

Role of Non-government Organizations (NGOs) in Alleviating Poverty from Urban Slums: A Study in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Unplanned urbanization and industrialization created urban poverty has become major concern in developing countries. Slum in the urban area is major challenges to development because the condition of slum area is alarming. Migration of people from rural to urban area is increasing day by day. The present study aimed to investigate the role of NGOs in alleviating the poverty of the slum dwellers. It is quantitative study and guided by sample survey method. Interview with 180 samples and observation has been selected as data collection techniques for this study. The present study found that around 7% slum dwellers are engage in small business and 8% in porter. We observed that 17% dwellers are garments worker and 90% of them are women. 15% respondents earn near about 300-400 taka per day by working at factory as day labourer. Near about 46.66% respondent in the slum is motivated by the NGOs workers to get services from NGOs. 37% slum dwellers get services from famous and popular NGO named Grameen Bank. 24% of the respondent took membership on Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). 56% of slum dwellers engaged in the micro credit program because they need loan for their investment as well as to remove there poverty. 44.44% of slum dwellers express that NGOs initiatives changed their life and they are now in a state of lees food and clothing problem. 22% express that after joining in the NGO, there socio-economic status become charged. 11% slum dwellers think that the initiative and activities of NGOs create there awareness about poverty. Government should take more emphasis on this urban poverty field. Quality and quantity of the services provided by NGOs should be increased. Interest rate in micro credit must be decreased to bring a noteworthy development of slum dwellers.

Key words: Intervention, migration, poverty, slum, urban.

1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a relative deprivation of basic human needs. The definition of poverty can vary from

one country to another. The meaning of poverty in Bangladesh is based on the socio-economic condition. By the developmental criteria

Bangladesh is certainly poor country as well as the poverty is alarming social evil [1-2]. The causes of poverty in Bangladesh can so far be defined, as; rapid growth of population, lack of employment opportunity, lack of education, lack of skilled labor, lack of capital, less participation of women in development activities, child marriage, polygamy, divorced and superstition, terrorism and corruption, unequal distribution of resources etc. This list can be unended. However, among the causes mentioned some of them required direct government interference, like political instability, terrorism and land dispute etc. But NGO's in Bangladesh have come forward to remove almost all the causes and thus to remove poverty [3]. NGOs are operating numerous programmes to alleviate poverty from the urban setting, they mainly focusing on basic need of human being [4-5]. It is to mention that the causes of poverty mentioned are not spreader all over Bangladesh. People of particular area have been facing some of the causes of poverty. The slum area at Dhaka city is also affected by property. The prime focus of this study is urban slum, where various kind of poor people are living. Poverty mainly impact on the life of an underprivileged family. A deprived person is not able to take proper food and medication. It makes them inferior, both mentally and physically [6-7]. Reduced capacity to work further affects them financially, making them poorer. Children from poor family never get proper education & nourishment. Slum dwellers have to work hard for supporting their family. Some of them also involve in crimes like theft, murder, robbery, etc. [8-9]. The rationale of this study is to identify the real situation of urban slum and the impact of poverty. Study

findings also able to support for policy and plan makers from both regional and national level.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is quantitative in nature and sample survey method was applied. The study has been conducted at Dhaka (the capital city of Bangladesh). Three slums have been selected randomly with about 180 slum dwellers. The reasons for choosing the area are: easy access and communication of researcher to the respondents. The slum dwellers who are receiving the service from the Non-government Organizations (NGOs) has been considered as a population and unit of analysis. Data has been collected for this study by using face to face interview and observation techniques. Interview questionnaire has been prepared and pre-tested to collected data systematically. The present study also has been guided by study objectives.

The study focused to investigate the role of non-government organizations (NGOs) in alleviating poverty from urban slums. It also observed the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents; the nature of program run by the NGOs to alleviating poverty of slum dwellers; the impact of the program of NGOs on socio-economic development of slum dwellers; the limitation of these NGOs program; and slum dwellers opinion for future policy implication.

