

“Exploring the Barriers to Basic Education of Bangladeshi Urban Slum Children”

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ABSTRACT:-This research is an effort to explore the barriers to basic education of Bangladeshi urban slum children and to find out the ways to overcome the barriers. About one-third of Dhaka's 20 million residents live in slums and 40% of them are children. Dropout, nonenrolment and irregular attendance are common phenomena in slums. The slum children of Dhaka city have been chosen for this study. 203 respondents were selected for this mixed-method study. The basic educational deprivation was originated from socio-economic causes. Only 43% children were continuing their education. On the other hand, dropout and nonenrolment were 40% and 17% respectively. Poverty was found the main cause of the slum children's basic educational deprivation. Household related causes were mainly responsible for non-enrollment and dropout. Dropout and non-enrollment rates were greater for children with illiterate parents. Above 82% of the families lived in single-room houses. Average monthly family income was TK8,000 (\$75) to TK22,000 (\$200) which was very low for the fundamental family needs including slum children's educational cost. Ways to overcome the slum children's basic educational barriers were found from four levels like the household environment, the slum environment, the school environment and governmental steps. Finally, this problem cannot be solved overnight, rather it needs time.

Key Words: Basic education, slum children, barriers to basic education, dropout, non-enrollment.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Children, the buds of a nation, are needed to provide proper opportunities to be educated. By considering the importance of education, most countries have set goals to achieve education for their children. By educating the children, a nation can nurture productive citizens. Education is the backbone of a nation and the basic education is the gateway for this. Slums are a matter of deprivation and children face deprivation from basic education here because slums consist of hard core poverty areas although poverty is considered a rural phenomenon in the context of Bangladesh (Cameron, 2010). The concept of basic education varies from country to country. International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines, “*basic education comprises primary education (first stage of basic education) and lower secondary education (second stage)*”. In the context of Bangladesh, the provision of basic education which is called primary school education has been made compulsory for all children (Mousumi and Kusakabe, 2021). Bangladesh National Education Policy, 2010, proposed compulsory education for all children is up to lower secondary education (up to class eight), but it has not been implemented yet (Rahman, 2017). So, basic education comprises primary school education in Bangladesh. The deprivation of basic education for urban slum children is more vulnerable than any group in Bangladesh (Cameron, 2011) and slum itself is a matter of deprivation of almost all fundamental rights including basic education of children (Cameron, 2017).

In the context of Bangladesh, Dhaka city has a population of about 20 million people and one-third of them live in slums (Roni and Jia, 2020). There, many social problems like poverty, overpopulation, poor sanitation, and lack of basic amenities make it harder for children to get an education (Cameron, 2011). Despite vast differences amongst slums, all slums have a lack of adequate living space, inadequate provision of public goods, and low quality of basic services, lack of education facilities, lack of sanitation and good health. Children in slum are deprived from education, they dropout from school, they remain out of school, they go to school lately and so on (Bag, Seth and Gupta, 2016). As a result, they cannot be productive human capital to change their life styles and their deprivation continues from generation to generation.

In the context of Bangladesh, a few literary researches have been done on the basic educational sides of the slum children. Although the Government of Bangladesh has made three slum censuses in 1986, 1997 and 2014 by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the reports of the censuses have not focused much on the educational deprivation or basic educational deprivation of slum children. Only a few noticeable empirical studies have been conducted in Bangladesh by Cameron (2010), Smita et al. (2020), Hossain (2014) and Islam et al. (2014) but these studies do not depict the overall barriers of basic educational deprivation of slum children or sometimes fulfills the partial areas of educational deprivation of slum children in Bangladesh. On the top of

this, there is not any empirical research on slum children’s educational barriers in recent times. Bangladesh has adopted a perspective plan to be a developed country by 2041. To do so, education is the key need. All section of people should be included in educational attainment. So, it is high time to think of the educational provision of slum children and it is needed to start from the basic education of slum children because basic education is the gateway for further education.

Objectives of the study:

The major aim of the study is to explore the barriers to basic education of Bangladeshi urban slum children. To fulfill this aim, this study focuses on two specific objectives.

1. To investigate the barriers that slum children face in obtaining basic education.
2. To find out the ways to overcome the barriers.

Research Questions:

To fulfill the objectives of the study, the following research questions have been selected:

1. What are the influential barriers to basic education in slum households?
2. How socio-economic factors are influencing the education of slum households and slum children?
3. How can the educational barriers be overcome in slum households, slum environment and schools?

According to the Slum Census 2014 data, total number of slums in Bangladesh is 13,935 and it is estimated that the number of slum in Dhaka city is about 5,000 now. BBS (2015) found the number of Dhaka city slum people was 7.8 million and about 40% of them are children. The literacy rate of the slum population (7 years and above) in Slum Census 2014 in Bangladesh is 33.26% of which males are 34.68% and females are 31.76% (BBS, 2015). On the other hand, the country’s literacy rate is 74.7 % in 2019 and 74.9 % in 2020 (APSC, 2022). It is seen here that; the slum population has less than half the literacy rate of the normal level. There is no unified approach to addressing these children's educational issues, nor is there appropriate information on educational opportunities available to poor children of slums in metropolitan areas (Cameron, 2011). So, research on slum children’s education is needed to explore in Bangladesh for its holistic development because Bangladesh has planned to achieve SDGs within 2030 and set goals to be a developed country by 2041.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

In this part, a review of the literature gives an overall picture of what is known about slums, slum children, basic education and barriers to slum children getting an education in urban areas of Bangladesh, and other contexts.

Basic Education

The term "basic education" is frequently used, yet it has distinct meanings and applications in various nations and among various international organizations. “Education for All” and the expended version of basic education expansion explain, *“Basic education goes beyond facts. It is the foundation for lifelong learning and human growth, and countries can plan to add more levels and types of education and training”* (Windham, 1992). The World Bank defines basic education as non-formal education for children and adults and then primary education but reality is that basic education is same as elementary education. UNESCO's official classification system (ISCED) classifies basic education as elementary and lowers secondary education. UNICEF's idea of "basic education" puts an emphasis on early and primary education (Hoppers, 2006). However, primary education usually takes six years, but this goal is only about five years of schooling (Wals, 2012). In Bangladesh, Basic education is considered as five years of schooling which is up to class five in general (Rouf, 2021). Basic education is primarily aimed for students between the ages of 6 and 11, despite differing requirements (APSC, 2022). In addition, it includes a large array of activities at both public and private institutions. It is intended to meet the basic educational needs of Bangladeshi children up to class five.

