

CHAPTER V

Assessment of Education and Skill Training Interventions of the GOB for Urban Working Children in Bangladesh

It is a reality that the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has a very few direct programmes for working children both in the urban and rural areas. Before the nineties there was no mentionable GOB intervention for them. During the early nineties, when the world-wide consciousness strengthened against the child labour problem and the UNICEF, ILO and other international agencies as well as some important national NGOs, with their own interventions, came forward to address the problem and created direct and indirect pressure to the Government to take direct programmes, the GOB undertook some programmes, mostly under its 5th Plan for this purpose.

5.1. Policy, Plans and Strategies of the GOB on Education for Urban Working Children

Traditionally, before independence in 1971, Bangladeshi children used to face all sorts of deprivation and negligence in the field of education. After independence, especially primary education came to be considered as a very important issue and the Constitution of Bangladesh states that primary education shall be the responsibility of the State. The provisions are: "The State shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of (a) establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such a stage as may be determined by law; (b) relating education to the needs of the society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those ends; (c) removing illiteracy within such time as determined by law" (*The Constitution of Bangladesh* as cited in GOB, 1998c: 6).

In the light of this, steps to upgrade the education system were taken right after independence. In 1972, the 'Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission' was set up to create a modern education system suited to the needs of an independent

nation and compatible with the systems of the neighbouring countries. The report of this Commission was submitted in 1974. The main objectives of the Commission were to develop and nurture the child's moral, mental and social personality and to bring up the child as a patriotic, responsible, inquiring and law-abiding citizen and develop in him a love for justice, dignity, labour, proper conduct and uprightness, etc. In view of the objectives, the Commission also placed before the Government some recommendations for the development of primary education. But there was no specific recommendation or policy for the special educational needs of the urban poor and underprivileged children.

During the First Five-Year Plan (1973-78), the first Two-Year Plan (1978-80), the Second Five-Year Plan (1980-85) and the Third Five-Year Plan (1985-90) period, the foundation of primary education in Bangladesh gradually became stronger. The 'Directorate of Primary Education' – a separate administrative body – was established in 1981 under the Second Five-Year Plan. During this period two important projects were started: (i) Universal Primary Education (UPE) with IDA assistance and (ii) Universal Primary Education (National) [GOB, 1998c: 7 & 8]. But during this long period, in the field of primary education, the urban poor and underprivileged children were clearly neglected. So, there was no policy, plan, and strategy regarding the education for the urban working children in Bangladesh before the decade of 1990s.

During the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1990-95), the provision of education for urban working children came to the light in the Government's policy for the first time, though the steps were very inadequate. In fact, the Fourth Five-Year Plan gave the highest importance to the role of primary education and mass education. Education was identified as a vehicle for the development of human resources. In 1990, the 'Primary Education (Compulsory) Act' was passed to ensure implementation of free and compulsory primary education programmes for children from 6 to 10 years of age, and the compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Cell was established towards the end of 1990. This Act, however, came to be effective in 68 thanas in 1992 and countrywide since 1993. To ensure countrywide expansion of Non-Formal Education (NFE), the Integrated Non-Formal Education Project (INFEP) was launched in 1991 for the

15-24 years age group people. In 1992, a separate ministry styled as the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) was created. These important breaks, however, were the effect of the Government as a participant of some international conference on education and child rights such as: the 'World Conference on Education for All' (EFA) held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990; 'World Conference on Child Rights' held in New York in 1990, and 'EFA Summit Conference of Nine High Population Countries' in New Delhi, India in 1993. The INFEP project was a successful one, and so it was upgraded to a separated directorate named as the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) on 3rd September 1995, which is the most important Government organization to plan and create opportunity for basic (non-formal) education for the urban working children in Bangladesh. The Government launched the 'Food for Education Programme' (FEP) on July 29, 1993. The programme was meant for encouraging the poor and underprivileged children, mainly in the rural areas, to receive education along with food (Rahman, M. A., 1998: 48). The formulation of the National Children Policy (NCP) in December 1994 was another important step in policy level. The task was identified as "providing appropriate facilities for non-formal education for children deprived of formal schooling facilities" and "use of non-formal education and traditional institutions (*Madrasas*) to provide educational opportunities for dropouts and non-enrolled, particularly girls" (GOB, 1994a: 11&12).

During the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the Government with the help of UNICEF launched an ambitious programme through the Ministry of Social Welfare to improve the conditions of children who were living in especially difficult circumstances, namely Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC). One of the objectives of the programme was – "to advocate access to food, basic education, shelter, health services and other basic needs of the working children and street children" (Rahman, M. A., 1998: 51). Signed by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), ILO and UNICEF in July 1995, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stipulated that the children under 14 be removed from the workplace in the garment industry, placed in schools and given a monthly stipend. Lessons learned from the MOU were later

incorporated into a basic education programme for hard-to-reach urban children (UNICEF, 1996: 60).

There were two years without any specific plan between the Fourth and the Fifth Five-Year Plans (1995-97). In 1997, the Government took the 'Fifth Five-year Plan (1997-2002)'. Two of the main objectives of the Fifth Five-Year Plan were (i) to "attain about 70 per cent literacy rate by the year 2002 in order to achieve 100 per cent within 10 years", and (ii) to "bring all children of age group 6-10 years under the formal primary educational stream within the shortest possible time" (GOB, 1998b: 432). However, there is no specific objective in the Fifth Plan for the urban working children's education.

In 1997, with the financial and technical help of UNICEF, Sida and DFID (UK), the GOB took a special project (NFE Project-3) of DNFPE. The Project was called 'Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC), and it targeted to cover 351,000 children between 8-14 years of age in six divisional cities, i.e., Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Borisal providing non-formal education upto grade III within 24 months duration.

During 1998, the GOB also started another pilot project in collaboration with UNDP and NGOs to cover the urban state children groups by NFE, skill training, shelter-home, health-care, and other facilities. By this project, namely 'Appropriate Resource for Improving Street Children's Environment (ARISE)', the GOB expected to support about 30,000 street children in six divisional cities of the country through partner NGOs (Hossain, 2000).

5.2. An Overview of Major GOB Programmes

As we stated earlier, the Government of Bangladesh has a few programmes for the working children. Moreover, these programmes are mostly viewed on the fulfilment of Government's goal of "Education for All" or "Total Literacy" by the year 2006 and to achieve the CRC-guided child right goals for better child welfare and child development. Mainly three Ministries are running the programmes basically for the urban working children group. These are:

- (a) Ministry of Education (MOE),
- (b) Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), and
- (c) Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW).

Among all these Ministries, the Education Ministry's special intervention with the provision of non-formal primary education to the urban hard-to-reach working children group by its DNFE is the prominent one. Under this programme (i.e., Project-3 of DNFE), MOE runs the basic education programme for the urban working children between 8-14 years of age in the slums in 6 divisional cities of Bangladesh. This programme was started only from 1997. Department of Social Services (DSS), under the Ministry of Social Welfare also runs the ARISE Project to provide NFE, skill training, and other basic facilities to improve the pathetic environment of street children in six divisional cities. This project, however, started from the end of 1998. Besides, it also runs several programmes on the issues of child welfare and child rights, such as access to temporary shelter, food, basic education, health services and other basic opportunities for urban destitute children.

The MOSW is specially responsible to implement and achieve the goals under the 'National Plan of Action for Children 1997-2002' – where, as we discussed earlier, the child labour problem has been specifically identified for the first time.¹ This plan has set the objectives (a) to have phased elimination of child labour and (b) to eliminate scope for employment of children in hazardous occupations. For this purpose, however, jointly with the MOSW, the MOWCA has allocated about US\$ 119 million² (ILO-IPEC Dhaka, 1999: 1). Within this multi-ministerial programme, however, there is no specific programme highlighting education and skill training for the working children.

Therefore, by its different ministries, in the decade of 1990s, the GOB has adopted the following three major programmes for the distressed urban working children of Bangladesh:

- (a) The CEDC (Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances) Programme;
- (b) The BEHTRUC (Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Children) Project; and

¹ The NPA for children has been discussed earlier in the Chapter-III.

