Durham University

Durham E-Theses

Understanding children's rights: Perspectives from street children in Dhaka

IQBAL AHMED

How to cite:

AHMED, IQBAL (2024) Understanding children's rights: Perspectives from street children in Dhaka. Masters thesis, Durham University.

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/15579/ is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the full Durham E-Theses policy for further details.

Academic Support Office, The Palatine Centre, Durham University, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3LE
e-mail: e-theses.admin@durham.ac.uk Tel: +44 0191 334 6107
https://etheses.durham.ac.uk

Understanding children's rights: Perspectives from street children in Dhaka

Iqbal Ahmed

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy
Department of Geography, Durham University

2024

Abstract

In this thesis, I critically aim to examine how rights are understood and articulated by street children in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The relationship between children's rights as commissioned in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the implementation of them has garnered considerable attention from scholars in Geography and other cognate fields in social science such as sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and development studies. Yet, there are significant issues that have not been addressed in detail. My thesis aims to contribute to existing knowledge and understanding through providing further insight into children's rights from their own perspectives that emerge from specific cultural contexts in Bangladesh. To this end, I will focus on the ways in which children discuss and understand the meaning of rights; the ways in which the meaning of rights is understood from children's everyday lives; the daily struggle and power dynamics between adults and children that may affect the process of children's understanding of rights.

I engage with children in three sites in Dhaka, represented by three collaborating NGOs, using interviews, observations, and visual methods. Learning about children's perspectives requires adopting strategies to understand their everyday lives. The methods I choose are particularly important to discovering the linkages between the lives of the children and that of adults who often have a dominant role in their lives. I discuss critically the linkages among children's rights, children's everyday lives, and adult intervention in Bangladesh. To engage with the aims and purposes of this thesis, I use an ethnographic approach, which helps me to understand children's experiences and views of their lives in which the meaning of rights is intricately connected with participation and citizenship. The approach further draws me to children's decision-making abilities and choices. These are often laden with children's powerlessness. The interrogation of children's lives exposes the challenges of promoting their voices within geographical circumstances of marginalisation and power struggle. The thesis demonstrated how street children imagined and articulated rights from their own lived experiences. However, there is a need to pay further attention to the opportunities they do not *get* to talk about their rights. In this vein, it concludes by recognising that further research in children's geographies on how children's voices can foreground new debates and discussions about enhancing the status of marginalised children and their rights across societies.

Table of contents

Acronyms 6
Tables of figures 7
Glossary 9
Statement of copyright 16
Publications from the thesis 17
Acknowledgement 18
Dedication 21
1.0 Chapter One: Understanding rights of street children in Bangladesh 22
1.1 Research aim 22
1.2 Focus of thesis 24
1.3 The CRC – the platform for children's rights 27
1.5 Definitions 30
1.6 Vocabulary from the street 37
1.7 Context of Dhaka 42
1.8 Thesis structure 45
2.0 Chapter Two: The concepts 48
2.1 Introduction 48
2.2 Locating rights for street children 49
2.2.1 Children's rights 50
2.2.2 Citizenship 52
2.2.3 Participation 57
2.3 Children's Geographies 65
2.3.1 Approaches to childhood 68
2.3.2 Deconstructing childhood 70
2.3.3 Multiplicity of childhood 76
2.4 Geographies of street children 81
2.4.1 Survival 84
2.4.2 Presence of power in children's lives 85
2.4.3 NGOs and their effect on children's rights 90
2.5 Conclusion 93
3.0 Chapter Three: Methodology -- steps in learning about children's rights 95
3.1 Introduction 95

3.2 Context of the fieldwork 98
3.3 On to the field 99
3.4 Multi-sited approach: The fieldwork canvas 102
3.5 Encountering the children 109
3.6 Identity: Lost in translation 118
3.7 Power of the field 119
3.8 Ethics of fieldwork 125
3.9 Research methods: Tools of the research process 129
3.10 Departure and data analysis 140
3.11 Conclusion 145
4.0 Chapter Four: Our rights, our voices 147
4.1 Introduction 148
4.2 Who are we (not)? 150
4.3 *I want to eat on a nice plate*: anthology of *moulik* rights 153
4.4 Give us a proper burial 156
4.5 Give us a chance to talk 165
4.6 Reflections on our rights, our voices 171
4.7 Conclusion 174
5.0 Chapter Five: Our lives, our rights 177
5.1 Introduction 178
5.2 A prelude to urban and marginal childhood(s) in Dhaka 180
5.3 Playing and living: Children in the Dhanmondi Lake Park 182
5.4 Of becoming: Children at crossroads 189
5.5 Stuck in struggle 193
5.6 Reflections on children's everyday lives 196
5.7 Conclusion 199
6.0 Chapter Six: Our streets, our voices 201
6.1 Introduction 202
6.2 Survival: I want to have a good life 203
6.3 Power and right: *Here we can dream* 208
6.4 Presence of NGOs in children's lives: We are *vaggoban* to have them 211
6.5 Powerlessness: *Gaan geye ki hobe?* 216
6.6 Reflection: our streets, our voices 226
6.7 Conclusion 231
7.0 Conclusion: (Re)-locating rights of street children in Dhaka 232

7.1 Introduction 233
7.2 Re-visiting the research questions 234
7.3 Gaps/limitation of the thesis 246
7.4 Key contributions for policy and/or practice 248
7.5 Future research 253
7.6 A return to the shelter: We are Free 254
Appendices 256
Bibliography 264

Acronyms

Alor Pothe Nobojatray (APON) Foundation	APON Foundation
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	ACRWC
Bangladesh Social Science Research Council	BSSRC
International Centre for Climate Change and Development	ICCCAD
Strategic Economic and Environmental Programme	SEEP
Urban Development Programme	UDP
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	UNCRC
World Food Programme	WFP

Tables of figures

Fig. 1. A group of street children in Dhanmondi, near the park.

Fig. 2. A session with the SEEP children at Mirur shelter.

Fig. 3. Dhanmondi Lake Park.

Fig. 4. An APON Foundation site. The programs for children are written on the wall.

Fig. 5. A tea shop where one of the Korail children worked.

Fig. 6. A satellite image of the Korail informal settlement in Dhaka.

Fig. 7. Drawing of 'home' by a child at Mirpur shelter.

Fig. 8. A snack session I organised for children in Korail.

Fig. 9. With the members of Korail community, including my gatekeepers.

Fig. 10. My campus card.

Fig. 11. Children in the park setting up their space for the informal school.

Fig. 12. Having tea with the boys in Korail informal settlement.

Fig. 13. Children drawings.

Fig. 14. Gifts from the children -- a notebook from APON children.

Fig. 15. Children at the Mirpur shelter made a replica of my t-shirt.

Fig. 16. I am wearing the blue t-shirt and holding the replica of it.

Fig. 17. 'We are free' -- children's drawing in Mirpur shelter.

Fig. 18. A graveyard near their shelter in Mirpur.

Figs. 19-20. A guy sleeping next to a grave while dogs roam nearby.

Fig. 21. The Arabic writings in black at the base are the identification of the dead.

Fig. 22. A girl at Mirpur shelter looking out the window.

Fig. 23. Two litter pickers in the Gulshan/Mohakhali area.

Fig. 24. A boy collecting litters from the ground.

Fig. 25. A boy from APON Foundation sitting on the edge of a playground.

Figs. 26-27. The boy (left), drinks water which is forbidden for him (right).

Figs. 28-29. Boys displaying their catch of 'gappi' fish from Dhanmondi Lake.

Figs. 30-31. Girls who sell balloons at night in Dhanmondi Lake Park.

Figs. 32-35. Children building clay homes with rain water and mud in Dhanmondi Lake Park.

Fig. 36: Aldo van Ayck's design of a park for children in the Netherlands.

Fig. 37: A girl from the mainstream family going to school.

Fig. 38. Children sleeping on the street.

Fig. 39. The tree symbolises as the protector of the younger girls at the shelter.

Fig. 40. The banner of APON Foundation hung in the park.

Fig. 41. Thank you – a group of children in Korail.

Glossary

Most of the Bengali words in the list below are children's expressions. The translation of some of them in English conveys the meaning as close as in Bengali. Some expressions have multiple meanings in English and Bengali. I have provided extra details for the readers, where I felt it was necessary to convey and contextualise the meaning of the Bengali words.

Accha:	Okay (similar to 'alright' in English).
Ador:	Affection
Agor bati:	Scented candle
Ain-jibi:	Lawyer
Ajai-ra bepar:	Senseless matter
Alap alochona:	Discussion
Alokito:	Enlightened
Alor Pothe Nobojatray	A journet towards enlightenment. This is the English translation of the Bengali acronym for 'APON' Foundation, one of the NGOs I worked with. 'APON' also means 'someone special' in Bengali.
Amader bhalo vabe kobor dite hobe:	We need to be buried properly.
Amader kotha keu shone na:	No one listens to us.
Amader shujog den:	Give us a chance/opportunity.
Amago kichu diben na?	Aren't you going to give us something?
Amader vobi-sshot:	Our future
Amder moto chele-meye:	Children like us. 'Chele' is boy and 'meye' is girl in Bengali. These expressions can be used as one to denote 'children'.
Ami jani na:	I don't know.
Apa:	Elder sister (same as Apu); also a sign of respect.
Apu:	Elder sister (same as Apa); also a sign of respect.
Atta koshto pabe na:	[Our] soul would not suffer.
Badha-bipotti:	Obstacle/struggle. 'Badha' and 'bipotti' are often used as single expression while 'badha' and 'bipotti' are two

	words in Bengali, which have similar meaning as struggle.
Banglish:	A mix of Bengali and English when speaking English. It is a form of cynical expression targeted towards those, who want to appear to be a ‘good’ English speaker.
Bastobota:	Reality
Beche thakar jonno:	To survive. The meaning of ‘beche thaka’ can also mean to live. In the context of the street children and the marginalised communities, it generally means to ‘survive’ in life so that they can live.
Beche thake chai:	[I/we] want to live/survive.
Bewarish laash:	Unidentified dead body
Bhai:	Elder brother (same as Bhaiya); also a sign of respect.
Bhaiya:	Elder brother (same as Bhai); also a sign of respect.
Bhalo:	Good/well
Bhalo mondo:	Wellbeing
Bideshi:	Foreigner
Biri:	Handmade cigarette wrapped in tobacco leaves.
Boro:	This expression has different meanings. ‘Boro’ means big as in dimension, elderly as in social hierarchy, age, something ‘good’ as in status, to grow up as in human development. In the next example, ‘boro beton’ means good salary, which many children hope to achieve through their education.
Boro beton:	Good salary; ‘beton’ means salary.
Boro bon:	Elder sister (see apa/apu above). ‘Boro’ in the sense of age, which also implies social hierarchy because an elderly is to be respected in Bengali culture.

Bosti:	Slum
Chakor:	Servant
Chakri:	Job
Cha-pani:	Drinks
Chinno:	Sign/marking
Chinta ashe:	Being worried
Chira:	Tattered
Chobi:	Picture/photo
Chor:	Thief
Choto :	Young
Chudanir pua:	Bastard, a common name-calling in Bangladesh. Younger people use this expression among themselves. People in lower social status often use this.
Daktar:	A medical doctor
Dami:	Expensive, pricey
Dekhe rakha:	To look after
Desh:	Country
Deshi:	A country man. This is a common expression in Bangladesh and in South Asia to refer someone who looks like and/or is from this region.
Dhongso hoe jabe:	To be destroyed
Dorid-rota:	Poverty
Dorkar nai:	No need
Dushto:	Marginalised (see also ‘Kangali’). This a common term in Bengali to address members of the marginalised communities.
Dunya:	World
Ei jibon:	This life
Eikhane morbo:	To die here
Ek jaigai:	Same place

Ekta:	One
Gamcha:	A local made thin towel commonly used in Bangladesh.
Ganjam:	Chaos
Gar-jian:	Guardian; a way of pronouncing it in Bengali.
Ghor-bari:	Home; this also implies owning a place to live.
Gobeshok:	Researcher
Gobeshona:	Research
Golpo:	Story
Ja bagh:	Get lost
Jati:	Nation
Jatri:	Passenger
Je-tai hobe jibone:	Whatever life holds; an expression of despair.
Jhal muri/chanachur:	Local spicy mix of nuts and puffed rice.
Jonmo dawa:	To give birth
Jontrona:	Pain
Kangali:	Marginalised. Locals often use this expression to refer to the street children. There's another common term for street children, 'tokai'. It might be noteworthy to mention that the actual expression may not have the emphasis on 'i' at the end, as in 'Kangal'. This word also has the same meaning as 'dushto'.
Kechos:	Worm
Keu nai:	There is no one to rely on. The literal meaning is 'no one is around'. The allegory of this expression for the street children means there is no help and hope for them (see also 'kono kichu nai').
Khali gai:	Bare chested. This expression also symbolises the destitution of the street children who do not have anything to wear. See also 'khali pai'.
Khali pai:	Bare feet. This expression also symbolises the destitution of the street children who do not have anything to protect their feet.
Kharap bebohar:	Being rude

Khatia:	Coffin. The wooden/steel open platform to carry the dead in Bengali culture.
Khela-dhular ghor:	Play room
Khomota-nai:	Powerless
Kichu ekta bolen:	Say something
Kichu korar nai:	Nothing (we can) to do.
Kobor-sthan:	Graveyard
Kono kichu nai:	To have nothing. This expression implies that the street children have nothing and no one who cares for them.
Kono vobisshot nai:	To have no future.
Koshto:	Pain
Kotha shona:	To listen
Laash:	Dead body
Laav nai:	No point. This expression means that there is no point of saying/arguing/asking, etc. A form of despair.
Lakri:	Dry wood
Leguna:	A four-wheeled motorized van to shuttle passengers.
Lojja:	Shame
Lokh:	People
Maastans:	Gang member(s)
Maati:	Earth, ground
Ma-baap:	Parents; This expression is a colloquial term in Bengali.
Malik:	Boss
Manobota:	Morality
Manush:	People
Manush howa:	To become a ‘good’ human being. In Bengali culture this is a common expression for children to become a ‘moral’ and successful person having attributes like education, job, manners, etc. Although this term is used to signify future, it also applies to adults who do not gain such attributes. So that person represents shame for his/her family.

