

Reasons behind Dropping out of Slum Children from Non-formal School in Dhaka

Marzia Khatan Smita ¹, Md. Fajlay Rabbi ², Shoeab Mohammad ³

¹ University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

² Khulna University, Bangladesh

³ Torrens University, Australia

Corresponding Author: Md. Fajlay Rabbi, ✉ ranjanrabbi@ku.ac.bd

ABSTRACT

In South Asia, numerous slum children were deprived of education upon several socio-economic grounds, and many children still dropout of non-formal schools despite receiving free non-formal education. This study aims to explore the reasons for dropping out of non-formal schools and the socio-demographic situation of slum children in Dhaka City. Fifty non-formal dropout slum children were selected conveniently as participants employing a mixed research design. A semi-structured schedule of questionnaire and interview was used as instruments for collecting data. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected simultaneously to explore the slum children's dropout situation. Twelve reasons of their dropout have been reported. In addition to explaining the reasons for their dropping out, two frameworks were presented in detail. Most slum non-formal students dropped out of their schools for the pulling out factors and reasons related to household. Recommendations for reducing slum children's school dropout and persuasive strategies for future work in this field have been addressed.

Keywords: *Non-formal School, Dropout, Slum Children, Non-formal Education.*

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INTRODUCTION

The comprehensive development of a country remarkably influenced by accessing quality basic education to all the folks of that country, which lies at the heart of development. Bangladesh has made significant achievements in ensuring access to basic in the past two decades. In 2018, the country's net enrollment rate at the primary school level reached above 98 percent. However, around 18 percent of children ages 6-11 remain out of school - either having never enrolled or dropped out before completing grade 5 (World Bank, 2019). Although the number of school dropouts in Bangladesh is decreasing steadily at the primary level, it is seen that the dropout rate of girls is 18% and that of boys is 23.90% which is still high (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Dropout rate of Dhaka district is 15.1% where male and female dropout rate is respectively 16.9% and 13.4%, shows that male dropout rate is higher than female (BANBEIS & Ministry of Education, 2017; BBS, 2015).

As such, Bangladesh is a populous country, and it is crucial to provide quality education to all the people. Furthermore, the urban population of this country is rising fast, and Dhaka city, the capital of this country about 47,400 people are living on each square kilometre, hosting 17.4 million on its land and the rise in density is 3.72% up from a year ago (Demographia World Urban Areas, 2018; Mousumi, M. A., & Kusakabe, T. (2020)). With such a large population, housing problems are seen to be as noticeably as many poor people want a little space for their livelihood and they start living in slums. The number of slum in slum census 2014 Dhaka (North) City Corporation was 1639 (11.76%). In Dhaka (South) City Corporation it was 1755 (12.59%), and in Slum census 1997 it was 1579 (52.79%) slums in Dhaka City Corporation (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015). In this city, all slums are not common in their features. There is a scarcity of elementary requirements of life like accommodation, employment, health, sanitation and hygiene, drinking water, education facilities, etc (Afsana & Wahid, 2013; Marcil et al., 2016; Siddique, 2017).

Many strides have been made to educate the slum dwellers, and different types of schools have been set up since the education system of Bangladesh is comprised of a mix of heterogeneous providers. Most common are government schools, registered non-government schools, privately operated but largely government-funded, NGO schools, kindergartens, fully private fee-charging pre-primary and primary schools, madrasas, community, experimental and satellite schools (Cameron, 2010; Icdrr, 2016). The reports that 26 percent of slums in Dhaka have at least a government school, and 27 percent have an NGO operated school. Like most of the national data generation methods, NGO schools and kindergartens are neglected when measuring the initial net enrollment rate in slums, as this reduces net enrollment rates (Cameron, 2010).

A report says 54.5 percent boys and 60.9 percent girls, aged between 6 and 10, go to school from the slums in Dhaka City. Even so, only 2.8 percent of slum children go to school when they reach the school age. The report also reveals an alarming figure that 62.9 percent slum children work more than eight hours a day (UNICEF, 2014). Children in slum areas are the most deprived of education in the city and the dropout rate is also high here. For various reasons, it has become difficult for this target group to participate in formal education. Thus, several NGOs are providing basic skills and education to support these disadvantaged slum children through non-formal approach collaboratively with the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) under Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME).