² Besides this, a separate amount has been allocated under the PMED for providing education to the urban hard-to-reach children.

- (c) The ARISE (Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children's Environment) Project.

These three programmes of the GOB have been elaborately assessed in the next part of this chapter in view of their tremendous impacts to the working children.

5.3. The CEDC Programme of MOSW: The First GOB Response to the Urban Working Children

In the execution of the CEDC project the Department of Social Service (DSS) of MOSW was the core authority. The Department of Labour (DOL), Ministry of Law and Justice (MOLJ) and Bangladesh Shishu Akademy; Bangladesh Sishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) and other voluntary agencies were also involved in its execution. This project was started in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi cities and in Narayanganj town through DSS within its regular framework of 'Urban Community Development Project'. To implement this project DSS in 1994-95 started 15 units: 7 in Dhaka, 3 in Chittagong, 3 in Khulna, 1 in Rajshahi and 1 in Narayanganj.

5.3.1. Objectives and Components of the CEDC Programme:

The objectives of the CEDC programme were as follows:

- “1. To advocate children's rights in general and the children in especially difficult circumstances in particular.
2. To advocate access to food, basic education, shelter, health services and other basic needs of the working children and street children.
3. To identify and advocate improvement of labour conditions which are harmful to children, especially the girl children and advocate immediate elimination of hazardous child labour.
4. To support and encourage research to find out and disseminate information about the nature and magnitude of the problems of children especially in difficult circumstances with special care to the girl child.
5. To create mechanism for better conditions and collaboration between government organizations for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the children in especially difficult circumstances programme.
6. To review the existing laws relating to children and child labour in collaboration with the Law Ministry, International Labour Organization, UNICEF, etc. in the light of the child right convention.” (Rahman, M. A., 1998: 51).

Urban disadvantaged children including working and street children and also their poor families were the target group of the CEDC programme. However, to attain the above objectives and goals, there were four major project components in this programme:

- (a) *Drop-in-Centre* for the street children below the age of sixteen years accommodating 50 children each (Total 10).
- (b) *Shelterless Working Girls' Hostel* for girls below the age of sixteen years accommodating 50 girls each (Total 4).
- (c) *Social and Vocational Education Centre* (also called *Functional Education Centre*) for slum-based selected women and children (providing non-formal education and vocational training) covering about 100 women and children each (Total 15).
- (d) *Revolving Fund* for small credit to the selected poor slum-women and elderly children who did not have entrepreneurship and own capabilities for viable individual schemes (upto Tk. 3000 per head) (Rahman, M.A. 1998: 52-53 & DSS, 1995: 5-6).

5.3.2. Non-Formal Education and Skill Training in the CEDC Programme:

As the first GOB intervention for the underprivileged working children group of urban areas, CEDC was a multi-dimensional pilot project. Nevertheless, it emphasized for the first time non-formal education and skill training amongst its programme components. Functional/non-formal education centres were established in all 5 cities within all project areas (i.e., total 15: 7 in Dhaka, 3 each in Chittagong and Khulna, and 1 each in Rajshahi and Narayanganj) [Table 5.1]. Functional education covered the illiterate and poor women and children of the targeted slums where the non-formal education covered 12-15 years old slum children, though the target was only to run a minimum level of literacy programme. Vocational/technical skill training was also provided to them to make them capable of engaging themselves in self-income generating activities to improve their standard of living³.

³ The detailed information regarding the provisions and output of NFE and skill training e.g. the grade and trade covered, duration of courses, school/training hours, etc. are not available (as the related DSS officials reported).

Table 5.1: CEDC Programme of the MOSW of GOB at a Glance

Cities	Functional Education Centre	Drop-in-Centre for Street Children	Shelterless Working Girls' Hostel	Revolving Fund (Taka)	Total No. of Benefited Persons (%)
Dhaka	07	04	01	20,35,600	12,402 (42.0)
Chittagong	03	02	01	11,27,400	4,960 (16.8)
Khulna	03	02	01	9,77,400	7,033 (23.8)
Rajshahi	01	01	01	4,75,000	2,802 (9.5)
Narayanganj	01	01	---	2,90,800	2,335 (7.9)
Total	15	10	04	49,07,000	29,532(100.0)

Source: The *Souvenir* on the occasion of the Assembly of the Representatives of Voluntary Organizations and Social workers on 2nd January, 1997; Department of Social Service, MOSW, Dhaka.

Non-formal education was also included in other components of the programme. For example, in Drop-in-Centres and in Girls' Hostel, there was a provision of non-formal education for street children and shelterless working girls respectively. These girls were also provided small credit from revolving fund. However, there was an amount of 4,907 thousand Taka distributed as revolving fund for this purpose.

A total of 29,532 persons (most of them children) were benefited by the 4-year pilot-based CEDC programme till 1997-98. About 92 per cent of them were the people of the four metropolitan cities: Dhaka (42%), Chittagong (16.8%), Khulna (23.8%) and Rajshahi (9.5%).

5.4 The BEHTRUC Project of DNFE: The Largest Programme of the GOB for Urban Working Children

Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) Project (also called NFE Project-3) was started in October, 1997, funded by the GOB, SIDA (Sweden) and UNICEF, and executed by the DNFE of Ministry of Education⁴. This project targeted 0.35 million working and slum-dwelling children in the 8-14 years age group of 6 divisional cities of Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal. It provided a two-year non-formal basic education upto grade-III as well as life skills to those children. The learning centres of this project were implemented by about 150 NGOs (LMS, 2000: 1). This project was due to end in December 2000.

⁴ In our discussion, this project is also called HTR project. Thus the 'BEHTRUC Project', 'DNFE Project-3', and 'HTR Project' are the same one.

5.4.1. Objectives and Strategies of the BEHTRUC Project:

The *ultimate objectives* of the BEHTRUC projects were:

- ❖ To provide non-formal basic education to 351,000 working children in six urban areas of Bangladesh.
- ❖ To protect children from exploitative and hazardous work conditions.

The *specific objectives* of BEHTRUC were as follows (DNFE & UNICEF, nd.):

- ❖ To gain a better understanding of the situation of school-aged working children;
- ❖ To promote efforts which aim to increase access to and completion of basic education by these hard-to-reach children;
- ❖ To introduce child-centred and participatory methods of learning;
- ❖ To strengthen alliances among existing and new partners in the non-formal education sector;
- ❖ To address the issue of social integration by improving the potential of students to enter some skill-based employment or a government school.
- ❖ To develop the capacity of the Government, NGOs and civil society to deliver education services to child workers; and
- ❖ To encourage civil society initiatives to enable working children access, protection and development opportunities.

To achieve these objectives, the BEHTRUC project followed the following major *strategies*:

- To deliver quality basic education package through the NGOs in cooperation with the DNFE by setting up learning centres;
- To provide for research and development for further improvement of the learning package, and complementary services – e.g. health, nutrition, legal protection services, protective gear for work, etc.
- To facilitate linkages between the DNFE project and other actors, municipal officers, local leaders and other service providers and thus promote the children's and community's participation in all aspects of organization and operation of the education programme;
- To adopt an “earn and learn” approach, ensuring that working children don't have to make a choice between work and school (UNICEF-Bangladesh, n.d.); and
- To develop and implement large-scale advocacy campaign to facilitate new mind-sets of civil society actors towards working children.

5.4.2. Learning Centres, Teaching Method, Curriculum and Components of the BEHTRUC Project:

In BEHTRUC, the two-year academic cycle was equivalent to grade -III of the formal system. Learning centres of the project were set up and managed by some 150 NGOs in 6 divisional headquarters of the country: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, and Sylhet. These NGOs participated in this project under the supervision of the GOB's Directorate of Non-Formal Education. Each centre accommodated 30 children per shift. Each shift ran for 2 hours, six days a week. The basic teaching methods were 'child-centred and participatory'.