Basic Education in Bangladesh

Article 17 of the Bangladeshi constitution guarantees all children a basic education. The provision for compulsory basic education in Bangladesh was introduced as a law in 1990 and became fully operational in 1993 (Rahman, 2003). The Sustainable Development Goals (Goal-4) recognizes the significance of primary education. According to Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) of Bangladesh 2022, basic education is primarily aimed for students between the ages of 6 and 11. According to UNICEF data (Data Warehouse, 2021) the adjusted net attendance rate for children of primary school age in Bangladesh is 85.9 in 2019 where male and female children rate is 83.3 and 88.5 respectively. On the other hand, the completion rate for children of primary school age is 82.6 where male and female children rate is 76.3 and 89.1. Out of school rate for children of primary schools is 6.4 where male and female children rate is 8.1 and 4.5 (Data Warehouse, 2021). According

to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education in Bangladesh which is responsible for maintaining pre-primary to up to class five, now 16,230,000 children are enrolled in primary school. Additionally, over the past two decades, the number of out-of-school children was reduced by over 35 per cent. However, there is still a long way to go: 64 million children of primary school age remain out of school, with the majority of them coming from marginalized groups like urban slum areas (DPE, 2022).

Basic Education in Bangladeshi Urban Slum

Over 18 percent of children aged 6-11 are not currently engaged in any form of formal education (World Bank, 2019). Children do not enroll school or dropout due to poverty, influence of peer group, illness, family background, natural disaster, taking care of siblings and so on (Cameron, 2008). Even while the number of students who stop attending primary school in Bangladesh is falling at a steady rate, it can be noted that the dropout rate for girls is 18 percent, while the dropout rate for boys is 23.9 percent, which is still a high percentage (BBS, 2015). Dhaka district has a dropout rate of 15.1%, and the male dropout rate is 16.9% while the female dropout rate is 13.4%. This indicates that the male dropout rate is greater than the female dropout rate (BANBEIS and Ministry of Education, 2017; BBS, 2015). Most of the dropouts and nonenrolment cases are seen in the slum areas of Dhaka city. It is needed to say that, government provides no special policy for slum children's education (Cameron, 2010; Icddr, 2016).

According to a report by UNICEF, 54.5 percent of boys and 60.9 percent of girls aged between 6 and 11 who live in the slums of Dhaka city go to school. Despite this, just 2.8 percent of children living in slums attend school once they reach the appropriate age. The report also discloses an unsettling statistics that 62.9% of slum children work more than eight hours per day (UNICEF, 2016). Here it is seen that UNICEF data is posing the high picture of dropout and non-enrollment. In the city as a whole, children who live in slum areas have the least access to educational opportunities, and the city also has a high dropout rate. Barriers to basic education in urban households of all cities are the result of many problems like low income, housing condition, parental education, health problems of children, surrounding environment of slums, impact of peer groups, lack of steps from governmental side, lack of specialized schools for slum children (Cameron, 2010). On the other hand, people who live in slums are typically impoverished and weak, and their opinions are rarely taken into consideration (Cameron, 2011) because they are temporary or migrant people and they can be used as a ready labor force. So, slum people, in some context, do not realize the role of education and many of them consider getting the immediate benefit of education. As this situation is going on from years to years, slum children are seen to be non-enrolled, not attended, irregular in school and dropout is very common in this area.

Bangladeshi Slums and Characteristics

According to a research conducted by Haque et al. (2020) that a slum is a cluster of housing units which grow unsystematically in government owned or private vacant land. In Bangladesh, the walls and roofs of such houses are generally made of straw leaves, gunny bags, polythene paper, bamboo etc. a tin shed house or even a building may be added, if it is situated within the purview and environment of a slum. The physical and hygienic conditions of such houses are far below those of a common urban residential area. Generally, this segment of people is distressed and forced to live in such unhygienic condition due to economic reason (Haque et al. 2020). Slums are defined by Dataset Papers in Science (2014) as settlements with a minimum of 10 households or a mess unit with a minimum of 25 members and predominantly very poor housing; very high population density and room crowding; very poor environmental services, especially water and sanitation; very low socio-economic status; lack of security of tenure (Gruebner et al., 2014). In the context of Bangladesh, the definition of slum has been given by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics under the Ministry of Planning; a slum is a cluster of compact settlements of five or more households that grow very haphazardly and unsystematically in an unhealthy environment and condition on government and private unoccupied land. Slums also exist on the owner based residential property (BBS, 2015).

Barriers to Basic Education in Bangladeshi Slums

According to BBS (2015), Dhaka district has a dropout rate of 15.1% and most of the dropout rate belongs to the Dhaka city slums. The problems of access to basic education faced by slum dwellers are fundamental (Cameron, 2010). The physical environment of slums is not favorable for children's education. The delivery of services, including basic education, to slum households is very limited as education expenditure amounts to only around Tk. 20 (US\$0.29) per child per month (Baker, 2007). UNICEF (2009) found that only 63 percent children of slums in Bangladesh aged between 8 to 11 enrolled in school while the national rate was 116 percent. Al-Samarrai (2009) depicted out some common barriers of slum children to continue and attend schools like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, unhygienic living condition, child labor, availability of schools, and the costs of school are the significant issues. A study conducted by Anis (2020) pointed out that there were two primary factors that led to urban slum children dropping out and nonenrolment of school. The first reason

was due to the financial constraints of the households, and the second reason was connected to the characteristics that were present in the schools. So, possible policies should be implemented to provide basic education of the children considering these issues.

Possible Solutions of Educational Deprivation for Slum Children

Providing education for children in slums must be hampered by a lack of solid data on their number and educational standing (Cameron, 2010). Some research and studies have given some suggestions, for example, extending the rural stipend program to urban areas would be a crucial step to support the expenses of urban slum children's education. Concerns have been raised concerning the efficacy of the existing rural subsidy program (Al-Samarrai, 2009; Baulch, 2010). Bangladesh has some social safety net (SSN) programs but the slum people do not get any allowance for children's education because of living in urban areas as the school going poor children allowance is not expended in urban areas (Cameron, 2011). Cameron (2010) in his study emphasizes that slum household per person earning is less than US\$0.50 (TK53) per person per day, it would benefit most from a tiny stipend if the children's education allowance is lunched for urban poor. Administrative barriers hinder proper policy implementation for urban slum children's education (SIDA Bangladesh, 2010). Research often overlooks the issue of urban poverty, as urban dwellers lack permanent addresses and national identity cards (Hossain, 2014).

As the constitution of Bangladesh has ensured the provision of compulsory basic education for all children which is up to class five (Rahman, 2017), it should also be ensured for the slum children. Here the pragmatic steps are needed which can be taken incrementally on a long term basis by considering the opinions of the slum residents, schools teachers relative to slum areas and slum monitoring bodies.

III. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Jordan et al. (1994) developed a framework and identified two factors, the Pushed Out and Pulled Out Factors whose are posing the barriers to basic education of children. The term "pulling out" describes the fact that students occasionally run into difficult circumstances that force them to stop attending school and fail to complete their education. The pulling out factors in slum areas include poverty, family background, parental education, low income and sickness of parents, looking after family members, household chores, child labor and so on. The pushed out factors are directly relative to barriers existing in schools (Smita et al., 2020). The pushed out factors include lack of schools, lack of facilities in schools, shortage of teachers, large class size, noisy class rooms, discrimination in schools, rules and regulations in schools, repeated failure, poor grade, late attendance at schools, lack of proper initiatives from authority levels and so on (Smita et al., 2020). Falling Out component of Watt and Rossingh (1994) occurs when pupils do not participate meaningfully in the academic activities of the school and do not make any progress without any obvious impact of push and pull factors (Finn, 1989; Finn and Pannoza, 1995). The falling out factors in this study include children's lust for money, indifference to obey academic and institutional rules, disinterested in study, seeking a free life, availability of drugs, involved in bullies and so on (Smita et al., 2020).

