

## CHAPTER VI

# *Assessment of Education and Skill Training Interventions of NGOs for Urban Working Children in Bangladesh*

### **6.1. Introduction**

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) have been playing a very important role in the field of socio-economic and cultural-political development of Bangladesh since the early 1970s. As Berthold Kuhn studied (1999:2), NGOs play a more important role in Bangladesh than in most other developing and developed countries of the world.

“NGOs emerged on a large scale in Bangladesh only after the Liberation War of 1971, to undertake relief and rehabilitation activities to mitigate the sufferings of the war-torn people” (Rahman, A. 1999: 34). NGOs in Bangladesh have evolved to their present position through a series of events and presently an approximate of 1,200 NGOs are registered under the Foreign Donations Regulation Ordinance of 1978 with the NGO Affairs Bureau directly attached to the Prime Minister’s Office, and more than 12,000 are registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860 with the Social Service Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs of the GOB.

“In more recent years, NGOs have also been involved in creating broader alliances of the poor to pursue mass social actions, as well as NGOs’ networking, lobbying and advocacy work. This reflects an emerging consensus within the NGO community that grassroots actions are needed to be accompanied by the development of abilities to become effective at the macro level, lobbying for policies that are beneficial to the poor and arguing against those that are seen as detrimental to the interests of the poor” (Naser *et al.* 1995: 7).

The spectrum of activities pursued by the NGOs covers at least the following major foci (*ibid.* 7):

- emergency aid and relief,
- formal and non-formal education,

- health-education, training and provision of services,
- credit programmes and income generation activities,
- technical skill training,
- empowerment of women,
- legal aid for the protection of children, women and the landless,
- policy advocacy,
- establishment of effective democratic process at the grassroots, and
- environmental issues (*Report of the Task Forces on Bangladesh Development Strategies*, Vol. II, 1991: 375).

NGOs in Bangladesh could be categorized as local NGOs, national NGOs and international NGOs and also as big NGOs, medium NGOs, intermediary NGOs and small NGOs. "Local NGOs, which operate in only a few villages..., receiving funds mostly from local sources or from national or international NGOs; national NGOs which operate in several geographical locations covering a number of districts, mostly receiving foreign funds, and international NGOs which may operate in several locations, having their headquarters based outside the country and being operated mostly by expatriates" (Task Force Report, *ibid*: 374).

On the other hand, "NGOs having its operation throughout the country at a national level are termed as big.... There are a few such NGOs operating in Bangladesh such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BARC), Association for Social Advancement (ASA), Gono Shahajya Shangstha (GSS) and Proshika...." (Zaman, M.H. 1999: 70). Big NGOs are national NGOs also. However, it is indeed a very difficult task to define medium, intermediary and small NGOs. One way of definitions may be: medium NGOs working at the divisional level small NGOs at the district level and intermediary NGOs at an intermediate level.

BRAC, Proshika, GSS, Asha, Gonosahajjo Kendra and Nijera Kori etc. are all amongst the largest development-oriented NGOs in Bangladesh, as well as in the world, with field operations in a single country. The Grameen Bank (which enjoys as "Bank for the Rural Poor", donor support and tax privileges) and BRAC are the largest providers of micro-finance operations in the world (Kuhn, B. 1999: 2). All these NGOs have strong bargaining power both with the donors and the government. Both the donors and the government have their confidence and trust on these large organizational set ups (Zaman, M.H.: 70). However, "a large number of small-size NGOs are in operation and are trying to put their efforts in innovative

projects. They have direct contact with the poorest of the poor because of their nature of operation in local areas. They can remain very close to the target population and understand their problems..." (Zaman, *ibid*: 66). Most of these NGOs are working in rural areas.

There are some important apex forums of Bangladesh NGOs. The Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) is the largest among them – with a total of 1,165 local, national and international NGO members (as on July 2001) of which 266 are central members and 899 are chapter members.

Bangladesh's flourishing NGOs, however, can take credit for other aspects of the country's nascent democracy. NGOs such as BRAC and Proshika "are now getting involved in exploring ways to make the whole of the democratic system work better. And in a country whose system of justice is in need of a radical overhaul, GSS is offering valuable legal services to people who previously would have stood little chance of legal protection or redress" (Stalker, P. 1997: 8). Another sector of NGOs' developmental activities is 'Women's Development'. Since early 1990s, a large number of poor rural women have been benefited in different ways from the NGO activities. For example, "in village surveys, around one-third of women who now felt free to move from their homes said their increased mobility was a direct result of their connections with the Grameen Bank" (Stalker, P. 1999: 8).

## ***6.2. NGO Responses Against Child Labour in Urban Areas***

Within the limited initiatives on child labour problems, NGOs take the major share and leadership in comparison to other organizations including GOs. This is a reality in Bangladesh as well as in many other developing countries. For example, in India, as Dr. Hajira Kumar studied, "it was not government but NGOs who took interest in the problem faced by the street and working children" (Kumar, H. 1999: 35).

As far as our knowledge goes, there are five different research studies where the specific organizations of Bangladesh which were engaged in child right activities were identified. The first study was done by M.Q. M. Mahbub and Mati-ur Rahman in 1996. The rest four studies were all made in 1999 by DAM, DPC, BSAF and DSS. Details of these studies are show in the following table:

**Table 6.1: Studies on NGOs Having Child Labour Programmes & CRC-Activities in 1990s**

Studied by the Organization / Person	Title of the Study	Funded by	Published in	No. of NGOs covered	NGOs With Ch.Lab. Prog.	NGOs With Other Prog.
A.Q.M. Mahbub & Mati-ur-Rahman from URC(B)*	Annotative Inventory Mapping of Service Areas on Working Children in Bangladesh	BSAF	August, 1996	112 (All over the Country)	67	45
Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)	Directory of Services to Working Children	CIDA/ Canada	March, 1999	72 (31 with details & 41 with address)	30	01
Bangladesh Sishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF)	Directory of NGOs (Engaged in CRC activities, 1998)	Save the Children (Denmark)	June, 1999	100 (All over the country)	66	44
Development Planners and Consultants (DPC)	Contribution of NGOs in Empowering the Children of Urban Poor through Non-formal General and Technical Education in 6 (six) Divisional Cities	UCEP – Bangladesh	June, 1999	41 (Only in 6 Divisional Cities)	41	Not Available
Dept. of Social Service (DSS) of MOSW	A Review of Existing Services Relating to Street Children (Covered 13 separate cities including 6 divisional cities) <sup>1</sup>	UNDP	December, 1999 (In 5 separate reports)	113 (In 13 major cities) <sup>2</sup>	79 <sup>3</sup>	34

\* University Research Corporation, Bangladesh

### 6.2.1. Locations of NGOs Providing Services to the Working Children in Urban Areas:

As we mentioned earlier and as all of those studies found, most of the programmes launched for the working children in Bangladesh were located in urban areas. Again, the majority of such activities were concentrated in the major city areas e.g., divisional headquarters, industrial towns (e.g. Narayanganj) and major

<sup>1</sup> These 5 Studies were prepared by 5 different research organizations viz. (a) Avanti Engineers and Associates Ltd. (AEA) (for Dhaka), (b) Resource Planning and Management Consultants (Pvt.) Ltd. (for Chittagong, Sylhet and Comilla), (c) Sustainable Development Consultants Ltd. (for Khulna, Barisal and Jessore) (d) Centre for Development Services (CDS) (for Rajshahi, Bogra and Rangpur), and (e) ABC Consulting Corporation Ltd. (for Narayanganj, Tongi, and Mymensingh).