The curriculum for this NFE programme was prepared by DNFE by a team of experts and enriched by experienced NGOs (such as BRAC, UCEP), keeping in view the requirements of the working children. It emphasised gender equity, human rights, prevention of violence and other need-oriented subjects (DNFE & UNICEF, n.d. & UNICEF-Bangladesh, n.d.). The children were also informed about health, hygiene, environment and social issues (UNICEF-Dhaka, 1999: 17). All books and teaching materials were provided to the learners free of cost.

Teachers of this project were trained in the special training methods. In particular, teachers from participatory NGOs received initial and follow-up training in the curriculum, and in the specific needs and concerns of the 'hard-to-reach' children. Both 'basic' and 'refreshers' trainings were implemented. Teachers were also provided with appropriate teaching materials. Project teachers were responsible to make home visits for all their students to monitor their progress and to communicate with their families.

The BEHTRUC project was supervised from the level of learning centres. There was a provision of one supervisor for 15 centres. These supervisors ensured, among other things, attendance of learners, supply of materials and monthly meetings with the "Centre Management Committees". These committees were formed by the partner organizations. These committees supported the learning centres to ensure that the needs of the working children in that particular area were met. The local government bodies and municipal authorities also collaborated to ensure the effective management of project activities (DNFE & UNICEF, nd.).

5.4.3. Achievements of the BEHTRUC Project:

The learning centres of the BEHTRUC, run by local and national NGOs, actually started in October 1997 in Dhaka and in July 1998 in Chittagong and in September-October 1999 in the cities of Khulna and Rajshahi. After two years, the graduates of the first and the second phase came out in September 1999 and in early 2000. Some centres also started in late 1998 and in 1999 in all the 6 metro cities to fulfil the target of covering 351,000 working children by the end of 2001.

Table 5.2: Status of the BEHTRUC Project in Early 2001

Cities	Indicators	Completed	On-going	Last phase	Total	Percentage of total target
Dhaka	Centres	2,700	915	3,510	7,125	60.90
	Learners	81,000	27,450	105,300	213,750	
Chittagong	Centres	1,500	---	300	1,800	15.38
	Learners	45,000	---	9,000	54,000	
Rajshahi	Centres	---	450	390	840	07.18
	Learners	---	13,500	11,700	25,200	
Khulna	Centres	---	645	735	1,380	11.79
	Learners	---	19,350	22,050	41,400	
Barisal	Centres	---	255	---	255	02.18
	Learners	---	7,650	---	7,650	
Sylhet	Centres	---	300	---	300	02.56
	Learners	---	9,000	---	9,000	
Total	Centres	4,200	2,565	4,935	11,700	100.00
	Learners	126,000	76,950	148,050	351,000	

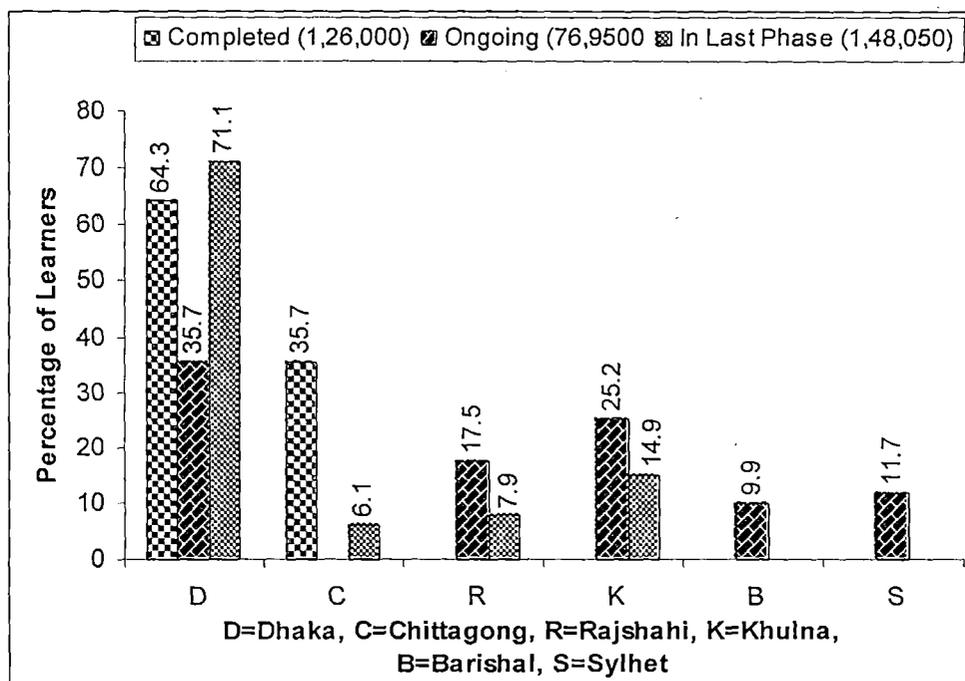
Source: UNICEF-Dhaka, *Present Status of BEHTRUC Project* (unpublished); HTR Team, UNICEF-Dhaka, 2001.

Table 5.2 above shows the achievements and status of the project in early 2001. A total of 4,200 centres completed the 2-year NFE courses in Dhaka and Chittagong during this time and 1,26,000 working children (36% of the ultimate target) became graduates. Presently (in early 2001), 2,565 centres with a total of 76,950 learners are continuing (22% of ultimate target) and 4,935 centres covering 148,050 working children will start in the near future under the so-called last phase.

Table 5.2 as well as Figure 5.1 shows the city-wise status of the BEHTRUC project in early 2001. Till this time, among the completed learners, more than 64 per cent were from Dhaka and other 36 per cent were from the Chittagong city. Among the on-going centres' learners, the highest groups of children (i.e., 35.7%)

were from Dhaka city, and the next share (i.e., 25.2%) of children was from Khulna city. The share of Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet cities were 17.5 per cent, 9.9 per cent and 11.7 per cent respectively. No on-going learning centre was found in

Figure 5.1: City-wise Implementation Status of the Learners of the BEHTRUC Project in Early 2001



Chittagong city at this time. In the last phase and overwhelming 71.1 per cent of learners were from Dhaka and the other 6.1, 7.9 and 14.9 per cent were from Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna respectively (Figure 5.1). This high share of Dhaka is the most reasonable as the overwhelming share of urban child labour force of the country is in Dhaka city.

At present (during March 2001), the project is on its mid-way and only 12.10 per cent (42,475) of the targeted working children completed the BEHTRUC course as against the 351,000 target of the project after the end of 2000. Table 5.3 below shows the general situation of these 42,475 graduates of the project. More than 55 per cent of them were girls. These children were only from two metro cities: Dhaka and Chittagong.

The average age of those BEHTRUC-graduated urban working children was 11.43 years where boys were a little older than girls (girls: 11, boys: 11.5). More than 32 per cent of them were self-employed. Boys (38.5%) were on a better position of self-employment than girls (27.1%). A higher percentage of those graduates, i.e., 45

Table 5.3: Situation of the BEHTRUC-Graduated Urban Working Children in Bangladesh in March 2000

Phase and number of NGOs as assessed	Number of learners who graduated by March 2000			Average age of graduating learners			Number of self-employed boys & girls		
	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total
1 st Phase* Total (24 NGOs)	19838	15879	35717	11.7	12.1	11.85	5204	5711	10915
2 nd Phase** Total (18 NGOs)	3674	3084	6758	10.3	10.9	11.0	1169	1592	2761
Grand Total (42 NGOs) (%)	23512 (55.4)	18963 (44.6)	42475 (100.0)	11.0 --	11.5 --	11.43 --	6373 (27.1)	7303 (38.5)	13676 (32.2)

Table 5.3 continued:

Number of wage-employed boys and girls			Learners in some kind of employment interested in studying further			Learners included in regular programme for continuing education/ skill training			Learners not included in any of the programmes		
Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total	Girl	Boy	Total
9110	7277	16387	9926	9387	19313	3185	2767	5952	9061	7775	16836
1268	1458	2726	1522	1354	2876	633	709	1342	2102	1661	3763
10378 (44.1)	8735 (46.0)	19113 (45.0)	11448 (48.6)	10741 (56.6)	22189 (52.2)	3818 (16.2)	3476 (18.3)	7294 (17.2)	11163 (47.5)	9436 (49.8)	20599 (48.5)

* 1st Phase: Started on Oct. – Dec. 1997, ** 2nd Phase: Started on April, 1998.