From the mentioned concepts, the overall conceptual framework of the study was combined. The educational barriers in slum households are mainly being influenced by three factors (pushed out factors, pulled out factors, falling out factors) or three reasons (children related reasons, household related reasons and school related reasons) including some existing effects. Here, the factors and causes are influencing the basic education in slum households in Bangladesh. The barriers to basic education cause the deprivation from future education which is leading to lack of employment. The barriers to basic education leads the slum children to lag behind in others like decision making in society, social status, living condition and so on. The overall framework of this study can be employed from problem identification to the possible way to overcome the problem by following two main research approaches like quantitative and qualitative approaches.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The core theme of this study is to explore the barriers to basic education related reasons and to outline the possible solutions. Here needs to find out the deeper insights of the study by following research objectives. So, this study needs to explore empirically through mixed method (qualitative and quantitative methodology) because here we need to find out phenomena and to measure some variables according to the research questions. Due to the nature of the topic and to achieve a comprehensive picture of the study, finally mixed methodology was chosen to be applied because quantitative survey followed by a qualitative interview can help assess respondents' overall insight condition. The research was conducted at four major slums in the capital city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The population of this study consists of the slum children whose ages are from 6 to 15 in Dhaka City. In this study, parents or guardians of the slum children have been interviewed to get the research data properly.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study involves non-probability sampling technique to draw the necessary sample from the target population. The total number of respondents was 203 who were selected purposively and in some cases by snowball sampling method.

Table 4.1: Sampling design of the study

Name of Slum	Gender of Children		Total
	Male	Female	
Korail	28	28	56
Lalbag	26	27	53
Mahammadpur	19	30	49
Kamlapur	22	23	45
Total	95	108	203

Source: Author based on field data, 2023

Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaire was used as the main data collection instrument for this study. The 'Leaving Method' of the 'Self-response survey' data collection method was chosen for the printed questionnaire survey. In most of the cases, researcher asked the question to the respondents and filled it in. Data was then entered into an Excel spreadsheet. The researcher interviewed target respondents in person and collected their responses as part of a qualitative study. To communicate with target respondents, the survey questionnaire was written in English and Bengali and questions were asked in Bangla. The data was edited manually and then coded and tabulated. Using SPSS and Microsoft Excel, the quantitative data were gradually examined. To determine the significance of the association between the dependent variable and independent variables, different statistical tools were used.

Reliability and Validity

Perfect reliability and validity is nearly impossible to obtain in social research (Neuman, 2014). The results obtained from all of the instruments are anticipated to be valid and reliable, as the interviews were conducted empirically with the consent of the respondents. The following efforts were made to increase the reliability and validity of the measurements used in this study:

- The constructs were clearly conceptualized, with each measure representing a single concept.
- Efforts were undertaken to measure structures with as much precision as feasible.
- Finally, a pilot test was undertaken in which the draft questionnaire was evaluated by posing questions to respondents and evaluating their clarity.

Ethical Issues

Respondents have the right to privacy when information is collected; therefore, the respondents in this study were notified that the information they supplied throughout the survey would be held in strict confidence. The questionnaire would only be accessible to the researcher. Respondents' involvement was voluntary. Respondents could at any time opt to answer questions or decline to participate.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Here, 203 respondents from four slums were surveyed. Several statistical tools were used like descriptive analysis, univariate analysis, inferential analysis, bivariate analysis, test of hypothesis using independent sample t-test, chi-test, Spearman's rank order correlation, and Cramer's V coefficient, and more for data analysis.

Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

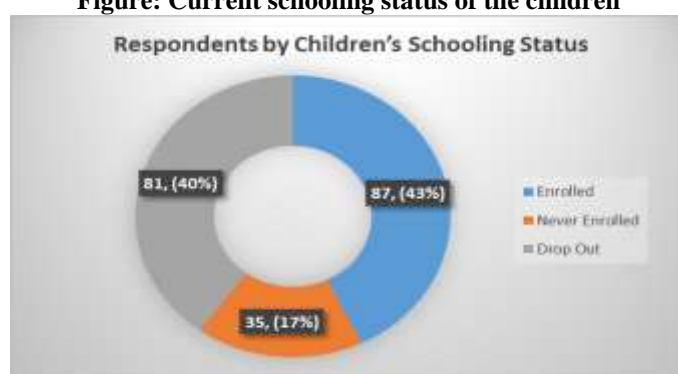
The study was conducted on four selected slums named Korail, Lalbag, Mohammadpur and Kamlapur in Dhaka city, Bangladesh and, the frequency or percentage of respondents from four slums includes 56 (27.6%), 53 (26.1%), 49 (24.1%) and 45 (22.20%) respectively totaling 203, where 108 (53%) and 95 (47%) were girls and boys. Three categories of children's guardians were found as parents (37.4%), only father (41.4%) and only mother (21.2%). The families having one children, two children, three children, four children and five or more children was found 33.5%, 37.9%, 18.2%, 5.4% and 4.9% respectively. In the house types, 13% of the respondents are living in Pacca house (roof, wall and floor are made of concrete), the percentage is doubled (26%) for Semi-pacca house (floor and wall are made of brick) and Tin/Kacha houses (all are made of bamboo, tin and timber) comprising two-thirds of the respondents (61%). 82.3% of the respondents have a one room

house, 13% respondents can afford two rooms and only 4.4% have three room houses for living with their family members. Educational qualification of the children's guardians illustrates that more than two-fifths of guardians are illiterate (43.3%). The percentage of guardians having a primary education is just over a third (37.9%) and the percentage of guardians who have completed secondary education is 14.8%. Only 3.9% guardians have higher secondary or more degrees. In the main sources of family income include rickshaws/van puller (24.1%), small business (17.7%), garment worker (15.8%), transport worker (11.8%), day labor (11.3%), servant/maid (9.9%) and job (9.4%). In monthly family income, 38.4% families had a monthly family income within the range of TK13000 to TK17000. The ranges of family income between TK18000 to TK22000, TK 8000 to TK12000, TK 23000 to TK27000 and above TK28000 were 26.1%, 21.2%, 11.3% and 3% respectively.

Barriers Related to the Basic Education of Slum Households

Children's Schooling Status: Among 203 slum children, current status of schooling of the children depicts that more than two-fifths of the children are now currently enrolled in school which is 43% and 17% children have never enrolled. On the other hand, two-fifths also dropped out of school which is 40%.