Non-formal education is a purposeful and systematically organized form of learning that generally occurs outside the formal educational institutions. It is designed to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons of different ages and backgrounds, flexible in terms of organization, time and place may cover basic and continuing education programs to impart basic literacy, including life skills, work skills, general culture and facilitates lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction. It ensures equity in access and human resource development; it may or may not follow a "ladder" system and may be of varying duration (NFE Policy, 2006). Non-formal Education (NFE) is considered as the process of empowerment that contributes to poverty reduction and balancing in demographic features of the country. It has been proved from many instances that NFE plays a vital role in improving the lives of millions of people with enhanced ability to create better health, more income and to tap potential resources from home and abroad. Even after providing many necessary facilities, it is seen that many children dropout from Non-

formal schools. The research objectives of this study are to find out children and their family's socio-demographic backgrounds and family environment of children belonging to slum areas. To explore the reasons of dropout from the Non-formal school of slum children in Urban Dhaka

Many scholars have developed a variety of frameworks to find out and illustrate the reasons of dropout from school. In this study, researchers have tried to explain reasons of dropout from non-formal schools through two frameworks. [Jordan et al. \(1994\)](#) created a framework, introduced two issues such as - Pushed out and Pulled out factors of school. However, the pulled out is the fact that students suffer from some unfavourable situations of their own that pull them out of school so they can no longer finish their school. [Watt & Rossingh \(1994\)](#) added another factor to this framework termed as Falling out. The falling out issue is when students do not partake significantly in the academic activities of the school do not show any progress without any visible effect of Push and Pull factors ([Finn, 1989](#); [Finn & Pannozzo, 1995](#)). The core differences between push, pull and falling out factors are usually related to "agency"-like system. The agent of Push factors is the school, which consequences in a student being evacuated from school and the agent of Pull factor is the student himself, as a result of which any allure or interference drives them away from the school. In due course, neither the student nor the school is an agent of falling out. Eventually, this creates an environment where neither the school nor the student receives any redirection in a dropout case and, as a result, the student's connection to the school progressively reduces ([Doll et al., 2013](#)). Furthermore, by following the framework of [Gauda M. & Sekhar \(2014\)](#). this study also attempted to sort the reasons of dropout from non-formal schools are into three more categories - Reasons related to respondent, Reasons related to household, School related reasons.

Non-formal education is now a very crucial issue in Bangladesh to deliver equal opportunities in education for disadvantaged and excluded slum children ([Paudel, n.d.](#)). Access to education is one of the basic and widely recognized human rights ([Mohajan, 2014](#)). Literacy and Basic education is now available in a non-formal settings for those who do not pursue or deprived of formal education ([Sabur, 2007](#)). Despite the fact that non-formal education is entirely free, many children can no longer achieve this level of education for different reasons. It is staunchly significant to ensure the life skills and quality basic education of every slum children to build an impeccable developed Bangladesh and eventually it is imperative therefore to investigate the reasons of dropout from non-formal schools. No previous work was found about non-formal dropout in Bangladesh. Even government-private research and data on the dropout of slum children were taken only for formal education, but no information was found on non-formal school dropouts. This study will add a new dimension to the field of non-formal education in Bangladesh. To reduce the dropout rate, we need to visualize all those obstacles revealed in the study and move forward immediately so that the government and non-formal education providers can consider the issues and move forward to avert these dropouts as well as bring a golden future and enviable posterity.

METHODS

An Exploratory mixed research design was employed to explore the present situation, reasons of dropping out from non-formal schools for this study, and the underlying principle is to provide a clearer understanding about the research problem and the dilemma than any approach itself, combining with both qualitative and

quantitative methods (Creswell, 2014). All dropout students from non-formal schools in those slum areas were the population of the study. Based on convenient sampling technique, fifty dropout students of non-formal education from four slum areas (Khilgaon, Malibag, Moghbazar and Tejgaon) of Dhaka City in Bangladesh were chosen as sample. The researchers collected data from primary sources, quantitative data through a survey by semi-structured questionnaire and qualitative data through personal interviews based on semi-structured interview protocol, also aim at precision and contain definite subject matter areas, coverage of which is required during the interview. The objective is to give the respondent a maximum opportunity to reveal his world of experience (Young, 2003).

