

# Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh



Trafficking in Children-South Asia (TICSA)

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INCIDIN Bangladesh  
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# Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh

By:  
INCIDIN Bangladesh  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

For:  
International Labour Organization  
International Programme on Elimination of  
Child Labour (ILO-IPEC)  
TICSA Project

February 2002

## Preface

Extreme forms of exploitation of children at work exist and persist all over the world, and they are particularly difficult to research due to their hidden, sometimes illegal or even criminal nature. Trafficking of children for labour or sexual exploitation is one of the most heinous crimes among the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Promoting the Convention (No. 182) concerning the Prohibition and immediate action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999, is a high priority for the International Labour Organization (ILO). Recommendation (No. 190, paragraph 5) accompanying the Convention states that “detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labour should be compiled and kept up to date to serve as a basis for determining priorities for national action for the abolition.

To INCIDIN Bangladesh and IPEC colleagues who contributed, through their individual and collective efforts, to the realisation of this report I should like to express our gratitude. The responsibility for opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the authors and does not imply endorsement by the ILO. The research was funded by the United States Department of Labour.

I am sure that the wealth of information contained in this report on the situation of girls and boys trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation within Bangladesh and across its borders will contribute to a deeper understanding and allow us to more clearly focus on the challenges that lie ahead. Most importantly, we hope that the studies will guide policy makers, community leaders, and practitioners to tackle the problem on the ground.



Frans Roselaers

Director

ILO-IPEC

Geneva, 2002

## Acknowledgements

The child survivors of trafficking played a critical role in this study. Interacting with them has been a rare and rewarding experience for us. The children shared their personal experiences, gave us their opinions and assessments, and made an invaluable contribution by providing a child's perspective that guided the research towards analysing the study findings through the eyes of the survivors.

We are grateful to the rural household members who shared their knowledge with us and to family members who co-operated with us as we interacted with the children at their households—a critical element of the study. The study process has been enriched by the open and thoughtful participation of the children.

ILO team members provided exceptional technical support. Our special thanks go to Ms. Tine Staermose, CTA, ILO-IPEC-TICSA, for her participation in planning the study and conceptualising its findings. We recognise her critical contributions in moving forward with the study process. Mr. Masud Hassan Siddique, National Project Co-ordinator, South Asian Anti-Trafficking Program (IPEC), ILO, inspired and encouraged us throughout. The support of the ILO team members did more than inspire and strengthen us—it revealed their personal commitments to the cause.

Many others contributed to this study. Government agency heads, development partner representatives, law enforcement and border security officials, local government representatives, and resource persons and team members from knowledge institutes, NGOs and activist groups shared their experiences and provided the support needed to collect data in the field.

The INCIDIN Bangladesh team has been deeply moved by the spontaneous co-operation offered by stakeholders in every phase of the study. This synergy has inspired us, and we believe that the same level of commitment will be reflected in putting the relevant study findings into action.

A.K.M. Masud Ali, Principal Researcher  
(On behalf of the study team members)  
Dhaka, Bangladesh  
February 2002

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| ACD                | Association for Community Development                                  |
| ASK                | Ain-O-Salish Kendra  |
| ATSEC              | Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children         |
| BDR                | Bangladesh Rifles  |
| BITA               | Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts                                   |
| BNWLA              | Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association                          |
| BSAF               | Bangladesh Shisu Adhikar Forum   |
| CCDB               | Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh                     |
| CEDAW              | Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CRC                | Convention on the Rights of the Child                                  |
| CWCS               | Centre for Women and Children Studies                                  |
| DAM                | Dhaka Ahsania Mission  |
| FGD                | Focus Group Discussion   |
| GO                 | Government Organisation  |
| HSC                | Higher Secondary Certificate   |
| ILO                | International Labour Organization                                      |
| INCIDIN Bangladesh | Integrated Community and Industrial Development in Bangladesh          |
| IOM                | International Organization for Migration                               |
| IPEC               | International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour               |
| MoWCA              | Ministry of Women and Children Affairs                                 |
| NGO                | Non-Governmental Organisation  |
| PRA                | Participatory Research Approach  |
| RA                 | Rapid Assessment   |
| SAARC              | South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation                      |
| SCF-UK             | Save the Children Fund-UK  |
| SSC                | Secondary School Certificate   |
| TCSD               | Theater Centre for Social Development                                  |
| Tk                 | Taka, the currency of Bangladesh                                       |
| TOR                | Terms of Reference   |
| UBINIG             | Unnayan Bikalpa Nitee Gobeshana  |
| UDDIPAN,           | United Development Initiatives for Programmed Actions                  |
| VGD                | Vulnerable Group Development   |

## Glossary of Bangla Words and Phrases

| <b>Bangla</b>  | <b>English Meaning</b>   |
|----------------|--|
| Bazar          | Market, usually an open market for small traders   |
| Biri or Bidi   | Traditional handmade cigarettes, the most popular form of tobacco in the rural areas   |
| Changra        | 'Young child,' a colloquial expression used in the Kurigram area   |
| Chele Dhora    | 'Child snatcher,' the community expression for trafficker  |
| Dalal          | Pimp, an individual who obtains clients for prostitutes and collects fees from those prostitutes, who may be children or adults  |
| Dhur           | Those who cross the border illegally, a colloquial expression from the Satkhira area meaning a 'person without any significance' |
| Ghat           | River port, illegal border transit point   |
| Khanki         | Prostitute, slang for a 'degraded woman'   |
| Mastan         | Hooligan   |
| Pachar Kari    | Trafficker   |
| Para           | A neighbourhood, usually comprised of couple of homesteads   |
| Qumi Madrasa   | Community-managed Islamic religious institute  |
| Rouhinga       | Illegal migrants from Myanmar to Bangladesh  |
| Thana          | Administrative unit  |
| Union Parishad | The lowest tier of elected local government bodies   |
| Upazila        | Administrative unit immediately above the Union Parishad   |

## Major Findings of the Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh

This study has been designed to identify and understand how the trafficking process functions and the terrible conditions often endured by the children who are its victims. The research combines qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. It identifies the rarity and universality of occurrence of different socio-economic factors and their impact on child trafficking within Bangladesh and across borders. The analysis has been characterised by a search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain the existence of those patterns.

The study used the Rapid Assessment Methodology, which included the following elements of data collection:

1. Review of literature and newspapers
2. Consultation with knowledge institutions
3. Interviews with key informants
4. Observation
5. In-depth interview and case study
6. Focus group discussion (FGD)
7. Participatory learning workshops
8. Short questionnaire-based household surveys

Geographical Coverage: Three *thanas*, Patgram, Shibganj, and Teknaf, in the districts of Lalmonirhat, Nowabgaj, and Cox's Bazar respectively, were selected for household surveys. These *thanas* were further segmented into unions and villages. Household surveys were conducted in 450 households with at least one child and two adult respondents.

Dhaka was selected primarily for collecting data from trafficking survivors. Rajshahi was chosen for interviewing rescued trafficked children in an NGO shelter. Data collection on illegal cross-border migration, including child trafficking, was conducted in Satkhira.

The study examined a broad range of issues surrounding the conceptual, structural and operational aspects of child trafficking. It suggests that the process of trafficking children is both socio-cultural and criminal. The major findings are presented in this section.

### ► The Concept of Trafficking

Many definitions of child trafficking are available. A debate on the common inadequacy of these definitions to include the consequences of trafficking has been recently introduced. The definitions generally address the recruitment, transport, harbouring, and sale of persons, but fail to include initiation, consequences, and prolonged exploitative conditions following the initial process of transfer. The study finds that the existing UN definition<sup>1</sup> also reflects these limitations. However, the definition clearly identifies the outcomes or consequences, which can be described as the “trafficked state”, a post-trafficking period continuing until rescue. Nevertheless, the UN definition, even in the face of the new debate, remains a powerful multilateral tool and can continue to support anti-trafficking forces at the global level.

The community vocabulary does not include ‘trafficking’. *Chele dhora* (child snatcher) is the Bangla term for what the development sector refers to as *pachar kari* (trafficker). Generally the discourse of trafficking is alien to common people, but the community comprehends and interacts, communicates and operates with that discourse based on its experience with ‘missing children’. However, the study underscores the need to acknowledge this discursive distinction to improve communication and action.

### ► The Trafficking Situation

The magnitude of trafficking in Bangladesh has increased over the years, but neither the extent nor the real expansion can be verified. The illegal structure of trafficking, community vested interests, and a lack of information networking (*i.e.* information is localised) are the major constraints preventing verification.

Internal trafficking in children is a much larger problem than external trafficking in children.

Trafficked children of both sexes engage in prostitution at brothels and on the streets. In Shibganj girls have been found employed in Indian *bidi* factories and boys trafficked to Dubai as camel jockeys. Girls from each of the four study areas (Patgram, Shibganj, Teknaf, and Dhaka) have been trafficked to brothels in India (Bombay, Delhi, Kolkata, and other areas). Trafficked girls engage in street prostitution in Dhaka. The origins of rescued girls at NGO shelters (BNWLA and ACD) reflect that internal trafficking of children occurs within almost all districts of the country.

About 13 percent of the marginal households in the three household survey areas reported cases of missing children. Only half of these missing children have been recovered. The experience of the trafficked children engaged in prostitution reveals that missing children are at high risk of being victimised by the trafficking network.

Trafficking routes vary depending on changes in the legal environment, geography, destination, means of transportation, and area of recruitment. Specific routes may be identified for some specialised destinations such as brothels. Cross-border trafficking uses existing migration routes, both legal and illegal. The trafficking routes, therefore, appear as an integral part of the map of human mobility, both legal and illegal, within a given time frame and geography.

### ► The Causes of Trafficking

The push and pull factors operating for child migration and child labour are equally responsible for trafficking in children.



Community awareness of the hazards of child migration, early marriage, and child employment, and their links to trafficking, is not completely absent. Economic pressure, the legal framework, and social perceptions prevent communities from acting on this knowledge. Socially an individual is considered a child up to the age of 10 years, at most. This ‘early adulthood’ concept is a strong impediment to eliminating child labour, early marriage, and child trafficking.

In border communities, confidence in the safety of movement across the border and local involvement in cross border trade leads to the moral and circumstantial context of child trafficking. A large number of very young children are reported to be involved in cross-border smuggling of goods. These children are highly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, and trafficking—once they cross the border these children lose control over their environment, fall out of the human safety net, and step into a grey space of extreme vulnerability.

Grassroots communities have limited sources of information and no institutional means of raising awareness of trafficking. Community knowledge comes primarily from direct experience, stories, and myths. Although interventions by NGOs, government agencies, and media occur, the major source of information is informal human communication. NGOs play a limited role.

Discrimination against girls in all spheres of society contributes to their increasing vulnerability to trafficking. Early marriage and dowry pressures make the girl child highly vulnerable to trafficking.

The participation of girls in formal schooling has increased due to the Bangladeshi government’s stipend program, but education does not

necessarily reduce the risk of trafficking. A section of key informants explained that the higher mobility of the school-going girls could very well increase their vulnerability to trafficking. The study, however, cautions against drawing conclusions about the relationship between education and a higher risk of trafficking.

### ► Migration and Trafficking

‘Migration’ and ‘trafficking’ are two different concepts, but in most cases communities, policy makers, activists, donors, and government agencies do not distinguish between illegal migration and trafficking.

Child migration and women’s migration are separate issues, but policy and legal documents treat the two agendas as synonymous. This treatment may result in the violation or reduction of women’s rights to freedom of movement and may not ensure the different type of treatment required for children.

The urge to migrate contributes to the expansion of trafficking. Political borders mean little to marginal rural communities. Myths of prosperity abroad, in places like Mumbai and Dubai, motivate parents to approve of (mostly illegal) migration for their children. They see human networking as the only means of safeguarding their children, but experience shows that such networking does not afford effective protection.

Illegal migration processes have a long history and extensive informal structures, including professional, illegal border emigration chains. Unless they are supported by strong economic, political and human connections, individuals accessing those mechanisms are exposed to high risks of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

The process of obtaining legal approval from the government for international travel appears to be quite expensive and complicated for the poor and the illiterate. Most of the rural and urban poor do not have passports—the cost and the means are beyond their capacity. The visa process, travel tax, and police harassment of individuals at the border are further discouraging factors.

While the poor are unable to acquire legal travel documents and are incapable of meeting the costs of a legal process, they still have a need to cross borders.

### ▶ **The Trafficking Chain: Nexus of Actors and Factors**

The trafficking process operates through chains of events and actors. A chain of socio-economic events and factors (such as a dysfunctional family, abuse, poverty, work-related migration, illegal cross-country migration, or marriage) exposes a child to the vulnerability of being trafficked. A chain of traffickers—a criminal network—exploits the vulnerability and invents opportunities to recruit and traffic children.

Child trafficking is profitable. A small investment yields a high profit. And while trafficking is illegal, risks are minimised through close links with corrupt law enforcement and border security officials.

The trafficking chain works through a corporate syndicate or locally organised service providers, each of which specialises in a part of the process. Individuals can act as traffickers without any support from criminal syndicates, but they require the services of different parts of the criminal chain for services such as transportation, shelter, and the sale and utilisation of a trafficked child.

Transportation workers at border areas are aware of the illegal migration process. They are not necessarily involved in the trafficking chain and therefore can interfere with and interrupt the trafficking process. The study identifies transport workers as a major source of information and an important means of rescue.

Key informants suspect that management personnel at certain residential hotels in border-area transit cities are part of trafficking chains. In some cases hotel management has been identified as having the capacity to interrupt the trafficking process.

### ▶ **The Consequences of Trafficking**

Trafficking clearly leads to the exploitative and hazardous employment and/or engagement of children, and even death. In most cases the consequences are both physical and psychological.

Trafficked individuals may develop consent for the exploitative and abusive environments and conditions they face, possibly reflecting the lack of control and choices available to them. The experiences of children engaged in street prostitution indicate that analysing the construction of such consent is more important than analysing the actual consent.

### ▶ **The Economics of Trafficking in Children**

Trafficking is big business, primarily with respect to the utilisation of trafficked children, rather than their actual transport. The profits from transporting and handing over trafficked individuals (to brothels, sweatshops, etc.) are shared by many—the most common types of trafficking networks are complex chains of smaller networks. While it is true that ‘corporate’ trafficking chains earn higher profits, the number of such syndicates is small.

### ► Interventions

Bangladesh's legal framework victimises trafficked girls engaged in prostitution by criminalising and failing to protect them.

The lack of regional and bilateral agreements, together with the legal framework, hampers the process of rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation, and re-integration.

At present, child survivors of trafficking have little or no say in the institutional approaches to rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation, and

reintegration. These approaches have good intentions but do little to help survivors regain control over their destinies.

Social stigmatisation is a major impediment to rehabilitation and reintegration.

Economic rehabilitation programs alone will not be able to meet the objectives of rehabilitating and reintegrating trafficking survivors. A process incorporating mental, social, and occupational reintegration is required.

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1 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

## Introduction

INCIDIN Bangladesh shares with the ILO a belief in the urgent need to understand the socio-economic dimensions of child trafficking. Development interventions cannot be sustainable without a thorough understanding of the social context. Moreover, advocacy programs can only mobilise community initiatives against traffickers if the role of community members (*e.g.* interest groups, influencing factors) is correctly understood and addressed. This is also true for programmes to rehabilitate or reintegrate child trafficking survivors. Without meaningful reactions to family and community dynamics, such initiatives are bound to fail in the long run.

In brief, the objectives of this research are to:

- Add to the knowledge base of trafficking in Bangladesh so that various stakeholders can use the information as a frame of reference, together with findings from other research. We also hope that it will serve to inform national policies.
- Provide ILO (IPEC) with building blocks to use in designing new interventions to combat the trafficking of children for exploitative employment in Bangladesh.
- Contribute information to a comparative

analysis of trafficking of children for exploitation in South Asia, as similar research is underway in Sri Lanka and Nepal.

### 1.2. Objectives

The goal of this research is to gain a better understanding of the nature of trafficking in children for exploitative purposes. In particular, the research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty and dropping out of school, and in particular identify potential trigger factors that cause trafficking, such as dysfunctional families, domestic and school violence, unemployment, and peer influence.
- Identify trafficking routes, including potential inter-linkages between different types of exploitative workplaces and situations along the route (*e.g.* from plantation areas to domestic work, to street children, to the sex sector).
- Assess potential linkages among missing children, internal child labour migration and trafficking of children for exploitative employment, including sexual exploitation in selected geographical areas.
- Gain a better understanding of the value

systems among different groups, such as local officials and the transport sector, that make child trafficking possible.

- Reveal community perceptions and family attitudes about trafficking.
- Gain a better understanding of the traffickers and their networks, including the economic gains throughout the chain.
- Gain a better understanding of the nature of the exploitation that child victims are exposed to throughout the trafficking process.

Background data on gender, age, ethnicity, income level, and other social status signifiers (*e.g.* religious leader) have been obtained whenever possible.

### 1.3. Definitions

This research is guided by ILO Convention No.182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which defines trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation as one of the worst forms of child labour, and by the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime).

ILO Convention No.182 defines the worst forms of child labour as:

- (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. (Article 3 of the Convention)

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, goes a step further in defining trafficking. It states that:

- (a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;<sup>2</sup>
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- (d) “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

This definition of trafficking involves the removal of the person from a familiar environment, but not necessarily the crossing of international borders<sup>2</sup>.

#### 1.4. Background of the Study<sup>3</sup>

Bangladesh ratified ILO Convention 182 in March 2001 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Over 20 international agencies are currently active in the battle against trafficking. IPEC is one of them.

IPEC's involvement began in 1993 with small action programs in Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Nepal. These sought to prevent trafficking through government and INGO capacity building, awareness raising, and the provision of alternatives to the families of those at risk. Following the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, efforts were made to launch programs to combat child trafficking at the sub-regional level, in addition to national level programs. These now operate in Asia, Central and Western Africa, and Central and South America. A substantial part of IPEC's current biennium budget (about US\$ 15 million) is committed to combating trafficking.

Over the years IPEC has developed a strategy to address the problem in an integrated manner. It combines situation analyses, national and sub-regional consultations, awareness raising, legal reform and law enforcement, direct action

programs, research and documentation, and advocacy and campaigning.

IPEC seeks to eliminate child trafficking by addressing its root causes. It supports the efforts of governments, workers' and employers' organisations, and NGOs in the prevention of trafficking and in the rescue, repatriation, and restoration of the rights of victims.

Data collection is crucial in the fight against the worst forms of child labour. Thus far 42 Rapid Assessments on the worst forms of child labour have been conducted in 21 countries and one border area. Four of these (Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Mekong region) address child trafficking and children in prostitution.

Instead of attempting to eradicate all child labour, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 (ILO C. No. 182) tackles the most exploitative and intolerable areas of work in which children under 18 are involved. Consequently, the target group of the Rapid Assessment as per the TOR includes and identifies the most vulnerable risk groups, with a special focus on the situation of the youngest children. The children targeted through the RA have been divided into three age groups: 5-9, 10-14, and 15 to 18 years.

This study will contribute to implementing the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 (No. 182) in Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup> Removal of organs is not a labour issue; hence this aspect has not been dealt with in depth.

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from a paper presented by Tine Staermose, CTA, ILO-IPEC-TICSA, Preliminary Sharing Workshop, Dhaka, 7 November, 2001



## Methodology

This study has been designed to identify and understand how the trafficking process functions and the terrible conditions often endured by the children who are its victims. The research combines qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. It identifies the rarity and universality of occurrence of different socio-economic factors and their impacts on child trafficking within Bangladesh and across borders. The analysis has been characterised by a search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain the existence of those patterns.

Because child trafficking is a criminal process carried out in secret, collecting information is difficult. Family members may be involved with traffickers and withhold information in order to

protect their reputations and avoid legal consequences.<sup>4</sup> Because of trauma, some trafficking survivors find it difficult to recall their experiences. Others, trafficked at an early age, fail to provide authentic data about their families or the trafficking process. In order to address such challenges the study had to apply a strict rule of triangulation (*e.g.* data collected through in-depth interviews were matched against the findings of the focus group discussions). To ensure authenticity some responses and respondents had to be dropped.

The study looks at two broad issues: the actual event of trafficking in children (*i.e.* routes, means, actors, process, causes, and consequences) and the vulnerability of children to trafficking. Two

Table: 2.1

**Respondent Method Matrix on Trafficking**

| RESPONDENT GROUP   | METHODS                     | MAIN AREAS OF QUERY  | COMMON AREAS   |
|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Trafficked children (Rescued and still not rescued children) | In-depth interviews and FGD | Personal accounts<br>Processes of trafficking<br>Perceptions and knowledge<br>Actors and factors<br>Background information | Means of recruitment<br>Origin<br>Destination<br>Means of rescue<br>Background information |
| Parents of trafficked children                               | In-depth interviews         | Processes of trafficking<br>Perceptions and knowledge<br>Background information  |  |



different methods of data collection were applied, and two different sets of sample groups were established for these two issues.

For data collection about the event of trafficking, qualitative methods were used included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. The sample included trafficked children engaged in prostitution, child survivors of trafficking (rescued children), and parents of trafficked children.

The data generated through in-depth interviews led to case studies and were also utilised to build a database on trafficked (rescued and still not rescued) children. Using data collected from trafficked children a quantitative database was also built to identify and analyse trends. FGDs helped clarify the roles of different actors and factors, triangulate data, and encourage debate about controversial issues. In-depth interviews

with parents were used to develop case studies.

Quantitative methods were used to obtain information about vulnerable children. The findings of the household survey, conducted in the three sample districts of Lalmonirhat, Nowabgaj, and Cox's Bazar, contributed to the building of an age and gender segregated database for a selected set of socio-economic indicators<sup>5</sup> of vulnerable households. The household survey also provided quantitative data used to place qualitative findings in a socio-economic context and to identify and better understand some of the trigger factors that cause many children to leave their families at a relatively early age and find themselves in the most vulnerable situations.

## 2.1. Sample Size

The study included two distinct sets of samples: the qualitative survey sample and the household survey sample.

Table: 2.2

**Primary Sample of Trafficked Children for In-depth Interviews**

| SAMPLE GROUP   | METHOD             | GIRL      | BOY       | TOTAL      |
|--|--------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Internally trafficked for prostitution (still not rescued) | In-depth interview | 40        | 9         | 49         |
| Child survivors (rescued children)                         |                    | 42        | 18        | 60         |
| <b>Total</b>   |                    | <b>82</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>109</b> |

Table: 2.3

**Primary Sample of Trafficked Children for In-depth Interviews**

| TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |     |       |                      |     |       |                      |     |       |       |     |       |
|---------------------|-----|-------|----------------------|-----|-------|----------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| 5-9 year-age group  |     |       | 10-14 year-age group |     |       | 15-18 year-age group |     |       | Total |     |       |
| Girl                | Boy | Total | Girl                 | Boy | Total | Girl                 | Boy | Total | Girl  | Boy | Total |
| 5                   | 4   | 9     | 14                   | 13  | 27    | 50                   | 9   | 59    | 69    | 26  | 95    |

Table: 2.4

**Sample of Trafficked Children for Focus Group Discussion**

| CATEGORY OF SAMPLE   | NUMBER OF FGD SESSIONS |          |          | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS |           |           |
|--|------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|  | Girl                   | Boy      | Total    | Girl                   | Boy       | Total     |
| Internally trafficked for prostitution (Still not Rescued) | 4                      | 1        | 5        | 27                     | 9         | 36        |
| Child Survivors (Rescued Children)                         | 1                      | 3        | 4        | 24                     | 7         | 31        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>5</b>               | <b>4</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>51</b>              | <b>16</b> | <b>67</b> |

Table: 2.5

**Sample of Key Informants for In-depth Interviews**

| CATEGORY OF SAMPLE  | CHARACTERISTICS AND NUMBER   | TOTAL RESPONDENTS |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Parents of vulnerable children  | Mother-17<br>Father-16   | 33                |
| Potential beneficiaries   | Bussinessman/Smuggler-2<br>Housewife – 2   | 5                 |
| Community members and leaders   | Elected UP Chairman- 1<br>Elected Union Parishad Chairman-2<br>Elected Union Parishad Member-<br>Female – 5<br>Male-2<br>Local Club Leader-1<br>NGO Group Leader-1 | 11                |
| Parents of trafficked children<br>(Rescued and still not rescued children) <sup>6</sup> | Mother – 8<br>Father-11  | 19                |
| Key informants  | Teacher, NGO Worker  | 11                |
| Knowledge institutes  | Local NGO/Branch – 8<br>National NGO/Agency – 2<br>International Development Agency – 3<br>Network- 2  | 15                |
| <i>Ghat</i> owners  | —  | 2                 |
| Transport workers in border transit points  | —  | 5                 |
| <b>Total</b>  |  | <b>101</b>        |

### 2.1.1. Qualitative Survey Sample

The two components of the qualitative survey sample are trafficked children and key informants. Each sample has two sub-groups, one for in-depth interviews and one for focus group discussions.

#### a. Sample of Trafficked Children

Initially, 109 children (82 girls and 27 boys) were selected for in-depth interviews.

Some children could not provide authentic information. Careful scrutiny left 95 of the trafficked children in the final sample. The presented table shows the age and sex distribution of the final sample.

The sample size of trafficked children for focus group discussions was 176 (133 girls and 43 boys), as detailed in the presented table.

Thus the sample size of the trafficked children was

162 (120 girls and 42 boys), of which 95 participated in in-depth interviews and 67 participated in focus group discussions.

#### b. Sample of Key Informants

The key informants for in-depth interviews included parents of vulnerable children; potential trafficking beneficiaries; community members and leaders from the study areas; parents of trafficked children (rescued and still not rescued); knowledge institutes (including local and national NGOs, international development agencies, and NGO networks); *ghat* owners (*i.e.* managers of illegal border exits); and transport workers at border transit points. The breakdown of respondents is shown in the above table.

#### c. Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Participants included vulnerable adolescent girls, potential trafficking beneficiaries, parents of vulnerable children, community members and

leaders, law enforcement and border security agencies (Police, Village Defense Police, Bangladesh Rifles), *ghat* owners, smugglers, transport workers in border transit points, and community volunteers<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore the study included 333 key informants through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

### 2.1.2. Household Survey Sample

The household survey was conducted in three rural areas in three districts of Bangladesh. The sample size was 450<sup>8</sup>, with 150 households from each area. Only ‘vulnerable households’ were included. These were selected using a set of vulnerability indicators derived from reviews of previous studies and through discussion with knowledge institutes.

The major factors determining vulnerability mapping of households to the risk of trafficking in children included:

- Rural destitute households based on the government’s listing of rural marginalised households. These families have Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) cards. They include families below the poverty income line, widows and destitute women.

- Families with children working for wages outside their households.
- Families with poor housing.
- Extremely poor households with an average annual per capita income of Tk. 3,757, including female-headed households and families with landholdings up to 15 decimals. In 1994 this category constituted 23 percent of rural households.<sup>9</sup>
- Moderately poor families with an average annual per capita income of Tk. 8,368. These are functionally landless families. Their land ownership limit is up to 50 decimal. In 1994 this category constituted 29 percent of rural households.<sup>10</sup>
- Households near border areas.
- Households depending on wage labour for survival.

The research team also selected households in consultation with local elected officials and other key informants. However, the set of criteria developed through discussions with knowledge institutes, the review of existing literature<sup>11</sup> and participation in workshops served as the basis for all consultations with local key informants.

The researchers were encouraged to develop the ‘eyes of the traffickers’ to help them identify

Table: 2.6  
Sample of Key Informants for Focus Group Discussion

| CATEGORY                                   | Number of FGD Sessions | Number of Participants |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Vulnerable adolescent girls                | 3                      | 26                     |
| Potential beneficiaries                    | 2                      | 6                      |
| Parents of vulnerable children             | 6                      | 41                     |
| Community members and leaders              | 12                     | 81                     |
| Law enforcement agencies*                  | 9                      | 55                     |
| Ghat owners and illegal border traders     | 1                      | 8                      |
| Transport workers in border transit points | 1                      | 8                      |
| Community volunteers                       | 1                      | 7                      |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>35</b>              | <b>232</b>             |

\* Includes members of Border Defense Rifles (BDR), Police, and Village Defense Police.

vulnerable households<sup>12</sup>. Three respondents, a child and her/his mother and father, were selected from each of these households for a pre-set questionnaire based interview. The presented table illustrates the age and sex distribution of the respondents.

In 114 families, the household heads were female (divorced, separated, or widowed). The fathers in 54 households were not available for interviews.

## **2.2. Methods of Data Collection**

This study used the Rapid Assessment Methodology and incorporated the following elements of data collection:

- 1) Review of literature and newspapers
- 2) Consultation with knowledge institutes
- 3) Interviews with key informants
- 4) Observation
- 5) In-depth interviews and case studies
- 6) Focus group discussion (FGD)
- 7) Participatory learning workshop
- 8) Short questionnaire-based household survey (an addition to the original RA methodology)

### **2.2.1. Data Collection through a Review of Literature<sup>13</sup>**

Published reports, books and documents from government agencies and NGOs were reviewed in order to generate a secondary database for broad identification of the study population. This review provided the researchers with some indicators for selecting the RA study area and helped identify a list of factors associated with defining vulnerable households.

### **2.2.2. Consultations with Knowledge Institutions<sup>14</sup>**

Before fieldwork began, researchers consulted 15 knowledge institutions familiar with child exploitation and trafficking in order to identify

the principal features of child trafficking and prostitution in Bangladesh. These consultations provided insights that helped triangulate the literature review findings and assisted in the clarification and in-depth understanding of certain issues. They were also used to discuss the concept of vulnerability, to establish criteria for identifying vulnerable households in the research, and to facilitate fieldwork.

After each consultation an observation sheet was completed in order to facilitate subsequent tabulation, analysis and validation of the information provided by the individual and/or the institution.

### **2.2.3. Interviews with Key Informants**

Key informants were carefully chosen to help focus the study with respect to research locations and topics to be examined. They were also asked to provide information about selected locations and to facilitate visits to children working in exploitative situations. The 101 key informants included social service outreach workers, transport workers, local elected officials, teachers, illegal border trade agents and organisers, potential traffickers, government officials, law enforcement and border security force members, parents of trafficked children, and others with trafficking knowledge and experience.

### **2.2.4. Observations**

Systematic observations of children in the research areas provided information about their work activities, working conditions, and mobility. Researchers chose locations such as bazars and border exit points where they could observe the movement of school children and working children. The observation method was particularly effective in examining the involvement of children and border security forces with illegal border trade.

Table: 2.7

**Household Survey Respondents**

| ADULT RESPONDENTS |        |       | CHILD RESPONDENTS |       |               |       |               |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------|--------|-------|-------------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Mother            | Father | Total | 5 – 9 years       |       | 10 – 14 years |       | 15 – 18 years |       | Total |       | Total |
|                   |        |       | Boys              | Girls | Boys          | Girls | Boys          | Girls | Boys  | Girls |       |
| 450               | 282*   | 732   | 12                | 21    | 89            | 190   | 56            | 82    | 157   | 293   | 450   |

**2.2.5. In-depth Interviews and Case Studies**

Researchers used formal and informal interviews and discussions with child survivors of trafficking. They met with rescued children and with trafficked children who were still not rescued. Of the 109 trafficked children interviewed in depth, 49 were engaged in prostitution and 60 were rescued (see 2.1.1.a. for sample details).

The 60 rescued children were interviewed at NGO shelters or, in three cases, at their own residences. Not yet rescued children were interviewed at two NGO drop-in centres (Nari Moitree and INCIDIN Bangladesh).

A different type of in-depth interview was used with employers, parents, and others knowledgeable about the child trafficking environment and prevailing perceptions and attitudes; why children are trafficked or working; the vulnerable situations of children; the family environment; and the work environment.

**2.2.6. Focus Group Discussions**

Researchers held discussions with focus groups of 6 to 12 persons. These included groups of children, adults, teachers, and community leaders. Special care was taken to avoid mixing people with different hierarchical positions in the same group. Every effort was made to form peer groups for the FGDs (*e.g.* parents and children were placed in separate groups).

The study conducted five FGDs with 36 still not rescued internally trafficked children engaged in

prostitution (27 girls and 9 boys) and four FGDs with 31 rescued children (24 girls and 7 boys).

Another 35 FGDs were conducted with 232 key informants: vulnerable adolescent girls (26), potential beneficiaries (6), parents of vulnerable children (41), community members and leaders (81), members of law enforcement agencies<sup>15</sup> (55), *ghat* owners and illegal border traders (8), transport workers in border transit point (8), and community volunteers (7).

**2.2.7. Participatory Learning Workshops**

A midterm internal workshop to incorporate feedback about the study process and findings was held. Participants included the research team and external experts.

A second workshop was held after the fieldwork was completed and findings were emerging, but prior to the preparation of the report. The research results were shared and discussed with NGOs, government officials, academicians, and other agencies working on trafficking, in an effort to establish broader ownership of the findings.

**2.2.8. Household Surveys**

The household survey (HHS) was conducted using a pre-tested structured questionnaire. The HHS sought to identify the socio-economic positions of the vulnerable households, the general perceptions of trafficking held by the children and parents of vulnerable households, and the prevalence of trafficking among the studied households.

As previously discussed, the households selected for the HHS were primarily identified through vulnerability mapping. The data generated through household surveys were used to build a database of households vulnerable to the risk of trafficking in the three sample areas.

### 2.2.9. Research Ethics

Great care was taken during interviews to avoid causing any harm to children with personal experience in trafficking. Interview techniques included personal histories, recall of activities of the trafficked state, story narration, and recall of actors. Based on previous experience<sup>16</sup> of conducting studies of trafficked children, the research team was conscious of the fact that a good number of children would be traumatised by their trafficking experiences. To ensure that the study process would not aggravate the children's trauma, a trained counsellor accompanied researchers when they interviewed trafficked children at NGO shelters and drop-in centres. Experienced researchers were always assigned to conduct interviews with rescued children at their residences.

Study team members received training in confidentiality issues, voluntary participation of respondents, and special skills and concerns with respect to interviewing child survivors.

Pre-tested interview guidelines were established for the respective sample groups. Interviews were kept short and focused on specific issues, but time was allowed for rapport building with interviewees. The average amount of time for each in-depth interview was 45 to 50 minutes.

## 2.3. Selection of Study Areas

Following the literature review and consultations

with knowledge institutions, the following geographical clusters were identified:

- Areas prone to trafficking
- Classification of these areas into a) sending areas, b) receiving areas, and c) transit zones
- Zones of internal or external trafficking

Based on these findings, the researchers chose four districts, and administrative units (*thanas*) within them, in which to conduct the RA. The locations and their characterisations are detailed in the following table:

Through consultation with local NGOs at a workshop in Khulna during the study period, Satkhira was identified as an area that may contribute to building knowledge about illegal border crossing associated with trafficking. The most frequently used land routes for trafficking in Satkhira district are Bawkari, Kushkhula, and Charbari in Kolaroa; Haratdah and Kuli in Debhata Andulia; and Mashilia in Chowgacha.

### 2.3.1. Household Survey Study Areas

Three *thanas*, Patgram, Shibganj, and Teknaf, in the districts of Lalmonirhat, Nowabgaj, and Cox's Bazar respectively, were selected for household surveys. These *thanas* were further segmented into unions and villages. The survey was conducted at the household level.

The villages were initially identified based on newspaper reporting and review of literature. The final selection was made following discussions with local key informants.

The RA focused on the areas most prone to trafficking activities: source and sending areas, urban workplaces, temporary destinations, transit areas, or final destination areas in these districts.

### 2.3.2. Qualitative Survey Study Areas

Dhaka was selected primarily for collecting data from trafficking survivors. It was chosen for two reasons. First, previous studies show that Dhaka is the main destination of internally trafficked children for street prostitution.<sup>17</sup> These children can be contacted through NGO drop-in centres to arrange interviews. Second, most NGO shelters for rescued children are located in Dhaka, providing opportunities to interview child survivors of both internal and external trafficking. Because major national and international development agencies working to combat child trafficking are located in Dhaka, the city was also chosen as a location for interviewing knowledge institutions.

Rajshahi was also selected for interviewing rescued trafficked children because ACD, a local NGO, operates a shelter there. Rescued trafficked children were interviewed in Satkhira as well, based on the literature review<sup>18</sup> and consultations with knowledge institutes in a workshop in Khulna.<sup>19</sup>

Focus group discussions with trafficked children in Dhaka were also held at NGO drop-in centres

and shelters. Other methods of qualitative data collection were applied in the same *thanas* chosen for household surveys and in Satkhira Sadar in Satkhira district.

Key informant interviews, observations, and FGDs took place in the three *thanas* of Shibganj, Teknaf, and Patgram. These *thanas* are recruitment and transition areas as well as destinations for trafficked children. Respondents included parents, community members and leaders, members of law enforcement agencies, knowledge institutions, trafficking agents, and NGO service providers.