Manush korano:	To make someone a ‘good’ human being. It is parents’ responsibility to make sure their children become a good person.
Mazhar:	Shrine; usually this is a grave of a fames pious person. Mazhar is very common and is dispersed across Bangladesh and in Dhaka.
Mehman	Guest
Moila:	Rubbish
Moila-wala:	Those who pick up rubbish from door-to-door. This term is commonly used in Bengali. They are also called litter pickers.
Moulik:	Basic
Naam-matro nagorik:	Name-sake citizen. This expression means not having the entitlements as citizens – commonly used in marginalised communities.
Nagorik:	Citizen
Nagorikotto:	Citizenship
Nijer jibon:	Own life
Nijer rastha dekhi:	Manage [our] own ways.
Niro-bota:	Silence
Oder sathe mishte hobe:	[You] have to be with them.
Odhikar:	Right
Ondhokar:	Dark
Ongshogrohon:	Participation
Par-thokko:	Difference
Pochondo korse:	Being liked
Porashona:	Education; there’s another term used for education – shikha. ‘Porashona’ is more commonly used.
Poribar:	Family
Poribesh:	Environment
Potho sishu:	Street children
Rastha:	Street
Rochona:	Essay

Sahajjo	Help
Samaj:	Culture. In Bengali this also means society. The usage and meaning of ‘samaj’ can be used interchangeably.
Sarder:	Leader
Shartho:	(Self) interest
Shashon:	Discipline
Shob jaigai:	Everywhere
Shob kichu:	Everything
Shob somoi:	Every time
Shomman:	Dignity -- this is also closely linked with respect.
Shopno:	Dream
Shotti kotha:	Truth
Shundor:	Beautiful
Shundor jibon:	Beautiful (good) life. While ‘shundor’ means beautiful, it can be associated with life as ‘good life’.
Sishu:	Children
Somporko:	Relationship
Songo-dosh:	Bad peer relationship. This usually means people of bad influence.
Sorkar:	Government
Taka-poisha:	Money. This is a commonly used term in Bengali to mean ‘money’.
Thaka-khawa:	Food and accommodation
Thik pothe:	Right path
Tomader sathe thakbo:	[I] will stay with you
Upor theke:	From above. This expression indicates people holding higher positions and people below refer to them as ‘from above’ -- applies commonly in working environment in Bangladesh.
Vaggo:	Luck
Vaggoban:	Lucky
Vhasa:	Voice
Vodrota:	Manners

Statement of copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Publications from the thesis

Sections of Chapter 3 discussed in the thesis were previously published as:

Ahmed, I. (2021). Ethical Research with Children: Reflections from Fieldwork in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in M.O. Ajebon, Y.M.C. Kwong & de I. Astorga D. (Eds.), *Navigating the Field: Postgraduate Experiences in Social Research,* Cham: Springer.

Acknowledgement

During the final year of this thesis, Covid-19 struck. Like many students, I became stuck at the university under the draconian yet necessary rules of isolation. Then the unthinkable happened some miles away in my home country. Both my parents passed away, my father first and then my mother exactly in two months. The thesis and everything else became a blur. Soon and gradually more unthinkable unfolded.

The gentle voices of my parents from above told me they never left. Careful and considerate guidance of my supervisors steered my focus back into the thesis. The university counsellor listened to me. My friends remained with me. The unwavering support from the Geography department poured in. The memories of children whom I worked with in Dhaka whispered of hope.

While this thesis is indebted to many who helped me to get back on my feet during the moments of grief, there are others who played direct and indirect roles at other times, before and during my studies at Durham University, for this thesis to be materialised.

It is particularly noteworthy to mention my supervisors' support, advice, and patience to get me through this journey after my parents' death. Their knowledge and wisdom pushed me to think harder; learn how to write better. They motivated me with their kindness, never ceasing to advise me to take care of myself. As supervisors, Dr. Colin McFarlane and Dr. Siobhan McGrath guided me to tell my story. Most importantly, they inspired me.

I am thankful to Dr. Gavin Bridge for encouraging my initial inquiry, research proposal, and CV for further consideration into the admission process at Durham University. Kathy Wood, whom I nagged so many times for so many things during my time in the department, never seemed to be perturbed. I am immensely grateful for her unwavering support.

Being a self-funded student has not been easy. However, I received help from many over the years. Dr. Louise Bracken, then Head of Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience (IHHR), provided key financial support for my fieldwork trip during 2018-19. I am thankful for the endowment of various research scholarships from the Ustinov College. Furthermore, I can

never thank nor can I show my gratitude enough for Dr. Sarah Atkinson from the Geography department for her critical support. Outside of the university, I am thankful to Gilchrist Foundation for its generous support.

This thesis owes a great deal of gratitude to Dhaka, Bangladesh. It was not only my home, but it was also my field of work where many individuals, and, not to mention, children who made my fieldwork possible. I am in debt to Hasina Mashrofa, then Director of Urban Development Programme (UDP) at BRAC, who made all the necessary arrangements for my official access to Korail informal settlement. I owe a great deal to M. Aftabuzzaman, the Executive Director and CEO of APON Foundation for letting me work with the children in Dhanmondi, Rayerbazaar, and Kawran Bazaar areas. I am thankful to Tareq Gaddafi and Shariful Hasan for facilitating my engagement with the children at Mirpur Shelter.

I bow to Shamol *Bhai* and Mamtaj *Apa* at Korail informal settlement, Nazma *Apa* and Nasim *Bhai* at Mirpur shelter, and Emam *Bhai* and Faria *Apa* at the Dhanmondi Lake Park for arranging my day-to-day engagements with the children. Most of all, their wisdom and support proved to be the fuel for my everyday fieldwork. I am grateful for the ongoing contact that some of them had allowed me to maintain after I had returned to Durham, allowing me to get updates on some of the children.

Speaking of children, this thesis would not have been possible for me to write without them. It seems self-fulfilling. While this may be true, I remain forever grateful to them for allowing me to enter their lives, letting me be their *Iqbal Bhai*, *Sir*, or *Bhai*. I remain guilty of disappearing from their lives for I do not how many of them will I ever see again. I endure the burden of carrying their stories. I am at the mercy of my inadequate capacity to tell them.

On the writing front, I am forever grateful to my good friends and brilliant scholars Clair Cooper and Ludovico Rella when I was lost, not knowing where I was going with my thesis. They responded promptly with their advice and kindness. I am blessed with their friendship.

I am left with only sibling, my sister, who lives, coincidentally, 30 minutes from Durham. I needed to see her from time to time for her inspiration and blessing. However, I always got

more than what I expected – love of a sister and the taste of her delicious Bengali food. The aroma of *bhaat*, *daal*, *curry*, *biriyani* was always refreshing and recharging.

My memory has betrayed me to list many others. I salute you for your support.

Returning to the voice of my parents, I say thank you *Abba* and *Amma* for remaining with me along with this journey.

Dedication

Abba and *Amma*, this thesis is for you.

1.0 Chapter One: Understanding rights of street children in Bangladesh

1.1 Research aim

The aim of this thesis is to examine how rights are understood and articulated by street children in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The thesis frames this inquiry with rights, children's geographies, and street children principally through the lens of geography, using key literature from other cognate fields such as anthropology, development studies, and sociology. The inquiry from the three key areas will be will be critically analysed through the central research question (see 1.2) and its three key dimensions to advance the understanding of children's rights. Using ethnography, I explored how street children in Dhaka, Bangladesh understand their rights about issues that reflect 'their everyday concerns' (Alderson, 2000: 14), using circumstances of children's lives as critical contexts in relation to their understanding of right. In this vein, the circumstances and contexts of children's lives will be analysed throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis.

Tracey Skelton has discussed the importance of geography to understand children's lives that are varied across cultures (Skelton 2009). Geography plays an integral role by fostering a connection to children's world around them. For Skelton (2009), children play an important role across societies under various circumstances, and given opportunities children can demonstrate their 'capacity to thrive, survive and cope in many hard and difficult conditions' (Skelton, 2009: 1443). For this thesis, I focus on the experiences of street children from three distinct sites in Dhaka to discover their views on rights. I develop the focus of geography by first delving into what rights (e.g., education, food) are important for children through the rights literature from key geographers (e.g., Nicola Ansell, Sarah Holloway, Tracey Skelton). I then analyse the connection between children's everyday experiences and rights through the lens of children's geographies followed by the analysis of the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights. Murray (2019) explains that not listening to children conveys denying not only their perspectives but also their value as children. Because not listening to children can deny their participation in engagements (e.g., dialogue) with others that can be helpful in understanding their views. In the context of street children this explanation is relevant because across countries in the Global South the voices of marginal children are 'seldom heard' (Abebe, 2008: 271). In this vein, Murray's argument above lends

a pivotal lens to understanding the rights of street children's lives in Dhaka in their own voices.

However, in terms of children's research in Bangladesh, Miah and Reza (2014) argue that studies on marginalised children often lack qualitative data to understand the complexity and dynamics of their lives. Broadly speaking, existing research (e.g., Chowdhury et al 2017, Farid and Mostari 2015 & Islam 2019) often focuses on the adverse effects of marginalisation on children but does not necessarily engage with the experiences and views of children themselves. My position is that despite the scholarly contribution on the issues of street children (e.g., Blanchet 1996, Conticini 2004 & Sarah Atkinson-Sheppard 2015, 2017, 2018), their works did not necessarily focus on the 'voices' of street children. My thesis will show that given the opportunity, children can have the capacity to express their views on rights that are relevant to their lives and experiences.

From the preceding discussions, children's perspectives become relevant to this thesis and so I investigate how street children in Dhaka have conceptualised the meaning of rights. According to Sylva (2010), children's perspective 'is the view or stance of the child from the 'inside out'; in other words, children's perspective is always expressed in the children's own words, thoughts, and images' (p. vi). However, Theresa Blanchet, an anthropologist, in her studies with children in Bangladesh in 1996 argues that children have 'no say' in the broader society because they often 'disappear' into the family and are 'hidden behind family statistics' (p. 38) because cultural practices do not allow children's participation in family matters (Rahman et al 2007). These are important arguments for informing children's lack of voice in Bangladesh, a male-dominated society in which patriarchial practices take center stage in decision-making (Chowdhury 2009 and Hossen 2020). I am not saying this is unique to other cultures elsewhere. For example, the work of Ezenwa-Ohaeto (2015) shows the evidence of patriarchal practices against women and children in Nigeria while the effect of patriarchy against women in United Arab Emirates is evident in work of Barragan et al (2018).

Despite these contrasting views of children's voice, Burra (2003) observes that there is a growing concern among academic scholars and practitioners about children's representation of their own interests. In this vein, Blanchet (1996) further stresses on the importance of

understanding children's voices – particularly about their rights. She contends that the 'complex … relationship between state, *samaj* (society), *dhormo* (religion), and *jati* (gender, caste, etc.) are crucial for understanding of … the rights of children' (p. 26). In the context of this thesis, then, I argue that children's perspectives are vital to understanding depth and context of their rights because the views of Blanchet more than three decades ago about the cultural dynamics of children and adults in Bangladesh have remained relatively unchanged.

In this vein, children's perspectives can be linked to their capacity to conceptualise the meaning of rights that matters for the best of their interest. Philip Alston offers a relevant explanation by emphasing on the word 'best' and 'interest'. According to him, best interest 'may exclude other factors which could … be … child's overall interests but not his or her 'best' interests (Alston, 1992: 11). Eekelaar (1992) argues that the best interests 'presuppose various states of affairs the experience of which are thought to have beneficial or adverse results for children' (p. 47). She emphasises on children's capacity to make informed decisions. By decision-making, for this thesis, I mean their capacity not only to articulate what matters for them but also to talk about their lives so that others can hear about the issues they confront to survive and thrive with dignity as humanbeings in the society. Freeman (2007), however, argues that capacity to make decisions is linked to 'different understandings of childhood' across societies. What this means is children's decision-making depends on their socio-economic and cultural circumstances which are an important marker for understanding the extent of children's decision-making abilities (Lansdown 2014).
In the next section, I will offer some context of children's understanding of rights before I move onto the details of the focus of this thesis followed by the discussion on the CRC, definitions of key concepts, vocabulary from the streets, context of research in Dhaka, and thesis structure.