2.1. Limitations and Challenges

Slum area is affected with lot of problem like they are not aware about study and participation in policies making process. They did not co-operate properly with the team. Sometimes they tend to hide their information

like income, loan etc. Funds and time limitation was also a barrier in conducting this study. The research team faced difficulty in collecting data from female respondent due to religious values. Slum dwellers were engaged with their work and asked for financial support for becoming the volunteer or refused it.

The study has been conducted for the purpose of identifying the major causes of poverty in slum area and the role played by the NGOs to remove the poverty. This study also wanted to show the real scenario of poverty in urban area.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Age

Age is one of the important variables which present some significant meaning. It was observed that teenagers are not getting the

Table 1. Age of the Respondents (slum dwellers)			
Years of respondent	Frequency (No. of case)	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-30	27	27	15
30-45	75	102	41.67
45-60 up	78	180	43.33
Total	180	180	100%

Table 2. Gender of slum dwellers			
Gender	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	100	100	55.55
Female	80	180	44.44
Total	180	180	100

Table 3. Reason for migration to slum area	
Sr. No.	Reason (Pull and Push factors)
1	River erosion
2	Uprooted
3	Driven out
4	Abandoned
5	Meager income
6	Insecurity
7	For job

Table 4. Types of resident in slum			
Types of resident	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Son's house	30	30	16.66
Daughter's house	4	34	2.2
Own house	146	180	81.11
Total	180	180	100

Table 5. Types of resident in slum

Sr. No.	House Making Materials
1	Jhupri/Shacks/Mud
2	Bamboo structure/ Tong
3	Tin shed
4	Tong
5	Chhai
6	Pucca
7	Semi pucca
8	Kutcha flimsy structure
9	Dilapidated old buildings

Table 6. : Encouraged to involve in NGOs

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-initiative	41	41	22.77
By NGO staff	84	125	46.66
By neighbors	22	147	12.22
By relatives	30	177	16.66
Others	3	180	1.66
Total	180	180	100

Table 7. Name of NGOs where slum dwellers are took membership

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)	44	44	24.44
Asa	32	76	17.77
Grameen Bank	67	143	37.22
Proshika	10	153	5.55
Oxfam BD	12	165	6.66
Women for Women	5	170	2.77
Action aid BD	8	178	4.44
Others	2	180	1.11
Total	180	180	100

services provided by NGOs. Volunteers from the age ranging from 35 to 70 years are mostly receiving these services

The most profited age range was observed to be in between the range of 45-60 years. It was also observed that the people ranging between the age group of 30-60 years suffer extreme poverty (Table 1). In the urban slum area these

Table 8. Service of NGOs in Slum area

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Health service	12	12	6.66
Poverty reduce strategy advice (PRSA)	8	20	4.44
Loan service	140	160	77.77
Food and cloth	10	170	5.55
Housing facilities	6	176	3.33
Business plan service	4	180	2.22
Total	180	180	100

Table 9. Range of Loan amount of NGOs

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
1000-5000	70	70	38.88
5000-10000	102	172	56.66
10000-15000	5	177	2.77
More than 15000	3	180	1.66
Total	180	180	100

Table 10. Impact of NGOs activities for slum dweller's family

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Income increase	80	80	44.44
Received education	12	92	6.66
Awareness raised	20	122	11.11
Increased socio-economic status	40	162	22.22
Get better health facilities	12	174	6.66
Get better food facilities	6	180	3.33
Total	180	180	100

people wish to remove the poverty and sustain their family with good financial support. [10]. Both men and women from these areas are working hard with support provided by NGOs.

3.2. Gender

Gender is an important deliberation in development. It is a way of observing at how social norms and power structures effect on the lives and opportunities available to different groups of men and women [11]. In urban

setting women are more vulnerable than man because of poverty [12-13].