Subject of this research was 50 slum children who have been dropped out of non-formal school. During the interview, they were asked about their socio-demographic status and the reason for dropping out of school. In some cases, the researchers also spoke to their families. Several open and closed ended questions were asked to the participants by face to face in their home place and work place, and each interview lasted for forty to sixty minutes. Audios of interviews were recorded over an android phone while conducting, and three researchers later transcribed and coded the data.

In analysing the data this research was conducted by making field visit on spot during the period December 2018 until June 2019 and intended to investigate the reasons for dropping out from the non-formal school of slum children in Dhaka City. It provides details on the non-formal education scenario of the slum area. The technique of interview transcription was undertaken to record every interview session. That transcript was read by coders and themes were labelled separately. To diagnose and explain issues, inductive and deductive approaches have been used. All data are presented and thematically addressed to better understand. Themes are identical codes collated together to establish a key aspect in the dataset, showing an essential item of qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2014). The researchers used frequency and percentage only to explain the problem in the form of descriptive analysis. Microsoft Excel and SPSS were used for the study of quantitative data. The main findings of the data are presented in the subsequent sections.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 gives an idea about respondents' age limit, where the researchers had found 8% from 8-9 years, 22% from 10-11 years, 28% from 12-13 years, 24% from 14-15% and 18% from 16-17 years. This table displays that the age group 12 to 13 years has the highest frequency (14) in the sample and the mean of the age distribution is 12.96 that also remains between 12 to 13 years.

Table 1. Age of the participants

Age (in years)	Frequency	% of the Participants
8-9	4	8
10-11	11	22
12-13	14	28
14-15	12	24
16-17	9	18
Total	50	100

Minimum: 8 Maximum: 17 Mean: 12.96 SD: 2.44

Sex:

Table 2 shows that the frequency of male participants was higher than female respondents from the total selected sample the percentage of male and female respondents was 60% and 38% respectively. Again the researchers had found 2% of eunuch respondents from the selected sample.

Table 2. Sex of the participants

Sex	Frequency	% of the Participants
Male	30	60
Female	19	38
Eunuch	1	2
Total	50	100

Marital status:

Table 3 shows that among the participants 44% were single, 6% married, 2% widowed, 4% separated and /or deserted by their respective husband.

Table 3. Marital Status of participants

Marital status	Frequency	% of the Participants
Single	44	88
Married	3	6
Widow	1	2
Separated	2	4
Total	50	100

Living Style:

Table 4 shows, 56% of participants lived with both of their parents. Yet again, 28% of participants lived only with their mothers because most fathers were separated by marrying elsewhere, and only a few participants' fathers had died. Of the 10% participants, some lived with other relatives (in-laws, grandparents etc.). Besides, 4% of the participants lived alone on the roads and railways around the slums or spent the night in the shops where they worked.

Table 4. Living style of the participants

Living with	Frequency	% of the Participants
Both parents	28	56
Father only	1	2
Mother only	14	28
Alone	2	4
Relatives	5	10
Total	50	100

Number of the family members:

Table 5 shows that households with the highest number of family members had more top dropout cases, as in this study, it is clear that 54% and 16% of participants

had 5-6; 7 and above family members consistently.

Table 5. Number of the family members of the participants

Number of family members	Frequency	% of the Respondents
<3	4	8
3-4	11	22
5-6	27	54
>=7	8	16
Total	50	100

Last academic performance:

From Table 6, it is found that 22% of dropout participants failed their final academic exam. The majority of dropout participants passed their final exam, with 42% of participants passing their final academic exam. Another thing to note is that 36% of the participants participated in the class activities throughout the year but did not take part in their last academic examination and this scene is most visible in the fifth grade.

Table 6. Last academic performance of the participants according to Grade/class

Academic performance	Pre-primary	1 st grade	2 nd grade	3 rd grade	4 th grade	5 th grade	Total	% of the Participants
Passed	2	3	5	4	7		21	42
Failed	0	0	1	1	5	4	11	22
Did not appear in Examination	0	0	3	1	4	10	18	36
Total							50	100

Monthly income of Family:

Table 7 shows that the highest monthly income of the participants' family was above 6000-8000 bdt. The table shows that 40% of the participants had a monthly income of bdt above 6000-8000, 28% of participants had above 3000-6000 bdt, 12% of participants had bellow 1000-3000 and above 8000-10000 separately, 2% of participants had above 10000 bdt and 6% of participants had no family income.

