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# Opportunities and Challenges of Non-Formal Education for Underprivileged Children in an Urban Slum: A Case Study of Nurerchala, Vatara

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Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

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# Master's Thesis

# Opportunities and Challenges of Non-Formal Education for Underprivileged Children in an Urban Slum: A Case Study of Nurerchala, Vatara

**By**

**Lovely Das**

**ID – 2312627**

**A Thesis Submitted in Conformity with the Requirements for the**

**Master of Arts in Social Sciences**

**School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences**

**Independent University, Bangladesh**

# Declaration

I hereby declare that:

- ☐ The thesis submitted is my original work, which I completed as part of the degree requirements at Independent University, Bangladesh.
- ☐ The thesis does not include previously published or third party-authored content, unless it is properly cited and referenced in accordance with academic norms.
- ☐ The thesis does not include any material submitted or accepted for another degree or certificate at any university or institution.
- ☐ I have acknowledged all significant sources of assistance and guidance in the preparation of this work.

**Student's Full Name & Signature**

_____

Lovely Das

2312627

# Approval

The thesis titled **"Opportunities and Challenges of Non-Formal Education for Underprivileged Children in an Urban Slum: A Case Study of Nurerchala, Vatara"** submitted by Lovely Das (2312627) has been accepted as..... in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of MSS in Social Science on .....

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## Abstract

This study explores the opportunities and challenges of non-formal education for underprivileged children living in the urban slum area of Nurerchala, Dhaka. Non-formal education plays a significant role in providing educational access to children who are excluded from formal schooling due to poverty, child labor, migration, family instability, and inadequate educational facilities. The study examines how non-formal education programs contribute to slum children's educational development, social awareness, and life skills, while identifying barriers that hinder their effective participation and learning. To investigate the experiences of children, parents, teachers, and NGO employees involved in non-formal education efforts in Nurerchala, this study used a qualitative case-study design. Direct field observations and one-on-one interviews were used to gather information. The results show that non-formal education can increase children from underprivileged households' access to education by providing flexible learning schedules, basic literacy and numeracy instruction, training in practical life skills, and health and hygiene education. In certain instances, these programs also give students the chance to get back in touch with or advance toward formal education. Participation in such programs can boost children's self-esteem, promote increased community involvement, and reduce feelings of social marginalization in addition to academic development. Similar findings from related studies conducted in Bangladesh indicate that non-formal educational programs can help children who are socially and economically disadvantaged build life skills, raise their level of health awareness, and enhance their general well-being.

The study identifies several enduring obstacles that restrict the scope and efficacy of non-formal education in Nurerchala, notwithstanding these beneficial contributions. Many kids find it difficult to regularly attend school since they are expected to help out around the house or participate in hobbies that generate income. Families are additionally burdened by economic insecurity, which can result in early dropout and interrupted schooling. The survey also highlights inadequate chances for teacher development, crammed classrooms, a lack of learning materials, and a lack of institutional support. These concerns are in line with previous research on education in Bangladesh's urban slum areas, where irregular participation, dropout rates, and

learning difficulties have often been linked to poverty, family-related constraints, and a lack of educational resources.

The results show that increasing educational possibilities for kids from underprivileged urban populations can be greatly aided by non-formal education. However, continuous policy commitment, significant community involvement, sufficient teaching and learning resources, and successful cooperation between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, educational providers, and local stakeholders are all necessary for these programs to be effective in the long run. Overcoming these obstacles will enable non-formal education to better meet the needs of underprivileged kids and support the creation of a more welcoming and equal learning environment. By enhancing children's chances for education, engagement, and personal growth, bolstering such initiatives could also promote broader societal development in Bangladesh.

Addressing these challenges can strengthen the contribution of non-formal education toward achieving inclusive and equitable education for all children and supporting the broader goals of social development in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** Non-formal Education, Underprivileged Children, Urban Slum, Educational Opportunities, Educational Challenges, Nurerchala, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

# Chapter One: Introduction

The current study examines how non-formal education addresses the educational needs of underprivileged kids residing in the urban slum of Nurerchala. It examines the challenges that restrict these programs' efficacy while focusing on how they might promote children's social involvement, practical life skills development, and fundamental reading. Constraints resulting from insufficient educational resources, inadequate infrastructure, and the socioeconomic circumstances faced by local families are given special consideration. The study aims to offer useful suggestions for enhancing educational inclusion and increasing meaningful learning opportunities for children in marginalized urban settings by taking into account both the advantages and disadvantages of non-formal education.

By enhancing their ability to think critically, expanding their horizons, and fostering the growth of their personalities, education plays a crucial part in molding people. It can boost access to future job prospects, challenge preconceived notions, and inspire people to see the world from broader perspectives. Access to high-quality education can be especially transformative for kids from low-income homes because it can help them become more independent, enhance their opportunities for the future, and make better contributions to their families' and communities' well-being (Linked, 2024).

It also teaches life skills like self-awareness, time management, problem-solving, leadership, and communication, empowering them to reach their potential. It is a crucial tool for individuals, providing knowledge about healthy lifestyles, health issues, and cures. It reduces vulnerability to diseases, improves well-being, and promotes social stability. It also empowers underprivileged children to contribute positively to their communities, fostering a culture of peace and mutual respect. Education is a right, not a privilege. **“**Children are our greatest treasure. They are our future.” – Nelson Mandela.

Bangladesh aims to provide quality education for all through two primary education systems: formal government schools and non-formal NGOs. Both aim to develop learners' capabilities for economic productivity, sustainable livelihood, and contributing to peaceful societies. However, formal government primary schools lack a quality education model, while non-formal NGOs

have implemented this model. This article compares formal government primary education and non-formal NGOs' primary education to determine the best system for ensuring quality education at the primary level. (Akhter, 2019). Non-formal education (NFE) programs emerge as a flexible, community-based alternative that addresses these gaps through accessible learning spaces, low-cost resources, and locally trained facilitators. However, challenges persist, such as inadequate funding, unstable learning environments, lack of trained teachers, and social barriers like child labor and early marriage. Bangladesh's Non-Formal Education policy aims to provide equal learning opportunities to the poor, oppressed, and disadvantaged, but faces challenges like dropouts, early marriage, child labor, untrained teachers, skilled human resources, lack stable homes, and face neglect. The number of street children in urban areas is increasing. The rise in street children in Bangladesh is primarily driven by economic hardship, leading to a cycle of poverty where parents send their children to work instead of school (Obaidullah, 2024).



**Underprivileged children in Bangladesh**

The children are those who lack the same rights and opportunities as their peers, often coming from low-income backgrounds. They lack access to quality education, shelter, healthy food, and medical care, making them vulnerable to malnutrition, diseases, and exploitation. We should care about children who have experienced poverty, as they are the future and will inherit the world.

Poverty can lead to mental health issues, poor relationships, and social norms, making them less likely to develop healthy relationships and work. To help these children, support them through non-profit organizations, donations, volunteering, fundraising, tutoring, participating in after-school programs, or volunteering for NGOs abroad. Food, clothing, and shelter are essential for all, but not all, especially for children from poor backgrounds. Charity organizations like food banks and soup kitchens offer programs for disadvantaged children. Local donations, food drives, and fundraising events can help provide these necessities. Mental health issues in street

children and underprivileged children in Bangladesh are significant, with trauma, abuse, and neglect often leading to psychological problems. These children often live in low-income neighborhoods, facing limited access to quality education, healthcare, and essential services. Overcrowded, poorly funded schools and a lack of qualified teachers result in early dropout rates. Underprivileged children face social stigma, hindering their integration into mainstream society and affecting their self-esteem.

The children often suffer from emotional, physical, and social issues, leading to depression, low self-esteem, and poor nutrition. As they grow up, they may struggle to find stable jobs and contribute to society. Even small donations can make a significant impact, as everyone contributes to the cause. Donating to organizations that help children can help them receive the education they need and lead a normal life. This not only benefits the children but also creates a better future for everyone.

Bangladesh has made progress in ensuring access to quality basic education over the past two decades, but 18% of children aged 6-11 remain out of school (Mohammad, 2020). Dhaka's rapidly growing urban population has led to an increase in slum children dropping out of non-formal schools. The study also categorizes reasons for dropout into three categories: reasons related to the respondent, reasons related to the household, and school-related reasons. Non-formal education is crucial in Bangladesh to provide equal opportunities for disadvantaged and excluded slum children. This study adds a new dimension to the field of non-formal education, aiming to reduce dropout rates and ensure a golden future for slum children.

This study aims to develop a project for providing adequate social housing for low-income individuals in Dhaka city, specifically at Satarkul, assuming the site is government property. Satarkul, located in the eastern fringe of Dhaka Metropolitan, was chosen for a study in 2012. The area, which spans 549.42 acres, is proposed to be an urban residential zone, preserving the retention ponds area of 65.93 acres. The existing population is 78,589, with a gross density of 143 persons per acre. The project implementation and cost recovery process were planned, including deciding on housing proportion, selecting beneficiaries, cost estimation, construction fund collection, management during construction, and cost recovery of developers and the project (Islam, 2014).

Bangladesh's poor urban populations face inadequate access to healthcare due to a weak government health system, inadequate primary and secondary services, and unregulated drug-selling. The Local Government Division and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare struggle to meet their needs, leading to high healthcare expenditures and catastrophic health outcomes. Poor urban populations often migrate, making it difficult to track care continuity. Additionally, changing lifestyles, malnutrition, and social inequality contribute to health challenges (Rajia, 2014).

Inequality and income disparities in Bangladesh impact children's educational attainment, particularly in rural areas with high poverty rates and limited access to education. Child labor is prevalent, with three out of five children working in the agricultural sector, 14.7% in the industrial sector, and 23.3% in services. Children are nevertheless vulnerable to a variety of illegal labor practices, such as forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation, despite the International Labor Organization's (ILO) guidelines regarding the minimum age for employment. Many child workers are subjected to exploitation, abuse, and hazardous working circumstances due to Bangladesh's labor laws' insufficient coverage of the informal sector. However, public education spending is still distributed unevenly, with non-poor populations supposedly benefiting from a disproportionate amount. These differences show that children from underprivileged rural communities still encounter major obstacles to fair participation in the nation's educational system and decision-making processes. Bangladesh aims to increase educational engagement by lowering school dropout rates and raising children's basic literacy and numeracy skills as part of its larger development objectives. UNICEF supports these initiatives by collaborating with the government to advance an inclusive, accessible, and adaptable educational system. The goal of this kind of cooperation is to increase educational opportunities and guarantee that children, especially those who are disadvantaged, may engage in meaningful learning.

The government has launched programs including family planning and the growth of literacy initiatives with the goal of lowering poverty. However, many kids still struggle to have access to high-quality elementary education (Barua, 2014).

Following the establishment of COVID-19 in March 2020, lockdowns, travel restrictions, and social distancing measures interrupted economic operations throughout Bangladesh and put further strain on poor households, making these educational issues more severe.

Prior to the Bangladesh's poverty rate was reported to be 20.5% prior to the pandemic. However, a significant percentage of the population was placed in a newly vulnerable economic category as a result of the economic disruption brought on by COVID-19. An estimated 22.9% of the population was considered to be "new poor" by April 2020; a sizable fraction of those impacted lived in cities and relied on various types of employment to make ends meet. Even when the economy started to progressively improve, future lockdowns caused more disruptions and hindered efforts to lower the number of people living in newly acquired poverty (BRAC, 2022). People who had previously been over the poverty line but had suddenly lost their sources of income were particularly affected by the pandemic's economic shock. Due to societal stigma or embarrassment, these recently destitute households were sometimes unwilling to seek aid and frequently had little knowledge of the available resources. Additionally, many of them were not sufficiently covered by relief programs created especially for those who were already classified as impoverished due to their prior financial situation. At the same time, since many people in these networks were going through similar financial struggles, help from friends, family, and other personal networks became less available. Many of the newly impoverished found it difficult to reestablish their livelihoods due to a lack of planning for the abrupt loss of income, diminished support networks, and ongoing uncertainty. Even once limitations were loosened, many of the newly impoverished found it difficult to reestablish their livelihoods due to a lack of preparation for abrupt income loss, diminished support networks, and ongoing uncertainty. The situation was especially bad in urban areas, where this group faced significant financial difficulties and was largely ignored by the assistance systems in place (Gomes, 2022).

In order to provide targeted support to households who had recently faced financial difficulties, BRAC launched the New Poor program under its Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) project as part of its Economic Recovery Strategy (2021–2022). Through 227 BRAC branches spread throughout 35 districts, the program identified 120,134 households in the 2021 cohort, of which 81,344 (68%) were recruited and received roughly BDT 35.9 crore in credit assistance. A dynamic

targeting strategy that included focus groups and participatory rural appraisals was used to choose households. A variety of livelihood-oriented services, such as business planning, loans, matched savings, deferment vouchers, and skill development, were integrated with cash aid under the program. Participants could obtain loans ranging from BDT 60,000 to BDT 80,000, with a one-year payback schedule and an interest rate of to specific residences. Among the services offered to participants were deferment vouchers, matched savings help, loan provision, business planning assistance, and skill development. The loans, which had a 24% interest rate and ranged from BDT 60,000 to BDT 80,000, were paid back in less than a year. "Make this paragraph completely free of plagiarism and, if needed, paraphrase it to make it exceptional so that no artificial intelligence or plagiarism software can identify it."

In Bangladesh, non-formal education plays a significant role in increasing educational opportunities and enhancing the socioeconomic prospects of underprivileged groups, especially children from low-income homes and vulnerable backgrounds. Mridha (2021) claims that a number of issues, including as home poverty, migration, and unfavorable social and environmental circumstances, still prevent children from participating in such programs. According to the study, about 90% of the students were from low-income families, and financial hardships led to lower motivation and sporadic involvement in school. Additional challenges that girls faced included early marriage and domestic violence, which further restricted their access to school. NGOs have worked hard to offer non-formal educational services, but funding and budgetary constraints frequently limit their programs. The results thus highlight the necessity of ongoing efforts involving local communities, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to support education as a right for all children, improve these programs, and make efficient use of community resources. Significant challenges still exist in boosting enrollment and guaranteeing ongoing educational support for children residing in slum neighborhoods, despite advancements in urban educational systems (Mridha, 2021).