<sup>2</sup> These cities are: Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, Sylhet, Kumilla, Mymensingh, Jessore, Rangpur, Bagra, Narayanganj and Tongi.

<sup>3</sup> Many National NGOs have been counted more than one time as they have their services in different cities (e.g. UCEP, DAM). Therefore, the actual number of NGOs is much less than this figure (79).

district headquarters (e.g. Comilla, Jessore, Tangail, Bogra, etc.). 'URC (B) Field Survey' found that of the 1,417 locations throughout the country, 59.6 per cent were in Dhaka division, 14.5 per cent in Khulna division, 12.1 per cent in Chittagong division, 10.4 per cent in Rajshahi division and only 3.0 and 0.3 per cent in Barisal and Sylhet divisions.

Therefore, a lion's share of the programmes for working children was concentrated in the four metropolitan cities (i.e., in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi) – specially in the capital city of Dhaka. Table 6.2 shows the nature and locations of those NGOs that were involved in CRC-related activities in 1998. A total of 66 NGOs were involved in child labour programmes with other child right activities and among them 52 (79%) were located in the four metropolitan cities. Again, an overwhelming 43 number of NGOs (82.7%) were working in Dhaka city.

**Table 6.2: Locations of NGOs Involved in CRC Activities in 1998**

Nature of Organizations	Number of NGOs in 4 Metro Cities				Total
	Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi	
Local NGOs	16	03	01	00	20
National NGOs	22	00	00	00	22
Regional NGOs	02	02	01	02	07
International NGOs	03	00	00	00	03
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>52</b>
NGOs out of 4 metro cities having child labour programme					14
NGOs who didn't have any working children programme					32
Donors who didn't have direct programme on working children					02
<b>Grand Total</b>					<b>100</b>

Source: Prepared by the author from: *Directory of NGOs (Engaged CRC Activities) 1998*; BSAF, Dhaka, 1999.

The review studies of DSS also found in 1999 that among 79 NGOs who were engaged in child right activities among the underprivileged children in 13 cities/towns, about three-fourth (i.e., 57 NGOs or 72%) were engaged in 4 metro cities (viz. in Chittagong 19, Dhaka and Khulna 16 each and Rajshahi 6).<sup>4</sup> It is also very remarkable from the above table that all the 22 national NGOs and all the 3

<sup>4</sup> It may be noted that the conducting organizations of these 5 studies were not the same. Therefore, they have listed the NGOs as Street/Working Children's Service provider by different manners. Thus, Chittagong became the highest and Dhaka became the 2<sup>nd</sup> position, even equal of Khulna. Actually, the Status of these 4 cities on this concern is more reflected in BSAF's Directory (See Table 6.1).

international NGOs were located in Dhaka. Dhaka also possessed an overwhelming majority – 16 out of 20 – of the local NGOs.

### 6.2.2. Types of NGO Services to the Working Children in Metro Cities:

In search of the nature and type of services of those 52 organizations of Table 6.2 – that are providing programmes for working children in the metro cities in Bangladesh, it is found that at least 10 different services are being offered by them. Formal/non-formal basic education is the most common programme offered by more than 90 per cent (i.e., by 47) of the NGOs. The second largest service given by the organizations is awareness raising and motivational activities where 55.8 per cent (i.e., 29) of the NGOs are involved. There are 23 organizations in Dhaka, 4 each in Chittagong and Khulna and 3 in Rajshahi city which have this awareness raising programme. The third largest programme is 'technical/vocational skill training' which is carried out by almost 33 per cent (i.e., 17) of the NGOs. This programme has also been largely concentrated in Dhaka (offered by 14 NGOs). Chittagong and Khulna have 2 NGOs each and Rajshahi has 3 NGOs offering skill training to the working children. 'Healthcare services' is on the fourth position, provided by about 29 per cent (i.e., 15) of the NGOs.

**Table 6.3: Types of NGOs' Services for Working Children in 4 Metro Cities in 1998**

Types of Services	No. of Organizations	Services in 4 Metro Cities			
		Dhaka	Chittagong	Khulna	Rajshahi
Formal/Non-formal education	47 (90.4)	39	09	05	04
Awareness Raising and Motivation against Child Labour	17 (32.7)	14	03	02	02
Technical/Vocational Skill training	15 (28.8)	13	02	02	01
Healthcare Services	03 (5.8)	03	01	01	01
Formation of Child congress/club /group/forum	29 (55.8)	23	4	04	03
Policy Advocacy/ Social Mobilization	04 (7.7)	04	00	00	00
Legal Support/Aids	07 (13.5)	07	01	00	00
Job Counseling and Employment Support	08 (15.4)	07	01	00	00
Prevention of Child Prostitution	03 (5.8)	03	01	00	00
Children's Workshop	03 (5.8)	03	00	00	00
Others*	04 (7.7)	04	01	01	01
More than one Service	30 (57.7)	28	05	04	03

\* Child labour research, Boys' and Girls' hostel, & Rehabilitation for adolescent girls etc..

Source: Prepared by the author from the *Directory of NGOs (Engaged in CRC Activities), 1998*; published by BSAF in 1999, Dhaka.

Dhaka has 13 such NGOs, Chittagong and Khulna have 2 each and Rajshahi has 1 such organization. The fifth position is occupied by 'formation of child congress/club/group/forum (15.4%)'. The other services provided by NGOs are 'policy advocacy/social mobilization' (13.5%), 'legal support' services (7.7%) etc. Most of these programmes are found in Dhaka. There are 30 organizations (i.e. 57.7%) that have more than one programme for working children – 28, 5, 4 and 3 respectively in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi (Table 6.3).

DSS also identified several areas of services that were almost the same as those in Table 6.3, but there were other types of services as well: supply of subsidized food (for street children specially), bathing/washing/cooking facilities, protection against child trafficking/rape/violence, psychological/emotional support/ counseling, etc. These studies also found that most of the NGOs in Dhaka were covering more than 2 or 3 areas of services and their working experience and coverage of children were also better than those of other NGOs in any other town. Again, as a whole, non-formal education and healthcare services were the two most common areas of services (See DSS & UNDP, 1999a, b, c & d).

Both Table 6.2 and Table 6.3 show that the concentration ratio for Dhaka city was very high considering both the number of organizations and number of services that was provided, in comparison with three other cities. Mahbub and Rahman also observed the same status of Dhaka in their URC(B) field survey: "Thick concentration of such activities in Dhaka city can be attributed to its being the capital city. Major migration from villages to urban areas occurs in Dhaka. Thus, the underprivileged children are available more in Dhaka city compared to other cities. Besides that, inceptions of most of NGO activities are from Dhaka which can be another reason of such high concentration, given the fact that the child-related activities are yet to be expanded in Bangladesh" (Mahbub & Rahman, 1996: 4).

### ***6.3. Major NGO Interventions in Non-Formal Education for Working Children in Four Metro Cities***

As it was discussed earlier, formal or non-formal basic education is the most common service provided by the NGOs for urban working children. Table 6.3

shows it. The DAM's 'NGO Directory' also found that the non-formal basic education is the most popular and common programme among the NGOs.