The use of differentiated study areas enabled coverage of the different dimensions of the trafficking process (Figure 2.1). Research in Dhaka and Rajshahi contributed to the development of a database on trafficked children. Household surveys in Patgram, Shibganj, and Teknaf contributed to the building of a database on vulnerable households. The qualitative data collected in Patgram, Shibganj, Teknaf and Satkhira contributed to an understanding of the perceptions and processes of child trafficking. The arrow linking the two

Figure 2.1  
Study Areas and Type of Data

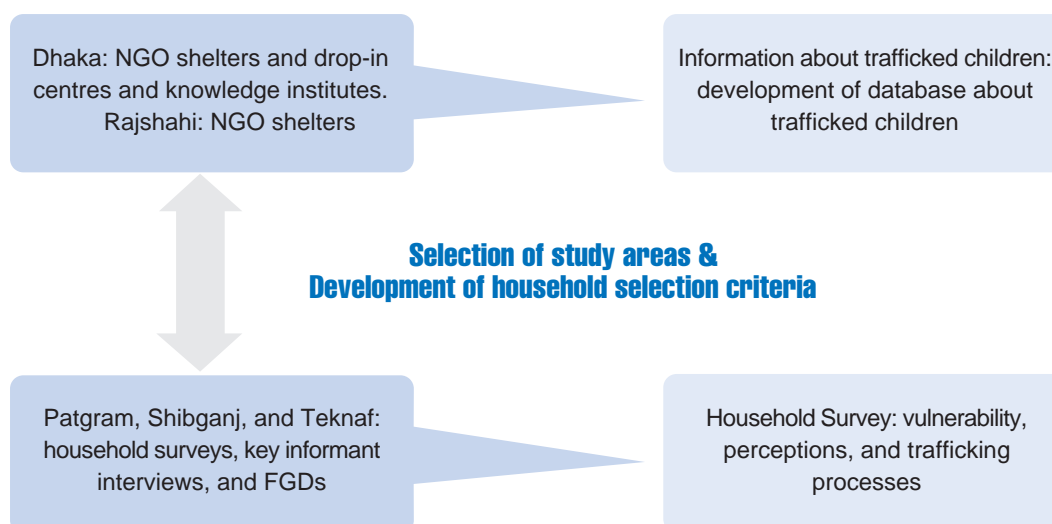


Table: 2.8

**Selected Districts and Child Trafficking Involvement**

| <b>DISTRICT AND THANA</b>     | <b>CHARACTERISATION OF THE AREA</b>   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Dhaka<br>Dhaka City           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street prostitution and NGO shelters</li> <li>• Internal trafficking destination</li> <li>• Urban environment, capital of Bangladesh</li> </ul>                                      |
| Lalmonirhat<br>Thana: Patgram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An area bordering India</li> <li>• Poverty stricken</li> <li>• Transit area for trafficking</li> <li>• Exit point for trafficking to India</li> <li>• Rural environment</li> </ul>   |
| Nawabganj<br>Thana: Shibganj  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An area bordering India</li> <li>• River erosion area</li> <li>• Transit area for trafficking</li> <li>• Exit point for trafficking to India</li> <li>• Rural environment</li> </ul> |
| Cox's Bazar<br>Thana: Teknaf  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rohingya refugees present</li> <li>• Source and sending area</li> <li>• Rural environment</li> </ul>   |

Table: 2.9

**Household Survey Study Areas**

| <b>DISTRICT</b> | <b>THANA</b>         | <b>UNION</b>     | <b>VILLAGE</b>        |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Lalmonirhat     | Patgram              | i. Kuchlibari    | 1. Kuchlibari         |
|                 |                      | ii. Dahagram     | 2. Panbari            |
|                 |                      | iii. Sreerampur  | 3. Mahimpara          |
|                 |                      |                  | 4. Angorpota          |
|                 |                      |                  | 5. Jhalangi           |
|                 |                      | 6. Sreerampur    |                       |
|                 |                      | 7. Islampur      |                       |
| 8. Mohammadpur  |                      |                  |                       |
| Nowabgaj        | Shibganj             | iv. Jagatber     | 9. West Jagatber      |
|                 |                      | v. Baura         | 10. Nabinagar         |
|                 |                      | vi. Jongra       | 11. Mominpur          |
|                 |                      | vii. Patgram     | 12. Dabal Suti        |
|                 |                      | i. Benodpur      | 13. Rahmanpur         |
|                 |                      | ii. Uzirpur      | 14. Zominpur          |
|                 |                      | iii. Shahbazpur  | 15. South Uzirpur     |
| iv. Monakash    | 16. Shialmara        |                  |                       |
| v. Durlavpur    | 17. Kharial          |                  |                       |
| Cox's Bazar     | Teknaf               | vi. Chatrajatpur | 18. Panoroshia        |
|                 |                      | vii. Kansat      | 19. Per Ghorapakhia   |
|                 |                      | viii. Mobarakpur | 20. Horipur           |
|                 |                      | ix. Gorapakhia   | 21. Kansat Guchoqram  |
|                 |                      | x. Noilavanga    | 22. Sundar Nagar      |
|                 |                      | i. Teknaf        | 23. Dolbona           |
|                 |                      | ii. Nhillia      | 24. Puran Pallan Para |
|                 |                      | iii. Whykong     | 25. Naithangpara      |
|                 |                      | iv. Sabrang      | 26. Pan khali         |
|                 |                      | v. Bahar Chara   | 27. Naikhang khali    |
|                 | 28. Kanjar Para      |                  |                       |
|                 | 29. Raikhang         |                  |                       |
|                 | 30. Bazar Para       |                  |                       |
|                 | 31. Hajee Para       |                  |                       |
|                 | 32. Dakhin Shilkhali |                  |                       |
|                 | 33. Jahajpura        |                  |                       |



Table: 2.10

**Locations of In-depth Interviews with Trafficked Children**

| CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS   | LOCATION*   |
|---|---|
| Street girls engaged in commercial sex work (still or rescued internally trafficked children) | 2 NGO drop-in centres: Nari Moitree and INCIDIN Bangladesh  |
| Street boys engaged in commercial sex work (still not rescued internally trafficked children) | In Dhaka, around the Gulistan Bus Terminal, Osmani Uddyan, Topkhana Road, and at INCIDIN Bangladesh |
| Rescued survivors of both internal and external trafficking                                   | NGO shelters (BNWLA, ACD) and Satkhira (seven cases)  |

\* BNWLA, Nari Moitree and INCIDIN Bangladesh are NGOs located in Dhaka. However, Association for Community Development (ACD) is a local NGO located in Rajshahi.

geographic groups of study areas shows that the study area selection process and the development of vulnerability criteria for selecting household survey samples both depended on literature reviews and primary inputs generated through interactions with different cross sections of samples in different areas. The map at the end of this chapter illustrates the geographical distribution of the study areas.

## 2.4. The Study Team

The 41-member study team, headed by the Principal Researcher, included nine Senior Researchers and 31 Research Assistants. An economist, a sociologist, and psychologists and counsellors were part of the team, which had 17 female and 24 male members<sup>20</sup>. The ILO provided technical assistance.

<sup>4</sup> In Shibganj, for example, it was difficult to obtain information from a trafficked girl's mother. Later it was found that one of her aunts had trafficked the girl.

<sup>5</sup> A set of indicators was initially used to identify the vulnerable families; the indicators of vulnerability are discussed in detail later in this and the following chapter.

<sup>6</sup> Lists of rescued children and their family addresses (located in Nowabgaj, Patgram, and Teknaf) were collected from BNWLA and ACD. Moreover some cases of trafficked children were identified at the study areas by the qualitative research teams. From these families 19 parents of the trafficked children were selected for in-depth interviewing.

<sup>7</sup> Community volunteers are local volunteers trained by the Dhaka Ahsania Mission, which works along with local NGOs to collect information about child trafficking.

<sup>8</sup> *In each household at least three individual were interviewed (one male, one female and one children) thus the survey covered (450x3)= 1,350 individuals.*

where,

n= the desired sample size (when population is greater than 10,000)

z= the standard normal deviate set at 2, which corresponds to the 95 percent confidence level

p= the proportion in the target population estimated to have a particular characteristic (set at 50%)

q= 1.0 - p.

d= Degree of accuracy desired, set at .05

$$n = \frac{(2)^2(.50)(.50)}{(.05)^2} = 400$$

But to evenly distribute the sample households in the three study areas the sample size is set at (400 + 50)= 450.

<sup>9</sup> Rahman, H. Zillur; Bangladesh Dynamics of Rural Poverty, Land, Vol#6, No#4, Page#6, Dhaka, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Rahman, H. Zillur; Bangladesh Dynamics of Rural Poverty, Land, Vol#6, No#4, Page#6, Dhaka, 1999.

<sup>11</sup> BNWLA study report *Causes and Consequences of Children and Women Trafficking: A Socio-Economic study on Ten Villages of Bangladesh* found 51 victim cases from 1987 to 1999 in three thanas of border area Sarsah, Patgram and Teknaf. The main reasons women are trafficked out of Bangladesh are marriage, prostitution, and domestic labor. Ninety-five percent of women victims are illiterate. Only 5% of women victims had received primary education. These findings show that the lack of education is the biggest factor behind trafficking. Ninety percent of women victims are household workers, 44% of the male children victims were students, and 11% were labourers. On the other hand, 22.73% female children victims were household workers, 9% were maid servants and 18% were students. The study revealed that divorced, separated, and widowed women are more frequently trafficked than married women. In the study 52.40% of women victims were divorced, separated and 14.28% were widowed, 14.28% of women victims were unmarried, and 33.33% were married women.

<sup>12</sup> A technique for assessing the vulnerability of a household to trafficking in the same way a trafficker would.

<sup>13</sup> Please see the Bibliography in Annex 5.

<sup>14</sup> Please see Annex 1 for the list of knowledge institutions consulted.

<sup>15</sup> This category includes members of Border Defense Rifles (BDR), Police and Village Defense Police

<sup>16</sup> INCIDIN Bangladesh, *Misplaced Childhood: A Short Study on Street Child Prostitutes in Dhaka*, with support of Save the Children Denmark, Dhaka, 1997.

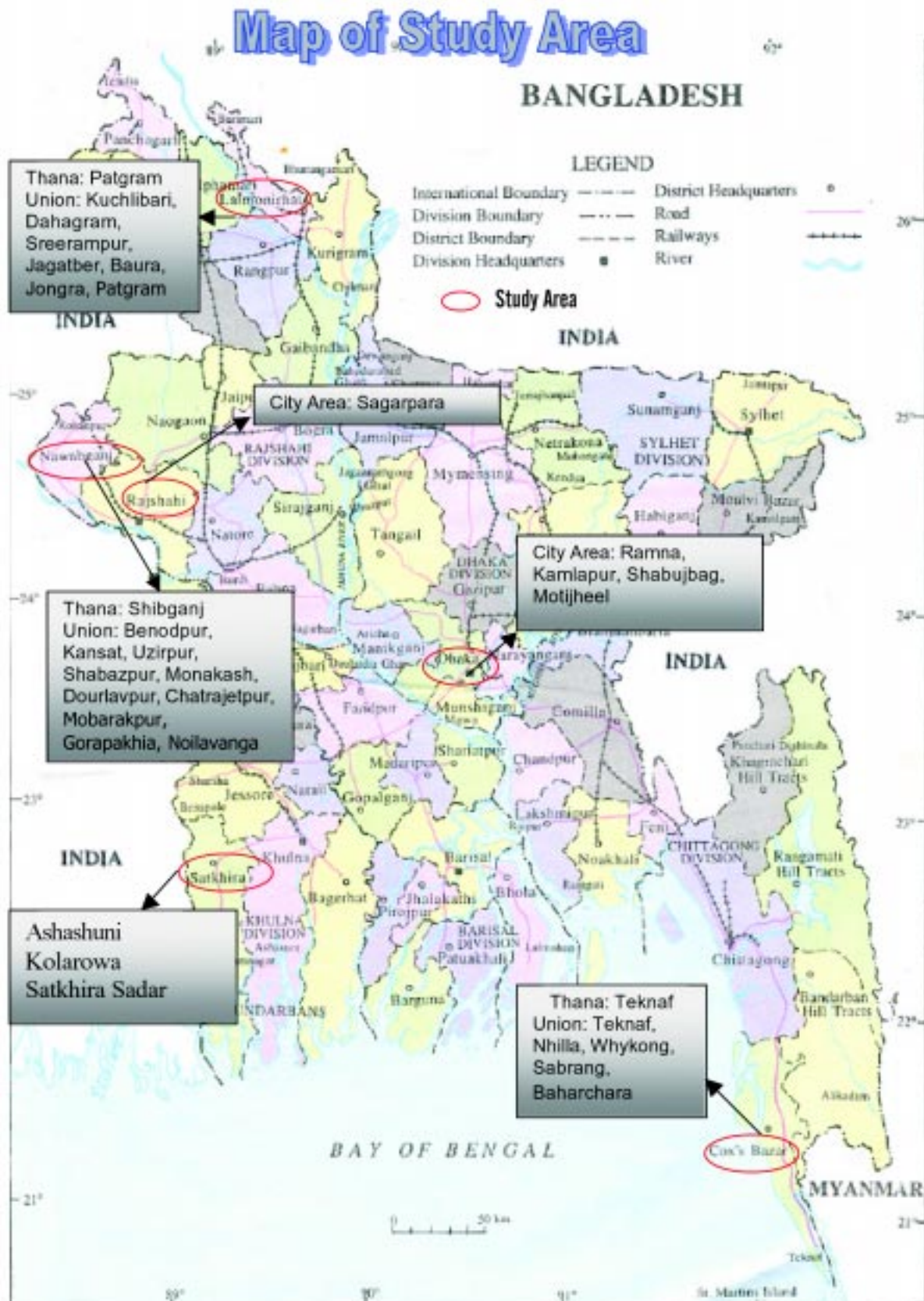
<sup>17</sup> INCIDIN Bangladesh, *Misplaced Childhood: A Short Study on Street Child Prostitutes in Dhaka*, with support of Save the Children Denmark, Dhaka, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Shamim, Ishrat. *Mapping of Missing, Kidnapped and Trafficked Children and Women: Bangladesh Perspective*. International Organization of Migration

<sup>19</sup> The researcher facilitated a workshop organized by Rupantar in Khulna during the study period.

<sup>20</sup> Please see Annex 2 for the complete list of the research team members.

## 2.5 Map of the Study Areas





## Trafficking In Children: The Situation in Bangladesh

Children in Bangladesh are trafficked for prostitution, sexual abuse, forced labour, camel jockey work, cheap labour<sup>21</sup>, bonded labour, domestic servitude, the sale of organs, and marriage. Trafficking is an illegal and secretive business—authentic statistics about the magnitude of the problem are not available, and collecting and verifying data present many challenges and risks.

Trafficked girls most often end up in the sex market, both within and outside of Bangladesh. The girls trafficked abroad are generally sent to India. Trafficked boys who are sent abroad go to Middle Eastern countries to work as camel jockeys. India is usually the country of transit on this journey. Within Bangladesh an alarming number of boy and girls are forcefully engaged in prostitution. The girls are engaged in brothels and the street sex market, while the boys work almost exclusively in street sex markets<sup>22</sup>.

This chapter presents an overview of the trafficking situation in Bangladesh based on the data collected from interviews with child survivors of trafficking and the major findings of the study concerning

trafficking. It presents an analysis and constructs conceptual models and describes the phenomenon of trafficking in children.

The data and analysis presented here are drawn primarily from the information collected from child trafficking survivors. These children were mostly interviewed at NGO shelters and drop-in centres. The data sets for different issues have different numbers of respondents, never exceeding 95. As previously noted, cases were dropped if the authenticity of data could not be ensured. As a result, each table presenting data about a specific issue has its own number of samples (mentioned as 'N' of that table). These filtering and checking processes ensured that the data, upon which the analysis was based and the conclusions were drawn, were reliable.

Data is presented in both tabular and graphical formats. The conceptual models are presented as network diagrams with narration. Where relevant, the primary data are either supplemented or clarified, or compared with findings of previous studies.

### 3.1. The Magnitude of the Problem and Estimation Difficulties

Most recent studies report that child trafficking in Bangladesh is increasing at an alarming rate. Because of its elusive nature, authentic statistics about the magnitude of the problem are not available. Estimating the size of the problem is further complicated by the fact that the crime so often goes unreported. Even if reported there is a lack of follow-up data regarding recovery, and sometimes incidents of missing children are not taken into account while dealing with trafficking. It is also difficult to estimate the span of criminal networks working in and outside the country.

During an initial literature review this study found a severe lack of authentic data concerning the exact magnitude of the problem of child trafficking. Official government sources and NGO and media sources differ, and some figures are repeated over and over without any validation or update.

A joint study report prepared by the Ministries of Home, Social Welfare and Women and Children Affairs is one of the most frequently cited reports about the magnitude of the child trafficking problem in Bangladesh. The report indicates that over the last five years at least 13,220 children have been smuggled out of the country; only 4,700 have been rescued. Laws against trafficking exist but are not strictly enforced—during the last five years, only 53 such cases went to court, and 35 had to be dropped for lack of adequate evidence.<sup>23</sup> A year later, the same data was cited by another study.<sup>24</sup> The same study further reported that:

- 300,000 Bangladeshi children work in the brothels of India;

- 200,000 Bangladeshi children work in the brothels of Pakistan (Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid, Pakistan);
- 4,500 women and children are trafficked to Pakistan yearly (SAARC and UNICEF);

The study thus provided information based on reviews of literature and media reports without any validation (such as the proportion of Bangladeshi children engaged in prostitution in India and Pakistan). The lack of validation can be explained against the backdrop of non-existent baseline studies of trafficking at the national or even local level. The present study also faced problems with validation because many studies quoted figures without citing sources. When sources have been cited data for specific geographic areas during specific periods were not cross checked in the case of multiple sources. This restricted the opportunities for questioning and comparing data.

Moreover, different studies have applied different methodologies, further complicating any intention of using them to develop a national overview. The major studies were conducted in geographical pockets; the data they provide could contribute little in determining exact extent of the problem at national level. However, these studies contributed to understanding child trafficking as a socio-economic and criminal process.

Recently the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) carried out a mapping study of missing, kidnapped, and trafficked children and women using print media reports between 1990 and 1999. The study presented incidents of trafficked, kidnapped and missing children and women and trafficking routes and places of origin in maps based on the Geographic Information

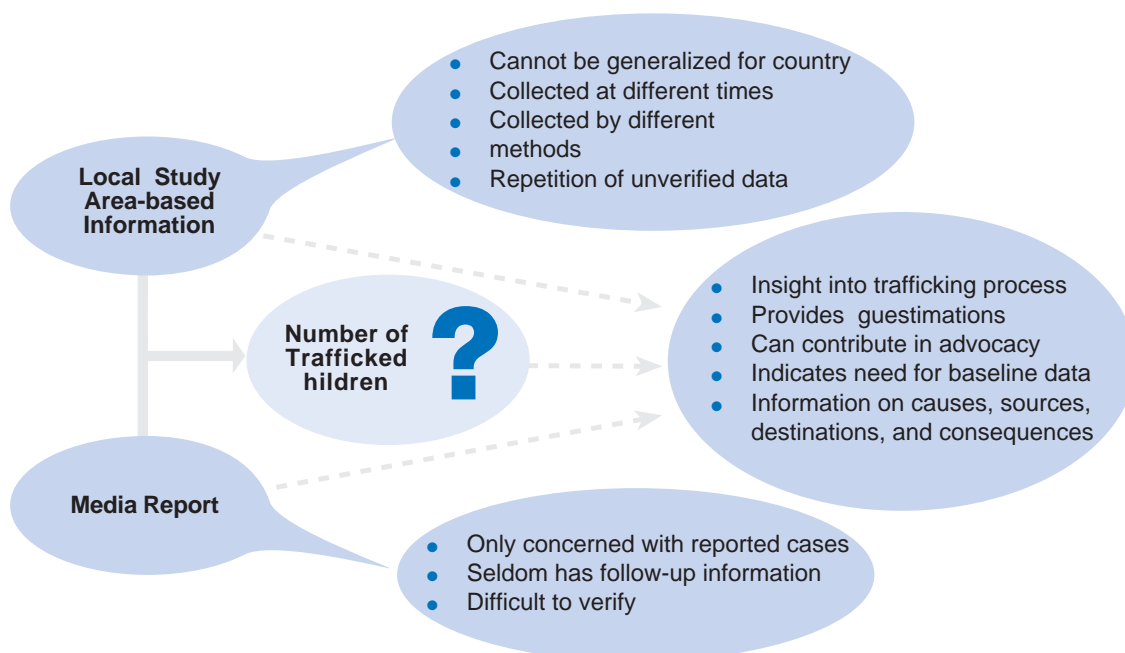
System (GIS).<sup>25</sup> The present study reviewed the maps and figures in developing a national overview.

The IOM report shows that 3,397 children up to age 16 years were trafficked between 1990 and 1999. Of these, 1,683 were boys and 1,714 were girls.<sup>26</sup> The study shows that a total of 306 children were rescued from within the country. Of these, 234 were rescued by police, 51 by local people, and 21 by the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR).<sup>27</sup> During the nine-year period 3,391 children (1382 girls and 2019 boys) went missing.<sup>28</sup> The study suggests that the number missing children is greater than reported by the media because most cases of missing children were not reported to law enforcement authorities. It also reveals that the number of kidnapped children is less than a third of that of missing children.<sup>29</sup>

This information is useful, but not adequate for constructing a national overview. The data was concerned only with reported cases, and the initial media reports were seldom followed up.

According to another study<sup>30</sup> the rate of rescuing of trafficked children has changed little throughout the nineties. The data on kidnappers and traffickers apprehended by police shows more males than females arrested—1,196 males arrested compared to 327 females. Shamim and Kabir, the researchers of the previous study, concluded that women are less involved in trafficking. However, this conclusion may be questioned—the significance of the data lies not only in a comparative involvement of women and men in trafficking, but in revealing that even within the conservative social construction of the country that restricts women’s mobility, a substantial number of women were involved in trafficking.

Figure 3.1  
Quality and Scope of Existing Information Sources



Estimating child trafficking numbers and trends was extremely difficult for this study. Previous studies could only provide either local (study area specific information) or unverified information based on some other secondary source. This lack of primary data or source of authentic data can be explained largely by the illegal status and secret nature of trafficking. While conducting field level data collection researchers found that some of the trafficking survivors were highly traumatised, which made it difficult for them to recall information about their experiences. As a result, information about methods, association, and consequences could not always be obtained or adequately verified. To avoid controversy, disputed cases had to be dropped. Therefore, not all the respondents were treated valid for all the areas of response (such as recruitment, route, means of procurement, consequence etc.).

In the case of survivors of external trafficking, previous studies have indicated a child trafficked at a very early age may forget her or his real identity, language and address. Moreover, the family members themselves are sometimes involved with the traffickers and develop vested interests. In other cases, families and community

#### **Definitions Used by the Study in Defining Socio-Economic Strata**

The set of socio-economic indicators used to identify the rural classes:

Extremely Poor: No homestead or land, complete dependence on wage labour, flimsy housing, debt burden

Poor/Landless: No or negligible landholding, dependency on wage labour, poor housing

Marginalised: Inadequate cultivable land, seasonal dependency on wage labour

Non-Poor: Surplus crop production, durable housing, surplus livestock

members withhold information to protect their reputations and to avoid legal consequences. Such situations make collecting and verifying authentic trafficking information difficult.

Given this context, the present study indicates that the information available fails to generate a national database. The available studies do, however, contribute to an understanding of the causes, sources, destinations, and consequences of child trafficking. The studies and information sources also elaborate on the trafficking process and stakeholders. So at present the information provides the capacity to design interventions and contribute to advocacy programmes, but because the number of trafficked individuals is yet to be estimated and verified, an authentic, comparable, and up-datable baseline database must be developed.

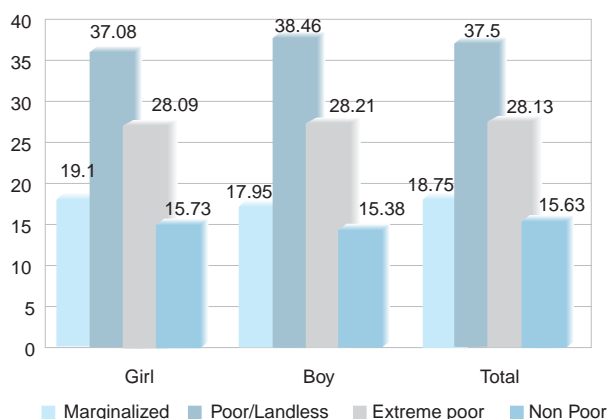
### **3.2. Children and Vulnerability Factors**

Children are exposed to different degrees of risk of trafficking depending on the interplay of several socio-economic factors. Although the economic position of a child is one of the most dominant risk factors, it is not the sole determinant.

Chart 3.1 shows the distribution of interviewed child trafficking survivors according to the economic background of the families. The study used a specific set of definitions to identify the socio-economic status of households.

Chart 3.1 reveals that nearly 85% of the trafficking survivors interviewed come from extremely poor (28 percent), poor (38 percent) and marginalised (19 percent) households—children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more vulnerable to trafficking.

Chart 3.1  
**Distribution of Interviewed Child Survivors by Socio-Economic Background**



This becomes even clearer when the pre-trafficked occupations of the children are looked at.

Table 3.1 reveals that nearly a third of the children were already working when they were recruited by a trafficker. A large portion of the interviewed child survivors reported that they were unemployed (*i.e.* willing and able to work but out of work) at the time of recruitment by a trafficker.

Figure 3.2 shows how recruiting agents can target both working and unemployed children. The former are targeted because they may be more visible, mobile, and less protected by human networks such as families or peer groups. The latter are targeted because they are exposed to economic pressure and can be enticed with the promise of a job or, for girls, marriage.

As Table 3.1 shows, 27 percent of the children were students at the time of trafficking. Attendance at school in itself cannot be an indicator of less vulnerability to trafficking.

The study further explored the educational status of the interviewed child survivors of trafficking.

Table 3.2 indicates that 40 percent of the 88 trafficking survivors never attended school. The percentage of illiterate girls (42 percent) was higher than that of boys (32 percent) among those interviewed.

Among the illiterate girls the majority were trafficked before reaching the age of 15 years. An explanation for this may be that compared to an educated girls an illiterate girl who has not been to school and has no other prospects is under greater social pressure to reduce her family's burden through employment or marriage. Education may not prevent a girl from being trafficked, but it may delay it. Moreover, the study also emphasises the need for ensuring safety of girls in movement, at both family and community levels, irrespective of their social status, educational, or professional engagements.

This study looks at the issue of procurement from slightly a different perspective—the process of trafficking begins at the time a child leaves home. The children in the study explained that the

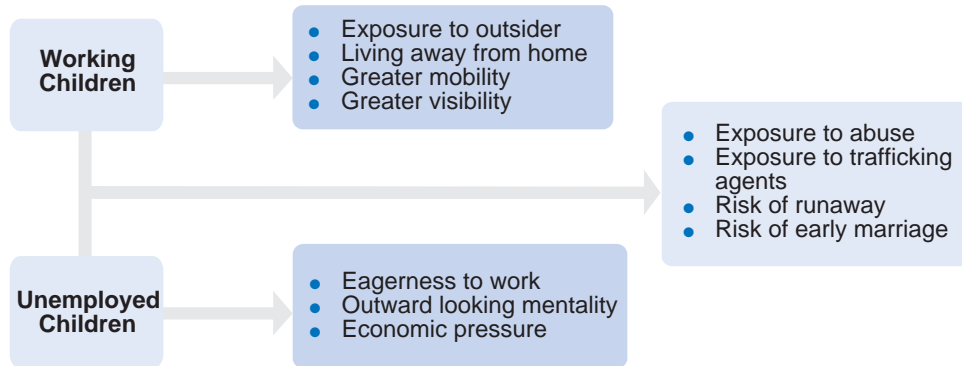
Table 3.1  
**Occupational Status before Trafficking**

| OCCUPATIONAL STATUS BEFORE TRAFFICKING | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|--|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|  | 5-9 yr. (%) N=9     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=26 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=58 |            |            | Total (%) N=93 |            |            |
|  | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Working Children                       | 60.0                | 25.0       | 44.4       | 21.4              | 25.0       | 23.1       | 36.7              | 11.1       | 32.8       | 35.3           | 20.0       | 31.2       |
| Student                                | 20.0                | 25.0       | 22.2       | 14.3              | 50.0       | 30.8       | 24.5              | 33.3       | 25.9       | 22.1           | 40.0       | 26.9       |
| Unemployed                             | 20.0                | 50.0       | 33.3       | 64.3              | 25.0       | 46.2       | 38.8              | 55.6       | 41.4       | 42.6           | 40.0       | 41.9       |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |



Figure 3.2

**Role of Child’s Employment Status in Recruitment by Traffickers FGD with the Child Survivors of Trafficking<sup>31</sup>**



**Potential Trafficker: Kalopur, Shibganj**

A female potential trafficker told us that children studying in school are at risk of being trafficked. In her area a local trafficker from the same age group attempted to traffick four school students. The recruiter lured other boys to India. He took them by bus to Nilfamari, intending to cross the border to India through Hilly. However, the police arrested them in Rajshahi based on the complaint filed by the parents.

reason for leaving home is the primary means through which they were linked with the trafficking chain.

Table 3.3 shows the percentage distribution of interviewed child survivors with respect to their reasons for leaving home. Almost one-third (32 %) initially left home to avoid poverty-induced hardship. A number of children also reported that

they left home to avoid sexual abuse (4.4 %) or physical abuse by the stepparents (16.5 %).

Eighteen of the sample child survivors reported that they had initially run away from their families to avoid sexual abuse, poverty, or physical abuse at home. Others accepted different types of job offers for the same reason. The experiences of the child survivors we interviewed reveal that runaway children ended up in a trafficked state through recruiting agents when they reached Dhaka. Children who left home seeking work either found the job-offers to be ‘fake’ on arrival or entered into abusive employment environments resulting in a trafficked condition.

A few more points about age and gender groups must be pointed out. In the youngest (5-9) age

Table 3.2  
**Educational Status of Trafficked Children**

| EDUCATIONAL STATUS | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|                    | 5-9 yr. (%) N=9     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=27 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=52 |            |            | Total (%) N=88 |            |            |
|                    | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Illiterate         | 60.0                | 25.0       | 44.4       | 71.4              | 38.5       | 55.6       | 31.9              | 20.0       | 30.8       | 42.4           | 31.8       | 39.8       |
| Non Formal         |                     |            |            | 14.3              | 15.4       | 14.8       | 21.3              |            | 19.2       | 18.2           | 9.1        | 15.9       |
| Primary            | 40.0                | 75.0       | 55.6       | 14.3              | 46.2       | 29.6       | 36.2              | 40.0       | 36.5       | 31.8           | 50.0       | 36.4       |
| Secondary          |                     |            |            |                   |            |            | 10.6              | 40.0       | 13.5       | 7.6            | 9.1        | 8.0        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 3.3

**Reasons for Leaving Home**

| REASON FOR LEAVING HOME*             | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |      |       |                   |      |       |                   |      |       |                |      |       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|-------------------|------|-------|----------------|------|-------|
|                                      | 5-9 yr. (%) N=9     |      |       | 10-14 yr. (%)N=26 |      |       | 15-18 yr. (%)N=56 |      |       | Total (%) N=91 |      |       |
|                                      | Girl                | Boy  | Total | Girl              | Boy  | Total | Girl              | Boy  | Total | Girl           | Boy  | Total |
| Fake offer of Tourism                |                     | 25.0 | 11.1  |                   | 8.3  | 3.8   | 6.1               |      | 5.4   | 4.4            | 8.7  | 5.5   |
| Fake job offer                       |                     | 25.0 | 11.1  | 14.3              | 8.3  | 11.5  | 18.4              |      | 16.1  | 16.2           | 8.7  | 14.3  |
| Avoid Sexual Abuse at Home           | 20.0                |      | 11.1  |                   |      |       | 6.1               |      | 5.4   | 5.9            |      | 4.4   |
| Avoid Physical Abuse of Step-parents | 40.0                |      | 22.2  | 28.6              | 25.0 | 26.9  | 12.2              |      | 10.7  | 17.6           | 13.0 | 16.5  |
| Avoid Poverty at Home                |                     | 25.0 | 11.1  | 28.6              | 33.3 | 30.8  | 32.7              | 57.1 | 35.7  | 29.4           | 39.1 | 31.9  |
| Sold                                 |                     | 25.0 | 11.1  |                   | 8.3  | 3.8   | 6.1               | 14.3 | 7.1   | 4.4            | 13.0 | 6.6   |
| Kidnapped                            | 20.0                |      | 11.1  | 14.3              | 8.3  | 11.5  | 4.1               |      | 3.6   | 7.4            | 4.3  | 6.6   |
| Fake Love Affair/Marriage            |                     |      |       | 8.3               | 3.8  | 6.1   |                   | 5.4  | 4.4   | 4.3            | 4.4  |       |
| Missing                              | 20.0                |      | 11.1  | 7.1               |      | 3.8   | 2.0               | 14.3 | 3.6   | 4.4            | 4.3  | 4.4   |
| Forced employment                    |                     |      | 7.1   |                   | 3.8  | 6.1   | 14.3              | 7.1  | 5.9   | 4.3            | 5.5  |       |
| Total                                | 100                 | 100  | 100   | 100               | 100  | 100   | 100               | 100  | 100   | 100            | 100  | 100   |

\* Among the sample child survivors 17.69 children reported that they had initially runaway from their families to avoid sexual abuse, poverty, or physical abuse at home.

group, relatively fewer children were interviewed (only nine); among them the majority of the girls left home to avoid sexual (20 percent) and physical abuse (40 percent). In the 10-14 age group no girls reported sexual abuse as a push factor, but 28 percent of girls reported that they left home to avoid physical abuse. In the 15-18 age group 6 percent and 18 percent of the girls left home to avoid physical and sexual abuse respectively (chart 3.2).

Chart 3.3 shows that the desire to avoid poverty was a dominant reason for leaving home for boys of all age groups: 25 percent for age 5-9, 33 percent for age 10-14, and 57 percent for the 15-18 age group. This reflects a positive correlation between age and motivation of the boys for leaving home as a strategy for avoiding poverty.

Figure 3.3 shows the interplay (indicated by the dotted line) of the push and pull factors discussed above. The study finds that the socio-economic

and psychological push factors (e.g. a child's urges to avoid poverty or abusive family environments) can only link the children with criminal actors, such as recruiting agents, through the pull factors (e.g. the lure created by traffickers and improper information).

### 3.3. The Structure and Actors of the Trafficking Chain

The study found that the traffickers have organised themselves within a network that is a complex construction of local, national, and regional actors. The trafficking chain includes people and organisations working from the grassroots to the cities from source to destination. The list of actors in the trafficking chain is a long one. It includes powerful underworld leaders, members of police and border security forces, local elite, agents, and pimps. It includes employment agencies, transport agencies, hotel management, madams and brothel owners, and employers who directly or indirectly receive

financial benefits. It also includes those who are implicated and influenced, such as parents and guardians, as well as the victims themselves. It is important to observe that the components of the trafficking chain can be classified into four tiers:

- Organisers of trafficking;
- Recruiting agents;

- Transporters; and
- Final abusers

### 3.3.1. First Tier: Trafficking Organisers

The primary actors are the ‘organisers’ or the ‘investors’. The study identifies a variety of actors who serve as organisers: cross-border businessmen,

Chart 3.2  
Abuse as a Push Factor for Girls of Different Age Groups

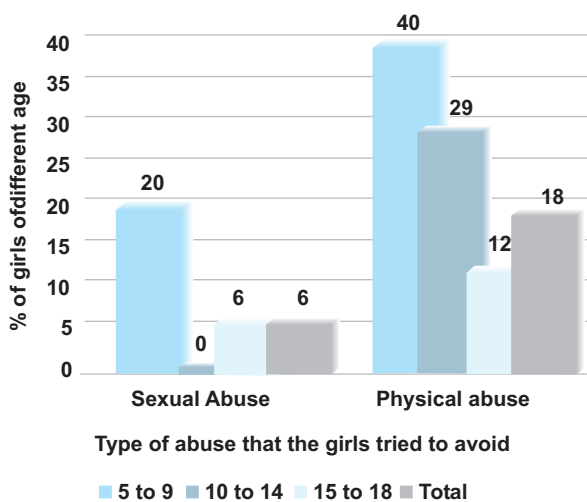


Chart 3.3  
Boys of Different Age Groups Leaving Home to Avoid Poverty

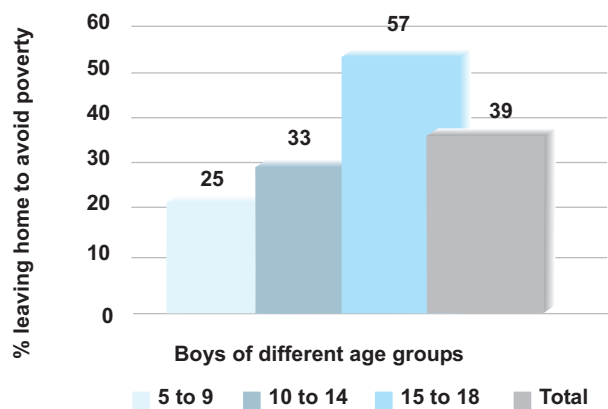
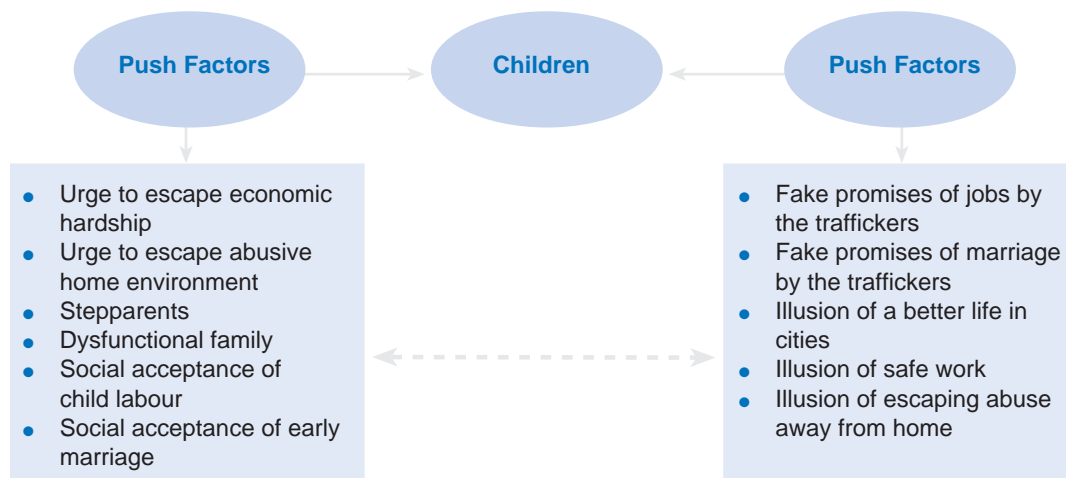


Figure 3.3  
Role of Push and Pull Factors in Trafficking in Children Discussed more in detail in Analysis Causes<sup>33</sup>



### Some of the means of procurement have been identified as<sup>32</sup>:

- Allurement of better jobs (14 %)
- Love affair or fake marriage (5 %)
- False promise of tourism (6 %)
- Kidnapping (7 %)
- Sale to pimp (7 %)

brothel owners, employers of sweatshops (*bidi* factory), employers of domestic help, and Police/BDR personnel are among them. The roles of the organisers include placing the initial order with the recruiters—recruiting the recruiters. At this initial stage the organiser may give a fee to the recruiter to meet the costs of recruitment and transportation, but this payment is not compulsory. Corrupt members of the law enforcement and border security agencies can be viewed as organisers since they provide the structure within which the organisers/investors and transporters can run their businesses (*e.g.* brothels, sweatshops, or illegal border trade) and thereby constitute demand for trafficked children.

#### 3.3.2. Second Tier: the Traffickers' Recruiting Agents

The second tier of actors comprises of actors who are the first contact of the trafficking chain with the vulnerable children. The organisers do not necessarily influence these actors. The recruiters can act without any contact with investors; they can very well recruit children without consulting anyone as they may have prior knowledge of, and contact or experience with individuals who are willing and able to help transport and sell a trafficked child.

Table 3.4 reflects the percentage distribution of the interviewed child survivors of trafficking according to their recruiting agents. The data are

separated both by sex and age. In general for the interviewed children, pimps (52 percent), relatives (17 percent) and neighbours (8 percent) appear as the top three recruiting agents (Chart 3.4).

However, variation has been observed across the gender and age groups. In the youngest group (5-9), relatives and neighbours are equally involved as traffickers (22 percent) and the third category of recruiters appears as local miscreants. Importantly, local miscreants were only involved in trafficking girls of this age group. Among the girls, friends appeared as dominant recruitment agents. Eight percent of girls in the 5-9 age group and eleven percent of girls in the 15-18 age group reported recruitment through friends.

In the 10-14 age group, self-recruitment, in which the child leaves home of her/his own volition, is the second most common (23 percent) 'recruiting agent'. This factor is also found among boys in the 10-14 (14 percent) and 15-18 (17 percent) age groups. Only two percent of girls in the 15-18 age group reported self-recruitment.

The discussion regarding children's vulnerability to trafficking (*e.g.* risks associated with a child's urge to avoid poverty or abuse) contributes critically to a review of children's 'self-recruitment' into trafficking. It is clear from the findings<sup>34</sup> that children are motivated to leave home because of strong push factors (*e.g.* poverty, sexual abuse, physical abuse). Thus the choice factor needs to be understood within the context of poverty- and abuse-induced survival compulsions.