From the study it was observed that about 55.55% of respondent were male and 44.44% were female (table 2). This ratio has been drawn on the basis of the willingness of participants in conducting this study. Women in Bangladesh are more vulnerable and are not interested to share their problems due to several reasons. Many studies reported that

Table 11. Slum dwellers participation in decision making and poverty reduction process before joining the NGO

Decision and poverty reduction process	Always	Sometime	Never	Total
Working outside	10	12	158	180
Participation in various program	0	2	178	180
Family planning women	12	10	158	180
Family planning men	40	10	130	180
Health raised issue	20	8	152	180
Marriage (women)	5	5	170	180
Finance issue	32	8	140	180
Movement	8	12	160	180
Total	-	-		180

Table 12. Slum dwellers participation in decision making and poverty reduction process after joining the NGO

Decision and poverty reduction process	Always	Sometime	Never	Total
Working outside	102	70	8	180
Participation in various program	122	38	20	180
Family planning and women	133	47	0	180
Family planning men	172	7	1	180
Health raised issue	156	20	4	180
Marriage	166	13	1	180
Finance issue	145	20	15	180
Movement	122	30	28	180

Table 13. Type of treatment and facilities you got from NGO during your pregnancy (only for women)

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Food (Portion)	70	70	38.88
Vaccination	102	172	56.66
Medicine	5	177	2.77
Advice and tips	3	180	1.66
Total	180	180	100

when women are provided opportunities by NGOs and other facilities they have grown well and empowered many other to do so. But they are objected to participate and stay within their limitations [14].

3.3. Occupation/Profession

Slum people in urban area are engaged in various types of temporary occupation with low income. Some of their temporary work includes brick breaking, clay digger, porter, rickshaw/van driving, rag picking, carpenter,