Figure: Current schooling status of the children

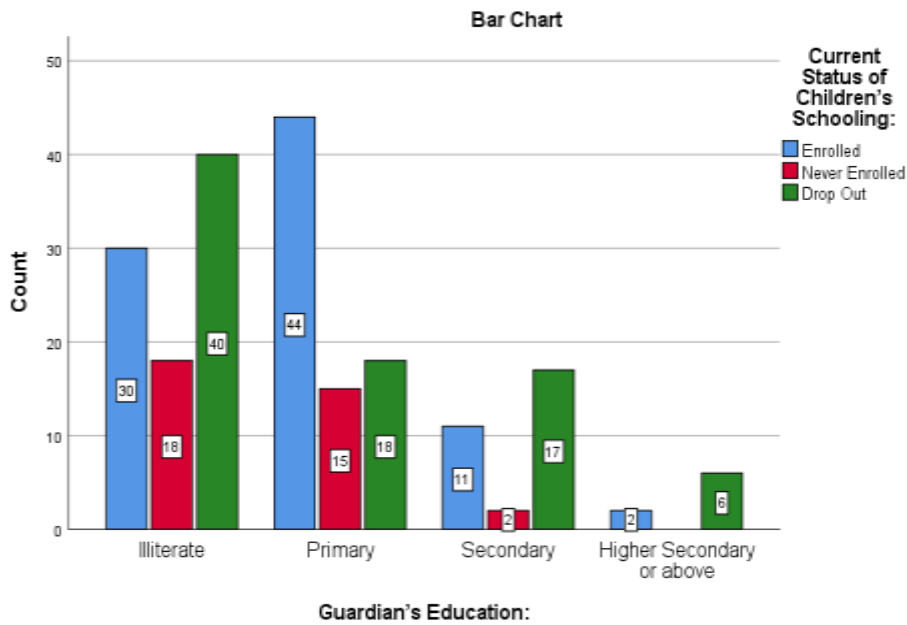


Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Children's Non-enrollment and Dropout Related Reasons: Several reasons related to non-enrollment and dropout of children from school were found. The responsible causes of non-enrollment include poverty (21.60%), looking after younger siblings (19.80%), household work of children (15.50%) and no interest of children to study (14.70%), obstruction from guardian (8.60%), non-availability of school near slum (8.60%), migration of family (6.0%) and interest of earning (5.2%). On the other hand several reasons related to the slum children's dropout were found as- poverty (24.90%), lack of interest of children (19.80%), reluctance of parents (14.40%), repeated failure (11.30%), poor academic performance (8.90%), Non-adjustment with school rules and regulation (8.90%), family migration (8.60%) and poor facilities in school.

Children's Schooling Status and Guardian's Education: The study examined the correlation between the educational background of guardians and the schooling status of 203 slum children. Out of the 88 illiterate guardians, 18 children were not enrolled, 40 children dropped out of school, and 30 children were still enrolled. These percentages represent 8.70%, 19.70%, and 15% of the total, respectively. Out of the 77 guardians of children with primary school education, the number of non-enrolled children, dropout children, and enrolled children were 15 (7.30%), 18 (8.90%), and 44 (21.60%) respectively. Among 30 guardians having secondary education, non-enrolled, dropout and enrolled children were 2 (1%), 17 (8.40%), 11 (5.40%) respectively. Among 8 guardians having higher secondary or above education had 0 non-enrolled children, 6 (3%) dropout children and 2 (1%) enrolled children. To assess whether the schooling status of children was related to guardians' education, a chi-square test for independence with $\alpha = 0.05$ was used. The chi-square test was statistically significant, $\chi^2(6, N=203) = 20.72, p < .002$, with Cramer's V coefficient of 0.226, indicating a small to medium relationship. As seen in figure, the illiterate guardians were more apt to have their children dropout of school than the educated guardians. So, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between the schooling status of children and guardians' education.

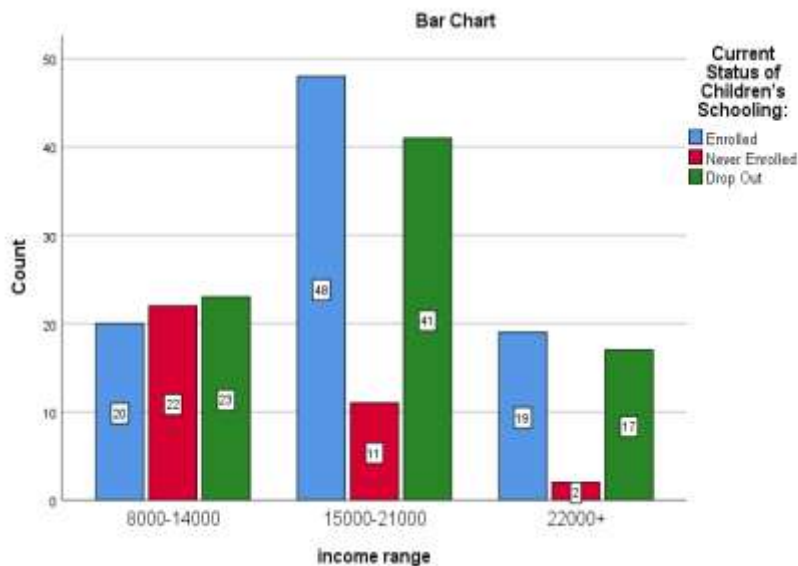
Figure: Children’s schooling status by guardian’s education



Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Children’s Schooling and Monthly Family income:The figure of the income range between TK8000 to TK14000 was found 65. Here, the numbers or percentages among enrolled, never enrolled and dropout children were found 20 or 30%, 22 or 34% and 23 or 36%. The income range between TK15000 to TK 21000 was found 100 in number. Here, the numbers or percentages among enrolled, never enrolled and dropout children were found 48 or 48%, 11 or 11% and 41 or 41%. The figure of the income range of 22000 or above was found 38. Here, the numbers or percentages among enrolled, never enrolled and dropout children were found 19 or 50%, 02 or 5% and 17 or 45%. A chi-square test for independence with $\alpha = .05$ was used to assess whether there is an association between the schooling status of children and the income range of the family. The chi-square test was statistically significant, $X^2 (4, N=203) = 19.68, p < .001$. As the figure illustrates, never enrollment status of the children decreased with the increment in family income. On the other hand, enrollment and dropout status faced little change with the income range. Now, it can be said that there is a significant relationship between schooling status of children and the income range of the family.

Figure: Children’s current schooling status by family’s monthly income



Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Children’s Schooling Status and Guardians’ Economic Solvency: Among 203 children, 138 guardians have no ability to the educational materials for children but only 65 guardians have. The guardians having the ability to supply the educational materials include the enrolled, never enrolled and dropout children in school and the respective proportions or percentages of these categories are 40 or 62%, 6 or 9%, and 19 or 29%. On the other hand, the guardians, unable to purchase educational materials, discovered that the figures or percentages of enrolled, never enrolled, and dropout children were 47 or 34%, 29 or 21%, and 62 or 43% respectively. A chi-square test for independence with $\alpha = .05$ was used to assess whether there is an association between the schooling status of children and the guardians’ ability to buy the necessary things for children’s education. The chi-square test was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (2, N=203) = 14.073, p < .001$. It is found that, no ability to buy necessary things for education was more likely to lead to dropout and even never enrolment in school.