1.2 Focus of thesis

While my thesis explores street children's rights through their own voices, it does so critically by engaging with three theoretical strands – children's rights, childen's geographies, and street children (see 1.1). To achieve the aim of the thesis, these concepts are examined through the central research question, which is as follows:

- How do street children in Dhaka understand their rights?

This question will be discussed through three dimensions, which are as follow:

- What rights are important for street children?
- How do they negotiate with the nuances of everyday lives that are associated with rights?
- What are the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights?

These dimensions will be linked to both conceptual and empirical chapters of this thesis. For conceptual mapping, the first dimension will be linked to section 2.2, the second dimension will be linked to section 2.3 followed by section 2.4 for dimensions three. For empirical analyses, the first dimension will be mapped to Chapter 4.0; the second dimension will be mapped to Chapter 5.0 while the third dimension will be mapped to Chapter 6.0. However, despite this general mapping it is noteworthy to mention that there will be an overlapping of some of the themes (e.g., dignity, survival) across all empirical chapters. It is also important to mention the difference between dimension one and three. While the former will focus on specific rights (e.g., education, shelter) that the street children I worked with think are important for them in the context of their lives, the former will underscore the factors (e.g., dignity, survival) that facililate children's discussion about rights. While there will be overlapping discussions between the two based on the understanding and articulation of the children and my own interpretation of what the children thought and understood, these two dimensions will contribute to children's perspectives on rights. In the following paragraphs, I will explain the interconnectedness of the three dimensions to answer the main research question.

The central theme of this thesis is street children's rights. To this end, this thesis will first set out to understand what rights are important and how they articulate these rights in their own voices to dissect and juxtapose them against the interpretation of rights mentioned in the CRC and other theoretical concepts. For example, education is considered a fundamental right for children in Bangaldesh (Kabeer 2012). Among street children this is no exception. In fact, education is understood to be a platform for their future (Blanchet 1996 and Kabeer 2003), granting them a tool for them to dream and carve out a path for their future. Besides education there are other significant rights that are also central to children's future. These will be discussed in Chapter 4.0 from their own perspectives. But realizing the rights of the children 'can be problematic and complex process subject to varying degrees of power,

inequality, and interpretation' (McIntosh et al, 2016: 41), which are linked with socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions not of the children alone but also of the societies they belong to (Lee 2016). These conditions can not only hinder or limit opportunities for children's rights but can suppress their voices (Lee 2016 and Spyrou 2011) due to the culture in which children belong to.

I will then analyse children's perspectives on rights from the lens of their association with various geographies in their lives. This geographical lens will lend to the understanding of rights a distinctive perspective based on the interplay between various places in their lives. This is an important consideration given how children's lives vary across geographies and their experiences are given emphasis as a source of exploring their own world (Holloway 2014). Similarly, Fairwell and Woods (2021) argue that the importance of understanding children's rights through their own voices is one of the fundamental principles of children's participation articulated in the CRC. In this vein, geographers focusing on children have argued that children can have the capacity to make decisions despite their status as children (Bosco 2007) and to express their views in 'matters affecting them' (Evans and Skovdal, 2016: 4) through the association with their living environments (Holloway and Hubbard 2013). In the context of the street children in Dhaka, I bring these arguments to show how rights emerge from the state of their childhood connected to the street (see Chapter 5.). For street children in Dhaka, 'street' means a number of places. For example, the experience of their childhood is connected to the places they are associated with such as their neighbourhood, park, and street. Their connection to these places (see 2.4.1) is pivotal to understand how their 'expectations and experiences of childhood' emerge (Wells, 2009: 18). The perception of their rights is then influenced by the geography of these places (Wells 2009).

The final dimension in Chapter 6.0 will discuss the contributing factors for street children to discuss their rights. I will explain the role of space and place (see 2.4) in their lives how their perceptions on rights are shaped by their need for survival, spatial distribution of power, and social relations. To these ends, I will show their relationship with NGOs and adults in their lives to underscore the importance of rights in their lives. Power is a key indicator in this chapter to show the evidence of the unequal power relation relates to the wider landscape

social relationship with the NGOs that affect their rights (Aitken 2015, Kallio and Hakli 2011 & Moosa-Mitha 2019).

1.3 The CRC – the platform for children's rights

In this section, I offer an overview of the CRC as a defining children's rights document to underscore its relevance of children's rights discussion for this thesis. While my principal launching point of engaging with how street children in Dhaka conceptualise the meaning of rights is through their own voices, I will also show that there is a connection between children's perspectives on rights and the CRC. The CRC is a 'broadly accepted human rights treaty' (Kallio and Mills 2016) that underscores a number of special rights of children', which are articulated through three key principles – protection, provision, and participation (Liebel, 2012: 70). The guiding principle behind the CRC is to accord dignity and rights to children and recognise them as 'human beings' (Kjorholt cited in Skelton 2007). The induction of this charter in 1989 serves a critical milestone for recognising children's rights. Through 54 articles, the UNCRC pursues attention to the concerns and 'global recognition of the rights' of children (Quennerstedt et al, 2018: 40). In this sense, the CRC offers a 'moral case' (Freeman, 2007: 9) for addressing children's issues through the principles of CRC.

The CRC has provided a prominent platform for the introduction of children's rights since it was drafted in 1989 (Ansell 2005, Archard 1993, Franklin 1995). It recognises 'both children's general human rights as well as a number of special rights of children' (Liebel, 2012: 70). There are 54 Articles in the CRC that reflect a 'holistic and comprehensive statement on the fundamental rights of children in a number of diverse fields … political, social, economic, cultural and humanitarian rights' (Leonard, 2004: 47). Benitez (2000) argues that the CRC is the 'single most powerful and comprehensive instrument concerning all children's rights', which provides a powerful 'lens' for the state governments to consider undertaking 'a holistic approach guaranteeing all rights for all children' (p. 4).

Despite the preceding views of the CRC, the implementation of rights for 'all children' remains problematic, particularly for those who are marginalised because they often they are not heard (Alderson 2000). As an example, street children in Bangladesh generally do not have a voice to express what matters for them. In this sense, then, realising the rights of the children can be a 'complex process subject to varying degrees of power, inequality, and

interpretation' (McIntosh et al, 2016: 41), which are linked with socio-economic, cultural, and political conditions not of the children alone but also of the societies they belong to (Lee 2016). So, my justification to base the CRC as a guiding document for this thesis hinges on addressing children's rights from the local context of street children in Dhaka.

Missing childhood in the CRC

It is critical here to point out that while the CRC that was introduced in 1989 did not explicitly mention street children, a later document (e.g., General Document 2017) was drafted and made available for public by the UN highlighting the relevance of street children to the CRC's provisions for children's rights. This document's purpose is to address and recognise children associated with street conditions around the world (e.g., Africa, Asia, South America). Quotations from 'consultations or written submissions' from 327 children and young people (General Document, 2017: 3) were collected from the representatives of state parties. The document did not further disclose about its methodologies although a wide range of recommendations were made. Although this document offers a significant shift for the CRC to acknowledge issues of street children, it is still necessary to explore from a wider population of street children the importance of their views about rights because these are not always met or fulfilled (Miencke 2009).

The original CRC is guided by three overarching forms of rights – provision of healthcare and education, protection from neglect and violence, and participation in decision-making (Ansell 2005, Franklin 2002, & Smith 2016). Herod and Lambert (2016) acknowledge various socio-economic and cultural factors that are central to gaining freedom for the poor and marginalised. To this end, governments and international communities are often at odds with each other to carry out the CRC principals. Boyden (1990) tells us that not all the rights have been intervened on behalf of the children because they are simply unattainable by the marginalised children who live in dire poverty and face constant deprivation of basic needs. For example, while the NGO communities have a long history of serving marginalised communities (Ansell 2005), they can also suffer from political battle for funding with the donors, which can lead to program cuts and funding (Abouassi 2012). This conflict can leave the marginalsied children in communities in Bangladesh without the services and provisions they were promised, leaving them in uncertainty for their rights and future.

The presence of the CRC in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has ratified the CRC, which has provided a guiding framework for influencing government policy and development interventions aimed at providing rights-based services for marginalised children (Siddiqui 2003). Since its ratification, government has made some necessary efforts to improve the social welfare within the marginalised communities (Rahman 2010). In relation to children's rights, the government has introduced The Child Act of 2013 to ensure and uphold the principles of the CRC. The Act is designed to strengthen children's welfare and safety. According to Siddiqui (2003), the 'neglect, deprivation, and oppression' among marginalised in Bangladesh have 'few parallels' (p. xi).

In this view, the CRC has a huge potential to contribute to the welfare of these children in Bangladesh through a set of comprehensive acts developed and adopted by the Act of 2013 based on the CRC. To these ends, this thesis aims to show some evidence of street children's capacity to express their views on rights with the hope of unravelling a view that marginal children in Bangladesh can have a voice. Furthermore, the CRC can play an instrumental role in articulating and promoting provisions as policy provisions among practitioners for not only improving the lives of the street children but also to give them a platform for their rights (The CRC 2017). However, the role of Bangladesh government as a body of introducing and administering legal mechanisms to promote and provide for social services for street children and other marginal population has proven to be problematic. It has suffered from institutional inefficiencies because of the history of political instability which contributed to conflicting interests among the policy makers (Chowdhury 2007).

Universal view of the CRC

The rights that are commissioned in the CRC 'reflects a global community of nation-states' and, therefore, the 'overall tenor of the document is … universalist (White, 2007: 508). Further argument by White (2007), as follows, reveals the universal appeal to CRC:

> The child is accorded rights, because rights are the currency through which the UN system recognizes the claims of individuals or population groups. At the same time, it is careful to leave some space for different cultural perspectives … sensitivities of representing a community of nations (p. 508).

In addition, Alderson (2017) posits that children's rights are often interpreted, 'defined and serviced' by the adults in children's lives because it is a common belief that adults know what is best for children. This self-approbation, Alderson (2017) argues, 'excludes children and their rights … intended to benefit children' (p. 310). Liebel (2012) claims while the CRC promotes a host of rights for children there are also 'missing rights', rights that are unclear, rights that are 'neglected' and 'culturally compromised' (p. 27). In the context of this thesis, this argument is particularly relevant because the children's imagination can transcend what is (not) written in the CRC.

These discussions place the CRC not only as an 'ambiguous document' that leaves room for interpretation of rights, it also lends the complexity of how rights are interpreted (White, 2007: 508). Alderson (2000) argues that 'rights are limited' and that their interpretations can include a host of issues such as 'freedoms, entitlements and obligations' (p. 18). She also argues that '[s]ome rights are aspirational, not yet fully realisable' (p. 18). But these complexities and limitations can also offer a space for children's rights to be understood with 'reasoned arguments' (Freeman, 2007: 9) against various contexts and nuances across societies. These understandings can tell us about children's voice that is capable of articulating their rights.

1.5 Definitions

In this section, I will discuss and define children's rights, childhood, and street children.

Children's rights

Freeman (2002) describes children's rights as 'claims or entitlements that derive from moral and/or legal rules' (p. 6) and argues that children's rights are important because if children are to be accorded with rights they must be respected with dignity (Freeman 2007). I take this definition seriously for this thesis because of the central focus on the voice of street children in Dhaka where they are often regarded with neglect and stigma (Conticini 2004). In this regard, their perspectives on rights should be regarded with respect and given due attention to their views because, as Unicef claims, children 'are human beings and are the subject of their own rights' (Unicef undated). To explore children's rights, geographers have focused on socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts (e.g., Aitken 2018, Moosa-Mitha 2016 & Skelton 2009). Ennew (1995) argues that marginalised children such as street children do not

enjoy ‘rights’ because they fall ‘outside’ of normal ‘childhood’ (p. 399). By referring to children as being outside of normal childhood’, Judith Ennew suggests that certain marginalized groups, such as street children, do not fit within the conventional understanding of what it means to be a child. These children often lack access to stable homes, education, and other basic rights and protections typically associated with childhood. Ennew (1995) argues that societal norms and structures fail to account for the diverse experiences and challenges faced by these children, thereby rendering them invisible or disregarded within mainstream discourses on childhood. Geographers have addressed the disconnection between the ‘discussion’ of rights and the realities of how they are being accorded to children. Grugel (2013) explains that ‘[c]hildren are winning rights in theory; but this is not yet translated into real, meaningful … improvements in terms of children’s well-being and status’ (p. 19). Beazley (2009) cites that although the CRC has been adopted by countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe, execution at local levels remains a challenge. Ennew (1995) suggests that the CRC needs to consider rights that emerge from various difficult conditions such as poverty and neglect that the street children endure in their lives.