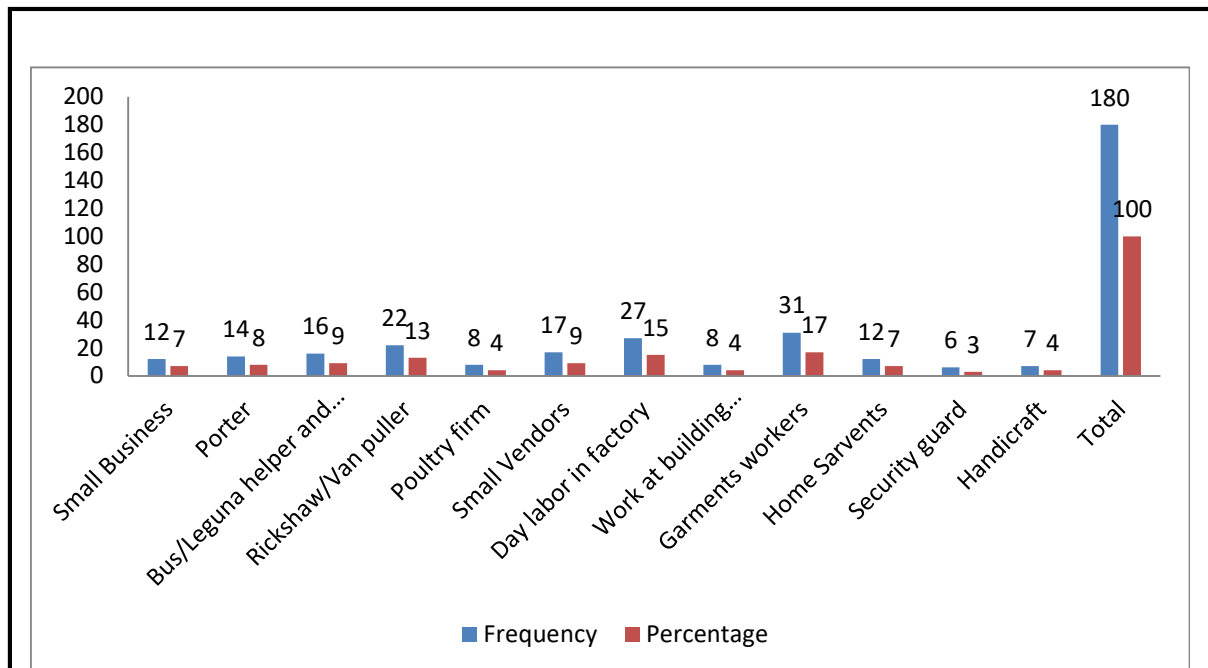


Fig 1. Occupation of the respondents

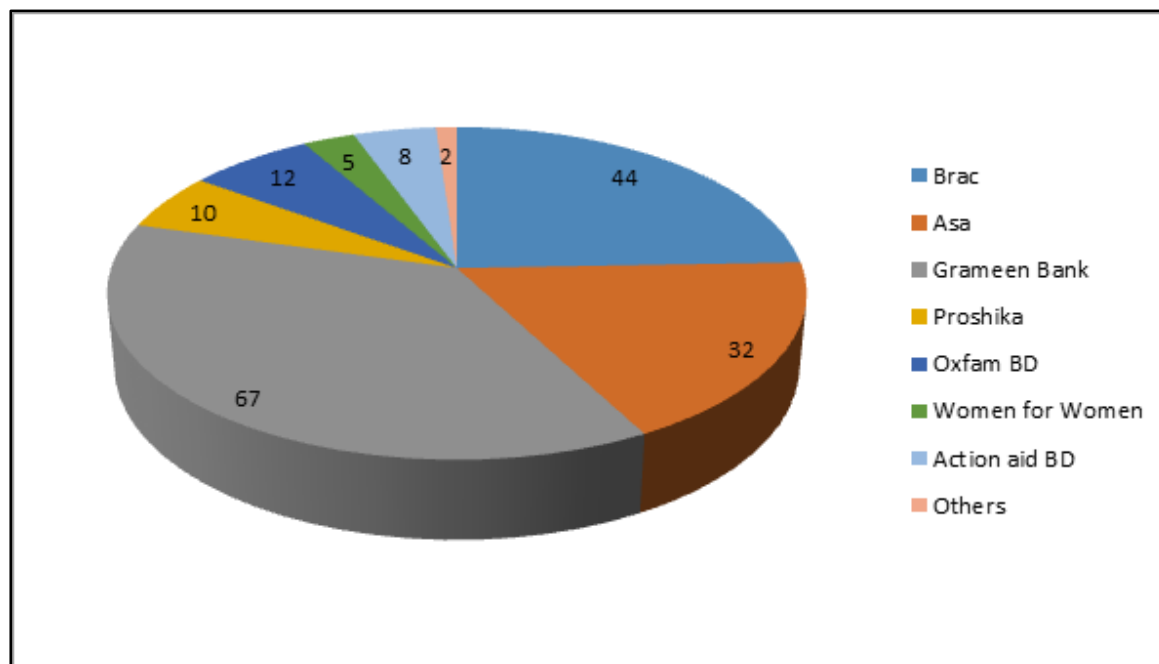


Fig 2. Name and frequency relationship between NGOs and respondents

plumbing, sewing, sorting medical waste, shop keeping, tailoring services etc. [15]. They have no profession academic qualification and trained skills to recognize a work as profession.

They source their jobs due to little educational qualification which bring them some earning.

Around 7% slum dwellers are engage in small business and 8% in pottery. They hire rickshaw or van from the garage for which they pay 120-

Table 14. Obstacles of slum dwellers faced while joining NGO

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Husband of wife did not like	70	70	38.88
It laws took it badly	102	172	55.56
Neighbor or relatives discouraged	5	177	2.77
Intra-personal conflict	3	179	1.66
Fair to loose	1	180	0.55
Total	180	180	100

Table 15. Obstacles of slum dwellers faced while joining NGO

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Loan amount is limited	22	22	12.22
High interest rate	150	172	83.33
Less income generating program	4	176	2.22
Laws and terms of NGOs	4	180	2.22
Total	180	180	100