### **6.3.1. NGOs Which Have Their Own NFE Programmes:**

Some of the NGOs have developed their own projects to provide NFE with or without other programme components to urban working children. Basically these organizations are the pioneers with their models and experiences in the field of NFE programme for the poor underprivileged urban children. The major features of NFE or basic education programmes of some leading NGOs for urban poor children are as follows:

#### **i) Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) <sup>5</sup>:**

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), basically a legal aid and human rights resource centre, was started in 1986 with the purpose of providing free legal aid to the disenfranchised. ASK is committed to promoting human rights within a democratic framework. ASK's goal is to create an enabling environment for equality, social justice and the rule of law (ASK, nd).

ASK implements its programmes through different units. Each unit has a different area of work – each unit provides assistance in particular programmes. The programme units are: Legal aid, Support to clients, Promoting child rights, Fact finding, Documenting human rights violations, Legal literacy and human rights awareness, Advocacy, Research, Media campaign, and Networking of different programmes (ASK, nd: 6-8).

ASK provides non-formal education under its 'Child Rights Unit' – with other services e.g. legal protection, healthcare, nutritional service, etc. for the underprivileged and working children in Dhaka. ASK started the first DIC in 1991 funded by Save the Children (Australia). In 1994, ASK started two more DICs at two different sites in Dhaka, supported by Radda Barnen. Their success encouraged ASK to establish more DICs, supported by AUS-AID. The sixth DIC in Dhaka, however, was added in 1997 with financial support from Red Barnet. These DICs

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<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of informations of this part is *Annual Reports of DAM, 1998-99 and 1999-2000*, DAM, Dhaka.

are working in Goran, Shahidbag, Bashabo, Mohammadpur, Mirpur areas and in the Purana Paltan area at ASK's main office in Dhaka.

In its DICs, ASK provides 'basic education', 'continuing education' and 'general education' for 8 to 15 years old working children who come from a range of occupations like domestic helpers, garbage collectors and tempo helpers.

A 'learner-centred' method is used for basic education upto grade II. In Grades I and II children are expected for recognize 400-500 words in simple sentences, to do simple sums, write short sentences and to read 4-6 books independently. Children can learn this basic education in the gap period of their daily work with the approach of 'earning with learning' in it's morning and afternoon shifts. Two educators – one female and one male – run each DIC and play the role of educators. The educators are trained in child-oriented techniques for teaching literacy and numeracy at a local NGO (GSS). In 1998, a total of 1004 working children (694 boys and 310 girls) received basic education (upto Grade II) from ASK's DICs. This figure rose to 1,748 (1225 boys and 523 girls) at the end of 1999.

Under the 'continuing education' and 'enrolment' component of ASK – children who have attended classes regularly and have shown an interest in further studies are enrolled in Government or private schools, depending on the availability of sponsorship funds. During 1998, 60 children (34 boys and 26 girls) were enrolled in other schools (Grade III or above)<sup>6</sup>. Almost 200 books (in 1999) are available in the mini library at each DIC. Children have become responsible for borrowing books and returning them. In 1999, 186 children used the library books.

In the 'general education' component, ASK follows the 'structured workshop' as the medium. Two trained facilitators conduct these workshops, based on a 12-topic syllabus entitled 'My World'. This strategy excites interest in general knowledge, enlarges awareness and helps development of their personality. In 1999, 245 workshops were organized for a total of 3,129 children.

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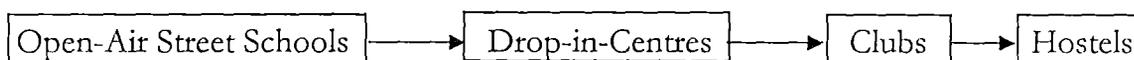
<sup>6</sup> 60 children (39 boys and 21 girls) were also provided with higher education in 1999.

## ii) Aparajeyo-Bangladesh (AB) <sup>7</sup>:

Aparajeyo-Bangladesh (AB) is a Dhaka-based national child rights non-government organization. It emerged from the Dhaka Programme of Terre des homes (Tdh) Foundations, Lausanne. Tdh began its activities in 1976, working initially with the children living in and around the slum areas of Dhaka. In 1989, the organization instituted a very distinct but complementary programme component which focused on the slum children and also those children who lived either on the city's streets or in and around its public buildings and utilities. However, through localization of Tdh's Dhaka programme, AB was finally founded in 1996.

The beneficiaries of AB are the vulnerable slum and street children of Dhaka as well as the parents of those children. The objectives of AB are "aims to work on the street and in the slum areas of Dhaka" (DPC, 1999: Annex-2). The 'Mission' of the organization is "to provide the poorest, most vulnerable children living on the street and in the slum communities around Dhaka City, a range of personal services designed to improve their quality of life. These services are principally, education, healthcare, skill training and socio-economic development" (AB: 2001: 1). The geographical areas of the organization are Palashi, Mohammadpur, Rayerbazar, Gabtoli, Komlapur, Sadarghat, Kanranbazar, Azimpur, Pallabi, etc. in Dhaka. Its major programmes as in 2000 were as follows (AB, 2001: 12):

a) *'The Street Children's Programme'* with its 6 components: (i) Open-Air Street Schools (14); (ii) Drop-in-Centres (02); (iii) Club for Boys and Girls (01); (iv) Boys' Hostel (01); (v) Girls' Hostel (01) and (vi) HIV/AIDS Prevention. The programme was designed in such a way that children could progress sequentially as:



b) *'The Slum Children's Programme'* with its 2 components: (i) Slum-Based Daycare Centres (04); and (ii) Slum Community-Based Education Centres (12): the provision was that the children of Slum Based Daycare Centres would subsequently join the Slum Community-Based Education Centres.

<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise stated the source of this section is 'Annual Report of Aparajeyo-Bangladesh 1998', 1999, 2000; AB, Dhaka.

c) *The Working Children's Programme* with its three components: (i) Community Education Centre (1) (ii) Learning Centres (6) and (iii) Community Mobilization on Child Labour: this programme aimed to provide education and vocational training to working children.

d) *The Healthcare Services* with its 2 components: (i) Indoor Clinic and (ii) Outdoor Clinic Mobile Medical Service.

Non-formal basic education is a major and common component of almost all types of AB's programme. Underprivileged children of Dhaka are receiving NFE from at least 6 AB programmes. These are:

i) *Open-Air Street Schools (OASS)*: These schools function for three hours everyday for six days a week. School hours are so selected that they do not interfere with the children's working hours and ability to earn a living.

ii) *Non-Formal Education in Drop-in-Centres (DICs)*: By the end of 2000, there were two DICs of AB in Dhaka to provide a non-judgmental environment and other basic facilities such as taking rest, use of locker for personal safety, cooking-bathing-clothes washing facilities, etc. However, non-formal education was also an important service in the DICs.

iii) *Education in Boys' and Girls' Club*: The clubs provide non-formal education to children through five classes: Pre-school A&B and Steps One, Two and Three. Classes are divided on the curriculum that permits children to fit in according to their acquired knowledge on literacy. In 2000, a total of 808 children (29% girls) attended these 5 classes.

iv) *Education in Boys' and Girls' Hostels*: Shelterless children are the beneficiaries of these hostels. By the end of 2000, there were 55 boys and 51 girls in the Boys' and Girls' hostels respectively. Almost all of them were enrolled in various general and technical schools of the other NGOs. AB ensures their education by linking programmes with the other NGOs.

v) *Education in 'Slum Community-Based Education Centres' (SCBEC)*: Non-formal basic education is the main service of these centres. The education programme is from the pre-school level to grade VI. Duration of each grade is six months. Centre-based education method is followed in these SCBECs. "Following Government curriculum, AB has designed and implemented need-based special

curriculum for each class with the inclusion of life skills education, general cleanliness, behavioural aspects and co-curriculum activities” (AB, 1997: 11).

vi) *Education in 'Community Education Centres' (CEC)*: CEC is a new and special programme for working children, started in September 1999, and located in Testuri Bazar, a commercial area of Dhaka. This non-formal school provides education by five stages: Beginning, Pre-school, Class 1A, Class 1B and Class 2. There are 2 educational sessions in a year. Each session consists of six months and there is one examination after every three months. Class times are organized according to earning hours of the children.