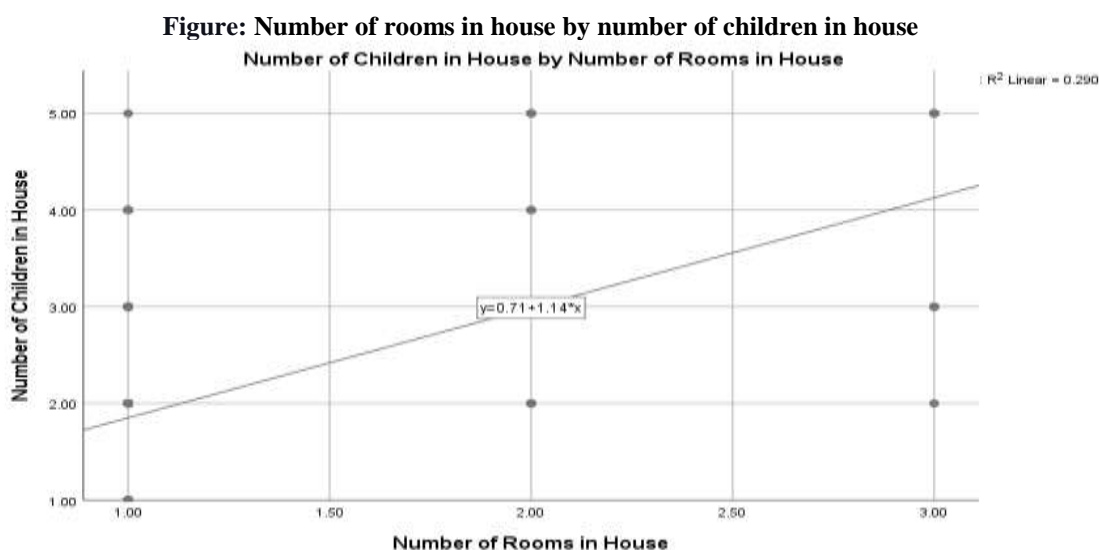
Children’s Housing Condition and School Environment Barriers: An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean School Environment Barriers (SEB) scores of suitable (n=48) and not-suitable (n=155) houses for children’s studies. That means, School Environment Barriers (SEB) significantly differ from the suitable and not suitable houses for children’s studies in the following figure.

Table: Mean difference of School Environment Barriers (SEB) scores between Suitable and Not Suitable houses for children’s studies

	House	N	Mean	Std. D	t
SEB scores	Suitable	48	2.4844	0.99788	2.148
	Not Suitable	155	2.1516	0.71025	

Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Number of Rooms in House and Number of Children: Spearman’s rank order correlation was used to explore the relationship between number of rooms and number of children in house. The rank order correlation was found positive and medium $r_s (203) = 0.479, p < .01$, two-tailed. Prior to calculating r_s , a visual inspection of the Scatterplot (following figure) confirmed that the relationship between these variables was linear.

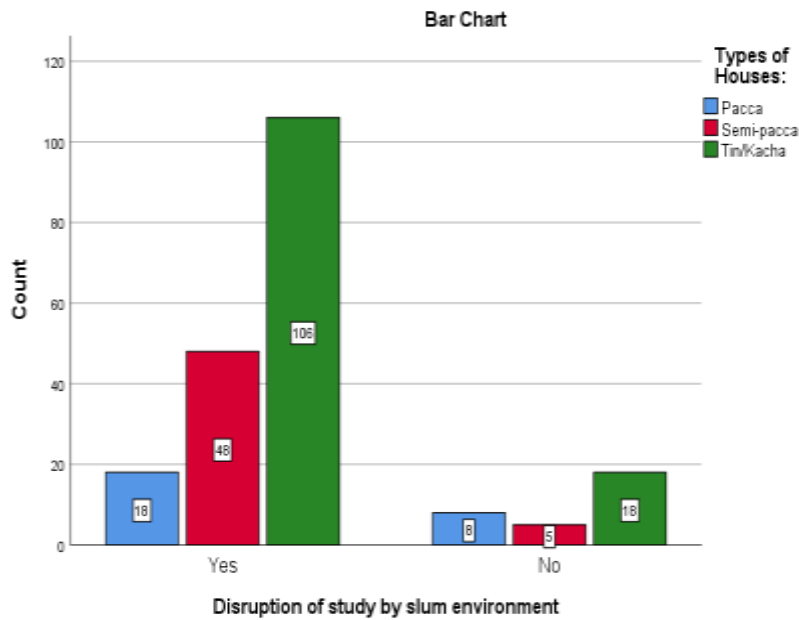


Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Socio-economic Factors Influencing Slum Households and Slum Children’s Education

Types of Houses Disrupt Slum Children’s Study: A chi-square test for independence with $\alpha = 0.05$ was used to assess whether there is an association between the disruption of study and the types of houses. The chi-square test was statistically significant, $\chi^2 (2, N=203) = 6.277, p < .043$. The given figure describes, Tin/Kacha houses were more responsible for the disruption of slum children's education than the Pacca/semi-Pacca houses.

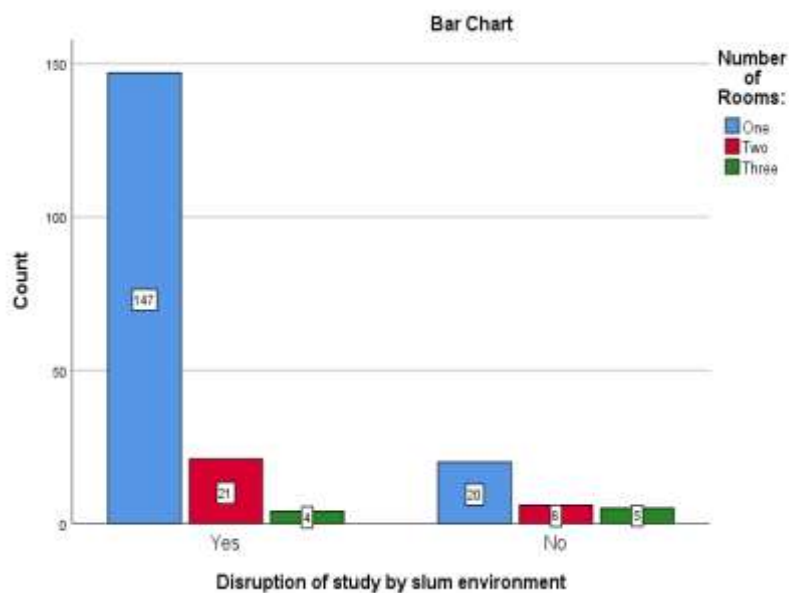
Figure: Disruption of study in slum environment by types of houses



Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Number of Rooms and Disruption of Children’ Study in Slum: A chi-square test was used the test was statistically significant, $X^2(2, N=203) = 13.698, p < .001$, with Phi (ϕ) coefficient of .260, indicating a small to medium relationship. As it is seen in following figure, one room houses in slums were more apt to disrupt education than others. So, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between the number of rooms and the disruption of study in slum environment.