Figure 3.4 illustrates that children are exposed to a risk of being trafficked by their family and community members as relatives and neighbours

Table 3.4  
**Recruiting Agents**

| RECRUITING AGENT | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|                  | 5-9 yr. (%) N=9     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=26 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=52 |            |            | Total (%) N=87 |            |            |
|                  | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Pimp             | 40.0                | 50.0       | 44.4       | 53.8              | 53.8       | 53.8       | 57.8              | 14.3       | 51.9       | 55.6           | 41.7       | 51.7       |
| Relative         | 20.0                | 25.0       | 22.2       | 7.7               | 15.4       | 11.5       | 15.6              | 42.9       | 19.2       | 14.3           | 25.0       | 17.2       |
| Neighbour        | 20.0                | 25.0       | 22.2       | 15.4              | 7.7        | 11.5       | 4.4               | -          | 3.8        | 7.9            | 8.3        | 8.0        |
| Miscreants       | 20.0                | -          | 11.1       | -                 | -          | -          | 2.2               | 14.3       | 3.8        | 3.2            | 4.2        | 3.4        |
| Step Mother      | -                   | -          | -          | -                 | -          | -          | 2.2               | -          | 1.9        | 1.6            | -          | 1.1        |
| Co-worker        | -                   | -          | -          | -                 | -          | -          | 2.2               | -          | 1.9        | 1.6            | -          | 1.1        |
| Friend           | -                   | -          | -          | 7.7               | -          | 3.8        | 11.1              | -          | 9.6        | 9.5            | -          | 6.9        |
| Beggar           | -                   | -          | -          | 7.7               | -          | 3.8        | -                 | -          | -          | 1.6            | -          | 1.1        |
| Maid Servant     | -                   | -          | -          | 7.7               | -          | 3.8        | -                 | -          | -          | 1.6            | -          | 1.1        |
| Self             | -                   | -          | -          | -                 | 23.1       | 11.5       | 2.2               | 14.3       | 3.8        | 1.6            | 16.7       | 5.7        |
| Business         | -                   | -          | -          | -                 | -          | -          | 2.2               | 14.3       | 3.8        | 1.6            | 4.2        | 2.3        |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

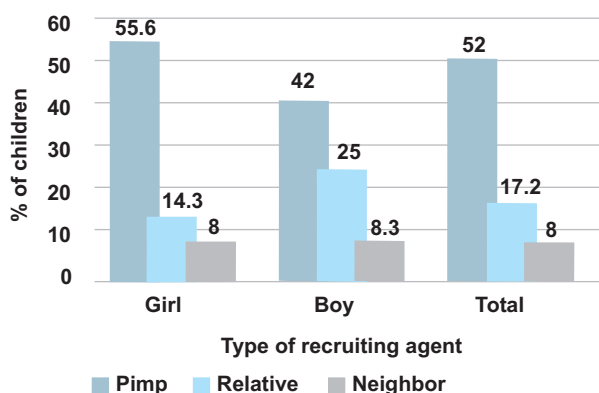
have been found to be active recruiting agents. Although the study identifies pimps as the major recruiters, the social insecurity of the children becomes clear when the family and community level risk elements are taken into consideration.

This study confirms the findings of the earlier studies regarding the seasonal calendar of trafficking. The study, as found in the IOM-commissioned survey<sup>35</sup>, indicates that agents recruit during the lean period before harvests or seek out families in financial difficulties. The

study finds<sup>36</sup> there are special times when the risk of recruitment by the traffickers heightens. These are **between June and August** when food is scarce; in the festival months of **September and October**; and during pre-harvest times when recruiting new girls is the easiest, because poverty is at its highest level.<sup>37</sup>

The role of the recruiter may or may not include 'initialisation' or infliction of force or abuse (such as sexual abuse) to break the resistance of a child. The recruiters mainly rely on false promises or commitments. Recruiters usually target the vulnerable areas, communities, and households that are severely impoverished, troubled with the future of adolescent daughter(s) and unaware about the risks associated with child-migration. Usually traffickers work through agents or procurers, male or female, to explore the possibility of finding children who will accompany them enticed by the false promise of better opportunities.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, the present study identifies that recruitment can take place with push factors working to isolate a child

Chart 3.4  
**Percentage Distribution of Trafficked Children by Recruiting Agents**



from the family without the direct involvement of trafficking agents in person.

### 3.3.3. Third Tier: the Transporters

The third tier of trafficking actors consists of individuals and organisations responsible for arranging ‘safe passage’ of the trafficked individuals to their destinations. Transporters include family members, relatives, neighbours, pimps/agents, trafficking survivors, cross border traders, transport workers, illegal immigration actors (*ghat* owners and linemen), hotel management, corrupt police, BDR and BSF, Union Parishad leaders, and in general border communities that accept and even expect illegal movement across the border. The number of transporters may vary depending on whether the destination is within Bangladesh or abroad. The recruiter and the transporter may be a single individual or a group; a recruiter can very well be a transporter. Nevertheless, in the process of transporting a trafficked child multiple actors are always involved.

Table 3.5 indicates that in the case of external trafficking a child may be handed over (to middlemen) more often than during internal trafficking cases. It also reveals that it is more common for girls (44 percent) to be handed over more than once than it is for boys (36 percent) in the trafficking process.

Figure 3.5 displays the different actors in the transportation phase. Apart from the actor accompanying the trafficked child, the list of transporters may include the following<sup>39</sup>:

- The gatekeepers at brothels, which include pimps and other agents who can link a transporter to a buyer.

Figure 3.4  
Different Types of Recruiting Agents and Children



- Shelter and transit points that include individuals, organisations, and places such as hotels and safe homes where the transporter may keep a trafficked child until final sale. This place may also be used to inflict physical, psychological, and sexual abuse on the trafficked child to break resistance or to initialise into prostitution.
- Resistance breakers who may or may not be the transporter. The major role of this individual is to abuse the child and ensure co-operation until handed over to the final abuser. Sometimes the clients play this role.
- Corrupted members of the law enforcement agencies allegedly are involved in the transportation process as they are said to be aware of the transit and final destinations; they collect illegal tax in exchange of safe passage.
- Local *Mastan*, miscreants, and leaders are also aware of the transit and final destinations and collect illegal tax in exchange for safe passage.

Table 3.5

**Number of Times Handed Over**

| NO. OF TIMES<br>HANDED OVER | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|                             | 5-9 yr. (%) N=3     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=13 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=30 |            |            | Total (%) N=46 |            |            |
|                             | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| 1                           |                     | 50.0       | 33.3       | 50.0              | 71.4       | 61.5       | 60.0              | 60.0       | 60.0       | 56.3           | 64.3       | 58.7       |
| 2                           |                     | 50.0       | 33.3       | 16.7              | 14.3       | 15.4       | 20.0              | 40.0       | 23.3       | 18.8           | 28.6       | 21.7       |
| 3                           | 100                 |            | 33.3       | 16.7              |            | 7.7        | 12.0              |            | 10.0       | 15.6           |            | 10.9       |
| 4*                          |                     |            |            | 16.7              | 14.3       | 15.4       | 4.0               |            | 3.3        | 6.3            | 7.1        | 6.5        |
| 5*                          |                     |            |            |                   |            |            | 4.0               |            | 3.3        | 3.1            |            | 2.2        |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

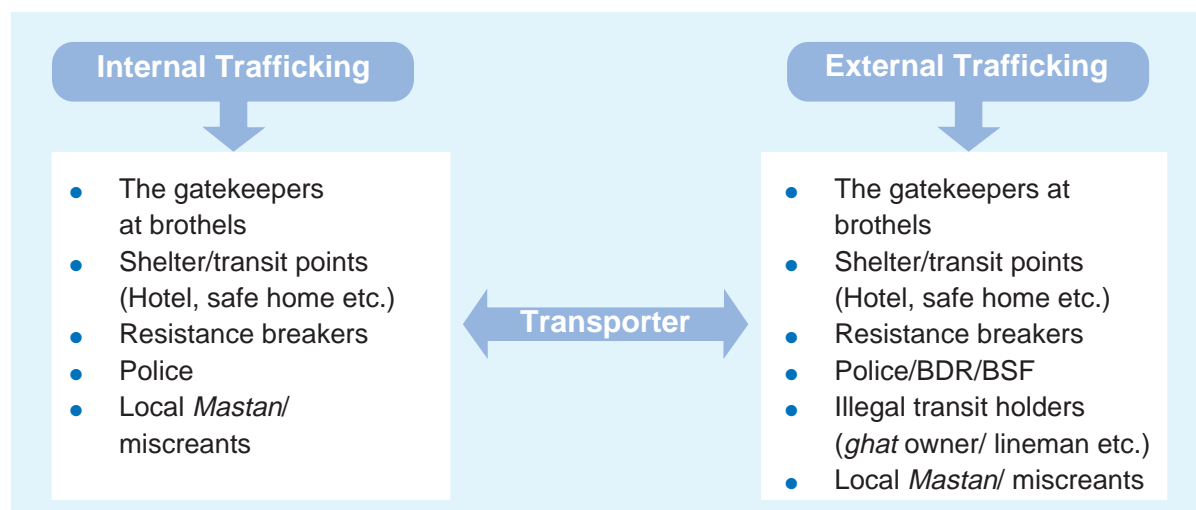
\* Only found in cases of external trafficking

- Corrupt members of the border security force (both BDR and BSF) allegedly play a crucial role in cases of cross border trafficking. They allow illegal border crossing and collect illegal tax in exchange.<sup>40</sup>
- The illegal border exit organisers, such as *ghat* owners, are also part of cross border trafficking. They facilitate illegal border crossings and collect illegal fees for the service. These actors may have agents of their own.<sup>41</sup>

**3.3.4. Fourth Tier: the Final Abusers**

The final abusers or employers constitute the last tier of the trafficking chain. This tier comprises cross border businessmen, brothel owners, employers of sweatshops (*bidi* factory), employers of domestic help, and brothel clients. The final employers have four distinct roles. First, the final abuser initiates the child into abusive employment. Second, the final abuser engages the trafficked child in exploitative employment or engagement. Third, the final abuser exploits the child to produce benefit (*e.g.* monetary gain, sexual service, entertainment, or any other

Figure 3.5

**Different Actors as Transporters**

exploitative form of labour). And last, the final abuser maintains a trafficked child in exploitative employment or engagement. Maintenance of a trafficked individual implies retention of the trafficked individual in a trafficked state in which the individual loses control over mobility, choice of employment, choice of employment conditions and environment, as well as contact with family and familiar environment.<sup>42</sup> The roles of the final abusers or employers are illustrated in the following figure.

Corrupt members of the law enforcement agencies also play a role in retention of the trafficked individual. Allegedly, they collect illegal taxes from brothel owners and allow them to continue exploiting the trafficked children. The clients are also part of this phase as they are the ones who reap the services of the trafficked individuals. In some instances the clients initiate the children

into prostitution. In addition, sometimes the primary actors are the same as the final abusers.

The children are exposed to different modes of abuse and control mechanisms from the onset of the trafficking process. The means of control include physical, chemical, and psychological elements. They are all meant to break the resistance of the children as well as to establish their dependency on those who possess them.

The agents working as transporters may also apply some of these methods of breaking resistance. However, these methods are mostly applied by the final abusers/employers to initiate or maintain exploitative employment such as prostitution.

Extensive abuse and coercion are part of the initiation to exploitative employment that the trafficked children receive after physical transfer

Figure 3.6  
Roles of the Final Abusers in the Trafficked State

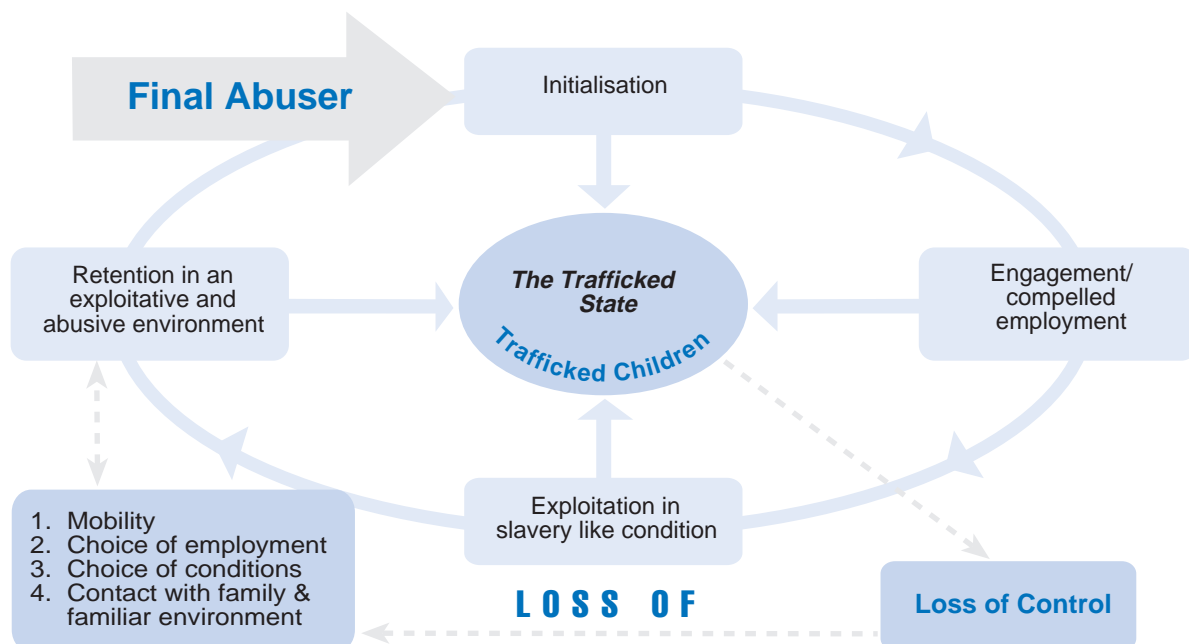




Table: 3.6

**Means of Breaking Resistance<sup>43</sup>**

| MEANS OF BREAKING RESISTANCE    | EXAMPLE OF SUCH METHODS   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Injecting sedatives             | A girl was injected with sedatives and remained unconscious for two days.   |
| Physical abuse                  | A 13-year-old girl was beaten so badly by the pimp who picked her up from the street that she could hardly move for a couple of weeks.  |
| Sexual abuse                    | A girl who refused to take clients was first raped by the pimp and later repeatedly raped by a group of men who worked for him.   |
| House arrest                    | A girl was kept under lock and key in a small house in Rajshahi before she was sold to a brothel.   |
| Starvation                      | A 12-year-old girl was starved for days until she gave her consent to take clients. She was not initiated through rape because the pimps wanted the financial benefits of selling a virgin. |
| Forced use of drugs and alcohol | A girl kept in a hotel in Mumbai, India was forced to drink local liquor because she resisted sexual abuse and interaction.   |
| Threats and fear                | A girl was threatened with death if she tried to escape and was told that her parents would also be killed if she did not obey.   |
| Verbal abuse                    | The traffickers addressed a 13-year-old girl only as “ <i>Khanki</i> ” (whore) which made her feel low and filthy.  |

to their destinations. Trafficked girls engaged in prostitution have reported that rape and gang rape are the two main modes of initiation. However, a small group (six percent of the 15-18 age group) of girl trafficking survivors interviewed mentioned that they were initiated to prostitution through fake marriage (Table 3.7).

Table 3.8 shows that clients initiated the trafficked girls into prostitution. The role of clients as initiators is even higher (83 percent) among the interviewed boys. Local miscreants (21 percent) are slightly low in their roles as initiator compared to the pimps or brothel agents (29 percent).

### 3.3.5. The Trafficking Chain

The trafficking chain model developed in the study process is presented in Figure 3.7. The figure shows that the organisers or investors of the trafficking chain both create the demand for trafficked children and initiate the process of acquiring trafficked children to meet their

purposes. The investors depend on the recruiters to collect the children and hand them over to the transporters. The transporters arrange the transfer of a child from a source area to a destination and collect a fee from the final abusers or employers of trafficked labour. The final abusers exploit, retain, and extract services from the trafficked children.

The model should not be taken as an excluding structure. It only reflects the findings of the study and has the potential of growing with further inputs. The core concept of the model is to identify and link roles played by different actors within the trafficking chain. The model also reflects that one set of actors can play multiple roles—organisers and final abusers may be the same, as may recruiters and transporters. The model allows for this flexibility. Last but not least, the model reflects the roles of the family and community members within the trafficking chain and thereby reveals the complex social construct of the chain.

Table 3.7

**Means of Initiation into Prostitution**

| MEANS OF INITIATION TO PROSTITUTION | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|                                     | 5-9 yr. (%) N=5     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=12 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=35 |            |            | Total (%) N=52 |            |            |
|                                     | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Rape                                | 25.0                | 100        | 40.0       | 66.7              | 66.7       | 66.7       | 42.4              | 100        | 45.7       | 45.7           | 83.3       | 50.0       |
| Gang Rape                           | 75.0                |            | 60.0       | 33.3              | 33.3       | 33.3       | 51.5              |            | 48.6       | 50.0           | 16.7       | 46.2       |
| Marriage                            |                     |            |            |                   |            | 6.1        |                   | 5.7        | 4.3        |                |            | 3.8        |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 3.8

**Initiators of Children into Prostitution**

| INITIATOR OF CHILDREN INTO PROSTITUTION | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|---|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|   | 5-9 yr. (%) N=5     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=11 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=40 |            |            | Total (%) N=56 |            |            |
|   | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Client                                  | 100                 | 20.0       | 50.0       | 100               | 63.6       | 42.1       | 50.0              | 42.5       | 40.0       | 83.3           | 44.6       |            |
| Local Miscreant                         | 50.0                |            | 40.0       | 25.0              |            | 18.2       | 21.1              |            | 20.0       | 24.0           |            | 21.4       |
| Pimp                                    | 50.0                |            | 40.0       | 25.0              |            | 18.2       | 28.9              | 50.0       | 30.0       | 30.0           | 16.7       | 28.6       |
| Relative                                |                     |            |            |                   |            | 7.9        |                   | 7.5        | 6.0        |                |            | 5.4        |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

**3.4. Trafficking Routes**

The total land border of Bangladesh is 4,510 km., of which 288 km. are shared with Myanmar (Burma) and the remaining 4,222 km. with India. Twenty-eight districts of Bangladesh share borders with India, and two districts share borders with Myanmar. Consequently, land routes are the most advantageous for traffickers, followed by air and water routes. Those using the air routes usually have work permits or a false family visa to travel to the countries in the Middle East.

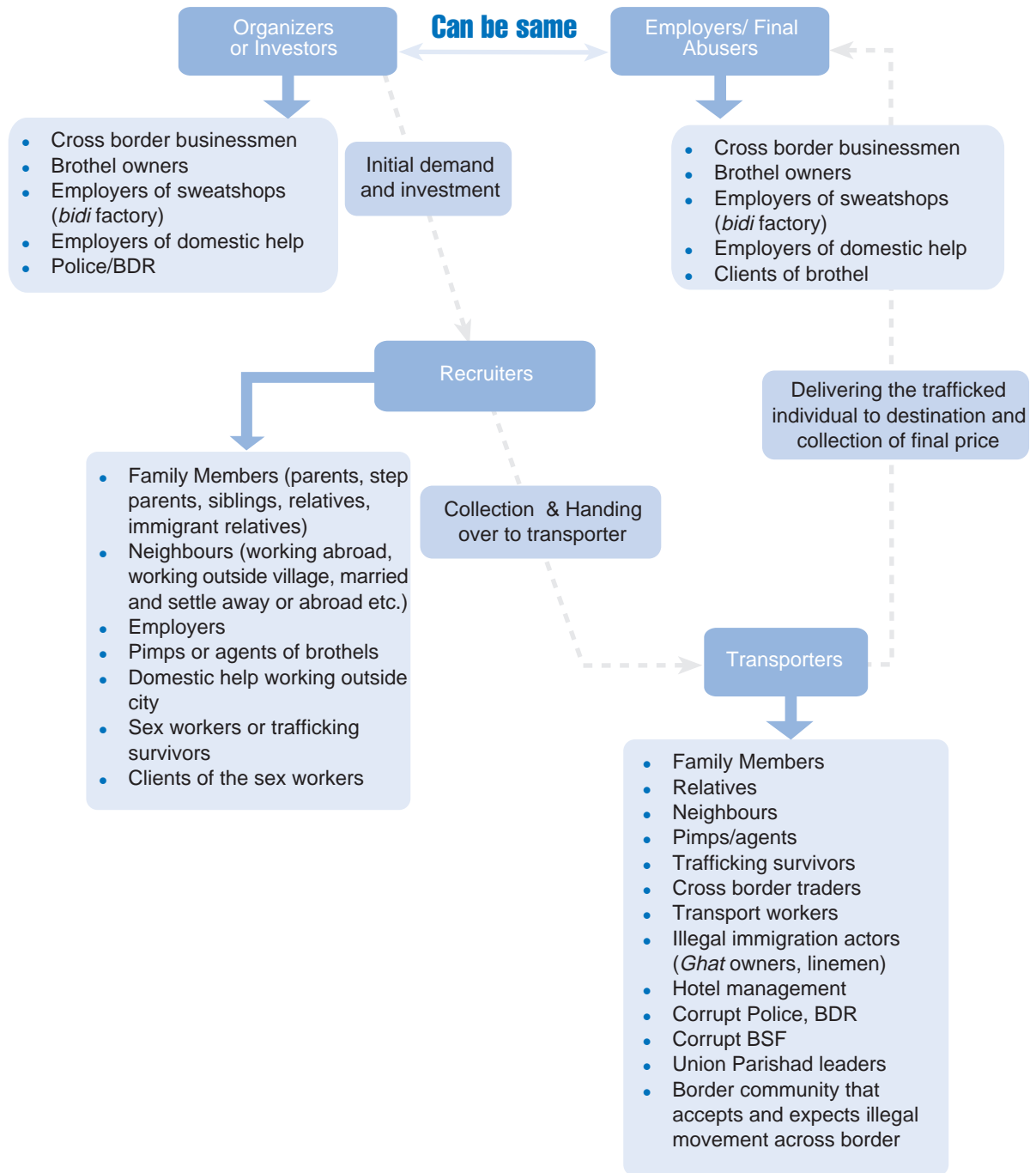
There are 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in India and 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh. People living in these enclaves do not receive institutional support from Bangladesh or India, although the countries with which the enclaves are identified,

The traffickers do not necessarily initiate girls into prostitution themselves. Forty-five percent of the girls reported that it was clients who initiated them into prostitution. The children perceive these clients as an integral part of the trafficking process.<sup>44</sup>

claim territory over them. In particular, and specific to the issue of trafficking, these areas are not patrolled or controlled by any law enforcement agents. These enclaves are being used as recruitment and collection sites for traffickers.

The present study identifies Teknaf, Satkhira, Patgram, Shibganj, and Dhaka as areas highly vulnerable to the risk of trafficking in children. Just as in the case of Cox's Bazar, many Rohingya women and children in Teknaf have been trafficked from the refugee camps or elsewhere to Pakistan, particularly the Karachi area where most Rohingya settlements are located.<sup>45</sup> The Rohingya camps are densely populated (29,000 children were born in the three camps between 1992 and 1997), extremely poor, and chaotic, simplifying the recruitment of children either through abduction or negotiation. The present study included Teknaf as its study area and came across a village from which 83 families attempted to migrate to Pakistan.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 3.7  
**Trafficking Chain**



This study confirms the common belief that Satkhira district is the most commonly used district for crossing the border, due to its proximity to Kolkata. The Benapole border in Jessore is the south west transit point, which acts as a crossing route from Bangladesh to India. As it is well connected by bus and train, traffickers can easily reach Kolkata. The West Bengal town of Bongaon, on the highway to Kolkata, is about 10 kilometres from Benapole, where women and children are collected from all over Bangladesh. They are taken to the Bongaon major trans-shipment point to be trafficked either through the legal check posts or via undercover routes<sup>47</sup>.

Traffickers use different routes at different times. For this reason they have to come to terms with local *ghat* owners<sup>48</sup> on a route. These *ghat* owners, who collect tolls from smugglers and traffickers, are nominated and contracted on a monthly basis by the local law enforcement agencies. The highest rate of trafficking is in Koloroa, where trafficking in children and women takes place in broad daylight in the villages of Tuzulpur, Kakdanga, and Badiali. The most frequently used land routes for trafficking in Satkhira district are Bawkari, Kushkhula, and Charbari in Koloroa, Haratdah and Kuli in Debhata Andulia, and Mashilia in Chowgacha.<sup>49</sup> Other points used for illegal border crossing from Jessore to India include Bagachra, Sadhipur, Goa, and Putkhali. Those in Satkhira are Kalaroa, Debhata, Kaligonj, and Satkhira Sadar.

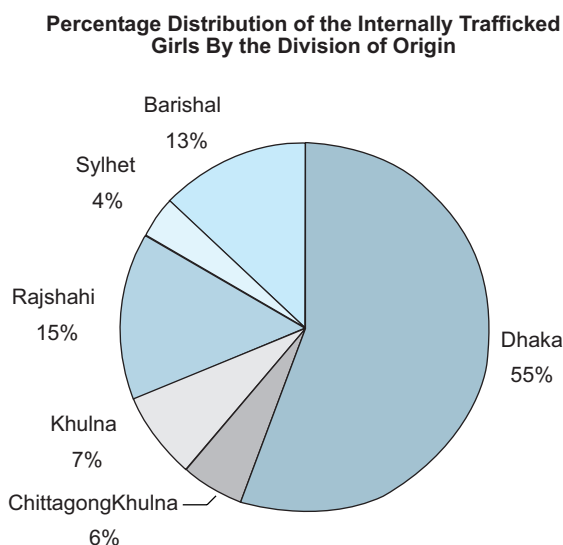
In Rajshahi, the Ganges/Padma is easily crossed during the winter when water levels are low. In Nowabgaj and Rajshahi the most frequently used points to cross the border illegally are Nowabgaj, Shibganj, Bholahat, and Rajshahi. This region was connected to what is now West Bengal by

both road and rail link. Rail links connect a number of other districts throughout the north west part of Bangladesh, including Patgram.

The present study has identified twenty-five districts in Bangladesh as source areas of internal trafficking in girls. This list includes: Bagerhat, Barisal, Bhola, Bogra, Barguna, Chandpur, Comilla, Dhaka, Faridpur, Gaibandha, Gazipur, Gopalganj, Khulna, Kishorganj, Manikganj, Munshiganj-Bikrampur, Mymensingh, Noakhali, Pabna, Rangpur, Nowabgaj, Sirajganj, Satkhira, Sylhet, and Tangail. The interviewed boys were trafficked from Faridpur, Cox's Bazar, Brammanbaria, Comilla, Dhaka, Bogra, and Chittagong districts. The children were trafficked to Dhaka from a total of 27 districts<sup>50</sup>. However, as the study collected information about sources from trafficked children engaged in street prostitution in Dhaka and from those rescued and sheltered in NGO homes in Dhaka and Rajshahi, the list of source areas may have some geographical bias. Even with that limitation, the study findings clearly display that children are trafficked from all over the country.

Chart 3.5 shows that the majority (55%) of internally trafficked girls was recruited from Dhaka. The data may not be nationally representative, but it indicates that the majority of interviewed girls who were trafficked into prostitution in Dhaka were originally recruited in Dhaka. The study also identified Khulna, Satkhira, Narayanganj, Kustia, Darshona, and Chittagong as destinations for victims of internal trafficking to be employed in prostitution. Further, children are trafficked to Dhaka from throughout Bangladesh and then trafficked out of Dhaka to several other districts.

Chart 3.5  
**Origins of Internally Trafficked Girls**



The transit points mentioned in the charts reveal that these are natural transit points for any traveller from the mentioned sources to the respective destinations. This indicates that the flow of internally trafficked children cannot be seen in isolation from the internal map of human mobility. It further tells us that the trafficking network has its own stopover points at natural transit points. Girls interviewed explained that traffickers sometimes used hotels and sometimes used private residences as transit points. However, the study also identifies bus stations, river ports, and train stations as transit points where children may be handed over on the way to final destinations.<sup>51</sup>

The study identifies three major destinations for children who are trafficked out of the country: India, Pakistan and Dubai. While the interviewed children reported India and Pakistan as the destinations of the trafficked girls, India and Dubai emerged as the exclusive destinations of trafficked boys. In India and Pakistan, girls are mostly trafficked for prostitution. In Dubai boys

are trafficked as camel jockeys. Some boys trafficked to India were rescued on their way to Dubai and as such India may not be considered a final destination for these boys.

The sources mentioned in the above charts indicate that just as with internal trafficking, children who are trafficked externally are recruited from all over the country.

Two aspects of the data may be further elaborated. First, in the case of a girl engaged in prostitution, it was found that after being trafficked to Dhaka she was again trafficked, to India. From India the girl returned to Dhaka. This indicates that the internal routes of trafficking can very well overlap with external trafficking routes, and a single

Table: 3.9  
**Identified Routes of External Trafficking:  
 Reported by Girl Survivors**

| PLACE OF RECRUITMENT | TRANSIT POINT                                       | DESTINATION |          |
|----------------------|---|-------------|----------|
| Bagerhat             | Jessore,<br>Benapol border<br>Shaildha              | India       |          |
| Jessore,             | Jhikorgacha<br>Kolkata<br>Howra station<br>Mumbai   |             |          |
| Nator                | Shaildah<br>Shalkia<br>Fultola<br>Shalkia Badhaghat |             |          |
| Noakhali             | Dhaka<br>Rangpur Kathalbari                         |             |          |
| Chapi Nowabgaj       | -   |             |          |
| Shibganj             | -   |             |          |
| Khulna               | Benapol border<br>Bongah<br>Shaildah<br>Mumbai      |             |          |
| Cox's Bazar          | Dhaka<br>Kolkata<br>Delhi                           |             | Pakistan |
| Dhaka<br>Comilla     | Alukhad, Pakistan<br>India                          |             |          |

survivor may be exposed to both types. Thus an area can be both source and destination. Secondly, Shibganj appeared as the source area of trafficking for India and Dubai. Shibganj is located near the border with India. Thus the geographical position (indicating the most convenient route to several destinations) contributes to making a locality susceptible to the risk of trafficking to multiple external destinations.

It is important to note that people crossing the border between India and Bangladesh in general use a common land route. The traffickers also use this popular route.<sup>52</sup> However, for reaching far away destinations such as Pakistan and Dubai, the traffickers use routes which are not conventional in the sense that they use routes known and ventured on to by illegal or irregular migration agents.

### 3.5. Sub-conclusions

Child trafficking in Bangladesh has increased, although the magnitude of the problem cannot be authentically verified. Trafficking within the country appears to be a bigger problem than external trafficking. Trafficked children are employed in abusive and exploitative environments, as prostitutes, factory workers, and, in the case of boys, camel jockeys. While economically disadvantaged children are most vulnerable to trafficking, a variety of social and other factors affect a child's potential vulnerability.

The trafficking chain includes many actors: organisers, recruiters, transporters, and employers

Table: 3.10  
Identified Routes of External Trafficking:  
Reported by Boy Survivors

| PLACE OF RECRUITMENT                      | TRANSIT POINT   | DESTINATION |
|---|---|-------------|
| Chittagong                                | Dhaka<br>Kustia<br>Bongah<br>Kolkata                    |             |
| Noakhali                                  | Dhaka<br>Lalmonirhat                                    |             |
| Narayanganj<br>Khulna                     | Not mentioned<br>Mumbai<br>Delhi                        | India       |
| Chapai Nowabgaj<br>Faridpur               | Not mentioned<br>Jessore<br>Benapol Border<br>Old Delhi |             |
| Brahmmanbaria                             | Dhaka Kamalapur<br>Benapol Border<br>Kolkata<br>Mumbai  |             |
| Faridpur                                  | Dhaka<br>Kolkata<br>Mumbai                              | Dubai       |
| Shibganj<br>Chapai Nowabgaj<br>Chittagong | Delhi<br>Not mentioned<br>Not mentioned                 |             |

or final abusers. The trafficking chain model developed as part of this study demonstrates that one set of actors in the chain can play multiple roles and that family and community members are an integral part of the chain.

Children are trafficked from all parts of the country to internal and external destinations. The routes used for trafficking overlap with migration routes and may vary depending on factors such as the legal environment, means of transportation, and area of recruitment.







- <sup>21</sup> Children are often employed in sectors that pay less than the requirements of adult workers. As a result, in such sectors, such as in *bidi* factories, children are given employment only based on the cheaper price of their labour.
- <sup>22</sup> INCIDIN Bangladesh, *Misplaced Childhood: A short study on street child prostitutes in Dhaka*, with support of Save the Children Denmark, Dhaka, 1997.
- <sup>23</sup> The Independent, 25 September 1996
- <sup>24</sup> BNWLA, *A Nationwide Survey on Child and Women Trafficking of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association*, Dhaka, 1997
- <sup>25</sup> Ishrat Shamim, *Mapping of Missing, Kidnapped and Trafficked Children and Women: Bangladesh Perspective*, International Organisation for Migration, not dated.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.33.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 22.
- <sup>30</sup> Shamim, Ishrat and Kabir, Farah, *Child Trafficking: The Underlying Dynamics*, Centre for Women and Children Studies, Dhaka, January 1998.
- <sup>31</sup> FGD with the child survivors of trafficking
- <sup>32</sup> Elaborated on in Table 3.3
- <sup>33</sup> Discussed more in detail in analysis causes
- <sup>34</sup> Please see table 3.3 and subsequent discussion.
- <sup>35</sup> Ishrat Shamim (IOM, no date) p.4.
- <sup>36</sup> FGD with *ghat* owners and with linemen, and discussion with the UP chairman about the labour migration season
- <sup>37</sup> Professor Ishrat Shamim and Farah Kabir, (1998) p.17; the findings of this study construct a trafficking calendar which is similar to the findings of this present study.
- <sup>38</sup> A previous study; INCIDIN Bangladesh, *Socio-Economic and Cultural Dimensions of Trafficking in Girl Children*, (INCIDIN Bangladesh supported by SCF-UK), Dhaka, 2000, also reveals the same findings
- <sup>39</sup> Derived from the in-depth interviews with the trafficking survivors and FGD with the illegal border traders
- <sup>40</sup> Discussed in detail later.
- <sup>41</sup> Discussed in detail later.
- <sup>42</sup> Based on the data analysis of the in-depth interviews of the child survivors of trafficking
- <sup>43</sup> FGD with the child survivors of trafficking
- <sup>44</sup> Table 3.7, Initiators of girls in prostitution
- <sup>45</sup> Images Asia, *Trafficked from Hell to Hades The plight of Rohingya Women from Burma Trafficked in Pakistan (Images Asia, November 1999)*. According to a 1993 report of the Sindh Police, the number of Burmese (all Rohingyas) living in and around Karachi was 200,000, an increase of 700% from the previous survey of 1988, p.13. The following information is derived from the Images Asia report.
- <sup>46</sup> Discussed in detail in a later chapter
- <sup>47</sup> According to Shamim and Kabir: For a long time, Calcutta has been well known for its prostitution, and the selling of women and children; traffickers are well organized to take them to Bombay and New Delhi, *Child Trafficking: The Underlying Dynamics*, CWCS, 1998.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ghat* owners are people who control and manage illegal border exits. They earn by collecting illegal fees from smugglers and migrants. This will be discussed in detail in another chapter.
- <sup>49</sup> This will be further discussed in a later chapter.
- <sup>50</sup> See the map.
- <sup>51</sup> The following map displays the sources or origins of the trafficked children as well as the destinations of the children within the country.
- <sup>52</sup> Discussed in detail in a later chapter.

## Causes and Consequences of Trafficking in Children

In previous chapters we have touched on some of the underlying dynamics contributing to trafficking in children, but we have not yet taken a close look at the causes. In this chapter we explore why children are in demand, how they end up in a trafficked state, and the toll that trafficking takes on their lives.

### 4.1. Demand Side Analysis of Trafficking in Children

The demand side analysis of trafficking in children can be a very useful tool in explaining the motivations of traffickers and in clarifying the characteristics (such as the age and sex) of those targeted by the trafficking network.

Chart 4.1  
Distribution of Trafficked Children by Age when Trafficked

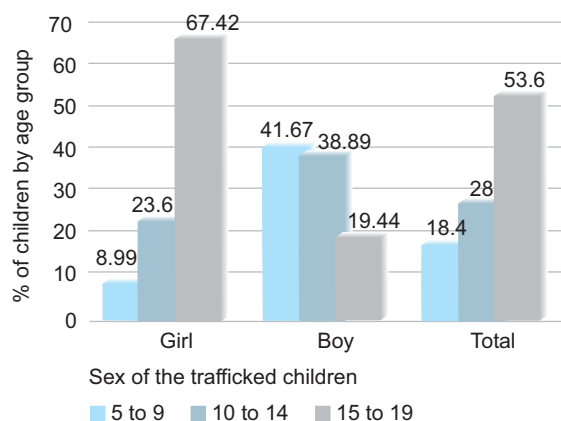


Chart 4.1 shows the age distribution of girls and boys at the time they were trafficked. Among the children who were interviewed, more boys than girls were trafficked in the youngest (5 to 9 years) age group and within the combined 5 to 14 years age group. It should be noted that girls (89) outnumbered boys (36) in our sample, but this bias can be overlooked; according to several other sources a larger number of girls than boys are generally found to be internally trafficked for sexual exploitation<sup>53</sup>.

The younger age of trafficked boys can be explained by the nature of their employment: camel racing and street prostitution both have more demand for younger boys. The mean age of trafficked girls is 15 years, and the mean age of trafficked boys is 12 years.

Figure 4.1 explains the demand side motivations for trafficking in girls. It illustrates the different tiers of demand, starting at the top with general economic motivation and moving towards more specific uses of trafficked girls at the base.

The demand side motivation for trafficking in girls comes from two sectors, the final abusers or

| TYPE OF DEMAND  | PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS   |
|---|--|
| To make profits by selling boys in the 'organ market' | The trafficked girls have reported hearing about such incidents but no living case could be identified. The study objective also did not include the issue.  |
| To earn high profits through exploitation             | Rescued girls living in shelter homes reported that they had been sold at the brothels in India for a range of Tk. 50,000 to 60,000.   |
| To earn a living by trafficking in human beings       | The trafficking chain involves recruiters and transporters who earn their living by trafficking children. There are others indirectly involved such as <i>ghat</i> owners <sup>56</sup> and Police and BDR, who collect illegal fees through the process. The final abusers (such as brothel owners and pimps) misappropriate the income of the trafficked girls while the girls are exposed to crude sexual exploitation. |

employers (*i.e.* those who earn profits through exploiting trafficked labour) and the traffickers (*i.e.* those who earn a living by organising child trafficking). The demand is constructed based on several economic needs.

The demand of the final abusers or employers comes from the need for cheap labour (*e.g.* domestic work), for easily controlled labour (*e.g.* work in *bidi* factories) and for unpaid bonded labour (*e.g.* prostitution). All these share the feature of being highly exploitative sectors of employment.

The demand formation of the traffickers is influenced by the way in which final abusers and employers use such labour. As a result, and as shown in Figure 4.1, traffickers are motivated by the prospects of selling trafficked girls to brothels and as brides. They are also motivated to obtain control over some girls for later use as bait to lure other girls. Thus on the demand side, the traffickers consider the children both as final 'products' (something that is sold) and as 'inputs' (retained to recruit other children).

The figure is not all-inclusive and aims only at providing an overview. The following may better explain the motivations illustrated in Figure 4.1:

As girls can be controlled more easily (with force and by creating social alienation through the stigma associated with sexual abuse) and can generate substantial revenue<sup>57</sup>, they are more attractive in the eyes of the traffickers.

In the same manner, Figure 4.2 illustrates the demand side construction of trafficking in boys. The traffickers view both girls and boys not only as outputs but as inputs; in both cases the traffickers are reported to have used trafficked children as recruiters at a later stage.