### **iii) Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC):**

Today, BRAC is the largest non-government organization in Bangladesh, as well as throughout the world. BRAC was established as a relief organization in 1972 after the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Over the years BRAC has gradually evolved into a large and multifaced development organization both in rural and urban areas with the objectives of “Poverty reduction and empowerment of the poor”. “People living below poverty line” are the target group of BRAC (BRAC, 2000: 8).

The major programmes of BRAC are: Rural Development Programme (RDP); BARC Education Programme (BEP); Health, Nutrition and Population Programme (HNPP); and BRAC Urban Programme (BUP). As of December 1999, BRAC programmes covered all 64 districts and 84 per cent of the thanas and more than 50,000 villages (a total of 86,000) of the country. Its 90,250 village organizations covered a total of 3.3 million members (97% were women) [BRAC, *ibid*: 8]. However, BRAC runs its urban programme by 50 area offices in four metro cities (*viz.* Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi).

BRAC extended its education service in urban areas for the slum children by opening 10 urban schools in 1992 (on a pilot basis), named BRAC Urban Programme. The programme has been designed keeping in mind the special needs of uprooted slum children aged 8 to 14 years who don't have access to the formal education system (BRAC, 2000: 31). As UNICEF observed: “although not labelled as a programme for working children, it recognizes the reality that poor children devote a major part of their day to working at home or in the fields” (Oxford

University Press, 1997: 55). The two main components of the programme are as follows:

*a) NFPE-BEOC<sup>8</sup> Schools:* BRAC's schools in urban slum areas follow the regular primary curriculum and emphasize practical skills to cope with the children's environment. These schools provide NFE upto grade III. "Each school in a small unit of 30 children, two-thirds of them girls, is located in the neighbourhood.... The result is outstanding, with completion rates of over 95 per cent for the three-year course, after which most of the children enter the fourth grade in the mainstream primary school" (Ahmed, M. 1996 cited by Oxford University Press, *ibid*: 55).

*b) Domestic Child Labour School:* At the beginning of 1999, BRAC started to bring domestic child labourers into its NFPE programme. The sources of funds for this programme are, apart from self-income, some donor organizations such as CIDA, DFID, DGIS, EC, NOVIB, UNICEF, etc.

**iv) PROSHIKA<sup>9</sup> - A Centre for Human Development:**

Proshika, established in 1976, is one of the largest national non-governmental development organizations in Bangladesh. The development strategy formulated by Proshika aims at addressing the needs and priorities of the rural and urban poor. The objectives of Proshika are: i) structural poverty alleviation; ii) environmental protection and regeneration; iii) improvement of the women's status; iv) increasing people's participation in public institutions, and v) increasing people's capacity to gain and exercise democratic and human rights. Spread in 12,106 villages and 886 urban slums in 51 districts, Proshika (as on December 1998) works with nearly 1.68 million men and women members drawn from rural and urban poor households, and organized into 87,068 groups (Proshika, n.d. 2).

Proshika introduced NFPE to provide education to the disadvantaged children who had either dropped out of a regular school or remained unenrolled. This programme started in both urban and rural areas in 1993 as one of the components of its Universal Education Programme. The main features of the programme are:

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<sup>8</sup> NFPE = Non-Formal Primary Education; BEOC = Basic Education for Older Children.

<sup>9</sup> The acronym 'Proshika' is made of the initials of three Bangla Words which stand for Training, Education and Development Action.

- i) The three-year NFPE is equivalent to five-year primary education.
- ii) Children of 8-11 years age group can complete an equivalent level of primary education in three years.
- iii) Each academic year consists of nine months. There are 200 working days in each academic year.
- iv) Most of the essential learning contents of the National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) are accommodated in its NFPE curriculum.
- v) Children who complete this course will qualify for admission to the secondary schools and also to occupational skills development programmes.
- vi) There is one teacher in each NFP school to take care of 30 students throughout the length of the course (Proshika, 1998: 12).

The whole learning process in Proshika NFPE is no longer a burden but a matter of attraction to the underprivileged or working children. The total process of learning and reading exercise is learner-centred and activity-based. They become independent learners within three year (Proshika n.d. 1:6). The major donors for Proshika's NFPE are CIDA-Canada, SIDA, BOVIB, EU donor countries, etc.

#### **v) Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (SEEP)<sup>10</sup>:**

SEEP is a local NGO of Dhaka that came into existence in 1995-96. Since its inception, it has been working with the disadvantaged children and their parents in different slum and fringe areas of Dhaka. The philosophical basis of the organization is sustainable development of the especially disadvantaged children of the society and the mission is to provide equal opportunity to them. The strategy to give human development services to these children, particularly education, to a sustainable level as well as to empower their parents to take over the ultimate charge of their children. The major programmes of SEEP are: i) Protection of Rights of the Distressed Children (PRDC); ii) Development Programme for the Slum and Street Children (DPSSC); iii) Development Programme for the Child Labourers through Alternative Trainings (DPCLAT) and iv) Development Programme for the Poor (DP) [SEEP, 1999: 1-4].

There are three different NFE projects of SEEP under its three programmes:

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<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of information of this section is the 'Annual Activity Report 1999 of SEEP', SEEP, 2000, Dhaka.

(a) Under the *PRDC programme* there are 6 'NFPE School Centres', 2 at Fatullah, 3 at Shahid Nagar and 1 at Bara Gram in Dhaka city. Each school centre consists of 30 children and a total of 198 underprivileged children of 8-12 years age group are getting NFPE upto grade-III under this project (in 1999). In addition to this, there are 5 'Pre-School' centres under PRDC. Each such centre has 35 children of 5 years age who get pre-school education every year under one-year course. Tdh-Netherlands is the donor of the programme.

(b) Under the *DPSSC programme*, there is another NFPE project with 5 school centres at the slum area of Mirpur. These centres provide NFPE upto grade-III for 8-12 year aged slum children, and follow the same provisions as the PRDC. The total number of enrollment in 1999 is 150. In addition to that, there are two 'Street Children Facility Centre's – one at Gabtoli bus terminal and another at Sadar Ghat launch terminal. Under each centre 50 street children are getting several facilities such as education, recreation, washing and bathing facilities, medical support, etc. This project is also funded by Tdh-Netherlands.

(c) Under the *DPCLAT programme* for 300 working children of Ward No. 3 of Dhaka City Corporation (who are employed in "jori and benarasi saree factories"<sup>11</sup>), there is another NFPE project of SEEP. Under this project, funded by Danish Save the Children and Red Barnet, there are 5 schools with a provision upto grade-III NFE. Each school centre consists of 30 children of the 7-17 age group.

#### vi) Shoishab-Bangladesh <sup>12</sup>:

Shoishab is a Dhaka-based prominent local NGO providing various programmes mainly to the child domestic workers and the street children since 1991. 'Working Women' is another major target group of Shoishab. Therefore, the 'disadvantaged children, and women living either alone or in a pseudo-family set up' in urban areas are the target of it. The objective of Shoishab is to educate and re-socialize disadvantaged children with minimum disturbance to their existing living practices or without removing them from their own environment. To achieve its

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<sup>11</sup> These children are known as Biharis (now called 'stranded Pakistanis').