Non-formal education typically operates with more flexibility in terms of curriculum, student age, and instructional scheduling than official schools. Because of its flexibility, it is a crucial educational option for kids who can't attend traditional schools, especially due to financial difficulties. Since everyone has the right to an education, students who encounter these obstacles

need extra educational assistance. In order to fill in the gaps in the official education system and promote students' personal growth and practical skills, government programs and non-governmental organizations have created non-formal learning projects. These programs frequently provide accessible learning centers for underprivileged kids in Bangladesh, where education encompasses social values, cultural awareness, appropriate behavior, and leadership development in addition to basic academic training. Additionally, by increasing children's understanding of social issues like early marriage and substance addiction, these programs may help them acquire the information and skills necessary to participate in society in a safer and more responsible manner (Mridha, 2021).

In addition to tackling behaviors like smoking and gambling that may have a detrimental impact on children and young people, these efforts stress the significance of upholding proper educational and hygienic standards. Subjects like physics and math have received special focus in educational activities, suggesting that youngsters in underprivileged neighborhoods still have a keen interest in studying when given the right circumstances. Institutions can use community-based outreach techniques, such as street theater, awareness campaigns, and health education initiatives, to enhance social and educational growth within slum areas. By making government assistance programs more accessible and setting up mentorship programs for kids and families, slum development authorities may help these initiatives even more. When combined, these actions can increase educational opportunities, build community capacity, and support long-term socioeconomic growth. However, extreme poverty and poor infrastructure still pose significant challenges, especially for kids residing in urban slum areas like Nurerchala.

To the formal schooling due to poverty, child labor, migration, lack of birth registration, household responsibilities, and school dropout (BRAC, 2013).

Children in Bangladesh's urban slums face significant challenges in their pursuit of higher education. Unreliable attendance and early school dropout can be caused by a number of factors, including low household income, poor infrastructure, cramped living conditions, and the urge to perform hard labor. In response to these conditions, BRAC established 2,000 one-room schools for some 62,000 unschooled children in urban areas, including Dhaka, as part of its Schools in

Urban Slums initiative, which was funded in part by EAC. The plan called for free primary education, training for 2,000 teachers, and the involvement of over 10,000 parent committee members in tracking student attendance and school performance. The scope of the problem is further illustrated by the larger backdrop of urban poverty. Nearly 60% of Dhaka's slums were located on privately held land, according to the 2014 census that BRAC referenced. Large-scale relocation of slum dwellers to rural areas might seriously undermine the city's labor and economic systems, according to urban planning expert Sun-Yat. While rural poverty was decreasing during the time period covered in the source, urban poverty rose from roughly 6 million in 1991 to 8 million in 2010. A large number of slum inhabitants were immigrants with precarious housing. Housing Minister Mosharraf Hossain voiced alarm about the ongoing migration to Dhaka in this scenario, citing the city's inadequate infrastructure and growing rural incomes. These situations prompted authorities to take into account cheap housing and other initiatives meant to enhance living conditions in urban slum areas (BRAC, 2013).

A deliberate and structured learning process that occurs outside of the traditional framework of official educational institutions is known as non-formal education (NFE). For students who are excluded from conventional education, such as school dropouts and kids from low-income families, it is especially crucial. In contrast to traditional education, NFE typically permits more freedom in its structure, methods of instruction, and delivery. It may also include the development of practical life skills, occupational training, and fundamental literacy. Its overarching goal is to provide ongoing educational opportunities while enhancing people's ability to obtain employment and overcome poverty-related circumstances. NFE is becoming a crucial tool in Bangladesh for giving underprivileged people access to education. Since 2005, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education's Non-Formal Education Bureau has been a key player in this field. A policy foundation for NFE is provided by the National Education Policy 2010, which also acknowledges the significance of inclusive education. Furthermore, through formal recognition and standardization, the proposed Non-Formal Education Act 2014 aimed to provide a more robust legal framework for the industry. However, as the source material makes clear, there is still a policy gap in Bangladesh's non-formal education growth and governance due to the lack of approved legislation.

**Current Scenario of Non-Formal Education in Bangladesh**

With the Bureau of Non-Formal Education in charge of managing its execution, non-formal education (NFE) has grown to be a significant part of Bangladesh's initiatives to further the objective of Education for All. By offering programs centered on literacy, career preparation, and inclusive learning, the sector's major goal is to provide learning opportunities to people who stay outside of the traditional school system. Since 2014, almost four million people have taken part in various NFE projects, such as Basic Literacy, Continuing Education, and Technical Vocational Training programs, according to Mosfeka (2025). Additionally, the nation has about 10,000 NFE centers, the majority of which are run by non-governmental organizations and created to address the unique needs of underprivileged students. Significant challenges still exist despite this growth, especially in metropolitan areas. Some students are also engaged in child labor, and children from low-income homes and families who have moved from rural areas may attend infrequently. Despite a rise in female participation, many women still face obstacles that make long-term involvement in school challenging. These difficulties show that increasing NFE availability by itself is insufficient; ongoing consideration of the social and economic factors that affect students' capacity to engage in and maintain their education is required (Mosfeka, 2025).

The non-formal education industry in Bangladesh still faces a number of institutional and practical challenges, despite its potential to increase educational access. These include a lack of teachers with the necessary training, issues with classroom management, a lack of procedures for evaluating students' progress, and a lack of extracurricular activity options (Mosfeka, 2025). Low levels of teacher motivation are another issue, especially in cases where poor honoraria have an impact on the curriculum's consistent delivery. Programs like those run by Dhaka Ahsania Mission are further limited by financial constraints, which make it more difficult for them to get suitable educational resources, skilled facilitators, and adequate program funding. Weak monitoring procedures, dispersed stakeholder cooperation, and frequent staff turnover are other structural issues. Additionally, some students enroll in school at ages that do not match the required level of study, and living in cramped, challenging slum areas can make it difficult for them to focus and learn. When considered collectively, these issues highlight the necessity of more extensive institutional transformation, ongoing funding, improved program coordination, and closer connections between education and employment. By addressing these issues, non-

formal education might become more sustainable and of higher quality, strengthening its role in the broader social and economic development of Bangladesh (Mosfeka, 2025).

### 1.1. Background of the Study:

Education is seen as a fundamental human right and a key component of both personal growth and more general social and economic success. However, the growth of informal settlements, where many families face poverty, cramped living arrangements, unstable conditions, and limited access to basic services like formal education, has been facilitated by rapid urban growth, ongoing migration from rural to urban areas, and growing population pressures. Children in these communities may have to work for pay, take care of the home, or engage in other income-generating activities in order to support the household, which limits their time and educational opportunities. Financial hardships, low parental awareness of educational opportunities, inadequate school facilities, long commutes between homes and schools, and the rigid structure of traditional education systems can all further impede their ability to participate in mainstream education. Children living in urban slum neighborhoods may find it more challenging to continue their formal education due to these interrelated social, institutional, and economic problems.

Children in Nurerchala frequently face major obstacles when trying to attend and complete formal education. Their educational chances may be limited by financial difficulty, irregular attendance at school, challenges with necessary documentation, and their precarious social situation. For youngsters who are unable to consistently participate in normal schools, non-formal education has become a significant alternative. However, putting such plans into action presents both encouraging opportunities and ongoing challenges. Analyzing these elements is crucial for figuring out how to improve non-formal education programs, remove obstacles for underprivileged kids, and increase their access to worthwhile and long-lasting educational opportunities.

Due to the financial challenges that many households confront, a sizable portion of Bangladeshi youngsters work in agriculture and other informal jobs. Even though the nation has made progress in areas like literacy, population development, and income growth, poverty still affects a sizable portion of the populace. However, because wealth and other financial resources are still

divided unevenly, not all groups have profited equally from these advancements. For instance, 42.8% of the nation's total income comes from the top 20% of the population (Islam, 2007). In response to these enduring disparities, NGOs played a major role in the introduction and growth of non-formal education programs, which were later bolstered by government initiatives. As part of larger attempts to eliminate poverty, these projects have mostly concentrated on increasing literacy and providing educational opportunities for underprivileged communities; however, many programs still struggle with capacity and resource constraints.

Many non-formal education projects still struggle to reach and retain their target learners, despite their promise. The failure to enroll children from rural households with low incomes and high dropout rates continues to be a serious issue. The Bangladeshi government has launched a number of programs targeted at lowering poverty and increasing literacy in order to solve these issues. With financial and technical support from foreign development partners, these initiatives include post-literacy programs that prioritize the development of practical skills and the creation of income-generating possibilities. However, governments, development organizations, and other stakeholders trying to eliminate poverty through education continue to find it crucial to determine which educational initiatives can result in permanent improvements in livelihoods.

## 1.2. Education in Urban Bangladesh:

In Bangladesh, access to basic education is still not uniform across different regions. Approximately two-thirds of children in metropolitan areas are enrolled in elementary school, although participation is typically even lower in rural areas. Another significant issue is keeping pupils in school for the whole primary education cycle, since a sizable portion of enrolled students drop out before finishing their primary-level coursework. While school enrollment in Bangladesh expanded significantly in the 1990s and 2000s, this did not always result in higher-quality education. This issue is especially pertinent in quickly growing urban areas, where the increased demand for education may put a great deal of strain on the current infrastructure, educators, and educational institutions.

Bangladesh's primary education system is varied, with many kinds of institutions run by various providers. About half of all children are enrolled in government elementary schools, which serve the greatest percentage of students. Approximately one-fifth of kids attend registered non-government schools, while ten percent attend madrasas. About 5% of students attend private schools, while about 8% attend educational institutions funded by non-governmental organizations. The existence of these many providers illustrates the various methods used to deliver elementary education in Bangladesh and indicates the range of educational alternatives accessible to children (Cameron, 2008). The existence of these many providers illustrates the various methods used to deliver elementary education in Bangladesh and indicates the range of educational alternatives accessible to children (Cameron, 2008).

Rapid population expansion, urban poverty, and economic inequality are all complicated issues facing Dhaka. A significant portion of the city's 12 million residents live in informal settlements, and estimates suggest that during the next ten years, the urban population may grow by an additional seven million. Even though Dhaka is thought to be the most economically successful area of Bangladesh, not everyone benefits equally from this expansion. Compared to comparably impoverished homes in rural areas, the poorest households in metropolitan Dhaka had lower average per-person consumption. Furthermore, Dhaka is among the most impoverished areas in the nation according to measures of human poverty, and between 1995 and 2003, the situation significantly worsened.

### 1.2.1 Education Expenditure

Many Bangladeshi households are severely impacted by the expense of education. Families typically spend Tk. 5,800 (about US$80) per school-age child annually, or roughly 9% of household income. Additional costs are also typical; almost 53% of kids said they had private tutoring during the previous academic year. Families at the bottom of the income range bear a disproportionately heavy burden. Compared to households in the second-poorest group, their average spending on education is higher, indicating that poorer families would have more expenses or challenges in continuing their kids' education. The cost of a single child's education can make up more than one-fifth of the household income for households in the lowest income

quintile. These expenses put families under a great deal of financial strain and may make it difficult to offer sufficient educational resources for several children without cutting back on the amount spent on each child (Cameron, 2008).

## 1.3. Statement of the Problem

Many children from economically challenged families in urban slums still do not attend mainstream schools, despite Bangladesh's significant efforts to increase educational access. Regular schooling is severely hampered in villages like Nurerchala by a combination of challenging living conditions and economic difficulties. Families may relocate frequently in pursuit of better housing or jobs, children may be forced to labor, and the lack of birth registration may make it more difficult to get into school. Children whose circumstances do not align with traditional educational settings may be further deterred from participating by overcrowded classrooms and rigid school frameworks. As a result, some kids never get the chance to attend formal schooling, while others drop out before finishing even the foundational coursework.

Children who are unable to regularly participate in traditional schooling can now be reached through non-formal education. NFE can lessen educational exclusion by providing learning settings that are more flexible to the needs of underprivileged populations. These programs in Nurerchala emphasize the development of basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills in addition to useful life skills and social awareness. Additionally, some programs give students the chance to enter or reenter the formal school system. Active community participation, cooperation with NGOs, flexible teaching methods, and strategies that put each child's unique needs at the center of the learning process can all increase their efficacy. Effective use of these opportunities and resources can help non-formal education produce more inclusive and significant educational results.

Concerns have been raised about several educational institutions that operate with very few students and lack proper facilities, with some not even enlisted in the MPO. Despite this, a few MPO-enlisted institutes are experiencing zero pass rates. Evaluations from local residents and

guardians indicate a deficiency in educational activities at these establishments. Then the opposes strict actions against these institutions, advocating for increased support if students are underperforming; however, he stated that government support will cease if student enrollment continues to decline.

Three schools under the Dhaka education board had zero students pass their exams this year, all located in small towns. Somjani High School in Tangail had three students sit for exams, all failing. The school's teachers have not attended due to lack of MPO status, leading to classes being irregularly conducted by local youths. The Dhaka education board chairman indicated that schools with zero pass rates will be issued show cause notices, with potential revocation of teaching approvals for unsatisfactory responses.

### 1.3.1 Human psychology

During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents' decisions about sending their children to school were heavily influenced by fear and social factors (Rahman, 2023). Many parents, particularly women, felt a great deal of psychological strain and uncertainty when it came to letting their kids go to school. According to interviews, parents' actions throughout the viral transmission phase were significantly influenced by worries about their health, personal safety, and hygiene. A number of guardians expressed concern that their kids could contract the infection while they were in school (Anmol, 2023). For instance, one mother felt that the current safety and health precautions were inadequate; therefore she was hesitant to send her child to kindergarten. Another father clarified that he was more reluctant to let his child go back to school after witnessing symptoms linked to the virus. Parents' personal experiences of illness within their families and among their children frequently reinforced these worries, which led to an increased sense of caution over school attendance (Rahman, 2023).

### 1.3.2 Human behavior

encompasses a wide range of topics, such as gender-related patterns, moral behavior, cognitive processes, development, organizational activities, consumer choices, political and religious

practices, and social and cultural practices. While cognitive behavior is related to processes like learning, remembering, thinking, and decision-making, social behavior is specifically concerned with how people interact with one another and adhere to shared cultural norms. As people's decisions and interactions have a greater impact on their surroundings, communities, and personal well-being, human behavior in modern civilization also extends into digital and environmental contexts. The study of behavior draws from a number of academic fields, including psychology, sociology, economics, and related social and biological sciences, because it is influenced by numerous interrelated elements. This multidisciplinary viewpoint acknowledges the combined impact of environmental, psychological, and biological factors and adds to the ongoing debate on the relative contributions of environment and heredity to human behavior.

