

## DRUG ADDICTION AMONG STREET CHILDREN AND ITS IMPACTS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*In rapidly changing world and in growing development street children involvement in drug addiction is a very alarming state that attributes tremendous despair to our society. A large number of street children in Dhaka and Chittagong city engage in drug addiction but there is lack of effective measures to lessen this problem. This study has been conducted to find out the reasons behind drug addiction of street children, to explore the impacts of street children involvement in drug-addiction upon sustainable development and to reveal the probable ways to mitigate this problem of drug addiction. This research paper has been developed based on qualitative nature. This study elicited that there are considerable number of causes like lack of basic needs, social isolation, depression, easy accessibility of drug, peer, and others adult's influence, no parental care, step parental abuse, distress in the home environment, releasing grief, stress, hunger and working for long hours, no accountability to anybody and frustrations are increasing street children involvement in drug addiction. Besides these, children have been living in the street for the reasons like poverty, homelessness, orphan, etc. It also revealed that drug-addicted street children are to face immense health complexities like physical weakness, various pectoral diseases, insomnia, arrogant behaviors for long years. In addition, drug addicted street children are involved in various social crimes like pilferage, fighting among them. The study also disclosed various impacts on SDG like abject poverty, illiteracy, health complications, imbalance of social harmony, loss of productivity and burden of demography. All development actors, like state, NGOs, and private agency should take essential steps to deal with this problem of drug-addiction among street children; else this underprivileged part of the society will be a great burden for our society and will be a great impediment for achieving sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** Drug-addiction, poverty, street children, sustainable development

### INTRODUCTION

The holistic approach of sustainable development embodies the theme of inclusive growth in every progressive arena. This aspect promotes an equitable future for all, and the core criterion is a commitment to leave no one behind. In that case, the number of destitute street children is increasing rapidly about 100 million as a consequence of global inequality, and that imposes challenges towards sustainable development (Vameghi, et al., 2014). Children living or working on the street are encountered with a myriad of problems such as extreme poverty, lack of education, food insecurity, health hazard, physiological and psychological harassment.

Moreover, the childhood of those destitute children lies upon penury. Even, they lead an ill-fated life within inadequate socio-economic incentives and are incredibly vulnerable to lots of dangers. In turn, these children fall into drug addiction in order to survive on the street with

their hard realities. The prevalence of drug addiction by street children is noteworthy, especially in many developing countries of Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (Embleton, 2013). Like other developing countries, Bangladesh comprises an enormous number of street dwelling children especially in Dhaka city about 250000 comparatively than other cities such as Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Rangpur, etc. (BRAC, 2014). The drug addiction is common among street children of Bangladesh taking different types of a substance such as gum/glue, acetone, gasoline, and paint thinner etc. (Masud, et al., 2018). Since 1989, the international community has remarkably been implementing a set of policies and programs to ensure deprived children's rights regardless of all the countries around the world. For instance, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has adopted a resolution considering universal rights of children and significant measures for the entire development and appropriate socialization of underprivileged children (UNCRC, 2008). Besides, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has initiated several attempts to conducive to street children's adorable care (UNICEF, 1986). Unfortunately, street children's socio-economic rights are violated and discriminated for which they become addicted to drugs to cope up with their indigent life. Besides, several reasons such as peer influence, absence of parental care, easy accessibility and affordability, relief of stress instigate street children to get drug addiction (Benegal, et al., 1998). In Bangladesh, the government in along with UNICEF, Save the Children, and Dhaka Ahsania Mission is currently working for the rehabilitation of drug-addicted children but not wholly successful in their mission. As a result, those street children endanger in mental and psychological health risks both in the short run and long-run effects.

Furthermore, these innocent children become violent with illegal and criminal activities that lead to a heinous life. Children are the nation builders, but the loss of those potential human resources experiencing meager rights like street children due to drug addiction is the more significant challenge towards sustainable development. As a result, this study aims to identify the root causes of drug addiction of street children and its socio-economic impacts upon sustainable development. The study intends to find out the answer to the following objectives: To explore the root causes of drug addiction among street children in Bangladesh? To explore the impacts of drug addiction of the street children sustainable development, and to explore the probable measures to solve this problem? This study will assist policymakers to take necessary steps to ensure street children's rights effectively and overcome the barriers of the implementation of sustainable development.

