Some Important issues towards Education For All (EFA) :

Developing Countries Perspectives

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1. Introduction

The goals of Education for All (EFA) are centrally concerned with equality. If children are excluded from access to education, they are denied their human rights and prevented from developing their talents and interests in most basic of ways. But unfortunately, this often happens in most of the developing countries. This circumstance could change if appropriate changes in policy were made. And for that we have to identify the victimized groups and to understand the way of their victimization.

1.1 What is the Education For All (EFA)

Education For All (EFA) is an international commitment first launched in Jomtien, Thailand in1990 to bring the benefits of education to every citizen in every society. Partners comprised a broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank. In the face of slow progress over the decade, the commitment was reaffirmed in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000 and then again in September 2000, when the 189 countries and their partners adopted two of the EFA goals among the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015.

The EFA commitment is specifically to :

- Ensure universal primary education for all children by 2015 (also an MDGs)
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education (also an MDGs)
- Improve early childhood care and education
- Ensure equitable access to life skills program
- Achieve a 50 percent increase in adult literacy by 2015
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education

1.2 Progress on MDGs

Despite considerable EFA progress in recent years, at least 52 of the 152 developing countries will

face difficulty in achieving universal completion of primary education by 2015 unless efforts are accelerated substantially. And though gender gaps in primary and secondary enrollment are narrowing, 43 developing countries will not meet the 2005 gender parity goal, of which 30 are unlikely to meet it by 2015 without intensified actions. Low-income countries face the greatest challenges to reaching the MDGs[1].

In the developing countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan or Afghanistan, the majority of the children of primary schools are the first generation learners and they enter school without the requisite academic and social preparation for ensuring their successful performance in schools. In spite of their strengths in practical life, the children of illiterate poor remain weak in academic activities compared to their peers who receive support in their literate home environment and form their literate parents. The disadvantaged children's life have been locked in a vicious cycle that originates primarily from poverty and illiteracy of their parents and plunges them into the same situation if special measures are not taken early in their lives to root them out of the cycle.
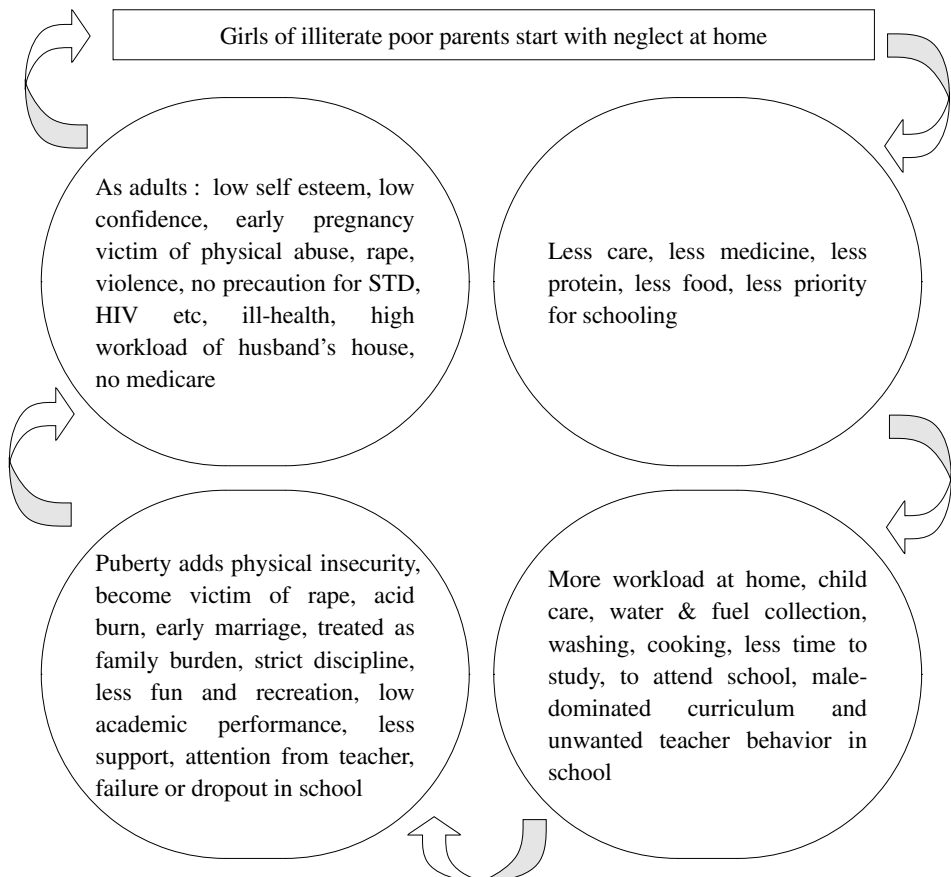
2. Concerns and Issues Relating to Focus Groups Towards EFA

Nevertheless, millions of children around the world still fail to gain access to schooling, and even larger numbers among those who do enroll leave prematurely, dropping out before the skills of literacy and numeracy have been properly gained. The followings are the pictures from the developing countries perspectives.