Table 16. Bureaucratic complexity of NGOs in emergency service

Variable	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	150	150	83.33
No	30	180	16.67
Total	180	180	100

Table 17. Limitation of NGOs (overall)

Variables	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
High interest	80	80	44.44
Create invisible poverty	12	92	6.66
Laziness of Slum Dwellers	20	122	11.11
Abuse money from NGOs	40	162	22.22
Women abuse	12	174	6.66
Fraud NGOs	6	180	3.33
Total	180	180	100

180 taka per day as rent. Potters of these areas earn near about 300-400 taka per day (figure 1). Women from the slum area are engaged with handicraft and business activities and sometime they cook for others and earn money. About 17% of dwellers are workers at garment factory out of which 90% are women. 15%

respondents earn near about 300-400 taka per day by working at factory as day labourer. In city it can be see that women also engaged in building construction woke.

3.4. Migration and Factors

Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by economic factors, but also by social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education and transportation factors. It commonly takes place because of the push factor of fewer opportunities in the socio-economic situation. Also because of pull factors that exist in more developed areas [16] due to urbanization [17]. This is the reasons for migration of the respondents.

3.5. Resident in slum

Slum resident's development has converted a major urban arrangement and management problem due to the challenges they posture to the larger urban setting [18]. Activities of slum dwellers are known to undermine the social, economic and environmental sustainability efforts of city authorities. This makes the slum resident areas environment feature highly in urban regeneration programmes as a way of

improving the standards of living of slum dwellers.

About 81% of the total responded are living in their own house and 16% are living at thier son's residents (table 4). Most of the respondent who is living in their son's house are old or diseased. Only 2% of the respondent is living in the daughter's home who are mostly women.

3.6. NGOs and their service

The slum people suffers financial crisis and to overcome it they always try to find new and profitable sources [19]. They look forward to private and public organizations for getting free treatment and food. So poverty is main driving force to engage in NGOs activities and get services from that organization. In most cases NGOs field level stuff motivates slum dwellers to get service from their organizations [20].