<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of informations of this section is *Brochure of Shoishab-Bangladesh*, n.d., Dhaka.

objective, however, Shoishab has been working through a number of programmes: i) Street Children's Programme; ii) Programme for Street Girls; iii) Child Domestic's Programme; iv) Halfway House; v) Domestic Workers Forum, etc.

Under the Child Domestic's Programme and Street Children's Programme, Shoishab is providing basic primary education in 11 thanas of Dhaka. Child domestic workers and street children involved in different child labour activities aged 11-16 years are the beneficiaries. Shoishab's NFPE centres offered a 2-hour schooling (i.e., 3 to 5 p.m.) in a single shift daily upto grade-III level. The course duration is only 6 months. As on June 2000, a total of 185 learning centres were providing for about 3,500 working children, 80 per cent of them being girls. By this time, a total of 7,417 working children (80% girls) had been provided NFE upto grade-III by Shoishab<sup>13</sup>. DFID, ILO and GOB were the main donors for this programme.

#### vii) SUROVI <sup>14</sup>:

SUROVI is another prominent national NGO working for the under-privileged children for the last two decades mainly in the urban areas of Bangladesh. It started functioning in 1979 in Dhaka. "It was established to enlighten the lives of destitute children with the light of knowledge, love and affection and to instill in their minds the dream to become responsible and worthy citizens of the great nation of Bangladesh" (Rahman, Z.K., n.d.). Besides Dhaka, the other service areas of SUROVI are Khulna, Bagerhat and Chittagong (Surovi, 2001)<sup>15</sup>.

SUROVI provides NFE both at the primary and lower secondary levels (upto grade-VIII). The duration of each grade is one year. Every school centre has 2 or 3 shifts and each shift has a duration of 2 and half hours. Here 6-14 years aged 'working children', 'street children' and 'slum children' are the target. The students of SUROVI receive books and other education materials, school uniforms and school bags free of cost. Every grade has an enrollment of 30 such students.

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<sup>13</sup> These informations have been collected through an interview with the acting Director of Shoishab-Bangladesh in June 2000, at its office in Dhaka.

<sup>14</sup> The acronym SUROVI is made of the initials of 6 different words: *Smiling, Understanding, Rising, Owing, Vibrating and Inspiring*

<sup>15</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of information of this section is *Brochure of SUROVI* by Dr. Zubaida Khan Rahman (n.d.).

As by the first half of 1999, there were 22 schools of SUROVI in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna cities (DPC, 1999: Annex 6). As per an account in December 1997, each school had an average of 330 students (Rahman A.N.S.H. *et al.* 1997: 4). According to the Annual Report-2000, there were 19 NF schools of SUROVI in Dhaka city: 9 in Mohammadpur, 2 each in Mirpur and Kamrangir Char areas and 1 each in Mirpur, Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Khilgaon, Adabar and Lalbagh areas. At present, there is no NFE centre in Chittagong and Khulna cities (Surovi, 2001).

#### **viii) Underprivileged Children's Educational Programme (UCEP)<sup>16</sup>:**

UCEP, by its nature, is the largest, oldest and the leading national NGO working for the underprivileged working children in the major urban areas of Bangladesh since 1973. In many senses, UCEP is the pioneer in the field of intervening for working children in Bangladesh. The present mission of the organization is "to raise the socio-economic condition of the urban poor to such a level that they can effectively participate in national development with enhanced capacity and dignity and fulfilment of their basic rights". To achieve this mission, it has the following main activities:

- General education for working children (aged 10+) upto grade-VIII;
- Vocational/technical education for working children;
- Employment and field services to the graduates of general and technical education;
- Para-trade (basic skill) training for working children;
- Development of integrated general and vocational education and skill training;

Under its umbrella of educational programmes, UCEP provides general education upto grade-VIII through its 30 schools located: 14 in Dhaka, 8 in Chittagong, 6 in Khulna and 2 in Rajshahi city areas. UCEP schools are located where the working children are concentrated. Each school operates 3 shifts a day, each of 2.5 hours duration having 4 lessons per day. Working children continue to work and earn while they attend school. These schools run 2 sessions a year, each of six months, with a target of 135 school days per session. Thus, a child can complete grade-VIII in 4.5 years including 6 months preparatory schooling.

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<sup>16</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of information of this section is 'Creating Miracles for the Working Children', by Zaman M.B. and Islam M.H., UCEP-Bangladesh, 2000.

UCEP's NFE follows NCTB curriculum in an abridged form. UCEP teachers are specially trained to be able to take up social work and they ensure that attendance is over 85% and annual dropout does not exceed 5 per cent. Irregular students are specially monitored. Moreover, child-centred teaching method and linkage with the community keeps it environmentally attractive (UCEP-Bangladesh, 1996: 60).

However, in the period of 1999-2000, a total of 20,425 students were enrolled. The attendance rate was 94.23 per cent and the dropout rate was only 3.94 per cent. These schools also achieved gender balance, as the male-female ratio was approximately 50:50 in 1999-2000. A total of 8,630 children graduated from both grades V and VIII in this year (UCEP-Bangladesh, 2000: 10)<sup>17</sup>.

In addition to these, a few other NGOs also run NFE programmes in urban areas for the underprivileged poor working children living in the slums, streets and other open places. The most mentionable among them are: (i) *Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM)*, (ii) *Association for Realization of Basic Needs (ARBAN)*, (iii) *Integrated Development Foundation (IDF)*, (iv) *Ghashful*, (v) *Jagorini Chakra (JC)*, (vi) *Nayan Action Foundation (NAF)* and (vii) *The Society for Underprivileged Families (SUF)*.

### **6.3.2. NGOs Involved in HTR, MOU and ARISE to Provide NFE:**

Besides their own NFE programmes, NGOs are also playing an important role, as partner of the GOB, the BGMEA, and the UN bodies to provide basic education to the urban street and working children. A total of 152 NGOs have been selected (as on February 2000) for HTR project<sup>18</sup>. Most of the NGOs have HTR centres in one city (mainly in Dhaka) or in two cities (e.g. in Dhaka and Chittagong). A very few national NGOs run this programme in 4 metro cities or in all 6 divisional cities (e.g. BRAC, Swanirvar, etc.). Some organizations have some past experience to operate HTR centres for urban working children. ARBAN, BACE, BRAC, DAM, GSS, Nijera Shikhi, PIACT, Proshika, Shoishab, SUF, Surovi, Swanirvar and UCEP are such organizations. These 13 selected organizations which have past experiences to run NFE centres for urban under-

<sup>17</sup> The interventions of UCEP-Bangladesh have been assessed in details as the 'case' of this study in chapters VIII and IX.

<sup>18</sup> HTR programme is implemented totally by the NGOs in 6 divisional cities of Bangladesh. However, this programme has been assessed elaborately in Chapter V.

privileged groups established 30 to 105 HTR centres in metro city areas in early 2000.

Under the tripartite MOU project of BGMEA, ILO and UNICEF<sup>19</sup>, NGOs are also playing a very important role to provide basic education to the removed garment factories' child workers as it is the main component of MOU. To this end, two major NGOs with an educational intervention background and experience – BRAC and GSS were given the responsibility to open schools, mainly in Dhaka and Chittagong to bring the ex-workers to school and they started this programme in 1996 with the cooperation of BGMEA, UNICEF and ILO. Upto March 2000, a total of 9,780 under-aged ex-garment workers were enrolled in 353 MOU schools of BRAC (256 schools) and GSS (97 schools) throughout the country (mainly in Dhaka and Chittagong city areas) (Sinha, A.R. 2000: 3).