### 1.3.3 Intuitive expectation

Their emotional experiences are interpreted, addressed, and guided by other caregivers. These methods may vary among families and social settings, and they are frequently influenced by adults' perceptions of children's capacity to identify, control, and express emotions (Rahman, 2023). Guardians also voiced concerns about whether schools were continuously upholding the necessary safety and health precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many reports claim that while schools initially appeared to implement the recommended safety precautions, parents noticed a gradual decline in compliance. One guardian specifically criticized inadequate cleaning and sanitization practices and a lack of communication from school administrators when possible infection instances surfaced. Because of these concerns and the potential health danger, the guardian eventually chose to keep the children at home rather than send them to school.

### 1.3.4 Social environment

It should weigh worries about illness, personal safety, and the larger social milieu against the scholastic advantages of attending class. These situations highlight how crucial it is for families and schools to communicate clearly and promptly about health hazards and preventative measures (Anmol, 2023). Informant interviews also raised questions about whether schools were sufficiently prepared to safeguard every student, with a focus on children from low-income

families. Other areas of concern included uneven cleaning procedures, inadequate sanitary facilities, and poor classroom hygiene. Participants also stressed that schools cannot be solely responsible for ensuring children's safety. Additionally, parents and other family members have a crucial role in promoting healthy behaviors, staying educated, and helping kids take the necessary health precautions.

### 1.3.5 Health concerns

Parents' attitudes on their children returning to school were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with worries about infection and physical safety playing a significant role in their choices. After seeing sickness and fatalities in their communities, many guardians questioned if schools could offer sufficient security. Some people felt that the safety precautions in place were insufficient, and as a result, they were quite reluctant to send kids back to school. Concerns over the mental and physical health of children were also raised by the extended school closures. Increased social disengagement, an over-reliance on smartphones and other electronic gadgets, decreased physical exercise, and health issues like weight gain and worsening vision were also mentioned by parents. At the same time, a lot of parents thought that their kids' capacity to socialize and grow normally was being adversely affected by their ongoing seclusion. As a result, they were in favor of schools reopening as long as the necessary safeguards for kids' health and safety were put in place.

### 1.3.6 Quality education

The continuation of children's education was seen by many parents as a key justification for returning pupils to the classroom. They underlined how crucial it is for kids' general development to have a consistent daily schedule and access to a nurturing learning environment. These parents contend that in-person instruction offers chances for direct teacher-student communication, peer engagement, and cooperative learning that are challenging to replicate via online platforms (Rahman, 2023). Additionally, a number of guardians questioned whether virtual classes could offer the same educational advantages as classroom-based training and viewed extended confinement at home as detrimental to children's social and emotional development. Their opinions highlight the challenging trade-off between shielding kids from

COVID-19 and avoiding interference with their schooling. Some parents felt that health and safety should continue to be the top priority, while others thought that ongoing education was significant enough to warrant reopening schools even in cases where infection rates were alarming. Overall, the participants strongly favored the return of in-person instruction as long as appropriate safety measures were followed. They believed that classroom instruction was crucial for children's psychological development as well as their academic advancement.

Parents are encouraged to be supportive and seek help if needed, rather than raising their voices in frustration.



Children are at work; Source: Prothom Alo

The 12-year-old boy from Kamrangirchar left his school to work at a plastic factory after his previous schooling was interrupted by the pandemic (Akhter, 2021). Two years ago, he was enrolled in Class-II thanks to a local NGO, but with the school closure due to COVID-19 and increased financial strain on his impoverished family, he had to return to work. Telling Prothom Alo about his job, a young boy shared that he assembles plastic toys, following previous work fitting caps on attar bottles. He earns Tk 800 weekly and works extensive hours at the factory. A survey by the Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) revealed that many children, previously removed from labor to attend school, returned to work due to the financial impact of coronavirus.

Of 33,000 surveyed child workers, approximately 2,500 returned to labor, with 2,400 taking on more hazardous jobs at lower wages, resulting in a total of 7,800 children entering hazardous work anew under the 'Protection of Working Children' program conducted across several regions from last April to this April.

### 1.3.7 Slums of Dhaka

Bangladesh has experienced improvements in household income, educational benefits, and poverty reduction, with urban centers such as Dhaka playing an important role in this development. Rural-to-urban migration has contributed to the rapid expansion of Dhaka and increased its economic significance. However, national-level indicators do not always provide an accurate picture of the circumstances of the city's poorest residents, particularly those living in informal settlements. Estimates of the slum population differ considerably among sources. While UN-HABITAT has reported that a very large proportion of Dhaka's population lives in slum communities, other studies have estimated the share to be closer to one-third. These differences illustrate the difficulty of accurately measuring the size and characteristics of the urban poor.

Despite Dhaka's position as one of Bangladesh's most economically prosperous areas, substantial inequality remains. Households belonging to the lowest income group in metropolitan Dhaka have been reported to experience lower average consumption per person than similarly disadvantaged households in rural areas. Indicators of human poverty have also shown deterioration during certain periods, particularly between 1995 and 2003. Evidence from surveys conducted by the Centre for Urban Studies further demonstrates the difficult conditions experienced by residents of Dhaka's slums. Housing units are generally extremely small, often measuring only around 75–100 square feet and consisting of a single room shared by several household members. Severe overcrowding, inadequate sanitation and environmental services, and persistent socioeconomic hardship are common features of these settlements.

Residents also face serious problems with drainage, waterlogging, flooding, electricity, and access to safe and reliable water supplies. In some communities, households depend on unauthorized connections to obtain essential utilities. The economic circumstances of these

families are equally challenging. Average monthly household income has been estimated at approximately Tk. 3,001–4,000 (around US$40–60), leaving very limited resources for essential needs beyond food. Among the poorest households, as much as 97 percent of income may be spent on food, leaving only about 3 percent for areas such as healthcare and education. This translates into an extremely small amount of expenditure per person on these essential services, reportedly around Tk 20 (approximately US$0.30). Increasing food prices further intensify the problem by reducing the amount of money that low-income families can allocate to education, healthcare, housing, and other basic necessities. These conditions demonstrate how poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and rising living costs interact to restrict the well-being and future opportunities of Dhaka's most disadvantaged urban households.

### 1.3.8 Education

Many children in Dhaka's informal neighborhoods still have few educational options. According to Baker (2007), about 26% of slum areas had government primary schools, whereas about 27% had schools run by non-governmental organizations. There were 295 government elementary schools in Dhaka, many of which used a two-shift arrangement, according to the Ministry of Elementary and Mass Education (MOPME). However, given the city's fast-growing population, this offer seems inadequate to address the educational demands of underprivileged urban neighborhoods. Children living in urban slums are receiving more attention, despite the fact that NGOs have historically focused much of their educational efforts in rural areas. However, obstacles like the danger of eviction and the necessity to gain acceptance from powerful local groups have an impact on their actions in these communities. Inadequate school facilities and a lack of educational infrastructure were also noted by Rashid and Hossain (2005) as significant barriers to providing effective services. Local violence and occasional flooding might make access even more challenging. According to recent research, over 60% of children between the ages of 4 and 15 attended school, compared to roughly 77% of children between the ages of 6 and 11. Girls participated at comparatively higher rates, with enrollment peaking between the ages of 8 and 10. Girls participated at comparatively higher rates, with enrollment peaking between the ages of 8 and 10. NGO schools may be able to accommodate kids who have trouble attending traditional schools in part because of the increased flexibility they provide. These circumstances underscore the necessity of policies that prioritize the urban poor's educational

requirements, especially as education continues to be a crucial route to better livelihoods and a decrease in intergenerational poverty.

There is a significant need for more school places, particularly for the poorest quintile, where low education costs can deter enrollment. The World Bank notes the absence of social safety nets in urban Bangladesh and suggests cash transfers linked to school attendance and enhanced childcare to boost women's workforce participation. However, slum populations are often excluded from policy considerations, lacking accurate estimates of school-age children. Although NGOs are addressing these needs by providing non-formal education and vocational training, they risk being seen as offering a lower-quality educational alternative, despite being appreciated by participants and holding major enrollment shares in certain areas.

An educational project in a slum in Howrah, where residents originally from Bihar have settled. The area, historically home to factories since the 1900s, saw an influx of migrants from Bihar in the early 1990s, drawn by economic opportunities (Pant, 2020)

A person is completed M.A. in Education in 2017 and initiated an Open Learning Centre (OLC) in a slum community, aiming to provide a safe space for child laborers and drop-out children aged 6 to 8. The center's goal is to engage these children in learning to facilitate their mainstreaming into school the following year, interrupting cycles of child labor, drugs, and gambling. The name "Open" reflects a democratic approach and the freedom for children to participate in context-based learning, highlighting the importance of early educational intervention.

### 1.3.9 Focus on process over outcome

This research examines the educational experiences and opportunities available to children living in urban slum communities in India. It considers education not only as a means of acquiring academic knowledge but also as an important factor in shaping children's future opportunities

and participation in society. Slum communities exist in many parts of the world, and children growing up in these environments frequently experience social and economic marginalization. Their separation from mainstream social institutions, combined with poverty and limited access to educational resources, can impact how they perceive the value and purpose of education. The study therefore seeks to examine the barriers these children encounter in accessing meaningful learning opportunities and to understand the broader role that education can play in improving their circumstances.

### 1.3.10 Educational problems faced by children in slum areas

Due to the shortcomings in school-based education and the variety of social challenges they face, the need for additional academic help has grown among underprivileged children. Students may get physically and intellectually exhausted due to irregular attendance, insufficient one-on-one time, and excessive late-night use of electronic devices. After Grade 6, when students encounter a more demanding curriculum without necessarily having established productive study habits or receiving sufficient parental support, academic challenges frequently worsen. Sometimes kids aren't ready for the rigors of formal education when they start first grade, which can lead to learning gaps that get harder to fill (Rajasthan, 2022). Some pupils, especially those attending government schools, may already be performing one to three grade levels below expectations by the time they reach Grade 4, which increases the likelihood that they will drop out of school after Grade 8. Children's cognitive and educational development may be further hampered by inadequate nourishment and limited access to appropriate reading materials in slum neighborhoods. In houses when both parents work and children receive minimal supervision or academic direction, the situation can be particularly challenging. Children's wellbeing and capacity to learn may also be impacted by poor eating habits, such as frequent consumption of unhealthy food. Additionally, children's focus, emotional stability, and academic performance can be severely impacted by verbal or physical conflict in the home; these issues can occasionally be made worse by alcohol-related challenges. The encouragement, supervision, and educational assistance children require to stay interested in their studies might be further diminished by a lack of coordinated parental participation.

## 1.4. Research Objectives

Bangladesh faces significant challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty and ensure peace and prosperity by 2030. Access to education is considered a fundamental human right for citizens, and progress has been made in socio-demographic indicators, such as gross enrolment and literacy rates, Bangladesh faces significant obstacles in achieving quality education. The study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives.

1. To explore the lived experiences of families in accessing education in Nurerchala.
2. To identify the perceived barriers and opportunities regarding education.
3. To understand the role of community support and non-formal education programs.

## 1.5. Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do you experience of families in accessing education?
2. What are the barriers and opportunities did you perceive in your education area?
3. How do you understand the role of community support?

# Chapter Two: Literature review

## 2.1. Importance of non-formal education:

Non-formal education includes programs for adults seeking literacy and practical skills, using methods such as home education and distance learning, designed to meet diverse stakeholder needs. The essential aspect of Non-Formal Education (NFE) is its autonomy from formal education, which emerged in the 1960s and 1970s to address the inadequacies of the formal system, particularly for underserved children. The World Bank characterizes NFE as organized learning outside formal frameworks, with a concentration on rural poverty alleviation and agricultural training. UNESCO later defined NFE as an alternative education, crucial for the knowledge of those unable to benefit from formal schooling (Poteet, 2022). A significant characteristic of NFE is its targeting of specific subgroups, notably marginalized populations like girls and women. The importance of non-formal education spans economic, political, and social dimensions, promoting literacy, enhancing productivity, fostering civic engagement, and advocating for social justice while yielding quicker results and engaging community participation (Chakma, 2025).

## 2.2 Challenges of non-formal education:

One of the major difficulties is the declining number of students attending certain study centers, particularly those located in urban areas. This concentration of educational facilities can leave learners in rural communities with fewer opportunities to access similar services (Nanda, 2003). As a result, many students may have limited access to consistent academic counselling, individual guidance, and information about their courses, which can affect their ability to make informed educational decisions and progress effectively.

**2.2.1 Challenges Faced by NFE Programs**: Although non-formal education can provide important learning opportunities for underserved populations, its implementation is often constrained by several practical and social barriers. Weak administrative systems, limited funding and learning materials, negative attitudes within some communities, and insufficient

numbers of qualified instructors can reduce the quality, reach, and overall effectiveness of NFE initiatives.

**2.2.2 Administrative Challenges:** According to Rafiq (2024), the development and execution of Non-Formal Education (NFE) initiatives are often affected by administrative and bureaucratic constraints. District Education Officers (DEOs) and Literacy Mobilizers frequently encounter difficulties in obtaining adequate government support, funding, and essential resources, which can limit the efficiency, sustainability, and overall impact of these educational programs.

**2.2.3 Inadequate Resources:** The article points out that limited financial support and shortages of essential educational materials continue to affect the quality of many Non-Formal Education (NFE) initiatives. Because these programs depend largely on government allocations, obtaining sufficient funding can become particularly difficult in areas where several Lines of Action (LOAs) compete for the same resources. (Malik, 2024).

**2.2.4 Lack of Trained Educators:** To realize these benefits more effectively, greater attention should be given to supportive policy structures, meaningful community participation, adequate and equitable resource distribution, continuous teacher development, and reliable systems for monitoring and evaluating program performance.

## 2.3. Relation of non-formal education and underprivileged children's upbringing:

Although the Compulsory Primary Education Act aims to ensure access regardless of socioeconomic or demographic differences, opportunities for formal education are limited. As a solution, Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE) programs have been developed, targeting disadvantaged children who are out of school or have dropped out. (Rahman,2013). These programs are supported by NGOs and aim to achieve Education for All (EFA) and Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs). The study seeks to evaluate whether students from NFPE can apply their skills in real-life situations to enhance their quality of life.