Bob Franklin, a sociologist, argues that children’s rights have largely been ‘philosophical and conceptual in character’ (Franklin, 1995: 6) and that children’s rights are problematic because children are not ‘rational or capable of making reasoned and informed decisions’ (p. 10). Archard (1993), in his influential book, *Children: Rights and Childhood*, opens a debate by arguing that children ‘can still have rights, but the choices which these rights protect are exercised not by them but by their representatives’ (p. 55). These ‘representatives’, as Archard (1993) hints, are the ‘proxies’ or authorities who ‘can determine what a child would choose’ (p. 55). This point cannot be denied or ignored. However, it can be seen as an interference by adults (Borgne and Tisdall 2017 and Roche 1999) for children’s participation. Adult intervention also challenges the ideals of children’s rights on their knowledge about their own lives and their decision-making capacity (Borgne and Tisdall 2017).

To this end, Wells (2008) reminds us that the ideals of ‘children’s right’ signals competent children ‘demanding what is rightfully theirs’ (p. 235). On the other hand, Wells acknowledges Archard’s (1993) caution about ‘representatives’ because children are in need of protection’ (Wells, 2008: 235) and so their rights. From these well-argued contentions, I define children’s rights as entitlements what children are owed as members of the society.

The preceding discussions about rights will provide a platform for the inquiry of my investigation to explore how these rights can be understood from the perspectives of street children and how they become ‘aware of their rights’ (Ansell, 2005: 229) from the context of their own lives in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Childhood

Discourses on childhood often encompass various aspects such as access to education, healthcare, stable family environments, protection from harm, and opportunities for play and socialization. For example, Matthews et al (2000) emphasise the significance of safe and supportive spaces for play, learning, and socialization in conventional childhood. These spaces include the home, school, neighborhood, and other community settings, where children develop crucial skills and form social bonds. For Holt (1995), conventional childhood is often characterized by a supportive family structure, access to resources, and protection from significant risks or adversities. Holloway and Valentine (2000) highlight the spatial distribution of educational resources and its implications for children's access to quality education. In conventional childhood, there is an expectation of equitable access to schools and educational opportunities (Kabeer 2012). Skelton (2009) underscores the importance of positive attachments to home and community spaces in fostering a sense of belonging and well-being among children. While these discourses on childhood is often characterized by a supportive family structure, access to resources, and protection from significant risks or adversities, it is important to note that notions of conventional childhood can vary across different cultural, social, and economic contexts, which can limit or hinder children from marginal conditions their voice in the society.

The driving force of children’s studies among geographers is to foreground ‘voices, perspectives and interest of children’ (Blerk at al, 2009: 215). But the study of children was marked by ‘silence’ of children due to various socio-economic and cultural factors and not necessarily by the absence of their childhood (Prout, 1997: 7, Wells 2009). This signals that children’s lives are influenced and shaped by the socio-cultural factors such as the role of adults in children’s lives (Wells 2009). As such, understanding of promoting children’s voice (Prout 1997) is not always evident among street children in Bangladesh, for example, because of their lack of dignity and ‘being invisible to society’ (Glauser, 1997: 146), which emerges from their status as street children. However, despite these views of street children, their

childhood represents hope because of the growing recognition of children being active 'social actors and holders of rights' (Tisdall and Punch, 2012: 3).

From this, I draw attention to a view of Cindy Katz based on her work with the children in Sudan. According to Katz (2008) childhood can be understood as a 'social construction of multiple dimensions … as a reservoir of memory and fantasy' (Katz, 2008: 7). This means is that children are capable actors who can use the experiences of their lives to develop a sense of their present and future - a way of understanding their being and becoming (see 2.4) – to imagine and articulate issues that affect their lives. From these discussions, I define childhood not only as a product of social construct within which a child is capable of learning and expressing his/her views from the experiences of the environment around him/her. Geographers such as Roger Hart have explored the need to 'focus on how the child experienced different places, different geographies' (Aitken, 2019: 23). For Hart (1979) children relationship to their environment is intensely personal, meaning their experience derives from the association of their own environments, and thus, it is important to learn about how they use the 'properties' (p. 12) from their environment to develop their understanding of the world around them. For Hart (1979), properties are the cues (e.g., knowledge and information) about their surroundings. By 'properties' I mean their everyday experiences and various tools such as photographs and drawings they used to discuss their rights. Throughout the empirical chapters of this thesis, I will show how street children use their environment (e.g., shelter, park, informal settlement) and various properties to interpret, imagine, and articulate their rights.

Street children

In this section, I describe the two related concepts -- street children and street-connected children -- that are important to introduce because many street children I worked with do not necessarily fall into one or the other category but instead can fit into both due to the complexity of defining 'street children'. I will offer theoretical perspectives of street children later in the thesis (see 2.4). Street children cannot be defined easily (Benitez 2011, Buggenhout 2020 & Meincke 2009). As Meincke (2009) argues, there is 'no international agreement on the definition of 'street children' (p. 2). 'Street children' is a familiar term among policy makers, development agencies, and international aid agencies. Unicef has defined street children based on their relation to the streets such as living and working as

‘children on’ and ‘children of’ the street as the former implies children who work on the street and return to their families while the latter indicates children who lives are associated with the street (Meincke 2009). However, the ‘multiplicity of experiences and perceptions’ of street children have not been properly addressed (Buggenhout, 2020: 96). For example, street children can be understood as active social actors (Moura 2002); while on the other hand, they are a category that falls below normal childhood (Ennew 1995 and 2002). Given these opposing views, the lives of street children, however, continue to evolve (Meincke 2009) and exist through their ‘everyday interactions with the street’ (Young, 2003: 608).

There are various socio-cultural reasons that drive children to Dhaka, including abuse, loss of families, polygamy within the family, and natural disasters (Wazed 2010). According to Chowdhury et al (2017), more than 75% of street children in Bangladesh live in Dhaka. Studies on urban-rural migration in Bangadesh, mainly to Dhaka, indicate that unemployment, and therefore, a better income in search of ‘Taka’, a reference to Bangladesh currency used colloquially for income, are the main reasons for migration to Dhaka (Biswas et al 2019). Although their study is focused on general population there is a semblance of movement to Dhaka on the basis of making money among young children as well (Wazed 2010).

The factors of migration mentioned above resonate with a number of street children I worked with. For example, some children moved to Dhaka because of abuse by their stepparents while others moved with their families due to poverty. Bangladesh is a delta land so natural distasters often cause destructions of land and properties in the coastal areas (Chowdhury et al 2017). Consequntly, people are forced to migrate to Dhaka in search of economic relief. When children become entangled into this mix of migration, Wazed (2010) observes children are drawn into the struggles such as abuse and neglect in their everyday lives. Their struggle then forces them to survive on the streets of Dhaka. Conticini and Hulme (2007), based on their work with the street children in Bangladesh, discovers that many street children in Dhaka adapt to their circumstances by developing strategies for survival. for children’s migration to elsewhere.

From my own experience with street children, I discovered social reasons such as parental loss, abuse at home by their parents, stepparents, and/or other guardians have caused some of

the children to move to Dhaka. Once on their own, many of them are left 'homeless, having no fixed address, or are residing in streets, slums and squatter settlements' (Chowdhury et al, 2017: 579). My interest to work with the street children in Dhaka emerged partly from my own background as someone who was born and brought up in Dhaka. However, my interest also grew from the demography of the population, a relatively younger one, in Bangladesh. According to a report by The Daily Star (2021), 30% of 160 million people, or 48 million, are between the ages of 10 and 24.

From the preceding discussion, then, street children in Bangladesh embody survival for their own future despite the presence of uncertainty and marginality. This provocation along with my knack for street photography in Dhaka captured my imagination to bring fore the imagination of theirs to articulate rights from the experiences of their own lives. As Kraftl (2008) argues, hope is connected to childhood. From this then my own hope is to reflect in this thesis what street children in Dhaka told me about their rights that are often laced with their aspiration to become *manush*, someone successful (see 5.0), in future. However, children's aspirations are also filled with uncertainties, particularly for the marginalised ones because, as Appadurai (2004) argues, despite aspiring, the poor often do not have the means to fulfil their aspirations. For him, the notion of aspiration is not just individual aspirations but are shaped by socio-economic and cultural forces.

In the context of Bangladesh and elsewhere in the other countries in the Global South, the lives of street children are associated with neglect and negative perception that stem from the landscape of multiple realities in their lives (Andrioni 2018), including that of hope, struggle, neglect, and exclusion (Abebe 2009, Conticini 2004 & Pluck 2015). It is a valid argument and while this may also be true for the marginal children like street children, in this thesis, I take a rather different approach. I extend the argument above by (Abebe 2009, Conticini 2004 & Pluck 2015) by signalling that the street children who talked about their aspirations are aware of the uncertainties due to their marginal conditions but the aspirations also represent their capacity to show how they are able to imagine and articulate their views on rights.

That said, the street children also became a topic of interest to me because they offered me 'glimpses of creative possibilities' (Katz, 2004: 61) in understanding perspectives about their rights. They represent a segment of the population in Dhaka that is visible every day and

everywhere in the city to those who live in it. Street children are receiving attention from the academics of both Bangladesh (e.g., Ahsan 2009, Reza 2017, Tariquzzaman and Hossain 2009) and abroad (e.g., Atkinson-Sheppard 2015, 2017, 2018, Blanchet 1996 & White 2002) in order to gain an understanding about their voice (Beazley 2003), choice (Ahsan 2009), and everyday lives (Abebe 2008, Grundling and Grundling 2005 & McNamee 2000).

Street-connected children

Miencke (2009) defines 'street connected children' as the following:

> [T]he terms 'street connected children' … can be understood as 'children for whom the street has become a central reference point … and … who … have strong connections to the street (through work, survival, and/or development) but who are currently not based in the street (p. 4).

Street children I worked with can also be placed into this category, whose lives are connected to the streets in terms of their roaming on the streets (Smith and Dunkley 2018), but they do not necessarily 'sleep' on the street, nor are they devoid of the care of their immediate families. Yet, streets figure large in their lives because of societal perception and poverty (Aufseeser 2017). Many children I worked with do not shy away to call themselves *potho sishu* because of the context of their everyday lives on the street. The perception that children thought 'people' had about them, emerged from being delinquent, *dushto*.

The identity as 'street children' in this thesis does not necessarily belong to 'one' or 'other' category described above. Rather it operates within the constructions of both. Their connection to the street makes their lives inseparable from the perception of their being street children, on the one hand. Conticini (2004) contends that the term 'street children' creates the 'idea that they (street children) systematically belong to the street' (p. 22). On the other hand, the reality of their lives on/of the street constitutes a sense of their belonging (Crang cited in Young 2003). For this thesis, the experience of street children in Dhaka is influenced by a sense of their belonging to different places (Young 2003).

Based on the preceding discussions, I define street-connected children as those whose lives are associated with streets in their everyday living. However, it is necessary to mention here

that the defintions of street children and street-connected chidren are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they share common characteristics among children who belong to each of those categories. In this vein, to refer to the 'street children' in this thesis, I interchangeably use 'street children' and 'children'. In some cases, to clarify the context of my engagements, I declare them as 'street children' or 'children' who participated in my fieldwork. In some instances, I also use the term 'street children' to denote them as a category.

1.6 Vocabulary from the street

In this section, I offer some local contexts of how street children in Dhaka understood 'right' (*odhikar*), 'participation' (*ongshogrohon*), 'to be heard' (*kotha shona*), and citizenship (*nagorikotto*). These terms will guide the conceptual and empirical analyses to show how street children in Dhaka understand their rights. I will discuss these terms in the section 2.0 in details but I introduce them here for the readers to inform the linguistic familiarity of the children for these terms in their own language, Bengali. Importantly, then, children's perspectives on rights in this thesis is explained through the context and circumstances in their lives.

Odhikar (right)

In this thesis, street children in Dhaka often discussed their rights, *odhikar*, through the struggles of their everyday lives. Most significantly, they were able to visualise and narrate their (lack of) rights, using their marginal status as a platform for rights they seek for their future. My association with street children I worked with emerged from the collaboration of three NGOs in Dhaka. They were enrolled into several rights-based programs of these NGOs. Through these programs, the NGOs offer lessons to these children that promote children's rights. As a result, street children learn about rights from the NGOs. It would be noteworthy to mention that although they were introduced to the term, right, *odhikar*, from their association the NGO, it is not entirely clear to me whether the word is familiar to them prior to their association with the NGO. *Odhikar* is a common linguistic term in Bengali that children, regardless of their status in society, can learn from their parents and/or family members, and school.

While I do not deny the role of adults and NGOs in their lives about how they come to know about *rights*, my hope is to unveil the spontaneous and imagined portrayal of their own

views. *Onno, bosro, shikkha, songosthan, sheba* (food, clothing, education, shelter, health) are a common language or slogan children are aware of about their rights. Basic rights are also commonly and linguistically known as *moulik odhikar*, which has also become a common theme among common theme about rights associated with NGOs in Bangladesh (Shamim 2017).