## OPERATIONAL TERMS

### Street Children

The controversy has been arisen to specify the particular concept of street children. There are many discrepancies noticeable in defining the term "street children as they are a heterogeneous population. Considering the inhabitation fact, the connotation of street children has been varied (Lalor, 1999). Moreover, "Children age between 5-17 years who are living and working on the street of a particular city for survival" are considered as Street Children (Ahmed, et al., 2003). According to UNICEF (1984), street children are multifaceted notions divided into two broader categories; "*children of the streets*," for whom street is the only place for shelter, livelihood, and companionship. They are entirely abandoned, living with street children or adult homeless people. On the other hand, "children on the street" are roaming and working on the street, but at the end of the day, they go back to their families and home (UNICEF, 2001). The dissimilation is significant between two categories. Earlier approach as "children of the street" has no parental care and impulsive

support. On the contrary, the following criteria "children on the street" have families, but parental care and psychological support from their families may exist or not.

### **Drug Addiction**

Drug addiction is denoted as the substance use of disorder considered as diseases affecting the brain, behavior, and incompetence to consume legal or illegal drugs or medication. In a sense, drug addiction is a situation when the human body gets dependent habitually on stimulating things that affecting the nerve system, other organisms, and human behavior (Angres & Bettinardi-Angres, 2008). According to WHO (1994), drug addiction is a condition of dependency of a chemical substance of synthetic, semi-synthetic or natural origin accounting for physiological and psychological disorder leads to contain risks on the human body. It is revealed that most of the street children from developing countries addicted to different types of dangerous drugs due to the deprivation of fundamental socio-economic rights (Mahmud, et al. 2011).

### **LITERATURE REVIEWS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Morakinyo & Odejide (2003) has unpacked the responsible factors and inclination towards drug addiction of street children in a local government area of Nigeria. Their study on "*A community based study of patterns of psychoactive substance use among street children in a local government area of Nigeria*". Utilizing multistage sampling method, this study unravels inadequate basic needs, poverty, and no parental guidance are considered as easily available psychoactive substance. Which are tobacco, alcohol, cannabis etc. These unprivileged children are squeezed with the gloomy of realities even they don't have any legal rights and active participation in the society. Thus, this study emphasizes on government as well as community based comprehensive measures to shed the light in the lives of those unfortunate children.

Not only in Africa but also in South Asia, street children wanted to use psychoactive substance. Which is the major concern in the era of sustainable development. Nasir and Khalid (2015) have tried to sketch the actual situation of street children in South Asia through the study on "*Street Children Phenomenon: A Great Loss of Human Potential for South Asia*". This study discloses the challenging issues of South Asia such as poverty, rapid urbanization, cultural conflict, violence and deteriorated the situation of street children. In addition, the study reveals that these street children subsist in miserable condition without having their rights. These socially excluded children are in danger of drug addiction, sexual harassment, forced labor, violations and criminal activities. The author predicts that it will be a great loss of human potential if those destitute children are not nurtured with socio-economic rights.

Dhawan et al. (2020) has briefly discussed about the drug addiction among street children at Delhi in India applying RDS method in the study "*Estimating the size of substance using street children in Delhi using Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS)*". This study conceals the challenges for instance social isolation, identity crisis and inadequate basic needs are responsible factors of drug addiction of street children in Delhi. This study has been conducted by implementing Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) methodology. It is identified that most of the children used to consume three available substances such as tobacco, alcohol and inhalants. This RDS method has been successful to depict the actual figures of drug addicted street children.

Like many other developing countries, Bangladesh is grappling with the problem of drug addiction and its gruesome impacts on street children. Masud, Khan and Jesmin (2018) have

pointed out the issue of drug addiction on the study “*Pattern of Drug Abuse among Street Children of Dhaka: Inhalants are the Most Popular Drug*”. The authors denoted that children’s sensation towards drug addiction. Street children commonly use cheap inhalants substances available in locality. These impoverished children used to survive with penury for which they take drug for short term grief relaxation. Most of the drug addicted street children consciously take drug sometime though it has adverse impacts. Interestingly, many street children want to abandon drug taking and desire for better life. Therefore, this study signifies the demand of the government and others associations intervention for their rehabilitation alongside. It is crying need to engage those street children in the essence of sustainable development.