#### 4.2. The Supply Side Analysis of Trafficking in Children

The supply side of trafficking in children can be explained with the help of a conceptual model of 'vulnerable space'. As we have seen, a child may be willingly handed over to a recruiting agent deceived by a fake promise; the family members themselves can work as recruiting agents. Moreover, in a broader sense the neighbours and

A girl in Satkhira was supposedly married off and living in India. Last year she visited her village in Keraltata, Bangladesh. She took three adolescent girls from her village with her when she returned to India. She was suspected using the promise of marriage or a job in India<sup>58</sup> to traffick them

Figure 4.1  
Demand Tiers of the Girl Trafficking Sector<sup>54</sup>

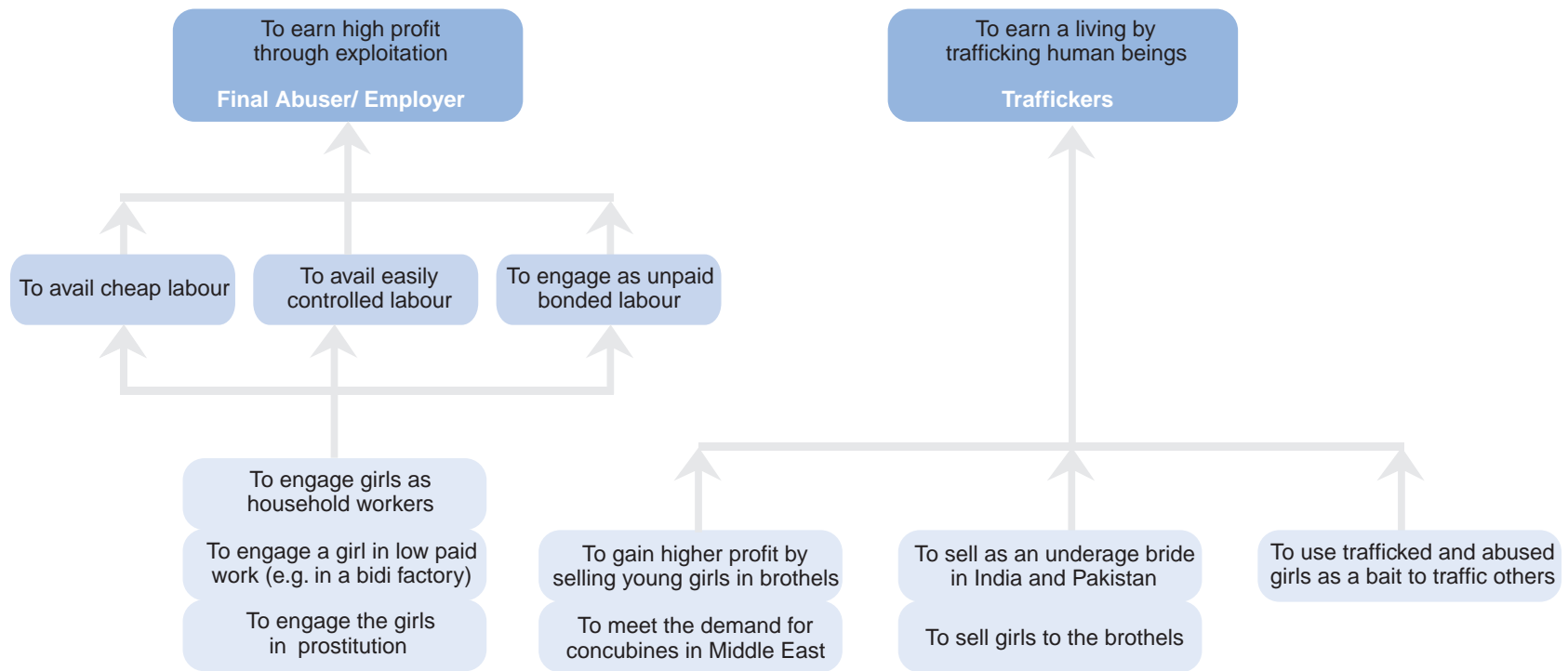
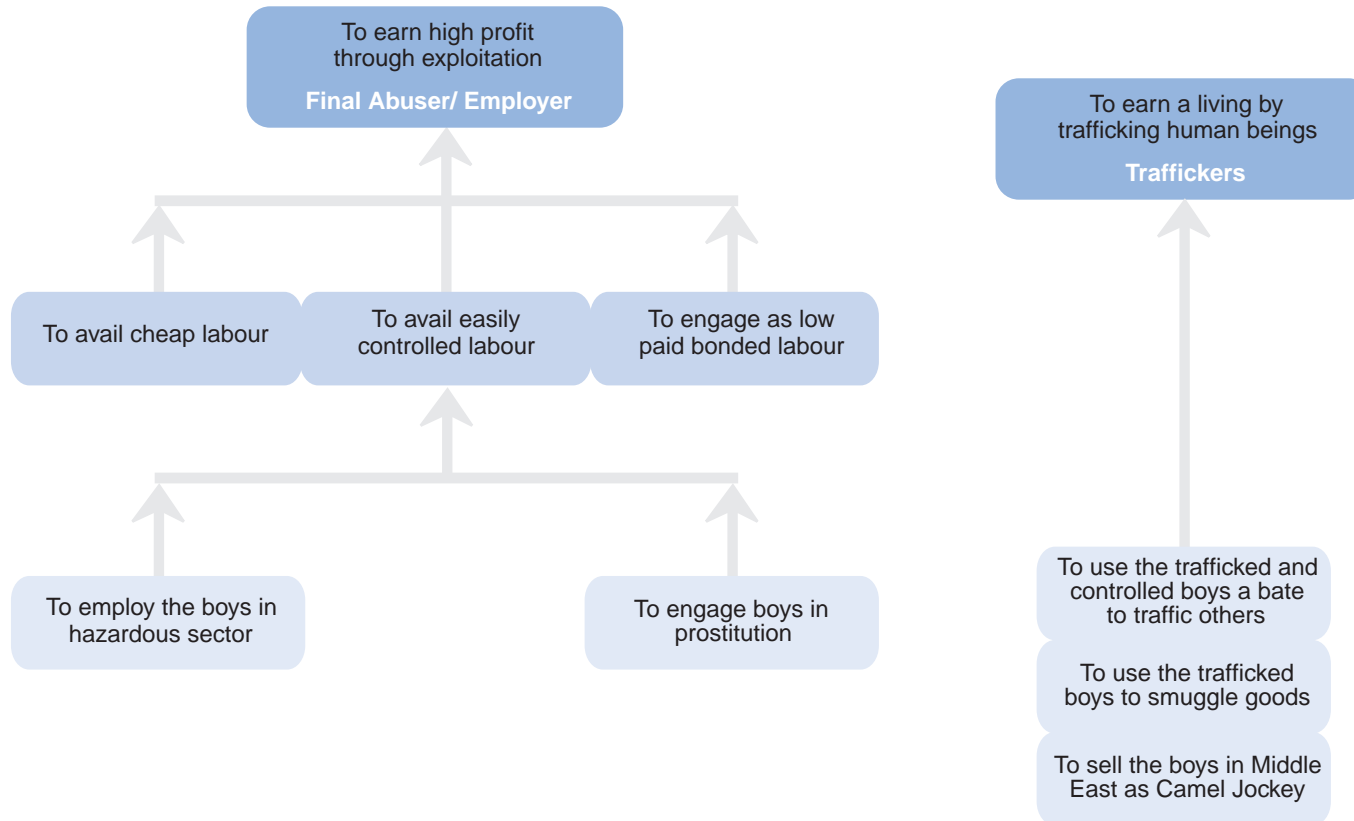


Figure 4.2  
**Demand Tiers of the Boy Trafficking Sector<sup>56</sup>**



community members can also work as recruiting agents. At the same time, in a number of cases<sup>59</sup>, ‘self-motivated’ children leave home without the help of a trafficker or an agent. Thus the study identifies a child moving from one space of vulnerability into another and consequently being trapped by traffickers. The ‘extreme vulnerable’ space has been defined as one in which the criminal networks are active and where they may screen for vulnerable individuals such as children and young adults unaccompanied by safe adult guardians. When children are being identified, approached, and deceived by actors in this space, they lose control over their own decisions and become dependent on actors who easily seize control over them.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the different spaces of vulnerability. A child may move from the centre (*i.e.* family) towards the outer rings. It must be noted that this model does not assume a child to be free of risk at the centre (*i.e.* within the family). Rather, based on the findings, it identifies children to be exposed to a variety of risks working as push factors at the family level. The intersecting arrows in the figure show that the spaces can infiltrate one another. Figure 4.3 shows a process through which criminals can reach community and family levels to take control over a child or to pick up a child pushed by socio-economic (*e.g.* marriage, employment) or psychological (*e.g.* trauma and stigma from sexual abuse) factors by entering the community space. Several factors and events lead a child to this ‘extreme vulnerable space’. Their common characteristics lie in their externality. In other words, the children have little or no role to play either in becoming involved with these characteristics or avoiding them. This is a fundamental disempowerment of an already very vulnerable individual. The vulnerabilities are discussed below.

Figure 4.3  
Interplay of Factors and Vulnerable Space



#### 4.2.1. Child Labour: Increasing Vulnerability to Trafficking

Once children leave home for work, they are exposed to events and influences beyond their control or the control of their family/human safety nets and the socially prescribed protective unit for the children.

The criminal chain can easily take advantage of this unprotected status to traffick a child. Moreover, the child can very well be employed in domestic servitude or sweatshop conditions and fall into a trafficked state.

Such employment conditions have been reported in Indian *bidi* factories and around the Shibganj area of Bangladesh. Because of the increased demand for girls as labourers in *bidi* factories, pimps from Bangladesh collect girls inside Bangladesh and supply them to those factories. These pimps are very intimate with the villagers of the border region. The villagers of the Shibganj border region are directly or covertly connected to the pimps and the cross border region business.<sup>60</sup>

### **Mother of a Trafficked Child:**

Pankhali, Tikka Para, Teknaf, Cox's Bazar

"I was having a difficult time after the father left house with the second wife, leaving me and the five children all alone. My son therefore, had to work outside."

The boy was working as a day labourer at a neighbouring farm. On 16 April 2001 he went to work but did not come home. In the evening the mother went to the neighbour's house to look for her son. The neighbour said that the boy did not return from the field. The neighbours took the initiative and instantly arranged a search party. They searched the neighbourhood and relatives' houses in vain.

The research identified a situation in one factory where 20 to 25 children worked in a small unhealthy room from 5:00 a.m. until midnight. They had to produce 1,000 *bidi* a day. Sometimes they had to work until 1:00 a.m. The supervisor beat them severely if they did not make the *bidi* properly or if they were too slow.<sup>61</sup> Sometimes the supervisors made sexual threats or abused the girls if they did not work well.

Most of the children are 14 to 15 years old, but some are even younger. Dola (9), Ambia (9), Sokhina (8), Mala (11) were four such girls reported by key informants in Shibganj.

Dola was rescued three days after being trafficked. An Indian businessman named Bhola Nath had planned to traffick the other girls, but a local UP Chairman and an influential smuggler rescued them by threatening him.

Once the girls reach puberty, pimps often exploit them sexually and introduce them to prostitution, a business that is more profitable for the pimps. Thus the Indian *bidi* factories serve not only as transit areas, but as destinations too. Although the link between the factory owners and the brothel owners has not been conclusively identified, the

study clearly shows the factory environment as a space in which criminal forces have a 'free hand' over the children.

Some local informants suspect that a number of children may run away from the factories and thereby go missing. They point out that the workload in the *bidi* factories can be a tremendous burden for the children and that the coercive and exploitative factory environment may influence a child to run away. The runaway child in that situation cannot return home and thus has no other option but to enter into the extremely vulnerable space where human fate is controlled and decided by criminal networks.

Parents can do little in such cases. A 12-year-old boy in Kuchali Bari, Patgram, left the Baura Bazar tea stall where he had been working and could not be traced. Eleven months have passed since then. The parents paid 800 Tk. for the search but were unsuccessful.<sup>62</sup> The father complained that the local police did not even try to help him. "The neighbours only could condole us," the father said. "The child could have been trafficked but I don't know for sure. There is no way to check. All I can say", he sighed, "is that the boy has no reason to return home—he knows that we will not be able to feed him".

When village children are recruited to work outside their own villages, they are beyond the

"My child was not properly paid or fed at the workplace," said another parent. "He had to work hard and was physically abused. He knows that there is no use getting back home."

A father explained, "I could not feed my children at home, so the *changra* (young one) had to go out to the local bazar to work at a tea stall."

**Mother of a Trafficked Girl:**

Kuchli Bari, Patgram

“All I know is that those who take children to Dhaka for work are the traffickers.”

“I have learnt about trafficking by losing my daughter,” said a grieving mother of two. “There was no one to help us, so when our neighbour’s son Jamirul offered to take Salma to Dhaka and find her a home to work in, I could not say no.” It has been seven years since the mother last saw her child.

control of their families and exposed to trafficking risks. The recruiter, who is not necessarily the employer, becomes the only link between the children and their families. Thus, when parents decide to send a child to work away from home they are inadvertently putting the child at risk. The economic compulsions leading to child labour place a child in a space in which she or he can be abused, exploited, and entered into a trafficked state. Further, a child can be trafficked from the initial space of employment to another destination.

Even if a child is not trafficked from the job location she or he may enter into a condition in which the option of returning home is lost—abused, perhaps, and now ashamed, or afraid because of having run away from work. Such children face a high risk of being trafficked.

**4.2.2. Labour Migration of Parents and the Linkage to External Child Trafficking<sup>63</sup>**

Children are exposed to trafficking risks not only when they migrate alone, but also when they migrate with parents without proper safety precautions or protection from the state.

A mother from Teknaf, abandoned by her husband, went to Dubai in 1994 to work as a housemaid. She brought along her two sons, who were 11 and 13

years old. One of her uncles accompanied them. In Dubai he took the boys from their mother, explaining that they were going to study Arabic. The mother was employed in a household but was not allowed to visit the boys. It took her one and half a year to locate her children—she found them working as camel jockeys.

**4.2.3. Dowry Pressure: Girls in Peril**

Discrimination against girls puts them at risk. Broad acceptance of early marriage is one form of discrimination girls in Bangladesh face. Parents fear that their daughters may be sexually abused or become scandalised if they are not married early. They worry that dowry demands will increase as their daughters get older. In the eyes of poor parents, girls are little more than economic burdens—if they have only a small dowry to offer, such parents are especially quick to arrange marriages for their daughters, irrespective of the groom’s status or the girl’s opinion.

Early marriage exposes these girls to two types of risks. If they marry at a young age they face the risks associated with early conjugal responsibilities and consequences. Or, they are exposed to the risk of trafficking—in marriage, control of the girl passes to the groom with social consent, but the groom may be a recruiting agent for traffickers.

One trafficker explained, “From Bangladesh we illegally smuggle out gold, bronze and copper utensils, as well as young women and girls of the age of marriage.” In Bangladesh, according to this

**Mother of Two Trafficked Children:**

Karachi-Para, Howaikong, Teknaf

“There is no need to be a member of an organised chain; anyone can traffick a child.”



### Father of a Trafficked Girl:

Islampur, Sreerampur, Patgram

“Because of poverty I could not meet the dowry demands, so I was unable to arrange marriage of my daughter. They said they would arrange a dowry free marriage.”

Naila (15) was trafficked in her village through the lure of a dowry-free marriage. Her father regretted that he could not arrange Naila’s marriage because he was too poor to meet the dowry demands of prospective suitors. So when Firoz Mia, who lived in the same village, told him that a friend was interested in marrying Naila without any dowry, the father was ‘relieved’.

trafficker, the father of the bride must pay a dowry to the groom. But there are many states in India in which the bride’s father receives a dowry from the groom. As a result, fathers in Bangladesh—at least those living near the border—arrange their daughters’ marriages in India. Traffickers take advantage of this phenomenon, which places girls in a vulnerable situation.

### 4.3. Survival in the Trafficked State

Psychosocially, morally, and physically, trafficking takes a huge toll on the lives of its victims. Sometimes this may result in victims expressing ‘consent’ to their involvement in prostitution—not because they want to be prostitutes, but because they feel powerless and see no viable alternatives in their lives. As Table 4.1 illustrates, more than 15% of the girls interviewed expressed such ‘consent’.

The girls in the study revealed some symptoms of psychological trauma as a result of their

experiences with prostitution. (For this study, trauma is treated as ‘emotional feelings’ associated with painful experiences.) The study examined whether children experienced nightmares or suffered from phobias as indicators of a traumatic mental situation. The findings of the investigation are presented in Table 4.2.

Girls and boys in the youngest age group reported the highest incidence of nightmare and phobia.<sup>64</sup> The general trend across the sexes reveals that the boys in each age group and in

### Why is a girl ‘willing’ to stay in prostitution?

- She believes there is nothing left in her life.
- She thinks that she is not worth anything to ‘good people’.
- She sees no alternative.
- She thinks no one expects her to change.
- She cannot think of anything else.
- She wants to return to her village and buy land.
- She loves money. She wants to earn money by doing this job.

Table 4.1  
Consent to Prostitution

| DO THE CHILDREN WANT TO STAY IN PROSTITUTION? | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|---|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|   | 5-9 yr. (%) N=5     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=18 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=38 |            |            | Total (%) N=61 |            |            |
|   | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Yes   | 25.0                |            | 20.0       | 18.2              |            | 11.1       | 13.9              |            | 13.2       | 15.7           |            | 13.1       |
| No  | 75.0                | 100        | 80.0       | 81.8              | 100        | 88.9       | 86.1              | 100        | 86.8       | 84.3           | 100        | 86.9       |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Girls who are still engaged in street prostitution look at their lives with great pessimism and apathy.

general (69 percent) experience nightmares and phobia at a higher rate than girls (49 percent).<sup>65</sup> As the sample size of the girls is comparatively large, the study presents the general trend based on that database, which indicates that almost half of the children engaged in prostitution suffer from nightmares or phobia (Chart 4.2).

Among the girls, extreme distrust towards adults in particular and others in general was observed—not surprising given that the children have, in general, been trafficked by, retained by, and prostituted by adults. This distrust does not alienate the children from adult perpetrators because these adults control the trafficked children through both force and dependency. Because of this ‘unhealthy’ dependency, some of the girls reportedly switched from being victims to becoming perpetrators; we have already noted that some trafficked children engaged in prostitution were reported to have become ‘recruiting agents’. This too should be seen in the

context of the powerlessness of child survivors and the extremely abusive environment in which such survivors must sustain themselves.

Apart from these psychological and moral costs, the children suffer from economic exploitation and experience crude sexual exploitation throughout the trafficked state.

The girls served an average of three to five clients daily. Girls in the 10 to 14-year-old group experienced the most pressure, being required to serve 10 or more clients a day. The study found that boys serve up to three clients each day. Table 4.3 reveals a high prevalence of economic exploitation when considering the illegal fees that the children must pay. In general, the children reported that at least 50 percent of their income is taken from them—by the pimps, local miscreants, corrupt law enforcement officials, or even clients.

Table 4.2  
Children with Nightmares and Phobia

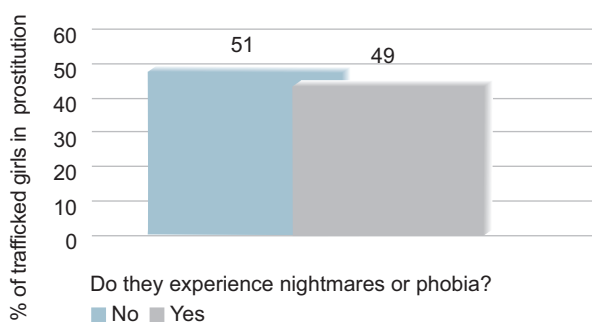
| NIGHTMARES AND PHOBIA | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|                       | 5-9 yr. (%) N=8     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=18 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=42 |            |            | Total (%) N=68 |            |            |
|                       | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Yes                   | 60.0                | 66.7       | 62.5       | 27.3              | 71.4       | 44.4       | 53.8              | 66.7       | 54.8       | 49.1           | 69.2       | 52.9       |
| No                    | 40.0                | 33.3       | 37.5       | 72.7              | 28.6       | 55.6       | 46.2              | 33.3       | 45.2       | 50.9           | 30.8       | 47.1       |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

Table 4.3  
Income Levels of Children Engaged in Prostitution\*

| INCOME PER DAY IF WORKING <sup>66</sup> | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|---|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|   | 5-9 yr. (%) N=9     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=27 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=59 |            |            | Total (%) N=95 |            |            |
|   | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| TK.0-100                                | 60.0                | 50.0       | 55.6       | 35.7              | 92.3       | 63.0       | 56.0              | 77.8       | 59.3       | 52.2           | 80.8       | 60.0       |
| TK1.01-500                              | 40.0                |            | 22.2       | 57.1              | 7.7        | 33.3       | 40.0              | 22.2       | 37.3       | 43.5           | 11.5       | 34.7       |
| TK.501-1000                             |                     |            | 7.1        |                   | 3.7        | 2.0        |                   | 1.7        | 2.9        |                |            | 2.1        |
| TK.1001-2000                            | 25.0                | 11.1       |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            | 3.8            | 1.1        |            |
| TK.2001 +                               | 25.0                | 11.1       |            |                   |            | 2.0        |                   | 1.7        | 1.4        | 3.8            | 2.1        |            |
| <b>Total</b>                            | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

\* The table reflects the highest ever income that a child experienced in *one day*, not the average *daily* income.

Chart 4.2  
**Do Trafficked Girls Experience Nightmares or Phobia?**



Finally, children in the trafficked state are forced to experience unsafe sex. Very few children in the study mentioned routine use of condoms, and almost all of them reported having a sexually transmitted disease (STD) at least once. The children displayed poor knowledge about STD prevention, and, more importantly, indicated that they have no power to ensure safe sex; the pimps and the clients determine when and how the children should have sex and with whom.

#### 4.4. Sub-conclusions

Children are both pulled and pushed into trafficking. They are pulled by a demand from those who earn profits at their expense, such as brothel and factory owners or those who actually traffick them in order to earn a living. A number of factors can push children into the trafficked state. These include: poverty, 'early adulthood' (the young age at which children are thought to be capable of handling adult responsibilities such as paid labour), discrimination against girls (including acceptance of early marriage and dowry pressures), abusive family environments, and the underestimation by family members of the dangers involved in child mobility.

Trafficking takes a huge toll on the psychosocial, physical, and moral lives of the children. They may experience nightmares and phobias and develop a distrust of adults. Physical abuse and even death are common. A child may change from victim to perpetrator status and develop a type of consent for exploitative and abusive conditions.

<sup>53</sup> INCIDIN Bangladesh, *Misplaced Childhood: A short study on street child prostitutes in Dhaka*, with support of Save the Children Denmark, Dhaka 1997

<sup>54</sup> This figure was developed in the participatory learning workshop of the research team members, in which the data collected from the field through FGDs and in-depth interviews with child survivors of trafficking have been critically revisited.

<sup>55</sup> This figure was developed in the participatory learning workshop of the research team members, in which the data collected from the field through FGDs and in-depth interview with child survivors of trafficking have been critically revisited.

<sup>56</sup> People who manage illegal exit points at the border areas.

<sup>57</sup> This will be further illustrated later in this chapter.

<sup>58</sup> FGD with community people at Keraltata, Satkhira.

<sup>59</sup> As described earlier in Table 4.4

<sup>60</sup> In-depth interviews with key informants, NGO staff, local elected member in Shibganj.

<sup>61</sup> In-depth interviews with key informants, NGO staff, Local Elected Member at Shibganj.

<sup>62</sup> In-depth interview with a father at Kuchali Bari, Patgram.

<sup>63</sup> This issue deserves greater attention. Therefore it has been discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

<sup>64</sup> This should also be considered against the extremely small sample size of this group.

<sup>65</sup> This again should be seen at the context of a very small sample of boys in-depth interview.

<sup>66</sup> Sickness or lack of clients.

## Vulnerable Households: Demography and Economy

Households facing extreme poverty, limited access to education and social services, and a lack of occupational opportunities generate strong push factors upon children, increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. The findings of the household survey, conducted in the three sample districts of Cox's Bazar, Lamonirhat, and Nowabganj, reveal that those households meeting the vulnerability criteria<sup>67</sup> developed by the study team are vulnerable to child trafficking. At the same time, however, the study finds that it is not socio-economic factors alone that constitute the entire spectrum of risk.

### 5.1. Demographic Features of the Vulnerable Households

The survey covered 450 rural households (150 in each of the selected districts) with 2,592 family members. The average family size was 5.8 and included at least one member under the age of 18 (about 60 percent of the survey population was under eighteen).

### 5.2. Family Income, Poverty, and Vulnerability

Almost half (47.5 percent) of the adult males are day labourers. Sixteen percent are engaged in small farming while another 17.4 percent engage in small

Table 5.1  
Age and Sex Distribution of Members of Vulnerable Families

| RESPONSE                  | STUDY AREAS              |        |                         |        |                         |        |        |        |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|                           | Patgram<br>(Lalmonirhat) |        | Shibganj<br>(Nowabganj) |        | Teknaf<br>(Cox's Bazar) |        | Total  |        |
|                           | Male                     | Female | Male                    | Female | Male                    | Female | Male   | Female |
| I. Sex of family members: | 45.7                     | 54.3   | 46.1                    | 53.9   | 46.5                    | 53.5   | 46.1   | 53.9   |
| II. Age:                  | (393)                    | (467)  | (394)                   | (461)  | (406)                   | (467)  | (1193) | (1395) |
| < 5 years                 | 6.9                      | 9.0    | 7.9                     | 8.0    | 14.0                    | 12.6   | 9.6    | 9.9    |
| 5 - 9                     | 9.4                      | 10.1   | 12.9                    | 11.9   | 17.2                    | 15.0   | 13.2   | 12.3   |
| 10 - 14                   | 22.9                     | 27.0   | 28.7                    | 25.6   | 24.9                    | 21.0   | 25.5   | 24.5   |
| 15 - 18                   | 13.5                     | 9.2    | 13.5                    | 17.6   | 10.3                    | 12.4   | 12.4   | 13.1   |
| 19 - 29                   | 13.2                     | 17.6   | 7.6                     | 11.3   | 11.1                    | 9.9    | 10.6   | 13.1   |
| 30 - 39                   | 15.7                     | 14.6   | 11.4                    | 15.0   | 8.9                     | 16.3   | 12.0   | 15.3   |
| 40 +                      | 18.4                     | 13.1   | 18.0                    | 10.6   | 13.5                    | 12.8   | 16.6   | 12.2   |

Table 5.2

**Occupations of Vulnerable Household Parents**

| OCCUPATION OF MOTHER (142)     |            | OCCUPATION OF FATHER( 282) |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Occupation                     | Percentage | Occupation                 | Percentage |
| Domestic work at others' homes | 42.3       | Agriculture                | 16.0       |
| Earth work                     | 5.6        | Day labourer               | 47.5       |
| Handicraft                     | 19.7       | Small trading              | 17.4       |
| Paddy husking                  | 2.1        | Service                    | 0.7        |
| Border trading                 | -          | Rickshaw or van puller     | 4.3        |
| <i>Bidi</i> production         | 30.3       | Unemployed                 | 2.5        |
|                                |            | Others                     | 11.7       |

trading. Almost one third (31.6 percent) of the adult females are engaged in income-generating activities. More than 40 percent of these women are employed as household helpers within their villages, nearly one-third are engaged in *bidi* production, and 20 percent engaged in handicraft production.

The parents in the vulnerable families are employed in the informal rural economy, mostly as wage labour, which has implications for the household economy.

The study estimated the incomes of the children and parents in these households and found that on average the children earn more than their mothers (Tk. 577 for the children, Tk. 573 for the mothers) and boys earn more than girls do. Adult men earn significantly more (Tk. 1317). The average annual per capita income (Tk. 3,534) of the surveyed households places them below the

- Extreme poor household: average annual per capita income of Tk. 3,757, including female-headed households and families with landholding up to 15 decimals. This category constitutes 23 percent of rural households (in 1994).<sup>69</sup>
- Moderate poor household: average annual per capita income of Tk. 8,368. These are functionally landless families. Their land ownership limit is up to 50 decimal. This category constitutes 29 percent of rural households (in 1994).<sup>70</sup>

The study identified that at least 23 percent of all rural households in Bangladesh share the economic features of the households categorised as 'vulnerable households'. In other words, based on the economic categorisation, the study estimates that children in at least 21.85 percent<sup>71</sup> of the rural households in the country are economically exposed to a high risk of trafficking. By looking at other factors such as children's stated reasons for leaving home, the study emphasises that the economic status of a family is not the sole determining factor in child trafficking. But it is a very important contributing push factor.

poverty line. The study estimates that three percent of the surveyed households are in the 'moderate poor' category and 97 percent can be described as 'extreme poor'. In rural Bangladesh, according to one estimate, 23 percent of all households fit into the category of 'extreme poor'.<sup>68</sup>

Children have no choice but to work. Household poverty, therefore, exposes them to the risks of early employment and the associated risks of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.

### 5.3. Educational Status of the Vulnerable Households

About one-third of the family members are illiterate (33.4 percent female and 26.9 percent male), and almost 14 percent (16.5 percent female and 15.4 percent male) have not had any

Table 5.3

**Children Presently Attending School**

| RESPONSE<br>Children Currently in School | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT (%) |       |             |       |             |       |       |       |       |
|--|----------------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | Age 5 – 9                  |       | Age 10 - 14 |       | Age 15 - 18 |       | Total |       | Total |
|  | Boys                       | Girls | Boys        | Girls | Boys        | Girls | Boys  | Girls |       |
| Yes                                      | 66.7                       | 57.1  | 42.7        | 61.1  | 10.7        | 34.1  | 33.1  | 53.2  | 46.2  |
| No                                       | 33.3                       | 42.9  | 57.3        | 38.9  | 89.3        | 65.9  | 66.9  | 46.8  | 53.8  |
| N =                                      | 12                         | 21    | 89          | 190   | 56          | 82    | 157   | 293   | 450   |

type of formal education. Another 35.3 percent (34 percent female and 45.8 percent male) received education equivalent to primary level (five years of basic literacy, numeracy, and religious teachings). Only one percent of the family members reached HSC level.

Almost 46 percent of the Teknaf women surveyed are illiterate, compared to about 27 percent in Patgram and Shibganj. Women in Teknaf have a lower rate of participation in formal education than the women of Patgram and Shibganj. While 46 percent of the Patgram women and 55 percent of those in Shibganj studied at the Class I to V level, only 24 percent of women in Teknaf had reached the same level. The lower educational levels of women in Teknaf can perhaps be explained by the comparatively stronger conservative cultural construction of that region.<sup>72</sup>

At the Class VI to X level, the average male-female ratio of participation is roughly equal (10.5 percent

and 9.1 percent respectively). Interestingly, in Shibganj more females (15.2 percent) than males (8.2 percent) were reported to be studying at the Class VI to X level. The comparatively better gender distribution at that level has been explained as an impact of the government's stipend program for the girls<sup>73</sup> and is further discussed in connection with Table 5.3

The parents of the surveyed households expressed awareness of the need to educate their children. However the reality seems to be quite different— 54 percent of the vulnerable children do not attend school at present.

Table 5.3 reveals that change is taking place in the sphere of education and gender. Among vulnerable households, more girls (53 percent) than boys (33 percent) currently attend school. This is attributed to the government's stipend programme for girl students. Boys are not included in the scheme, so the allocation of

Table 5.4

**Retention Levels of Vulnerable Children in Educational Institutions**

| RESPONSE<br>Grade/ Type | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT (%) |       |         |       |         |       |       |       |       |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                         | 5 - 9                      |       | 10 - 14 |       | 15 - 18 |       | Total |       | Total |
|                         | Boys                       | Girls | Boys    | Girls | Boys    | Girls | Boys  | Girls |       |
| Non-formal education    | 12.5                       | -     | -       | 3.4   | -       | -     | 1.9   | 2.6   | 15.2  |
| Class I - V             | 75.0                       | 91.7  | 73.7    | 59.5  | 66.7    | 21.4  | 73.1  | 53.1  | 56.9  |
| Class VI - IX           | 12.5                       | 8.3   | 26.3    | 31.9  | 33.3    | 57.1  | 25.0  | 34.6  | 32.2  |
| Class X                 | -                          | -     | -       | 2.6   | -       | 17.9  | -     | 5.1   | 3.8   |
| S.S.C. +                | -                          | -     | -       | 2.6   | -       | 3.6   | -     | 2.6   | 2.0   |
| N =                     | 12                         | 21    | 38      | 116   | 6       | 28    | 52    | 156   | 208   |

Table 5.5

**Level of Education Desired by Vulnerable Household Members**

| RESPONSE | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |        |          |       |      |         |      |         |      |       |      |
|----------|-----------------------------|--------|----------|-------|------|---------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
|          | Parents                     |        | Children |       |      |         |      |         |      |       |      |
|          | Desired level of education  | Mother | Father   | 5 - 9 |      | 10 - 14 |      | 15 - 18 |      | Total |      |
| Boy      |                             |        |          | Girl  | Boy  | Girl    | Boy  | Girl    | Boy  | Girl  |      |
| Primary  | 35.3                        | 33.6   | 14.3     | 41.7  | 11.1 | 13.9    | 16.7 | 6.2     | 12.2 | 16.1  | 15.2 |
| S.S.C    | 47.8                        | 47.9   | 42.9     | 25.0  | 55.6 | 58.3    | 66.7 | 67.9    | 55.1 | 57.4  | 56.9 |
| H.S.C.   | 7.6                         | 8.2    | -        | -     | 16.7 | 11.3    | -    | 21.4    | 12.2 | 12.3  | 12.3 |
| H.S.C. + | 9.3                         | 10.4   | 42.9     | 33.3  | 16.6 | 16.5    | 16.7 | 70.2    | 20.4 | 14.8  | 16.2 |
| N =      | 450                         | 280    | 7        | 12    | 36   | 115     | 6    | 28      | 49   | 155   | 204  |

Table 5.6

**Types of Education Desired by Vulnerable Household-Members**

| RESPONSE                 | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |        |          |       |      |         |      |         |      |       |      |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------|----------|-------|------|---------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
|                          | Parents                     |        | Children |       |      |         |      |         |      |       |      |
|                          | Type of education desired   | Mother | Father   | 5 - 9 |      | 10 - 14 |      | 15 - 18 |      | Total |      |
| Boy                      |                             |        |          | Girl  | Boy  | Girl    | Boy  | Girl    | Boy  | Girl  |      |
| Formal/general education | 72.6                        | 76.4   | 66.7     | 57.9  | 73.8 | 81.1    | 66.7 | 66.7    | 71.4 | 75.8  | 74.6 |
| Religious education      | 25.3                        | 22.9   | 22.2     | 21.1  | 13.8 | 10.4    | 16.7 | 22.3    | 15.3 | 11.7  | 12.7 |
| Technical education      | 15.1                        | 15.0   | 11.1     | 21.1  | 24.6 | 14.6    | 29.2 | 42.1    | 24.5 | 21.7  | 22.5 |
| N =                      | 450                         | 280    | 19       | 9     | 164  | 65      | 75   | 24      | 240  | 98    | 338  |

resources for educational opportunities has slightly shifted in favour of the girls. At the entry level (ages 5 to 9), however, a higher proportion of boys (67 percent) than girls (57 percent) are enrolled in school. This suggests that the stipend program may be more effective at keeping vulnerable household girls in school than at expanding school enrolment.

Total enrolment can be misleading. The greatest proportion (57 percent) of children is currently enrolled at the primary level, while only two percent are in the S.S.C. level. (Table 5.4) At the top end of the secondary level (10<sup>th</sup> grade and S.S.C. level) only girls represent the economically vulnerable rural households. This again indicates the positive impact of the government's stipend scheme for the poorest girl students.

NGO non-formal education centres provide education to one third (35.2 percent) of the

vulnerable children (36.5 percent girls and 33 percent boys). The majority of the children, however attend government schools. The parents of vulnerable children have high educational goals for their offspring, but most fail to achieve them as a result of the conditions they face.

About one-third of the parents want their children to complete primary level education, and nearly half would like to see their children complete the S.S.C. level. As the children get older, it appears that their interest in completing the S.S.C. level increases.

The majority of parents and children surveyed desire a general education for the children. This, combined with strong interest in S.S.C.-level study, suggests that vulnerable household members view general education as an effective means of expanding livelihood options to positively alter their impoverished situations.

Table 5.7

**Vulnerable Households: Reasons for Dropping Out of School**

| RESPONSE                       | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT (%) |       |         |       |         |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                | 5 - 9                      |       | 10 - 14 |       | 15 - 18 |       | Total |       |       |
|                                | Boys                       | Girls | Boys    | Girls | Boys    | Girls | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| <b>Reason for dropping out</b> |                            |       |         |       |         |       |       |       |       |
| Economic reasons               | -                          | -     | 56.3    | 56.0  | 72.5    | 62.5  | 65.3  | 57.1  | 60.9  |
| Failed S.S.C                   | -                          | 100   | 18.8    | 8.0   | 15.0    | 6.3   | 16.7  | 9.5   | 12.4  |
| Got married                    | -                          | -     | -       | 8.0   | -       | 18.8  | -     | 11.9  | 6.4   |
| Had to start work              | -                          | -     | 12.5    | 4.0   | 17.5    | 3.1   | 15.3  | 3.6   | 9.0   |
| Does not like to go to school  | -                          | -     | 25.0    | 6.0   | 12.5    | 3.1   | 18.1  | 4.8   | 10.9  |
| School is far                  | -                          | -     | -       | 4.0   | -       | -     | -     | 2.4   | 1.3   |
| Husband/ Father opposed        | -                          | -     | -       | 18.0  | -       | 9.4   | -     | 14.4  | 7.7   |
| N =                            | -                          | 2     | 32      | 50    | 40      | 32    | 72    | 84    | 156   |

The disparity between these desires and reality is striking: economic reasons cause the majority (61 percent) of these vulnerable children to discontinue their education. Those children who have never been to school identify their parents' unwillingness (53.5 percent) or economic hardship (38.4 percent) as the reasons for never attending any form of education, technical or general.

Table 5.7 also indicates that children's expectations for better lives through education contradict the poverty status of the vulnerable households. This discontentment can also work as a push factor for the children and may make them vulnerable to the false promises of traffickers or motivate them to leave home (*e.g.* accept an employment offer or marriage proposal, or run away). As discussed in Chapter 3, these factors can expose a child to the risk of trafficking.

#### 5.4. Vulnerable Families' Access To NGO Services

Over the last two decades, non-government organisations (NGOs) in Bangladesh have rapidly expanded in number and coverage. Most NGOs work with a mandate of poverty alleviation by organising rural marginalised communities at the

grassroots level. Also, NGOs mostly target poor women. The study explored the access of the rural marginal families to NGO organisations.

Only one quarter of the marginalised households in the study districts is involved with NGO group activities. Nearly one quarter of the adult women and 13 percent of the men belong to NGO groups. Five percent of the children are linked to NGO activities. In this regard a slight gender bias to the boys have been observed. This is because the daughters of the village are considered 'transitory', expected to leave the village after marriage (marriages most often are patri-local).

At present NGOs are largely restricted to micro-credit activities. The girls are not considered credit-worthy and therefore fall out of the scope of the work of the mainstream NGOs.<sup>74</sup>

Ironically, half of the women who don't participate in NGO programmes reported that their poor economic condition, which attracts them to NGO poverty alleviation programmes, prevents their joining NGO activities. The NGOs exclude the rural marginalised sections from their programmes because micro-credit experts consider them not worthy of credit.



The NGOs' non-formal education programmes have more impact on the children surveyed in the study. Almost 15 percent of the children in these vulnerable households attend the non-formal schooling offered by NGOs. This participation presents an opportunity for NGOs to work more closely with the children of the vulnerable households.<sup>75</sup>

### 5.5. The Socio-Economic Context of Vulnerability

The household survey findings clearly indicate that the sample vulnerable families are hardcore poor with poor access to education, organisation and options regarding occupation. When it comes to trafficking, these households generate a strong push factor upon the children and make them more vulnerable to trafficking. However, the household survey also looked into knowledge, attitude, perception and practice of the members of these households, as the socio-economic factors alone do not constitute the entire risk spectrum.

### 5.6. Sub-conclusions

A variety of factors contribute to children's vulnerability to trafficking. Extreme poverty is a key factor, exposing them to the risks of early employment and the associated risks of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. The majority of vulnerable families desire education for their children yet more than half of the surveyed children are unable to complete the level of education desired or even to attend school at all. Lack of education limits occupational opportunities, which in turn makes it difficult to break the cycle of poverty. While a small segment of children from vulnerable families are able to participate in NGO-sponsored educational programs, most vulnerable families do not have access to social services and are left out of the NGO 'safety net'. Rural marginalised families represent an important window of opportunity for NGOs whose mission is to work to alleviate poverty and/or to promote access to education.