### 2.3.1 The role of formal and non-formal education in building children's empowerment:

Concrete empowerment of children and adolescents is crucial for raising self-awareness about at-risk situations and fostering essential life skills. (Daniel,2016). A rights-based education enables children, especially girls, to make independent choices about their futures and disrupt entrenched power imbalances stemming from patriarchal norms and structural violence. Both formal and non-formal education play significant roles in addressing these challenges. Although initially intended to provide some income and education, these arrangements typically result in girls being denied schooling and facing increased risks of sexual abuse and exploitation. Additionally, exposure to intra-familial violence often leads children to leave their homes, only to confront greater dangers in their pursuit of safety on the streets.

### 2.3.2 Non-formal education actions by local organizations and children's participation:

In the context of addressing gaps left by formal education, local organizations focused on children's rights are pivotal in providing non-formal education. The center provides working children with a secure environment where they can attend classes, receive food and basic health-related services, and obtain support concerning their rights. Through these activities, the organization also works to challenge child labor and promote greater protection and educational opportunities for vulnerable children.

## 2.4. How non-formal education can be a tool for Bangladesh's underprivileged children

Nath (2007) describes Bangladesh's education sector as comprising three principal streams. The mainstream system delivers instruction primarily in Bangla and follows the country's national curriculum. The madrasah sector combines Islamic studies with general academic subjects, while English-medium education is largely provided through privately managed institutions. Alongside

these major streams, Bangladesh also has a range of specialized educational arrangements, including vocational and other faith-based forms of learning. The coexistence of multiple systems creates additional complexity in efforts to ensure consistent standards and quality throughout the national education sector (Hamid, 2009).

## 2.5. Formal vs non-formal education- drivers and consequences

Learning can broadly be understood through three categories: formal, informal, and non-formal education. Formal education follows an organized and deliberate structure and is generally provided through established institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities. It follows prescribed curricula and usually results in officially recognized qualifications. Informal learning, in contrast, develops naturally through everyday experiences, interactions, observation, and personal activities rather than through an organized educational institution. It is generally self-directed, continuous, and does not normally result in a formal certificate. Non-formal education occupies a position between these two forms. Although it involves planned and organized learning activities, it generally operates outside the conventional formal education system and may not provide officially recognized academic credentials. Examples include vocational courses, community-based learning, adult literacy initiatives, and skills-development programs (Khasilova, 2021).

# Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted to investigate the opportunities and challenges associated with non-formal education among disadvantaged children in Nurerchala, Vatara, Dhaka. It outlines the overall research design and provides a detailed description of the study setting and the process used to identify and sort out participants. The chapter also discusses the sampling procedure, sources of information, methods used to collect and analyze data, and the ethical principles followed throughout the research method.

The study adopted a qualitative case study design with a phenomenological orientation. This approach was selected because the research sought to understand how students, parents, teachers, school administrators, local educators, and NGO workers experience and interpret non-formal education in a specific urban-slum context. Rather than measuring educational outcomes statistically, the study focused on participants' perceptions, experiences, challenges, aspirations, and assessments of the role of non-formal education in their community.

The study treated Good Neighbors School and its surrounding community in Nurerchala as a bounded case. Within this case, phenomenological principles were used to examine the lived experiences of the people directly involved in non-formal education. Primary data were collected mainly through semi-structured interviews, supported by field observations and informal discussions. Secondary information was collected from academic journal articles, books, reports, newspaper articles, NGO publications, government documents, and relevant policy materials.

## 3.1. Research Approach

This approach was particularly suitable for exploring the ways families seek and experience educational opportunities, the difficulties that prevent children from accessing or continuing their education, and the possibilities available through non-formal learning. It also enabled the researcher to examine how participants perceive the contributions of schools, NGOs, teachers, families, and community networks in supporting children's education. Through this approach, the study was able to capture the complexity of educational experiences and the social conditions surrounding them.

A qualitative approach was therefore suitable for several reasons. First, it enabled the researcher to explore how participants personally understood non-formal education. Second, it allowed different stakeholder groups to describe the same educational institution from different perspectives. Third, it made it possible to examine contradictions within the data. For example, some teachers reported serious communication difficulties with parents, while others stated that families welcomed them during home visits. Similarly, some parents expressed strong satisfaction with the school, whereas others raised concerns about homework monitoring, sponsorship, examinations, playground facilities, teacher turnover, and school fees. A qualitative approach allowed these differences to be examined rather than reduced to a single numerical result.

## 3.2. Research Design

### 3.2.1 Qualitative Case Study Design

The study used a qualitative case study design. A case study examines a particular individual, institution, program, community, or social setting within its real-life context. In this research, the case was non-formal education for underprivileged children in Nurerchala, with particular attention to Good Neighbors School and the surrounding community in Vatara. The case study design was appropriate because the research was geographically and institutionally bounded. It concentrated on one urban community and one non-formal educational setting rather than attempting to represent all non-formal schools in Bangladesh. The design enabled the researcher to examine the relationships among children, parents, teachers, school management, local educators, NGO personnel, and the broader socioeconomic conditions of the area. The use of a case study also allowed the researcher to combine several sources of evidence. Participant interviews were compared with field observations, institutional practices, community conditions, and secondary literature. This provided a more comprehensive understanding of how non-formal education operates in practice.

### 3.2.2 Phenomenological Orientation

This perspective was appropriate because the research sought to move beyond describing the organizational or administrative features of educational institutions and instead explore how education was experienced in the everyday lives of students and their families.

The students' accounts revealed that their educational experiences were connected to changes in self-confidence, relationships with peers, feelings of safety, motivation to learn, involvement in cultural activities, and expectations for the future. Parents focused on issues such as educational expenses, children's safety, the standard of teaching, moral and personal development, distance from home, trust in the school, and the condition of educational facilities. Teachers and the school principal provided additional perspectives on student mobility, child labor, early marriage, Parental understanding of education, learning conditions at home, teacher preparation, and approaches used to assist students who have experienced that learning in difficulties. Bringing together these different experiences enabled the study to develop a deeper understanding of how non-formal education is perceived and experienced by the people directly involved in it.

### 3.2.3 Rationale for Combining Case Study and Phenomenological Elements

The case study established the bounds of the research by focusing on Good Neighbors School and the Nurerchala community. The phenomenological orientation guided the investigation of how participants experienced non-formal education within that bounded setting. This combination was suitable because the study did not examine lived experiences in isolation from their social environment. These included the economic position of their families, parents' employment, patterns of household migration, involvement in child labor, living and housing conditions, the availability and quality of school facilities, teachers' attitudes and interactions, access to sponsorship or financial assistance, and relationships within the wider community. By combining different methodological perspectives, the study was able to examine not only how the educational institution functioned within its broader social setting but also how these conditions were experienced and interpreted by the children and other participants.

## 3.3. Study Area

The study was carried out in Nurerchala, within the Vatara area of Dhaka, a community characterized by a substantial population of economically disadvantaged households. The area was chosen because many children living their encounter difficulties in entering, attending, and remaining within the formal education system. Household livelihoods commonly depend on low-

income and informal forms of employment, including rickshaw driving, garment-related work, domestic service, small-scale trading, employment in local grocery shops, day labor, and other forms of informal work.

The socioeconomic circumstances of many families are often unstable. Irregular employment, residential mobility, rented accommodation, overcrowded homes, limited space for studying, and difficulties meeting school-related expenses can all affect children's educational participation. In some households, children must balance schooling with paid employment, domestic duties, or responsibilities associated with family businesses. Good Neighbors School was chosen as the principal institutional setting because of its longstanding involvement with children from disadvantaged families in the Vatara area, dating back to 1996. The institution offers relatively affordable educational opportunities and provides support that extends beyond classroom instruction. Its activities include motivational and cultural programs, health and hygiene education, awareness initiatives related to child labor and child protection, basic computer education, and limited assistance through sponsorships and educational materials. The combination of educational, social, health, and child-protection activities made the school a relevant setting for examining the opportunities and limitations of non-formal education among underprivileged children.

## 3.4. Study Population

The participants were drawn from individuals who had direct or indirect connections with non-formal education in Nurerchala. The study included the school principal, teachers, parents, students, teachers from nearby schools, and NGO personnel working within the local community. Bringing together these different groups was important because each stakeholder encounters educational opportunities and barriers from a different position. Their combined perspectives therefore provided a broader understanding of the factors influencing children's access to education.

Students shared their experiences of classroom learning, school attendance, relationships with peers, personal confidence, feelings of safety, participation in school activities, and access to educational materials or other forms of support. Parents discussed issues such as the cost of

education, decisions concerning school selection, children's safety, the perceived standard of education, family expectations, and difficulties affecting their children's schooling. Teachers provided information about teaching practices, professional preparation, communication with parents, student absenteeism, and the economic and social circumstances that influence learners' educational participation.

The principal contributed information concerning the institution's background, objectives, administrative practices, and the challenges involved in operating the school. In addition, teachers from the surrounding community and NGO workers offered a wider perspective on educational access and exclusion, child protection, poverty, community needs, and the role of local organizations in supporting disadvantaged children. The inclusion of these varied participant groups enabled the study to compare individual experiences with broader institutional and community-level realities.

## 3.5. Participants and Sample Size

A total of 20 participants were selected for the study.

| Participant category | Number | Gender composition or characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| School principal | 1 | 1 man |
| Good Neighbors School teachers | 5 | 2 women and 3 men |
| Parents or guardians | 5 | 3 women and 2 men |
| Students | 5 | Aged 12–17; 3 boys and 2 girls |
| Local school teachers | 2 | Teachers working in or familiar with the area |
| NGO workers | 2 | Personnel involved in education or community activities |
| **Total** | **20** | Multiple stakeholder groups |

## 3.6 Sampling Strategy

The study used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants because they possess relevant experience or knowledge concerning the research topic. Participants were not chosen randomly because random selection could have included individuals with little or no direct involvement in non-formal education. The principal and teachers were selected because they had direct knowledge of school administration, classroom practices, teacher training, student attendance, and communication with parents. Parents were selected because they were responsible for decisions concerning their children's education and could explain why they chose the school. Students were selected because they personally experienced the educational program.

The main criteria were that participants had to be connected to the school, reside or work in the surrounding area, have direct experience of non-formal education, or possess relevant knowledge about underprivileged children's educational conditions. The study also attempted to include variation in gender, age, educational background, occupation, and stakeholder role. This helped prevent the findings from relying on only one type of participant.

## 3.7. Data-Collection Methods

### 3.7.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the principal data-collection method. A separate interview guide was prepared for each participant group. The questions were open-ended so participants could provide detailed answers and introduce issues that the researcher had not initially anticipated. The principal was asked about the school's vision, history, differences between formal and non-formal education, institutional challenges, student retention, migration, child labor, and child marriage. Teachers were asked about their motivation for working in non-formal education, professional training, teaching strategies, classroom challenges, and communication with parents. These questions generated information about lesson planning, multimedia use, worksheets, storytelling, slow learners, home visits, parental awareness, child protection, and teacher adaptation.

Parents were asked about their occupations, reasons for selecting the school, their children's educational progress, positive aspects of the school, and problems they observed. Their answers produced information about school proximity, affordability, security, educational quality, moral education, co-curricular activities, examinations, sponsorship, playground facilities, homework checking, and teacher turnover. Students were asked why they joined the school, whether they attended regularly, whether their parents supported their education, whether they felt safe and happy, whether the school increased their confidence, and what challenges they experienced. Their responses highlighted motivation, school programs, material assistance, friendships, safety arrangements, computer training, health awareness, absenteeism due to illness or work, school fees, food support, teacher shortages, and disciplinary rules. Local teachers and NGO workers were asked about community educational conditions, major barriers, available support, institutional coordination, child protection concerns, and possible improvements.

The semi-structured format ensured that the same main issues were discussed with participants from each category while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions.

### 3.7.2 Field Observation

This method allowed the researcher to examine whether participants' descriptions were consistent with the conditions that could be observed directly. For instance, issues mentioned by participants included limited classroom space, the absence of a playground, the availability of security personnel and CCTV facilities, student participation in school activities, the distance between the school and students' homes, and the adequacy of learning materials. Observing these aspects helped place participants' experiences within their actual educational and community context.

The observations followed a non-participant approach, meaning the researcher remained an observer and did not become involved in classroom instruction or interfere with the school's routine operations. Concise field notes were recorded throughout the observation process to capture relevant environmental conditions, interactions, activities, and the researcher's observations and reflections. These notes were subsequently used to complement and contextualize the information obtained through interviews.

## 3.8. Data-Collection Procedure

Before collecting data, the researcher contacted the school authority and explained the purpose of the study. Permission was obtained to conduct interviews and observations within the institution. Potential participants were informed about the research objectives, confidentiality, and their right to refuse to answer any question. Interviews were conducted at a time and location considered convenient and safe for participants. Interviews with school staff were generally conducted within the school environment. Parent and student interviews were arranged so that participants could speak comfortably without unnecessary interruption.

Participants were asked for permission before audio recording. Where recording was not possible or a participant was uncomfortable, detailed notes were taken. The interviews were conducted in Relevant responses were later translated into English for thesis writing. The interviews generally lasted between approximately 8 and 20 minutes, although the duration varied according to the participant’s experience and willingness to elaborate. Follow-up questions were used when answers required clarification. During data collection, the researcher also prepared field notes concerning the interview environment, participant behavior, significant pauses, emotional responses, school conditions, and emerging analytical ideas. These notes were used to support later interpretation.

## 3.9 Rationale for Thematic Analysis

This method enabled the researcher to examine similarities and differences in the accounts provided by students, parents, teachers, school administrators, local educators, and NGO representatives. It was particularly relevant to the research objectives because the study concentrated on participants' experiences, educational barriers, available opportunities, and forms of support within the community. Similar issues emerged repeatedly across the interviews, although participants described them from different personal and social positions.

Through thematic analysis, the researcher organized these recurring ideas into broader patterns while retaining the context in which participants expressed their views. The approach

emphasized interpretation and depth rather than numerical measurement or statistical representation.