Table 7. Monthly income of participants' Family

Monthly Income	Frequency	% of the Participants
Bellow 1000-3000	6	12
Above 3000-6000	14	28
Above 6000-8000	20	40
Above 8000-10000	6	12
Above 10000	1	2
No income	3	6
Total	50	100

Health Status:

It can be easily explained by looking at Table 8 below that the physical condition of most slum dropout participants was not good. 80% of participants were not in good health condition and 26% of participants are almost always sick. The

reasons for this miserable state of health in slum areas were malnutrition, lack of hygiene, lack of safe clean water and above all lack of health awareness. Meanwhile, only 12% of participants were soundly healthy.

Table 8. Health status of the participants

Health Status	Frequency	% of the Participants
Healthy	6	12
Not healthy	30	60
Sick	14	28
Total	50	100

Disability status:

Table 9 explains that the researchers found 10% of participants with disabilities who had once dropped out of non-formal school. None of them was congenitally disabled, but since the samplers all lived in the slums around the railway line, children were often involved in train accidents and became disabled.

Table 9. Disability status of the participants

Disability	Frequency	% of the Participants
Disable	5	10
Able	45	90
Total	50	100

Desire to study:

Table 12 shows that at the time of the interview, 64% of the respondents said that they were interested in studying and would go back to school if given a chance. Here it is seen that 10% of the participants did not want to continue their studies, and 8% of the participants did not know what they wanted.

Table 12. Desire to study of the participants

Desire to study	Frequency	% of the Participants
Yes	37	74
No	10	20
Don't know	3	6
Total	50	100

From the interview analysis, 12 reasons of dropout from non-formal school of slum children were revealed and as follows:

Outdoor work for payment:

Most of the poor slum children were forced to dropout of school in need of money. In the pursuit of survival, they engaged in various child labour and work outdoor in exchange for money. Several participants said that they had to go outside for income-earning so that they can help their families, and could not continue the class and work at the same time. One of the participants said,

"I used to go to an NGO school but I dropped out because my father is sick, which is why I have to work. I want to go to school, but we have no money to feed my family, so I have no choice but to work." (P₁₀)

A teacher of Shishu Neer Bangladesh, a non-formal school, said, "About 20% of

our students drop out because most of them have to quit their education to help their families. They are very poor and have no choice but to work for their survival."

Household work:

Many dropout from non-formal school because of doing some household works such as looking after their family members (grandparents, parents or siblings) and have to assist in the household chores. One of the participants mentioned,

"I am the eldest child in the family. My father drives a rickshaw all day in this city and my mother works as a housemaid. She comes that evening. I have no one to look after my two younger siblings. Who will see these little siblings when I go to school...tell me?" (P₃₉)

Marriage:

Even though child marriages have been illegal in Bangladesh, adolescent female respondents got married willingly or unwillingly before their legitimate minimum age 18 years, that's why they dropped out of school. A participant stated,

"I have to get married sooner or later ... No, no... no one forced me to get married. I wanted to marry myself. I don't have a father. Mother alone looks after such a big family. No one wants to marry a fatherless girl. So I got married when a good proposal came." (P₃₅)

Pregnancy:

The interview revealed that some of the respondents became teen young mother and dropped out of school to take care of their children. A participant stated,

"I got married at a very young age. My husband used to work in another city then. I lived with my parents and went to school every day. I became pregnant before I understood the world. I was younger than that, and I didn't want to go to school again with a baby in my womb." (P₇)

Repeated failure/ Poor grades:

Respondents failed the same grade frequently and got very low grades. Later gradually, they become dropouts. One of the participants said,

"Not that I'm not good at studying. Even though I went to school every day, people used to quarrel or listen to songs loudly in our houses and slums all day long. Even in the vicinity of the school that I had next to the railway line, people were shouting and screaming. There was no studying environment at all. I could not study in such a noisy place. So I used to fail again and again." (P₁₃)

Teasing and bullying:

However, the slum surroundings were dangerous due to the presence of many bullies and bad gangs, several women and transgender respondents were often teased and bullied by the students at school, so it was seen that at some point they dropped out of school. One of the participants stated,

"Everyone used to laugh and abuse me as a transgender person. No one even wanted to sit next to me in class. I was humiliated, so I left school." (P₄₄)

Lack of proper facilities at school:

Due to lack of adequate investment, it was not possible to provide an appropriate environment in many non-formal schools. Female participants in particular, suffered from this problem, as there were no separate female bathrooms, no separate seating for girls, and the classes had to be very crowded; so dropped out of schools. One participant said,

"A lot of students used to study at our school. In a small room, all the boys and girls had to sit together in a huddle. There was no toilet. I urinated a few times, but my clothes got wet one day as there was no toilet. I haven't been to school since." (P₁₈).