<sup>67</sup> Discussed in detail in section 2.1.2

<sup>68</sup> Rahman, H. Zillur; Bangladesh Dynamics of Rural Poverty, Land, Vol:6, No:4, Page:6, Dhaka, 1999

<sup>69</sup> Rahman, H. Zillur; Bangladesh Dynamics of Rural Poverty, Land, Vol:6, No:4, Page:6, Dhaka, 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Rahman, H. Zillur; Bangladesh Dynamics of Rural Poverty, Land, Vol:6, No:4, Page:6, Dhaka, 1999.

<sup>71</sup> It has been estimated from the findings that 95 percent of the surveyed vulnerable families fall into the 'extreme poor' category and 23 percent of the rural households in general fall into that economic category.

<sup>72</sup> During FGDs women participants from the Teknaf described their communities to be dominated by religious control

<sup>73</sup> FGDs with community members and interviews with key informants (teachers, elected representatives, etc.)

<sup>74</sup> This issue was discussed at the Preliminary Sharing Workshop, Dhaka, 7 November 2001. The participants identified that there is a need to introduce separate programs which would directly reach the children.

<sup>75</sup> Table 5.6 provides detailed information.

## Knowledge, Perceptions, and Practices Among Vulnerable Households

This chapter presents the household survey's findings concerning the knowledge, perceptions, and practices of vulnerable households in relation to child trafficking. It also compares this information with the findings generated through discussions with the child survivors of trafficking (as presented in Chapter 3) in order to identify possible linkages between the existing practices of these households and the risk of trafficking.

The study findings indicate that surveyed household members are not completely unaware of the risk of trafficking associated with child mobility, child labour, and child marriage. In some cases (*e.g.* early marriage) their knowledge is dormant, while in others (*e.g.* safety of girls in the family) existing perceptions are not validated by fact.

Information about missing and trafficked children among the surveyed families is presented in order to illustrate the actual state of vulnerability as well as the rescue and rehabilitation responses of the families. The study emphasises that vulnerability of the children is determined not only by the economic status of their households, but also by the beliefs, perceptions, and practices of family members.

### 6.1. Child Mobility: Perception and Practice

The survey reveals that the perceptions and practices of the parents and children regarding mobility, especially safety concerns, do not match. In other words, the measures taken to protect the children are perceived as safe but are not necessarily safe for the children.

#### 6.1.1. Perceptions about Child Mobility

The majority of the parents identified 10 years as an appropriate age for an unaccompanied child to leave home for short distance travel outside the village (61 percent in the case of boys and 54 percent in the case of girls). When the question of work related mobility was introduced, the acceptable age for leaving home changed. About half the parents considered their children as grown enough to leave home for work at age 12 (51 percent for boys and 46 percent for girls). Thirty percent of the parents of girls felt 13 to 15 years old is an acceptable age, while 24 percent felt it was better if girls did not leave until after the age of 15.

While other respondents found 10 years to be an appropriate age for boys to leave home, only 17 percent of the 5 to 9-year-old boys agreed. Girls in the same age group are more prepared to leave home

Table 6.1

**Safe Escorts for Children Within the Country**

| RESPONSE   | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |            |           |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|--|-----------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
|  | Parents                     |            | Children  |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|  | Mother                      | Father     | 5 - 9     |           | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total      |            |            |
|  |                             | Boy        | Girl      | Boy       | Girl      | Boy        | Girl      | Boy       | Girl       | Total      |            |
| A. With whom do you feel secure to send a girl for work? |                             |            |           |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
| Mother   | 55.4                        | 55.3       | 58.3      | 81.0      | 58.4      | 63.7       | 60.7      | 56.1      | 59.2       | 62.8       | 61.6       |
| Father   | 72.3                        | 81.6       | 41.7      | 90.5      | 73.0      | 72.1       | 67.9      | 82.9      | 68.8       | 76.5       | 73.8       |
| Brother  | 47.5                        | 44.0       | 41.7      | 38.1      | 51.7      | 45.3       | 42.9      | 42.7      | 47.8       | 44.0       | 45.3       |
| Sister   | 10.3                        | 9.6        | -         | 9.5       | 13.5      | 3.2        | 14.3      | 8.2       | 12.7       | 11.6       | 12.0       |
| Husband  | 10.3                        | 10.3       | 16.7      | 4.8       | 3.4       | 4.7        | 8.9       | 7.3       | 6.4        | 5.5        | 5.8        |
| Close relative   | 25.9                        | 26.6       | 33.4      | 4.8       | 27        | 22.1       | 19.6      | 17.1      | 24.8       | 19.5       | 21.3       |
| Friends/<br>Neighbour                                    | 2.9                         | 3.2        | 8.3       | -         | 2.2       | 3.7        | 5.4       | 2.4       | 3.8        | 3.1        | 3.3        |
| None   | 0.7                         | -          | -         | -         | 1.1       | 0.5        | -         | 1.2       | 0.6        | 0.7        | 0.7        |
| <b>N =</b>   | <b>448</b>                  | <b>282</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>293</b> | <b>450</b> |
| A. With whom do you feel secure to send a boy for work?  |                             |            |           |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
| Mother   | 42.2                        | 42.4       | 58.3      | 61.9      | 53.9      | 45.3       | 33.9      | 46.3      | 47.1       | 46.8       | 46.9       |
| Father   | 71.8                        | 75.5       | 50.0      | 81.0      | 71.9      | 73.2       | 76.8      | 72.0      | 72.0       | 73.4       | 72.9       |
| Brother  | 46.2                        | 45.0       | 8.3       | 42.9      | 51.7      | 42.6       | 41.1      | 51.2      | 44.6       | 45.1       | 44.9       |
| Sister   | 4.7                         | 5.7        | -         | 9.5       | 10.1      | 8.4        | 1.8       | 6.1       | 6.4        | 7.8        | 7.3        |
| Close relative   | 37.8                        | 36.9       | 41.7      | 4.8       | 30.4      | 28.5       | 21.4      | 25.6      | 28         | 26         | 26.7       |
| Friends/<br>Neighbour                                    | 14.9                        | 18.4       | 25.0      | 14.3      | 10.1      | 11.1       | 17.9      | 7.3       | 14.0       | 10.2       | 11.6       |
| None   | -                           | -          | -         | -         | 2.2       | 0.5        | -         | 1.2       | 1.2        | 0.7        | 1.1        |
| <b>N =</b>   | <b>4450</b>                 | <b>282</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>293</b> | <b>450</b> |

than their male counterparts—thirty-three percent felt that ten is an appropriate age for a girl to leave home for work. This response may arise from their low status in the family, which in the context of extreme poverty can work as a strong push factor, or they may simply be too young to understand fully the implications of their answers.

In general, the members of the surveyed vulnerable households accept work-related migration of older children as a necessary survival strategy and feel that children should be provided with escorts for safety reasons. Both parents and children identified parents as the safest escorts within the country (Table 6.1), and all groups except 5 to 9-year-old-boys identified the father as a more able security provider than the mother. After fathers and mothers, brothers were

mentioned as safe escorts. Only 21.3 percent of respondents cited close relatives.

With respect to safe escorts for children travelling across borders (Table 6.2), a similar pattern emerged. However, fathers and brothers, the predominant male figures of the family, are assigned greater importance for foreign travel. Friends and neighbours are perceived as safer escorts for boys travelling abroad than for girls, indicating the safety concerns for boys are underestimated.

Chapter 3<sup>76</sup> notes that relatives recruited 17 percent of trafficked children (14 percent of girls and 25 percent of boys) and neighbours recruited eight percent. The perception that relatives and neighbours are safe escorts for children in fact exposes children to the risks of trafficking.

Table 6.2

**Safe Escorts of Children Abroad**

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (PERCENTAGE) |            |           |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Parents                              |            | Children  |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|   | Mother                               | Father     | 5 - 9     |           | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total      |            |            |
|   |                                      | Boy        | Girl      | Boy       | Girl      | Boy        | Girl      | Boy       | Girl       | Total      |            |
| A. With whom do you feel secure to send girls for work? |                                      |            |           |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
| Mother  | 32.4                                 | 21.6       | 50.0      | 52.4      | 36.0      | 38.4       | 35.7      | 36.6      | 36.9       | 38.9       | 38.2       |
| Father  | 63.1                                 | 64.2       | 58.3      | 61.9      | 70.8      | 61.6       | 66.1      | 64.6      | 68.2       | 62.5       | 64.4       |
| Brother   | 43.6                                 | 45.0       | 25.0      | 33.3      | 58.4      | 37.9       | 41.1      | 46.3      | 49.7       | 39.9       | 43.3       |
| Sister  | 7.1                                  | 7.8        | -         | 9.5       | 12.4      | 11.1       | 5.4       | 6.1       | 8.9        | 9.6        | 9.3        |
| Husband   | 20.7                                 | 22.3       | 8.3       | 19.0      | 21.3      | 15.9       | 25.0      | 23.2      | 21.7       | 17.7       | 19.1       |
| Close relative  | 37.3                                 | 46.0       | 33.3      | 32.3      | 28.1      | 28.9       | 17.8      | 20.8      | 24.9       | 27         | 26.2       |
| Friends/<br>Neighbour                                   | 8.4                                  | 7.1        | 25.0      | 9.5       | 2.2       | 2.1        | 1.8       | 4.9       | 3.8        | 3.4        | 3.6        |
| None  | 0.9                                  | 4.3        | -         | -         | 1.1       | 2.1        | 1.8       | 2.4       | 1.3        | 2.0        | 1.8        |
| <b>N =</b>  | <b>450</b>                           | <b>282</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>293</b> | <b>450</b> |
| A. With whom do you feel secure to send boys for work?  |                                      |            |           |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
| Mother  | 19.8                                 | 13.8       | 50.0      | 19.0      | 23.6      | 23.2       | 16.1      | 26.8      | 22.9       | 23.9       | 23.6       |
| Father  | 58.4                                 | 63.5       | 66.7      | 61.9      | 51.7      | 59.5       | 67.9      | 67.1      | 58.6       | 61.8       | 60.7       |
| Brother   | 46.7                                 | 47.2       | 16.7      | 33.3      | 50.6      | 42.1       | 23.1      | 45.1      | 41.4       | 42.3       | 42.0       |
| Sister  | 2.9                                  | 2.1        | -         | 4.8       | 5.6       | 5.3        | 1.8       | 7.3       | 3.8        | 5.3        | 5.1        |
| Close relative  | 66.9                                 | 67.7       | 33.4      | 57.1      | 70.8      | 50         | 50        | 60.9      | 60.5       | 53.6       | 28.0       |
| Friends/<br>Neighbour                                   | 20.4                                 | 24.5       | 41.7      | 28.6      | 19.1      | 18.4       | 16.1      | 8.5       | 19.7       | 16.4       | 17.6       |
| None  | 0.4                                  | 2.5        | -         | 4.5       | 4.5       | 0.5        | 1.8       | 2.4       | 3.2        | 1.4        | 2.7        |
| <b>N =</b>  | <b>450</b>                           | <b>282</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>293</b> | <b>450</b> |

Child respondents of both sexes identified girls as being much more vulnerable during movement. They cited a range of risks that await a girl outside the home environment. These include the risk of trafficking (30 percent), the risk of sexual abuse and rape (eight percent), and fear of abuse or assault by *mastans* (nine percent). Fifteen percent of the children identified the risk of scandal as a major threat. This indicates that a potential threat is no less important than the actual threat of abuse and hazards. In rural areas of Bangladesh the impact of a scandal can affect the life of a girl in many ways. It can lead to social stigmatisation, alienation, and self-imposed restrictions on a girl's ability to move around freely. A scandal can decrease a girl's marriage prospects, which may, in turn, lead to higher dowry demands or a rushed marriage. Any of these impacts can push a girl into the 'extremely vulnerable' space.<sup>77</sup>

Equally noteworthy is the fact that almost one quarter of the respondent children (25 percent of girls and 24 percent of boys) reported that they observed no risks related to a girl's mobility.

### 6.1.2. Child Mobility Practices

Through in-depth interviews and FGDs with adolescent girls from vulnerable families, the study found that the actual mobility of girls and boys varies across age, social strata, purpose, and other factors:

- Age of the girl: in general, the younger a girl is in mobility, the safer she is thought to be. The reverse is the case for boys. This is because sexual and abuse and scandal are the major threats to girls.
- Social Status: girls from relatively well off households are thought to be safer in

Table 6.3

**Risks Children Perceive in the Movement of Girls**

| RESPONSE                  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
|                           | 5 - 9                       |           | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total      |            | Total      |
| A. Type of Risk Perceived | Boys                        | Girls     | Boys      | Girls      | Boys      | Girls     | Boys       | Girls      |            |
| Can be trafficked         | 25                          | 4.8       | 19.3      | 37.9       | 35.7      | 26.8      | 25.6       | 32.4       | 30.1       |
| Eve teasing               | -                           | -         | 4.5       | 4.2        | 7.1       | 8.5       | 5.1        | 5.1        | 5.1        |
| Fear from <i>mastans</i>  | -                           | 4.8       | 17.0      | 5.8        | 8.9       | 11.0      | 12.8       | 7.2        | 9.1        |
| Girl can be raped         | -                           | -         | 1.1       | 3.7        | 1.8       | 9.8       | 1.3        | 5.1        | 3.8        |
| Can be sexually abused    | -                           | 4.8       | 2.3       | 4.1        | 7.1       | 7.3       | 3.8        | 3.8        | 3.8        |
| No risk                   | 25.0                        | 33.3      | 27.2      | 26.9       | 17.9      | 19.6      | 23.7       | 25.3       | 24.7       |
| Don't know                | -                           | 33.3      | 14.8      | 14.7       | 8.9       | 18.3      | 11.5       | 16.1       | 11.8       |
| Can be scandalised        | 50                          | 13.8      | 17        | 6.9        | 16.1      | 9.8       | 19.2       | 8.8        | 15.8       |
| <b>N =</b>                | <b>12</b>                   | <b>21</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>293</b> | <b>450</b> |

mobility because their influential human networks offer better protection. For girls from extreme and moderate poor households, the vulnerability during movement is comparatively higher.

- Nature of mobility: although girls' mobility is comparatively more restricted than that of boys of the same age group, a girl can be permanently relocated at an earlier age because of marriage or employment.<sup>78</sup>

A girl's world appears to be much more socially restricted than a boy's yet, ironically, it is far less 'safe'. Within the village, and even as far as the *thana* headquarters, the mobility of girls and boys is much the same (for education purposes girls may even visit the *thana* headquarters more frequently). But boys are more mobile when moving longer distances, such as up to the District town. The study identifies that within the same range (1-5 miles) boys are much more mobile (22.3 percent) than girls (seven percent).<sup>79</sup>

A critical finding of the household survey is that a half of the child respondents (43 percent girls and 66 percent boys) have revealed a desire to leave home in search of better economic

opportunities. This may not be surprising, but it is critical because it clearly shows broad acceptance of migration as a viable survival strategy among vulnerable children. The children<sup>80</sup> explain this desire in a framework of financial necessity—they are forced to look outward for opportunities, as there is little hope at home. Poverty, abuse, insecurity, and family disputes blend into a push mechanism which influences a child to underestimate or play down the risks involved with leaving one's home.<sup>81</sup>

It is also important to note that although boys outnumber girls in all age groups in expressing consent to migration, a large portion of girls of all ages (52 percent of the 5-9, 37 percent of 10-14, and 56 percent of the 15-18 age group) have expressed the same intention. (Table 6.4) A comparison of these figures with the figures concerning parents' perceptions of the appropriate age for a child to migrate for work indicates that

During in-depth interviews children explained that a child may choose to play down the risk factors if s/he is self-motivated or influenced by a peer. The sense of safety was also reported to be dependent on the age and experience of a child. But as one girl reflected, "If someone encounters bad experience, a nearby place may seem an ocean away."

Table 6.4

**Children's Willingness to Leave Home**

| RESPONSE<br>Do you want to leave home for a better opportunity? | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|---|------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | 5 - 9                  |           | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total      |            | Total      |
|   | Boys                   | Girls     | Boys      | Girls      | Boys      | Girls     | Boys       | Girls      |            |
| Yes   | 50.0                   | 52.4      | 66.3      | 36.8       | 69.6      | 56.1      | 66.2       | 43.3       | 51.3       |
| No  | 50.0                   | 47.6      | 33.7      | 63.2       | 30.4      | 43.9      | 33.1       | 56.7       | 48.7       |
| <b>N =</b>  | <b>12</b>              | <b>21</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>190</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>82</b> | <b>157</b> | <b>293</b> | <b>450</b> |

children's willingness to leave matches parents' preparedness to approve such moves in a large number of cases. Fifty-three percent of mothers and 40 percent of fathers consent to migration for 12-year-old boys. Migration approval for 12-year-old-girls comes from 51 percent of the mothers and 36 percent of the fathers. Thus, large portions of the vulnerable household children are 'ready' to leave home with their parents' consent.

Early marriage is the socially accepted way for girls to leave home, but for boys it is mostly work-related migration that takes them away. In dysfunctional families a child may even choose to run away or take a risky option to leave home. From the perspective of children's vulnerability to trafficking, this is a crucial element. The findings regarding existence of two-way push factor (*i.e.* children's willingness to migrate and parents acceptance of such migration) can be explained by<sup>82</sup>:

- Economic hardship experienced in the 'extreme poor' and 'moderate poor' households triggers survival pressures
- Social acceptance of child labour
- Psychological pressure on a child to lessen the family's burden
- Pressure on girls to marry

These factors may motivate a child to leave home on his or her own. Within this context, a child further exposed to physical or sexual abuse may

even run away. The findings regarding child survivors of trafficking in Chapter 4 reveal that a good portion of the trafficked children left their homes to avoid poverty (31 percent), physical abuse (17 percent), or sexual abuse (4.4 percent) at home. (Chart 6.1)<sup>83</sup>

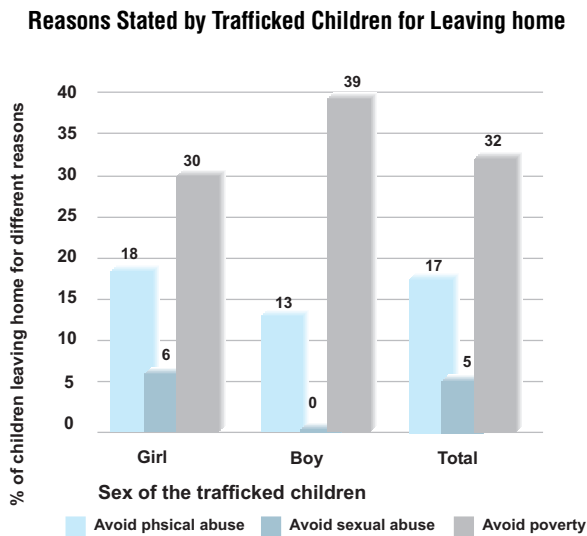
As the above chart displays, the willingness of both children and parents of the vulnerable households can push the children into situations that can lead to a trafficked state.

## 6.2. Child Labour, Child Migration and the Linkages to Trafficking in Children

The household survey collected information about working children from the parents and children in each of the surveyed households. This information included the current ages of working children, their ages when they began earning wages, place of work, and the process of getting a job. The data from the different sources varied with respect to the prevalence of child labour: the fathers reported only 57 cases of child labour while the mothers reported 206. Upon scrutiny the information provided by the mothers was found to be much more reliable than that provided by the fathers.

Interestingly, only in the youngest age group (5-9 years) do girls participate in wage labour (19 percent) more often than boys (8 percent). In the other two age groups working boys outnumber working girls (see Table 6.5). This can

Chart 6.1  
**Trafficked Children’s Reasons for Leaving Home**



be explained by the fact that as a girl gets older her mobility, compared to that of a boy, becomes more restricted. So for a girl in the 5- to 9-year-old age group it is considered ‘safe’ to work, while at that age a boy may be sent to school.<sup>84</sup> At the same time, given the context of Bangladesh, where women’s mobility is generally restricted by social norms or by insecurity, the study finds it significant that more than a third (35.4 percent) of 15- to 18-year-old girls from vulnerable families work outside their homes.

The household survey (Table 6.5) also reveals that a third of all girls from vulnerable families earn wages as domestic servants. One quarter of the girls in the 5-9 age group work in *bidi* factories, while another quarter of this group work in the grocery business. Overall, boys are most commonly employed as day labourers (28.1 percent), agricultural workers (21.3 percent) or domestic servants (19.1 percent). More than half of the boys (58.5 percent) and almost a third (31.4 percent) of the girls work as paid day labourers of one sort or another.

Forty-three percent of the children in the survey do not work at present. Table 6.6 shows that one fifth (19.7 percent) of these say they don’t need to work. Ten percent stated that they were students, and nearly one-third (30 percent) were too young to work. However, 29 percent of the children said they were unemployed, *i.e.* willing and able to work but unable to find employment. Interestingly, a higher proportion of the girls in the oldest group of children considered themselves unemployed, while in the younger age groups more boys than girls considered themselves unemployed. So while 79 percent of girls from vulnerable families are not employed at present, almost one third of them are looking for work.

This outward-looking mentality is a push factor contributing to their increased vulnerability to trafficking. This information suggests that it is not only working children, and girls in particular, who are exposed to trafficking risks—children who are looking for work should also be seen as vulnerable.<sup>86</sup>

The effect of gender on work outside the home is demonstrated by the fact that 5.3 percent of mothers and almost eight percent of girls report they cannot work outside because of excessive workloads at home. Female members of households are generally expected to perform all household chores (*e.g.* cooking, washing, childcare) even when they work outside their homes.

The data presented in Table 6.7 tends to support the previously mentioned social norms that consider children around the age of 12 to be ready for work.

As is the case in all South Asian countries (and many others throughout the world), children do

Table 6.5

**Occupations of Working Children**

| RESPONSE                 | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |       |         |       |         |       |       |       |       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                          | 5 - 9                       |       | 10 - 14 |       | 15 - 18 |       | Total |       | Total |
| Type of Work             | Boys                        | Girls | Boys    | Girls | Boys    | Girls | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| Domestic servant         | -                           | 50.0  | 17.8    | 39.3  | 22.1    | 24.1  | 19.1  | 32.8  | 24.7  |
| Earth work <sup>85</sup> | -                           | -     | 4.4     | -     | 2.3     | -     | 3.4   | -     | 2.0   |
| Rice husking             | -                           | -     | -       | -     | 8.7     | -     | 4.4   | -     | 2.7   |
| Border trading           | -                           | -     | 4.4     | -     | -       | -     | 2.2   | -     | 1.3   |
| Handicraft production    | -                           | -     | -       | 21.4  | -       | 48.3  | -     | 32.8  | 13.3  |
| <i>Bidi</i> making       | -                           | 25.0  | -       | 14.3  | -       | 6.9   | -     | 11.5  | 4.7   |
| Grocery business         | -                           | 25.0  | 3.2     | -     | 11.6    | -     | 13.5  | 1.6   | 8.7   |
| Agricultural labour      | 100.0                       | -     | 5.0     | 10.7  | 16.3    | 10.3  | 21.3  | 9.8   | 16.7  |
| Day labour               | -                           | -     | 6.3     | 14.3  | 25.6    | 10.3  | 28.1  | 10.1  | 21.3  |
| Rickshaw or van puller   | -                           | -     | 1.4     | -     | 11.6    | -     | 9.1   | -     | 5.3   |

of course work within the family; this is true both for girls and boys. Girls usually assist their mothers with household chores, which is a way to acquire the homemaker skills needed in a wife. Boys often help their fathers in the fields. For agricultural workers and farmers this is the traditional way of handing down knowledge and skills to the next generation.

Of particular importance here, however, is that the study reveals that the children from vulnerable households begin wage labour at quite a young age. Two-thirds of the working boys and 59 percent of the working girls join the labour force by the time they are 12 years old, and

almost all of the present child workers began their careers before they became 15 years old.

As detailed in Table 6.8 the majority of the surveyed children work in their villages and are thus in the vicinity of parental guidance. However, children also work in neighbouring villages, *thana* headquarters, district towns, and even abroad (only one case was found through the household survey, but FGDs revealed a trend in Satkhira and Nowabgaj, in particular, of engaging children to work in India).

During FGDs with parents from vulnerable households, it was mentioned that those who

Table 6.6

**Children's Reasons for Not Working**

| RESPONSE                      | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENT (%) |           |           |            |           |           |           |            |            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
|                               | 5 - 9                      |           | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total     |            | Total      |
| Reasons for not working       | Boys                       | Girls     | Boys      | Girls      | Boys      | Girls     | Boys      | Girls      | Total      |
| Work not needed               | 18.2                       | -         | 18.2      | 21.6       | 7.7       | 24.5      | 16.2      | 20.7       | 19.7       |
| Unavailability of work        | 36.4                       | 17.6      | 18.2      | 29.0       | 46.2      | 37.7      | 26.5      | 30.2       | 29.3       |
| Need to go far                | -                          | 5.9       | 4.5       | 1.9        | 7.7       | 7.5       | 4.4       | 3.4        | 3.7        |
| Less wage                     | -                          | -         | 2.3       | -          | -         | -         | 1.5       | -          | 0.3        |
| Physical problem              | -                          | -         | 2.3       | 0.6        | -         | 1.9       | 1.5       | 0.9        | 1.0        |
| Too young                     | 45.5                       | 64.7      | 40.9      | 29.6       | 23.1      | 9.4       | 38.2      | 27.6       | 30.0       |
| Students                      | -                          | 11.8      | 13.6      | 9.9        | 15.4      | 5.7       | 11.8      | 9.1        | 9.7        |
| Husband does not allow        | -                          | -         | -         | -          | -         | 5.7       | -         | 2.2        | 1.7        |
| No extra time to work outside | -                          | -         | -         | 6.2        | -         | 7.5       | -         | 6.9        | 5.3        |
| <b>N =</b>                    | <b>11</b>                  | <b>17</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>162</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>53</b> | <b>68</b> | <b>232</b> | <b>300</b> |



migrated to the cities and towns for work were usually engaged in domestic work (mostly adolescent girls, but young boys as well), day labour (mainly adolescent boys) and work in garments factories.

A large percentage of boys (44 percent) reportedly arrange for employment through their own initiative. However, for girls, employment is arranged through neighbours (36 percent) and the initiatives of parents (23 percent) or relatives (20 percent). This employment process reveals a risk factor when the recruitment features of trafficked children are taken into account. In Chapter 4 it was noted that, in general for the interviewed trafficked children, pimps (52 percent), relatives (17 percent) and neighbours (8 percent) appeared as the top three recruiting

Table 6.7  
Ages at which Children Start Work

| RESPONSE<br>Age of Starting<br>Work | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |      |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|
|                                     | Boy                     | Girl |
|                                     | (140)                   | (66) |
| < 10 years                          | 15.7                    | 13.6 |
| 10 - 12 years                       | 59.3                    | 45.5 |
| 13 - 15 years                       | 22.1                    | 39.4 |
| 16 and above                        | 2.9                     | 1.5  |

agents. Therefore, the children who arrange employment through relatives (three percent of boys and 11 percent of girls) and neighbours (36 percent of girls and 21 percent of boys) are exposing themselves to trafficking risks.

According to the parents and the children interviewed, a family looks at various factors when considering a job proposal for a child.

Table 6.9 displays that the parents of girls (44 percent of mothers and 60 percent of fathers) look

Table 6.8  
Workplaces of Child Workers

| RESPONSE<br>Place of Work | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |      |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------|
|                           | Boy                     | Girl |
| Own village               | 77.9                    | 81.8 |
| Neighbour village         | 11.4                    | 6.1  |
| Thana headquarters        | 3.6                     | 1.5  |
| District town             | -                       | 3.0  |
| Abroad                    | 0.7                     | -    |
| Other                     | 2.8                     | 7.6  |
| N=                        | 140                     | 66   |

for sewing work so that the girls may work at home with parental guidance. However, for the boys, security is not the major concern; both mothers (46 percent) and fathers (43 percent) consider the prospect of reduction of family poverty through wage labour of the boys. At the same time, some parents of girls (20 percent) and boys (14 percent) don't take any special factors into consideration when assessing job proposals for their children. This reveals that at least a fifth of the vulnerable households are so economically hard-pressed that they cannot afford to consider safety concerns of their children—for them child employment is an essential component of family survival. These children do not, therefore, have access to any safety measures in joining wage labour and are highly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitative employment.

| DISTRICT | LOCATION OF WORK IN INDIA   |
|----------|-----------------------------|
| Satkhira | Work in brick field         |
| Nowabgaj | Work in <i>bidi</i> factory |

The study identifies (Tables 6.10 and 6.11) that the parents and children are aware, to a great extent, of the risks associated with work-related migration of children. Compared with the interviewed fathers, the mothers of the surveyed households expressed greater concern about almost all the risks (such as abuse, overwork, and job place hazards), other than that of trafficking. Through in-depth interviews and focus group

Table 6.9

**Factors considered before Employing Children Outside the Home**

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |            |            |            |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Mother                      |            | Father     |            |
|   | Boy (140)                   | Girl (66)  | Boy (42)   | Girl (15)  |
| Factors Considered when assessing employment offers for a child |                             |            |            |            |
| Own village   | 29.3                        | -          | 19.1       | -          |
| Nothing considered  | 14.3                        | 19.7       | 14.3       | 20.0       |
| Work with mother or father                                      | 6.4                         | -          | 7.1        | -          |
| Reduction of family poverty                                     | 46.4                        | -          | 42.9       | -          |
| Other   | 3.6                         | 3.6        | 4.8        | 6.7        |
| If the employer is good   | -                           | 3.0        | 12.0       | 6.7        |
| Sewing in home  | -                           | 44.0       | -          | 60.0       |
| Future prospects  | -                           | 6.1        | -          | 6.7        |
| Size of family at location where the child will work            | -                           | 13.6       | -          | -          |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>100</b>                  | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

discussions, it has been observed that mothers tend to underestimate the risk of trafficking for boys. However, in areas where actual incidents of trafficking in boys have taken place, this perception has drastically altered.

In the case of options for boys to work abroad, both the parents and children have identified high risks of death, going missing, trafficking and abuse. They also identified difficulties in communication as a major obstacle. Both mothers and girls have been found to worry comparatively more about trafficking in boys during cross-country migration.

Although mentioned by a smaller number of participants during FGD sessions, both parents and children expressed their apprehensions about legal harassment in work related child migration. They fear that a boy may be imprisoned in another country, indicating a presumption of illegal migration and associated uncertainties.

In the face of these identified risk factors, neither the parents nor the children could come up with any viable strategy of protection, indicating a high degree of powerlessness. They found the most viable option to be stopping the migration.

The other options include information collection regarding the prospective employer and accessing the support of the human safety net (such as relatives or neighbours).

The risks of physical and sexual abuse constitute the chief concerns in the case of work related migration of girls. In the case of the migration option to other countries, trafficking was named (42 percent of mothers, 49 percent of fathers, 52 percent of girls, and 49 percent of boys) as the single largest risk for a girl. The risks of being killed (from abuse or sale for body organs) and communication failure were also mentioned. In the case of girls, once again both parents and girls failed to come up with any feasible strategies to ensure the safety of a migrant girl. The viable options mentioned here also indicated ending the migratory trend and heavy dependence on the informal human safety net of parents and relatives (Table 6.11).

In Shibganj the mothers of working children have expressed grave concerns about the risk of trafficking in children. After some local boys were trafficked to India while on the way to Dubai, they realised that in any form of child migration, even of boys, there is a high risk of trafficking.<sup>87</sup>

Table 6.10

**Concerns about Work-related Migration of Boys**

| RESPONSE   | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |        |       |       |       |
|--|-----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | Children                    |        |       |       |       |
|  | Mother                      | Father | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| A. Risk perceived for a boy working outside the village                                  | (450)                       | (282)  | (157) | (293) |       |
| Type of Risk   |                             |        |       |       | (46)  |
| Can be abused  | 43.8                        | 40.7   | 23.5  | 48.3  | 39.1  |
| Can be over worked   | 8.3                         | 3.7    | 5.9   | -     | 2.2   |
| Can be in hazardous condition  | 31.3                        | 3.7    | 35.3  | 17.2  | 23.9  |
| Can be sold/ trafficked  | 25.0                        | 55.6   | 33.3  | 48.3  | 43.5  |
| Can be used as camel jockey  | -                           | 3.7    | -     | -     | -     |
| D. Percentage of respondents perceiving risks in cross-border migration of boys for work | (450)                       | (282)  | (157) | (293) | (450) |
| Type of Risk Perceived   |                             |        |       |       | (164) |
| Can be killed  | 17.4                        | 26.1   | 19.7  | 26.5  | 23.8  |
| Can be lost  | 19.9                        | 26.1   | 24.2  | 22.4  | 23.2  |
| Can be trafficked  | 31.1                        | 23.5   | 25.8  | 38.8  | 33.5  |
| Can be arrested  | 3.1                         | 3.4    | 6.1   | 4.1   | 4.9   |
| Organs can be sold (kidney/eyes etc.)  | 5.0                         | 2.5    | -     | -     | -     |
| Can be physically abused   | 3.1                         | -      | -     | -     | -     |
| Can be sexually abused   | 18.6                        | 10.1   | 19.7  | 8.2   | 12.8  |
| Difficult to communicate   | 8.4                         | 14.3   | 10.6  | 4.1   | 6.7   |
| Can be associated with the bad people  | 6.2                         | 6.7    | -     | -     | -     |
| Can be given less wage compared to work load   | 0.6                         | 2.5    | -     | -     | -     |
| May not return   | 1.9                         | -      | 1.5   | 5.1   | 3.7   |
| Can be half-fed  | 0.6                         | -      | 1.5   | -     | 0.6   |
| Can be cheated   | 1.2                         | 3.4    | 1.5   | 5.1   | 3.7   |
| Don't know   | -                           | 0.8    | 1.5   | 3.0   | 2.4   |

Table 6.13 presents data reflecting that in the household survey, a high proportion of working children (83 percent of girls, 87 percent of boys) reported that they perceive their present workplace to be safe. It should be noted that the children interviewed were all working in or near their villages. Nevertheless, even in these preferred work locations, 16 percent of the children expressed

While the girls identify high risks of abuse and trafficking in work-related migration of boys, the boys themselves underestimate those risks. As males they want to believe that they are 'in control'—this sense of control is more often than not an element of perceived masculinity rather than a sense acquired through experience or information

fear of being physically or sexually abused, killed, going missing, and so on. They fear the employers, colleagues, and strangers.

These findings require our further attention as they reflect the helplessness of the working children in the face of different types of perceived perils in the work place. It furthermore shows that there is no decision-making role for children concerning employment on the one hand, and there is a lack of protection against wage labour associated risks to the children on the other hand. This again constitutes another factor heightening the risk of trafficking among the surveyed child population.

Table 6.11

**Concerns about Work-related Migration of Girls**

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (PERCENTAGE) |               |               |               |               |
|---|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|   | Children                             |               |               |               |               |
|   | Mother                               | Father        | Boys          | Girls         | Total         |
| A. Percentage of respondents perceiving risk for a girl working outside the village | (450)<br>39.3                        | (282)<br>34.4 | (157)<br>37.6 | (293)<br>37.5 | (450)<br>37.6 |
| Type of Risk  | (178)(97)                            | (60)          | (109)         | (169)         |               |
| Can be tortured/ abused physically/ mentally  | 16.9                                 | 20.6          | 20.0          | 16.5          | 17.8          |
| Can be sexually abused  | 44.9                                 | 35.1          | 28.3          | 19.3          | 22.5          |
| Will not able to come home alone  | 1.7                                  | 1.0           | 3.3           | 1.8           | 2.4           |
| Can be trafficked/ sold   | 5.1                                  | 11.3          | 13.3          | 10.1          | 11.2          |
| Villagers can spread scandal  | 17.4                                 | 20.6          | 15.0          | 21.1          | 18.9          |
| Can be lost   | 5.6                                  | 9.3           | 10.0          | 3.7           | 5.9           |
| Can be trapped by bad people  | 19.7                                 | 12.4          | 18.3          | 32.1          | 27.2          |
| Don't know  | 0.6                                  | 2.1           | 1.7           | 3.7           | 3.0           |
| Percentage of respondents perceiving risk associated with a girl working abroad     | (450)<br>74.9                        | (282)<br>74.5 | (157)<br>72.6 | (293)<br>69.3 | (450)<br>70.4 |
| Type of Risk Perceived  | (337)                                | (210)         | (114)         | (203)         | (317)         |
| Can be physically abused  | 11.9                                 | 10.5          | 7.9           | 8.4           | 8.2           |
| Can be sexually abused  | 43.9                                 | 38.1          | 24.6          | 30.7          | 28.4          |
| Can be trafficked/ lost   | 41.5                                 | 49.0          | 51.8          | 49.0          | 49.9          |
| Can be killed (abuse/organ sell)  | 8.9                                  | 5.7           | 4.4           | 11.4          | 8.8           |
| Difficult to visit and maintain communication                                       | 9.8                                  | 11.0          | 7.9           | 6.9           | 7.3           |
| Job is not certain  | 2.7                                  | 1.4           | 2.6           | 2.0           | 2.2           |
| Don't know  | 1.5                                  | 1.9           | 6.1           | 3.0           | 4.1           |
| Can be forced to work as maid   | 0.6                                  | -             | -             | 1.0           | 0.6           |
| People can spread scandal   | -                                    | 2.4           | 0.9           | 0.5           | 0.6           |

### 6.3. Early Marriage, Migration and Dowry: Girls' Vulnerability to Trafficking

The interviewed child survivors (both rescued and still not rescued trafficked girls and boys) mentioned early marriage (4.4 percent) as one means of recruitment. Because of social pressure on the girls for marriage and dowry pressures on the families, traffickers recruit girls with the promise of marriage. The study looked into the early marriage scenario in the surveyed households as an indicator of vulnerability of the girls to trafficking.

In the three study areas, 20 percent of the mothers reported that at least one case of early marriage of a daughter has taken place in each of their respective households. In other words almost

29 percent<sup>88</sup> of the sample girls between 10 and 18 years of age were married early. This indicates that early marriage is a predominant phenomenon among the vulnerable rural households. Alarming, the majority of these girls (69.5 percent) were married between the ages of 12 and 15 (Table 6.14).

The study findings show that among the sample trafficking survivors 6.1 percent of the girls of the 15-18 years age group and 4.4 percent of girls of all age groups were trafficked through fake marriages or love affairs.<sup>89</sup> This indicates that the girls of the surveyed households are exposed to not only to the risk of early marriage but also the risk of trafficking through such marriage.