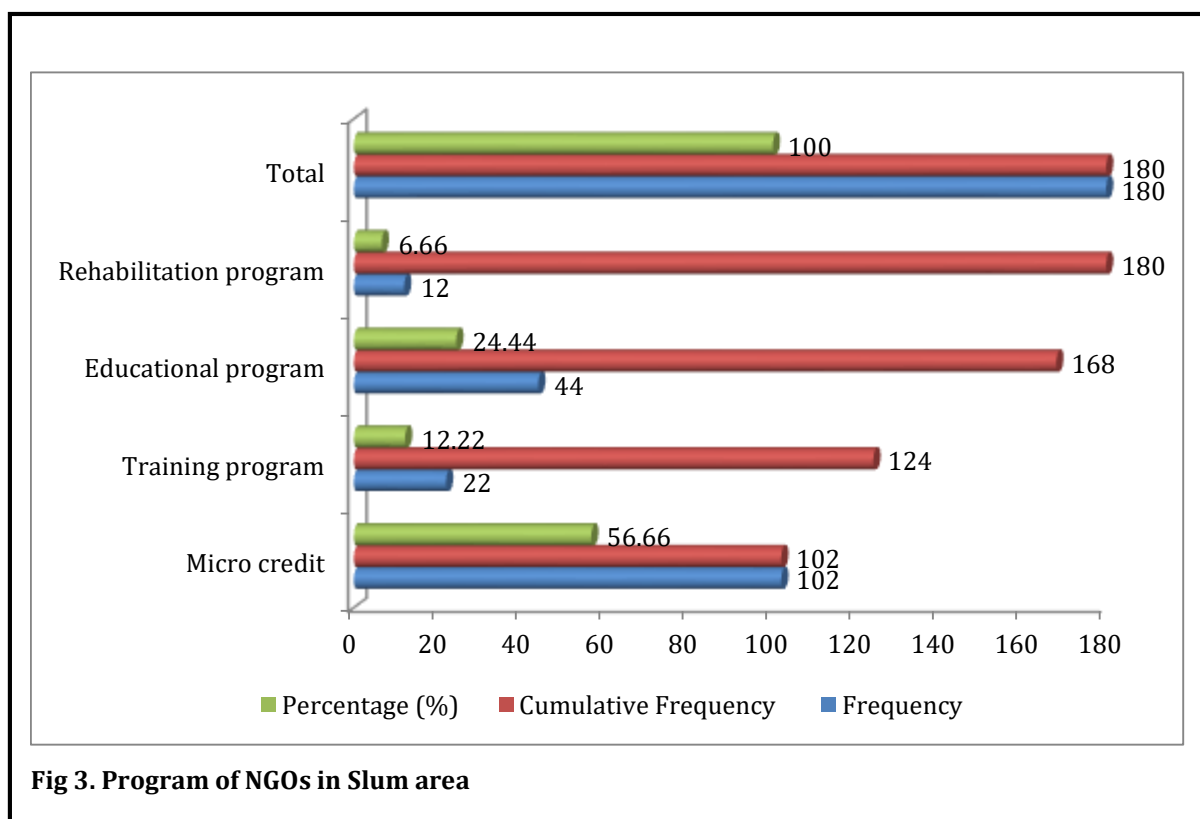


Fig 3. Program of NGOs in Slum area

About 46.66% respondents in the slum area are motivated by the NGOs workers (table 5). There are sometime that after repeated motivation from NGOs the slum dwellers refuge to join them. Near about 22% of the total respondent join the NGO by their own initiative that show that they are very concern about their poverty. They are aware about their financial condition and want to upgrade from their present situation for the family.

About 37% of respondents are members of a famous and popular NGO named Grameen Bank (table 7). 24% of the respondent took membership on Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC/Brac). They involve in their microcredit program and by this microcredit they want to increase the income.

The slum getting services from Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Asa,

Grameen Bank, Proshika, Oxfam BD, Women for Women NGO, Action aid BD, Vaab (Feelings) Bangladesh or Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB) (figure 2) [21-24]. Beside this Dhaka Ahsania Mission is operating a lot of educational programme in these area

It was observed that 56% of slum dwellers engaged in the micro credit program because they need loan for their investment as well as to remove there poverty. 24% of them engaged in training program that program help them to build up the capacity for more income (figure 4). Dhaka is one of the most densely populated and rapidly expanding mega cities in the world. Over 30 million people live in various cities in Bangladesh, which is roughly around 24% of the total population. It was estimated that the number would increase to about 68 million by 2016. And at this much populated crowd, NGOs

are playing an important role to remove poverty.

3.7. Services and programmes of NGOs in slum area

NGO's are playing a significant role in offering relief and other basic amenities to individuals who are suffering from extreme poverty. These non-governmental organizations have initiated some empowerment programs. These programs empower both men and women, thereby offering some commendable benefits in their lifestyle. NGO's have brought about some viable and effective, skill based livelihood programs. Various public services are provided by the NGO's both at Macro and Micro levels. NGO's have also implemented some viable development programs which are able to remove poverty and this role of NGOs is significant [25-28]. Micro credit, more specially is an important services to make the slum people more empower. The services of this micro credit programme of NGOs have a significant role [29].

Most of the slum dwellers take loan service because to remove the poverty we need immediate financial service. They also take health services from this NGO. BRAC is one of the popular NGO and they provide health and hygienic related services to the slum dwellers like sanitary latrine, tips for illness. In the time of natural disasters some NGOs provide them with food and cloth services (table 8)

It was observed that most of the slum dwellers took near about 5000-1000 loan and this amount is very effective for them (table 9). But interest of the 1000-5000 is flexible for the

slum dwellers and because of it most of the slum dwellers want more loan. From here it can be justify the psychology of the slum dwellers is very much haphazard with their decision.