NGOs are also involved in ARISE programme of GOB. Under the collaboration project between the Ministry of Social Welfare of GOB and UNDP, a total of 9 NGOs are involved to provide non-formal basic education to the street children of all 6 divisional cities of Bangladesh: 4 in Dhaka and 5 in other 5 divisional cities. Most of these NGOs are new-comers in the field of providing non-formal education among the street and working children.

#### ***6.4. Major NGO Interventions in Skill Training for Working Children in Four Metro Cities***

A small group of NGOs are involved in the service of technical and vocational skill training to the urban working children in Bangladesh in comparison with their service of formal/non-formal education.

Not more than 23 NGOs are presently working with skill training interventions in the four metro cities in Bangladesh. The majority of them do not have any regular programme. Again, an overwhelming majority of them are working in Dhaka. As Table 6.3 shows, out of 17 organizations, 14 (82.35%) are working in Dhaka alone and the rest 3, in 3 cities.

Skill training provided by NGOs for urban working children may be classified into three categories. The first category has skill training as a regular

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<sup>19</sup> The MOU Project is discussed and assessed elaborately in Chapter VII of this thesis.

programme. The second category is a new-comer in this field with a plan of intervening in skill training on a regular basis. For the third group, skill training is not a major programme component.

#### **6.4.1. Skill Training Programmes of NGOs under the First Category:**

##### **i) Aparajeyo-Bangladesh (AB):**

AB has vocational training (VT) both under its 'Slum Children' and 'Street Children's' programmes. According to the *AB Annual Reports* "considering the desperate needs of the children who otherwise would have no access to education or employment opportunities VT has been introduced in AB's programme during 1994 to provide skills in certain trades" (AB, 1999: 22).

Under the Slum Children's programme, AB has been providing skill training side by side imparting qualitative education to them. Children from Class IV upwards of the Slum Community-based Education Centres of AB are being offered training in small-scale Sewing/Tailoring and Embroidery. The instructors follow a generally accepted trade curriculum for each group of children selected for this training. Each session lasts for 3 hours everyday and the total course duration is 12 months. Provisions are made so that the children can also transfer their skills to family members and together they can increase their total family income (AB, 2001: 26).

Under the 'Street Children's Programme', AB has merged the skill training course with the existing education programme of Boys' and Girls' Club. Initially, two short courses were provided: Tailoring for girls and Bicycle and Rickshaw Repairing for boys. These facilities were opened only to the boys and girls attending the Clubs and Drop-in-Centres. During 1998, three more low-cost skill training courses, i.e. Block-batik, Tie-dye and Screen-printing were added to these two.

##### **ii) SUROVI:**

Surovi has been providing skill training with its educational programmes throughout the last two decades in Dhaka. At present (in mid-2001), there are 2 training courses of Surovi: Doll Making and Tailoring. Each of these two training courses has a duration of 6 months. In doll making, there are 50 students (25 boys and 25 girls) and in Tailoring there are 100 students (50 boys and 50 girls). The only

training centre of Surovi is situated in its head office which is at Dhanmondi, Dhaka. The average dropout rate is 4 per cent. However, upto mid-2001, Surovi trained about 600 street/working/slum children of Dhaka by its own programme. Besides this, under the MOU project, it provided skill training to a total of 200 ex-garment workers (children) funded by UNICEF. Surovi also trained 256 more working children by providing different short-term trade courses under the financial assistance of ILO/IPEC. On an average, 80 per cent of the beneficiaries of Surovi's skill training were girls.<sup>20</sup>

### iii) UCEP-Bangladesh <sup>21</sup>:

UCEP-Bangladesh is the pioneer in providing vocational skill training for underprivileged children in the urban sector since early 1980s. UCEP provides Vocational Education (VE) through its 3 Technical Schools (TSs) located one each in Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna cities. Besides, there are 5 para-trade training centres (PTTCs) which offer low-cost and short-duration training programmes, located 3: in Dhaka and one each in Chittagong and Rajshahi (as on June 2000).

UCEP's VE programme started in Dhaka in 1976 as a pilot project and in 1980 as a regular programme. Two other TSs started in Chittagong in 1992 and in Khulna in 1993 (Amanullah, M. 1998: 31). At present (as on June 2000), Dhaka TS has 7 units, running training programmes in 14 trades/vocations (e.g. Automobile, Welding and Fabrication, Electrical, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning etc. for boys and Electronics, Garments, etc. for girls). Chittagong TS runs 4 trades in 3 units and Khulna TS has 3 units delivering training in 5 trades. These TSs run 2 shifts per day, each of 3.5 hours duration, so that working children can continue in their jobs while they acquire skills in the Technical Schools (Zaman & Islam, 2000: 25). The course duration varied from 6 months to 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> years. However, the number of trainees in 3 TSs were 1,461 in 1999-2000 with a male-female ratio of 68:32. The attendance rate was almost 96 per cent while the dropout rate was only 2.88 per

<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, Surovi – which is working in this field for the last three decades – does not have any annual report, evaluation report or any other report/publication highlighting its activities. Therefore, the informations used in this section have been collected from the Surovi Head Office as provided by the project director Mr. M.A. Taher during visits to his office several times during 1999-2001.

<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of information of this section is, *Annual Report 1999-2000*, UCEP-Bangladesh, Dhaka.

cent. A total of 1,294 working children graduated from these 3 TSs of UCEP during this year.

Para-Trade training of UCEP, on the other hand, is an innovative cost-effective vocational intervention that allows working children to acquire basic skills in simple trades in a very short span of time i.e., 6 months (Zaman & Islam, *ibid*: 29). UCEP is the largest provider of skill training in Bangladesh and in recent years it has been providing vocational and skill training intervention to about 1,950 urban working children annually on an average<sup>22</sup>.

#### **6.4.2. Skill Training Programmes of NGOs under the Second Category:**

##### **i) Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM):**

DAM is the best example among the NGOs under the second category. From its long experience in non-formal educational programmes, DAM came to the realization that skill training is necessary with NFE to achieve a tangible improvement in the life situation and socio-economic status of working children – as well as of their families. DAM, therefore, makes provision for providing skill training or vocational education to its NFE beneficiaries.

The two projects ENWC and NBUC, are currently (since 1997 – *as cited by UNICEF-Dhaka, 1999*) being implemented for working children, and has specific components for vocational education or skill training. Accordingly, after receiving NFE the 900 beneficiaries of the WNWC project are being imparted vocational training (VT) in five trades, namely Tailoring, Needle work, Carpentry, Repair of Rickshaws/Vans and Repair of Motor Cycles as started from the beginning of year 2000. Similarly, under the NBUC project the urban poor children are also being offered VT in the fields of their choice.

Recently, the idea of establishment of a Vocational Training Institute for Working Children (VTIWC) in Dhaka has been proposed by DAM to provide skill training to the working children to continue work at their workplaces and simultaneously improve their skills in the fields of their choices. This Institute started in January 2001 with the initial assistance from UNESCO. According to the

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<sup>22</sup> Chapter VIII & IX of this study also discussed and assessed the Vocational and Skill Training Programme of UCEP.