Table 6.12

**Measures Proposed by Parents to Protect Children in Migration**

| RESPONSE   | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |        |       |       |       |
|--|-----------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | Children                    |        |       |       |       |
|  | Mother                      | Father | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| Measures of protection for a migrant boy within country                      | (48)                        | (27)   | (17)  | (29)  | (46)  |
| Should not send outside to work  | 70.8                        | 66.7   | 70.6  | 89.7  | 82.6  |
| Should send to a good place to work  | 22.9                        | 25.9   | 11.8  | 10.3  | 10.9  |
| Should take legal protection   | 4.2                         | 7.4    | -     | -     | -     |
| Don't know   | 2.1                         | -      | 17.6  | -     | 6.5   |
| Measures of protection for a migrant working boy abroad                      | (161)                       | (119)  | (66)  | (98)  | (164) |
| Should not send outside the country  | 72.7                        | 76.5   | 71.2  | 76.5  | 74.4  |
| Should send with a known person  | 11.8                        | 8.4    | 13.6  | 12.2  | 12.4  |
| Should collect information about recruiter                                   | 10.0                        | 9.3    | 9.0   | 6.1   | 7.3   |
| Should inform Chairman/ Member before sending outside                        | 3.7                         | 1.7    | 1.5   | -     | 0.6   |
| Should take legal measures   | 1.2                         | -      | -     | -     | -     |
| Don't know   | 1.9                         | 4.2    | 6.1   | 5.1   | 5.5   |
| Measures of protection for a girl working outside village within the country | (178)                       | (97)   | (60)  | (109) | (169) |
| Would not send outside to work   | 70.2                        | 62.9   | 62.7  | 64.9  | 64.1  |
| Will enquire properly about the recruiter                                    | 19.7                        | 28.9   | 10.2  | 18.9  | 15.9  |
| Will send with known person  | 7.3                         | 5.2    | 11.9  | 9.0   | 10.0  |
| If any arises problem, will take legal measures                              | 1.7                         | 4.1    | 5.1   | 0.9   | 2.4   |
| Don't know   | 2.3                         | 2.0    | 11.9  | 8.1   | 9.4   |
| Measures of protection for a girl working outside country                    | (337)                       | (210)  | (114) | (203) | (317) |
| Will arrange work in the country/ will not send abroad                       | 81.9                        | 84.8   | 79.8  | 82.8  | 81.7  |
| Will enquire properly before sending abroad                                  | 7.7                         | 8.6    | 5.3   | 7.9   | 6.9   |
| Will send with a known person/ relatives                                     | 5.6                         | 4.3    | 4.4   | 4.4   | 4.4   |
| Will inform police (if problem arise)  | 2.1                         | 0.5    | 3.5   | 0.5   | 1.6   |
| Don't know   | 4.2                         | 3.8    | 7.9   | 5.9   | 6.6   |

It is ironic to note (Table 6.15) that both the parents (69 percent of mothers and 68 percent of fathers) and children (78 percent) of the sample households displayed high awareness of the appropriate age for marriage. This knowledge apparently did not influence their decision-making when the question of arranging marriage for their daughters arose.

About three-quarters of the parents and children were found to possess knowledge about problems associated with the early marriage of girls. (Table 6.16)

The household survey reveals a contradiction

between knowledge and practice regarding early marriage. In other words, although the household members of the surveyed families are aware of the risks of early marriage they do not act upon their knowledge. The prevalence of early marriage in the presence of high awareness against such practice can be understood by explanations provided by a section of the respondents. According to them, early marriage has several advantages. Among others, they have reported that early marriage frees parents from anxiety, reduces the burden of the family, provides greater options for better brides, and lowers dowry costs. This becomes even clearer from the account of the parents who consented to early marriages of

Table 6.13

**Children's Sense of Security in Work Outside Home**

| RESPONSE   | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |          |           |           |          |           |           |           |           |
|--|-------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | 5 - 9                   |          | 10 - 14   |           | 15 - 18  |           | Total     |           | Total     |
|  | Boys                    | Girls    | Boys      | Girls     | Boys     | Girls     | Boys      | Girls     |           |
| A. Place of work feeling safe                            |                         |          |           |           |          |           |           |           |           |
| Yes  | 83.3                    | 90.5     | 83.1      | 83.2      | 92.9     | 80.5      | 86.6      | 82.9      | 84.2      |
| No   | 16.7                    | 9.5      | 16.9      | 16.8      | 7.1      | 19.5      | 13.4      | 17.1      | 15.8      |
| N =  | 12                      | 21       | 89        | 190       | 56       | 82        | 157       | 293       | 450       |
| B. What type of risk is associated with working outside? |                         |          |           |           |          |           |           |           |           |
| Employer can torture                                     | -                       | -        | 40.0      | 12.5      | 25.0     | 23.5      | 33.3      | 15.7      | 20.8      |
| Can be pushed into difficult and working condition       | 50.0                    | -        | 26.7      | 12.5      | 25.0     | -         | 28.6      | 7.8       | 13.9      |
| My life can be destroyed                                 | -                       | -        | 13.3      | 12.5      | -        | 17.6      | 9.5       | 13.7      | 12.5      |
| Can be fired without valid reason                        | -                       | -        | 6.7       | 12.5      | 25.0     | 11.8      | 9.5       | 11.8      | 11.9      |
| No risk  | -                       | 100.0    | 13.5      | 28.1      | 25.0     | 47.1      | 14.3      | 37.3      | 30.6      |
| Don't know   | 50                      | -        | 6.7       | 18.8      | -        | 5.9       | 9.5       | 13.7      | 13.9      |
| <b>N =</b>   | <b>2</b>                | <b>1</b> | <b>15</b> | <b>37</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>21</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>71</b> |

their daughters; a large section of these parents reflected that 'the age was perfect' and it helped reduce the family 'burden'.

Table 6.17 reflects that the marriages of the girls in the surveyed households usually (72 percent cases) involved a matchmaker and a dowry payment to the groom. Although the overwhelming majority of parents and children (93 percent of mothers, 94 percent of fathers, 88 percent of girls, and 84 percent of boys) realise that dowry payment and receiving is punishable under law, the practice is extremely widespread.

Table 6.18 presents that the parents and girls have reported that a marriage proposal usually is evaluated based on the economic status of the groom and his family. Family name and 'character' of the groom are also considered. Alarming, however, 10 percent of the mothers and 15 percent of the girls have reported that nothing had been checked before arranging marriage of a girl in their family. This reveals a high vulnerability of a section of the girls of the

surveyed families to the risk of being trafficked through fake marriage.<sup>90</sup>

Moreover, the study reveals that even after all the efforts to learn about the grooms, at least one-tenth of these early marriages led to separation, divorce or widowhood at an early age. Fifty-five percent of these broken marriages had lasted less than one year, 33 percent had lasted one year and only 11 percent had lasted up to two years. All of these girls were between 14 and 18 years old (Table 6.19).

The parents reported that marriages failed for several reasons, including violent behaviour,

Table 6.14

**Age of Marriage in Selected Vulnerable Households**

| RESPONSE           | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Age at Marriage    | Mother*                 |
| Less than 12 years | 7.6                     |
| 12 - 13 years      | 31.5                    |
| 14 - 15 years      | 38.0                    |
| 16 - 17 years      | 19.6                    |
| Above 18+          | 0.7                     |

\* Mothers of 99 surveyed households reported 99 cases of early marriages

Table 6.15

**Vulnerable Household Members' Knowledge of Appropriate Marriage Age**

| RESPONSE                             | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |        |       |       |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                      | Children                |        |       |       |       |
|                                      | Mother                  | Father | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| Appropriate marriage age for females | (450)                   | (450)  | (157) | (293) | (450) |
| < 13 years                           | 10.4                    | 7.4    | 2.5   | 4.1   | 3.6   |
| 14 years                             | 3.8                     | 5.3    | 6.4   | 2.4   | 3.8   |
| 15 years                             | 10.7                    | 11.7   | 12.7  | 8.2   | 9.8   |
| 16 years                             | 4.7                     | 6.7    | 3.8   | 5.5   | 3.8   |
| 17 years                             | -                       | 1.1    | 0.6   | 0.3   | 0.4   |
| > 18 years                           | 69.1                    | 67.7   | 73.9  | 79.1  | 78.7  |

Table 6.16

**Vulnerable Household Members' Knowledge of Early Marriage Disadvantages**

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |            |          |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
|   | Parents                     |            | Children |           |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|   | Mother                      | Father     | 5 - 9    |           | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total      |            | Total      |
| Boy   |                             |            | Girl     | Boy       | Girl      | Boy        | Girl      | Boy       | Girl       |            |            |
| Mother can die at the time of delivery                | 29.9                        | 28.1       | -        | 25.0      | 11.3      | 29.2       | 27.3      | 32.9      | 17.0       | 30.0       | 25.9       |
| Both child and mother can die at the time of delivery | 28.7                        | 30.2       | -        | -         | 1.3       | 8.4        | -         | 2.7       | 0.9        | 6.2        | 4.5        |
| Mother's health can suffer                            | 66.3                        | 67.3       | -        | 25.0      | 21.0      | 24.7       | 15.9      | 27.4      | 17.9       | 25.5       | 23.1       |
| Child's health can suffer                             | 36.4                        | 35.7       | 66.7     | 25.0      | 50.0      | 61.0       | 47.7      | 74.0      | 50.0       | 62.6       | 58.6       |
| Child can die   | 11.1                        | 17.1       | -        | 25.0      | 29.0      | 26.0       | 27.3      | 35.6      | 26.8       | 28.8       | 28.2       |
| Don't know  | 1.5                         | 1.5        | 16.7     | 12.5      | 19.3      | 12.3       | 8.1       | 6.4       | 18.6       | 13.5       | 15.2       |
| Others  | 9.1                         | 12.6       | 16.7     | 25        | 16.2      | 9.7        | 15.9      | 10.9      | 16.1       | 11.1       | 13         |
| <b>N =</b>  | <b>341</b>                  | <b>199</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>16</b> | <b>62</b> | <b>154</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>73</b> | <b>112</b> | <b>243</b> | <b>355</b> |

infidelity, and further dowry demands by the husbands. According to interviews with daughters, the reason so many of those marriages led to divorce, separation, or abandonment of the girl brides, was the inability of the girls' parents to meet the dowry demands. Also, 13 percent of the mothers and 23 percent of the fathers of currently married girls reported that their daughters suffered from physical abuse by their husbands.

All this reflects how families and communities discriminate against girls. Negative attitudes towards girls and the rigid social roles of girls

result in less participation of daughter in the family economy. Consequently, dowry pressure manifests the extreme disrespect towards girls and women. This also indicates high vulnerability of the girls to marriage-related migration. The household survey reveals that the girls are not only at risk of early marriage but also of risk of being married off without any initiative from their parents to effectively verify the groom's whereabouts and intentions (Table 6.18).

The study also indicates that almost a third of the parents would agree to a cross-country marriage proposal for their daughters. The

Table 6.17

**Early Marriage Process for Girls in Vulnerable Households**

| RESPONSE                                    | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |
|---|-------------------------|
|   | Mother (92)             |
| Matchmaker was involved in marriage process | 71.7                    |
| Dowry Payment                               | (92)                    |
| Cash  | 62.9                    |
| Ornaments                                   | 22.5                    |
| Cycles                                      | 30.3                    |
| House/Land                                  | 3.3                     |
| Nothing                                     | 22.4                    |

children, both boys and girls, expressed relatively higher consent to such proposals. At the same time, a large portion of sample parents and children have identified the risks in such propositions. The major dilemma appears to be communication failure as a result of great distance and cross-country legal barriers. At the same time, a large section is apprehensive of trafficking of the girl in the process. Seven percent of the girls also feared the risk of sexual exploitation through prostitution. The overwhelming majority of the parents and children expressed that these risks can only be minimised or avoided by turning down the cross-country marriage proposals for girls. This has two implications, they say:

- No viable mechanisms are available at the family or community levels to protect cross-country brides.
- A third of the parents and children are willing to consider any marriage proposal for girls out of the country. The inability to protect such girls indicates that a section of the girls in the studied households will be exposed to the risks associated with cross-border marriage.

The communities display a unique dichotomy in relation to early marriage, dowry and associated

phenomenon. While they are aware of the risks and hazards, they are unable or unwilling to act on their knowledge. This inability is largely a reflection of economic compulsion and social discrimination against girls.

#### 6.4. The Myths and Realities of Trafficking: Perceptions among Vulnerable Families

Child trafficking is a concept known by a large section of the parents and children covered by the household survey. However, the study finds that the members of the surveyed vulnerable households, as well as their community members, do not have a word for 'trafficking' as such in their vocabulary.

Table 6.18

**Information about Grooms Checked before Marriage**

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |       |
|---|-------------------------|-------|
|   | Mother                  | Girls |
| Information Checked About the Groom Before Marriage | (92)                    | (20)  |
| Nothing was checked                                 | 9.8                     | 15.0  |
| Level of education                                  | 6.5                     | -     |
| Occupation  | 69.6                    | 55.0  |
| Economic status                                     | 45.7                    | 40.0  |
| Family address                                      | 57.6                    | 35.0  |
| Family status                                       | 26.1                    | 15.0  |
| Heredity  | -                       | -     |
| Legal papers  | 5.1                     | -     |
| Other   | 9.8                     | -     |
| Don't know  | -                       | 15.0  |

Table 6.19

**Present Status of Married Girls**

| RESPONSE                                  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |
|---|-------------------------|
|   | Mother                  |
| A. Married Status                         | (92)                    |
| Currently married and living with husband | 89.1                    |
| Widow                                     | 1.1                     |
| Separated                                 | 2.2                     |
| Divorced                                  | 7.6                     |
| Abandoned                                 | -                       |



One of the divorced child brides, aged 15 and divorced for two years, explained her situation, “I had to marry, because that was what my parents expected me to do. The marriage was a disaster. Now all I want is a good job.”

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents acknowledged that they have some information about and understanding of trafficking in children. The study tried to assess the quality of their knowledge and the authenticity of the available information through a process of triangulation (the same questions were asked to three members in a family) to have a clearer understanding of the vulnerability of the children to trafficking in the study areas.

#### 6.4.1. Knowledge about Recruitment

Community members<sup>91</sup> reported that traffickers operate through force and deceit. As a means of recruitment they informed that a child may be sedated or abducted, or they may be cheated through false marriage or false promises for better opportunities such as employment. The parents and children identified that boys and girls of the extremely poor section, children who are highly mobile; who are orphans and who are living with stepparent(s) are the most vulnerable to trafficking. Adolescent girls whose parents are unable to arrange marriage because of inability to meet dowry demands, and girls whose marriages take place without proper information, were also identified as vulnerable sections. It is interesting to note that child labourers and children involved in border trade are seen as less vulnerable sections.

#### 6.4.2. Perceptions of Vulnerability

The sense of vulnerability, as perceived by the vulnerable household, has both poverty and gender dimensions. While the economically poor section of the children are assessed to be at risk

because of their outward movement, the adolescent girls are identified as vulnerable because of their subordinate position in terms of power and resources. Also, dysfunctional families and families with stepparent(s) are thought to push the children towards traffickers. On the other hand, a relatively low perception of risks regarding child workers and border traders can be explained by communities' perceptions that working children are 'tough' and border trade is safe. Both perceptions contradict reality. Illegal border trade has been found to expose the children to trafficking risks in two ways:

- The involvement of children in illegal trade pushes them into a space in which they lose control over their destinies; girls in Shibganj become extremely vulnerable to abuse and trafficking when they cross the border into India for Indian products to smuggle.
- The illegal border operators accepted by border communities have 'easy hand' over the girls of the localities. In Satkhira a girl was trafficked to Mumbai by a smuggler with whom her parents were arranging her marriage.

Table 6.20 shows that more than half of the mothers and boys interviewed in the HHS thought boys

The study collected information about trafficked and missing children from the vulnerable households in two ways. First, the respondents were asked to inform about their own household members. Second, they were asked to provide information about their relatives. Both sets of data indicate that half of the missing children never returned. It has been observed that rural people commonly refer to these missing children as 'lost children' and not as 'trafficked children'. Their vocabulary may not include the word 'trafficking' but through their life experience they are familiar with the concept.

were more at risk of being trafficked than girls. The girls think that both sexes are equally at risk, while fathers mentioned that girls faced a slightly greater risk of being trafficked than boys.

Sample respondents generally assign a greater risk of being trafficked to boys, but the findings regarding trafficking survivors presented in Chapter 4 indicate a higher risk associated with girls when it comes to trafficking. The factors determining the perception of vulnerability of the surveyed household members are presented in Table 6.22.

Table 6.22 explains that the boys and the mothers consider boys to be more vulnerable because the boys are more mobile and girls are more closely supervised.

Communities perceive that boys are more vulnerable to trafficking because they can be trained as pick pockets, they go out for work, they are more interested in going abroad to work, and their bodies can be sold for organs.

We could not confirm the use of trafficked boys as pickpockets or for sale of organs. However, the study does confirm that the traffickers recruit boys as camel jockeys in Dubai. Ironically, in Dhaka the study collected information on trafficked boys almost exclusively from trafficked boys engaged in street prostitution, but the members of the vulnerable households do not mention the use of boys in the sex trade.

Community perceptions of trafficking do not entirely reflect reality. Their perceptions of the risks to girls is seriously undermined by the proactive recruitment strategy of the traffickers; they feel secure with the level of restraint they impose on girls, in the name of protection, to

Table 6.20  
Perceptions of Vulnerability to Trafficking

| RESPONSE                                 | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |        |       |       |       |
|--|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|  | Children                |        |       |       |       |
|  | Mother                  | Father | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| Who is more at risk of being trafficked? | (304)                   | (211)  | (107) | (180) | (287) |
| Boys                                     | 54.3                    | 46.4   | 57.9  | 46.1  | 50.5  |
| Girls                                    | 45.1                    | 53.6   | 37.4  | 46.1  | 42.9  |
| Don't know                               | 0.7                     | -      | 4.6   | 7.7   | 6.6   |

counter the threat of trafficking. This perception can also be questioned on the basis of findings regarding recruiters and recruitment methods as presented in Chapter 4.

### 6.5. Perceived Consequences of Trafficking in Children

The parents and children are very well informed about the consequences of trafficking in children. They realise that traffickers target girls because of their economic value in the sex trade. They identify the socially accepted mobility of boys as the major risk factor. Organ sales were identified as a common motivator for trafficking both boys and girls, although they could not provide any evidence of such (no attempts have yet been made by the government or NGOs to verify this belief).

The adult members of the surveyed households named a range of destinations for trafficked children within Bangladesh and abroad while the children mentioned destinations in Bangladesh and India only (Table 6.23). Respondents also identified that traffickers use land, water and aerial routes for their purposes. Although a large majority of the community people denied having any knowledge about traffickers, it is important to note that one quarter of the respondents reported that they have some degree of knowledge regarding agents of traffickers. The respondents identified that:

Table 6.21

**Children's Perceptions of the Vulnerability of Girls and Boys**

| RESPONSE                         | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |          |           |            |           |           |            |            |            |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
|                                  | 5 - 9                   |          | 10 - 14   |            | 15 - 18   |           | Total      |            | Total      |
| A. More at Risk to be Trafficked | Boys                    | Girls    | Boys      | Girls      | Boys      | Girls     | Boys       | Girls      |            |
| Boys                             | 100.0                   | 57.1     | 55.7      | 41.7       | 58.1      | 53.4      | 57.9       | 46.1       | 50.5       |
| Girls                            | -                       | 28.6     | 36.1      | 48.7       | 41.9      | 43.1      | 37.4       | 46.1       | 42.9       |
| Don't know                       | -                       | 14.3     | 8.2       | 9.5        | -         | 3.4       | 4.6        | 7.7        | 6.6        |
| <b>N =</b>                       | <b>3</b>                | <b>7</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>115</b> | <b>43</b> | <b>58</b> | <b>107</b> | <b>180</b> | <b>287</b> |

- The traffickers are individuals who benefit from exploiting the trafficked children or by selling their organs
- The agents of traffickers are individuals who simply collect children on behalf of the traffickers (*i.e.* the recruiters)

Although the household members mentioned the trafficking agents, initially they did not provide any names. But respondents identified almost a third of these agents of the traffickers as women. Only through in-depth interviews were a few names uttered and these could only be secured

after promising absolute confidentiality. An elected member of the Union Parishad in Teknaf has explained that this is because traffickers operate in secrecy and because community people fear reprisals from the trafficking chain if they do not maintain silence. In other words, community people may know the whereabouts of the traffickers but they fail to act on that information because of the dominant power position of the traffickers. The traffickers are reported to have the support and protection of the rich and influential and the political elite; even law enforcement agencies are reported to be their close allies.

Table 6.22

**Vulnerable Household Member Perceptions about Causes of Vulnerability**

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS |        |       |       |       |
|---|-------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|   | Children                |        |       |       |       |
|   | Mother                  | Father | Boys  | Girls | Total |
| <b>Who is more at risk of being trafficked?</b> |                         |        |       |       |       |
| B. Reasons considering more vulnerable:         |                         |        |       |       |       |
| Girls:  | (139)                   | (113)  | (107) | (180) | (287) |
| Girl can be abused sexually                     | 43.2                    | 50.4   | 16.8  | 22.2  | 20.2  |
| Can be taken through early marriage             | 6.5                     | 1.8    | 1.9   | 1.7   | 1.8   |
| Girl believes others easily                     | 6.5                     | 8.8    | 6.5   | 6.1   | 6.3   |
| Girl from poor family go out for work           | 12.2                    | 8.8    | 4.7   | 6.1   | 5.6   |
| Can be used for organ sales                     | -                       | 8.0    | 5.6   | 3.3   | 4.2   |
| Can earn more by selling girl                   | 31.7                    | 22.1   | 14.0  | 11.0  | 12.2  |
| Don't know                                      | -                       | 8.8    | 2.8   | 9.4   | 7.0   |
| Boys:   | (165)                   | (98)   |       |       |       |
| Boys can be trained as pick-pockets             | 6.1                     | 8.2    | -     | 1.1   | 0.7   |
| Young boys go out for work                      | 58.1                    | 66.3   | 36.4  | 29.4  | 21.1  |
| Boys are more interested to go abroad for work  | 10.0                    | 7.1    | 0.9   | 2.2   | 1.7   |
| Can be used for organ sales                     | 6.1                     | 10.2   | 3.8   | 3.3   | 3.5   |
| Can earn more by selling boy                    | 18.2                    | 8.2    | 9.4   | 3.3   | 5.6   |
| Don't know                                      | 2.4                     | -      | 1.9   | 3.3   | 2.8   |

## 6.6. Sources of Information about Child Trafficking

Vulnerable households obtain information from two sources: gossip and other second-hand sources, and personal experience (some household members have experienced child trafficking within their families or at the community level<sup>92</sup>). Table 6.24 presents the second-hand sources of information mentioned by the surveyed vulnerable household members.

As we can see from table 6.24 informal human networking is the major source of information. About 80 percent of respondents gather trafficking information from neighbours, while another third obtain it from relatives. Institutional sources of information that were mentioned include radio, television, and newspapers. Fewer than four percent mentioned receiving trafficking information from NGOs.

## 6.7. Incidence of Trafficked and Missing Children in Surveyed Households

‘Trafficked children’ is a phrase that is not part of the vocabulary of the surveyed vulnerable household members. They were familiar with the concepts of ‘lost’ or ‘missing’ children. Therefore, the study initially collected information about lost or missing children. Later the cases were considered in detail to reclassify the ‘trafficked children’ from the broad category of ‘missing children’.

On average 13 percent of the households in the three study areas have had at least one incidence of missing children within the last five years. Only in half of the missing cases were the children were found. Ten cases were reported in Teknaf, in which the children after recovery were identified as trafficking survivors. These children were engaged in domestic work, camel jockeying,

and prostitution. The experience of missing children is important as it indicates that a large portion of the missing cases may be trafficking incidents.

Table 6.25 shows that in the three *thanas* of Patgram, Shibganj, and Teknaf a total of 61 cases of missing children have been identified. Among the missing children, 61 percent are boys and 39 percent are girls. The majority (67 percent) of the missing children was reported as lost from home and about 12 percent from the market. Table 6.25 also illustrates that 23 percent of the missing children are between 0 and 9 years of age, 23 percent between 10 and 12 years and 54 percent are between 13 and 18 years of age.

Significantly, almost a tenth of these children are suspected of having run away from home. Based on the findings regarding the trafficking survivors, the study concludes that these runaway children are either already trafficked or face imminent risk of being trafficked.<sup>93</sup>

Table 6.23  
Destinations of Trafficked Children Named by Vulnerable Household Members

| RESPONSE     | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS              |                 |               |                |                |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
|              | Children                             |                 |               |                |                |
|              | Mother<br>after trafficking<br>(304) | Father<br>(211) | Boys<br>(107) | Girls<br>(180) | Total<br>(287) |
| India        | 28.0                                 | 40.8            | 30.8          | 28.9           | 29.6           |
| Delhi        | 2.6                                  | 2.4             | 1.9           | 2.8            | 2.4            |
| Bombay       | 1.3                                  | 1.4             | 1.9           | 0.6            | 1.0            |
| Chittagong   | 3.9                                  | 1.9             | 2.8           | 3.3            | 3.1            |
| Bihar        | 0.7                                  | -               | -             | -              | -              |
| Dhaka        | 13.2                                 | 11.4            | -             | -              | -              |
| Nepal        | 0.7                                  | 0.9             | -             | -              | -              |
| Saudi Arabia | 1.0                                  | 2.8             | -             | -              | -              |
| Pakistan     | 5.6                                  | 2.8             | -             | -              | -              |
| Madras       | -                                    | 0.5             | -             | -              | -              |
| South Korea  | -                                    | 0.5             | -             | -              | -              |
| Myanmar      | 0.3                                  | 0.5             | -             | -              | -              |
| Thailand     | 1.0                                  | 0.5             | -             | -              | -              |
| Malaysia     | -                                    | 0.9             | -             | -              | -              |
| Don't know   | 56.6                                 | 47.9            | 49.5          | 50.6           | 50.1           |

Table 6.24

**Source of Trafficking Information Accessed by Vulnerable Household Members**

| RESPONSE<br><br>Sources of Trafficking<br>Information | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS (%) |        |          |      |         |      |         |      |       |      |       |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|----------|------|---------|------|---------|------|-------|------|-------|
|   | Parents                     |        | Children |      |         |      |         |      |       |      |       |
|   | Mother                      | Father | 5 - 9    |      | 10 - 14 |      | 15 - 18 |      | Total |      | Total |
| Boy   |                             |        | Girl     | Boy  | Girl    | Boy  | Girl    | Boy  | Girl  |      |       |
| From Neighbour  | 85.2                        | 80.1   | 66.7     | 85.7 | 80.3    | 80.9 | 62.8    | 77.6 | 72.9  | 80.0 | 77.4  |
| From relatives  | 32.6                        | 34.6   | 66.7     | 71.4 | 34.4    | 24   | 3       | 32.8 | 36.4  | 28.9 | 31.4  |
| By listening radio                                    | 30.6                        | 39.3   | -        | -    | 29.5    | 24.3 | 46.5    | 39.7 | 35.5  | 28.3 | 31.0  |
| By watching television                                | 12.2                        | 22.7   | -        | 28.6 | 24.6    | 6.1  | 23.3    | 22.4 | 23.4  | 12.2 | 16.6  |
| From NGO worker                                       | 3.3                         | 0.9    | -        | -    | -       | 2.6  | -       | 6.9  | -     | 3.9  | 2.4   |
| From husband  | 8.9                         | -      | -        | -    | -       | 0.9  | -       | 3.4  | -     | 1.7  | 1.0   |
| From news paper                                       | 0.7                         | 9.0    | -        | -    | 4.9     | 5.2  | 4.7     | 13.8 | 4.7   | 7.8  | 6.6   |
| Others  | 2.6                         | 6.6    | -        | -    | 14.8    | 8.7  | 7.0     | 10.3 | 11.2  | 8.9  | 9.8   |

In missing child cases, members of the vulnerable families have been mostly (60 percent) found to inform their relatives. However, a good proportion had also informed the police (40.9 percent) and the Chairman of the Union Parishad (54.1 percent). A third of the household members also announced news of the lost child through loudspeakers.

Table 6.26 further reveals that to recover a missing child, the vulnerable households seek

assistance from only two institutional actors: the chairman (*i.e.* the elected representatives of the local government body) and the police. Between these two, the chairmen were found to be more accessible and acceptable to vulnerable household members. Those who sought police assistance in most cases reached the police station either with the chairman or through the chairman's referral. This indicates that the local elected representative holds a very important position in the rural communities and works as a linkage between the

Table 6.25

**Information about Missing Children**

| RESPONSE   | STUDY AREAS              |                         |                         |               |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
|  | Patgram<br>(Lalmonirhat) | Shibganj<br>(Nowabganj) | Teknaf<br>(Cox's Bazar) | Total         |
| A. Percentage of respondents from whose family a child was ever lost | (150)<br>13.3            | (150)<br>15.3           | (150)<br>12.0           | (450)<br>13.6 |
| B. Sex of the Lost Child   |                          |                         |                         |               |
| Boy  | (20)<br>47.8             | (23)<br>47.8            | (18)<br>70.0            | (61)<br>60.7  |
| Girl   | 52.2                     | 52.2                    | 30.0                    | 39.3          |
| C. Where the child was lost  | (20)                     | (23)                    | (18)                    | (61)          |
| From own village   | 50.0                     | 73.9                    | 77.8                    | 67.2          |
| From market  | 20.0                     | 4.3                     | 11.1                    | 11.5          |
| From house/ ran away   | 10.0                     | 8.7                     | 11.1                    | 9.8           |
| Don't know   | 20.0                     | 13.0                    | -                       | 11.5          |
| D. Age of Lost Child   | (20)                     | (23)                    | (18)                    | (61)          |
| < 10   | 40                       | 8.7                     | 11.2                    | 22.9          |
| 10-12  | 20                       | 8.7                     | 44.4                    | 22.9          |
| 13-15  | 20                       | 17.4                    | 33.3                    | 21.3          |
| 16-18  | 15                       | 65.2                    | 11.1                    | 32.8          |
| Don't know   | 5                        | -                       | -                       | 1.6           |

rural communities and the other government agencies. It is also important to note that none of the surveyed vulnerable household members reported to any of the NGOs for assistance in recovering a missing child.

Based on the findings of the experience of the trafficked children, the study identifies the entire group of missing children as highly likely to be trafficked.

Almost half of the missing children were never recovered. Of the children who were recovered 47 percent were identified by the families as having been trafficked. More than 75 percent of the rescued child survivors reported that they were recruited by false offers of jobs and another 15 percent through fake offers to be sent to school.

The study found that 67 percent of the rescued children reported they were jailed after having been trafficked, suggesting attempts at border crossing. However only 4 percent actually crossed the border. Less than two percent of the children worked as camel jockeys, and 18 percent reported work as maidservants. Note that prostitution is not included among the types of work done by the trafficked children—the study identifies this as self-imposed censorship on the part of the respondents in order to maintain a good reputation in the community. NGO staff interviewed in the study areas echoed this belief.

Table 6.28 shows the major means of rescue experienced by the vulnerable families. The considerable participation and success of community members in rescue operation shows that:

- community members are usually aware of trafficking actors and their routes
- they are well informed and better positioned to act promptly

Table 6.26  
Steps Taken by Families to Recover Missing Children

| RESPONSE                             | STUDY AREAS              |                         |                         |       |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
|                                      | Patgram<br>(Lalmonirhat) | Shibganj<br>(Nowabganj) | Teknaf<br>(Cox's Bazar) | Total |
| Measure Taken<br>(Multiple Response) | (20)                     | (23)                    | (18)                    | (61)  |
| Informed police                      | 15.0                     | 60.9                    | 44.4                    | 40.9  |
| Informed chairman                    | 45.0                     | 43.5                    | 77.8                    | 54.1  |
| Informed relatives                   | 61.1                     | 82.6                    | 38.9                    | 60.7  |
| Announce loud<br>speaker in the area | 35.0                     | 34.5                    | 22.2                    | 31.1  |
| Published in<br>newspaper            | 5.0                      | -                       | 55.6                    | 18.0  |

- they have greater access to reach out to the perpetrators through networking<sup>94</sup>

The findings of the household survey also indicate NGOs did not play very significant roles in that stage of rescue.

Table 6.27  
Information about Recovered Missing Children

| RESPONSE  | CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS<br>Mother |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| A. Have found   | (57)                              |
| B. Percent of missing<br>children who were trafficked | 49.1<br>(28)                      |
| C. The way the child was<br>trafficked                | 46.6                              |
| Offered good work                                     | (13)                              |
| Offered to send to school                             | 75.9                              |
| Don't know  | 15.4                              |
| D. Work done after being<br>trafficked                | 7.7<br>(13)                       |
| Maidservant   | 17.7                              |
| Camel jockey  | 1.7                               |
| Poisoned  | 66.9                              |
| Don't know  | 13.7                              |
| E. Destination after being<br>trafficked              | (28)                              |
| Dhaka   | 3.6                               |
| Respective district town                              | 17.9                              |
| Outside country                                       | 3.6                               |
| Own area  | 17.9                              |
| Could not recall                                      | 53.5                              |

## 6.8. The Vulnerability Situation and Concerns

The findings of the household survey and qualitative research findings in Patgram, Shibganj and Nowabganj in particular reveal that the surveyed households in extreme-poor and moderate poor categories are exposed to a high degree of vulnerability to trafficking. The position of children in general and girls in particular, both in the family and within the community, do little to protect them from the threats. Child labour, early marriage, and the acceptance of and necessity for work-related child migration contribute immensely to increasing trafficking risks for the children of vulnerable households. The perceptions and practices regarding safety of the children fail to protect mainly because they contradict reality. On the other hand, the communities fail to act on their knowledge because of socio-psychological and economic constraints.

## 6.9. Sub-conclusions

Child mobility, child labour, and child marriage present risks that are understood to some degree by the vulnerable families. However, family

Table 6.28  
Rescue Process for Child Survivors

| RESPONSE                                     | INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM THE MOTHERS (%) |
|--|--|
| A. How were the trafficked children rescued? | (N= 13)                                    |
| Rescued by BDR and Police                    | 69.2                                       |
| Rescued by legal aid NGOs                    | 7.7  |
| Trafficker was arrested                      | -  |
| By community's people                        | 23.1                                       |

members often underestimate these risks or simply fail to act in ways that take them into account. The vulnerable family members get most of their information about child trafficking from neighbours and relatives.

Believing that they can help their families or improve their lives, children may develop a willingness to leave. Parents are often prepared to approve this—acceptance of child labour, early marriage, and work-related child migration are woven into the society. When the children become mobile, their vulnerability to trafficking increases. The perceptions and practices concerning the children's safety fail to protect because they contradict reality.

<sup>76</sup> Table 4.4

<sup>77</sup> Discussed in chapter 4, a space in which the criminal elements can entrap a child and traffic the child.

<sup>78</sup> See Table 6.14 for data on early marriage of girls.

<sup>79</sup> Only 13 percent of the children in HHS responded to this query, so the data regarding one range of distance only have been considered., which indicates that within a range sex of the children can play a role in defining span of mobility.

<sup>80</sup> FGD with the adolescent girls of vulnerable family.

<sup>81</sup> This has been discussed in detail in chapter-4 based on the data collected from the child survivors of trafficking.

<sup>82</sup> Issues mentioned by the adolescent girls of the vulnerable households during FGDs.

<sup>83</sup> Based on Table 4.3

<sup>84</sup> Table 6.5 on present participation in education does show that while at 5-9 age group more boys attend school.

<sup>85</sup> Earth work indicates any sort of work that involve digging or carrying earth (e.g. excavation of canal, homestead building)

<sup>86</sup> As explained in the model constructed in chapter-4.; figure:4.2

<sup>87</sup> FGD with mothers of vulnerable households in Sibganj, Nowabganj.

<sup>88</sup> Estimated from Table 6.1: In total there were 834 girls (up to the age of 18) in the surveyed households. Of those girls 314 were within 14-18 age group. As there were 90 cases of early marriages reported (i.e. 20 percent of the 450 households), the married girls constituted  $(90/314) \times 100 = 28.66$  percent of the girls of 14-18 years age group.

<sup>89</sup> Table 3.3 in chapter 3.

<sup>90</sup> Experience of the trafficked girls (chapter 3) indicates that traffickers recruit girls through fake marriage.

<sup>91</sup> This includes parents of the trafficked children, representative of local elected bodies, illegal border operators, and other key informants.

<sup>92</sup> This has been discussed in the next section in relation to the incidence of trafficking in children in the surveyed households

<sup>93</sup> 18 percent of the interviewed child survivors of trafficking reported that they had initially runaway from home, Chapter 3, Table 3.3.

<sup>94</sup> Further clarified by the key informants in Satkhira and Sibganj.

## Border Communities, Cross-Border Migration, and Trafficking

The study identifies several specific factors among the border communities of Teknaf, Shibganj, Patgram, and Satkhira, which create the moral and economic basis for the existence of illegal cross-border trade in goods and humans. The rural poor access the illegal trade network, especially the illegal or irregular migration network, for different migration needs; traffickers use the same network. This creates a problem of overlapping. In order to avoid confusion, the study isolates migration (including illegal or irregular migration) from trafficking by identifying differences in consequences after reaching the destination. If coercion (*e.g.* false pretext given by the trafficker in order to recruit) is not used until the destination is reached, it may appear as a case of migration even to the trafficked individual.

While in transit, trafficked individuals are very difficult to distinguish from ordinary migrants. However, when the destination is reached the trafficked individual is distinctly separated from the labour migrant by terms of employment and engagement. A trafficked individual, after completing travel, reaches the destination only to be engaged or employed in highly exploitative,

slavery-like employment or arrangements. This phase continues until she or he is 'rescued'. The entire pre-rescue exploitative situation from the time trafficking begins, is defined by this study as the 'trafficked state'.

In this section we deconstruct the cross-border trafficking process, in terms of both socio-economic factors and structures, and criminal chains or networks of traffickers. The process that leads individuals to the trafficked state is analysed with respect to different actors and factors in the context of the border communities.

### 7.1. Attitudes towards Border Trade

During FGDs with the women and men of vulnerable households in the border areas of Shibganj, Patgram and Satkhira, the research team found that the marginalised sections of the border communities do not consider illegal or irregular immigration and illegal trading in goods to be bad or immoral. One mother in Teknaf who is involved in illegal cross border trading of goods said, "I like my business as it helps me to feed my children. I don't know why it is illegal." The woman buys goods from Myanmar and sells them in Bangladesh. "Those who are in need", the



mother explained, “have to depend on border trade for survival.” The same ideas were echoed in Shibganj. Vulnerable communities view these activities as normal and legitimate sources of livelihood.

Mothers of vulnerable children<sup>95</sup> said, “Usually the poor parents are compelled to send their children for illegal border trade.” A segment of vulnerable children were also observed to be engaged in the illegal cross-border trading of goods. Some work as carriers for smugglers. Others buy goods in India and sell them in local markets in Bangladesh. The goods are usually items such as onions, salt, and sugar.

During FGDs marginalised household members indicated that they find no risk in cross-border mobility, even for children. This belief is strengthened by certain factors:

- Relatives living on the other side of the border
- Long term economic bondage (sharing a history of common economy)
- Common culture
- No value assigned to the political border separating India and Bangladesh by the border communities
- Economic profit derived from smuggling goods
- Unprotected land border<sup>96</sup>

Through community-level FGDs the study learned that because of their geographical positions and their knowledge of border exits,

Mother of a Vulnerable Child:  
*Jaminpur, Shibganj*

“We see nothing wrong with children being involved in cross-border smuggling. There is no risk for the children—we know everyone, and it’s among our neighbours.”

border communities believe they are in control of the immediate border environment. This feeling of control contributes highly to the underestimation of risk factors.

According to members of several communities boys (ages 14-18) and girls (ages 10-12) are involved in the cross border smuggling of goods. The children carry salt, sugar, beans, or rice, or they drive cattle into the country from India. The smaller children get only Tk.2 to 4 for a trip. The bigger kids can earn more money; their families also depend on that income.

However, during an FGD session in Patgram, one of vulnerable family fathers contradicted the others. In his opinion, although necessary, the involvement of girls and boys in illegal border trade is not always safe. He recalled an incident in which one of the local boys was arrested and imprisoned by Indian police. “Indeed there is risk in involving a child in cross-border smuggling. The child may be lost, stolen by the Indians, or arrested”.

Recently, a 12-year-old boy returned to the village after serving a three-month period in an Indian prison. He had been arrested while illegally crossing the border as he smuggled in goods from India.