Near about 44.44% of slum dwellers think that NGOs initiative changed their life and they are now in a state of less food problem. 22 % think that after joining in the NGO, there socioeconomic status have changed. 11% slum dwellers think that the initiative and activities of NGOs create there awareness about poverty (table 10).

Before joining the NGO the situation of the slum dwellers was not good. About 158 respondent had no permanent job and 158 women and 130 men have no planning about the family and child (table 11). These consequences create overpopulation and leading to more poverty. About 102 respondent work outside and 70 work outside sometime with the loan of NGO. This phenomenon shows that NGO actually play a vital role for poverty reduction (table 12). Here most amazing aspect is that the family planning aspect of women becomes 0 (Zero). This indicates that women in our country in marginal level become aware with the help of NGOs.

Due to poverty women in cannot get proper food, nutrition, health facilities which effect growth of their growing children [30] . About 56% of them got vaccination and 38% only got proper food facility during their pregnancy (table 13). This scenery was more vulnerable before taking the initiative of the NGO in the slum area of Dhaka City.

3.8. Limitation and Barriers of NGOs in getting Services

In getting services from the NGOs most of the time husbands do not permit wives to get services from male NGOs workers [14]. Some religious sentiments also creates barriers. NGOs also makes some bureaucratic complexity in getting the services. The interest rate of all NGOs is high, that sometime divert poor to poorer situation.

Some negative concept about the NGO create barrier to join the NGOs. 55% the respondent cannot join the NGO because of hard laws and tears of NGO. Sometime husband did not permit wife to join the NGO because of religious sentiments (table 14).

Some limitation related to the microcredit program of the NGO like loan amount is limited, high interest rate, less income generating program, laws and terms of NGOs. About 83 % of the respondent express that high interest rate is the great limitation of the NGO (table 15). Sometimes they show a lot of formalities that create complexity for the effectiveness of the program of NGO about the poverty reduction.

83 % of the respondent thinks that NGO create Bureaucratic complexity when they need emergency service. Only 16% think that they did not create any Bureaucratic complexity when they need emergency service (table 16).

The main identified limitation is high interest (44%), laziness, abuse money from NGOs, women abuse, fraud NGOs create invisible poverty: Some economist explain that micro

credit sometime crate more poverty, there are a lot of theory about this poverty and microcredit.

3.9. Slum Dwellers Opinion and Suggestions

Slum dwellers should be given priorities in all policies, planning and programs related to disaster management. Community-based awareness raising programs should be strengthened. Seminar, symposium and workshop will have to be arranged and ensure the participation of elderly people in these programs.

This study found that about 43% think that they have to increase their poverty reduction program as well they have to reduce high interested rate. Some respondent think that NGOs must maintain flexible formalities related to poverty reduction program. About 49% of the total population of Bangladesh is poor, destitute, vulnerable and living inhuman lives. 20 million people are extremely poor, which is 7% of the total population in Bangladesh.

4. CONCLUSION

NGOs should take some particular projects for this slum. NGOs has to take proper steps to stop crime in this slum. Government should work to ensure their basic needs properly. Fundamental facilities which government and other NGOs provide are not sufficient. So they should provide better health facility. Government should try to stop the establishment of illegal slum. Dhaka City Corporation is not giving proper concentration towards the poor Condition of slum. It has to give its attention towards the slum people. In this slum, the

people live an insecure life [21]. Government has to ensure security of those people. Without the development of the people of every level, the development of a county is not possible. For developing the quality and quantity of NGOs progarmme, NGOs should increase formal education facilities, micro credit programs, regulate rural to urban migration, enhance women's empowerment, ensure urban development and planned urbanization, increase self-employment opportunity, create a balance eco-system, create social awareness , bring positive social change and arrange programs for slum dwellers.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

NA

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

NA

7. SOURCE/S OF FUNDING

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