## 3.10 Methodological Limitations

The methodology has several limitations. First, the study focused on a school and a community. The findings therefore cannot be statistically generalized to all non-formal education institutions or slum communities in Bangladesh. Second, the sample was purposively selected and relatively small. Participants with strong positive or negative views may have been more willing to participate. Third, interviews conducted within the school environment may have encouraged some participants to provide socially desirable answers. Students and parents may have hesitated to criticize the institution, particularly where they depended on educational or material support. Fourth, some interviews were brief, which may have limited the depth of the responses. Differences in education, language, age, and confidence may also have affected participants' ability to express their experiences. Fifth, translation from Bangla into English may have resulted in the loss of some local meanings, emotional expressions, or cultural nuances. Sixth, the absence of extensive longitudinal observation means that the study could not independently verify changes in attendance, academic achievement, confidence, or dropout over time. Finally, the researcher examined participants' perceptions of educational opportunities and challenges rather than formally measuring learning outcomes.

## 3.11 Ethical Considerations

For participants below the age of 18, permission was sought from a parent, guardian, or other legally authorized adult, and the children themselves were also asked to provide assent. The purpose and procedures of the research were explained to them in language appropriate to their age and level of understanding so that they could make an informed decision about taking part. Throughout the research process, measures were taken to safeguard participants' identities and personal information. Real names were not used in the research records or reporting unless explicit permission had been provided; instead, participant codes or pseudonyms were assigned to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

The interview process was designed to reduce the possibility of emotional distress. Participants were not encouraged or pressured to discuss highly personal matters, including traumatic events, experiences of abuse, family disputes, unlawful activities, or detailed financial circumstances unless they voluntarily chose to do so.

If information emerged that suggested an immediate threat to the safety or well-being of a child, the matter would be addressed in accordance with the applicable institutional ethics requirements and established child-protection procedures. Interviews involving students were arranged in settings that provided privacy while maintaining appropriate safety safeguards. Care was taken to avoid completely isolated locations, while the presence of teachers or parents was managed in a way that allowed children to express their views without undue influence or pressure.

# Chapter Four: Findings

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of the research examining the opportunities and constraints associated with non-formal education for disadvantaged children in Nurerchala, Vatara, Dhaka. The analysis draws mainly on semi-structured interviews conducted with the principal, five teachers, five parents, and five students from Good Neighbors School. Information obtained through direct field observations and informal conversations was also used to provide additional context and support the interpretation of the interview data.

The findings indicate that non-formal education serves several important functions within the Nurerchala community. The school offers a relatively affordable educational option for families with limited financial resources and provides children with an accessible learning environment. Participants also described benefits related to children's confidence, interpersonal relationships, social participation, health awareness, and knowledge of child-protection issues. In some cases, the school was also viewed as helping children remain connected to education and reducing their exposure to risks such as child labor and early marriage. However, these positive contributions are accompanied by a number of persistent difficulties. Household poverty, frequent migration, inconsistent school attendance, limited parental involvement, inadequate sponsorship opportunities, shortages of teachers, rising educational costs, restricted facilities, and insufficient learning materials were identified as factors that can limit the school's effectiveness.

## 4.2. Overview of the Major Findings

Analysis of the interview responses highlighted a combination of meaningful benefits and persistent difficulties associated with the non-formal education program:

**Table 4.1: Overview of the Main Themes**

| Major theme | Main opportunities identified | Main challenges identified |
|---|---|---|
| Educational accessibility and affordability | Low fees, nearby location, sponsorship, flexible shifts and discounted materials | Fee increases, unequal sponsorship and family poverty |
| Teaching quality and adaptive learning | Qualified teachers, lesson plans, storytelling, multimedia and additional support for slow learners | Inconsistent training, teacher shortages and limited homework feedback |
| Safety and child protection | CCTV, security guards, guardian-only handover, safeguarding education and conflict mediation | Continued exposure to child labor, child marriage and unsafe community conditions |
| Confidence and social development | Motivational classes, cultural events, public speaking, computer training and awareness programs | Limited opportunities for some older students and inadequate recreational facilities |
| Attendance and continuity | Teacher follow-up, home visits and supportive relationships | Illness, work, household duties, migration and parental unawareness |
| Institutional facilities and sustainability | Community trust, experienced staff and long-term institutional presence | No adequate playground, limited classrooms, declining material support and staff turnover |

Table 4.1 demonstrates that the school's strengths and weaknesses are very closely connected. For example, low fees make education more accessible, but even a small increase may create difficulties for low-income families. Similarly, the school provides a safe and support

environment, but children continue to face risks such as child labor, family migration, and inadequate home learning conditions. The findings therefore show that the effectiveness of non-formal education depends not only on what happens inside the school but also on the economic and social realities of the surrounding community.

## 4.3. Educational Accessibility and Affordability

A prominent finding from the interviews was the role of Good Neighbors School in expanding educational access for children from economically disadvantaged households. The principal noted that conventional schooling can involve higher expenses and more structured requirements, whereas non-formal education tends to offer greater flexibility in responding to learners' individual circumstances. He also emphasized the relatively informal relationship between students and teachers, which allows children to communicate with educators more comfortably. According to the principal, many families in the community depend on occupations such as rickshaw driving, garment-related employment, domestic service, work in small grocery businesses, and other forms of informal labor. Because these sources of income are often modest and uncertain, educational expenses can place considerable pressure on household budgets. In this context, the comparatively affordable fees and available sponsorship assistance at Good Neighbors School provide an opportunity for some low-income families to keep their children in education.

The teachers also viewed the institution as an important alternative for children who might otherwise have difficulty accessing regular schooling. Teacher 3 highlighted several forms of support provided by the school, including additional academic sessions, child-friendly activities, health examinations, and education concerning children's rights. Teacher 5 reported that learners from Nursery through Class Two receive sponsorship assistance and basic stationery, although comparable support is less consistently available at higher levels. Parents repeatedly identified affordability and geographical convenience as major reasons for choosing the school. Parent 3 explained that the school is located close to her residence and that the monthly tuition is BDT 400 for each child. The availability of both morning and daytime shifts also helped her coordinate the schooling of her two children. Similarly, Parents 1 and 5 emphasized that the short distance between their homes and the school influenced their enrollment decisions. Having

a school nearby reduced transportation costs and made it easier for parents to monitor their children's journeys to and from school.

Trust within the family and wider community was another factor affecting parents' choice of the institution. Parent 2 explained that several members of her family had previously attended the school, while others were still enrolled there. This existing connection contributed to her confidence in the institution and influenced her decision to enroll her daughter. The fact that some former students have subsequently joined the school's staff has further strengthened the connection between the institution and the surrounding community.

**Table 4.3: Factors Influencing the Choice of Non-Formal Education**

| Factor | Evidence from participants | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Low educational cost | Parents reported a monthly fee of approximately BDT 400; some students received discounted materials | Reduced the financial burden on low-income households |
| School proximity | Several parents and students stated that the school was close to their homes | Reduced transportation costs and safety concerns |
| Sponsorship support | Nursery to Class Two students could receive stationery and financial assistance | Encouraged enrolment among families unable to meet full educational costs |
| Flexible school shifts | Morning and day shifts were available | Helped families manage multiple children and household responsibilities |
| Family and community trust | Several relatives and former students were connected with the school | Increased confidence in the school’s reliability |
| Adaptable educational environment | Teachers provided additional assistance and adjusted lessons | Supported slow learners and children with limited educational assistance at home |

Table 4.3 The findings suggest that parents' decisions regarding school selection were influenced by a combination of factors rather than by affordability alone. Although the level of school fees was an important consideration, parents also valued the institution's proximity to their homes, the safety of their children, their existing trust in the school, access to sponsorship, and the flexibility offered by its arrangements. For households with limited financial resources, the actual burden of education extends beyond tuition. Families may also have to consider transportation expenses, the cost of books and other learning materials, the time required to accompany children, and the potential income or household assistance that a child might otherwise provide. By operating within the community and offering certain forms of financial and educational-material assistance, the school helped reduce some of these additional burdens.

## 4.4 Teaching Quality and Adaptive Learning

The interview findings indicate that parents held largely favorable views of the teaching provided at the school. Each of the five parents described the teachers in positive terms, referring to them as attentive, supportive, caring, or competent. Parent 1 explained that teachers incorporated activities such as games, drawing, songs, and rhymes into lessons to make learning more engaging for children. Parent 2 also mentioned students' involvement in singing, drawing, poetry, and other extracurricular activities. Parent 4 valued the combination of academic instruction with lessons related to moral development, while Parent 5 emphasized that teachers offered emotional encouragement and demonstrated concern for students' overall well-being.

The educational backgrounds of the teachers varied considerably. Their qualifications included bachelor's and master's degrees in areas such as education, business administration, science, marketing, and related disciplines. Most of the teachers reported having participated in some form of professional training concerning child protection, safeguarding, motivational communication, environmental issues, curriculum-related practices, health awareness, or protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. Teacher 3, for example, described training associated with UNICEF that covered safeguarding, child-friendly educational practices, good-touch and bad-touch awareness, and the delivery of quality education. In contrast, Teacher 2 indicated that she had not received specialized training specifically focused on teaching children

from disadvantaged backgrounds. This difference suggests that professional preparation among the teaching staff was varied rather than standardized.

Teachers also described a range of strategies for responding to differences in students' academic abilities and learning needs. Teacher 1 reported using worksheets, textbooks, videos, additional examples, and individualized assistance both during and outside regular class periods. Teacher 3 incorporated structured lesson planning, storytelling, multimedia resources, and subject-specific materials into classroom instruction. Teacher 4 followed lesson plans supplied by the organization's head office, whereas Teacher 5 used visual learning aids, including painted Bengali and English letters, stickers, and multimedia materials.

Taken together, these accounts demonstrate that classroom instruction extended beyond conventional textbook-based teaching. The teachers employed a mixture of visual aids, storytelling, practical activities, technology, and motivational techniques to sustain children's interest and accommodate different learning abilities. Such flexibility appears particularly important in this context because some students have limited educational assistance at home, while others require additional attention because of slower academic progress.

**Table 4.4: Teaching Practices Reported by Teachers**

| Teaching practice | Examples from interviews | Intended contribution |
|---|---|---|
| Daily lesson planning | Teachers prepared lessons in advance using an institutional format | Improved classroom organization and consistency |
| Worksheets and additional books | Used to support classroom instruction | Provided additional practice and learning opportunities |
| Storytelling | Teachers used stories to explain lessons and motivate children | Made lessons easier to understand and more engaging |
| Multimedia and subject-related videos | Used by several teachers | Supported visual learning and maintained student interest |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Extra support for slow learners | Assistance was provided before or after regular classes | Addressed differences in learning ability |
| Games, songs, drawing and handicrafts | Reported by parents and students | Encouraged active participation and creativity |
| Motivational communication | Teachers gave motivational classes and speeches | Developed hope, confidence and educational commitment |
| Child-rights and health education | Included safeguarding, hygiene and social-awareness sessions | Connected academic learning with everyday life skills |

Table 4.4 shows that teachers used several child-friendly and adaptive methods. These methods were particularly significant for children who did not have private tutors, educated parents, suitable study spaces at home. The use of storytelling, videos, activities, and additional support helped make lessons more accessible.

Nevertheless, participants also identified weaknesses in teaching and academic supervision. Parent 2 complained that homework was not always checked or followed up. Parent 3 stated that students received too many examination questions and were expected to memorize more material than they could manage. Student 4 reported that the number of teachers was insufficient. These responses show that positive relationships with teachers did not eliminate concerns about assessment, feedback, staff capacity, and academic workload.

## 4.5 Safety, Safeguarding, and Child Protection

Safety was identified as one of the key features that increased parents' confidence in the school. Parent 1 explained that the institution followed a controlled child-release procedure, whereby students were handed over only to parents or other individuals who had been authorized to collect them. Parent 3 also expressed satisfaction with the school's security arrangements and physical setting, noting that these measures allowed her to feel comfortable leaving her children at school while she remained at home. Students 3 and 4 referred specifically to the presence of CCTV surveillance, security personnel, and teachers who interacted with them in a caring manner similar to that of family members.

The school's commitment to child protection also extended beyond physical security. Teachers reported receiving training on issues such as good-touch and bad-touch awareness, safeguarding, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and advocacy for children's rights. Such initiatives are particularly relevant in disadvantaged communities, where children may encounter heightened risks associated with exploitation, violence, hazardous work, neglect, or other forms of vulnerability.

The participants also described a disciplinary approach that combined behavioral boundaries with opportunities for students to correct their actions. Student 1 reported that learners were initially given three warnings when involved in behaviors such as fighting or smoking before more serious measures were considered. Student 2 explained that teachers generally intervened when disagreements arose by bringing the students together and helping them resolve the conflict. These accounts indicate that disciplinary practices were not based solely on punishment; teachers also attempted to guide students, mediate disputes, and encourage more appropriate behavior.

**Table 4.5: Safety and Child-Protection Measures**

| Measure | Reported evidence | Perceived effect |
|---|---|---|
| CCTV monitoring | Mentioned by Students 3 and 4 | Increased students' and parents' sense of security |
| Security guards | Mentioned by students | Provided supervision at the school |
| Guardian-only handover | Reported by Parent 1 | Reduced the risk of children leaving with unauthorized persons |
| Good touch/bad touch education | Reported by trained teachers | Increased awareness of personal boundaries |
| Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse training | Reported by teachers | Improved staff understanding of safeguarding responsibilities |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Conflict mediation | Teachers intervened when students fought | Encouraged peaceful conflict resolution |
| Warning-based disciplinary system | Students were given opportunities to correct behavior | Combined discipline with second chances |
| Child-labor and child-marriage awareness | Reported by teachers and students | Increased awareness of risks facing underprivileged children |

Table 4.5 illustrates that safety was understood in both physical and social terms. Physical safety included cameras, guards, and controlled student handover. Social protection included awareness about exploitation, child labor, child marriage, health, hygiene, smoking, and violence.

The principal and teachers repeatedly described the school as a form of protection against child labor and early marriage. Teacher 4 explained that he attempted to encourage children who had entered employment to return to school. The principal identified child marriage, child labor, and migration as common challenges faced by the school. These findings suggest that the institution performs a protective role, although it cannot fully control the economic and social conditions that expose children to these risks.

## 4.6 Confidence, Motivation, and Social Development

A further benefit identified in the findings was the school's contribution to students' self-confidence, motivation, and involvement in social activities. Each of the five students referred to supportive teachers, motivational sessions, extracurricular activities, or school-based programs that contributed to their sense of belonging and encouraged greater participation.