In the era of sustainable development, inclusive development is the precondition for unceasing progress. However, it is a matter of great regret that Bangladesh constitutes near one million street children who are destitute and far behind from mainstream development (Islam, 2004). It is estimated that the number of street children is increasing at an alarming rate due to poverty, growing socio-economic inequality, family problems, natural disaster, and urbanization. Most of the street children are tremendously affected by drug addiction in many urban areas especially in Dhaka cities of Bangladesh (Masud, 2018).

In Dhaka city street children are residing outside of their home or many of them are abandoned and vulnerable to drug addiction. As a result, those unfortunate children have been leading towards harsh realities as well as crime (Hossain and Ahmed, 2015). There are several NGOs in Bangladesh like BRAC, WHO, UNICEF, Chinnomul Shishu-Kishor Sangstha (CSKS), and Manusher Jonno, etc. working for street children but not focus precisely on drug addiction issues. Only Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), an NGO run by a trustee board of the former Nabab family of Dhaka, has particular programs and rehabilitation center for drug-addicted street children (Mahmud, 2018). The government of Bangladesh established two rehabilitation centers near Hazaribag and Karail Slums, but the effort goes in vain to continue the centers due to Lack of foreign funds and other operational limitations.

### **Policies for the protection of street children**

To accomplish sustainable development, it is the first and foremost duty of the government to ensure the rights of the deprived and exploited citizens like street children. As children are the future asset of the nation, the government, along with other organizations, is liable to secure the fundamental rights of those impoverished, homeless children. The government of Bangladesh has ratified "The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)" intertwined with national policies, acts, and other legal bindings (Newaz, 2011). Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) conducted a seminar on "National seminar on Street Children: Observation and Task Ahead" in 2014, has discussed several international alongside national laws, policies, acts related to child rights adopted by the government as follows:

- A. Clause 28 (4) of the Bangladesh Constitution,
- B. United Nations (UN) Charter of Child Rights,
- C. National Child Policy 2011,
- D. National Policy for Eradication of Child Labor 2010,
- E. Child Law 2013,
- F. Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021.

### **Children's Rights and Sustainable Development**

The sustainable development agenda assimilates the highest ambition for the children's rights globally to uphold the theme of "no one should be left behind. In general, the Asia- Pacific

regions constitute half of the world's children, including a vast number of street children (West, 2003). Though many countries around the world have ratified "The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)," millions of children are still now left behind, such as street children experiencing the precarious situations. Street children are marginalized children in many developing countries like Bangladesh as well as a victim of violations and discrimination of their rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is stimulating to review the progress of sustainable development goals. The principal aim is to highlight the solutions against a number of challenges that must be secured children's rights (UNHRC, 2008). The sustainable development goals are explicitly mentioned to emphasize the protection, promotion, and implementation of the children right based approach towards the accomplishment of sustainable development (UNICEF, 2017.).

**Table 1: SDGs specific targets on children rights based approach**

SDGs Goals	Specific Target related to children rights
Goal-1: No Poverty (Child Poverty)	1.1.1 Children living below US\$1.90 per day 1.2.1 Children living below the national poverty line 1.2.2 Children in multidimensional poverty 1.3.1 Children covered by social protection 1.4.1 Access to essential services
Goal-2: Zero Hunger	2.2.1 Stunted children, 2.2.2 Prevalence of malnutrition
Goal-3: Good Health	3.2.2 Neonatal mortality 3.3.1 New HIV infections in children 3.3.2 Tuberculosis incidence in children 3.3.3 Malaria incidence in children 3.4.2 Adolescent suicide 3.6.1 Child road traffic deaths
Goal-4: Quality education	4.1.1 Minimum proficiency in reading and writing, 4.2.1 Early childhood development 4.2.2 Pre-primary participation
Goal-8: Good jobs and economic growth	8.7.1 Child labor 8.b.1 Spending on social protection and employment

Source: Developed by the author based on UNICEF. (2017). Is every child counted? *Status of Data for Children in the SDGs*.