Figure: Disruption of study in slum environment by number of rooms



Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Access to Basic Education Related Barriers in Slum from Major Views: Respondents were asked some Likert scale questions to know the barriers related to accessing basic education in Bangladeshi urban slums. There were four major sections; each section follows some questions with five-point Likert scale categories. After entering each category of Likert scale data into SPSS, the variables were transformed into new variables by calculating the mean of the categories. The descriptive statistics of data are as follows:

Table 5.2: Access to basic education-related barriers

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. D
Barriers related to state limitation	203	1.33	4	2.1921	0.52838
Barriers related to household environment	203	1.29	3.57	2.0704	0.47834
Barriers related to school environment	203	1	4.5	2.2303	0.79773
Deprivation of future education and facilities	203	1.25	2.5	1.6853	0.25318

Source: Author, based on survey data 2023

Note: 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

The mean was interpreted as follows: value between 1 to 1.8 = Strongly Agree, 1.81 to 2.60 = Agree, 2.61 to 3.40 = Neutral, 3.41 to 4.20 = Disagree, 4.20 to 5 = Strongly Disagree.

In the first section, the mean is 2.19; hence it shows that respondents agree that there are barriers related to state limitation in Bangladeshi urban slums. In the second section, participants also agree on the barriers related to the household environment as the mean value is 2.07. The barriers related to school environment mean are 2.23 which indicate the respondents agree with this. Participants strongly agree on the deprivation from future education and facilities having a mean of 1.68.

Possible Ways to Overcome the Basic Educational Barriers of Slum Households

Respondents were asked about the possible solutions to the basic educational deprivation of slum children and multiple options were given with open ended questions.

House Environment: To know about the desired study environment in household for children’s education, it has been found that the demand for the availability of private tutor and separate room for children’s study hold the top percentages as 22.60 and 21.80 respectively. Calm environment, parents’ consciousness for children’s education, guardians’ proper income and eradication of family based gender discrimination were found 18.70%, 17.70%, 17.20% and 2.10% respectively.

Slum Environment: In the opinion related to the required slum environment for children’s education, about three-fourths of respondents have given their answers on three recommendations as noise-free environment (28.50%), stopping rural-urban migration (24.20%) and proper responsibility of City Corporation (22.10). Violence free environment (14.30%), ensuring law (6.90%) and presence of NGOs and voluntary education program (4.0%) in Bangladeshi slum areas also needed to be considered.

School Environment: For the desired school environment for slum children’s basic educational access, several questions were asked. Two-fifths of the respondents recommended simplifying the class lessons and finishing at school (20.90%) and providing educational materials from school (19.70%). Trained teachers, simplifying the admission procedure, required number of teachers, emphasizing on edu-entertainment, good teacher-student relationship, good teachers-guardian relationship, required classroom and multimedia based classroom were found 12.10%, 10.90%, 9.10%, 7.70%, 6.10%, 5.10%, 4.30% and 4.20% respectively.

Required Governmental Steps: For required governmental steps to ensure the basic education of slum children, the respondents emphasized on stipend scheme (21.70%), time demanded student assessment procedure to prevent dropout (20.90%), ensuring mid-day meal at school (12.20%), ensuring the right to education of slum children (9.10%), a time-based plan to upgrade slum (9.0%), special protection programs for urban poor (7.80%), establishing more schools (7.10%), ensuring urban facilities in slum areas (5.50%), ensuring legitimacy to the right of slum dwellers (4.50%), and political case for a greater focus on the urban poor (2.20%).

VI. DISCUSSION

The barriers relative to slum households, slum children’s educational access, socio-economic situation, slum environment, school facilities, state related barriers for slum children’s education and possible solutions to access the slum children in the basic educational process needed to be analyzed by the linkage and comparison between the study findings and the previous literature.

Socio-demographic Factors of the Respondents

Over 70% of families have one or two children, although some have three or more. Most families live in one-room houses (above 82%) that are Tin/Kacha (61%) and Semi-pacca 26%, reflecting a lower standard of living. Slum Census (2014) revealed almost the same results, 62.45% and 26.43% respectively. A research by Tanni et al. (2014) found that 80% of the houses have Tin/Kacha structures in poor condition, making it hard for residents to live there. About 80% of child guardians were illiterate or had just primary education. According to Tanni et al. (2014), 42.19% of people were illiterate and 20.66% could only sign their names. Bangladeshi slums had 33.26% literacy in the 2014 Slum Census. The literacy rate of guardians in this study is lower than in

Slum Census 2014 since this study considered guardians or parents' educational levels, while Slum Census (2014) considered all aged residents. Tanni et al. (2014) found that slum adults were less literate than children. Child guardians work in low-wage employment including rickshaw or van pullers, small business or hawkers, garment workers, day laborers, and others. Hossain (2014) showed 63.12% of slum inhabitants work in low-wage informality. The children's family income was quite low, ranging from TK8,000 to TK22,000, although Doctor & Doctor (2023) found that Bangladesh's average monthly income is TK24,000 (\$226.52). Cameron (2008) found slum inhabitants earn \$70–\$110 (TK7,500–TK12,000) per month. Slum dwellers live in extreme poverty because they earn less than \$1 a day. This study found that participants' socioeconomic status was low. Tanni et al. (2014) revealed that extreme poverty forces most slum residents to live in substandard homes without basic utilities and conveniences.

Barriers Faced by Slum Children to Obtain Basic Education

Basic education is difficult for slum children for socioeconomic reasons. This study found that 40% of children dropped out and 17% were not enrolled in school. School going children also face barriers, with only 43% continuing their education. The findings are relevant. The World Bank (2019) data shows 18% of children remained non-enrolled. Cameron (2008) reported that 43% to 85% of students attended school, whereas 12% and 27% dropout and non-enrolled respectively. Nath et al. (2015) found that more than 50 percent of children were not continuing education, either because they were never enrolled or dropped out, while 48.56 percent of children were continuing their education.