Director's report of the VTIWC of DAM, "Seven Basic Trade Courses and 15 Para-Trade Courses are being offered in the Institute. The duration of the Basic Trade Course is 6 months with 360 contact hours and that for the Para-Trade Course is 3 months with 180 contact hours...." (DAM, 2000: 2).

**ii) Jagorini Chakra (JC):**

JC is trying to establish its training component in a regular basis. This training programme started in the mid-1990s in the slum areas of Mohammadpur in Dhaka. In 1997-98, 120 children received skill training in Signboard/Banner writing (for boys) and Tailoring (for girls). As in early 2000, 120 more children were continuing this skill training course.

**iii) National Development Organization (NDO):**

NDO is another national organization working in Dhaka to provide skill training for working children with NF education. NDO has a training institute with the skill training facilities on Embroidery Works, Sewing, Lather Goods Making, Typing etc. This intervention supported by ILO/IPEC started in the second half of the 1990s. In the year 1999-2000, it covered a total of 40 working children (25 girls and 15 boys) [ILO/IPEC-Dhaka, 1999: 12 & DAM, 1999a: 37].

**iv) Society for Underprivileged Families (SUF):**

SUF is another such organization. Following the UCEP-model, it is providing vocational training in different trades with non-formal education upto grade VIII to the working children of 14 slums of Mogbazar thana in Dhaka. The trades of training are: Tailoring (60 seats), Sewing (20 seats) and Electronics (20 seats). Every course has duration of 6 months. A total of 200 working children has so far received vocational and skill training annually from SUF (SUF Brochure and the data supplied by Mr. Zamal Uddin, the project Director of SUF, in March 2000).

**6.4.3. Skill Training Programmes of NGOs under the Third Category<sup>23</sup> :**

Most of these NGOs in the third category run their skill training programmes in urban areas without any regular programme commitment but only based on any short package programme funded by ILO/IPEC or other national or

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<sup>23</sup> Unless otherwise mentioned, the source of information of this section is the *Directory of Services to Working Children*, *ibid*, by DAM (1999) and the *DPC's related Study Report (1999)*, *ibid*.

international donor agencies. Moreover, instruments, instructors and infrastructure to run skill training programmes are also not available in these organizations (as on December 2000) and hence, their service of skill training is quite unsatisfactory. Some mentionable NGOs of this category are: (i) *ARBAN*, (ii) *Azad Muslim Welfare Complex*, (iii) *Bangladesh Association for Community Education (BACE)*, (iv) 'Centre for Rehabilitation, Education, and Earning Development (CREED)', (v) 'Karukhatba', (vi) 'Progressive Assistance for Social Service (PASS)', and (vii) 'Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha' (TMSS) in Dhaka; (viii) *Ghashful (MCH, FP and FW Association)*, and (ix) *Integrated Development Foundation (IDF)* in Chittagong; (x) *Banophul* in Khulna and (xi) *Association of Community Development (ACD)* in Rajshahi. Tailoring and Embroidery works (mainly for girls) are the two common trades in these organizations. In case of boys, carpentry and light electrical works are the common trades. Most of the trades are short courses having duration of 3 to 6 months.

Some other NGOs in recent days are also providing short-term vocational/technical skill training towards street children mainly in four Metropolitan cities under ARISE project viz. AB, PMUK, PSTC, and SPK in Dhaka, Jogajog in Chittagong, ACLAB in Khulna and ACD in Rajshahi. They are offering skill training in Screen-printing, Sewing, Embroidery, Rickshaw repairing, Candle making, Book binding, Carpentry etc. (DSS, 2001b).

### **6.5. Networking and Collaboration of NGOs for Urban Working Children**

The networking and collaboration relations of several national and local NGOs may be categorized in 4 different levels: a) NGO-GOB collaboration; b) NGO-NGO collaboration; c) NGO-INGO, Donor and UN Bodies' collaboration, and d) NGO-Business Association and Civil Society collaboration. In the fields of NFE and skill training for the urban working children, NGOs are developing their networking relationship with those groups to achieve the following major goals:

- (a) Sharing of experience, model, strategies, etc.;
- (b) Quality control and standardization of services;
- (c) Policy advocacy and lobbying with GOB and other donors;
- (d) Better coordination and cooperation among similar service providers;
- (e) Institutional capacity building to intervene in this field;
- (f) Logistic support and sharing of costs; and,
- (g) Sustainability (of organizations and programmes); etc.

### 6.5.1. Networking and Collaboration in NFE Interventions of NGOs:

The Government of Bangladesh has attached utmost importance to the educational sector and identified it as the priority issue of the country's development. At present, DNFE of GOB has 4 NFE programmes covering urban and rural areas throughout the country both for children/adolescents and adults. All these 4 projects are being implemented by NGOs. However, Project-3 of DNFE (i.e. HTR project) is also implementing by more than 150 NGO partners in 6 divisional headquarters<sup>24</sup>. NGOs are totally responsible for implementation of this project. Big NGOs like BRAC, GSS, Proshika and the UCEP have been contributing in this programme even at the levels of policy making, project planning, curriculum development, experience sharing, teacher's training, project monitoring and evaluation etc. However, HTR project is the best example of NGO-GOB networking/collaboration. NGOs are also involved in the ARISE project of GOB and thus, as BRAC observed, "...the relationship between BRAC (*and other NGOs involved in primary education – author*) and the Government of Bangladesh has undergone a fundamental and qualitative change in the past five years" (BRAC, 1999: 46).

NGO-NGO networking and collaboration relationship is also seen to be strong in the recent years specially in the field of NFE service. Bigger NGOs like BRAC and Proshika are supporting smaller NGOs in their development efforts including NFE service for the urban children, with support from donor agencies. In the field of NFE in urban areas (as well as rural areas), "the major (bigger) NGOs do keep track of each other's work and innovations and there is considerable sharing and copying of experience, techniques and materials" (BRAC, 1998: 50). To this end, BRAC began the Education Support Programme (ESP) in 1991. As of April 1999, ESP had extended support to 381 NGOs for 8113 NFPE schools (both in rural and urban areas). In addition to technical support, BRAC also provides financial support to around 300 NGOs (BRAC, 1999: 41). However, BRAC has established networking relationship with other big NGOs by different activities, e.g. by purchasing magazines and story books produced by GSS, FIVDB, CAMPE,

<sup>24</sup> Already discussed in Section 6.3.2 in this Chapter.

DAM etc. for its continuing education programme, and by selling its story books, magazines and text books for the other NGO's schools (BRAC, *ibid*: 43).

Campaign for Education (CAMPE) is another unique example of coordination of NFE initiatives. The cooperation of CANPE has been inspired in part by the need, and by the models developed by BRAC, GSS and other NGOs (BRAC, *ibid*: 43). BSAF and ADAB, two other apex bodies of NGOs, are also playing an important role to make communication, networking and collaboration efforts among the NFE provider NGOs in urban (as well as rural) Bangladesh.

UCEP, in recent years, has developed a strong networking relationship with several NGOs in an organized way. In the year 1999-2000, UCEP continues its linkage and networking relationship with other NGOs like BRAC, Proshika, GSS, Concern, Surovi, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, ASK, Nari Motitree, CAMPE, etc. in the form of model presentations, meetings, curriculum-related issues, possibilities of students admission, visits to each other programme activities etc. in the field of NFPE especially in the urban areas (UCEP-Bangladesh, 2000: 22).