This table represents the thematic approach of sustainable development goals with specific targets of children's rights, including poverty, food safety, health, education, clean water and sanitation, reduction of inequalities, peace, and justice. To achieve sustainable development goals by 2030, several international organizations, along with the Bangladesh government, incorporate effective measures for street children. For instance, the Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted its General Comment No. 21 on Children in Street Situations, providing proper guidelines to the government in 2017 (UN OHCHR, 2017). However, in reality, the destitute street children remain far behind from those mainstream development approaches. As a result, street children drop out and get addicted to drugs due to a lack of socio-economic rights. As children are the future asset of any nation, sustainable development would not be attained, possibly leaving those street children's rights unprotected and unsecured. Finally, authors have motivated to conduct this research due to previous research's gaps to explore the exact impacts on sustainable development. Beside this, authors of this research also have encouraged to help the concern policy makers and actors of the sustainable development by providing the real impacts of drug addiction of street children on SDG. It is also important to help concern authority and actors of SDG in Bangladesh by providing probable effective



solution guidelines so as to underprivileged drug addicted children can be part of main stream of our society and SDG.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative in nature. Both primary and secondary data has been used in developing the research. Primary data has been gathered from *Gulistan* bus Stand, *Komlapur* Railway Station, *Sholosahor*, and Chittagong Railway Station, and secondary data has been collected from different previous research articles, papers, books, journals and media information. Number of sample size taken was 50. Data has been collected through purposive sampling, and respondents are street children, experts, media, and government officials. In-depth interviews have been conducted with two university's teachers, one psychiatrist, two Directors of NGOs as experts. Alongside these, questionnaires survey has been conducted with fifty street children and it also includes personal observation of the field, Moreover, two focus group discussions have been done with the drug addicted street children and some of the guardians of the street children during this study

## FINDINGS

### Factors behind living in street

Street children are dealing a miserable life on the street. They are tremendously deprived of their legal rights. Moreover, harsh realities push them to survive on the street. As the fate of the street children would not be improved overnight, then it will be the barrier to achieve sustainable development. Reasons for which children being compelled to subsist on the street as follows:

**Table 2: Reasons for which children being compelled to subsist on the street**

Factors	Respondents	Percentage
Poverty	11	22
Homelessness	9	18
Abuse and Lack of affection	5	10
Earning money	8	16
Broken family	7	14
Orphan	10	20
	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

The above table represents that among 50 respondents, almost 22% of children are being on the street due to extreme poverty. Among them, 20% of the children being orphans have to survive on the street without their parents as well as family. About 18% of the children live on the street due to homelessness as they migrate to Dhaka city with their relatives but now living on the street. Even 16% of respondents explained that they leave their homes due to earn money as well as support their family. Unfortunately, it is found from the study that children about 14% from broken families due to parent's separation or divorce forced them to live on the street and few children about 10% leave their family because of abusing and lack of affection by their parents or others guardians.

### Causes behind taking drugs

There are number of reasons that pushes these street children toward drug addiction. Street children remain far behind from the mainstream development procedure as they are the

victim of a violation of their vital socio-economic rights. To survive on the street with numerous problematic factors, street children get addicted to drugs. There are various causes responsible for drug addiction of street children which are stated as follows:

**Table 3: Causes for drug addiction of street children**

Reasons	Respondents	Percentage
Lack of basic needs	9	18
Social isolation and depression	5	10
Easy accessibility and affordability	8	16
Peer and other adult's influence	7	14
No parental care and abuse, step parental abuse	6	12
Distress in the home environment	5	10
Releasing grief, stress, hunger and working for long hours	10	20
	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

This table shows that most of the street children found from the study (about 18%) said that they got addicted substances due to lack of basic needs such as education facilities, health care, affection, adequate food, and other socio-economic needs. Moreover, among all the street children, about 20% of the respondents work for a long hour having no adequate food or starvation, inner pain, grief and therefore they take different drugs to release their stress and hunger. Besides, 16% of respondents explained that they could afford those addicted materials cheaply. Street children live in a group with peers and other adults, so children almost 14% explained that they got used to taking substance by their influence and assistance. About 10% of street children expressed about drug addiction due to social isolation and depression, and others, 10% described their issue about distress in the home.