Disability:

Many students with disabilities dropped out of school because they were not given any facilities in school and it was challenging to go from home to school. One of the participants stated,

"I was playing with friends on the side of the railway when suddenly I fainted. I woke up and saw that I was lying in a hospital. At that time I did not realize that my legs were gone. A few days later, I found out that I had lost my leg after being hit by a train. I lost my legs as well as my mental condition was not good. Then I could not go to school anymore." (P₄₁)

Disinterest in studies:

Few Respondents felt that they no longer need to study to survive, but that studying was a waste of time. Many became addicted to drugs, got involved in bullies, formed gangs and lost interest in the study. One of the participants stated,

"I wanted to be a cricketer. So I had no desire to study. Does it take education to be a player? I used to play all day." (P₃)

Seeking a free life:

Slum boys and girls grow up in families or societies in such a way that they do not like the organized environment of the school, they always want a free life where there will be no hard and fast rules. One of the respondents mentioned,

"It was very annoying to wake up at the same time every day and sit in the same place with the same people and take classes. My breath would get stuck. I just like to sleep and walk around in the open place." (P₄₇)

Parent's disallowance:

Most of the parents in the slum areas had not studied much or were illiterate. So they did not understand the significance and need for education. Many did not want to send girls to school for the sake of religion. They thought it would be a sin for girls to go to school. Many participants themselves did not know why their parents would not let them go to school. One of the participants mentioned,

"My father used to scold me whenever I went to school. My father was very religious. He told me girls don't need to study." (P₂₄)

Sickness/illness:

From the analysis of the socio demographic situation in the slum area revealed that most of the slum dwellers did not comply with the hygiene rules. As a result, they often had fever, cold, cough, diarrhea and various other ailments. For various reasons, they did not receive adequate medical care or were deprived. As a result of this frequent illness, students could no longer continue school. One participant revealed,

"I had a fever for several days and my body was always very weak. I couldn't attend regular classes or even exams. So one day I stopped going to school." (P₂₀)

Table 13 shows the twelve dropout causes, according to sex and some categories. In this study, eight pull factors (Outdoor work for payment, Household work, Marriage, Pregnancy, Disability, Parent's disallowance, Sickness/illness) were detected and played the most substantial role in dropping out from non-formal school. The above table shows, 47% of male respondents and 17% of female participants had to go outside for income-earning. Most of the female participants 22% drop out of non-formal school because of doing some household works. 17% of adolescent female participants got married, 6% of female participants became teen young mother that's why they dropped out of school. 6%, 4%, and 2% of participants dropped out due to Disability, Parent's disallowance, Sickness/Illness of the participants respectively.

The study shows three push factors (Repeated failure and poor grades,

Teasing and bullying, Lack of proper facilities at schools). 10% male participants and 6% of female participants failed the same grade frequently and got very low grades. Later gradually they become dropouts. 6% Female participants in particular, dropped out because of lack of proper facilities at school.

Another finding is falling out factors (Disinterest in studies, Seeking a free life) played a less noteworthy role than the other two categories. 10% of male participants and 11% of female participants had no interest in the study. 7% of male participants wanted a free life.

Table13. Main reasons of non-formal dropout by sex of participants

Type	Reason	Male	Female	Eunuch	Total
Reason related to participants					
Fall	Disinterested in studies	10%	11%		10%
Push	Repeated failure/ Poor grades	10%	6%		8%
Pull	Marriage	3%	17%		8%
Pull	Disability	7%	6%		6%
Fall	Seeking a free life	7%	0%		4%
Pull	Pregnancy	0%	6%		2%
Pull	Sickness / illness	3%	0%		2%
Reason related to household					
Pull	Outdoor work for payment	47%	17%		34%
Pull	Household work	10%	22%		14%
Pull	Parent's disallowance	3%	6%		4%
Reason related to school					
Push	Teasing and bullying	0%	11%	100%	4%
Push	Lack of proper facilities at school	0%	6%		2%
Sample size		30	19	1	50

From Table 14 it is visible that of all the participants, male and female together account for 70% of the total dropped out due to the pull factors. The study then found that 17% and 10% of male participants dropped out due to falling out and pushed out factors respectively; 21 % and 11% of female respondents dropped out due to pushed out and falling out factors orderly.