Source: LMS and UNICEF; *Post Literacy Skills for the BEHTRUC Graduates: A Report on a Meeting with NGO Partners*; Dhaka, March-2000, pp. 7-8.

per cent, were wage-employed where the gender difference was very little (girls: 44.1% & boys: 46%). Out of these learners, more than 52 per cent showed some interest in studying further although they were employed somehow. Only 17.2 per cent learners were included in some regular programme (16.2% girls and 18.2% boys) for continuing education or vocational skills. Almost half of the learners (48.5%) were not included in any of the programmes. This was also somehow a little lower among girls than boys (boys: 49.8% and girls 47.5%).

In March 2000, DNFER and UNICEF jointly assessed the BEHTRUC project with participation of 42 partner NGOs – including the leading NGOs e.g. BRAC, PROSHIKA, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, PIACT-Bangladesh, Surovi, BACE, UCEP-Bangladesh, etc. – who covered a large number of learning centres in different cities. The HTR Team of UNICEF also assessed the project in early 2001. These assessments showed that the project created a positive environment to provide need-based interventions e.g. non-formal education and skill training for the urban working children to ensure basic child rights and better livelihood among

them. This programme has been able to create a broader networking and communication among the government bodies and other partner organizations such as NGOs and the UN agencies.

The project has been able to provide non-formal education to children who had no chance to have any kind of education. Assessment and evaluation of the project indicated that many bright and intelligent children had availed this opportunity and they deserved more with a strong motivation to improve their own life situation. With a better realization of the potentials of these learners the GOB selected 500 children for further studies (after completion of the BEHTRUC course) in the public education system. Till early 2000, some partner NGOs (e.g. Surovi, BRAC, Proshika, UCEP, etc.) already absorbed the learners in their own regular programmes. Many of the other NGOs were also planning to provide continuing education to the learners which would include vocational training as well (e.g. UCEP). Some NGOs expressed the possibility of absorbing the learners in their regular programmes (LMS, 2000: 1 & 4, 5).

As the leader of the BEHTRUC project of UNICEF Mr. Samphe Lhalungpa mentioned during the beginning of the project, "...every one knew that it was not going to be smooth sailing. That is why it was called 'basic education for the hard to reach' and not easy to reach" (LMS, 2000: 5). There had been many problems during the first two years of the project. Some major problems were the following:

- (a) Late delivery of funds;
- (b) Defective management system;
- (c) Inadequate follow-up measures;
- (d) Lack of proper rapport building between teachers and learners;
- (e) Lack of proper coordination and communication among partner organizations;
- (f) Lack of an effective monitoring system; -- which "led to high drop-out of learners and poor delivery of services to the learning centres, not to mention, the inability to track down the performance of partner NGOs" (GOB & UNICEF, 2000: 47).

(g) Lack of a proper policy for establishment of learning centres in suitable locations. Location of centres should be based on situation assessment and mapping of working children. It was found that some NGOs were allotted areas where there were hardly any working children. As a result, learners of those centers were mostly the unreached children instead of the hard-to-reach ones (GOB & UNICEF, 2000: 47).

(h) Lack of skill training in the intervention. It was one of the major limitations of the BEHTRUC project. In UNICEF and LMS's evaluation meeting, all the participants agreed on this limitation and suggested that skill training should be added in the new learning centres because "integrated basic and vocational training should be provided to prepare the learners for jobs" (LMS, 2000: 11). Without this, this programme may not be popularized among the target children as they need direct result of any such intervention to their current employment and earnings.

5.5. The ARISE Project of DSS: A Hope for the Urban Street Children of Bangladesh

The project titled Appropriate Resources for Improving Street Children's Environment (ARISE) is the latest GOB intervention reaching the urban working children (specially the street children) in Bangladesh. This pilot project came into existence in 1998 in response to the recommendations of a series of meetings and consultative workshops⁵ with the GOB departments, NGOs, Donors and Apex bodies, and UN bodies focussing the felt needs, crucial issues and problems of the street children of the country with special attention to *Most Vulnerable Children* (MVC)⁶ on the street (DSS, n.d.2). These meetings and workshops "suggested various interventions in the direction of strengthening the existing institutes and sustainable innovative pilot projects of good practices in the country with focus on ensuring the street children's security (shelter, community and policy awareness, education, skill development, physical and mental health, etc.)" (DSS, 1999: 87). With that end in view this project was formulated at the end of 1998 for implementation

⁵ A consultative workshop, attended 25 GOB and NGO representatives, held at CIRDAP Bangladesh, in June 1997, discussed in detail the overall situation of the street children in Bangladesh and suggested various interventions.

⁶ As per UNICEF, 3 out of 10 urban children live under difficult circumstances and are involved in dangerous and hazardous jobs (DSS, 2001a: 10).

by DSS of MOSW with the financial assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In terms of planning and development of this project, the CEDC project of DSS and the BEHTRUC Project of DNFE also played important roles by providing experiences, inspirations and technical supports. The project outlay was estimated to be Tk. 126.54 million with a UNDP component of Tk. 120.86 million (US \$ 2,376,298) and the GOB share of Tk. 5.68 million for a period of three years from April 1999 to March 2000 (DSS & UNDP, 2001: 6). By this project, the Government of Bangladesh expected to support about 30,000 targeted street children in the six divisional cities of the country through partner NGOs and existing government and private organizations.

5.5.1. The Target Group and Goals of ARISE:

The ARISE project particularly focussed on the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged group of street children of 6 divisional headquarters of the country. This group constituted the *target group*. ARISE defines street children as “children below the age of 18 who spend their day and nights on the street or some of their day time on the street for earning”. ARISE divides them into 4 specific categories:

- (a) Children who work/live on the street day and night without their family;
- (b) Children who work/live on the street with their family;
- (c) Children who work on the street and return to other family; and
- (d) Children who work on the street and return to the own family (DSS, 2001: 11).

The goals of ARISE were specified as follows (DSS, n.d. 2 & DSS, 2001: 12):

- (a) Working with 30,000 most vulnerable street children with special emphasis on girl children to access them to non-formal education, vocational training, health services, counseling services and livelihood opportunities;
- (b) Betterment of quality of services being provided by 24 Government and Non-Government agencies working for children;
- (c) Working of the GOB and NGOs together and initiating the NGOs to a strong role to mobilize resources;
- (d) Formulating an appropriate National Policy for the benefit of the street children.

5.5.2. Major Activities and Implementation Strategy of ARISE:

i) *Major Activities of ARISE:* The ARISE project followed a holistic approach in providing services to the street children through the partner NGOs. The major activities of the project can be summarised as the following:

- Shelter Half-way Home/Drop-in-Center;
- Non-Formal Education;
- Awareness Raising;
- Psychological Counseling;
- Health Care Service;
- Recreational Activity;
- Vocational Training;
- Networking;
- Market Survey;
- Job Placement;
- Advocacy; and
- Legal Aid Protection.

These twelve activities were at the project partner NGO level. There were also three more activities at the national level:

- Community Sensitization;
- GOB Best Practices; and
- Innovative Research.

ii) *Implementation Strategy of ARISE:* The strategy being followed by ARISE was to give priorities to girl street children who were the most frequent victims of physical and sexual abuse. They were to have safe shelter in Shelter/Half-way Homes or Drop-in Centres and attain psychological counseling, education and skill training. Children living in the pavements and open spaces would have an opportunity to attain a safe and secure environment with basic amenities like, food, clothing, medical care and education in Shelter/Half-way Homes (DSS & UNDP, 1999b: 2). This will enhance their capacity to get employment for an independent livelihood. These Shelters or Half-way Homes were ensured to be staffed by female care-providers (DSS, 2001a: 12).