These terms have historical context of famine and flood in Bangaldesh in 1973 that triggered a massive appeal for survival of people. During this crisis, basis necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter became a prominent theme – *onno, bosro, songstan* – as a slogan for rights in Bangladesh, which is further amplified by the NGOs and aid agencies to assist people in need from this crisis (Siddiqui 2003). As years progressed, healthcare and education have become a part of the slogan for rights in Bangaldesh. According to Shamim (2017), this slogan has had a generational effect among general people in Bangladesh by passing this language of right to their children through formal (e.g., textbook in school) and informal learning.

Ongshogrohon

Ongshogrohon, a Bengali word, in English means 'participation', which means 'different things to different people' (Chawla, 2001: 1). Chawla (2001) goes onto explain:

> Participation is a process in which children and youth engage with other people around issues that concern their individual and collective life conditions. Participants interact in ways that respect each other's dignity …. In the process, the child experiences itself … in constructing meaning and sharing decision making (p. 42).

Chawla's explanation about dignity and construction of meaning are central to the overall aim of this thesis to underscrore street children's perspectives on rights. Street children in Dhaka used the word, *ongshogrohon,* to signify their lack of participation in dialogues with 'others' in society to talk about their lives. The issue of 'participation' in the context of children's opportunity to engage with 'people' in society to talk about their lives offers a significant similarity to Chawla's views on participation. For many street children in Dhaka, their lives relate to their families and adults in them, who influence their decision-making.

These children because of their status as *potho sishu* (street children), which derives from poverty and marginalisation, often lacks dignity (see 2.2.2) as human beings.

In this vein, *ongshogrohon* is understood not only from the theoretical perspective of children's participation (see 2.2.3 and 4.0) but also from the everyday occurrences as 'chances' that children do not have. The meaning of the two however is not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are connected with each other within the broader context of children's participation. As Bosco (2010) argues, marginalisation can hinder children's participation. However, despite their status, which adversely affects their participation in dialogues with others, if given opportunities, children can 'show' the capacity to offer views about their lives. The word *ongshogrohon* is a common word in Bengali and in the context of 'participation' in decision-making street children are familiar with this word as lack of opportunities in their everyday lives to discuss issues about their own lives with the adults around them. It is noteworthy to mention that the NGOs are not necessarily the source of learning the word *onshogrohon* for street children, but they do promote the word among them as a lack of opportunities for decision-making. In this sense, the meaning of the word may be reinforced by the NGOs among street children.

In Chapter 4.0, I will discuss children's opportunity to interact with a group of researchers where they discussed their lives so that others can hear about them. This opportunity opened children's participation as a right where they were able to interact with dialogues with others about their lives, including rights that they thought were important for them. This dialogue then also became a space where they spoke and were heard.

Kotha shona

In this section, I offer some local perspectives on 'to be heard', a central tenet for the CRC in Article 12 that promotes children's right to express their views and be heard, from street children in Dhaka. *Kotha shona* is a Bengali word. Its closest translation is 'to be heard' in English. From the evidence of my interaction with street children in Dhaka, *kotha shona* means no one listens to them. It can also be understood as they are not being heard, a point of their voice being silenced (Gabriel 2021). This means that their own voices are not heard because they do not have the opportunity to participate, *ongshogrohon kora*, in talking about their lives because 'others' do not listen to them, *keu amader kotha shone na.*

By ‘others’, I focus on children’s multiple relationships with not only their parents and guardians but also the NGOs and how these relationships affect children’s understanding of rights that affect their lives. Children’s right to be heard is a key point about ‘participation’ addressed in the Article 12 of the CRC. The Article mentions children right to express their views and be heard (Unicef 2004). I want to draw attention to both – right to express views and be heard. I will discuss *kotha shona* both conceptually and empirically in Chapters 2.0 and 4.0 respectively.

Lundy (2007) argues that because children’s lives are ‘dependent on the cooperation of adults’ (p. 929), the reality of Article 12’s principle may not be realised. She goes on to mention that ‘scepticism about children’s capacity … to have a meaningful input’ (Lundy, 2007: 929) can contribute to this concern. Based on my interaction with street children in Dhaka, I take a slightly differently approach to this concern. The marginal status of street children often renders them alone, *eka*. What this means is that while children are left alone, they do not have anyone to talk to. Their being left alone also emerges from the perception of their unworthiness and lack of dignity, which prevent them from creating opportunity to express their views (Lundy 2007), leaving them wondering about (the legitimacy of) their citizenship.

Nagorikotto

In this section, I offer a context of children’s citizenship in relation to their rights. In doing so, I explain the term ‘nagorikotto’, a Bengali word for ‘citizenship’ while ‘nagorik’ means ‘citizen’. The children at the shelter described the word ‘Nagorikotto’. The discussion of *nagorikotto* is relevant to their understanding of rights. Although some of the children I worked discussed this word, the implied meanings – exclusion, lack of dignity, destitution, poverty, etc. – also reverberated through the voices of children at other sites. This word is relevant to how it is connected their rights. Holston (2011) defines citizenship as ‘membership in a political association or a community that articulates a relation (not a dichotomy) between structures of power and practices of social lives’ (p. 336). It provides some relevance to the lives of street children because of their lived experiences that is often layered with the dynamics of power and social interactions with adults. Formal citizenship (Holston 2007) is another mechanism in which state interventions play a role in recognising individuals’ asscoation with the community as a citizen.

Broadly speaking, nationality issues in Bangladesh are determined by the jus soli (birth) and jus sanguinis (descent) provisions of the 1951 Citizenship Act, one that states 'every person born in Bangladesh acquires citizenship automatically at birth' (UNHCR 2011: 8 and Hoque 2016). These provisions also determine children's formal association with the state as citizens in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the citizenship of a child is assessed against the lawful wedding of their parents and this allows the parents to claim the citizenship of the child (Siddiqui 2003). However, the issue arises when a child is born out of wedlock. I did not investigate nor was I required to verify the citizenship status of the children. The implication of children born out of wedlock can open grounds for further research with street children in Bangladesh.

As citizens, children are entitled to state provisions for basic rights (see 1.5). However, citizenship does not necessarily mean 'all' children in Bangladesh have the equal access to these rights. This is particularly evident among street children and marginalised communities. Kabeer (2011) criticises this as a lack of disconnection between state and society. For her, state's accountability to the wellbeing of people is far from transparent and being effective (Kabeer 2011). However, while Kabeer's (2011) view is valid it is also partial because there are evidences of initiatives by the government to prove the conditions of the marginalised communities in Bangladesh (Uddin 2019). For example, Union Parishad (UP), a body local community administrators formed and organised by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), in various districts in Bangladesh have promoted the awareness of decision-making process within families through the emphasis on participation and empowerment (Uddin 2019). Although there was no evidence of empowering children as citizens among these projects, they were linked collectively to strengthen people's belief to become 'good citizens' (Mills, 2011: 122).

The citizenship status of street children in Dhaka is based on the social identity of their parents through national registry, social relationship with their parents, and through their subscription to language (Bengali) by birth and cultural association. In this vein, children's citizenship also arises from the 'membership' within the community children belong to (Lister 2007). In the context of street children in Dhaka, the 'membership' and 'community' imply 'belonging' to the 'society' as human beings. Moosa-Mitha (2005) argues that within the academia, the discussion of 'children's citizenship and rights' is discussed through 'normative, liberal citizenship models within which theories of children's rights are discussed

and defined' (p. 369). Roche (1999), for example, offers a view of children's citizenship that claims the importance of their voice and views (Roche 1999). While Roche's explanation is optimistic, the voices of street children in many countries are not necessarily being heard because of stigma (see 2.4.2) attached to their childhood (Andrioni 2018). For street children in Dhaka, their status as *nagorik*, citizen is non-existence because they were denied and excluded because of their status as *potho sishu*. Because of their marginal status, they are not considered human beings, *manush na*. Therefore, no one listens to them, *keu kotha shone na*. For them, this struggle can be linked to their lack of participation in decision-making and status in a society that generally renders them weak and ignored.

From these discussions, I will advance the view of children's citizenship in this thesis as a platform for exploring their views on rights on the basis of being recognised as a member of the society in Chapter 4.0. However, children's perceived lack of citizenship is also linked to their lack of dignity and respect in society and in the empirical chapters throughout the thesis I will discuss their perception of rights because of the absence of dignity and respect in their lives.

1.7 Context of Dhaka

In this section, I offer a brief overview of the context of Dhaka, where I conducted my fieldwork for this thesis.

Dhaka: Field of 'research'

I was born and raised in Dhaka, completed my high school in Dhaka before I set foot abroad in the US for college. Having done so in addition to some years of work in the NGO sector in New York City, I came to the UK for further education. I was excited to have had the prospect of returning to Dhaka (although I had returned to Dhaka during my stays in both countries) to do my fieldwork as a *deshi* researcher with a passport from the US, and a university badge from an elite UK research institution. Therefore, geography has played a key role in my returning to Dhaka to conduct my fieldwork.

There are two elements of my fieldwork with street children in Dhaka, one is their rights and other is their voice. In the context of Bangladeshi street children, a number that exceeds more than a million in Dhaka, their rights are generally advocated and promoted by both local and

foreign NGOs. Yet, those who advocate for their rights are not necessarily the children themselves but the adults who represent the NGOs. In this adult-centric culture of children's rights (Alderson 2017), the city of Dhaka cannot be more appropriate for my fieldwork.

With a population of nearly 23 million, Dhaka has emerged as one of the 'fasting growing megacities' in the world (Baumgart and Kriebich 2014). The context of this thesis is the engagement of street children in various programs, activities, and experiences in their everyday lives to learn about their livelihoods. The fieldwork was carried out through an ethnographic approach in Dhaka, using participatory methods (see Chapter 3.6). The city of Dhaka, which represents a long pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history, has transformed into a megacity (Burkart and Khan 2008 & Hackenbroch et al 2009) within the last two decades. Within this transformation, old and new identities still jostling to stand their grounds, invoking a curiosity about the city that was once known as 'Dacca', now bear the name as 'Dhaka', a place where more than a million children roam its streets (Reza 2017), simply known as *potho sishu*.

NGOs and development: a brief history of rights-based programs in Bangladesh
Immediately following the Independence of 1971, Bangladesh required an extensive reconstruction of the country ravaged by the war. Attention to social welfare was central (Rashid 2012). State and non-state actors such as members of local communities played a key role in 'rehabilitation as well as the nation-building process' (Rashid, 2012: 219). However, the progression of this process of rehabilitation and reconstruction did not a follow a linear path due to political upheavals. In this sense, politics remained at the centre of the development activities. Between from 1971 to 1975 Bangladesh has experienced traumatic experiences of military coup of the Nation's founder, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman followed by military dictatorship between 1975-1990, which then followed the insertion of governance of 'formal democracy' (Devine, 2006: 79).

Following Independence, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has encouraged and NGO sector to take the lead on the agenda for human and social development (Haque 2004). In this endeavour, the NGO sector has played a prominent role in pursuing the 'common goals of … development and people's empowerment (Rahman cited in Haque, 2004: 273). Along with these transitional phases of political landscapes, the development sector experienced an

evolutionary process. For nearly two decades since 1971, the development sector in Bangladesh depended on the NGO services from two key institutions, BRAC and Grameen Bank, to rely on issues of 'humanitarian relief, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation' (Rahman, 2006: 454).

The 1990s saw a significant shift of the NGO services mentioned above to human development, particularly women empowerment, including introduction of micro-credit services to marginalised communities in the rural areas, emerged as a result of the new democratic reform in politics (Zohir 2004). However, as the number of NGOs proliferated, the need for funders also grew. With 26,000 or so NGOs (ADB 2008), Bangladesh has been heavily 'dependent' on their services (Kennedy et al, 1999: 490). As the number of NGOs has grown, their 'dependency' on various resources (AbouAssi, 2012: 598) namely funding from the donor agencies has also proliferated in Bangladesh in order to promote development activities (Hulme and Edwards 1997 and Rahman 2006).

Providing education, as an example, for marginalised communities as a platform for 'promoting rights for the poor' and 'children's rights' (Jordan and Tuijl, 2006: 4) has been one of the core responsibilities for the NGOs since 1980s (Haque 2002). Ansell (2005) argues that 'schooling' is the most basic 'feature' of children's lives. Education services by the NGOs in Bangladesh largely focuses on pre-primary school (Institute of Child and Human Development 2013). However, many NGOs have extended their services beyond primary education like the ones at APON Foundation – the NGO I worked with by opening education opportunities through formal and informal schooling for marginalised children for them to prepare for their future (Akhter and Chaudhuri 2013).