Table 14. Dropouts by reasons categorized as three factors and sex of participants

Reasons	Male	Female	Eunuch	Total
Pulled out	73%	68%		70%
Pushed out	10%	21%	100%	16%
Falling out	17%	11%		14%
Sample size	30	19	1	50

Furthermore, this study also made an attempt to sort the reasons of dropout from non-formal school are into three more categories which is framed below at Table 15. Reasons related to respondent (Disinterested in studies, Repeated failure and poor grades, Marriage, Pregnant, Seeking a free life, Sickness/ Illness, Disability), reasons related to household (Household work, Outdoor work for payment, Parent's disallowance), school related reasons (Teasing and bullying, Lack of proper school facilities) in schools especially for female.

Table 15. Dropouts by reasons categorized as three groups and sex of participants

Reasons	Female	Male	Eunuch	Total
Reason related to respondent	42%	40%		40%
Reason related to household	42%	60%		52%
Reason related to school	16%	0%	100%	8%
Sample size	19	30	1	50

The participants dropped out of non-formal school mostly because of reasons related to household, then children and school respectively. 52% and 40% of both male and female participants dropped out of non-formal school due to reasons related to household and children respectively. However, no male but only female and transgender participants dropped out of school due to school-related reasons.

This study result indicate that the Socio demographic status of the participants was low. This finding is expected, since because they live in slim area. During data collection it was seen that many slum residents don't know their exact age. The main explanation is that the literacy rate is low which prevents the residents from documenting their birth date. However, nearly one in six slum children aged six to fourteen years do not receive some sort of education (Chowdhury, 2019).

Male students dropped out of school more than female students. In the society of Bangladesh, it is seen that male have to take responsibility for the maintenance of their family which pushes them towards child labor (Farah et al., 2019). Thus, the concentration of dropping out from Non-formal School was higher among the male respondents than female respondents.

In his study, Chugh (2011) shows that family size is a significant factor when students get dropped out. It is also seen that in slum areas where many people live together in squalor, the higher the number of family members, the higher the cost of running the family naturally. Big families continue to face greater income- and expenditure-dependence and thus paying for child education become difficult (Hussain et al., 2011; Shadreck, 2013).

Another key findings emerge that twelve main reasons of slum children dropping out from non-formal schools are - Outdoor work for payment, Household work, Marriage, Disability, Seeking a free life, Pregnancy, Sickness / illness, Disinterest in studies, Repeated failure/ Poor grades, Parent's disallowance and Teasing and bullying and finally Lack of proper facilities at school. The main reason for boys dropping out was outdoor work while the main reason for girls dropping out was

housework. Their non-formal education is hampered mostly due to pulled out factors and household related reasons.

In an economically recessed country like Bangladesh, 12.7% of children dropped out of school at the age of 5-18 just to provide financial support to their families (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015). It is seen that 40% of children drop out of school due to poverty and the main reason for dropping out of school in Bangladesh is low income of the family and food deprivation (Sarker et al., 2019). Since low-income people mostly live in slum areas, the children dropout from school to support their families by working in exchange of money and even do full-time work. One of the reasons for dropping out of primary school is doing household work and forcing children to do these things without any salary (K & N, 2016).

Social insecurity for female students is one of the reasons for dropping out of school. Many families have a gender preference where they actively educate and raise their male children but keep the female child/children in captivity at home (Hasanat, 2017). According to UNFPA's State of World Population 2019 report, the rate of child marriage in Bangladesh is 59%, the highest in South Asia and ranked fourth globally. Early marriage is one of the most important reasons for dropping out of girls. Many girls will not go to school after marriage and are thus dropped out of education (Chugh, 2011). These dropped out girls don't get a single chance to go back to their schools. Early marriage often leads to early pregnancy. Early pregnancy is substantial contributor to school dropout rates among girls (CDE, 2015). Parents and relatives usually do not want to take any risks during the pregnancy of girls. Eventually, most girls get dropout of school during their pregnancy (Sarker et al., 2019).