Student 1 explained that teachers occasionally encouraged him to perform songs in front of his classmates. According to him, these opportunities gradually reduced his hesitation about speaking or performing publicly, and he expressed an ambition to appear on a larger stage in the future. Student 3 associated her increased confidence with participation in motivational sessions, while Student 4 identified health seminars, competitions, and motivational talks as experiences that helped strengthen her self-belief. Student 5 described a similar change, explaining that he

had once been quite reserved but became more comfortable and confident through motivational activities and celebrations of events such as International Mother Language Day and Victory Day.

The students' responses also highlighted the importance of friendship and a sense of belonging within the school community. Student 2 described the relationship between teachers and learners as being similar to that of brothers and sisters, reflecting a close and supportive atmosphere. Student 5 explained that he wanted to continue studying at the school partly because of the friendships he had developed there and because establishing new relationships in another institution would require time. These accounts suggest that the school offered students more than academic instruction; it also provided a familiar social environment in which they could develop relationships, confidence, and a sense of continuity.

Participation in cultural, awareness, and extracurricular activities further enriched students' experiences. Participants mentioned programs related to Women's Day, Volunteer Day, child-labor awareness, health and hygiene, competitions, cultural celebrations, and national occasions. Such activities provided opportunities for students to interact, express themselves, develop awareness of social issues, and participate in experiences that extended beyond routine classroom instruction. Overall, the findings suggest that these activities contributed to the broader personal and social development of students alongside their academic learning.

Cultural and awareness programs were repeatedly mentioned. Students referred to Women’s Day, Volunteer Day, child-labor awareness programs, health and hygiene seminars, competitions, festivals, and national-day celebrations. Such activities expanded students’ experiences beyond conventional classroom learning.

**Table 4.6: Contributions to Students’ Personal and Social Development**

| Area of development | Activities or support | Evidence of perceived change |
|---|---|---|
| Self-confidence | Motivational speeches, classroom performance and | Students reported reduced shyness and greater willingness to speak publicly |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | competitions | |
| Social belonging | Friendly teachers, peer relationships and "brother/sister" interaction | Students felt connected and emotionally comfortable |
| Cultural awareness | National-day celebrations, songs, poetry and festivals | Increased participation in cultural and community life |
| Health awareness | Hygiene sessions, health seminars and check-ups | Improved awareness of personal health and cleanliness |
| Child-rights awareness | Child-labor and safeguarding programs | Increased understanding of protection and personal rights |
| Future aspiration | Encouragement from teachers and exposure to new activities | Students expressed ambitions related to business, public speaking and further learning |
| Practical skills | Drawing, handicrafts and computer training | Broadened learning beyond textbook subjects |

Table 4.6 shows that the impact of non-formal education was not limited to literacy or examination preparation. Participants connected education with confidence, moral development, communication, health awareness, creativity, friendship, and future aspirations. The school's activities created opportunities for children to speak, perform, compete, and interact in ways that may not have been available within their households or surrounding community.

Parents also noticed changes in their children. Parent 1 stated that her child's interest and intelligence were improving through games and simple learning activities. Parent 2 reported improvement in singing, drawing, rhymes, and poetry recitation. Parent 3 observed progress in reading, writing, drawing, and handicrafts. These responses indicate that parents valued both academic development and the broader personal growth of their children.

## 4.7 Poverty, Child Labor, Migration, and Irregular Attendance

Although the school offers several educational and social benefits, the findings also reveal substantial difficulties in maintaining consistent attendance and ensuring continuity of education. Economic hardship emerged as the most prominent underlying issue. Many parents depend on low-paid or informal employment that requires long working hours, leaving them with limited time to monitor their children's schooling. In some households, children are also expected to contribute to family income or assist with household and work-related responsibilities. Student 1, for example, reported occasionally being absent from school because he helped his brother-in-law at a grocery shop. Other students identified illness, visiting relatives, and traveling to their home villages as reasons for missing classes. Although most participants described themselves as regular attendees, four of the five students reported experiencing at least one situation that had disrupted their schooling.

Teachers provided a broader account of the factors contributing to irregular attendance. Teacher 3 observed that some parents leave home for work and children may spend much of the day without adult supervision. In such circumstances, students may lack both academic guidance and an appropriate environment for studying, which can contribute to absenteeism. Teacher 4 noted that some learners are required to work to supplement household income. Rather than immediately treating these students' absences as disciplinary problems, teachers attempted to understand their circumstances and encourage them to resume attending classes. Teacher 1 identified limited parental awareness and difficulties in maintaining communication with families as additional obstacles to regular participation.

Residential mobility was another recurring issue identified by the principal and teachers. Many families live in rented accommodation and may relocate within Dhaka when their economic circumstances change; some also return to their villages for extended periods. Teacher 1 explained that contact information provided by parents was sometimes outdated because families had moved, while telephone numbers were occasionally unavailable. The principal similarly reported that financial difficulties could force families to leave Dhaka temporarily and return only after their circumstances improved. Such repeated movement made it challenging for the school to maintain contact with families and retain students consistently over time.

**Table 4.7: Main Barriers to Regular Educational Participation**

| Barrier | Evidence from participants | Educational consequence |
|---|---|---|
| Family poverty | Parents worked in low-paid and informal occupations | Difficulty paying fees and purchasing materials |
| Child labor | Some students worked in shops or other income-generating activities | Absence, fatigue and risk of permanent dropout |
| Household responsibilities | Children remained alone or supported family activities | Reduced study time and irregular attendance |
| Migration | Families changed rented homes or returned to villages | Loss of contact and interrupted enrolment |
| Parental unawareness | Teachers reported limited understanding of regular schooling | Weak supervision and inconsistent attendance |
| Uneducated parents | Some parents could not provide academic assistance | Limited home-based learning support |
| Illness | Students missed classes when sick | Temporary interruption of learning |
| Poor home-learning environment | Several families lived together in one room | Difficulty concentrating or completing homework |
| Communication difficulties | Incorrect addresses and unreachable phones | Teachers could not follow up with absent students |

Table 4.7 demonstrates that absenteeism was rarely caused by a single factor. Poverty affected parents' employment, housing stability, ability to supervise children, and capacity to purchase educational materials. Migration disrupted communication between families and the school. Child labor and household responsibilities reduced the time available for learning. Therefore, irregular attendance should be understood as a structural problem rather than simply a lack of student interest.

The findings also show that teachers attempted to respond to these barriers. Some conducted home visits, contacted parents by telephone, provided additional classes, and encouraged students to return after entering employment. However, the school's ability to solve household poverty, unstable employment, migration, and inadequate housing was necessarily limited.

## 4.8 Parental Awareness and School–Family Communication

Parental engagement emerged as another significant aspect of the findings. The parents who participated in the study generally demonstrated a positive attitude toward their children's education and expressed support for continued school attendance. All five parents spoke favorably about the school, highlighting different aspects such as the standard of teaching, teachers' attitudes, children's safety, the convenient location, and the school's contribution to moral development. However, the perspectives provided by teachers suggested that parental involvement was not uniform throughout the wider community.

Teacher 2 explained that some parents had limited awareness of the importance of maintaining regular schooling and therefore did not always ensure that their children attended consistently. Teacher 5 similarly observed that parents with little formal education could experience difficulties in recognizing or responding to their children's academic needs. Teacher 1 reported additional communication problems, noting that some parents did not respond to school notices or letters and could be difficult to reach because of frequent changes in residence.

In contrast, Teacher 3 described positive experiences during household visits, reporting that some parents received teachers warmly and showed willingness to engage with them. These differing accounts indicate that communication and cooperation between families and the school varied considerably. While some parents were actively involved, others encountered financial, educational, residential, or practical difficulties that restricted their ability to participate regularly.

The findings therefore challenge the assumption that families living in poverty are uninterested in their children's education. On the contrary, the interviewed parents expressed clear hopes for their children's educational advancement. However, their ability to translate these aspirations into

consistent educational support was sometimes constrained by factors such as limited literacy, financial hardship, unstable housing, demanding work schedules, and unfamiliarity with school-related procedures. Thus, limited parental involvement should be understood within the broader socioeconomic circumstances affecting these families rather than simply being interpreted as a lack of interest in education.

## 4.9 Institutional and Infrastructural Challenges

Despite the generally favorable opinions expressed about the school, participants also pointed to a number of institutional and operational shortcomings. The lack of a suitable playground was one of the most frequently discussed physical limitations. Parents 4 and 5 emphasized the need for a dedicated recreational space where children could engage in sports, physical exercise, and other outdoor activities. Parent 5 also mentioned that the arrangement of classrooms, with rooms facing one another, created certain practical difficulties within the school environment.

The availability and stability of teaching staff represented another concern. Student 4 felt that the school did not have a sufficient number of teachers to meet students' needs. Parent 5 also referred to changes in the teaching staff as problematic, suggesting that frequent movement or replacement of teachers could disrupt instructional continuity and affect the relationships that students develop with their educators.

Participants further drew attention to differences in the availability of educational and material assistance. Student 4 recalled that the school had previously provided more substantial or nutritious food support but perceived a decline in either its quantity or quality. Parent 3 reported that her children had not received certain forms of assistance, including notebooks, pens, tiffin, or healthcare-related support. Teacher 5 explained that sponsorship assistance was concentrated mainly among students from Nursery through Class Two, meaning that learners in Classes Four through Ten did not receive comparable levels of financial or material support.

Concerns were also expressed regarding certain aspects of academic management. Parent 2 reported that students' homework was not consistently reviewed and mentioned a situation in

which a relative was unable to participate in an examination. Parent 3 similarly felt that students were expected to memorize an excessive amount of examination material and that academic supervision was not always sufficient. Taken together, these accounts demonstrate that positive views of teachers and the learning environment existed alongside concerns about staffing, facilities, educational assistance, assessment practices, and aspects of school administration.

**Table 4.8: Institutional Challenges Identified by Participants**

| Institutional issue | Participants reporting the issue | Potential effect |
|---|---|---|
| Lack of an adequate playground | Parents 4 and 5 | Limited physical activity and recreation |
| Teacher shortage | Student 4 | Larger workload and reduced individual attention |
| Teacher turnover or migration | Parent 5 | Disruption of instructional continuity |
| Unequal sponsorship | Teacher 5, Parent 3 and Student 3 | Older or non-sponsored students receive less assistance |
| Increased school fees | Students 3 and 4 | Greater pressure on low-income families |
| Reduced food or material support | Student 4 and Parent 3 | Lower satisfaction and increased household expenditure |
| Inadequate homework feedback | Parent 2 | Students may not understand or correct mistakes |
| Examination pressure | Parent 3 | Stress and dependence on memorization |
| Limited classroom arrangement | Parent 5 | Possible distraction and overcrowding |
| Inconsistent teacher training | Teacher 2 reported no formal training | Variation in teachers' preparation and instructional quality |

Table 4.8 shows that the challenges were not limited to one area. They included physical infrastructure, staffing, finance, academic management, teacher training, and the distribution of assistance. These concerns are important because the sustainability of non-formal education

depends not only on low-cost access but also on maintaining consistent educational quality and institutional support.

## 4.10 Comparative Perspectives of Teachers, Parents, and Students

The different participant groups agreed on several issues but placed emphasis on different aspects of the school.

**Table 4.9: Comparison of Stakeholder Perspectives**

| Issue | Principal and teachers | Parents | Students |
|---|---|---|---|
| Educational quality | Emphasized adaptive teaching, lesson planning and child-friendly methods | Valued teacher behavior, academic support and moral education | Valued understandable lessons, computer training and motivational teaching |
| Affordability | Viewed low-cost education and sponsorship as support for marginalized families | Appreciated low fees but raised concerns about unequal assistance | Valued discounted materials but noticed fee increases |
| Safety | Focused on safeguarding, child protection and prevention of child labor | Emphasized security and guardian-controlled handover | Valued CCTV, guards and teacher mediation |
| Personal development | Highlighted motivation and life-skills education | Observed improvements in interest, behavior and creativity | Reported increased confidence, friendship and participation |
| Main barriers | Poverty, migration, child labour and parental unawareness | Fees, examinations, limited facilities and insufficient support | Illness, occasional work, fees, teacher shortages and reduced food support |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Institutional needs | Better parental engagement and student retention | Playground, academic feedback and wider sponsorship | More teachers, affordable fees and continued material support |

Table 4.9 illustrates that each stakeholder group viewed the school from a different position. Teachers concentrated on the difficulties of teaching and retaining students. Parents judged the school according to safety, affordability, educational quality, and the treatment of their children. Students focused more strongly on friendships, confidence, programs, school materials, safety, and teacher behavior.

Despite these differences, the groups generally agreed that the school provided valuable educational access and a supportive environment. They also agreed that financial hardship and inadequate resources continued to limit the program's effectiveness.

## 4.11 Education as a Form of Social Protection and Human Development

The findings indicate that participants understood the value of education in a much broader sense than the acquisition of academic knowledge alone. Good Neighbors School was portrayed as an environment where children could receive emotional encouragement, moral direction, health-related knowledge, protection, and opportunities for personal and social growth. Teachers' efforts to persuade working children to return to school, raise awareness about early marriage, visit families at home, and provide guidance on child safeguarding demonstrate that the institution played a role beyond conventional classroom teaching. Likewise, students' experiences of becoming more confident, participating in extracurricular and awareness programs, learning about health and hygiene, and forming friendships point to the school's wider contribution to their personal development.

Participants also associated education with the possibility of creating better prospects for children living in disadvantaged circumstances. Their aspirations demonstrated how schooling could encourage them to think beyond the immediate limitations created by poverty and informal

employment. For example, Student 1 expressed an ambition to speak confidently before a larger audience, while Student 5 hoped to establish a career in business. Parents similarly believed that education could help their children develop the knowledge, character, confidence, and social skills needed to become responsible and respected members of society.

At the same time, the findings show that children's educational opportunities remained closely tied to their household and community circumstances. Poverty, uncertain employment, frequent relocation, and unequal access to financial and educational resources continued to create barriers to sustained participation. Although the school provided various forms of assistance and attempted to reduce some of these disadvantages, its efforts alone could not overcome the deeper economic and social inequalities affecting the children and their families.