The main cause of slum children's dropout and non-enrollment was found poverty which is a pulled out factor relative to household causes as well as low income of guardians. Cameron (2008) found that the educational expenditure per year was only \$80. Nath et al. (2015) identified poverty as the leading cause of non-enrollment, dropout, and irregular attendance for both boys and girls of slum children. Similarly, Sarker et al. (2019) also found that poverty and low family income were the main reasons for slum children's dropout and non-enrollment. Additionally, Smita et al. (2020) found that push, pull, and falling out factors contributed to the dropout of slum children. Looking after younger siblings (pulled out factor) and lack of interest of children for study (falling out factor) were found the second most dominant causes of non-enrollment and dropout. The pulled out factors (household work, obstruction from guardians and family migration), and the pushed out factor (non-availability of schools near slum) and the falling out factors (no interest of children to study and children's interest to earn money) were found as the reasons of slum children's non-enrollment in schools. The pulled out factors (reluctance of guardians for children's education and family migration), the pushed out factors (repeated failure in same class, poor academic performance, children's non-adjustment with school rules and regulation) are also the causes of slum children's school dropout. Tsujita (2013) found that the majority of urban low-income residents reside in slum areas, where children dropout or never enroll in school to work part-time or full-time to support their family. This study also found that doing household chores and making children perform them for no pay is one of the causes of school dropout. So, it can be said that for non-enrollment and dropout, pull out factors or the factors relative to household causes are the dominant barriers.

Slum children's education is affected by guardians' education, monthly family income, ability to buy educational materials, and positive attitude. Dropout rates were considerably greater for children with illiterate parents than those with educated parents. Caught (2011) and Oketch et al. (2012) found that parental education and backwardness cause slum children to drop out and not enroll. Although dropout rates vary by income source, families with servants/maids were more likely to have children who never attended school. Nath et al. (2015) found that guardians' jobs affect slum dropout and non-enrollment. Family monthly income was linked to children's education. Children's school dropout rate dropped with family income. However, income range affected enrollment and dropout rates. According to Nath et al. (2015), guardians' financial difficulty greatly affects children's dropout. Dropout and non-enrollment were linked to guardians' incapacity to afford educational materials for children.

The houses of slums which were suitable or not suitable to children's study were significantly important. It was found that there was an effect among houses for children's studies. Tsujita (2013) also found the same findings that school barriers and study environment in house significantly play role on children's schooling. The number of rooms was found an important indicator for suitable or not suitable houses for children's study. Nath et al. (2015) found that 98.75% of families in the slums occupy a single room, which is used for various purposes such as living, dining, sleeping, storing, bathing, washing, cleaning, and cooking. The same picture was observed in Bangladeshi slum households. Consequently, creating an environment conducive to concentration and studying at home becomes nearly impossible for slum children. With the increasing number of children in houses, the school related barriers seemed higher to children. Tsujita (2013) also highlighted several educational problems that can hinder children's access to a quality basic education, such as poor teaching practices, limitations in physical infrastructure, and insufficient resources and labor to expand classroom space, particularly in developing countries.

Socio-economic Factors Influencing Slum Household and Slum Children

Three types of houses such as Tin/Kacha (61%), Semi-pacca (26%) and Pacca (13%) were found in the study areas. Tin/Kacha houses are the lowest quality houses. Types of houses were related to the disruption of children's study in slum areas. Tin/Kacha houses were found more responsible than Pacca/semi-Pacca houses for the disruption of slum children's education because Tin/Kacha houses are the lowest quality houses. On the other hand, more than 82 percent of houses consisted of one room and all activities are done here including children's education. As a result, children's study in house is severely hampered. According to Nath et al. (2015), the presence of single-room houses in slum areas disrupts the study of slum children due to the prevalence of multipurpose activities within these houses. It was found that a majority of the guardians are unable to buy educational material for their children's study due to monthly low income. As a result, slum children's basic education is hampered. Tsujita (2013) found that guardians' financial inability is the main reason for dropout and non-enrollment in schools. It was also found that slum children start school late and with the advancing age of the children, the parents increasingly opposed their education although basic educational access in government school is free. Tsujita (2013) also found that among the slum children currently attending school, 55.4% of them are over the expected age, mainly due to late enrollment or repeating classes, indicating that slum children often start late school than the recommended age or face challenges in progressing through the expected grade levels.

A relationship between guardians' education level and the disruption of children's study in environment was found and the increase in the education level of the guardian reduced the disruption of children's schooling caused by the slum environment as four-fifths of the guardians were illiterate or have only primary education. Duraisamy (2001) found that both fathers' and mothers' levels of education have a positive and statistically significant impact on children's education. Similarly, Cameron (2010) found that parents with higher levels of education were more likely to have children who were enrolled in school at the appropriate age and less likely to experience dropout. Due to being illiterate or only having primary education, the income of children's guardians was very low. Cameron (2010) further discovered that the absence of a clear and decent income also has an impact on children's education. A linear relationship between the monthly family income and the number of room was found that most guardians of slum children cannot afford more than one room because of low monthly income. So, it is seen that guardians' education, monthly income and number rooms were responsible for the disruption of slum children's basic educational access. Caugh (2011) identified two primary reasons for the educational barriers faced by slum children, namely socioeconomic reasons and school-related reasons.

Basic Educational Barriers Leading to Future Deprivation

The barriers related to state limitation, household environment, school environment and deprivation of future education and facilities were analyzed. In barriers related to state limitation, almost three-fourths of the respondents recognized it which proved that there were barriers related to state limitation in Bangladeshi urban slums. Like this, in barriers related to household environment, more than four-fifths opined that they have barriers related to household environment. According to Tanni et al. (2014), the household structure in slum areas was identified as having a very lamentable condition, making it extremely difficult to live in such environments. Consequently, the study environment within the house for slum children was found to be almost absent. In school environment related barriers section, three-fourths opined that the slum children face barriers in schools to obtain basic education. Nath et al. (2015) identified school-related barriers to children's education, which included insufficient numbers of teachers, large classroom sizes, and uninteresting lessons. The deprivation from further education of children and future facilities were the result of barriers related to state limitation, household environment related barriers and school related barriers. Besides these three barriers, barriers related to children themselves were also found dominant for slum children's deprivation of schooling, further education and facilities where all respondents acknowledged it. So, it is unanimously recognized that due to barriers from family, school and state, slum children deprived from basic education and the deprivation of basic education was found the deprivation of further education and future facilities such as getting job or lack of employment which has been leading to the overall deprivation like decision making in society, poor socio-economic condition, behavioral and attitude gap, health problems and so on. To eliminate the deprivation of slum people and to overcome the educational barriers of slum children, Cameron (2008) emphasized the importance of recognizing slum people as both human capital and social capital, highlighting their potential for personal and community development. For the sake of holistic development in Bangladesh, the slum children need to be provided with educational facilities because education is the key change maker from personal to national levels. As the deprivation of slum children starts from basic education, the solution to the educational deprivation of slum children should be started from the basic educational access because basic education is the gateway for further education as well as a macro change in society.

Ways to Overcome the Basic Educational Barriers of Slum Households

As slum itself is a barrier, basic education, the doorway to higher education, has been denied to them for generations. Educational barriers in slum areas are difficult to overcome overnight. It must happen gradually (Nath et al., 2015). The core solutions of the basic educational deprivation of slum children may come from four levels such as the household environment, the slum environment, the school environment and the governmental steps.