2.1 Girls' Education

Traditionally and culturally the girls in developing countries face discrimination from their birth. They are overburdened with all kinds of domestic chores but without having decision-making authority in the family. They frequently become victim of sexual and other kind of harassment in the society but get less opportunity for schooling and study. Early marriage brings early pregnancy of the girls and, in most cases ; they face abuse in husbands' home for dowry and many other reasons. Sometimes, girls fall prey to husband's diseases or neglect. Many girls have to suffer from husbands' and in-laws' torture and many of them succumb to torture and die an unnatural death. Please have a look to our following diagram(1) that makes it more clear and transparent.

Diagram 1

Girls of illiterate poor parents start with neglect at home

As adults : low self esteem, low confidence, early pregnancy victim of physical abuse, rape, violence, no precaution for STD, HIV etc, ill-health, high workload of husband's house, no medicare

Less care, less medicine, less protein, less food, less priority for schooling

Puberty adds physical insecurity, become victim of rape, acid burn, early marriage, treated as family burden, strict discipline, less fun and recreation, low academic performance, less support, attention from teacher, failure or dropout in school

More workload at home, child care, water & fuel collection, washing, cooking, less time to study, to attend school, male-dominated curriculum and unwanted teacher behavior in school
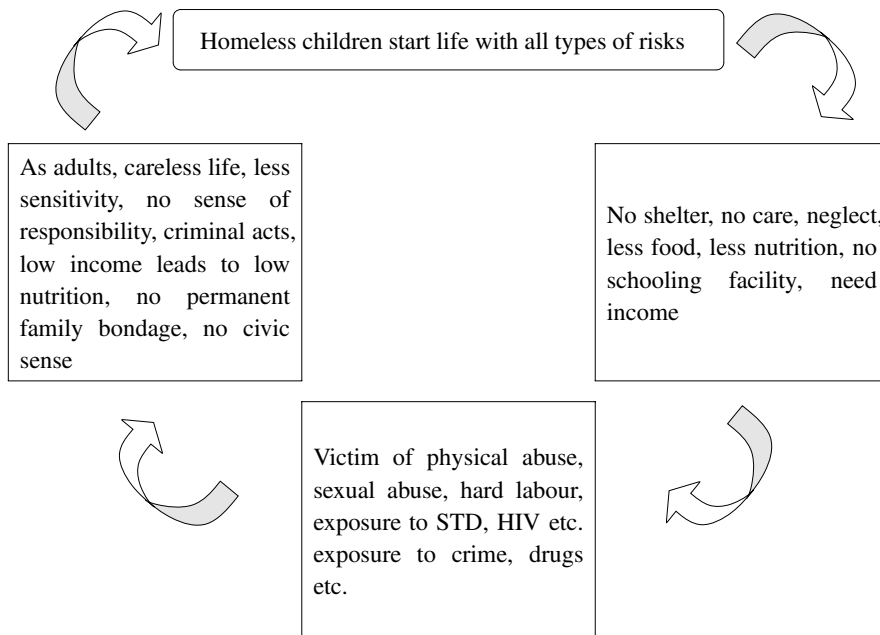
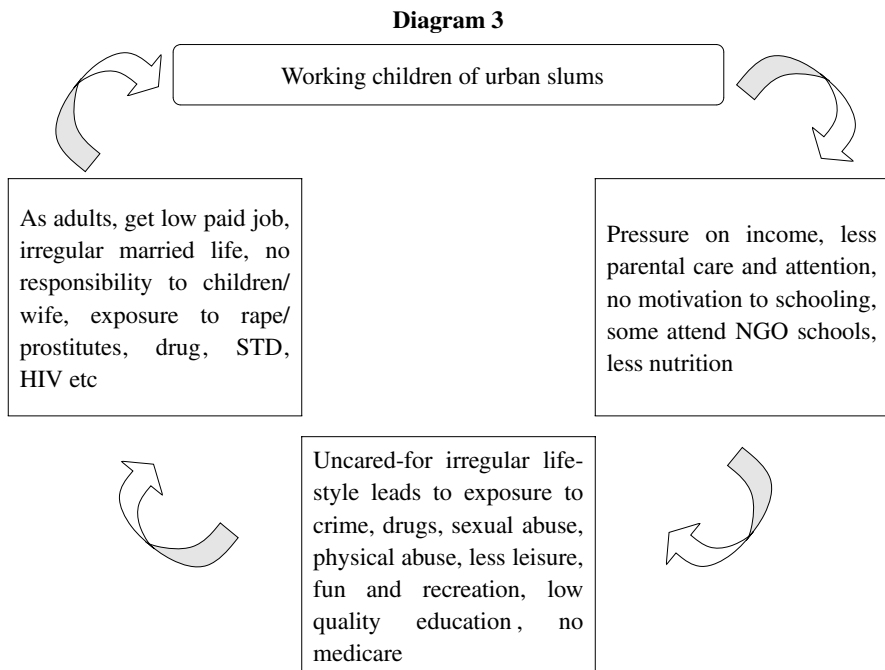## 2.2 Marginalized Homeless Children (street children, sex worker, abandoned children, excluded orphans)