Just a few study provide insights into the bullying, teasing or harassment situation in South Asian schooling system (UNICEF, 2016). These are the reasons that lead students to poor academic performance, school absenteeism and dropout (Cornell et al., 2013). After repeated failures and poor grades, students lose hope and interest that they will no longer be able to succeed, and eventually dropout of school (CDE, 2015).

Slum children suffer from high rates of diarrhea, respiratory illnesses, malnutrition and low vaccination rates. This rate is increasing due to poor health education of mothers living in slums (Unger, 2013). More than 73% of people share toilets and 81% share water sources in slum (Kabir & Parajuli, 2016). Where adequate facilities are not available in residential areas, it becomes difficult to set up separate infrastructures in schools located in the same area. The quality of education may fluctuate due to poor health in childhood, and indicators such as low birth weight (predicted childhood health) indicate low academic test achieves and low quality of education (Murillo & Martinek, 2011). Furthermore, physical disability is a significant barrier to going to school, and even lower-income slum disable children face more obstructions to education.

When asked about this, many said that the last exam of the fifth grade is the compulsory public exam, which is known as Primary School Certificate (PSC) or Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE). Many non-formal schools were not registered, so fifth-graders had to register for exams at nearby government schools, and non-formal schools supervised them. These public examinations were difficult according to the level of the students in the slum area, on top of that the registration problem, the students were freaked out due to the location of the examination center was being far away from their living area and their primary level remained incomplete. 35.5% of Bangladeshi children dropped out of school because they had no interest in

education (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2015; Shilpi, 2017; Al Mamun, D. G. I., & Akhter, 2019). For some students, school is like a prison where they can't do anything freely. So they hate school because they want a life with full freedom (Gray, 2009). This study, however, found that 74% of slum children wish to study again, despite the fact that students suffer from some of their own adverse circumstances that remove them from school so that they can no longer finish school. It is further revealed that slum children dropout more due to outside work for payment, household work and then their own or school reasons.

For the provision of equality in education non-formal education is now a very emerging issue in Bangladesh. For those who cannot receive or are deprived of formal education, education is now provided in a non-formal setting so that they can receive basic education. Despite this non-formal education being completely free, for various reasons, many children can no longer complete this level of education (Quattri, M., & Watkins, 2019). Contrary to the findings of non-formal education dropout the researchers did not find any past research. Even government-private research and data on the dropout data of slum children have been taken only in the formal setting but no data on non-formal school dropouts have been found. Although the sample size was small, it is expected that this study would help the government and non-formal educators take various initiatives to minimize the dropout rate in non-formal schools and ensure basic education for all children in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSIONS

Every year in Bangladesh, many students are being dropped out of non-formal education in slum areas. This dropout is an intricate concern and it is associated with numerous dynamics. The study pursues to identify the socio-demographic status of these dropouts and the grounds of dropouts. These are the reasons that have been found are – outdoor work for payment, household work, marriage, disability, seeking a free life, pregnancy, sickness/illness, disinterest in studies, repeated failure/poor grades, parent's disallowance, teasing and bullying and finally lack of proper facilities at school; disadvantaged from schooling mostly due to pulled out factors and household-related causes. So, if we want to reduce the dropout rate, we have to envisage all those impediments and move acceleratively. Furthermore, slum illiterate parents do not realize the significance of quality basic education and force their children to employ in various activities. Eventually, their children are more likely to dropout of school. Using this study, it is possible to reduce their dropout rate and child labour propensity. Because in most cases, later, it is seen that the fellow dropout children suffer from depression or frustration due to not finishing the school properly. Bangladesh Government and education providers should offer adequate and effective educational support considering these reasons. The following recommendations can be drawn for the prevention of dropping out from non-formal school- From this study, we can address the leading cause of dropping out from non-formal school is poverty. So, the students of non-formal school should also have the opportunities of earning as well as learning. So, they should be provided vocational and technical education according to their will besides basic education. They should be provided the opportunities to earn besides learning. Simultaneous learning and earning opportunities could prevent them from dropping out of schools.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENTS

Marzia Khatan Smita is the first author in this paper. Md. Fajlay Rabbi is the second author who provides support in being a comparative researcher. In this research, Marzia Khatan Smita and Md. Fajlay Rabbi jointly design research, collect data, conduct analysis and conduct dissemination together. Then, Shoeab Mohammad is the third author as researcher who helps finishing this research.

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