Furthermore, 12% of respondents got drug-addicted because of having no parental care as they are orphans and some are tortured by step mother and step father. Besides we can recall the field story that Ismail is a 14 years old street child but who is not by born street child, who had to leave his home due to his step mother's abuse against Ismail. He used to live at a village in Rangpur district in Bangladesh with his parents. When he left his home, he was a student of class nine, and even his family's economic solvency was good; nevertheless, he had to leave his home because of absence of parent care and step mother's tortures. Now he has been living on the street of Dhaka city with some other street children and most often he takes 'Glue, sleeping pills, cigarette' drugs to forget the grief, sorrow, pain and his past life. When we were taking his interview we appeared him with taking drugs as Glue, Ismail was asked why does he take drugs like Glue, why is he on the street?

Ismail replied that

*"I take glue for nothing, what will I say? I have no pain and affection for anything. I have left my home because my parents, stepmother, used to torture me, and my original mother left me and married another male person, so what will I say? I take Glue, Poli, and sleeping pills to forget my pain, my past life so, what is to do with my life now."*

He was also asked about any expectation which will convince him to stop consuming drugs; the reply was that if he gets food, school again, good work, and place for living, then he would leave the street and the ill habits he used to have.

Similarly, Arif is a 12 years old street child; abandoned by his mother, has been living in the street for last few years. He had a poignant life story that after his father's death, his mother got married again and Arif was taken to step father's house, where he was tortured often by his step-father and made him bound to beg money for the family. Whenever Arif failed to collect the target amount of alms then he was brutally tortured. When his sufferings went beyond his toleration he fled away from the house. Since then, he has been living in the street with another group of street children. When asked more it was found that he takes shoe Glue (polythenebori local name) sleeping pills as a means of addiction to forget his hurting memories. Arif expressed in his own words as:

*"I used to take glue for my pleasure, and to ease my pain. Occasionally I used to take sleeping pills to forget everything. I came here as I had no alternatives (His statement in Bengali was like; ami ekhane thelay pore esechi). I do not want to stay in the street and wish to go back to my mother again. If I get admission to school again, get my mother back, and get something good for a living, then I will leave here and will go back home."*

#### Source of money for purchasing drugs

1. Scrap-picking/Tokaigiri (Mainly collecting different types of plastic, wooden, metallic, glass garbage from street, canal, garbage box, station and selling these to vangari shop (place of selling and buying of these scrap materials))
2. Begging (Asking for money, food from pedestrians, drivers, and others)
3. Coolie laboring
4. Participating in different political programs, meeting, slogan
5. Pilferage (mild level stealing), snatching

Study shows that majority of the street children mostly collect money by scrap picking and begging to purchase drugs for addiction. Most often, they used to take drugs in a group of four or five. Sometimes they do work as a coolie in different bus and train stations to manage the money for drugs. Occasionally they participate in different types of political rallies, yelling the slogan of political parties where they get some tips and they spend on ingesting drugs. In addition, at times they involve themselves in pilferage and snatching activities. We had experienced an appealing moment during data collection. when we asked Jishan an 11 years old street child that why is he here, and how did he get himself onto it? Moreover, how do you manage to buy drugs? When he was replying he got emotional. Jishan Replied as:

*"I only take dandi (Dendrite Glue) nothing more. I inhale glue to relieve my grief and sorrows. When my mother passed away, then my father got married and brought stepmother. Stepmother tortures me. My father drives the passenger bus of a famous company but did not care about me and since then, I have been here. I manage Taka (money) for my ill conducts by begging. I wish to get a caring family so that I can leave the street, and I would not be here if I get so."*

Street children have been living in the vast of frustration despite this it is also found that street children are not accountable to anybody thus they have no restriction for taking drugs. So frustration and no accountability are also the considerable reasons behind taking drug in street children.