The floating street children, who are lost or abandoned or those who do not have permanent shelter and parents to care of them and have to earn their own living. Consequently they often become victim of physical and sexual abuse and are led to the world of crime and drugs. Please have a look to our following diagram(2) that makes it more clear and transparent.

Diagram 2

Homeless children start life with all types of risks

As adults, careless life, less sensitivity, no sense of responsibility, criminal acts, low income leads to low nutrition, no permanent family bondage, no civic sense

No shelter, no care, neglect, less food, less nutrition, no schooling facility, need income

Victim of physical abuse, sexual abuse, hard labour, exposure to STD, HIV etc. exposure to crime, drugs etc.
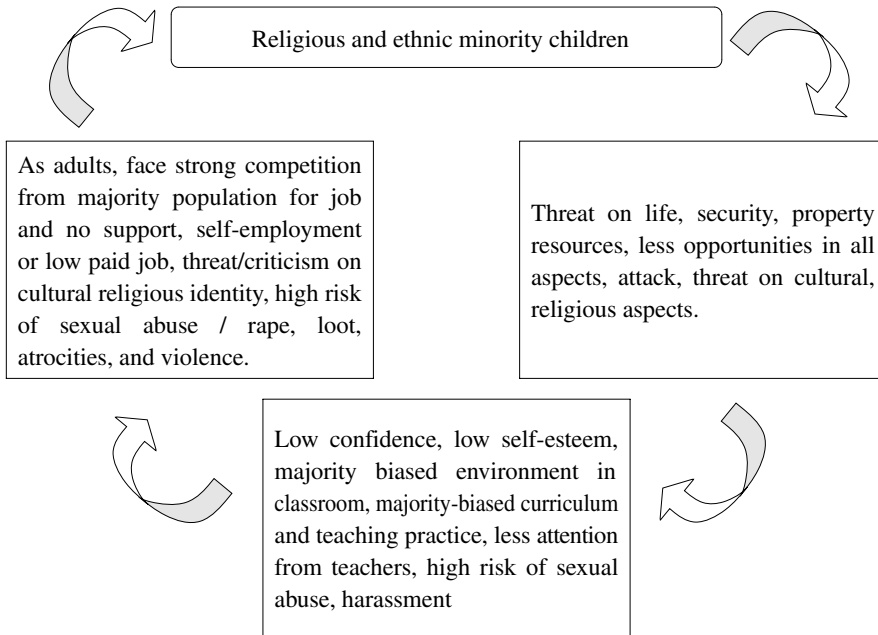
2.3 Working Children of Urban Slums

These children are engaged in various livelihoods. Those who live with parents or without parents, life pattern of both groups is more or less similar. These children have exposure to sexual and physical abuse, have possibility of being involved in crime and drug addiction, hence enjoy no permanent family bondage due to vulnerable family tie between the parents. Please have a look to our following diagram(3) that makes it more clear and transparent.