However, the exponential growth of NGOs in Bangladesh and their dependency on the donors has also led to the emergence of NGO accountability (Jamil 1998) and their allegiance to the donors at the expense of the service recipients (Srinivas 2009). Conticini (2016) cites that NGOs often have preconceived notions that street children 'lack everything' and that the 'livelihood strategies they have been developing on the street are not useful 'rehabilitation'' (pp. 78-79). This signals a paradox of the NGO sector in Bangladesh. On the one hand, NGOs represent 'aspirations of citizens' in the society (Lewis, 2015: 10), on the other hand, Ahmed et al (2010) point out that when the NGOs expand their operations, it can so happen

at the expense of those they serve. Siddiqi (2003) also worries that a vast majority of people in Bangladesh simply 'do not and cannot access law' (p. 12). I will show the evidence of these contentious circumstances and the dynamics of NGOs and street children to highlight the effect of rights on children's lives in Dhaka in Chapter 6.0.

1.8 Thesis structure

The discussions above provide as a starting point for this thesis about how street children in Dhaka perceive their rights, I argue that children's perspectives can offer further meaning and context of rights that are (not) articulated in the formal charters of children's rights (e.g., The CRC). To explore these perspectives on rights, I will engage with the three dimensions (see 1.1) that are associated with the central research question. These dimensions are discussed through the lens of rights, children's geographies, and street children. Through conceptual, methodological, and empirical analyses, this thesis will show how street children imagine, understand, and articulate their rights.

Chapter 2 will examine and develop the conceptual framework of this thesis. Chapter 3 will discuss methodology to offer an understanding about the research process. Chapters 4-6 will offer the empirical analyses. The empirical chapters are mapped to three dimensions of the central research question although as I mentioned earlier some themes will overlap all across three empirical chapters to foreground the central research question. Chapter 7 will offer the conclusion of the thesis, in which I will summarise key findings and reflections from the empirical evidence from my fieldwork in Dhaka.

In Chapter 2, I will critically engage with the conceptual groundwork for this thesis. First, I will discuss children's rights because 'they recognise the respect their bearers are entitled to' (Freeman, 2007: 11). I will offer definitions, debates, and discussions of rights before I transition to discussing citizenship, a key element of right. The discussion of citizenship will be discussed through the lens of dignity, aspiration, hope to show how the absence of these factors can deny rights to individuals. Then I will discuss children's rights through the lens of participation.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology used in the research process to answer the research questions. This chapter underscores the process of exploring street children's rights in Dhaka

by attending to the role of the methods I undertook to engage with the exploration of the research process.

Chapter 4 will discuss what rights are important for street children. This is based on the first of three sub-questions of the main research question. To address this inquiry the chapter will show a host of rights that are critical for their survival and wellbeing. The reflections of children's voice will underscore what rights are important for them. Some of these include these include education, safety, shelter, through the lens of their basic rights, *moulik odhikar*. To offer an understanding of these rights, the thesis will also explore how they contextualise these rights, a necessary point about the contribution of this chapter. The discussion of citizenship will guide their perspectives to the articulation and imagination of their rights. In chapter I will discuss one of the key rights – a right to burial, which children have imagined. This is particularly important to show rights can emerge from children in difficult circumstances that are not necessarily written in the CRC (Ennew 2002). Then chapter will provide some empirical evidence on children's participation as one of their critical rights to be heard.

In Chapter 5, the thesis will discuss childhood as a construct within specific cultural contexts and what this means for the street children in Dhaka in terms of understanding their rights. In doing this, I will examine childhood through the discussion of deconstructing childhood, varied childhoods, and geographies of marginalised childhood. These lenses will offer a framework of understanding childhood by demonstrating that children's lives embody a tapestry of meaning and understanding of their rights – a key contribution of this chapter -- that are engaged through the lens of particularity of 'social grounds in which they take place' (Abebe, 2007: 82). These are critical to recognize the marginalised childhood(s) within the context of their surroundings and boundaries of social production and politics (Katz 2004).

In Chapter 6, I will focus on empirical analyses of the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights. In doing so, I will analyse how power affects children's rights by examining social relation between adults and children in Dhaka. The thesis will argue that the issue of power does not necessarily delegitimise children's rights; they operate within the tensions of the legitimacy of power of children and adults. As a contribution for this chapter, I will show that power plays a dominant role in children's lives, which, on the one hand,

often puts them at the mercy of adults about their own decisions. On the other hand, though, children can also acquire power from the association of their immediate environments, which can enable them to talk about their rights emerged from their marginal circumstances. Paradoxically, these can also render them powerless in the society. However, I will also show that children, if given the opportunity, can create space to form opinions and decisions based on their experiences and views (Holloway 2014), using powerlessness as a trigger to talk about rights they do not have. The contribution of this chapter will also emerge from the evidence of the presence of NGOs in Bangladesh to address right-based programs for marginalised children and ways in which their interventions influence children's rights.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I will offer some concluding remarks and reflections on this thesis and will consider implications of future research for academia and development practitioners to work with marginalised children in Bangladesh.

2.0 Chapter Two: The concepts

2.1 Introduction

Rights 'recognise the respect their bearers are entitled to … respect dignity … to deny rights is to cast doubt on humanity' (Freeman, 2007: 7).

This thesis explores the perception of rights of street children in Dhaka. In this chapter, I will analyse the conceptual framework and contribution to literature on children's rights. The chapter has three distinct but interrelated strands – rights, children's geographies, and street children -- on which I build the conceptual framework of this thesis. The first section of this chapter will discuss the research terrain on rights followed by children's geographies and street children. Together, these sections will offer an integrated approach about the investigation of rights from the perspectives of street children.

The landscape of rights will set the tone for this thesis by highlighting the relevant debates in relation to marginal children from the lens of geography and other cognate fields. These debates, for example, indicate while rights are important for children for getting the protection they need from the adults (Skelton 2007), they alone may not have the 'avenues for claiming' their rights (Liebel, 2012: 12). The focus on children's geographies will build on the logic of these debates and what it informs us about rights from the everyday lives of children. The driving force of children's geographies is to foreground 'voices, perspectives and interest of children' (van Blerk et al, 2009: 215). The theoretical grounding of street children will build on the everyday tensions of children in order for them to survive (Aufseeser 2017). To this end, this section will draw on children's everyday survival (Mitchell and Heynen 2009), power (John 2003) and powerlessness (Gallagher 2008) that exist within the landscape of children's social relations with adults.

2.2 Locating rights for street children

In discussing childen's rights in this chapter, I first set out to discuss relevant debates on children's rights followed by the discussion of citizenship and participation. By weaving through these discussions, I will ground the first part of, although not exclusively, the inquiry of this thesis – what rights are important for street children followed by the discussions of children's geographies to underscore children's rights from their own perspectives that emerge from the nuances of childen's everyday lives and geographies of street children to highlight the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights. Rights are not easy to define as there is a wide range of understandings (One 2007). Freeman (2002) suggests that rights are claims or entitlements' that can have a moral basis, which he argues is grounds for human dignity (p. 29). This definition will drive the inquiry about street children's rights in this thesis. But let me first tend to what Freeman meant by his definition. For him, rights grant children a platform for demanding their rights as he argues 'if they cannot demand, there is no entitlement' (Freeman, 2011: 11).

Children's rights can be understood as entitlements or needs, providing them with education, healthcare and protection from abuse, violence, and exploitation (White 2002). However, in terms of entitlements, McFarlane and Desai (2015) argue that rights usually require a 'form of legally binding statements' while entitlements are a function of 'social relations and based on people's experience and perceptions' (p. 4). In their argument, McFarlane and Desai (2015) explain that there is a link between legal binding and social relations. For example, rights to basic hygiene and sanitation are provided by the state to improve people's lives and experiences (McFarlane and Desai 2015). The function of state is also critical in fulfilling the basic needs of the children such as healthcare, education, sanitation (White 2002).

Entitlements then become markers for what children need as right. This way children's need can be associated with right. To this end, then, children have the right to tend to their needs to ensure their potential (Jones and Mazanka 2021). These markers offer a relevance to the context of this thesis in ways that it is about street children's perspectives on rights. In particular, while the concepts of rights have derived from the members of the academia and practitioners, children's perspectives on rights would advance in this thesis how these theories offer what rights actually mean for street children in Dhaka. Federle (2011) contends

that rights are ‘exercise of free will and choice’ (447). For her, this exercise means capacity to ‘demand’ rights. Placing her argument against the principles of the CRC, the word ‘freedom’ has appeare nine times in this document explaining the ‘Preamble’ of the CRC to Articles 13, 14, 15, emphasising children’s freedom of expression, thought, and association. However, deciphering the the meaning of ‘freedom’ is layered with geographical tensions of protecting children’s interests in the contexts of their lives (Archard 2013). So, taken from Federle’s argment, rights can be freedom to do ‘something’ – demanding what is best for children.

This brings to the point that rights can also be associated with language that is native to street children. For example, the word ‘need’ is associated with entitlements as rights in Bangladesh (Kabeer 2003). These include a range of ‘things’ for children such as education, shelter, safety, etc. Historically, Kabeer (2003) posits, ‘need’ has been associated with the wellbeing of the people in the marginalised communities but it has been evolved as a ‘right’ for people in the wider society in Bangladesh (see 1.5). While I will show throughout the thesis how street children have expressed views on right in their own ways, I will also show in Chapter 5.0 how street children expressed rights in terms of ‘need’ and what it means for their right.

2.2.1 Children’s rights

Holt (1995) argues that ‘[m]uch is said and written these days about children’s ‘rights’’ (p. 109). Ironically, these discussions and writings have emerged as a ‘concern’ (Kallio and Mills, 2016: x), which involves locating ‘the best interests of the child’ (Kallio and Mills, 2016: xi), articulated in article 12 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Child (UNCRC) in ‘recognition of children’s rights to express their view in all matters affecting them’ (Evan and Skovdal, 2016: 4). In this vein, while it is important to recognise the importance of children’s, it is not always the case for street children I worked with because of their perceived status as street children. White (2007), based on her research on street and working children in Bangladesh, explains that their rights are primarily carried through the NGO interventions while the ideals of institutionalising children’s participation remain a far-fetched notion in Bangladesh. While I will offer some empirical evidence of the first part of her observation in Chapter 6.0, to counter the second half of White’s observation, my

intention is to show in this thesis some degrees of children's agency to articulate their perspectives on rights that matter for them.

Yet, realising children's rights remain a contested topic. Adults remain in charge of providing rights to the children. This creates an issue of unequal power relations, in which children often find themselves ensnarled in, struggling not only to have their rights appropriated but also to talk about them. On the one hand, the CRC have provided a platform for addressing and implementing children's rights; but, on the other hand, uneven social systems can also hinder children's rights (Bartos 2016). For example, commitment to their families is a key issue among many marginal children in Bangladesh and, as a result, they are forced to give up their right to education (Hai 2014).

Liebel (2012) posits that children's role as a provider is necessary to understand 'to analyse the actual economic and social relevance of their activities … that the vital necessity of work not only can be measured in terms of exploitation or plight but also that it can exist under dignified conditions' (p. 205). In the context of this thesis, commitment to families drives many street children I encountered in Dhaka to think about alternative ways to pursue their lives and aspirations. To this end, then, I will also emphasise children's rights in this thesis based on their lived and diverse experiences, which can lend an insight into their capacity as decision makers to provide for their families (I will advance the evidence of this throughout the empirical chapters in this thesis).

Broadly speaking, these discussions then leave room for understanding rights of the marginalised children in the Global South because rights are 'inherently geographic' and have different meanings and interpretations based on their locations (Kallio and Mills, 2016 xi). What this means is 'children's rights are 'appreciated' very differently in different parts of the world' (Kallio and Mills, 2016: xi). However, given this somewhat a broader appeal it is then important to understand children's rights from the context of their own background in which they belong to (Imoh 2012). To this end, children's narratives are particularly important for this thesis because it explores how rights are understood and articulated from their own experiences. From these discussions, I argue that children's voices are not only central to understanding of rights, their voices may also offer insights into the contexts that are pivotal to the meaning of rights such as education, clothing, food, health care, and shelter.

In the context of Bangladesh, these rights are considered basic rights for children (Blanchet 1996, Kabeer 2003, Lieten 2009 & Siddiqui 2003).

These are also known as *moulik odhikar* in Bengali and are often used as a common slogan for right in Bangladesh (see 1.5). The narrative of these rights in Bengali offers a similar way of understanding them universally. The CRC, for example, also articulates health care, education, and shelter among the basic rights for children (Skelton 2007). In the context of Bangladesh, right to play (*khela-dhula-r odhikar*) is strongly emphasised among children (Abdullah 2015) because it allows them not only to interact and develop network of friends, it also helps develop friendship, care, security, sisterhood/brotherhood among children, attributes that are important to become a *manush* (Shamim 2017). Through these traits children also attach meanings to association with their own environment (Buggenhout 2020). I will advance the understanding of these rights by street children throughout this thesis.