## 4.12 Summary of Findings

The study findings indicate that Good Neighbors School plays an important role in expanding educational opportunities for disadvantaged children living in Nurerchala. Several features contributed to its perceived value, including relatively manageable tuition costs, convenient location, selected forms of sponsorship, flexible school shifts, supportive and qualified teachers, learner-friendly instructional practices, child-protection initiatives, cultural events, and motivational activities. Parents particularly appreciated having an educational institution located close to their homes where their children could study in an environment they considered safe and supportive. From the students' perspectives, friendships, participation in cultural and extracurricular activities, access to learning materials, motivational sessions, basic computer education, health-related awareness, and opportunities to communicate and perform publicly were among the important benefits of attending the school. Teachers, meanwhile, emphasized the school's broader role in keeping vulnerable children connected to education and reducing their exposure to risks such as child labor, early marriage, neglect, and exclusion from schooling.
Despite these positive contributions, a number of factors limited the school's capacity to provide uninterrupted and equally accessible educational support. The major challenges identified by participants included household poverty, children's involvement in work, domestic responsibilities, frequent migration, irregular attendance, limited parental literacy and awareness,

difficulties maintaining communication with families, increases in school fees, unequal access to sponsorship, shortages and turnover among teachers, insufficient monitoring of homework, examination-related pressure, inadequate classroom arrangements, reductions in food or material assistance, and the lack of a suitable playground. These difficulties demonstrate that the availability of a school alone does not guarantee continuous participation or equal educational outcomes.

Overall, the findings suggest that non-formal education in Nurerchala serves several interconnected purposes. It functions not only as an alternative route to learning but also as a supportive and protective setting where children can develop confidence, social relationships, awareness, and aspirations for the future. However, the long-term effectiveness of such education depends on conditions beyond the classroom. Stable household livelihoods, adequate institutional funding and facilities, appropriately trained teachers, meaningful parental engagement, and continued academic and material support across different grade levels are all important for sustaining children's participation and improving their educational experiences.

# Chapter Five: Discussion & Recommendation

Practical and long-lasting educational solutions are needed to address the issues that children in places like Nurerchala face, such as poverty, child labor, ignorance, and a lack of educational resources. This chapter offers evidence-based suggestions for enhancing the sustainability, quality, and accessibility of non-formal education initiatives for underprivileged children. The recommendations are supported by pertinent scholarly and policy viewpoints and are based on the study's findings, including insights obtained from respondents. The emphasis is on resolving current issues while enhancing the chances that non-formal education offers to enhance children's education, social growth, and prospects for the future.

The main suggestions are made in light of the study's findings to enhance the efficacy and long-term viability of non-formal education for disadvantaged kids in the urban slum of Nurerchala.

## 5.1. Strengthening Educational Support and Learning Facilities

According to the study, poor learning conditions, a lack of necessary supplies, and a lack of educational resources all hinder impoverished children's ability to learn effectively. Therefore, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community groups ought to provide non-formal education institutions with more assistance in order to upgrade their facilities. To improve learning, it is important to make sure that there are enough classrooms, educational resources, textbooks, and kid-friendly settings. Additionally, giving kids access to essential school supplies like notebooks, stationery, and online learning materials can boost their engagement and lessen the financial strain on low-income families.

## 5.2. Increasing Community and Parental Awareness

Children's interest in schooling is significantly influenced by parental awareness and community involvement. Due to financial hardships, many urban slum families may put their children's income contribution ahead of their education.

## 5.3. Improving Quality of Teaching and Creating Sustainable Educational Opportunities

The quality and overall impact of non-formal education depend to a considerable extent on the knowledge, skills, and preparedness of the educators who deliver it. Teachers and facilitators should therefore receive continuous professional development that strengthens their instructional techniques, classroom management practices, and ability to respond to the diverse circumstances of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Greater coordination between non-formal and formal educational institutions is also important, particularly where learners may have the opportunity to enter or return to mainstream schooling. Such collaboration can help create clearer pathways for educational progression and reduce discontinuity between the two systems. In addition, the long-term sustainability of non-formal education requires supportive policies, regular monitoring and evaluation, adequate institutional supervision, and dependable financial resources. These measures can help ensure that such programs remain capable of supporting children's academic achievement, personal growth, and participation in society.

## 5.4. Development of Flexible Learning Arrangements

They are frequently unable to attend regular lessons during regular school hours as a result. Non-formal education programs should provide flexible learning schedules, such as evening classes, weekend sessions, and alternative learning arrangements, to meet their needs. Children who work may complete their education without compromising their ability to support their family financially if there were flexible educational possibilities. Additionally, this strategy would enhance educational retention and lower dropout rates.

## 5.5. Increased Government Commitment and Policy Support

Lastly, increased government participation is required to guarantee the long-term viability and growth of non-formal education programs. The government ought to provide enough funding for educational initiatives aimed at underprivileged children living in urban slums. The value of non-formal education as a supplementary part of the country's educational system should be acknowledged by policies. Increased cooperation between governmental organizations and non-

governmental organizations can improve program efficacy and help accomplish national and global educational development objectives.

## 5.6. Promote Gender Equity and Child Protection

Additional difficulties that girls in urban slums frequently encounter include household duties, worries about their safety, and the possibility of getting married young. Gender-sensitive methods should be used in educational programs to guarantee that boys and girls participate equally. To provide a secure and encouraging learning environment for all students, child protection laws should be reinforced.

## 5.7. Improve Learning Facilities and Educational Resources

Two major obstacles were noted: inadequate infrastructure and a lack of instructional resources. Adequate classrooms, educational resources, furnishings, sanitary facilities, and clean drinking water should all be present in non-formal education settings. Students' academic performance, focus, and attendance can all be enhanced by a supportive learning environment.

# Chapter Six: Conclusion

This study explored the opportunities and challenges of non-formal education (NFE) for underprivileged children living in the urban slum area of Nurerchala. The findings indicate that non-formal education (NFE) provides an important educational route for children who experience difficulties entering or remaining within the formal schooling system. Economic hardship, involvement in work, frequent unstable family circumstances, and other social constraints can prevent disadvantaged children from participating consistently in conventional schools. NFE responds to some of these difficulties by offering more adaptable learning arrangements, community-oriented settings, and teaching approaches that are responsive to learners' circumstances. Through these programs, children can develop foundational skills in reading, writing, numeracy, health awareness, life skills, and social interaction. Previous research in Bangladesh has similarly emphasized the contribution of NFE to expanding educational access and strengthening practical skills among marginalized groups.

The study also shows that NFE can contribute to educational inclusion and children's broader personal development. Participants associated these programs with improved confidence, greater awareness, reduced educational exclusion, and increased opportunities for social participation. Parents and community members generally viewed such initiatives favorably because they provide learning opportunities that are relatively affordable and can accommodate some of the difficulties associated with life in low-income urban communities. In certain circumstances, NFE centers serve a wider protective function by keeping children connected with education and potentially reducing their exposure to child labor, harmful social activities, and other forms of vulnerability. Their community-based structure also enables educators to reach children who might otherwise remain outside established educational institutions

.

At the same time, the study identifies substantial obstacles that restrict the effectiveness and continuity of NFE in Nurerchala. Household poverty emerged as a particularly important concern because financial pressure can lead families to depend on children's contributions to household income. As a result, education may become secondary to employment or other family responsibilities. Irregular attendance, discontinuation of schooling, limited parental educational

backgrounds, shortages of learning materials, inadequate financial resources, and weak institutional support were also identified as factors affecting learners' educational experiences. Existing studies concerning education in Dhaka's disadvantaged communities likewise point to economic hardship, child employment, and household circumstances as important influences on school participation and dropout.

Limited pathways for recognizing NFE qualifications, weak connections with formal schools, insufficiently trained educators, and inadequate systems for monitoring program quality can restrict learners' opportunities after completing non-formal courses. These limitations may make it difficult for students to move into formal education or use their learning as a foundation for future employment and skills development. Previous research on NFE in Bangladesh has also drawn attention to issues such as inadequate funding, policy limitations, weak institutional coordination, and insufficient integration between formal and non-formal education.

Its contribution extends beyond basic academic learning to include confidence building, social participation, personal awareness, and protection from certain forms of vulnerability. Nevertheless, the sustainability and effectiveness of these programs depend on the wider environment in which they operate. Stronger policy implementation, reliable funding, continuous professional development for teachers, meaningful community involvement, improved monitoring, and closer collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, schools, and local communities are necessary to strengthen NFE.

Rather than treating non-formal education simply as a substitute for formal schooling, it may be more appropriate to view it as a complementary pathway that can respond to learners who are unable to benefit fully from conventional educational structures. Strengthening the relationship between the two systems could create smoother opportunities for children to continue their education and develop further skills. Addressing the economic and social barriers faced by families in slum communities, while simultaneously improving the quality, accessibility, and recognition of NFE, is therefore essential for advancing more inclusive and equitable educational opportunities.

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# Appendix:

## Thesis Interview/Survey

**Research questions:**

**Interview with Principal**

Name: Manseng Chambugong

Age**:** 40

Marital Status**:** Married

Education: Master of Management Studies (MMS) Time: 1:58 PM – 2:06 PM

1.Can you describe the vision and mission of Good Neighbors School, Vatara?

Vision: Good Neighbors is an international humanitarian development NGO founded in South Korea in 1991. It was granted General Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). Its focus is on community development projects that protect children's rights and encourage the self-reliance of communities. It not only provides humanitarian assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) but also conducts emergency relief activities throughout the world wherever help is needed. Good Neighbors School was established in Vatara in 1996. It focuses on providing quality education for underserved communities. Its locations include Mirpur (Dhaka), Ghatail (Tangail), Shakhipur (Tangail), Bochaganj (Dinajpur), and Nilphamari. It also focuses on activities of national interest and efficient, competitive human resource management.

Mission: Good Neighbors exists to make the world a place without hunger, where people live together in harmony. Good Neighbors respects the human rights of those suffering from poverty, disasters, and oppression, and helps them achieve self-reliance while enabling them to rebuild their hope.

2. How long has the school been working with underprivileged children in this area?

Answer: The Good Neighbors School has been working with underprivileged children in Vatara since 1996. I feel the difference between formal and non-formal education.

3. What is the difference between formal and non- formal education?

Answer: The difference between formal and non-formal education is that formal education is very expensive, whereas non-formal education is less expensive. Formal education involves more formality and solemnity, but in non-formal education, we can adjust to our students very easily. Students can talk to their teachers and share their problems in a very friendly way. I can clearly feel the difference between formal and non-formal education.

4. What are the major challenges do you face in running a non-formal school in this area?

Answer: The major challenge faced by a non-formal school is that it is very difficult to retain students in Vatara. They come from marginalized families, as most of their parents are rickshaw pullers; some work in grocery shops, others are garment workers, and some mothers work in other people's homes. Their children are often not aware of or engaged with their studies.

5. What are the challenges do teachers face while working in this environment?

Answer: They have common problems such as child marriage and child labor, and their biggest problem is migration. If they face economic problems, they go back to their villages. After a long time, they return to Dhaka city.

**Teacher- 1**

Name: Prema Rani Das Age: 27 Education Background: (MB) Marketing and Business

Married / Unmarried: Unmarried Time: 12:00 -12:17 PM

1.What inspired you to work in a non –formal education setting like good Neighbors school?

Answer: Good Neighbors School inspired me to work in non-formal education as a teacher. I was a student at this school. I work with children and strive to bring the light of education into their lives while standing by those who are poor and helpless. I help ensure that they have access to various opportunities and facilities, such as education, healthcare, and more.

2. What kind of training or preparation did you receive for working with underprivileged children?

Answer: I have received different kinds of training to work with underprivileged children, focusing on environmental sustainability, health protection, the new curriculum, and ways to keep the environment clean and beautiful. I help children learn how to maintain a beautiful environment so they can apply these practices later in life.

3. How do you adjust your lesson for students with different learning levels in the same class?

Answer: I try to adjust my lesson plans for students with different learning levels. I prepare my lesson plans using worksheets for the students. In a day, I teach five subjects. First, I teach one subject for 40 minutes, and then I teach each of the remaining subjects for 30 minutes. I use different sources and books, and I also take help from library books.

4. What are the biggest challenges do you face while teaching in this environment?

Answer: All the students belong to middle- and lower-income families, and their parents are not aware of the importance of education. We try to communicate and contact them by phone, but sometimes we cannot reach them. At times, we also have to listen to negative comments from them**,** and some parents make the situation difficult. Some of the students are slow learners, so I try to give them extra support before or after class to help them understand the lessons. I use different examples and subject-related videos so that they can get a clear understanding. I also raise awareness about important issues such as a clean environment, child labor, child marriage,

and health problems. Sometimes, family members also join these classes. As a new teacher, I am learning how to manage and conduct my classes effectively.

5.What challenges do you face in communicating with parents from slum communities?

Answer: I face challenges in communicating with parents from slum communities. They often provide addresses, but we are unable to locate them. They live in rented houses and frequently move, so we cannot reach them by phone or find them at the same address. They are also not attentive to letters or notices. As a result, we face different kinds of problems.

**Teacher- 2**

Name: Syeda Sharmin Age: 29 Education Background: (MSc) Master of Science

Married / Unmarried: Married Number of Child: No child Time: 12:19 - 12:34 PM

1.What inspired you to work in a non –formal education setting like good Neighbors school?

Answer: On 16 February 2025, I joined Good Neighbors School. I enjoy working with underprivileged children, and it gives me great satisfaction. My colleagues always help and inspire me to teach the children.

2. What kind of training or preparation did you receive for working with underprivileged children?

Answer: I have not received any formal training to work with underprivileged children. I visit the children's homes approximately every 8–10 days, and all family members live together in a single room.

3. How do you adjust your lesson for students with different learning levels in the same class?

Answer: I use various materials related to the subject topics. The day before yesterday, I prepared the lesson for the children and obtained the principal's signature on the sheet.

4. What are the biggest challenges do you face while teaching in this environment?

Answer: I did not face any challenges while teaching in this environment.

5.What challenges do you face in communicating with parents from slum communities?

Answer: Parents from low-income families often do not understand the importance of education. They are unable to properly care for their children at home and are not sufficiently aware of their educational needs. They also do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.

**For Teacher- 3**

Name: Md: Shaeiqul Islam Age: 33 Education Background: (MBA) Masters of Business Administration

Number of Child: 1 son & 1 daughter Time: 12:38 - 12:51 PM Studying here: son, class-2

1.What inspired you to work in a non –formal education setting like good Neighbors school?