Diagram 3

Working children of urban slums

As adults, get low paid job, irregular married life, no responsibility to children/ wife, exposure to rape/ prostitutes, drug, STD, HIV etc

Pressure on income, less parental care and attention, no motivation to schooling, some attend NGO schools, less nutrition

Uncared-for irregular life-style leads to exposure to crime, drugs, sexual abuse, physical abuse, less leisure, fun and recreation, low quality education , no medicare
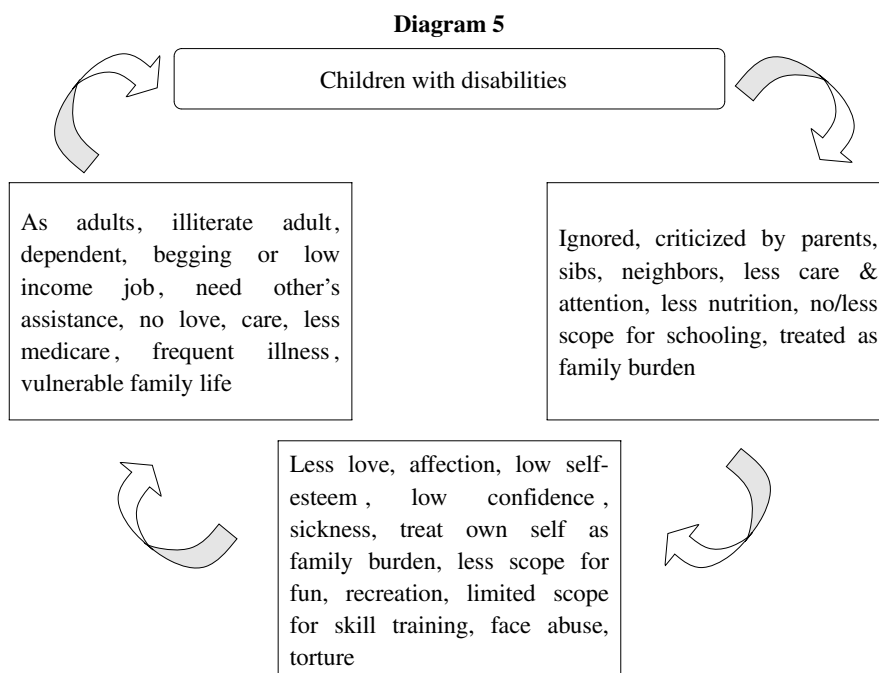
2.4 Religious and Ethnic Minority Children

These groups face discrimination from birth, face treat on life, property, own religious and cultural practices and suffer from high degree of insecurity. Although we lack research data, it is believed that minority girls often become victim of sexual harassment and rape from dominant social groups. The school environment projects pro-majority culture, hence they face isolation and suffer from low self-esteem, low self-confidence. As adults they face discrimination, competition with majority in getting employment or livelihood. Please have a look to our following diagram(4) that makes it more clear and transparent.

Diagram 4

Religious and ethnic minority children

As adults, face strong competition from majority population for job and no support, self-employment or low paid job, threat/criticism on cultural religious identity, high risk of sexual abuse / rape, loot, atrocities, and violence.

Threat on life, security, property resources, less opportunities in all aspects, attack, threat on cultural, religious aspects.

Low confidence, low self-esteem, majority biased environment in classroom, majority-biased curriculum and teaching practice, less attention from teachers, high risk of sexual abuse, harassment

2.5 Children with Disabilities

Children at very early age especially while they start crawling and grasping objects, face risk of different types of accidents which cause variety disabilities. Most acquired disabilities of children result from burn injuries from domestic burners, lanterns etc., falling from heights, injuries caused by knives ; children also hit each other with sticks, pebbles and so on. Children may insert pebbles, coins into nostrils, ears etc. Some are born with vision, hearing and speech impairment and some are born with learning difficulties. There is a tendency to hide the children with disabilities from the neighbors, and relatives. Hence they are deprived of mainstream social life, cultural activities, fun and enjoyment. Love and affection from their own parents are not always up to expectations.

These groups of children often get less care, attention in centers or foster homes or in their own homes. Generally they are considered as family burden or burden in society. As a result, they may suffer from low self-esteem, low self-confidence and face abuse. Only 11% are thought to receive any kind of schooling facility[2] and sometimes begging becomes their only livelihood. Please have a look to our following diagram(5) that makes it more clear and transparent.

Diagram 5

Children with disabilities

As adults, illiterate adult, dependent, begging or low income job, need other's assistance, no love, care, less medicare, frequent illness, vulnerable family life

Ignored, criticized by parents, sibs, neighbors, less care & attention, less nutrition, no/less scope for schooling, treated as family burden

Less love, affection, low self-esteem, low confidence, sickness, treat own self as family burden, less scope for fun, recreation, limited scope for skill training, face abuse, torture

3. Problems of disadvantaged children

All the above mentioned groups of children living in difficult circumstances are the target groups of EFA and primary education along with the children of advantaged literate parents. These groups lack intellectual skills, the pre-requisite for good academic performance in schools. Young children in general learn through many sensory experiences and handling of concrete objects. A child's idea and understanding of time, space and numbers are limited. Development and understanding of the meaning of these depends on maturation and early exposure to stimulating experiences. Moreover, the attention span of the child is very short and he/she can not sit for a long period of time. His/her ability to concentrate and do a specific task or to reason is limited.