This indicates that, although the community tries to ignore the ‘criminal elements’ and associated risks involved in illegal trading, they cannot always protect themselves from such elements. In Satkhira, an interview with a father of a trafficked girl reveals that the moral acceptance of illegal trade invites criminal elements into the community sphere. The father said that a man once ran into his home to avoid police arrest. It

Table: 7.1 **Cost of Illegal Border-Crossing**<sup>97</sup>

| BORDER DESTINATION<br>Exit |       | BANGLADESH SIDE (TK) |     | INDIAN SIDE (RS.) |        | TOTAL  |     |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------------|-----|-------------------|--------|--------|-----|
|                            |       | Ghat owner           | BDR | BSF               | Police | Others |     |
| Bhomra                     | India | 50                   | 50  | 50                | 50     | 50     | 250 |
| Baikali                    | India | 10                   | 40  | 70                | 20     | 10     | 150 |

was the first time that he met that man. However, the man later proposed to marry his daughter and the father accepted the proposal. The father explained, “The man was earning and I found nothing wrong in being involved in smuggling”. So the marriage was on. But the would-be son-in-law trafficked the girl into India and sold her at a brothel in Mumbai, just before the day of the wedding.

## 7.2. Rationale for Illegal Border Crossing

According to the estimation of the transport workers 300 to 400 *dhurs* (those who cross the border illegally) cross the border at Bhomra and enter India daily. There are several border exit points through which people, goods, and animals are smuggled in and out of the country.

For the poor and illiterate, the government’s process for approving legal trans-border travel appears to be quite expensive and complicated. Most rural and urban poor do not have passports. The cost of obtaining a passport is beyond the capacity of most of the poor. Moreover, the visa process, travel tax, and harassment by border officials function as additional discouraging factors.

While the poor are unable to acquire legal travel documents and incapable of meeting the costs of the legal process, they nevertheless feel a need and desire to cross the border. Five major causes of such border crossing (to India) have been identified: trade work, citizenship, medical service and visiting relatives.

Table: 7.2

### Reason, Nature and Destination of Migration

| REASON                        | NATURE OF MIGRATION   | DESTINATION                    |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Migration for trade           | Usually the illegal traders of goods frequently (even several of times a day) cross the border to India to buy goods from nearby markets and sources.   | West Bengal (border districts) |
| Migration for work            | Usually for a season. However, some migrate to India for a long time and gradually even settle there. A good number of people from Satkhira are reported to be working in Indian brickfields and in Bombay. In brick fields there are said to be jobs throughout the year (Rs. 100/day). Sometimes couples go together. | Kolkata, Delhi, Bombay         |
| Migration for citizenship     | Usually the Hindu community members of Bangladesh migrate to India to acquire Indian citizenship. It is usually permanent in nature.  | West Bengal                    |
| Migration for medical service | The people at the border localities report that the cost of medical service is much lower in West Bengal, India and that the quality of such service is much higher in India. As a result even the rural poor of border areas migrate to India to meet medical needs. It is short term and need based.                  | Kolkata, Delhi                 |
| Migration to visit relatives  | The political division of India and Bangladesh has resulted in separation of family members who are now citizens of different countries. This political separation cannot prevent relatives from visiting each other.   | West Bengal, Bihar             |

In addition to these six major reasons, people also reported that they illegally cross the Indian for tourism, marriage, and education.

### 7.3. Organisation and Mechanism of *Ghat* Operations

The research team has identified that border exit and entry points are 'controlled' not only by the border security force (BDR) but also by some local people who are in control of some unofficial and illegal border crossings. Two types of illegal traders use these illegal crossings:

- people engaged in smuggling goods, and
- people engaged in arranging illegal migration.

Interestingly, during FDGs the research team identified that traffickers use the same border exits as those used for illegal migration in Satkhira, Patgram, Teknaf, and Shibganj.

The Isamati River divides the border between Bangladesh and India at Debahata-Kalgonj. So people use boats to cross the borders in this region through river border points called *ghats* (small river ports). One can own an exit point because it involves the service of boating over the river. As explained before, the national border points have the dual character of being privately and officially controlled at the same time, which opens them up for a special kind of business. Former *ghat* owner "K" explained that the main focus of Debahata and Kajiganj border businesses are goods and human beings or *dhur*. He explained that Bosontopur of Kaligonj and Debahta were the most active *ghats* in this region for illegal border crossing.

Three groups of stakeholders are directly linked

with this *ghat* operation. First are those who own the *ghats*. Second, the pimps, or *dalals*, who bring the *dhur* from the Bangladesh side to cross the border, and third, the boatmen. A fourth group of stakeholders, the BDR, is indirectly linked with the *ghat* operations, as they collect illegal fees from the *ghat* owners.

Through the findings of the FDGs sessions held in different border localities, the researchers found that the location of a *ghat* depends on certain geographical factors:

- In Patgram usually the houses located on the fringe with India and the houses located in 'Chit Mahal'<sup>98</sup> are mentioned to be most suitable for illegal border operation.
- In Shibganj, houses next to the shorter river crossing between Bangladesh and India are identified as most effective *ghats*.
- In Satkhira, those river crossings and land crossings that are well connected with highways on the Bangladesh side and to a big Indian city, or which can be easily used as a transit point to reach a big city in India, or located next to a market in India, are best suited for illegal crossing points.

The *Gugi Bari Ghat* of Satkhira is an example of a well-connected *ghat* used for illegal migration. People use it to go to Kolkata and Mumbai and to Pakistan. It takes only a couple of hours to reach the *ghat* from the main road, which is about 7 to 8 km. away. People can travel to the *ghat* either by motorcycle or rickshaw. The river crossing by boat takes only 5 to 10 minutes. On the other side of the river, in India, there is a big market place called Hakimpur Bazar. Because of this market the *ghat* is also used for smuggling goods. From Hakimpur people can take a bus and go to Moslondopur (a

transit point for Mumbai and Pakistan) or Bonogram (transit point for Kolkata).

Thus it appears that illegal border exits are not necessarily hidden or away from convenient communication facilities. On the contrary, the illegal exits may well be located in areas that are easily accessible through road communication from Bangladesh and India. Transport workers report that if a crossing is difficult to reach by the *dhurs* it will not be popular. This suggests that *ghat* owners do not necessarily depend on secrecy to protect themselves from legal persecution, in fact, it is alleged that *ghat* owners must buy protection from the police and BDR instead of trying to hide their operation from the law.

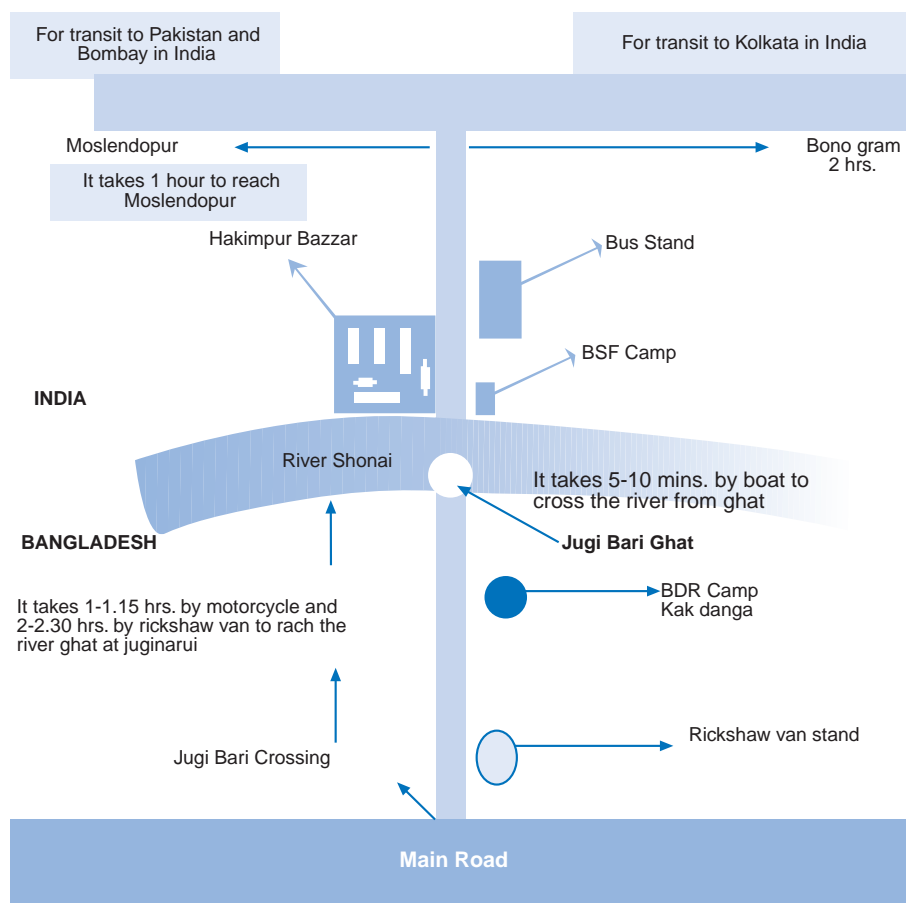
#### 7.4. Structure of a *Ghat*. The Baikali Example

Almost identical processes and structures have been reported by community volunteers and elected members in Khalil Nagar, Baikali Sadar *Thana*, and Satkhira regarding the *ghats* in those areas. However, their descriptions include not only internal agents or suppliers of *dhurs*, but external agents as well.

“K” (see above) said that up to 100 *dhur* per day are transported through the *ghats* to India. They can cross the border in three ways:

- Arrive at the border without an agent’s help and pay at the *ghat* to cross into India,

Figure 7.1  
Map of Illegal Migration and Trafficking Route through Jugi Bari Ghat<sup>99</sup>



- Arrive at the border with an agent who negotiates with the *ghat* owners and arranges crossing into India, and
- Arrive at the border and pay an agent to negotiate with the *ghat* owners and arrange crossing into India.

During FGDs with transport workers in Satkhira, it was mentioned that illegal migration agents seldom enter India with their clients. If a *dhur* is willing to pay, the agent on the Bangladesh side can, with the help of the *ghat* owners, hire an agent on the Indian side. A *dhur* can also hire an agent on the Indian side without any help from the Bangladesh agent. Transport workers mentioned that the *dhurs* who arrive at the border area with an agent are usually received by another agent on the other side of the border.

A Satkhira *ghat* owner explained that agents and pimps cannot always be identified. Sometimes a pimp may pose as just another *dhur* and negotiate with the *ghat* owners. However, usually the *ghat*

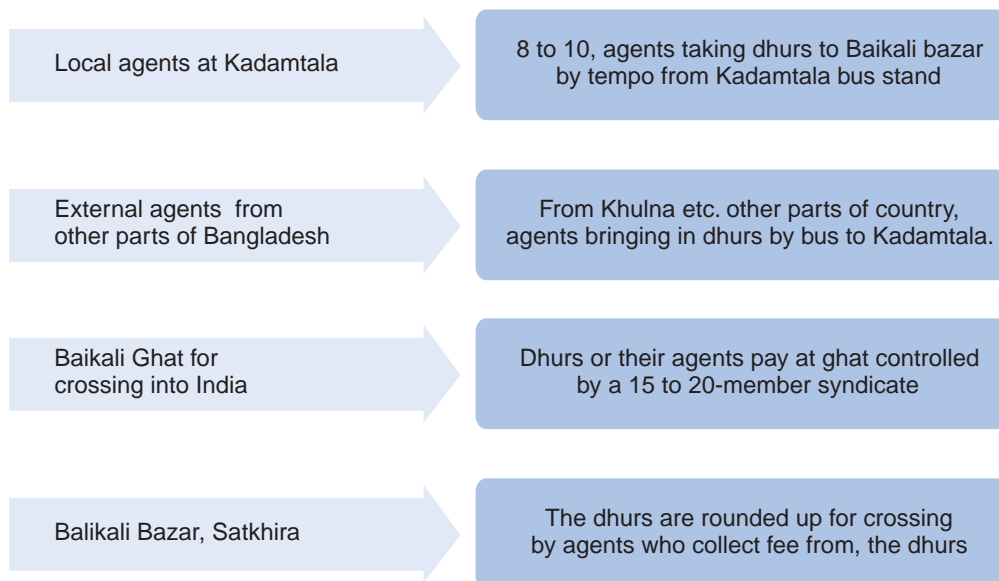
owners either employ agents or have contact with agents from bringing *dhurs* to their *ghats*.

The *dhurs* get off the bus at Kadamtala, where they come into contact with local agents. An agent negotiates a fee with the *dhurs* that includes his own service charge, use of a tempo (a type of vehicle), the fare, and fees to the *ghat* owner. (The *dhurs* who bring an agent to Kadamtala do not get involved in negotiations.

Next, the *dhurs* travel to Baikali Bazar by tempo. (The ride usually costs Tk.6 for the locals, but *dhurs* are charged Tk. 10 for the same trip.) The fee paid at the *ghat* includes the service charge of the *ghat* owners and the fee of the BDR.

The *ghat* rent or fee for illegal border crossing depends whether people or goods are crossing, what type of goods or people are crossing, and how the crossing is organised. Key informants in Satkhira report that there are two types of crossing, general and special, and that each has a different range of fees.

Figure 7.2  
Structure of Baikali Ghat<sup>100</sup>



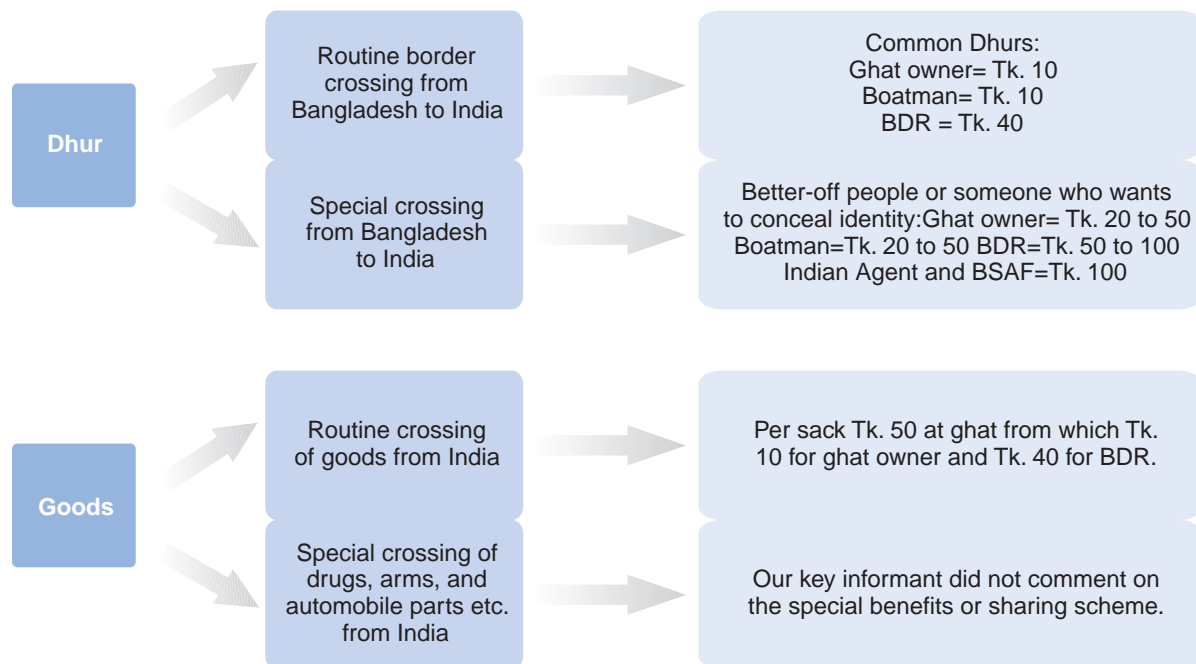
The 'special' border crossing does not always involve criminals; it has been mentioned that comparatively well off *dhurs* sometimes will secure passage by paying higher fees. However, traffickers known to the ghat owners also use the special crossing. This is because the *ghat* owners, knowing that the trafficker is willing to pay higher amounts for safe crossing, can charge a fee higher than usual. A former *ghat* owner in Satkhira reported that a *ghat* owner might not always identify a trafficker; this issue will be discussed later.

crossing. At Baikali, there are ghats for cattle, *dhur* and sugar etc. There are also *ghats* of different sizes and importance. The small *ghat* owners may be poor and marginalised while the bigger ones can be very influential and well organised. While a single person manages a small *ghat* a syndicate may manage a larger *ghat*. The larger *ghat* owners have close ties with local leaders, the political elite, elected representatives, and political parties. They subscribe quite handsomely in the case of social and religious events. In the Baikari area there are several *ghats* of different sizes and purpose.

Key informants reported that different *ghats* are used for different purposes. The same *ghat* may or may not be used for goods smuggling and *dhur*

It has been reported that at the bigger *ghats*, apart from the leaders or owners, other people work to monitor, collect tax, or manage security.

Figure 7.3  
Types of Operations and Distribution of Ghat Rents



## 7.5. The Role of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in *Ghat* Operations

According to local community members interviewed in Satkhira, Shibganj and Patgram, the local BDR camps hold illegal auctions to lease out the *ghats*. A *ghat* owner has to put up an initial amount for the 'lease' and then pay a fixed amount to the respective BDR camps each evening.

Because the BDR leases out the *ghats* it holds the real control over them. The BDR selects *ghat* leaders and retains the authority to replace them. It collects illegal fee from the *ghats* daily. There are different amounts of rent for different types of smuggled items. According to one estimate, in every case it is the BDR who appropriates the major share of rent paid by the illegal traders and *dhurs*.<sup>101</sup>

The BDR has to keep a sharp eye on the activities at different *ghats*. "This is because", one local key informant explained, "if the *ghat* leaders are left alone they would not even pay half of the rent to the BDR." As a precaution, the local BDR camp deploys one of its staff at the *ghat* to count

the 'heads' and sacks. The BDR representative stays at the *ghat* without his uniform and ensures 'fair payment'<sup>102</sup>.

## 7.6. The Trafficking Chain and Illegal Migration

This section deals with two aspects of illegal migration and the trafficking chain. First, the study findings identify the process of illegal migration as a disempowering process that exposes the poor and female to a greater risk of trafficking. Thus trafficking has a power dimension. Second, the study reveals that the trafficking chain functions by utilising the same mechanisms as illegal migration. This constitutes the major problem of overlap between trafficking and illegal migration.

### 7.6.1. Migration Need and the Trap of Traffickers

Both men and women cross the border to India daily in big numbers. Women carry children and in some areas even outnumber men. In explaining '*Dhur*' a local transport worker in Bhomra said, "*Dhur* means 'insignificant', a 'fool', someone who has no control over her/his destiny".

#### "Y" Former *Ghat* Leader:

Baikari, Satkhira

"I am basically a day labourer," explained the former *ghat* leader. "Seven years back I first got involved in the trade of illegal border crossing because I was not getting any work while I had the responsibility of feeding my wife and children. He said he did not have to hide his profession from his family and community members. It was, and still is, socially acceptable to 'work at the border'.

He observed that in the recent years the number of *dhurs* have increased at an alarming rate. Seven years ago he used to cross four to five people a day to India and charged Tk. 10 for his service. At that time most of his clients were people of nearby Unions who would go to India mainly for medical reasons or to visit relatives. Nowadays, he described that people from all over the country are coming to Baikali as *dhurs*. "The business has grown enormously. You see buses full of people coming from all over the country. They even have a resting place in Khulna, allegedly, at the Temple of Siva."

"I ceased my involvement with the border trade because I realised that if I am caught and sent to prison by the BDR, my family will have to starve." At that time, BDR chief Manish Dewan was strict with the illegal traders. Comparing that time to the present, "Y" finds that at present the BDR is more actively involved with the trade than ever before. He reports, "Even the Chairman and Members are now involved in cross border smuggling."

The poverty dimension of illegal migration and vulnerability to trafficking is clearly summed up by a UP member in Teknaf, “Mainly the poor are trying to migrate to Pakistan. The wealthy people are going to Dubai.”

The element of safety in illegal migration has been reported to depend on control by individuals of resources, personal connections, administrative and political liaisons, and connection with ‘criminal elements’ of illegal trade-networks. *“Nobody dares to traffick the children of people who have power and money,”* concluded a potential trafficker in Shibganj.

The study team finds that the very ‘discourse of *dhurs*’ reflects an inferior position of these migrants in relation to resource and control. The trafficking chain can therefore more easily take advantage of the ordinary *dhurs* and entrap them. The *dhurs* undertake illegal migration out of economic necessity while their inability to ‘buy’ safety from criminal elements exposes them to the risk of trafficking. In other words, the survival pressures push the *dhurs* (usually rural poor) to access means of illegal migration, which in turn link them with trafficking chain.

The sex of a *dhur* also influences the vulnerability status; a female *dhur* is more exposed to the risk of being trafficked than a male. In Satkhira a local NGO executive explained,

Table: 7.4

**Smuggled Items and Rents**

| SMUGGLED ITEM                                | RENT OF BDR | RENT TO GHAT |
|--|-------------|--------------|
| <i>Dhur</i>                                  | Tk. 40      | Tk. 10       |
| Cattle                                       | Tk. 80      | Tk. 20       |
| Two Sacks of rice/<br>sugar/beans per cycle* | Tk. 60      | Tk. 20       |

\* Usually local people use a bicycle to carry the goods from one side to the other.

*“For girls or women no one can ensure safety once the illegal migration agents take over their control. A woman, even if not sold, can be sexually abused by the ghat owners and agents while she is in their custody.”*

A ghat owner during an in-depth interview also supported this gender dimension of the vulnerability of the *dhurs* to trafficking.

The overlapping between trafficking and illegal migration network becomes clear from the experience of Kolorowa, Satkhira. Kolorowa is another border exit point frequently used by *dhurs*. It also used by traffickers to traffick women and children to India or Pakistan. The *ghat* owners may not be directly linked with the trafficking chain. Nevertheless, they play a key role in the process of trafficking human beings across the border. According to the key informants the entire process of trafficking is usually carried out under the false pretext of illegal migration, the latter being socially accepted by all in and around these border communities.

Table: 7.3

**Name and Size of Ghats**

| NAME OF GHAT  | SIZE OF ORGANISATION     | ITEMS SMUGGLED                               |
|---------------|--------------------------|--|
| Kalinai       | 8-10 <i>ghat</i> leaders | Cattle, salt, sugar, onion, and garlic, etc. |
| Baikari       | One <i>ghat</i> owner    | Salt (during the study it was closed)        |
| Asle Member's | Controlled by BDR        | Sugar  |
| Bot Tala      | 7-8 <i>ghat</i> leaders  | <i>Dhur</i>                                  |
| Tegore Bari   | 2-3 <i>ghat</i> leaders  | Sugar and crabs                              |
| Bolod Ghata   | 3-4 <i>ghat</i> leaders  | Fish and sugar                               |
| Notun Gram    | 6-7 <i>ghat</i> leaders  | Cattle                                       |



A local Chairman of Union Parishad explained the illegal migration in terms of economic causes. "*I will go to somewhere else in the country if I want to increase my wealth. But the poor cannot afford to do so. They will go anywhere, even out of the country, only to sustain their existence.*"

Within the trafficking chain, the mechanism of illegal migration works as a means of recruiting the victims and ensures trouble-free border crossing. The victims are usually motivated to cross the border by the (false) hope of job, marriage, medical help, or tourism. On some occasions the victims are either drugged or forced during the border crossing.

Importantly in any of the cases, the traffickers try to portray the entire process as an act of illegal migration. They can get away with this because:

- The people in the border areas morally accept the illegal migration, which neutralises community resistance.
- The mechanism established by the illegal border traders ensures protection both from the border security force and the criminal syndicates, both of which are feared by the local population.

Both the illegal migration seekers and the trafficked individuals who are tricked by the traffickers with the false promise of migration consider the illegal migration actors as their allies when they are crossing the border. The agents (who can be traffickers) during movement (both within and outside the country) are trusted by the migrants and trafficked individuals. The reasons are:

- The people who seek to migrate abroad have real need to do so.
- If not coerced, the trafficked individual does

not suspect the trafficker before reaching the destination.

- Being illegal migrants, they do not expect the government agencies to help them. Rather, they consider them as a source of trouble. Traffickers and the trafficked are perceived as 'us' and authorities are perceived as 'them'. Their interests are in opposition to each other.

There are some localities near the border which have long lasting migration links with India and Pakistan. In Satkhira, the union of Keraltata was identified as a place from which not only individuals but also families (men, women and children of different age) migrate to Mumbai, India. With the help of the field workers of a local NGO<sup>103</sup>, the researchers could list 61 individuals who had migrated over the last ten years, with or without their family members, to Mumbai from six villages of that union.<sup>104</sup>

In Satkhira the team also identified ten individuals who gave accounts of their migration to India for work in the brickfields. For them it is routine seasonal migration in order to cope with growing rural unemployment and low wage problems in Bangladesh. They mentioned that young women (either daughters or wives of male migrant workers) sometimes work at the brickfields. In these Indian brickfields there is work both for men and women

A girl in Satkhira was drugged before she was trafficked in to India. While crossing border, the trafficker informed the *ghat* owners and community people that the girl was sick and was being taken to Kolkata for treatment. As people in that area socially accept illegal visit to India for treatment, they did not suspect any wrongdoing.

A father of a trafficked girl in Patgram reported the same. His daughter was drugged at the time of border crossing and portrayed as a patient.

throughout the year. At least one case was reported in which a young girl was abused and sold to a brothel from a brickfield.<sup>105</sup>

The same pattern has been identified in Teknaf. The Rohingya communities have long-lasting relations with Karachi, Pakistan. Many of their relatives live in Karachi. So they are mentally prepared to accept a migration option to Pakistan in search of a better opportunity. The knowledge of having relatives at the point of destination works for them as a psychological safety element. Taking advantage of this situation there are agents who routinely collect families in Teknaf for migration to Pakistan.

Many suspect that large numbers of migrant seekers, and their children, are trapped by traffickers. In these localities the marginalised people are much more eager to work in Karachi than within the country (*e.g.* Dhaka or Chittagong). By any means they want to leave the country and work abroad where they believe they will have better opportunities. They think work is available in Karachi. During 2001, 83 persons (women, men, and children) in Roikhang village, Teknaf, were arrested by BDR when they wanted to cross the border illegally. They paid a large amount of money, selling off their properties, to 'travel agents' who promised them safe passage and employment. The local key informants explained that the women and girls had a good chance of being trafficked to brothels either in India or Pakistan.

Therefore there is a strong indication that the traffickers are perceived by the migration seekers to be on their side till they reach the destination. As a result, the traffickers can negotiate a 'treaty of darkness' with the people, as described by a

A young woman (22), mother of a girl (7), was interviewed in Satkhira. The woman migrated to Mumbai at the age of 11 with her father and mother. In Mumbai, the girl reported that she worked along with her husband, who she had married in India. Last year the young woman bought land and built a house in her village in Bangladesh. She returned to live in her house two months back along with her daughter. Her mother, she reported, migrated to Dubai from Mumbai. She said men need Rs. 35,000 to go to Dubai from Mumbai. But women only need Rs. 5,000. She said, "Although there is good money in Mumbai, I will not advise anyone else of my village to go and work there." She also expressed strong reservations against going to Dubai. "My mother went there, it's her decision. I will never go there". She did not answer what made her come back and stay.

The woman advised her villagers against migrating to Mumbai or Dubai but did not explain the hidden reasons; many young girl of the village are attracted toward Mumbai, seeing the new house of the returnee.

Union Parisad Member in Teknaf. From the people's perspective migration, legal or illegal, when required for survival is seen as a necessity. Consequently those who can arrange migration for them are seen as 'friends'. The traffickers capitalise on this dependency and trust. This also isolates the 'prey' of the traffickers from external anti-trafficking actors such as NGOs or government agencies because as the traffickers portray the external agencies as actors which can destroy their scope of migration.

This dependency and co-operation between the traffickers and vulnerable groups (mostly rural poor) needs to be taken into account when designing effective interventions. It is important to design interventions so that people do not identify the anti-trafficking initiatives as anti-migration initiatives.

### 7.6.2. The Trafficking Chain and Migration Network

The study reveals that the trafficking chain functions at cross country level openly (and therefore hidden!) within the same mechanism used by people for the illegal migration. This constitutes a serious problem for both those who would like to interrupt the trafficking process or those, such as the *ghat* owners, who want to make money out of the process.

According to the local *ghat* owners, in moving an individual from Bangladesh to India the traffickers usually work through recruiting agents, cross-border agents, *ghat* owners, and BDR. The first of these two can be a single individual while the last of these two actors may or may not be directly involved.

A brothel owner in India or Pakistan may pay the recruiting agent an advance. The total payment is usually paid at the point of 'final delivery'. It has been reported that the advance helps to meet the costs of *ghat* owners and BDR. Sometimes an agent may work both for illegal migration seekers and for a trafficking chain. The agent may organise a number of *dhurs*, among which only a few are targeted for trafficking.

#### Rescued Trafficked Victim:

Hoikong, Cox's Bazar

"It is not the travel agents but the BDR who have ruined us!"

Eighty-three individuals from Hoikong were trafficked from their village. They were arrested by the BDR at the Rajshahi border. They were trying to migrate to Pakistan. A number of them, especially the women and children, were at imminent risk of trafficking.

At the Moslendopur border exit, *dhurs* usually seek to migrate to India, or to Pakistan through India. In any case they cross the border to India through the *ghat*. The agents must be paid in advance by the *dhurs* for the border crossing. From that payment the agents pay the *ghat* owners and BDR. They also arrange payment on the other side of the border and ensure safe passage. Usually an agent charges about Tk. 500 for passage to India. However, if someone wants to migrate to Pakistan, the fee is much higher. The migration seekers have to reveal their destinations at the border transit even if they have an agent because the *ghat* owners charge according to destination and suspect that the agent may cheat them by concealing the actual destination. It is also necessary to arrange payment on the other side of the border. This is because different actors are needed on the Indian side for migrants going to India and Pakistan.<sup>106</sup>

Moreover, a trafficker identified by the key informants and interviewed by the researchers, in Upper Chak Para, Shibganj, explained that people who are engaged in border trade can easily be involved with trafficking in human beings. This is especially true for the 'dealers' (people who sell the service of illegal border crossing of goods and people). A dealer can be involved in trafficking in humans either intentionally or without knowing.

### 7.7. The Role of Transport Workers

Transport workers play a very crucial role in illegal border crossing. During the workshop held in Khulna<sup>107</sup>, a case was presented in which a scooter driver saved three boys from a trafficker. The scooter driver suspected an adult and his relationship with the children and took them into a local NGO office that had informed him previously about trafficking in women and children.

For the *ghat* owners, it is very easy to identify ‘veteran traffickers’ but it may not be possible for them to identify an amateur or new trafficking agent. According to a *ghat* owner in Kolorowa, “It is not the business of the *ghat* owner to enquire why a person is crossing the border. But if we get a hint that a person may be trafficking another, we simply increase our fee”.

At Bhomra, Satkhira, during FGDs with the local transport workers, the researchers collected invaluable information regarding human mobility across the border.

The development of physical infrastructures such as roads and culverts has resulted in two major impacts at Bhomra:

- It has obviously made road communication much easier and more reliable.
- It has also transformed the mode of rural transportation. In recent years, taking advantage of the better roads, automotive vehicles (such as auto-rickshaws and buses) have increased in number, reducing the number of ‘helicopters’ (bicycles) and rickshaws used for transporting people and goods.

During the discussion with the transport workers in Bhomra and an interview with the Union Parishad Chairman, it was revealed that almost 50 percent of the *dhurs* are female. According to their estimation, through one exit point of that area per day a maximum of 150 women illegally cross the border into India. The local sources mentioned that roughly 25 percent of those female migrants can be at high risk of trafficking; they suspect this because these women either come to border with external agents or with agents who have disputed reputation.

By this estimation, about 38 woman passing through Bhomra each day are exposed to a high risk of trafficking. How many of them are actually trafficked could not be confirmed without a follow-up study at the destinations in India.

#### “M”, a *Ghat* owner involved with traffickers:

Jugibari, Kolaroa, Satkhira

“No, there is no different route for trafficking. If we can understand trafficking then we charge more. The trafficked cannot understand the situation, Dalals promise them jobs with better salaries.”

This latter situation has had negative implications for the livelihoods among the local communities. In Bhomra, during focus group discussions with the transport workers, trade union leaders reported that over the last two years, the number of ‘helicopters’ was reduced from 200 to 50 because automotive vehicles offer more efficient means of transporting people and goods. This has also led to unemployment of formerly self-employed bicycle operators, many of whom had become involved in one way or another in transporting *dhurs* across the border illegally in order to earn a living. Some of the transport workers are thought to be working as agents for *ghat* owners.

The transport workers have some specific roles in the cross border movement. These include:

- They have information regarding human mobility.
- They can set the time for such mobility.
- They are directly or indirectly linked with illegal border exits.
- They do not necessarily have a share of the fees of illegal crossing.
- They can both facilitate and interrupt trafficking in children.

### 7.8. The Traffickers’ Nexus

The social canvas includes a cultural and moral context, power and gender dimensions, and a set of events and conditions that expose the children

## Tafadar Transport Systems

**Introduction:** Tafadar Transport systems carry “*dhur*” from Barisal to Satkhira. *Dhurs* travel from Barisal and Faridpur to Jessore and Satkhira border points to enter into India without passports. Most of the people in Satkhira know about the Tafadar transport and its client groups.

**Convenience:** Tafadar transport starts at 10 PM and it reaches Satkhira at seven in the morning, via Navororn, Jessore and Koloroa. It is convenient for the people who want to cross the border for two reasons. First, because of the timing. Second, it is the longest route to cross the border. From Narvon the exit point starts and continues up to Shayamnagar.

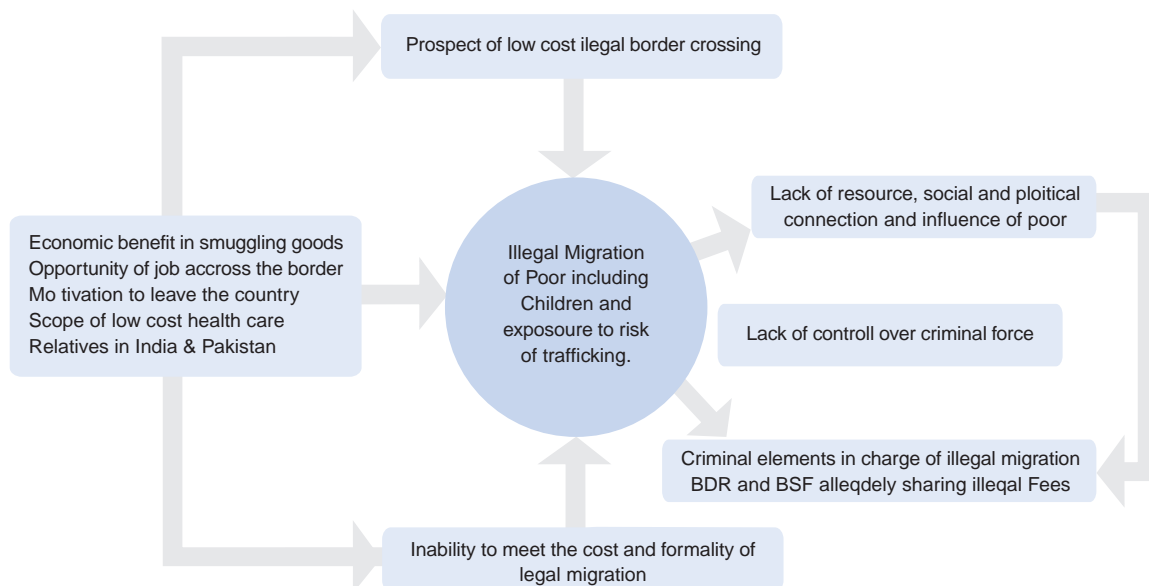
**Clients and their identity:** Generally Hindu people who are accustomed to travelling to India without passports are the target groups of the Tafadar Transport. According to one of the transport supervisors mostly poor Hindus such as potters, barbers, and weavers use the transport.

**Travel Cost:** “The fare is most lenient” the supervisor informed. General rent from Barisal to Satkhira is Tk 180 but for the *dhurs* it is only Tk. 120. The supervisors said that they also served the clients by providing them with information about the border situation. Sometimes they also introduced them to the *dala*.

to a vulnerable space in which they become easy targets for the criminal network of trafficking. The study finds that such a space of vulnerability exists irrespective of the trafficking chain, but works to link the children with the trafficking network. On the other hand, it identifies the trafficking network through the actors (individual and organisational) and their interdependencies (process and outcomes).

The study also reveals that the trafficking phenomenon cannot be completely understood without addressing the consequences or outcomes of the trafficking process. Indeed, movement in this vulnerable space cannot in itself be termed as trafficking. Whether a child has been trafficked can only be identified if the child finds itself in an exploitative or abusive situation as a result of this movement through vulnerable space. The

Figure 7.4  
**Illegal Migration and Trafficking**



study identifies that the trafficking-led displacement of the children results in a 'trafficked state', a post-trafficking era continuing until rescue. The agents and beneficiaries of trafficking include a whole range of people, starting from family members, community people, professional traffickers, employers, and government officials.

The study thus identifies two sets of chains, as explained in Chapter 6: one of events and one of actors. The former may lead a child to the vulnerable space without the aid of latter. In the case of the border communities and the issue of illegal migration the relationship between the social forces and criminal forces are explained by the following model:

This model must also be seen from the moral acceptance of illegal migration and labour migration of both adults and children. In this model the moral acceptance of illegal border crossing and illegal border trade in general is a strong influencing factor that traps the poor (including children) in a migration cycle and pushes them into the vulnerable space of trafficking.

### 7.9. Sub-conclusions

The urge to migrate contributes to the expansion of trafficking. Illegal migration and trade networks used by the rural poor are often the same as those

#### Suspected Trafficker:

Kalopur, Shibganj

**“Trafficking in women and children is a high risk venture—why should one be engaged in the venture if they are not getting high monetary reward?”**

Trafficking in women and children is a highly profitable business. In general, the following benefit from any form of border trade:

- The government officials in administration
- The members of the law enforcing agencies of local *thana*
- The members of BDR posted in the locality
- The border community engaged in the trade

used by traffickers. Once a child enters the network, especially if not supported by the right connections, she or he is exposed to a high degree of trafficking risk. If children are not coerced into a trafficked state at the onset of the process, it may appear to others that they are part of a migration process.

The criminal trafficking network consists of a complex chain of events and actors. Trafficking in children is highly profitable. The risks are minimised because of corruption among law enforcement personnel and others in the involved communities. Many of the actors in the network are, however, in a position to help rescue trafficked children.

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<sup>95</sup> During FGD in Shibganj.

<sup>96</sup> The ability of the BDR to enforce laws prohibiting illegal border crossings is hampered by the fact that there are relatively few BDR outposts along the western border between Bangladesh and India. This means that vast tracts of land are not patrolled, making it very easy in many places to walk into India. In areas identified as Indian enclaves, the ability of police to investigate rumors of trafficking is hampered by the fact that these areas are not part of their jurisdictions even though surrounded by Bangladeshi territory. Similarly, refugee camps and those of stranded Pakistanis are out of bounds for police. Police, BDR and others invested with the power to enforce certain laws are also affected by background factors such as poverty and cultural attitudes. (*BNWLA, Dhaka, 1997*)

<sup>97</sup> FGD with the transport workers at Bhomra Bazar, Satkhira

<sup>98</sup> That is, houses in 'land enclaves' with India.

<sup>99</sup> This map has been prepared by a key informant and cross-checked by a *ghat* owner at Satkhira

<sup>100</sup> Annex 4 explains the roles of different actors of the *Ghat*.

<sup>101</sup> An account of a *ghat* owner (in Satkhira) is presented in Annex 4.