To achieve these objectives and goals, as part of the implementation strategy, a Project Management Structure was adopted consisting of the following five bodies:

- a) National Steering Committee with the representatives of 6 ministries, DSS, ARISE and UNDP, headed by the Secretary of MOSW (10 members in all);
- b) Project Implementation Committee with the representatives of 5 ministries, DSS, ARISE, UNDP and partner NGOs, headed by the Director General (13 members in all);
- c) Tripartite Project Review Committee with the representatives of 3 ministries, DSS and ARISE (12 members in all);
- d) Technical Assistance Management Team consisting of senior project staff members (7 members in all); and
- e) Consultants' Team consisting of one international expert on child counseling and 4 national consultants on Education, Health and Vocational training (5 members in all) (DSS, n.d. 2).

This project, however, could not start its operation in time. Its operation started only after signing agreements with some leading national NGOs⁷ in May 2000. Of these NGOs, four were in Dhaka city and one each in the other five cities, and they covered all the fifteen major activities mentioned earlier.

5.5.3. The Achievements of Non-Formal Education, Skill Training and Other Interventions of the ARISE Project:

i) Non-formal Education: ARISE project has come to its operations in about the middle of 1999 – by different NGO partners in different cities. Non-formal basic education, however, is one of the major project components in general in this project. According to the performance report of the partner NGOs, targeted street children are being provided life-oriented non-formal basic education through both ‘open-air school’ and ‘centre-based approach’. These schools function for 2 hours (e.g. in PMUK’s 12 NFE centres in Dhaka) or 3 hours (e.g. in AB’s street schools in Dhaka and VOSD’s street schools in Barisal) in each day for six days in a week. School schedule is being settled usually according to the choice of the learners so that it does not overlap to the working hours or the learning period of the children. The average daily attendance of the children in each street school was found to be 30 (e.g. in AB of Dhaka) to 31 (e.g. in VOSD of Barisal). There is no fixed course curriculum, materials (e.g. books) and course duration in ARISE, but

⁷ See the Names of NGOs working in several divisions in Table 5.4.

as it is reported, and some NGOs (e.g. SPK in Dhaka) are following the BEHTRUC curriculum with some adaptation to the life of the street children. In many other organizations, curriculum is being used as conventional rather than special life-oriented to the street children. Some NGOs (e.g. JOGAJOG in Chittagong and ACLAB in Khulna) are following a 6-month course duration (DSS, 2001b).

Table 5.4 shows the achievements of ARISE in non-formal education from its beginning to June 2001. It reveals that, 40 per cent of the total target of the project (30,000) was fixed for Dhaka city alone; and including Dhaka, the 4 metro cities covered 86 per cent (Dhaka 40% + Chittagong 18% + Khulna 15% + Rajshahi 13%) of total target. Among the 9 partner NGOs, 7 were working in these 4 metro cities which are more affected by child labour and street children problems than any other city in Bangladesh. Accordingly, as on July 2001, a total of 24,851 street children (83% of total target) received non-formal education, of them 14,900 (about 60%) were boys and 9,951 (40%) were girls (Table 5.4).

Of the 14,900 street boys who received non-formal education more than half, which is 8,332 (56%) were covered in Dhaka city alone by 4 NGOs. For the remaining street boys the percentage break-up was: 18 per cent in Chittagong, 12 per cent in Khulna, 8 per cent in Rajshahi, 5 per cent in Barisal and only 1 per cent in Sylhet. Thus, the four metro cities – which are the study area of this study – covered the overwhelming 94 per cent of the total street boys who received NFE from the ARISE. In case of girls, of the total coverage (9,951), Dhaka city alone covered 39 per cent (3,870) but it was much less than that of boys (56%). Girls had higher rates of coverage than boys in the 5 other cities. Among the 5 other cities, Chittagong covered the highest number (e.g. 2,694) of girls in its non-formal education programme which was 27 per cent of total girls whereas the overall target of Chittagong was only 18 per cent (Table 5.4). The four metro cities – which are the study area of this study – covered the overwhelming 92 per cent of the total street girls who received NFE from the ARISE.

ii) Skill Training : Vocational skill training to the street children is the other important project component of the ARISE. Accordingly, following the identified

Table 5.4: Achievements of the ARISE Project of GOB as on July 2001

Project Area	Partner NGOs*	Total Target	Achievements on Selected Project Components on July 2001									
			N.F. Education		Drop-in-Centre		Vocational training		Health Service		Job Placement	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Dhaka City	AB	3300	3342	892	88	18	37	06	1249	3677	03	---
	PMUK	3000	1014	714	1244	643	31	32	4710	3338	01	08
	PSTC	2500	2333	997	1450	370	178	121	2333	997	79	31
	SPK	3200	1643	1267	342	131	107	132	1132	1241	91	---
<i>Total of Dhaka City</i>	<i>4 NGOs</i>	<i>12,000</i> <i>(40.0%)</i>	<i>8332</i> <i>(56%)</i>	<i>3870</i> <i>(39%)</i>	<i>3124</i> <i>(74%)</i>	<i>1162</i> <i>(54%)</i>	<i>353</i> <i>(33%)</i>	<i>291</i> <i>(27%)</i>	<i>9424</i> <i>(82%)</i>	<i>9253</i> <i>(60%)</i>	<i>174</i> <i>(40%)</i>	<i>39</i> <i>(21%)</i>
Chittagong City	JOGAJOG	5300 <i>(17.67%)</i>	2671 <i>(18%)</i>	2694 <i>(27%)</i>	66 <i>(2%)</i>	49 <i>(2%)</i>	201 <i>(19%)</i>	203 <i>(19%)</i>	1910 <i>(17%)</i>	2394 <i>(16%)</i>	96 <i>(22%)</i>	49 <i>(26%)</i>
Khulna City	ACLAB**	4500 <i>(15.0%)</i>	1755 <i>(12%)</i>	1343 <i>(14%)</i>	911 <i>(23%)</i>	921 <i>(43%)</i>	234 <i>(22%)</i>	301 <i>(28%)</i>	18 <i>(0.2%)</i>	582 <i>(4%)</i>	23 <i>(5%)</i>	10 <i>(5%)</i>
Rahshahi City	ACD	4000 <i>(13.34%)</i>	1214 <i>(8%)</i>	1202 <i>(12%)</i>	23 <i>(1%)</i>	22 <i>(1%)</i>	169 <i>(16%)</i>	102 <i>(10%)</i>	28 <i>(0.2%)</i>	1387 <i>(9%)</i>	119 <i>(27%)</i>	34 <i>(18%)</i>
Barisal City	VOSD	2300 <i>(7.67%)</i>	769 <i>(5%)</i>	694 <i>(7%)</i>	---	---	98 <i>(9%)</i>	124 <i>(12%)</i>	38 <i>(0.3%)</i>	965 <i>(6%)</i>	17 <i>(4%)</i>	38 <i>(21%)</i>
Sylhet City	VARD	1900 <i>(6.33%)</i>	159 <i>(1%)</i>	148 <i>(1%)</i>	97 <i>(2%)</i>	---	30 <i>(3%)</i>	46 <i>(4%)</i>	39 <i>(0.3%)</i>	726 <i>(5%)</i>	10 <i>(2%)</i>	15 <i>(8%)</i>
Grand Total	9 NGOs	30,000 (100%)	14,900 (100%)	9,951 (100%)	4,221 (100%)	2,154 (100%)	1,085 (100%)	1,067 (100%)	11,457 (100%)	15,307 (100%)	439 (100%)	185 (100%)

Source: *Compilation Report of Partner NGOs of ARISE* (Unpublished), ARISE Project Office, DSS, MOSW, GOB, July 2001, Dhaka.

* **AB**: Aparajeyo Bangladesh, **ACD**: Association for Community Development, **ACLAB**: Alliance for Cooperation Legal Aids in Bangladesh, **PSTC**: Population Services and Training Centre, **PMUK**: Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra, **SPK**: Samaj Paribartan Kendra, **VARD**: Voluntary Association for Rural Development, **VOSD**: Voluntary Organization for Social Development.