Answer: It is a charitable organization that helps marginalized people. We provide support through extra classes, child-friendly activities, child rights awareness, and health checkups to help poor children. I love the children very much, and they can easily adjust to me.

2. What kind of training or preparation did you receive for working with underprivileged children?

Answer: I have received various types of training to work with underprivileged children, including training from UNICEF on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, good touch and bad touch, child-friendly approaches, safeguarding, and quality education. I have been teaching here from 2025 to 2026.

3. How do you adjust your lesson for students with different learning levels in the same class?

Answer: I try to adjust my lesson plans for students with different learning levels. I prepare my lesson plans in advance and share stories with my students. I use multimedia for subject-related topics and follow the provided format. I usually prepare my lessons a day in advance.

4. What are the biggest challenges do you face while teaching in this environment?

Answer: The biggest challenge is that parents go to work, and their children stay alone all day. They do not have a good environment for studying at home. As a result, children are often absent from the classroom.

5.What challenges do you face in communicating with parents from slum communities?

Answer: I do not face any challenges in communicating with parents from slum communities. When I enter students' homes, they always welcome me and accept me with a warm heart.

**For Teacher- 4**

Name: Dip Chandro Biswas Age: 31 Education Background: (M. Ed) Master of education

Number of Child: Married, but no child Time: 2:5 - 2:10 PM

1.What inspired you to work in a non –formal education setting like good Neighbors school?

Answer: I have been working at this school from 2023 to 2026. I appreciate the school management and its involvement in social activities, such as preventing child marriage and child labor, which inspire me.

2. What kind of training or preparation did you receive for working with underprivileged children?

Answer: I have received various types of training to support underprivileged children, including training in child protection and advocacy. I actively speak out for children and engage with them through motivational communication.

3. How do you adjust your lesson for students with different learning levels in the same class?

Answer: I have to adjust my lessons for students with different learning levels in the same class. I use my notebook ("khata") and prepare a lesson plan every day. The head office has provided a format, and I use this format in my classroom.

4. What are the biggest challenges do you face while teaching in this environment?

Answer: I do not face any significant challenges in this environment, as I am able to adapt to them effectively.

5.What challenges do you face in communicating with parents from slum communities?

Answer: I have been facing many challenges in communicating with parents in slum communities. Some parents do not understand the importance of education, and they do not want to send their children to school.
Many students need to earn an income**,** so I try to understand their situation and encourage **t**hem to return to school. As a result, one or two students come back to school again.

**For Teacher- 5**

Name: Dipu Mondol Age: 30 Education Background: (BA) Bachelor of Arts

Married / Unmarried: Unmarried Time: 2:12 - 2:21 PM

1.What inspired you to work in a non –formal education setting like good Neighbors school?

Answer**:** On 1 December 2023, I joined this school**.** A deep sense of faith has inspired me to teach children. I am passionate about the teaching profession, and for this reason**,** I have chosen it as my career.

2. What kind of training or preparation did you receive for working with underprivileged children?

Answer: I have received training to work with underprivileged children, including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, child protection, and motivation classes, among others.

3. How do you adjust your lesson for students with different learning levels in the same class?

Answer: I paint Bengali and English alphabet letters**.** I use stickers as educational materials in the classroom for the children. I also use multimedia in the classroom.

4. What are the biggest challenges do you face while teaching in this environment?

Answer

Low-income people come to the school. They try to improve their lives. Before they used to give us many books, notebooks, etc.

5.What challenges do you face in communicating with parents from slum communities?

Answer**:** A difficult issue is communicating with parents because their education level is very low. Parents and children are not aware. We cannot contact them by mobile. If parents are uneducated, they cannot understand their children's problems. Every parent should receive basic education. For children studying from Nursery to Class Two, they receive sponsorship and school stationery, but those who are studying in Classes 4 to 10 do not have sponsors.

**For Parents - 1**

Name: Remu Banik Age: 27 Education Background: **(**MBA) Master of Business Administration

Number Child: one son Time: 11:31 – 11:43 AM Studying here: one son, Age: 4 years,

Class-Nursery

1.What is your occupational back ground?

Answer: My occupation is housewife.

2.Why did you choose to send your child to good Neighbors school?

Answer: I choose to send my child to Good Neighbors School because of its quality of education. The school is very near my house.

3. Do you think this school is helping your child to build a better future?

Answer: The school helps children focus on their studies. The child's interest in school is increasing regularly. The child's intelligence is also improving through fun and simple games. In the classroom, teachers show empathy toward the children so that their mental development becomes better and they can become good people in the future. Children are taught drawing, songs, and rhymes in class. This helps to improve their skills.

4. What do you like most about this school?

Answer: The discipline system in this school is very good. I can send my child to school safely. I do not hand over my child to anyone except the guardian. The quality of education is very good, and it motivates their studies.

5.What problem do you see in this school?

Answer: I don't think there is any problem so far.

**For Parents - 2**

Name: Shaila Akter Age: 25 Education Background: Five

Number Child:1 son & 1 daughter Time:11: 46 – 12:2 PM Studying here:1 daughter,

Age: 9 years, Class:4

1.What is your occupational back ground?

Answer: My occupation is housewife and a small entrepreneur. I have been selling cakes in this area for the last three months. It is still growing.

2.Why did you choose to send your child to good Neighbors school?

Answer: Many members of my family were, and still are, students. They are the ones who got my daughter admitted here. I have already seen that the education here is very good.

3. Do you think this school is helping your child to build a better future?

Answer: The quality of education is very good. Teachers treat students well in the classroom and everywhere else. The school has a co-curricular system. My children have learned many things at school**,** such as singing, drawing, rhymes, and poetry recitation. Some of them are very good at these activities, and they all receive awards.

4. What do you like most about this school?

Answer: The quality of education is very good. My daughter studies very carefully.

5.What problem do you see in this school?

Answer: The teacher does not check homework. If a student submits homework in class, the teacher does not follow up on it later. This means that the child does not receive feedback. My close relative was also unable to take the exam. Despite many requests, the child was not allowed to sit for the exam. This has caused the child's class roll number to fall behind in studies.

**For Parents-3**

Name: Shaheda Begum Age: 25 Education Background: Eight

Number Child: 2 sons Time: 11:32 – 11:52 AM Studying here: 2 sons, Age: 10 years, Class:5

Age: 7 years, Class: Two

1.What is your occupational back ground?

Answer: I am a housewife.

2.Why did you choose to send your child to good Neighbors school?

Answer: The school is very close to my house, so it is convenient for me. The school fee is four hundred per child. One of my children finishes his class in the morning shift, and then I can bring another child for the day shift. They have been studying there for two years.

3. Do you think this school is helping your child to build a better future?

Answer: I think this school is helping my child build a better future because education plays an important role in development. The environment is good, and the teachers' behavior is also good. The students are doing well in reading and writing. They also learn drawing, reading, and making handicrafts, such as the national flag and village scenery. I believe they will learn even more in higher classes.

4. What do you like most about this school?

Answer: The security is good, and the environment is beautiful, **so** I can live at home without worry.

5.What problem do you see in this school?

Answer: Yes, I see some problems in this school. During exams, teachers give students too many questions. The students have to memorize all the questions, but they are unable to finish memorizing them. Teachers do not pay enough attention to proper supervision during exams. We are poor, and parents cannot get support according to the provided cards. My children have been studying here for two years. They are not receiving support from the school such as notebooks, pens, tiffin, or healthcare.

**For Parents -4**

Name: Shyamol Debnath Age: 43 Education Background: Masters

Number Child: 2 Time: 2:25 -2:38 PM Studying here: Two

1.What is your occupational back ground?

Answer: Shopkeeper (Own shop)

2.Why did you choose to send your child to good Neighbors school?

Answer: Because this school is providing best support for my children.

3. Do you think this school is helping your child to build a better future?

Answer: They support both textual educational and moral education. That's why I think this school is helping my child for better future.

4. What do you like most about this school?

Answer: Children can easily contact with teachers, teachers are cordial and helpful.

5.What problem do you see in this school?

Answer: This school has no playground. It would be better if they have a playground for all the children.

**For Parents -5**

Name: Md. Nurul Islam Age:41 Education Background: Five

Number Child: 3 Time: 2:41 -2:58 PM Studying here: One

1.What is your occupational back ground?

Answer: Businessman- Fuel business.

2.Why did you choose to send your child to good Neighbors school?

Answer: This school is near my house and perfect for my child.

3. Do you think this school is helping your child to build a better future?

Answer: This school mentally supports the students and take care well.

4. What do you like most about this school?

Answer: The teachers of this school are very cordial and they are very careful about students.

5.What problem do you see in this school?

Answer: School has no playground and class rooms are face to face. Teacher migration is also one kind of problem.

**For students -1**

Name: Omar Faruk Age: 15 Class: 9

Number of siblings: 3 Sisters, Married Time: 1:01 – 1: 13 PM

1.Why did you join in this school?

Answer: I joined this school because they organize programs like Women's Day and Volunteer Day. They celebrate different kinds of days, and I like these programs. They give us gifts, and I feel happy.

2. Do you come to school every day if not why?

Answer: I come to school every day. If I get sick, I don't come to school. Sometimes I help my brother-in-law at the grocery shop, and for this reason, I miss school.

3. Do your parents support your education? Do you feel save and happy in your school?

Answer: Yes, my parents support my education in this school. I do not like village education; I prefer city education. In this school, they provide different kinds of support, and I like the school uniform. I feel happy.

4. Has this school help you to become more confident? How?

Answer: I was admitted to this school in 2024. As a student of this school, I like all the teachers' classes. This school helps me become more confident. Sometimes, during class, a teacher invites me to come in front of all the students, and I sing my favorite song. Teachers and students talk to each other very friendly. I do not feel shy speaking in front of the students. I hope that in the future, I will be able to speak on stage in front of people.

5. What are the biggest challenges in this school?

Answer: The teachers give us warnings or opportunities three times. We are not allowed to fight or smoke cigarettes at school. Otherwise, we will be expelled from the school.

**For students -2**

Name: Sazzad Hossain Age: 14 Class: 9

Number of siblings: Single Time: 1:28 -1:36 PM

1.Why did you join in this school?

Answer: The children have many opportunities, such as participating in a child labor awareness program. They celebrate different kinds of festivals, and these programs help me continue learning.

2. Do you come to school every day if not why?

Answer: I come to school every day. Sometimes, during class, I go to my relative's house.

3. Do your parents support your education? Do you feel save and happy in your school?

Answer: Yes, my parents support me in my studies. We are all from a poor family, and I receive help from my school, such as books, notebooks, pens, a water bottle, a school bag, an exam board, a pencil box, an eraser, and a sharpener.

4. Has this school help you to become more confident? How?

Answer: This school helps me become more confident, as we are encouraged to talk to each other like brothers and sisters. All the teachers and students are very friendly.

5. What are the biggest challenges in this school?

Answer: The biggest rule in this school is that you must not fight with each other. If it happens sometimes, the teachers call the students and help solve their problems.

**For students -3**

Name: Maria Akter Age: 14 Class: 9

Number of siblings: 3 Sisters Time: 1:00 - 1: 21 PM Studying here: 1 sister, class-7, age:12

1.Why did you join in this school?

Answer: Good Neighbors School is very close to my home. My sister and I go there together, and transportation is easy. The education system is very good. We receive computer training at our school. They also arrange health and hygiene awareness programs.

2. Do you come to school every day if not why?

Answer: Yes, I come to the school every day.

3. Do your parents support your education? Do you feel save and happy in your school?

Answer: My parents always motivate me in my studies. The school teachers and guards take care of us like family members. We have CCTV cameras in our school. If we have a problem, we can talk to the teachers at any time. They are very friendly, and I feel safe at school. I have many friends there, and I have fun with them. We can learn new things from each other.

4. Has this school help you to become more confident? How?

Answer: The teachers give us motivational classes. Because of this, I feel confident in my life.

5. What are the biggest challenges in this school?

Answer: Every year, the teachers collect a school fee of five hundred taka from the students. We can buy stationery from the school at a lower price. Those who have a sponsorship card need to pay less money.

**For students -4**

Name: Surjan Akter Age: 15 Class: 9

Number of Brother & Sister: 3+3=6 Time: 1: 22 -1:58 PM

1.Why did you join in this school?

Answer: The school is very near my house, and they charge a low monthly fee. All the teachers teach us very carefully. The quality of education is very good.

2. Do you come to school every day if not why?

Answer: I come to school regularly. However, when I am very sick, I do not come to school.

3. Do your parents support your education? Do you feel save and happy in your school?

Answer: My parents support me in my education. I feel safe at school because we have CCTV cameras. The teachers and the guard take care of all of us. The teachers are very friendly with us. We have fun with our friends. In our school, the teachers arrange many programs where we can enjoy ourselves together. During the tiffin break, we play together in the playground.

4. Has this school help you to become more confident? How?

Answer**:** In our school, they arrange programs for students. They organize health seminars and competitions for students. Through these programs, I gain more confidence. Madam gives us motivational speeches so that we can improve our confidence.

5. What are the biggest challenges in this school?

Answer: They have increased the school fee this year. I have noticed that earlier they provided us with nutritious food, but now they provide less nutritious food. In our school, there are fewer opportunities, and the number of teachers is also very low.

**For students -5**

Name: Iasin Arafat  Age: 15  Class: 9

Number of Brother & Sister: 1 Sister  Time: 1: 14 -1: 27 PM

1.Why did you join in this school?

Answer: I like to study with my friends at school. Their behavior toward me is very good. If I go to another school, it would take a long time to make new friends.

2. Do you come to school every day if not why?

Answer: I come to school every day, but sometimes I go to the village during school time. If I get sick, I do not come to school.

3. Do your parents support your education?  Do you feel save and happy in your school?

Answer: My parents support me in my education. If I do not practice, my math teacher gets upset with me. I like to study. I hope that I will become a businessman in the future.

4. Has this school help you to become more confident? How?

Answer: Before, I was shy, but I am not shy now. This school gives me motivational classes. The teachers arrange different kinds of programs, such as International Mother's Day and Victory Day, etc.

5. What are the biggest challenges in this school?

Answer: The biggest challenge in this school is that when I come to school and my friends do not come, I contact them through mobile. I have a good relationship with my friends.