Almost all of these NGOs have collaboration relationship to some extent with UN bodies, INGOs and donors as they are the main source of funds for child labour-related services. For example, in the HTR project, NGOs are collaborating with GOB, UNICEF and other donors. NGOs are also related with ILO/IPEC and UNDP in MOU project and in ARISE project respectively. NGOs like UCEP, NAF, Shoishab, NDO, IDF etc. were also supported by ILO/IPEC (as in 1998-99) in terms of providing NFPE to the urban working children (ILO/IPEC, Dhaka, 1999: 8-14). However, NGOs have the working relations with other INGOs and donors like World Vission, CIDA (Canada), SDC (Swiss), Tdh (Switzerland), Tdh (Laussane and Italy), NOVIB, etc. in terms of providing NFE and skill training for urban working children. NGOs have also established networking and collaborative relationship with business organizations e.g. with BGMEA in MOU project, community members and the civil society.

### **6.5.2. Networking and Collaboration in Skill Training Interventions of NGOs:**

In case of skill training, the networking relationship is not as strong as it is in NFE interventions. Organizations like AB, DAM, and UCEP etc. are providing

skill training for urban working children basically with the financial support of several INGOs and international donor agencies and countries. Bigger NGOs in this field e.g. UCEP, Surovi etc. are involved in NGO-NGO and NGO-GOB relations in different ways. UCEP allows some other NGOs' (e.g. BRAC, DAM, AB, ASK etc.) NFE graduates in its vocational and technical training programmes. In a collaboration with BRAC, by December 1999, UCEP and Surovi provided a total of 646 (with a completion of 517) MOU students (the ex-garment workers) in their skill training programme (BRAC-MIS Report, 1999, unpublished). In this way UCEP and Surovi also made the relationship with BGMEA and UNICEF. Under an agreement between UCEP and UNICEF on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1999, 900 children of MOU project were enrolled in the regular technical training course in UCEP-who had graduated from BRAC and GSS's special NFPE schools (BGMEA, 1999: 8).

UCEP and some other local organizations have a continuing relationship with ILO/IPEC in terms of providing skill training to urban working children. The first Para-trade Training Centre of UCEP was also started with the collaboration of ILO/IPEC. UCEP developed another collaboration in skill training for the poor urban children with different industries in Dhaka and Chittagong by its 'on-the-job training (OJT)' programme. However, the other organizations e.g. AB, DAM, also have plans and provisions for interlinking and collaboration with other NGOs and UN bodies as well as GOB by their skill training services for urban working children. However, NGOs like AB, PSTC, SPK, Jogajog, ACD, etc. are also collaborating with GOB and UNDP for providing skill training for urban street children under the ARISE project.

### ***6.6. Constraints, Weaknesses and Limitations of NGO Interventions***

In terms of providing NFE and skill training interventions to the urban working children in Bangladesh, NGOs however, are not free from constraints, weaknesses and limitations that may be summarized as follows:

(a) Some NGOs have their own organizational and managerial problems. They do not prefer formal organizational structures, efficient management system and professionalism, which is essential for effective child right programmes. This resulted in very poor performances. On the other hand, the resources of a few large

NGOs are getting concentrated into the hands of small NGOs who are fast acquiring the corporate character. Moreover, these NGOs are taking over some functions as partners of the government rather than creating moral pressure on the government to perform better. Many of the “NGOs are not yet putting themselves under a more transparent and rigorous auditing and accounting system. (Rahman, A. 1999: 38-42). Many of them became contractors rather than real service providers.

(b) A dis-coordinated, inadequate and defective service system specially in education and skill training services is another major limitation of the NGOs – especially for the small and local NGOs:

- A wide heterogeneity in the age-structure of their clients combined into one group is a problem (UCEP, 1996: 24). In many NGOs, “the intake in NFE centres is based on whoever is available is taken in” (Haque S. 1996: 45).
- Lack of uniformity in curriculum design and contents of learning materials in the different NGOs is another limitation. As Professor Shamsul Haque studied, “there is no unity or uniformity in the standard of materials. Besides, most materials are oriented to rural setting and urban slum dwellers find no interest in them...” (Haque, S. *ibid*: 45).
- Absence of equivalence of standards of learners’ achievements and grades is another limitation (UCEP, 1996: 24).
- “Use of different materials by different NGOs pose another peculiar problem: when a family moves from one location to another, the clients are not admitted into the NFE centre at the latter location because the NFE programme there, if any, uses a separate set of materials” (Haque, S. *ibid*: 46).
- NGOs offering only NFP education in traditional ways, which is the most common case, do not attract parents or children, because the latter do not see any visible gain from acquisition of literacy. (Haque, S. *ibid*: 46).
- There is absence of coordination among NGOs in the delivery of their services (UCEP, *ibid*: 24)
- As M.A. Rahman stated, many of the small NGOs do not seem to have adequate professional manpower and social work based follow-up or home visit system for an effective child labour programme (Rahman, M.A. 1998: 73).

(c) Many other problems lie with the hardcore poverty as well as social prejudice . These can be summarized as follows (Mia, A. 1995: 31-35 & ILO/IPEC, 1998: 20):

- Poverty-related problems have a negative influence on children's education (in enrollment, performance, attendance etc.);
- Because of extreme poverty, parents put priority on immediate gain rather than spending for the children's education (specially for the girl and older children);
- Parental migration from one project area to another is often caused by demolition of slums by the Government and lack of employment in the existing area;
- Children taking full-time employment find schooling difficult due to lack of minimum time for schooling. Employers are also not very keen in this regard;
- High prejudice and discrimination against child workers in the neighbourhoods;
- The negative social attitude against female education. In many cases the poor parents want to get rid of some family burden through early marriage of their daughters;
- Difficulty of working with parents who are too busy earning a living;
- Lack of a strong social structure in the slum communities, etc.

(d) Most Bangladeshi NGOs depend on foreign donors for most of their funding requirements. This of course has the potential for creating relations of dependence (Hashemi S. as cited by Rahman H. 1999: 41). Big NGOs have no problem in finding multiple donors. In contrast, small NGOs face problems in finding their donors – so they have the problem of funding (Zaman, M.H. 1999: 69).

(e) Lack of adequate research for planning effective programmes and for evaluation of the existing programmes is another constraint. Many NGOs, even some of the big ones (e.g. Surovi), do not have such research activity or any documentation of their service.

(f) Lack of commitment and proper coordination is another problem specially for the small NGOs. On the one hand, in some areas, programmes are being overlapped by different NGOs, on the other hand, some areas are not being covered by them at all.

(g) Lack of integration among different programmes and programme components for working children is the other problem. (DSS & UNDP, 1999C:26).

(h) Lack of adequate trained manpower and also of the special type of training facilities is the other common problem for NGOs. (See DNFE & UNICEF – Bangladesh, 2000a in chapter 7).

(i) The main limitation of the NGOs is that they are trying to solve the problem of child labour in a piece-meal manner which can not solve the problem permanently – a holistic approach is necessary.

However, in spite of these limitations, it can be concluded that most of the NGOs are successful to some extent in offering child workers a new lease of life by providing them with non-formal basic education, technical/vocational skills and career options. Even those children who continue to work are likely to get better jobs with better pay and experience, less exploitation and hazards. These children can concentrate on studying and regain their lost childhood by being away from the world of work, at least for as long as they stay in NGO schools. By these, “either from the human resources development point of view, the economic point of view, or the ethical point of view, the action programmes and what the children get out of them are well worth...although some improvements could increase and enhance the benefits for the participating children and their families.” (ILO/IPEC, 1998:21).