2.2.2 Citizenship

The discussion of citizenship is relevant to this thesis because, one, it provides a context for how street children in Dhaka understood their rights and, two, it is fundamental to rights and how they are provided for or not. Lister (2007) argues that the concept of citizenship is contested due to its association with different socio-cultural and political contexts. I have discussed citizenship in section 1.5 but it is also noteworthy to bring fore other definitions in order to underscore the linkages between citizenship and socio-economic, political, other factors in society. For example, Massey (2005) argues that citizenship should be understood not only in legal and political terms but also in relation to space and place. For Massey (2005), spatial citizenship encompasses the rights and responsibilities associated with inhabiting and shaping the spaces we live in because spatial citizenship emphasises the importance of inclusivity, diversity, and exclusions within the society.

Wood (2016) posits that marginalised children experience citizenship through the constraints of resources and unequal social relations that imbue within their everyday experiences and places (e.g., street, informal settlement). To this end, Desforges et al (2005) explain the meaning of ‘landscape of citizenship’ (p. 441), in which citizenship is practiced and experienced in different places through ‘social and spatial marginalisation’ (p. 439). Holston (201) offers a perspective of ‘insurgent citizenship’ (p. 336), emerging from the marginalised

in the urban areas by stating that the poor can perceive new meaning of citizenship. For him, the insurgency refers to 'citizens who mobilize their demands' (p. 336) through some form of actions such as challenging the dominant practices of citizenship (e.g., the distribution of resoures). In the context of street children, while this analogy is not entirely fitting but it provides a relevancy into how children have mapped their citizenship to discuss their rights.

The relationship between citizenship and children is, however, not a linear one (Karsten 2016). On the one hand, children's citizenship is considered a 'status that is attained' (p. 75) at a later stage. On the other hand, it is thought to be a social process, deeply embodied in the 'practices of dealing with the 'other' and the processes of inclusion and exclusion' (Karsten, 2016: 75). The notions of 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' allude to a sense of (un)belonging, which is entrenched among the marginalised communities and its people in the developing countries (Moosa-Mitha, 2005: 370).

In geography, children's inclusion and exclusion has a 'spatial dimension' because it signals a lack of their social and political spaces due to their marginal conditions, which deny their choice and voice (Davis and Hill, 2006: 6). Children's citizenship experiences are 'deeply and mutually intertwined' with geography (Yarwood, 2016: 2). For example, Mills (2013: 122) takes up on Marshall's position by arguing that children are entitled to have 'rights of citizenship, such as protection of particular freedoms under state and international law'. However, children are not only old enough to access 'legal, social, and political rights' that Marshall has described because they cannot necessarily make 'rational and informed decision' (Cohen cited in Bosco, 2010: 384).

However, Marshall's theory of rights has raised some concerns. Hoxsey (2011) states it was based on 'British conceptualization of post-war development and transformation of state roles' (p. 917). This concern signifies that the theory was based on specific geographic location and context. In a study about gentrification of public spaces in Vancouver Canada geographers Blomley and Platt argue that the rights are layered with multiple elements of socio-cultural and political contexts (Blomley and Platt 2001). These contexts, they claim, are necessary to understand right from a wider lens of geography. Siddiqui's (2002) observation highlights the lack of depth of geographical focus in Marshall's three elements, which has less focus on 'their symbiosis' (p. 4). Although Marshall's theory discussed the idea of

inequality, what Siddiqui (2003) means is that Marshall's concepts have fallen short of offering a pathway for such inequality and struggle for marginal people in the society. Marshall's citizenship theory also faces criticism on the ground that it follows a sequence of rights, 'civil rights to the eighteenth, political to the nineteenth and social to the twentieth' centuries (Marshall, 1950: 10). While, as mentioned above, Marshall's idea was introduced based on specific time and location in history, for the twenty-first century the rights Marshall introduced may not follow such a sequence (Moller and Skaaning 2010). For example, due to 'inequality of treatment of the citizens … inefficient implemention of policies', the political rights may seem to be more 'widespread' than the civil rights in present-day developing countries' (Moller and Skaaning, 2010: 459). In relation to this thesis, I have introduced Marshall's concept to show the importance of socio-economic and geographic contexts that are associated with street children's understanding of rights.

Geographers have recognised these variations as a source of alternative approaches to children's citizenship (Bosco 2010). One approach would be to consider children's unequal social relationship with their families and wider communities (Lister 2003 and Wood 2016) and other would be to consider children as active social agents (Bosco 2010). For example, despite being a citizen, margnalisation of children can emerge from the idea that they do not have the competencies such as 'rationality and independence' (Cockburn and Moosa-Mitha cited in Larkins, 2013: 8) to claim their rights. The work of Katz (2004) with children in Sudan, on the other hand, offers a look into children's role as active members of the community places them to discover 'opportunities to … reimagine, and alter environmental knowledge' Katz, 2004: 60). The everyday lives (e.g., work and play) of children in Sudan in Katz's research showed that through these daily activities, children were able to acquire knowledge about their environment (Katz 2004). For example, young girls in Hawa learn to collect water in the morning for families as a ritual is a marker for their source of learning that enables them to learn life skills from the world around them (Katz 2004). This evidence then offers a relevant connection to their citizenship, signalling that they were able to learn about their world as an active member of the society. In the context of this thesis, the example of children in Sudan offers a relevance for street children in Dhaka to imagine and articulate their rights through the experiences of social dynamics and their lived experiences.

From these discussions, I define citizenship as an identity that derives from the role of state and social relations. The social relations are critical in children's lives to offer insights into the 'glimpses of creative possibilities' (Katz, 2004: 61) for understanding children's rights. Identity for street children also emerge from their association with the unequal social conditions (Young 2003), which may offer understanding about rights as a member of the society (Savyasaachi and Butler 2014). To make a connection between citizenship and rights, then, I also consider citizenship not as a 'lone' function of state-oriented mechanism that bestows a recognition of citizenship of the state to its people. Rather, I seek to draw a connection between citizenship and rights that signifies their identity as 'others' without proper entitlements to their rights.

However, children in marginal conditions may not have the ability to get what they are entitled to as rights such as education; and second, the uneven social relationships between children and the adults in the society can restrict their ability to participate in making decisions about their lives. As a result, Moosa-Mitha (2005) argues children can become 'second-class citizens' (p. 374), which can put people in the lower rung of the societal hierarchy. In the context of marginal children like street children this has an implication of not being respected (Dutta 2018). For her, the challenges of street life deprive street children of the comforts of the city, leaving them without the necessities to survive.

This way, dignity is linked with their citizenship and rights that needs to be understood within specific cultural contexts (Blanchet 1996), which are not always known and understood. Sigurdsen (2020) argues that the lack of dignity among marginalised groups can derive from their vulnerability to lack of protection and entitlement, and their (in)ability to participate within their communities (Gaskell, 2008: xx). The lack of dignity also raises an opposing effect in their life that make them aspire to become 'someone', *manush*, in life through the notion of 'futurity' (Kraftl, 2008: 84). To become a *manush* in Bangladesh signals a host of meanings such as being successful, being moral, having a good job, etc., which are connected to future (Abdullah 2015). In this sense, Kraftl's, 'futurity' is linked with children as being a 'repository' (p. 84) of hope for their future.

To extend the preceding discussions about becoming a *manush*, Kraftl's (2008) views on 'futurity' (p. 84) as a platform for contextualising the aspiration of street children in Dhaka

signals a relevance. Hope and aspiration are not seen here in mutually exclusive term rather they are connected in children's lives in ways that aspiration is regarded as hope (Grant 2017). For Grant, both aspiration and hope are reflected through a number of factors such as how the prospective of getting education can shape the future of children. Although Grant's study focused on the non-marginal young children, it offers a relevance for this thesis in the sense that for street chidlrenin Dhaka education figures large for their future. This signals children's aspiration and hope for spatial movement from one state of their lives to another (see 6.5).

The notion of futurity (Kraftl 2008) then is layered with a goal-oriented future (Grant 2017). In this vein, I define 'hope' as a vehicle for aspiration. Hope and future for street children is not limited to a single empirical chapter in this thesis, rather I will show the evidence of children's hope for a better future not just as an aspirational vehicle but also as rights. However, children's hope for future can result in anxieties among children, layered in uncertainty and frustration. For example, Hinton (2011) in his study among young children in Wales shows the tension of their future through the movement from home to pursue their education at a new place. Similarly, I will show the tensions of the prospects of future among street children through the lens of aspration and hope in this thesis (see 5.5).

To this end, hope can emerge from children's own logic and rationale of being aspirational. Appadurai (2004) describes aspiration as a 'navigational capacity … that provides a map of norms that leads to future success' then he goes onto explain that '[i]n reality, the poor lack the opportunities and pathways needed to achieve their aspirations. This means that the culture of aspiration is a capacity enjoyed by the more affluent members of society' (p. 179). For Appdurai (2004), marginal conditions can constraint 'diminish their dignity' but he also offers hope for 'strengthening the capacity to aspire' through the mechanisms such as development interventions (p. 180). I will also explore the tensions of their aspirations, which may not be 'fully realisable' (Alderson, 2008: 18) due to the marginal condition and status in the society (Appadurai 2004) as street children. I will offer evidence of dignity and aspiration in the empirical analyses of this thesis, drawing on children's optimism and anxieties about their future through the lens of *ongshogrohon* and a platform for listening to their rights.

2.2.3 Participation

Participation is a contested issue and its definition has multiple dimensions (Landown 2010 and Skelton 2007). Lansdown (2010) defines participation as part of 'belonging within a family of community' (p. 11). This definition has a relevance to this thesis because the social dynamics of street children in Dhaka within their families and communities is inherently layered with power relations which can make it 'difficult for children' to become visible (Ray, 2010: 65). Placing Lansdown's (2010) definition in the context of the CRC would also extrapolate further meaning of participation through the understanding of street children.

For this thesis, a key point arises from Lansdown's view is the freedom of expression. However, Matthews (2003) argues that the freedom of expression can be 'problematic for children where a culture of non-participation … is still endemic' (p. 264). This is particularly relevant for street children in the context of this thesis because they are neglected (Chowdhury et al 2017). Participation is also important for this thesis because of its relevance to the context of children's right is paramount. Not only has Article 12 (mentioned above) outlines a guideline for children's participation as a right, it is then imperative for children's viewpoints be heard, a claim the children in Dhaka often persisted on. From these discusions, I define particaption not only as a right (Freeman 2012, Hammersley 2015 and Siddiqui 2003) but also as a process that enables children to negotiate to take part in 'something' with the adults about their lives.

To introduce the debates on how children's participation has been addressed in geography and their cognate fields, I first discuss the (un)presence of children in terms of their lack of voice (Percy-Smith 2010). The discussion of children in geography, as an example, has been a matter of debates for decades (Holloway 2014). Understanding (or lack therof) of children and their childhood across places is a good starting point for this discussion. Valentine (2000) argues that the necessity of understanding of varied children's lives has led to new provocations of acknowledging not only the presence of children as different beings than the adults but also about how this presence of children and adult co-exist. Valentine explains that children are 'located within narratives of individualisation … in relation to rights and entitlements' (Valentine, 2000: 258). For Valentine (2000), this means that children's lives have their own identity which is separate from adults. Therefore, the idea of 'individualisation' is largely embedded within the culture of global North (Valentine 2000).

However, the recognition of children's 'rights and entitlements' (Valentine, 2000: 258) represents a shift of children's position as 'subjects in the world' to 'their abilities to perceive space' (Holloway, 2014: 380) to recognise themselves as 'social actors' (Bourdillon, 2004: 100). While I will explain in detail about the role of space in section 2.3, I pause here to offer readers a relevance of space in understanding of children's perception about their environment. The 'shift' in Holloway's view is based on evolving social approach to children' studies emerged from non-geographers like Alison James, Allan Prout and Chris Jenks (Holloway 2014). While children's recognition is being understood this way, I bring up what I mentioned earlier the '(un)presence of children'. The evidences of children's exclusion due to lack of their voices continue to remain evident in the Global North (Holloway 2014) and receive 'less attention' in the South (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2011: 14). Having said that, children's lives and their rights can be influenced by adults in cultures in the global South. For example, adults play a dominant role about their children's lives in making decisions on their behalf in Bangladesh (Siddiqui 2003). This example then signals children's voice that can be silenced (Liebel 2008).

The lack of children's voice is linked to participation (Hart 1992, I'Anson 2013, Mannion 2007) which has been also taken up by a number of geographers (Ansell 2005, Skelton 2007, Tisdall and Punch 2004) examined under the auspices of children's rights as commissioned by CRC. Although the CRC emphasises three key dimensions – provision, protection, and participation, Skelton (2007) argues that the 'distinguishing feature of the CRC lies in its emphasis on the participation of children in decisions affecting their own lives' (p. 167). She emphasises the point that 'children have always participated in life' and that many have made differences in their lives (p. 173). This emphasis is important to offer some contexts that apply to this thesis. First, existence of street chidren in Dhaka cannot be ignored as more than 500,000 street children roam the streets of Dhaka (Chowdhury et al 2017). Second, their lives in Dhaka are generally seen as tormented and miserable (Farid and Mostari 2015). However, despite and because of the large and marginal existence of street children in Dhaka, this thesis will show that given opportunities for participation, street children are capable of articulating their voice on matters that are important for them.