** = ARISE is running in Khulna by a 'Consortium of Dipshika, Anirban and ACLAB'.

trades in demand through market survey and realistic assessment of requirements of the children, partner NGOs developed vocational skill training facilities in different trades for their targets. The most common method in different trades for this was to establish vocational training or para-trade training centres but some NGOs also approached in other methods e.g. referral system, apprenticeship in small commercial enterprises through establishing linkages etc. For example, where AB, PSTC, etc. followed mainly the centre-based approach providing training in skill training centres, JOGAJOG of Chittagong and ACLAB of Khulna on the other hand followed the referral system, apprenticeship system, etc. along with the centre-based approach. The NGOs were generally following 3 to 8 trades for training. The common trades were screen-printing, sewing, embroidery, rickshaw repairing, candle making, hair-cutting, book binding, carpentry, etc. These trades were designed for training in a period of 3 to 6 months duration. The average duration for training was, as it has been reported, 2 to 3 hours per day. PMUK of Dhaka had a provision of awarding Tk. 500 per month to each trainee who was found to be quite sincere in receiving the training (As discussed in DSS, 2001b).

Table 5.4 also shows that a total of 2,152 children – about half of them girls – received different types of skill training from the 9 partner NGOs. Dhaka city alone covered 644 children – that was 30 per cent of the total. The coverage of other cities in this regard were: Khulna 535 (25%), Chittagong 404 (19%), Rajshahi 271 (13%), Barisal 222 (10%) and Sylhet only 76 (4%), which indicates that an overwhelming 86 per cent was covered by the four metro cities.

It was found that a lesser number of girls were covered in Dhaka city in terms of providing vocational/skill training – specially in case of AB, though SPK in Dhaka covered more girls (132) than boys (107). Among the rest, Khulna was the best covering 28 per cent of girls whereas it covered only 22 per cent of boys. Both these figures for Khulna were higher than its general target that was 15 per cent (Table 5.4). It may be mentioned that the concerned consortium of the NGOs in Khulna (ACLAB and others) established 4 skill training centres and along with this they followed different methods of skill training and job placement (DSS, 2001b).

iii) Other Interventions: There are some other components of the ARISE project, e.g. drop-in-centre, health service, and job placement. Table 5.4 also shows the achievements in these services. This project provided day and night shelter facilities in drop-in-centres for 6,375 children (66% boys and 34% girls) in 6 divisional cities. These children were provided with shelter homes and open house facilities with personal safety, day time napping, nutritional advice, and healthcare facilities like bathing, sleeping, teething, cloth washing, nail cutting etc. Some destitute girls were benefited with special care in day and nights shelter homes including food at subsidized cost (DSS, 2001b).

Street children were also provided with healthcare services from the partner NGOs. As on July 2001, a total of 26,764 children (57% boys, 43% girls) were provided with different types of health services e.g. first aid services, health check-up, basic health knowledge, clinical facilities, treatment in illness, distributing de-worming tablet, sex-education, etc. In case of health service, however, Dhaka had been covered predominantly well – the city accounted for about 70 per cent of the total achievement. From the total 11,457 boys, Dhaka alone covered 82 per cent but in case of girls it covered much less than that – 60 per cent of the total 15,307 girls. On the other hand, in Chittagong girls were found to be benefited in higher numbers than boys (2,394 girls and 1,910 boys). This picture, however, was also found in all other cities except Dhaka as a whole – though AB of Dhaka covered girls' healthcare services almost double that of boys (Table 5.4).

ARISE also provided job placement services specially to those children who had been provided with vocational skill trainings. As on July 2001, a total of 624 children were provided with job placement facilities by the 9 NGOs in 6 divisional cities. Among them more than 70 per cent were boys and only 30 per cent were girls. For boy's job placement, Dhaka achieved the highest rate (40%) as a single city but in case of girls the NGOs of Dhaka achieved combinedly only 21 per cent. For the other cities JOGAJOG of Chittagong achieved the best performance (26%) in the field of placement of girls. VOSD of Barishal was also in a good position comparatively as its achievement was 21 per cent (Table 5.4).

5.6. Networking and Collaboration of the GOB

In general, networking and collaboration with different related bodies is a common and important technique for developmental works of the GOB. The overall general objectives behind this networking and collaborative efforts can be summarized as:

- To develop and modify child development/welfare-related national policies;
- To share national/international experiences in terms of child labour-related programme, planning and implementation;
- To undertake and operate child labour-related research/studies;
- To plan appropriate action programmes/interventions;
- To identify appropriate national and local-level effective strategies to implement action programmes;
- To develop appropriate techniques e.g. curriculum and logistics, for non-formal education, etc.;
- To allocate necessary funds for programme implementation;
- To develop service-related effective organizational and institutional framework, appropriate logistics, and effective manpower;
- To implement GOB action programmes/projects;
- To assess and evaluate related GOB action programmes/projects;
- To publish related reports, findings, manuals, curriculums, etc.;
- To keep in touch with relevant international movements, authorities, communities, etc.; and lastly,
- To achieve expected results/impacts of GOB interventions.

The GOB has developed networking and collaboration in education and skill training intervention for urban working children in four important directions:

- a) Within different GOB ministries/departments;
- b) With several UN bodies;
- c) With local or national NGOs; and
- d) With donor agencies/countries, and INGOs.

In addition to these, the GOB also collaborates frequently with political parties, civil society, business organizations, professional groups, related community members, and so on:

5.6.1. Networking and Collaboration within Different GOB Departments:

Several ministries and departments of the GOB are working for destitute urban children and their families. Though the level of networking, collaboration and coordination is not so strong, there are some inter-dependent collaborative relations among and between them. Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), and Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) are the three core ministries in terms of child labour-related GOB services. Several other ministries e.g., 'Education', 'Law and Justice', 'Information', 'Planning', 'Finance', etc. are also involved in assistance and collaborate with the core ministries for implementing child labour-related programmes. For instance, DSS of MOSW was the core authority of both CEDC and ARISE programmes, whereas Department of Labour of MOLE, MOLJ, and Bangladesh Shishu Akademy of MOWCA were also inter-linked in case of the CEDC project. In ARISE project, MOHFP, MOE, MOLE, etc. were also involved at different levels and in different ways. In case of BEHTRUC project, MOWCA was the core authority but at the execution level DNFE of MOE, MOLE and MOHFP were also involved deeply. MOP and MOF, however, were involved in every project at the stages of planning, funds allocation, etc.

5.6.2. Networking and Collaboration with UN Bodies:

The GOB also maintains networking and collaborative relations with several UN bodies e.g. UNICEF, ILO, UNDP, etc. to work together in this field. The UN bodies, in general, are always helping the GOB departments to achieve CRC goals and other child related UN agenda. MOWCA and DOLE are closely involved with UNICEF and ILO/IPEC to combat the child labour and related problems. The BEHTRUC project of DNFE is largely financed and collaborated by UNICEF. On the other hand, GOB's CEDC project of early 1990s and ARISE project of late 1990s were also largely financed by and collaborated at different levels with UNDP. The GOB also networks with ILO for the latter's special programme on child labour named IPEC. The focal ministry of collaboration of ILO/IPEC is the MOLE. The GOB networks with ILO/IPEC broadly in terms of implementation of the Plan of Action on Children. However, in general, the GOB has developed

networking and collaborative relations with UN bodies for developing its child labour-related policies and programmes; to collect necessary funds; to develop institutions and train manpower; to exchange experiences; to develop appropriate strategies; and to conduct research/analysis of the existing situations and evaluate the programmes/projects.

5.6.3. Networking and Collaboration with NGOs:

At the implementation level of the GOB projects, NGOs are generally the most important development partners of the Government. The World Bank rightly identifies three types of collaborative arrangements between Government and NGOs at the programme implementation level:

- a) sub-contracts for GOB programmes/projects;
- b) joint implementation of GOB programmes/projects;
- c) Government as financier of NGO projects (Kuhn, B. 1999: 16).