## Patterns of drugs

Street children take different types of drugs based on their habitual fact. Generally, children get addicted to drugs within a group most of the time or sometimes take alone. It is noticeable that street children in urban areas of Bangladesh consume several types of drugs than rural areas due to easy accessibility and others above discussed reasons. This study found that Street children use different types of drugs regularly in particular areas of Dhaka City as follows:

**Table 4: Use of drugs by street children in particular areas of Dhaka City**

Types of drugs	Respondents	Percentage
Inhalants, Glue like dendrite gum, paint, and thinners	16	32
Smoking cigarette, biri(local name)	11	22
Chewing tobacco, local name tamak	9	18
Ganja/Shiddhi(Local name) cannabis	8	16
Others substances like Chakti( there imposed name- sleeping pills) polythene,	6	12
	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

The study reveals that among 50 street children, 32% of the children used inhalants drugs such as glue, dendrite gum paint thinners, etc. as they get it easily. About 22% of the children used to smoke cigarettes, Biri (one kind of local cigarette). Many street children (about 18%) expressed that, chewing tobacco is another mostly used drug substance as local name "*Gul*." Even some of them around 16% took *ganja* or cannabis as a drug which they got from their peers or other people, and often they also buy from illegal local markets. A few numbers of children, (almost 12%) disclosed that they take chakti (sleeping drug), polythene and injection, etc. as those products are not always available, and the price is high comparatively than other drugs. It is uncovered from the study that sources of money for the expenses of those drug substances are begging, working, collecting and selling waste products, and other illegal activities.

## Problems faced by drug-addicted street children

Street children become drug-addicted to lessen their miseries and frustration. Therefore, they are socially excluded, and in the long run, they will not be incorporated as the human resource for the country, which is a challenge towards sustainable development. The street children who are drug-addicted confront lots of problems are following:

**Table 5: Problems confronted drug-addicted street children**

Different problems	Respondents	Percentage
Physical and mental health problems like physical weakness, insomnia and pectoral diseases	13	26
Arrogant behavior	8	16
Involved with illegal and criminal activities	5	10
Being school dropout	9	18
Family complications	8	16
Fighting with peers and colleagues	7	14
	50	100%

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

This table visualizes the hard realities of drug-addicted street children's trouble with the number of difficulties. From the study, it is unpacked that 26% of children suffered from severe physical and psychological health risks such as stroke, nerve system complications, appetite loss, headache, hallucination, etc. Even unconsciously aggressive behavior is prevalent as 16% of children said that and some of them about 10% involved with drug selling activities as a middleman, robberies and stealing, etc. Besides, many of them about 18% dropped out of school. Often they created complication situations in their family as 16% of children shared about that case, and 14% of children shared that they started fighting with their peers and colleagues without any valid reason.

According to Kamal Uddin, a 45 years old man Kamal Uddin living in the street. He expressed his outrageous wretched story of what he witnessed last year. He has shared some information voluntarily to us as:

*"What should I say Bhai (brother), is there nobody to look after them? Five street children have been living with me in the street for many years. Some of here only because of the tortures of stepfather or mother, some are orphans, some of them even do not know who their parents are. Most of the time, they used to take glue, gum, dendrite, sleeping pills, and poli. Some of them collect money by begging, scrap pickings, but they do not harm anybody."*

He sadly added that, last year a 12 years' girl named Amina died due to taking poli (gum inside a plastic bag). When she was taking gum, it got stuck in her throat, which caused choking, and after struggling hours, she had passed away.

### Impacts on sustainable development

Street children undergo a pathetic situation because of the violation of their socio-economic rights. They are the victim of the negligence that induces them to consume addicted drugs. Street children are the destitute society, and drug addiction worsens their condition with an uncertain future. Sustainable development urges the necessity of inclusive progress to take the most impoverished society like street children into the core of advancement. Nevertheless, drug addiction of street children is recently a burning issue of the society.

By doing observations, interviews and literature studies it is identified that street children involvement in drug addiction. Study reveals important number of impacts upon SDG are following:

**Poverty:** From the study area, it is unpacked that street children struggle with poverty that persuades them to get drug-addicted. In the long run, drug addiction put those unfortunate children in great danger and lies in vicious cycle poverty. Generally, goal 1 of sustainable development focuses on the elimination of all forms of poverty. Drug addiction has adverse impacts on the lives of those poor children. Drug addiction makes them extremely poor as well as socially isolated. Therefore, it is a significant challenge for the achievement of sustainable development without considering these impoverished children on the street.