<sup>102</sup> This role of BDR in illegal border crossing has been also reported by other studies. Trafficking gangs enjoy the patronage of law enforcing authorities. It is reported that police provide special tokens to agents who are involved in smuggling and trafficking in women and children across the border. The police at border points question agents taking trafficked women and children. During inquiry agents show their token or symbol such as different names of flowers or birds. Every day the symbol used is changed. Sometimes, police postings in Satkhira and Sarsha are so lucrative that police personnel bribe high officials for postings. Similar pay offs and corruption are widely practiced by the officials of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), the border security forces (*Shamim, Ishrat & Kabir, Farah, 1998.P. 37*).

<sup>103</sup> Bersha is the name of the NGO working in Satkhira who supported the research team with its own workers.

<sup>104</sup> Of union: Karlkata and *thana*: Kaloroa from the following villages: Hatuni , (9), Baura (8), Shinga (17), Darbasha (17), Potuni (4) and Hulhulia (16) men, women along with children have been recorded by the study team to migrate to Mumbai, India.

<sup>105</sup> In Karalkata, *thana* Kaloroa of Satkhira, from the villages: Jakila, Ballianpur, Pach rukhi, Talbaria , Alipur, Sirrampur, the study team identified at least ten individuals with 41 child dependents in their families, have been reported to work in brick fields in India.

<sup>106</sup> Annex 4 provides further information.

<sup>107</sup> The workshop was organised by Rupantar and INCIDIN Bangladesh volunteered as facilitator. In the same workshop another case was presented in which one local residential hotel was identified as a safe transit point for the traffickers. A case was also presented in which girls were rescued from the trafficker because of the intervention of the hotel management.

## Anti-Trafficking Instruments and Interventions

The chapter provides a brief overview of the anti-trafficking interventions of government organisations and NGOs and reflects on existing national and international legal instruments as means of combating the harms of trafficking in children.

### 8.1. National and International Legal Tools and Instruments

Bangladesh is a signatory to different international declarations and conventions, including The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979; The Beijing Declaration and The Platform for Action, 1995; Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1990; and ILO Convention 182.

Accordingly the existing *National Plan of Action for Children 1997-2002* also includes Trafficking of Children in its area of concern.<sup>108</sup> This concern has been translated into legal instruments through the *Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Domon Act, 2000* (Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act, 2000). The act in its sections five and six provides for very strict punitive measures against individuals involved in trafficking and in its section seven for individuals involved in kidnapping or abducting children and women.

The law also provides for special Women and Children Anti-Represion tribunals to hear and try cases expeditiously.

#### 8.1.1. Implementation and Implications of the Legal Provisions

During the Strategic Planning workshop of BNWLA (Dhaka, November, 2001), it was highlighted that the act appears to be 'too strict' and that judges are not usually comfortable with finding anyone guilty (the punishment is 'too harsh'). It has been said no one has yet been found guilty under the Act. Only one case is reported to be in process at present. The activists and NGO representatives were divided in their opinions of the Act, but everyone suggested that existing laws should be implemented properly even if changes are needed.<sup>110</sup>

On the other hand, legal enforcement is obstructed through corruption and faulty case filing. A study conducted by BNWLA finds that the law enforcement agents are involved in the issue of trafficking in two ways:

- 1) As those who enforce laws prohibiting trafficking, kidnapping, abduction, illegal



### **Section 5: Punishment for Trafficking in Women<sup>109</sup>**

- 1) Whoever brings from abroad or sends or traffics abroad, or buys or sells, or lets to hire or otherwise disposes of any women with the intention of using that women in prostitution or using for illicit intercourse or for any unlawful or immoral purpose, or for such a purpose keeps a women in his possession, care or Custody shall be punished with death sentence or life imprisonment maximum 20 years but minimum 10 years and in addition be liable to a monetary fine.
- 2) If any women is sold, hired or disposed of in any of her way to a prostitute or to any person who keeps or manages a brothel than the person who has disposed of her in that way, unless proven otherwise will be thought to have sold or disposed of the women for prostitution shall be punished according to above sub-section (1).
- 3) Whoever keeps or manages a brothel buys or hires or gets in their possession by any other way or keeps in their Custody any women, then unless proved otherwise, will be thought to have brought, hired or kept in their possession for use in prostitution shall be punished in accordance with the above sub-Section (1).

### **Section 6: Trafficking in Children**

- 1) Whoever brings from abroad sends or traffics abroad or buys or sells or otherwise keeps a child in his /her possession, care or custody with the intention of using the child for any unlawful or immoral purpose shall be punishable with death sentence or life imprisonment and shall also be liable for fine.
- 2) Whoever steals a newborn baby from hospital, child or maternity hospital, nursing home, clinic etc, or from the custody of concerned guardian shall be punishable in accordance with sub-section (1).

### **Section 7: Punishment for kidnapping and Abduction of Women and Children**

Whoever kidnaps or abducts any women and child expect with the intention of using them for any unlawful purpose mentioned in section-5 shall be punishable with life imprisonment or rigorous imprisonment for at least fourteen years and shall also, in addition to that, be liable to monetary fine.

border crossing, child labour and illegal marriage, and

- 2) As those implicit in the trafficking of women and children through the acceptance of bribes to allow illegal crossing and trafficking; by ignoring certain elements of cases which result in the shifting of cases from those of trafficking or abduction to those of passport violations; by losing crucial evidence; by assisting in the “escape” of those held in prison under trafficking charges; or simply by not pursuing investigations with the full vigour expected.<sup>111</sup>

According to another report<sup>112</sup>, the Border guards or police knowingly had charged traffickers with passport violations rather than under the Women and Children Oppression (Special provision) Act 1995 (*i.e.* the Act preceding the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act, 2000).

This helps to explain why traffickers seldom face difficulties from the legal mechanism even in the face of very harsh penalties. According to one media report, although under the 1995 Act the highest punishment had been 10 years’ imprisonment, by 1996 only 21 culprits had been convicted. The problem was further compounded as 10 were still at large.<sup>113</sup>

Women activists and child rights groups have also raised the limitation of including women and children under the same Act. They feel that the issue of child trafficking should be separated from that

Researchers interviewed a self-rescued girl survivor in Satkhira. At the time of the interview the girl had filed a case against the criminals. But a month later the family arranged for the girl to marry the man who was accused of trafficking her to a brothel in India. Consequently the case was withdrawn.

of trafficking in women. In a recent consultation meeting<sup>114</sup>, it was opined that protective measures may be welcomed for children but are not always acceptable for adult women. They regret that, in the name of protection, recently enacted laws prohibit low-skilled female workers from migrating to the Middle East for domestic service.<sup>115</sup>

It is also difficult to continue legal prosecution against accused traffickers in a court of law. One of the major constraints lies in the lack of witnesses and the unwillingness of family members of the trafficked children to continue the case. On many occasions the family members of the trafficked children withdraw the case against the accused traffickers because of pressure from the criminals and associated insecurity, or because of social pressure and stigma.

### 8.1.2. The SAARC Convention on Trafficking

A “SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution” was signed by SAARC member states during the 11<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit in Kathmandu from 4-6 January 2002. However, a large number of women and child activist groups and NGOs in Bangladesh and India have strong reservations against restricting the proposed convention to the area of ‘prostitution’. During discussions with the knowledge institutions the same opinion was expressed. The NGOs and activist groups all over the region have proposed several amendments to the Convention. One of the major concerns of the activists is that the scope of the Convention should be broadened beyond ‘trafficking for prostitution’.

## 8.2. Government and NGO Approaches and Interventions

NGOs became involved in the campaign against child trafficking long before the government formally acknowledged the existence of the

### SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution

#### ARTICLE 1: DEFINITIONS

- 1) “Child” means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years;
- 2) “Prostitution” means the sexual exploitation or abuse of persons for commercial purposes;
- 3) “Trafficking” means the moving, selling or buying of women and children (for prostitution) within the outside a country for monetary or other considerations with or without the consent of the person subjected to trafficking;
- 4) “Traffickers” means persons, agencies or institutions engaged in any form of trafficking;
- 5) “Persons subjected to trafficking” means women and children victimised (or forced into prostitution) by the traffickers by deception, threat, coercion, kidnapping, sale, fraudulent marriage, child marriage, or any other unlawful means;
- 6) “Protective home” means a home established or recognised by a Government of a Member State for the reception, care, treatment and rehabilitation of rescued or arrested persons subjected to trafficking.

problem. Indeed, one of the achievements of the NGOs is facilitating a process of dialogue and co-operation with the government towards formal recognition of the problem. Presently, the Government of Bangladesh not only recognises the existence of trafficking in children, but also implements projects to combat it.

Awareness of the problem of trafficking in women and children has increased among the development practitioners (NGOs), international development partners, and even among different government agencies and policy makers through a series of research initiatives carried out in recent years. The research and studies can be classified into four categories:

- National survey
- Sample studies in pocket areas

- Review of media reporting on incident of trafficking
- Review of literature (*i.e.* review of research report, workshop reports etc.)

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) of the Government of Bangladesh has recently launched a three-year pilot project, '*Child Development Coordinated Program to Combat Child Trafficking, Pilot Project 1*', to combat child and women trafficking. The project is supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

The project aims to combat women and child trafficking to India, Pakistan, and the Middle East from 14 districts through 25 *upazillas* situated along the Indian border.<sup>116</sup> The project is expected to contribute to more effective rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of trafficked children and to the dispensation of justice in the field of trafficking. The project also aims to develop and administrative set-up and mechanisms in the government at different administrative levels (*e.g.* national, district, and *thana*) in order to combat child trafficking.<sup>117</sup>

The NGOs underscore the need for a more proactive role by the government and strong political commitment as preconditions for successful and sustainable interventions to combat trafficking in children. Again, both confrontation and co-operation have been adopted by the NGOs as the strategic means of interaction with the government.

The Government of Bangladesh, under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, has recently moved to create a *National Plan of Action to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, including Trafficking*. The planning process included government, NGOs, INGOs and other

international development partners working in the field of trafficking and sexual exploitation in children.

The National Plan is expected to be the policy guideline of the Government in the areas of prevention, protection, recovery, and reintegration, and monitoring and co-ordination. The plan also envisages the involvement of children and national and international organisations in the process of implementation.

Some NGOs are working to combat trafficking in women and children and prostitution mainly with an advocacy strategy, while others are focused on legal aspects and interventions concerning rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors of trafficking.

The current activities of the NGOs can be divided as follows:

1. Research
2. Strengthening anti-trafficking networks
3. Capacity building (*e.g.* police training, TOT, NGO staff training)
4. Awareness raising campaigns
5. Community surveillance
6. Networking
7. Policy level advocacy
8. Prosecution and protection
9. Rescue and legal support
10. Repatriation
11. Rehabilitation (shelter and support for skills development and livelihoods)

The NGOs receive information about these cases either through the media or when they undertake research. Sometimes they receive information through local partner NGOs and organisations. Whenever a case is reported in the media, they try

Table: 8.1

**Matrix of Anti-Trafficking Interventions**

| <b>APPROACHES</b>  | <b>NGOs*</b>   | <b>GOB</b>   | <b>FUNDING AGENCY*</b>   |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Preventive</b></p> <p>Workshop, seminar, consultation meeting with different level officials, grass roots/village level meeting, IEC materials distribution, rally, formation of networks at different levels with different professionals, development of monitoring indicators, Capacity building of staff members/group members, training of law enforcement agencies, Research and Studies, lobbying and advocacy etc.</p> | <p>ATSEC (a network of 14 NGOs), ACD, ASK, BSAF, BNWLA, BITA, CWCS, CCDB, DAM, INCIDIN Bangladesh, Rights Jessore, Mukti, Resource- Bangladesh, TCSD, UDDIPAN, UBINIG and others</p> | <p>Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Homes</p> | <p>Action Aid-Bangladesh/ DFID, Asia foundation, British Council, CIDA, DANIDA, DFID, EU, ILO-IPEC, IOM, NORAD, Save the Children Denmark, and UK, USAID, UNICEF, UNIFEM</p> |
| <p><b>CURATIVE</b></p> <p>Rescue, repatriation, legal aid, medical treatment, shelter home support, safe custody, psychosocial counselling, recreation facility, skill development, education support, study tours, rehabilitation/ integration etc.</p>   | <p>ACD, ASK, BNWLA, DAM, INCIDIN Bangladesh</p>  | <p>Ministry of Women and Children Affairs</p>                    | <p>SIDA, NORAD, USAID, The Asia Foundation, Save the Children Denmark, UNESCO, ILO-IPEC</p>  |

\* Each NGO works in specific areas within the preventive and curative approaches.

to follow it up and usually they have to rescue the trafficked children from brothels or police custody.<sup>118</sup>

### 8.3. Rescue and Reintegration: Challenges and Constraints

The study collected information about the rescue and reintegration process from 94 child survivors of trafficking. However, the study findings should be seen only as an overview. A separate study is necessary in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the quality of the on going interventions in order to frame a way forward.

#### 8.3.1. The Rescue Process and Constraints

The trafficked state may end with a rescue for the children who are 'fortunate'. The study has identified that a significant portion of the child survivors of trafficking were rescued through self or community initiatives. Among the children who were rescued through an agency, the NGOs appeared to be the major means. Apart from that, Bangladesh Police and BDR, members of law

enforcement agencies, border security forces, and immigration officials in destination countries (in cases of external trafficking) were the other agencies of rescue.

Table 8.2 displays that among the sample of the rescued trafficked survivors, almost one half were residing in NGO shelters while only three percent were staying at their respective homes. This is because the sample selection process primarily included children staying at the NGO shelters or reached by NGO services.

The NGOs working in the field of rescue, repatriation, and rehabilitation have expressed that the lack of bilateral treaties or regional agreements among countries makes it very difficult to arrange repatriation. This causes delays and bureaucratic harassment<sup>119</sup>.

Moreover, the researchers identified a lack of sensitivity on the part of 'institutional rescuers' to the opinions of the children regarding the

repatriation and rehabilitation process. In other words, the children have little role to play in the process of rescue, repatriation, and rehabilitation decision-making.<sup>120</sup>

Through the interactions with these rescued child survivors of trafficking, the study identifies several complexities of the rescue process. Those trafficked children who organised self-rescue, in contrast, had to take the whole responsibility themselves, or at best received assistance from the community. Thus there is a gap between institutional approaches and community initiatives, and both suffer from lack of legal support.

### 8.3.2. The Quality of Interventions and Challenges

The majority of the children attending the NGO-run drop-in centres viewed the facilities as stepping-stones to the NGO shelters. In other words the child survivors assessed the role of the drop-in centre to be limited to linking the children with the ‘real rescue facilities’ (*i.e.* the shelter homes).

Chart 8.1  
Means of Rescue Reported by Child Survivors

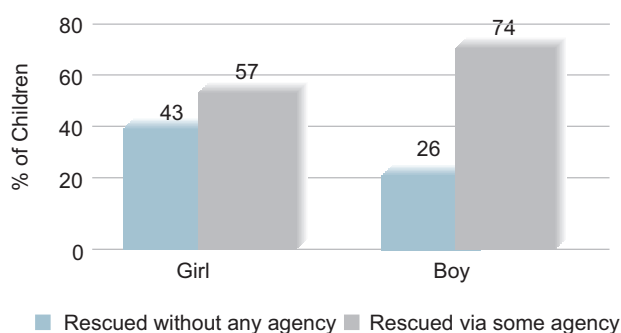


Chart 8.1 reveals that a considerable percentage of girls and boys have been rescued without the help of any formal agency.

#### Father of a trafficked girl:

Sreerampur, Patgram

*“My daughter managed to rescue herself with the help of Indian police but got trapped in an Indian prison.”*

The girl, Rinu, was kept in Siliguri, India. She was allegedly sold for Tk. 30,000. In a small room she was kept under lock and key and forced into prostitution. “My daughter was lucky,” the father said. “One day she could see one of our Hindu neighbours through the window. The man was visiting a relative in Siliguri”. Rinu got the attention of the man, who then organised a rescue with the help of the Modinipur police force. *One and half a months after rescue*, she finally returned home with the help of a police officer from Patgram Thana. *“If the police officer had not taken the informal initiative, my daughter would still remain in an Indian prison”*.

At the same time the still not rescued trafficked children (*i.e.* the trafficked children engaged in street prostitution) identified that the drop-in centres failed to meet their major demand of ‘safe night shelter’ (58 percent). Besides, lack of security for valuables (8 percent), lack of job placement facilities (8 percent), unhygienic environments (8 percent), and overcrowding (17 percent) were some other features of the existing NGO drop-in centres that the children did not appreciate (Table 8.3).

On the other hand, the study identifies that the main challenge facing the NGOs lies in ensuring ‘freedom’ of the rescued children. A large percentage of children (70 percent of the girls and 68 percent of the boys) from the NGO shelters revealed their feeling of ‘re-imprisonment’ in the controlled environment of the shelter facilities. Recalling his experience as a camel jockey, one boy in an NGO shelter said, “I was in danger in Dubai, but I had more freedom and fun”.

Table 8.2

**Present Locations of Trafficked Children**

| PRESENT LOCATION | TRAFFICKED CHILDREN |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
|                  | 5-9 yr. (%) N=9     |            |            | 10-14 yr. (%)N=27 |            |            | 15-18 yr. (%)N=58 |            |            | Total (%) N=94 |            |            |
|                  | Girl                | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl              | Boy        | Total      | Girl           | Boy        | Total      |
| Drop-in Centre   |                     |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
| INCIDIN          | 60.0                |            | 33.3       | 28.6              | 15.4       | 22.2       | 42.9              |            | 36.2       | 41.2           | 7.7        | 31.9       |
| Nari Moitree     | 20.0                |            | 11.1       | 28.6              |            | 14.8       | 4.1               |            | 3.4        | 10.3           |            | 7.4        |
| Shelter Home     |                     |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
| BNWLA            | 20.0                | 75.0       | 44.4       | 21.4              | 30.8       | 25.9       | 38.8              | 44.4       | 39.7       | 33.8           | 42.3       | 36.2       |
| ACD              |                     |            |            | 14.3              | 23.1       | 18.5       | 6.1               | 22.2       | 8.6        | 7.4            | 19.2       | 10.6       |
| Others           |                     |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
| Own Home         |                     |            |            |                   |            |            | 4.1               | 11.1       | 5.2        | 2.9            | 3.8        | 3.2        |
| Street           |                     |            |            |                   | 30.8       | 14.8       |                   |            | 3.4        |                | 23.1       | 6.4        |
| Govt. Half way   |                     | 25.0       | 11.1       | 7.1               |            | 3.7        | 4.1               |            | 3.4        | 4.4            | 3.8        | 4.3        |
| Shelter Home     |                     |            |            |                   |            |            |                   |            |            |                |            |            |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>100</b>          | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>100</b> |

The study found that the trafficked children frequently have negative attitudes towards the government-run shelters. They reported poor quality of food and, alarmingly, two girls have reported physical and sexual abuse within the shelter.

A large portion of the trafficked children engaged in prostitution complains that the major problem with the NGO drop-in centres is that they do not provide night shelter. Yet the children assess the shelter homes as being disempowering. This is a dilemma that the study not only identifies but also urges should be addressed.

Chart 8.2

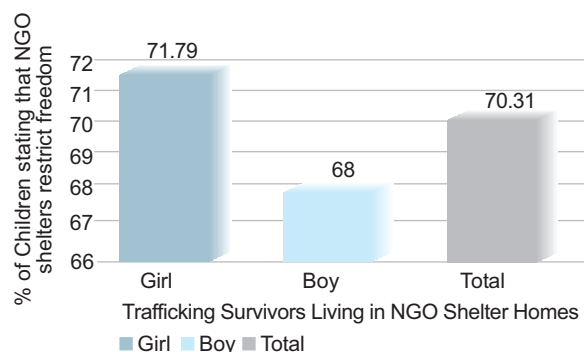
**Children's Assessment of Freedom in NGO Shelters**

Table 8.3

**Children's Assessment of NGO Drop-in Centres**

| What do the children dislike?        | % of the Child Survivors |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| No scope of night time shelter       | 58.33                    |
| Lack of security of money/belongings | 8.33                     |
| No Job Placement Facility            | 8.33                     |
| Overcrowding                         | 16.67                    |
| Unhygienic environment               | 8.33                     |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>100</b>               |

Thus while the trafficked children view the NGO shelters as windows of 'rescue', the rescued children at those shelter homes seriously doubt whether their status has changed in real terms and not in terms of 'actual' rescue from the 'disempowered' state of trafficking.

In general the study reflects that the drop-in centres must be further developed to perform the role of reception, assessment and placement of the children and the shelters and reintegration mechanisms needs to be capacitated to facilitate empowerment and psychological reintegration along with viable economic and social reintegration.

## 8.4. Sub-conclusions

The country's legal framework fails to protect child trafficking victims. In fact, it victimises them and makes them criminals. The process of rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration is hampered by the legal framework and by a lack of regional and bilateral agreements. Those who survive child trafficking have little say in how institutions seek to assist them, and their rehabilitation and reintegration is hampered by the stigma associated with their experiences. Addressing these problems requires an integrated process involving all stakeholders.

The NGOs managing shelters reported that they need to keep the children in a strictly controlled environment because a large number of the survivors have court cases or need to be protected from the threat of the pimps and others with vested interests. The NGOs also reported that they are only recently strongly feeling the need for a 'psychosocial rescue' and rehabilitation of the trafficking survivors. In this regard they lack planning, strategy, expertise, and infrastructure as well as financial resources.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, *National Plan of Action for Children* (1999), p.108.

<sup>109</sup> This box presents an unofficial English translation of the Act.

<sup>110</sup> BNWLA's official report on the workshop is in progress, Dhaka, 2001.

<sup>111</sup> BNWLA, *Survey in the Area of Child and Women Trafficking*, Dhaka, 1997.

<sup>112</sup> Shamim, Ishrat, 1995.

<sup>113</sup> *The Independent*, 25 September 1996

<sup>114</sup> INCIDIN Bangladesh – People's Empowerment Trust, *Consultation on the Role of Civil Society in Combating Trafficking in Women and Children*, unpublished proceedings of the consultation meet held in Dhaka, November, 2001.

<sup>115</sup> The Emigration Ordinance, 1982 and discussion with IOM representative indicate that adult women and children are put under protective measure in international movement. As for example in 1997, the government's ban on migration of unskilled women (as industrial workers, house maids, nurses or any other job overseas other than 'highly technical professional women') was portrayed as a protective measure. Although, in the face of opposition from NGOs and women's rights activists, the ban was lifted, the ban remains for women household aids (an exemption has been made for women working for a few categories of employers such as Bangladesh embassy staff).

<sup>116</sup> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, *Project Proforma* (PP) Dhaka: May 2000.

<sup>117</sup> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Project Proforma (PP) 'Child Development: Coordinated Programme to Combat Child Trafficking (Pilot Project)', Dhaka, May 2000; and also Dr Kazi Saleh Ahmed, Mrs Gule Afruz Mahbub and Dr Jyoti Sanghera, 'Appraisal of the PCP: Coordinated Programme for the Elimination of Child Trafficking,' Final Report, 20 July 1998.

<sup>118</sup> INCIDIN Bangladesh, *Status Report on: Women And Child Trafficking Situation in Bangladesh*, prepared for UN Special Rapporteur for Violence against Women, OXFAM (GB)- INCIDIN Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2000.

<sup>119</sup> Researchers' own notes, Strategic Workshop, BNWLA, 2001

<sup>120</sup> Researchers' own notes, from the workshop "Minds of the Survivors: A South Asian Consultation Program" organised by Sharthak, Delhi, India, 3-4 October, 2001.

<sup>121</sup> Researchers' own notes, from the workshop "Minds of the Survivors: A South Asian Consultation Program" organised by Sharthak, Delhi, India, 3-4 October, 2001.

## Recommendations

The study covered a wide range of issues with respect to the conceptual, structural, and operational aspects of trafficking in children. In general, it indicates that the trafficking process in children is both a socio-cultural and a criminal process. The study also stresses the importance of developing a collaborative approach among national, regional, and international actors with long-term commitments and planning to address the problem of trafficking in children.

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the study.

### 9.1. Recommendations

The trafficking process must be conceptualised from the perspective of child survivors. This study's recommendations are consistent with that broad objective. To achieve it, changes in attitudes and an understanding of the actors in the anti-trafficking intervention sector are necessary. Structural, procedural, and legal changes will be required in all of the involved countries (origin-transit-destination) as well.

#### 9.1.1. Review of Definitions

It is essential to review the definitions of

trafficking in order to address the results of trafficking. The abusive and exploitative employment and environments in which child survivors of trafficking are maintained must be recognised and emphasised. This process should also focus on decriminalising the survivors of trafficking. Initiating and facilitating public consultation will strengthen, not undermine, existing international and multinational declarations.

#### 9.1.2. Communicative Language

Development actors should move cautiously to understand and work, as far as possible, within the existing public discourse regarding child trafficking. Acknowledging the discursive distinction between grassroots communities and development agencies will facilitate better communication in terms of developing, sharing, and receiving information and knowledge.

#### 9.1.3. Awareness Raising Campaigns

In addition to awareness raising campaigns for community members at risk of trafficking, it is necessary to work together with the communities to identify means of putting knowledge into practice. This is a major challenge facing policy



makers and change agents. External actors such as NGOs should also properly understand community level knowledge. In addition to delivering and correcting knowledge, awareness raising campaigns must address the consequences and costs of not putting knowledge into practice. NGOs must be more active as information sources for grassroots level households at risk and, more precisely, for the children of marginal families. This can contribute immensely to creating access to institutional information about trafficking.

#### **9.1.4. NGO Strategy for Marginalised Households**

NGOs working to combat child trafficking must review their existing membership selection criteria to ensure that marginal rural and urban communities are included in their overall development schemes and not addressed only through awareness raising programs. Poverty alleviation programs must be undertaken to meet the needs of these communities. A new strategy for, and approach to, empowerment may be required. More importantly, marginal households and their children require organisation-building assistance from the NGOs. Clubs for adolescent girls and boys, as well as other participatory groups, appear to be highly appropriate for knowledge building, information networking, empowering and protecting the children.

#### **9.1.5. Education as Protective and Curative Means**

Both mainstream schools and non-formal schools run by NGOs should incorporate child trafficking issues in their curricula. Education can help protect at-risk children and change attitudes toward rehabilitation and reintegration, but measures are required to ensure that children are not exposed to increased trafficking risks through

greater visibility and mobility. Such measures are necessary in order to neutralise any unforeseen negative consequences of good interventions.

#### **9.1.6. Greater Participation of Child Survivors**

The rescue, repatriation, and reintegration processes must create space for child survivors to express their opinions and must focus on empowering these children to take charge of their own situations. Voluntary participation by the children and their best interests should be the guiding principles in designing and implementing any rescue, repatriation, and reintegration activities.

#### **9.1.7. Quality of Service**

NGO and government service providers must ensure the quality of the services (*e.g.* drop-in-centres, shelters, legal aid.) they offer. Children's opinions should be taken into consideration, and all services should empower child survivors. Viable psychological, social, and economic care plans should be prepared in consultation with individual survivors. The roles of different actors require clarification. Drop-in centres should be viewed as reception and assessment centres, and the rescue and reintegration process should be performed by agencies able to remove children from the trafficked state. Quality counselling is essential to enable the children to deal with their trauma and regain control over their lives. An independent body to monitor the quality of service and to solicit the opinions of the children is recommended.

#### **9.1.8. Increased Community Participation**

Increased community participation is recommended to address the hidden status of the problem of child trafficking. Local NGOs, elected bodies, community-based organisations, and

community watch groups are possible vehicles for facilitating increased and more effective community participation. These bodies (such as Union Parishad) can introduce a form of record keeping, the mobility register, to monitor child mobility.

#### **9.1.9. Winning New Partners to Combat Trafficking**

New partners to help combat organised trafficking networks should be found and brought to the cause. Transport workers and hotel staff and management can be very effective in bringing down the criminal chain from within. Capacity building and motivational interventions will have to be carefully designed and implemented before these new partners can be made operational.

#### **9.1.10. Interventions that Empower**

The study highlights the immediate need to bring in favourable national and international policy regimes to facilitate the voluntary repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of child trafficking survivors. Bilateral treaties can play a very effective role. Equally important is the new regional SAARC Convention. All interventions must focus on the empowerment of survivors by ensuring their effective participation in every phase of the process. Rescuing trafficked children does not mean physically transferring them to another equally disempowering environment in the name of protection.

#### **9.1.11. Capacity Building of Partners**

Capacity building of law enforcement agencies, the border security force, and relevant government ministries (*e.g.* Ministry of Women and Children's

Affairs, Home Ministry), and NGOs is necessary to develop and implement child-focused anti-trafficking interventions. Those providing shelter and rehabilitation facilities must build greater capacity to address the psychosocial needs of child survivors. In this regard, counselling is not only a cure—it can also function as a means of protection. For this, both the survivors and the potential victims of trafficking must be covered (*e.g.* counselling children from dysfunctional families will help empower them to deal with their problems at home).

#### **9.1.12. Future Studies**

Future studies should address three areas in greater detail: the trafficking network, the anti-trafficking sector, and communities at the grassroots level. Studies of specific sectors, such as transport workers, that can play effective roles in combating trafficking are highly recommended. An assessment of the existing interventions—from the perspective of the survivors—is necessary. Identifying ways to operationalise community actors, resources, and knowledge to combat child trafficking will contribute added value to awareness raising campaigns. An assessment of legal instruments, existing infrastructures, and procedures with respect to survivors' empowerment and justice will also contribute to improved intervention strategies. Market surveys to develop effective economic development schemes for vulnerable households and child survivors of trafficking are needed.<sup>1</sup> These studies should cover origin-transit and destination areas (regionally) and be updated regularly. A comprehensive baseline survey should also be able to take into account changes over time.

<sup>122</sup> This last recommendation has been put forward in the Preliminary Findings Sharing Workshop of the study held in Dhaka, 7 November 2001.



## Annex 1

### List of Knowledge Institutes and Persons Interviewed

#### Local NGOs/Branch Offices of National NGOs

1. Ms. Salima Sarwar  
Executive Director  
Association for Community Development (ACD), Rajshahi
2. Mr. Jahangir Hussain  
Field Co-ordinator  
RDRS, Patgram, Lalmonirhat
3. Mr. Swapan Guha  
Executive Director  
Rupantar, Khulna
4. Mr. Azam Khan  
Officer  
BRAC, Patgram Branch, Lalmonirhat
5. Ms. Seema Rani Pal  
CNO  
SHED, Teknaf
6. Mr. Madab Kumar Dutta  
Executive Director  
Swadesh, Satkhira
7. Mr. Anisur Rahman  
Executive Director  
Barsha, Satkhira
8. Mr. Abdus Sabur  
Executive Director  
Aragati Satkhira

#### National NGOs and Agencies

- Advocate Ms. Salma Ali  
*Executive Director, BNWLA, Dhaka*
- Mr. Emranul Haque Chowdhury  
*Executive Director, UDDIPAN, Dhaka*
- Mr. Mohammadur Rahman  
*MAP Photo Agency, Dhaka*
- Networks  
*Mr. Mizanur Rahman  
Project Director/ATSEC, Dhaka*
- Mr. Ratan Sarkar  
*Team Leader, Action Aid Anti-Trafficking Core Group, Dhaka*

#### International Agencies

- Mr. Masud Hasan Siddique  
*National Program Co-ordinator/ILO-South Asian Sub-Regional Program to Combat Trafficking in Children, Dhaka*
- Ms. Helen T. Thomas  
*ADB Study Team Leader, Dhaka*
- Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque  
*Regional Representative, IOM, Dhaka*
- Ms. Rina Sen Gupta  
*Program Officer, IOM, Dhaka*

## Annex 2

### Research Team Members

#### Principal Researcher

1. Mr. A.K.M. Masud Ali

#### Senior Researchers

1. Mr. A.K.M. Mustaque Ali
2. Mr. Ratan Sarkar
3. Mr. Nasimul Ahsan
4. Mr. Zakir Hossain
5. Mr. Toffazal Hossain
6. Mr. Shakhawat Hossain
7. Mr. K. Reaz Hossain
8. Mr. Md. Abul Hayat
9. Mr. Mohammad Shahid Ullah

#### Research Assistants

1. Mr. Rafiqul Islam
2. Ms. Umma Habiba
3. Ms. Ferdowshi Begum
4. Ms. Risalatunnahar
5. Ms. Jesmin Akter
6. Ms. Shahanaz Afroz
7. Ms. Lutfu Begum
8. Ms. Shilpi Chowdhury
9. Ms. Sk. Jesmin Nahar
10. Ms. Mst. Maksuda Khatun
11. Ms. Alimun Naher
12. Mr. Abu Sina Md. Sirajul Islam
13. Mr. Nuruzzaman Bali

14. Mr. Md. Zamil Ashraf
15. Mr. Shaikh Saiful Islam
16. Ms. Sadia Islam (Himu)
17. Mr. Shek Muhammad Anuarul Kabir
18. Mr. Md. Shafiullah
19. Mr. Md. Kamal Hossain
20. Mr. Abdul Karim
21. Mr. Md. Jahedul Anwar
22. Mr. Md. Nazrul Islam
23. Mrs. Shamsun Nahar (Nizu)
24. Ms. Kazi Taslima Khanom
25. Ms. Khaleda Akhter
26. Ms. Shaheda Islam
27. Mr. Md. Emdadul Haque Bhuiyan
28. Ms. Israt Jahan
29. Mr. Md. Aminul Islam
30. Ms Fahmida Sharmin
31. Ms. Saad M. Faisal

#### Management

1. Ms. Umma Habiba
2. Ms. Ferdowshi Begum

A local NGO worker, Mr. Joedev Ghosh, conducted the in-depth interview of a ghat owner. District Co-ordinator, Bangladesh Vision, Sultanpur, Palpara, Satkhira.

## Annex 3

### Workshop Participants

Participants in the Workshop on the Preliminary Findings of the *Rapid Assessment on Trafficking in Children for Exploitative Employment in Bangladesh*, 07 November 2001 at WVA Auditorium, Dhanmondi, Dhaka

|                        |   |                           |           |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------|
| ACD                    | 1 | IOM                       | 1         |
| Action Aid             | 1 | Manab Kallyan Parishad    | 1         |
| ADB MANILA             | 2 | Nari Maitree              | 1         |
| Ajker Kagoj            | 1 | Other Local NGOs          | 6         |
| Ansar VDP Head quarter | 1 | Police Head Quarter       | 1         |
| ATSEC                  | 1 | Red Barnet                | 1         |
| BMSF                   | 3 | Right Jessore             | 1         |
| BNWLA                  | 1 | SAP                       | 1         |
| BSAF                   | 1 | SCUK                      | 1         |
| CDR                    | 2 | Shishu Adiker Sangjog     | 1         |
| CHC/CIDA               | 1 | SUPK – Dinajpur           | 2         |
| CPCCT                  | 1 | The Ittefaq               | 1         |
| CWCS                   | 2 | UCEP-Bangladesh           | 1         |
| DAM                    | 1 | UDDIPAN                   | 1         |
| EC –Delegation         | 2 | USIA                      | 1         |
| ILO                    | 4 | <b>Total Participants</b> | <b>51</b> |
| INCIDIN Bangladesh     | 5 |                           |           |

## Annex 4

### Interview with a *Ghat* Owner

1. What fee does the illegal border network charge to each *dhur* (migration seeker) from *Jugibari* to *Moslandpur* (India) at different transit points?

| TRANSIT POINTS/ILLEGAL FEE COLLECTORS                  | TK.   |
|--|-------|
| Jugibari <i>thana</i> duty                             | 60/=  |
| Badiali <i>ghat</i> BDR camp                           | 50/=  |
| Crossing the river by boat                             | 15/=  |
| Charge of <i>Dalal</i> to reach Hakimpur               | 60/=  |
| Commission of Hakimpur <i>ghat</i>                     | 80/=  |
| Charge of <i>Dalal</i> to reach Hakimpur to Moslandpur | 40/=  |
| Charge of <i>Dalal</i> to reach Jatribari to Jugibari  | 100/= |
| Total  | 405/= |

The fee is on a per person basis. *Dhurs* have to bear transport and food costs.

2. How many persons cross the border every day?

| TYPES OF <i>DHURS</i> | DESTINATION   |             |          | <i>DHURS</i> BY RELIGION |        |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|--------|
|                       | Tour to India | Bombay city | Pakistan | Hindu                    | Muslim |
| Woman                 | 5             | 2           | 0        | 5                        | 0      |
| Man                   | 5             | 2           | 2        | 4                        | 1      |
| Child                 | 2             | 0           | 0        | 2                        | 0      |
| Total                 | 12            | 4/month     | 2/month  | 11                       | 1      |

Of those who are going to India for tours, the majority are Hindu. In the case of Pakistan 100% are Muslim.

3. What is the pattern of income and expenditure of a *Ghat* Owner?

| DESTINATION FOR WHICH FEES ARE COLLECTED | INCOME IN TK. (MONTHLY) |
|--|-------------------------|
| India                                    | 18,000/=                |
| Bombay                                   | 4,000/=                 |
| Pakistan                                 | 20,000/=                |
| Total                                    | 18,600/=                |

| EXPENDITURE/MONTH                                 | IN TAKA |
|---|---------|
| Thana charge                                      | 4,000/= |
| BDR camp charge                                   | 2,000/= |
| Charge of miscreants/Chandabaz                    | 5,000/= |
| Charge of duty holder                             | 1,000/= |
| Entertainment cost for Police, BDR and DSB people | 5,000/= |
| Total   | 8,000/= |

Net income, (TK. 18,600 - TK. 8,000) = TK. 10,600/month

If there are two *ghat* owners working together, this money will be divided into two, and each owner will get half. This income fluctuates.

4. The amount of money charged by the *ghat* owner for Bombay and Pakistan:

Per head amount of contact for Bombay = 1000/=

Per head amount of contact for Pakistan = 5000/=

**A change of agent occurs 4 times to reach Bombay and 6 to 7 times to reach Pakistan.**

5. Connections between *dalals* and *ghat* owners:  
The relationship between *dalals* and *ghat* owners is built on trust, and they behave well with travellers. *Ghat* owners know that their businesses depend on their reputations and good behaviour. If they damage their reputations, the *dalals* will not be able to obtain their *dhur* customers and they won't make any money. *Ghat* owners give more commissions to those *dalals* who can collect more *dhur*.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Ghat</i> owner (one or two persons) | To manage <i>thana</i> , BDR, DSB and <i>chandabaz</i> (illegal toll collector) and manage accommodation for untimely travellers. As well as appropriate management of <i>ghat</i> |
| Duty Collector (one person)            | To collect tolls from passengers and put it to fund.   |
| <i>Ghat</i> crossing <i>Dalal</i>      | To help passengers cross the border with security  |
| Accommodation manager and entertainer  | If a <i>dhur</i> fails to cross the border then they manage food and accommodation   |

6. Structure and responsibility of *ghat* agent:

7. Is there another route for the trafficking or sale of human beings?

No, there is no other route for trafficking. If we know there is trafficking, we charge more. Those being trafficked do not understand the situation—*dalals* promise them jobs with better salaries.

“**Mawla**”<sup>123</sup>

Jugibari, Kolaroa, Satkhira

Information collected by Joedev Ghosh  
District Co-ordinator, Bangladesh Vision  
Sultanpur, Palpara  
Satkhira

<sup>123</sup> Fictitious name



## Annex 5

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**Trafficking in Children - South Asia (TICSA)**

**International Programme on the  
Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)  
International Labour Organization**

TICSA Project - Bangladesh Chapter  
House # 8/A/Ka, Road # 13 (new)  
Dhanmondia R/A, Dhaka 1209  
Bangladesh  
Phone # (0) 8802-913 6219  
Fax # (0) 8802-811 4211  
Email: ticsabd1@hrcworks.com or tine@ilo.org

<http://www.ilo.org>