However, in terms of providing child labour-related interventions, GOB has established a very strong working relationship with several international, local and national level NGOs because NGOs are much more experienced than the government in this field. Though NGOs were involved in the CEDC programme on a limited basis, both the BEHTRUC and ARISE projects of the GOB incorporated the involvement of NGO partners. DNFE was linked with more than 150 NGOs to implement the BEHTRUC project. The ARISE project of DSS was also implementing with the help of 9 NGOs in its primary stage. Apart from the implementation stage, the leading NGOs in this field, e.g. BRAC, Proshika, DAM, GSS, AB, UCEP, etc. were also involved with different GOB departments in terms of policy making, project planning, experience sharing, development of curriculum and trained manpower, capacity building, and even at the monitoring and evaluation level. This collaborative relationship is growing day by day in a stronger and wider way specially in the field of child labour-related interventions.

5.6.4. Networking and Collaboration with Donors and INGOs:

INGOs and donors are also very important working partners of the GOB in this field. As a country of poor economic characteristics, the GOB simply cannot maintain the expenses of multidimensional child labour interventions. So it has

networked with several international donors and INGOs and established collaborative relations with them to undertake national-level projects as well as to achieve child right-related goals. For example, DFID of UK and Swiss SIDA are the two major sources of funds for the DNFE's BEHTRUC project. The GOB also collaborates with other parties. In the process of MOU for the ex-garment industry child labourers education project of UNICEF-ILO-BGMEA, the GOB also played a very important role as a coordinator, motivator and collaborator as well as observer.

Finally, it fully endorsed the terms of the MOU which has had major long-term consequences for the country to response against child labour problem. Through research, study, seminar, symposium, etc. the GOB also networks with the civil society, professional groups, etc. Inside and outside the Parliament it also keeps contact with political parties. Ministry of Social Welfare and the NGO Affairs Bureau are also deeply involved with all NGO activities mainly in two forms: (a) registration of NGOs, its endorsement and distributing grants among them (by the MOSW); and (b) controlling the flow of foreign aids, donations and other international assistance for NGOs (by the NGO Affairs Bureau).

5.7. Assessment of the GOB Interventions⁸ to Combat the Urban Child Labour Problem in Bangladesh

As we stated earlier, the Government of Bangladesh does not have a good number of well-covering action programmes to fight against its child labour problem both in the urban and rural areas. The GOB has come to light as one of the important service providers for working children only in the early 1990s. At the policy level as well as the planning process, the issues of child labour have been substantially incorporated in this decade – specially during the middle of the 1990s.

In terms of programmes, specially on education and skill training for urban working children, the two prominent projects i.e., BEHTRUC and ARISE are still on-going⁹ and only the CEDC programme has been completed (Table 5.5).

⁸ The impact of two major programmes i.e., BEHTRUC and ARISE have already been assessed individually earlier in Sections 5.4.3 and 5.5.3 In this section, however, we will assess the GOB interventions as a whole.

⁹ As in early 2001. Details are shown in Figure 5.1 and Table 5.4.

Therefore, the ultimate impact of the projects may not be calculated fully at this stage. The CEDC programme, on the other hand, has only a little scope for discussion regarding its impacts. Still on the basis of available data, we shall try to assess the impact of the GOB interventions for the sake of academic interest and practical issues.

5.7.1. Impact of GOB Interventions on Underprivileged Urban Children:

A huge number of underprivileged urban children who are the direct targets of GOB interventions are being impacted positively in different ways. About 1.8 lac urban street and working children have been covered by non-formal education and other services in the 1990s through the three programmes (CEDC, BEHTRUC & ARISE). In terms of coverage of beneficiaries, the BEHTRUC and ARISE projects are the largest project in its kind in Bangladesh for the welfare and development of urban underprivileged children. These poor urban children had the opportunity to receive NFE without any cost and having no or little interruption in their earnings. These children also achieved consciousness on child rights/child labour and learned important life skills from those projects (as shown in Table 5.5: major components/provisions of projects). These interventions helped them to lead a better life and to adjust better with their environments. As we discussed earlier, both the BEHTRUC and ARISE projects achieved such consciousness and positive environment where many children after receiving NFE enrolled themselves in the general primary schools or other non-formal schools for higher continuing education.

Children were benefited by services like shelter, healthcare, legal right, recreation, etc. Children were also benefited directly by the skill training component and thereby facilitated by being placed in better jobs (as in ARISE project) or given small credit for self-employment (as in CEDC project) – though very few children received these facilities. As in July 2001, a total of 2,152 street children (1,085 boys and 1,067 girls) received different types of short-term vocational training from the ARISE project (Table 5.4). Skill training was also included in the CEDC programme (especially for girls who were sheltered in the Girls' Hostels). In the BEHTRUC project upto May 2001, a total of 1106 children also received skill trainings

(sponsored by UNICEF). These trainings must have created a better opportunity to the working children to reach out to gainful and less harmful jobs.

Table 5.5: Status and Achievements of the GOB Projects for Urban Street and Working Children in the 1990s

Projects (responsible GOB ministries/ departments)	Project periods	Target groups of the project	Major components/ provisions of the project	Area of the project operation	Goal achieved by the end of 2000 or end of project
CEDC Project (DSS under MOSW)	4 years (1994-95 to 1997-98)	Underprivileged urban children (including slum/ street/ working children and their mothers)	Functional education, Shelter centres for street children, Shelter homes for girls, Skill training and Small credit for self-employment	5 cities (Dhaka Chittagong Khulna Rajshahi and Narayanganj)	29,532 children and others
BEHTRUC Project (DNFE of MOE & the MOWCA)	4 years (End of 1997 to the end of 2001)	351,000 slum/ working children	Non-formal education, Healthcare, Skill training, Protection from hazardous and exploitative work	6 cities (Dhaka Chittagong Khulna Rajshahi Barishal & Sylhet)	1,26,000 children (36% of total target)
ARISE Project (DSS under MOSW)	3 years (Middle of 1999 to middle of 2003)	30,000 street children of major urban areas	Non-formal education, Shelter centres/ homes, Health Care services, Awareness raising, Job placement, Psychological counseling	6 cities (Dhaka Chittagong Khulna Rajshahi Barishal & Sylhet)	25,144 children (84% of the total target)*

Source: Based on Table 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4.

* As in October 2001 (DSS, 2000).

Though job-placement initially was not included in two of these three projects as a goal, there were some achievements in this field also. Under the ARISE project, as in mid 2001, a total of 624 street children (439 boys and 185 girls) (Table 5.4) were given different types of jobs in the informal sector. On the other hand, these children were also facilitated by healthcare services, from all of

the GOB programmes. For example, in the ARISE project, till mid 2001, a total of 26,764 children received different types of healthcare services¹⁰ and an interesting fact was that, more than 57 per cent of those underprivileged urban children who received healthcare services were girls (Table 5.4).

5.7.2. Other Impacts of the GOB Interventions :

As we cited earlier, the GOB is comparatively a newcomer in providing child labour interventions. But as it is the central organization and central authority to chalk out any policy, plan and strategy with its huge administrative framework, logistics, resources and manpower – any action of the GOB may create comparatively profound and long-run impacts on the targeted population.

As we observed, many family members of the urban working children and other members of the related community have also been benefited by the umbrella type GOB initiatives in terms of the fight against child labour problems. Both the CEDC and ARISE programmes of DSS initiated to improve the family and social environment related to the working children. For example, the revolving fund of the CEDC programme has been used for small credits to improve the economic condition and empowerment of urban poor women.

All those GOB projects created a greater consciousness against child labour and in favour of education and other child rights. Community consciousness has also been developed through participation in the NFE centres run under the BEHTRUC project by the community members. In many cases, they became important partners in the management of community-based non-formal schools. This participation and involvement of community leaders and members has created a strong environment to keep the working children in the schools.

NGOs are the other important beneficiaries of the GOB initiatives in this field. Both the BEHTRUC and ARISE projects have been totally implemented by different NGOs and thus the GOB has created important positive effects on the GOB-NGO collaboration in development efforts. It has also created a strong GOB-NGO working relation specially in terms of providing non-formal education both to the illiterate adults and to the underprivileged children, like working

¹⁰ The healthcare services provided by AARISE include: clinical treatment in illness, first-aid facilities, de-worming, health awareness by health education, sex-education, hospital facilities if necessary, etc.

children, street children etc. At least 160 NGOs were involved in the BEHTRUC and ARISE projects. Many of them were newcomers and more or less inexperienced in this field. Through partnership with the GOB, they developed their own organizing capacity, expertise and practical experience on providing child labour intervention, and after completion of these two projects, some of them took initiatives to continue child labour-related programmes including non-formal education specially in their own capacity.