**Illiteracy:** Education perspective is incorporated into the Goal-4 of sustainable development emphasizes on childhood development and quality education. On the contrary, street children's childhood passes away to struggle with hard realities, and to cope up with this situation. It is revealed from the study area that street children lack proper access to education. Even children of illiterate parents have no importance on education. Moreover, most of the street children are orphans, so they survive in difficulties and the scope of education is absent to them. The study shows that almost 85% of children have never been to school, and others, 15% were drop out of school. Drug addiction makes street children reluctant to education and

destroys their future vitality. As a result, sustainable development would not be possible, remaining those poor street children illiterate.

**Health complications:** In reality, street children have no proper health care support, clean water, and sanitation facilities, etc. From the study, it is disclosed that most of the street children consume the drug to release stress and hunger. As sustainable development goal 2, including targets 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, are related to stunting and malnutrition of children due to hunger. Besides sustainable development goal-3 covers the good health context, and goal 6 is associated with clean water and sanitation issues. Street children outlive with poor health, malnutrition, stunting having no clean water and sanitation facilities, and suffer from serious health complications such as loss of appetite, headache, stroke, gastric, mental illness, and so on. Therefore, it will cause a loss of human productivity as well as early death. In that case, the government and other organization's attempts are not much more useful to rescue street children from this danger. As a result, it will be a significant failure of sustainable development without concern about the health hazards of those poor street children.

**Imbalance of Social Harmony:** Drug addictions compel street children to involve in illegal and criminal activities. The study portrays that most of the drug-addicted children commit robberies, stealing, drug trafficking, pick-pocketing, and many other crimes. For that reason, street children have no communal acceptance, and they are socially excluded and deprived of their socio-economic rights. So, this instigates inequality and imbalance of social harmony. As sustainable development goal 10 concentrates on reduced inequalities and discriminatory laws and policies. Street children are the underprivileged section of the society, and drug addiction ultimately makes them detached from the flow of sustainable development.

**Loss of productivity and demographic burden for country:** In the short run, street children suffer from severe physical and mental problems and, in the long-run, lose their productivity due to this ill-habit of drug addictions. The study reveals that those drug-addicted street children are considered as a burden in this socio-economic structure rather human capital of the nation. Furthermore, Sustainable development goal 8 emphasizes on good jobs and economic growth. However, the study presents a gloomy picture of the hard realities of drug-addicted street children, as they survive one way or another by working or begging on the street and involve themselves in illegal activities. The government and other organization's initiatives seemed inadequate for the efficiency enhancement of those children. In Bangladesh, those drug-addicted street children are considered as the demographic burden alongside barriers towards sustainable development.

### **Expert's recommendation**

According to experts recommendation study reveals that, following steps should be taken to bring street children back from drug addiction and to engage them in main stream of the society.

By illustrating the figure 1 that the problem like street children involvement in drug addiction can be mitigated throw folloing steps like;

- a. Relieving from drug addiction:** Which actually may cover Detoxification program, relapse prevention program, rehabilitation program, counseling program ,monitoring of law enforcement agency and social awareness building program for drug addicted street children. Concern authorities should come forward to solve this problem in a coordinated way. Government, different voluntary organization like NGOs and private organizations may work together to releive street children from drug addiction. Social awareness building program should be taken to make the street children aware of this drug

addiction problem. Law enforcement agency should continue their monitoring on the street children.

