, health, and development opportunities for children having on the streets. In 2009, a total of 8000 children got benefited from PCAR interventions in 68 open air schools; Day by day different programs are being such for the betterment of street children but their number is not decreasing that includes alarming high for Bangladesh.

## **1.10 Recommendations**

Victim of children is an unpleasant situation of Bangladesh. To overcome the unexpected situation for the children we have to take some measures for the well-being for the victim children. Such are:

- I. Firstly, torture and crude behavior to the children must be protected and legal action should be taken to offender and child victimization;
- II. Secondly, family counseling should be applied to reduce the victim of children. It helps to understand various factors which are responsible for ensuring peaceful environment in the family. Psycho-social therapy is very helpful for the well-being of the children as well as for the development of good child-parents relationship;
- III. Thirdly, awareness of the social people needs to be developed for the street children and relationship program should be made for their well-being;
- IV. Fourthly, arrange security programs particularly for the girl children at the time of their movement outside home; and
- V. Finally, moral education should be given to the children as well as adult people of the society.

## **1.11 Conclusion**

Children of Bangladesh are facing various kinds of abuses situation like physical, psychological, and sexual harassment. For making the conditions of abuse children, every person of the society should come forward to controlling the situation of child abuse.

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