One should remember that child's language can be the most effective tool towards intellectual development, and unfortunately that is very much lacking in the above mentioned groups of children. The form of speech changes as children mature, its users change too. The child's speech moves from "telegraphic" (3-4 word sentences that include only the most essential words) at 3 or 4 years of age to more sophisticated (complex) speech where he/she asks many questions and can give and follow commands. He/she uses all parts of speech by 4/5 years of age. At 6 and 7 years of age, children have a vocabulary of 3000 to 4000 words. It is worthwhile to know the age apecific steps of language learning by normal human child.

Major steps in learning to talk	Age range for language skills
Laughs	1.5-3 months
Turns head to voice	4-8 months
Imitates sounds	6-11 months
Names mother, father (mama, dada)	9-11 months
Says three words	12-21 months
Combines two different words	14-24 months
Points to one named body part	14-23 months
Follows simple directions	15-30 months
Gives first and last name	24-40 months

Source:Facts for Life; A Communication Challenge, Chapter of Child Development, UNICEF, 1995.

4. Conclusion

The children are dependent on adults for right care, attention and love they need. The adults are the stakeholders as well as caregivers in their lives. The policy planner and program designers should take the stakeholders' roles also into account for being able to develop an ECCED program that would meet targeted children. It would strengthen stakeholders' ability to serve the children's best interest.

The real challenge to the policy planners and program designers and implementers in developing countries who are committed to achieve goals of EFA and universal primary education of these countries lies in overcoming or removing the difficulties, obstacles, lacking of the above mentioned

disadvantaged groups of children.

Footnotes :

1. Education For All (EFA)-World Bank Education, 2003/4.
2. ESTEEM study 2: Educating children with difficult circumstances: Children with disabilities.

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1. Bangladesh Education Sector Review Voll.11, Published for the World Bank, The University Press Ltd.
2. The State of World's Children, Early Childhood, UNICEF, 2001.
3. Bangladesh country paper presented in World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000.
4. Towards a Fair Start for Children, Robert, G.Myers, The young child and the Family Environment Project, UNESCO, 1990.

Education For All（EFA）のための諸問題：開発途上国の教育の現状と課題

要　　　　約

　「万人のための教育（Education For All）」は，1990年にタイで開催された「万人のための世界教育会議」において確認されたイニシアティブで，その目標は教育の平等を達成することにある。これは，2000年の「国連ミレニアム宣言」において他の国際開発目標と統合され，一つの共通枠組としてまとめられた。

　こうした国際的動向の背景には，教育にアクセスできない子どもたちが，まだたくさんいることを踏まえている。子どもたちが教育にアクセスできないことは，人権の否定であり，才能や関心を伸ばすことが妨げられることでもある。現状としては，開発途上国の中にはこれらの問題を抱えている国があり，適切な政策的取組によって改善することが期待される。政策的取組にあたっては，どのような子どもたちが不利な立場にいるのかを特定し，その子どもたちに対して優先的に実施するのが有効だと考えられる。そこで，本稿では，不利な立場にいる子どもたちを「フォーカス・グループ」として特定し，その状況と課題について明らかにした。

　主なフォーカス・グループは，①女子，②親がいない子ども，③スラム街で働く子ども，④マイノリティの子ども，⑤障がいをもつ子ども，などである。主な現状として，次のようなものがあげられる。①伝統的に，女子は出生時から区別されており，家庭内で軽んぜられている。②親がいない子どもたちは自分で生計を立てなければならず，性的被害や犯罪に巻き込まれている。③都市スラム街の子どもたちも働く必要に迫られており，②と類似する問題を抱えている。④宗教的少数派や少数民族の子どもたちは,多数派を占める人々とは異なる文化的習慣をもつために，不安で保障のない生活を送っている。⑤障がいをも

つ子どもは，親からの愛情を期待できないだけでなく，隣人や親類から隠される傾向があり，多くの子どもと同様の社会生活や文化活動などの楽しみを奪われている。

　これらの子どもたちは，親が充分な初等教育すら受けていないという困難な状況にもある。そのため，学校での学業達成に要求される知識やスキルが不足している。一般に，子どものよりよい成長には，周囲の手助けが必要であるが，上述したグループは条件の悪い中で生活しており，よりいっそうの配慮がなされるべきである。それぞれの立場で，不利な立場にいる子どもたちの状況を改善し，初等教育が普遍化することに挑んでいくことが重要である。