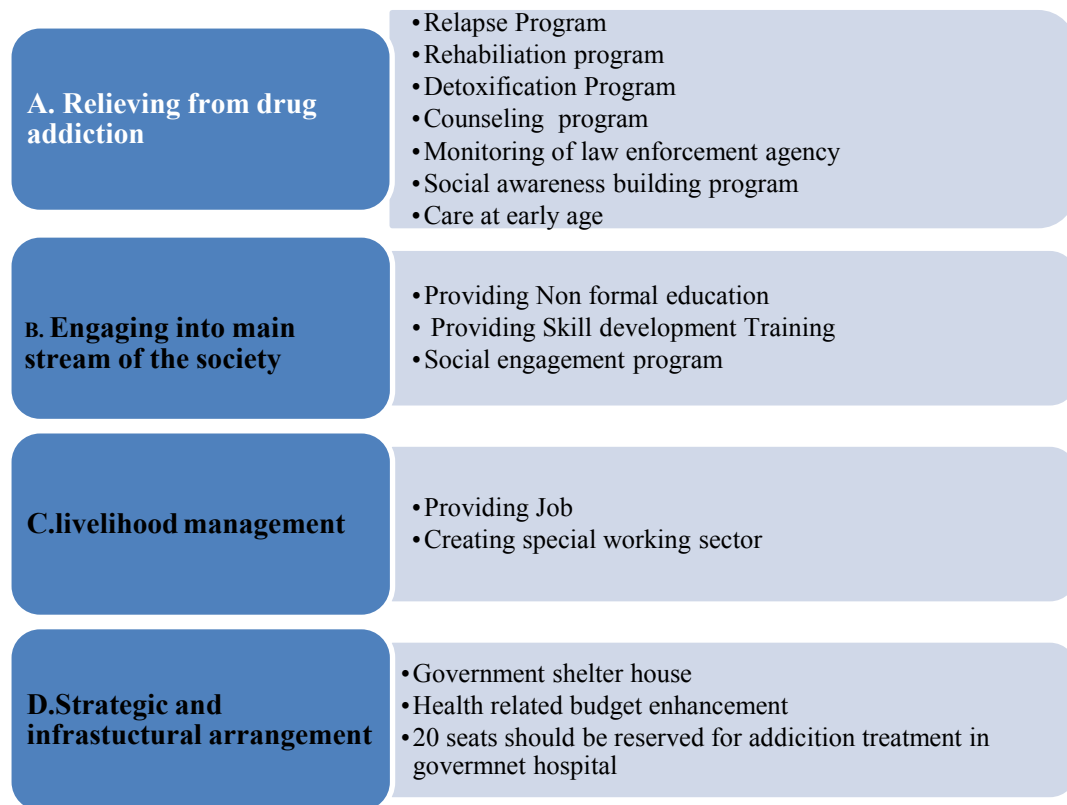


Figure 1: Developed by authors based on findings

- b. Engaing them into the main stream of society:** It is also important to engage cured street children into main stream of the society by providing non formal education, skill development training and social engagement activities( sports,cultural activities). These steps can be led by government ,NGOs and private sector individually or collaborately. Convincing them to return to their family by solving the problems which made them to remain apart from their families will be an imortant task to finish. Appending them to the main block of the society with generate remarkable positive impact for nation as a whole.
- c. Livelihood mangement:** Drug addicted street children ,who will be back from drug addiction ,will be educated and will be skilled then concern authorities should have to create job facilities as well as particular working sector for them. In this way underprivileged society like drug addicted street children can be able to contribute to the development of society as well as can be part of the Sustainable development.
- d. Strategic and infrastuctural arrangement:** Government need to be more concerned regarding the soulutions of street children dug addcition problem . The socio-economic development can not be ensured without addressing these socially deprived group of people. Government should adopt number of strategies that would incorporate plaanning and policy initiatives for the welfare of the street children . For example;establishing number of government initiated shelter homes or drop-in centers, enhancement of the allocation of health budget, number of reserved seats at governmmnet hospital should be made mandatory, etc.

## CONCLUSION

Street children are the backward section of the society as they survive negligibly without fundamental necessities. Love, affection and proper care are always remaining unserved to them. There are so many push or pull factors that entail the tragedy of the sufferings of these street children. Children are the nation builders, but the loss of those potential human resources experiencing meager rights like street children due to drug addiction is the greater challenge towards sustainable development. These children are snuffing their life out of themselves through life-threatening drugs. What we, the citizen of the society, do is simply ignore the tragic incidence around us. Presently, the proportion of drug or substance consumers among the destitute street children is on the rise. The aftermath of these situations of drug addiction comprises critical and enduring health issues and problems associated with mental breakdown etc. Besides other consequential damages like commotion in the interpersonal relationship, social exclusion, and propensity to criminal activities also occur. The rampant situation of drug addiction will get worse if the ill-treatment of society is not stopped immediately. Both government and non-governmental organizations should work together to uproot the evil from society. Launching comprehensive movement, rehabilitation, and other measures are the prompt measures those need to be adopted by the concerned people. State should act spontaneously without pondering about this problematic issue. It is believed that this study will help to suffice solutions to this problem of drug addiction to some extent. Recommendations are given to make some better plans to bring the street children out from the darkness of drug addiction and offer them the light of hope of a better life.



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