In mid-1990s, the GOB signed an MOU with ILO to introduce the IPEC programme in Bangladesh. The GOB is the main partner of IPEC to take several programmes for the working children. Besides this, the GOB has entered into partnership and collaborative relations with UNICEF, UNDP and several international donors specially for child labour interventions.

The GOB also initiated special training programmes on child labour-related issues for its higher level officers and bureaucratic cadres with the help of ILO/IPEC through the foundation course of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC). In the policy level, on the other hand, there have been some achievements of the GOB specially in the 1990s. The issue of child labour got importance for the first time in NCP, NAP for children and specially in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002), and these frameworks of policy and plan are the base of all child labour related interventions. Therefore, in a wider consideration, the GOB has been playing an important role as a planner, policy maker, collaborator, networker, motivator, and coordinator and, of course, as a service provider to combat the child labour problem – which has long-term, wide and far-reaching impacts.

5.8. Limitations of the GOB Interventions

Considering the huge scope, capacity and administrative framework of the GOB, the child labour-related interventions of the GOB are very inadequate and in terms of combating the child labour issue, this field is one of the neglected ones. There are so many limitations and weaknesses with the GOB: some are related to the policy-plans and the government's outlook, and some are related to the existing action projects. These may be outlined as follows:

a) Lack of Proper Policy and Plans on Child Labour:

The GOB ratified the problem of child labour only during the early 1990s. But this issue has been accommodated as a very small part of the child welfare issue. Neither any law, nor any policy, has especially highlighted the child labour issue covering a huge number of children e.g. domestic servants, street children, etc.

b) Lack of Proper Physical Environment and Practical Experience in Child Labour Interventions:

The GOB could not develop any appropriate physical environment and infrastructure to combat child labour problems on a regular basis. All GOB initiatives in this field were very much temporary and pilot-project based. It was observed that in the BEHTRUC project, the “physical condition of 16% of the learning centres was poor and space per learner in 49% of the centres was inadequate. Drinking water and toilet were not available in 46% and 62% of the centres respectively” (DNFE & UNICEF-Bangladesh, 2000a: xxiv). In the ARISE project, the physical environment was also very poor. Inexperience in terms of child labour intervention was the other weakness of the GOB.

c) Lack of Proper Commitment to the Working Children:

In the GOB interventions, in most cases, the projects emphasized on reaching the number of targets, but neither the quality of services nor the commitment to the working children. For example, the Formative Evaluation of HTR project observed low attendance (about 54%) and high dropout (about 24%) (ibid: xx). Therefore, the efforts of GOB officials and also the implementing bodies were more related with keeping children’s names in school enrollment and to cover the number of targets. In case of the ARISE project, the Mid-Term Evaluation Team also found the same thing. “The entire NFE process is extremely target-oriented” (DSS, 2001a: 4 & 24).

d) Problem of NGO Selection for Effective Partnership and Successful Service Delivery:

In case of both the BEHTRUC and ARISE projects, the GOB was fully dependent on the NGOs for implementation of services but many of these NGOs were not selected properly to achieve the real goals of those projects. Many of them became ‘contractors’ rather than ‘partners’. In case of the HTR education programme, it was observed that, the majority of the NGOs lacked experience,

management capability and confidence to run an education project for the 'hard-to-reach' children as well as to provide necessary support to teachers and supervisors in the field (GOB & UNICEF, 2000:47). In case of the ARISE project, the majority of the selected NGOs did not have any prior experience in the field of providing non-formal education and other specialized services to the most vulnerable urban underprivileged children like street children.¹¹

e) Lack of Proper Coordination and Monitoring of Services:

Child labour projects of the GOB were not properly coordinated mainly because of the lack of proper administrative framework and experienced manpower in this field. As ILO-IPEC has studied the problem, "a technical drawback in this regards is that, for the child labour issue the PMED and the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) have been identified as the lead agencies, funds have been allocated under the Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW) and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), whereas the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) has been the focal point for dealing with the child labour issue. This may lead to a lack of effective coordination among the relevant agencies which may hamper setting effective strategies and programmes in addressing this problem" (ILO/IPEC-Dhaka, 1999:1).

Lack of proper executing agency is always a problem for the GOB. In case of the BEHTRUC project, for example, the only professional to assist the Project Director (PD) was an Assistant Director (AD) with no previous experience or training in non-formal education. The supporting staff in the PD's office was also inadequate, and so it was hardly possible to ensure effective delivery of the services.

This project, as called NFE-3 project of DNFE, had no supervisory or monitoring personnel of its own. The existing monitoring associates of DNFE were not meant for NFE-3 and they did not visit NFE-3 learning centres. Even NFE-3 had no MIS of its own and it was also observed that though most of the learning centres had their 'Center Management Committees' (CMCs), in most cases the CMC meetings were not always held regularly (DNFE & UNICEF-Bangladesh, 2000a: xxii).

¹¹ Only two of them had the prior experience to work with street children (As cited in DSS 2001a: 19).

f) Lack of Appropriate Teaching-Learning Methods and Materials:

In the ARISE project, the curriculum used was actually from different formal education textbooks. Even the methodology used was completely different for different organizations (NGOs). The teaching material was not related to the lives of the street children and hence was not making much sense to them (DSS, 2001a: 4). It was found that the teaching methods used by all the NGOs (except Aparajeyo Bangladesh¹²) were teacher-centric and not participatory.

On the other hand, in the BEHTRUC project, the situation was much better with specified curriculum and teaching materials. But still, the executing agency (DNFE) could not ensure distribution of the teaching-learning materials on time. Furthermore, the materials delivered were of low quality and often fell short of the requirement (DNFE & UNICEF, Bangladesh, 2000a: xxiv). For the CEDC programme, there was no specific teaching-learning curriculum and materials at all.

g) Lack of a Vocational Training System:

Vocational training component for the working children in the GOB's intervention was either absent or very neglected, even though strategically vocational training with non-formal education is very much effective to combat the child labour problem. There was no vocational training component in the BEHTRUC project. In the ARISE project, the vocational training programme was not as innovative as expected and the market survey by the individual NGOs was done pretty late. Also the vocational training was not targeted for all the children (DSS, 2001a: 5).

h) Lack of Specific Training Centres for Staff and Officials:

Special type of training for the teachers and officers in providing services to the working children is strategically very essential. Specific projects took initiatives to train their manpower haphazardly and not in a regular and organized basis, and it did not cover all of the teachers and officers. The evaluation team of the BEHTRUC project found that, "while many teachers and supervisors considered the duration of their foundation training (10-12 days) to be inadequate, the NGO

¹² This organization has a vast experience to work with street children specially. So their teaching methods is participatory, interesting and motivating for children

coordinators felt that provisions should be made for an appropriate course of training for them as well” (DNFE & UNICEF-Bangladesh, 2000a: xxiii). In the ARISE project, teachers of most of the centres were not trained in non-formal education and hence, they failed to make the classes interesting. They did not have the training to motivate the target group and manage such special classroom activities (DSS, 2001a: 23).

i) Lack of Proper Linkages with the Related Parties/Bodies:

Strong linkages with the related bodies are very much essential in the planning and implementation stages specially but GOB did not succeed in this point also. Many famous NGOs who were experienced in this field were neglected in all stages of the ARISE project. Even the NGOs who were implementing ARISE were not linked together strongly.

There were also many other limitations related to the GOB interventions for the working children like huge dependency on the donors for funds, dependency on the NGOs for project implementation, relatively small coverage of the target group in comparison to the increasing volume of child labour throughout the country, and so on. These limitations have become the main hindrance to the GOB’s efforts to achieve the goals of mitigating the miseries of the urban street and working children.