Some expected answers were found to identify the desirable household environment for slum children's studies. Most slum parents were uneducated and worked hard, thus they recommended private tutors to educate their children. Most slum children are first-generation learners, meaning their parents have little or no schooling, according to Nath et al. (2015). It was also found that slum children cannot learn from school alone. Private tutors are better but an economic burden for parents. For their children's education, a separate study room, a calm environment, parents' consciousness, and sufficient money were equally significant. With the necessity of private tuition and stipend scheme in urban areas, Cameron (2010) emphasized the need for improvements in various aspects of the education system, including the exam system, teacher training, curriculum, and school-student relations.

Household and slum environments must be improved for children's education. Three-fourths of respondents emphasized on noise-free slum environment, preventing rural-urban migration, and City Corporation responsibility for children's education. For slum children to have basic educational access, a violence-free atmosphere, appropriate law enforcement, and NGOs' educational operations were desired. Islam et al. (2014) also stressed the need of government initiatives in maintaining laws and security to improve slums. They also noted the importance of national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in improving slum residents' lives.

For the deprivation of slum children's basic educational access, schools are also responsible. The school environment should be desirable for the slum children. Two-fifths of the respondents emphasized on simplifying the class lessons and finishing at school and providing all educational materials from school for free. The uneducated and poor parents cannot provide the proper educational materials for their children and children cannot grasp the lessons properly in school. Actually schools do not formulate the book lessons; it is the responsibility of the authority like NCTB (National Curriculum and Text Book). So the policy should be come from the authority level. Trained teachers, simplification of the admission procedure, presence of required teachers in school, edu-entertainment to grasp the children's attention to education, good relationship with schools and students as well as teachers and guardians, required classrooms and multimedia-based classrooms were found necessary for desired school environment to ensure basic educational access of slum children. Bose (2016) emphasized that mid-day meals, free textbooks and scholarships are significant contributions made by the state which facilitated entry and retention of poor slum children in schools. Azad (2024) found the necessity of multimedia-based classrooms in Bangladeshi context for making lessons effective and pragmatic for learners. On the other hand, MedhiNabanita (2016) emphasized the need for improving the school environment, including measures such as providing adequate resources and facilities. They also stressed the importance of trained teachers who can deliver lessons in an easy and feasible manner. Additionally, special attention should be given to challenging subjects such as mathematics and English.

The government is the highest body for implementing policies. It was found that the government could take the proper steps to ensure the basic education of slum children. More than two-fifths of the respondents opined on the implementation of a stipend scheme and time demanded student assessment procedure to prevent dropouts. Cameron (2010) emphasized to implement a stipend scheme for urban poor like rural areas which are TK100 per poor child per months. Cameron (2010) depicted that although the stipend money provided may not be substantial, even a modest stipend can be helpful for supporting the education of urban poor slum children. Evidently the findings are relevant because slum parents are too poor to bear the educational cost of their children. On the other hand, the present assessment procedure creates repeated failure. Due to repeated failure, slum children can not continue their studies resulting in dropping out of school. Mid-day meal at school, ensuring children's right, a time-based plan to upgrade slums, special protection programs for urban poor, establishing more schools, ensuring urban facilities in slum areas, ensuring legitimacy to the right of slum dwellers, and political case for a greater focus on the urban poor were found as necessary governmental steps to ensure the basic educational access of slum children. Nath et al. (2015) suggested the implementation of poverty alleviation programs, provision of government housing facilities for the urban poor, micro-level need-based planning, and comprehensive steps to ensure quality basic education for all slum children in the 6-14 years age group. MedhiNabanita (2016) recommended a slum upgrading model as a governmental approach to improve the living conditions in slums. Furthermore, Cameron (2010) emphasized the importance of expanding safety net services for the poor in slums, offering subsidies for the education of slum children attending schools, and leveraging the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in providing schooling opportunities.

VII. CONCLUSION

Bangladesh's slum dwellers are the most impoverished group of urban dwellers, lagging behind from generation to generation as a result of the lack of access to basic education for children because education is the most influential change maker and basic education is the gateway for further education. It is more difficult for slum children to receive an education there due to a number of socioeconomic issues such as poverty, population growth, inadequate sanitation, and a lack of basic services (Cameron, 2011). The dropout, nonenrolment and irregular attendance in school are common phenomena in Bangladeshi urban slums. As a result, they cannot be productive human capital to change their life styles and their deprivation continues from generation to generation. Although the educational access of slum children is a crying need for the holistic development of Bangladesh, this area has not been studied much (Yeasmin and Islam, 2016). As a result, there is not any comparative policy to provide basic education for slum children. The basic educational barriers of slum children can be minimized by taking proper steps and policies. As a model of exploring the basic educational barriers of Bangladeshi urban slum children and providing possible ways to overcome the barriers, this study was conducted at Dhaka city in Bangladesh. In this study, data relative to socio-demographic factors of 203 respondents who are parents or guardians of slum children were chosen to conduct the study from four selected slums. Slum children's basic educational barriers, socio-economic factors relative to slum children's basic education and the possible solutions of the problems were analyzed. Barriers faced by slum children to obtain basic education were found to be severe. Dropout, non-enrollment and school going children's percentages were 40, 17 and 43 respectively. Poverty was found as the main cause of dropout and non-enrollment. The dropout and non-enrollment causes were grounded from pulled out, pushed out and falling out factors which can be seen from household, school and children related causes.

Again, the educational barriers of the children were found from three levels like household environment, school and state. 77% of houses were not suitable for children's study because 82.3 percent of houses were a single room house where all the activities were done. 68 percent of parents or guardians were not able to provide the educational materials for their children. Here, the three barriers (household related problem, school environment barriers and state limitation) were leading to future deprivation of slum children. All respondents recognized that due to the barriers of basic educational access created by household, school and state levels, slum children were deprived from further education and future facilities. It was found that slum households' cumulative deprivation originated from the deprivation of basic educational access. The slum children are required to provide educational facilities for the benefit of Bangladesh's overall development because education is the main engine for change at all levels. Since basic education is the entry point for further education as well as a large-scale transformation in society, the solution to the educational deprivation of slum children should also begin with basic educational access. So, the basic educational deprivation of slum children can be overcome by proper policy implementation for the holistic development of Bangladesh. It is also needed to say that, this study is not enough for identifying the overall barriers of slum children's basic educational access and provide the solutions of the problems. This study can be a snapshot of the study area and can be a pioneering base for the future researchers too. For the overall picture, this area is needed to be studied more and more.

Limitation of the Study

Despite all-out attempts to make the present study a scientific one, it has the following limitations:

1. Because of the use of a purposive sample technique, it may precisely represent the population.
2. The research is heavily context-dependent. The respondents were selected from four specific slums, so the opinions of this group cannot be regarded representative of all slum children.
3. Currently, the COVID-19 epidemic is affecting the entire world, including Bangladesh. So, it was rather challenging to visit each respondent and conduct interviews for this questionnaire survey in light of the urgency of the situation.

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Ethical Statement

The authors affirm that data collection for the research was carried out in an anonymous manner, ensuring that it was impossible to identify the participants.

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