The role of children's participation can be both social and political (Thomas 2007). The former implies the relationship of children within their families and 'opportunities for social connection that participatory practice can create' while the latter signals to 'power, and challenge, and change' (Thomas, 2007: 206). These discussions then are relevant to 'scale and form of children's participation (Skelton, 2007: 169). While I will address the role of power later in this thesis (see 2.4.2 and 5.0), I pause here to underscore the conflicting relationship between the ideals of participation and the role of adults in children's lives. In the context of street children in Dhaka it is a critical point because 'Bengali society does not recognise the normalcy of adolscents' rebellion against authority' (Blanchet: 1996: 64). However, I argue that this strictly regimented view of adult-children relationship does not always apply to street children in expressing their views. I will build on this argument through the empirical analyses of this thesis to show resourcefulness, imagination (Webster 2011), resiliency (Continicini and Hulme 2007 and Ali 2011), and autonomy (Ali 2011) in explaining their views on rights. Article 12 of the CRC draws a wider attention in children's geographies about children's participation as a right because children are 'seen as social actors and agents' (Skelton, 2007: 169). This role, as Lansdown (2014) argues, signals the evidence of children's capacity to 'add value' to the 'process and outcomes of that decision-making' through their participatory rights that promotes children's 'active engagement in the realisation of … rights, in accordance with their evolving capacities' (p. 176).

Hart (1992) defines participation as a 'process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives' (p. 5). Hart's explanation is entrenched in the idea of participation being the 'fundamental right of citizenship' (p. 4). This statement indicates the relevance of participation as a citizen but not being citizenship as a 'right'. In this vein, I have shown earlier that citizenship is a central point for this thesis for understanding children's rights. Aitken (2013) advocates for children's participation in a similar line of thought by referencing the principles of participation in the CRC by explaining that participation for children in an important aspect of their lives even 'simply by their presence' (p. 134). This point leads me to think that while participation can promote children's capacity to engage with adults, lack of it is a marker for children's weak and neglected status in the society (Morrow 2008). This, then, brings up the issue of tokenistic participation, in which children's particaption can lack attention from the adults (Hart 1992).

However, for this thesis, my focus is on street children's views on rights. What may come of them is a matter of future research.

Written in two parts, Article 12 (see below) first states children's right to express their views based on their maturity and age. In the second, it articulates opportunities about children's right to be heard (see 2.2.3). The Article 12 is as follows (UNCRC, 1990: 5):

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

To offer a point about children's 'maturity' and 'age', I worked with children in the age group (8-17) defined as 'children' in Bangladesh (Unicef, 2011: 14). Throughout my investigation in Dhaka, the logic and the arguments some of them demonstrated to discuss rights signalled their capacity to speak from the context of their own experiences. Geographers have discussed the age of marginalised children in terms of their capacity to make decisions (Holloway et al 2018).

The capacity can provide a platform for marginalised children such as street children to develop an understanding about their lives (Bordonaro 2012 and Ruiz-Casares 2017), such as rights that are important for their lives. In the context of this thesis, street children of various ages took part in imagining and articulating their rights. The 'older' ones mostly engaged in longer and substantial discussions while the 'younger' ones also contributed to their views of rights in the forms of short comments, drawings, and writings (see 3.5). By 'older', I mean children between the ages of 13 and 17 while the 'younger' children between the ages of eight and 12. Having said that, children are not always capable of understanding the world around them. So, in this sense, the principle focus of my engagement with their views is to assess the interpretations and meaning of rights that emerged from the perspectives of street

children in Dhaka. Although there is a 'growing attention paid by geographers to the lives and voices of marginalised groups in society' (Ansell and van Blerk, 2005: 423), children's rights can be understood as 'fragmented' in their meaning and interpretation (Baraldi and Cockburn, 2018: 5). For this thesis, I use the word 'partial' and that is based on street children's capacity to engaged with their views on rights. To this end, the evidence of partialty in terms of children's voice and the meaning of rights, which are not always complete, nor understood, will be reflected through all empirical chapters.

The variation of children's participation in discussing their rights signals that both capacity and maturity were not 'uniformly linked' to their age (Lansdown, 2010: 12). By capacity, I mean children's ability to do talk about their rights (see 2.5). By maturity, I mean to be able to understand the implication of their action (Lansdown 2010). For many street children in this thesis, they have adapted to the harsh circumstances from a very young age. Webster (2011) in his study in India on street children discovers that they were 'highly confident and skilled operator … constantly monitoring situations, adapting and transforming them to suit' (p. 432) their needs.

In this vein, this thesis offers not just their views on rights but the context in which they emerge. I will explain the context of street children's lives through the lens of place and space in section 2.4 to underscore their perception on rights. Scholars in children's geographies such as Holloway (2014) argues that it is 'imperative to study children both as knowing beings whose life worlds are of interest' (p. 382). According to Lieten (2009: 3-4), in the 'interpretation of entire range of articles of the Child Rights Convention (1989) the focus tends to rest on child participation'. In this vein, van Blerk et al (2009) acknowledge the importance of understanding the context of children's lives. This focus is particularly relevant to discovering the lives of street children through the context of their own lives, including 'their interactions with family and community' (van Blerk, 2012: 322). For the street children in Dhaka this means that it offers an opportunity to discover their perspectives on rights, which emerged from their relationship with their families and the wider society (see 2.5) (van Blerk 2012).

In the context of the street children in Dhaka, their involvement with making decisions about their lives is influenced by the marginal circumstances and adults in their lives in and through

uneven social relations (see 2.4 and 5.0). However, interaction among children and adults can be challenging for children in their participation in decision-making (Tisdall et al, 2014: 15). During her research in Bangladesh about participation of the marginalized groups in decision-making White (2010: 11) discovers that while participation empowers marginalised people by allowing them to actively 'take part in something', it also affects them negatively because they do not have 'confidence' to take part in decision-making. Studies on children's rights in Bangladesh also signal children's lack of opportunity to express their views or 'any involvement in family decisions' (Wyness, 2018: 67).

Right to be heard

In the second part of Article 12 stated earlier, children's opportunity to be heard is stated with the emphasis on children's right to speak and adults' responsibility to listen to children (Bartos 2016). The CRC provides a relevance for understanding street children's right to be heard in this thesis because the socio-cultural context in Bangladesh often restricts street children's voice (Conticini and Hulme 2007). In the context of the CRC, the right to be heard signals to children's voice (Ennew 2002). Being heard is linked to having opportunities to speak (Kallio and mills 2016). Being able to speak then opens a space for listening to the children to understand their lives (Savyasaachi and Butler, 2014: 52). The focus on children's voice then encompasses a view that despite lack of opportunities to speak marginalised children can become involved in discussing their views that not only affects their lives (Bartos 2016) but are understood differently from that of the adults. I argue that unless children are allowed to speak, they will not be heard but hearing what they say also depends on others, including adults, who listen to them and pay attention to what the children have to say.

However, it is also important to pay attention to some of the pitfalls of children'voice. Although scholarships in children's geographies have noted problems of participation as not being sufficiently attentive to children's views (Wyness 2013), children's views can be a paradox. On the one hand, childhood scholars such Liebel (2012) posits that rights that are imagined and formulated by children are connected to their own experiences and existence. On the other hand, geographers such as Skelton (2007) point to children's ability and position themselves in society to act on matters that affect their lives due to the presence of adult influence in their lives. In this vein, Lansdown (2010) explains that '[t]oo often, adults underestimate children's capacities or fail to appreciate the value' (p. 15) of children's perspectives. This thesis engages with the rights that the children have articulated in order to understand their meaning and interpretation in the context of their lives as marginalised, a factor that mutates in their everyday lives and denies their voice.

For Skelton (2007), then, children can remain the under the control and care of the adults in many societies, which can unable children to articulate their voice. This perspective is common in Bangladesh, where children's voices are largely silent. For street children, the silence is often accompanied by their exclusion. This silence can dissuade them to speak and

remain unheard (Mizen and Ofosu-Kusi 2010). For street children in the context of this thesis, articulating their rights offers imagination and meaning to the dimensions of their dignity and aspiration. In particular, the discussion of burial as a right (see 4.3) can be linked to a metaphor for ‘unwritten rights’ (Ennew 2002). However, Archard (1993) reminds us that although realising children’s rights is exercised not necessarily by the children but by their ‘representatives’, meaning adults in their lives, children may have the capacity and interest to exercise what rights actually mean for them (pp. 54-55). These markers signal that listening to imagination and articulation (see 4.3) of rights from the street children in Dhaka may introduce and extend the boundaries of the CRC for children and childhood of the marginalised.

2.3 Children's Geographies

This section explores the role of children's geographies in engaging with the 'voices, perspectives and interest of children' (van Blerk et al, 2009: 215). To understand these, scholars from geography and other branches of social science have brought forth the discussion of childhood around the world, highlighting the contested, complicated, and layered 'social-political-economic structure' of children's lives (Bartos, 2016: 116). 'Children's geographies can be found in *all* parts of geography', argues Skelton (2009: 1430) to illustrate the existing and emerging focus on children's studies in geography in conjunction with other cognate fields of social science. I use the word 'all' in her argument as an analogy to advance the knowledge of children's lives that are lived and experienced by them (Skelton 2009) spatially across 'local' and 'global' boundaries (Ansell, 2009: 194).

In this vein, I analyse Ansell's 2009 article 'Childhod and the politics of scale' to put some perspectives into the life of street children I worked with in Dhaka. Through her carefully crafted argument, Ansell (2009) takes up on the narrow scope of the focus on children's lives in children's geographies. This narrow focus, she argues, is based on the 'how children perceive and engage with the world around them' (p. 191). By examining various case studies, Ansell (2009) illustrates the disparities in childhood experiences across different scales, highlighting the necessity of context-specific interventions. Ultimately, her analysis underscores the significance of recognizing the intricate interplay between global discourses and local realities in shaping childhood and informs policymakers on adopting more nuanced, context-sensitive approaches to improve children's well-being globally (Ansell 2009).

The engagement with children's studies, however, in Ansell's article does not negate the existence of children's geographies in 'all' parts of geography, rather, her article delves into how the focus on children is discussed within the field of childhood studies. According to Ansell (2009), childhood studies have traditionally focused on 'childen's interactions with their immediate environment such as 'playground' and 'street'' (p. 191). Without disregarding the relevance of nature of micro-geographies to understanding children's lives, Ansell (2009) argues that it is also necessary to explore children's lives through the prisms of both 'local' and 'global' boundaries (p. 194). The context of this thesis applies to these spatial boundaries. By 'local' I mean children I encountered in each of their environment they

are familiar with (e.g., park, shelter, informal settlement), whereas, by ‘global’, I mean the understanding of differences in childhoods across borders. For example, global childhood encompasses the diverse experiences, challenges, and opportunities encountered by children across the world. Studies highlight profound socio-economic disparities shaping children's lives globally. Research by Sen and Ariizumi (2020) underscores the impact of poverty on children's access to education, healthcare, and basic necessities. The political landscape significantly influences children's well-being and rights. Ennew and Plateau (2019) explore the impact of armed conflict on children, documenting the devastating effects of violence, displacement, and trauma.

Ansell (2009) has stressed on local and global divide to denote the parochial nature of children’s lives and the thrust for a wider understanding of it among the geographers. In her work with Lorraine van Blerk in Africa, Ansell (2005) points out that despite the wider interest on children’s lives from children’s geographies, the work has been largely been about children in the West. However, they acknolwledge the engagements of children’s lives from the scholars in the Global South, which, however, has largely focused on the marginal children. On the other hand, studies in the West have remained focused on the non-marginal children. This indicates the socio-economic gap in understanding about children across multiple places cannot necessarily be ignored (Ansell 2009 and Philo 2000). Holt (2011) reminds us that in geography understanding of children has been based on the ‘common sense assumptions’ of childhood that has largely emerged from the ‘old’ sociological constructs of childhood (see 2.3.2). Holloway (2014), however, tells us that there has been an emerging focus on the social construction of childhood that weighs on children’s experiences within their respective environments.

To this end, Ansell (2009) emphasises on interactions children make with their lives across ‘distant places’ (p. 201). My focus of bringing childhood issues through the lens of Dhaka points to the need for understanding the spatial divide in how childhoods perpetuate across the globe. To this end, Skelton (2009) argues that geographers play an ‘important role in expanding our understanding of children’s lives’ (p. 1430). The signals expanding the scope of understanding children’s lives are both varied and specific (Kabeer 2003). However, the challenge is to understand how these differences are understood. To this end, the children’s geographies has particularly played a key role in addressing children’s lives through the lens

of ‘children as fully made human beings’ (Ansell and Smith 2006). This refers to children’s lives that are associated with present and future, which are connected to their ‘beings’ and ‘becomings’ (see 2.4.2). I will discuss the dynamics of being and becoming through empirical analyses in Chapter 5.0.

Despite children’s association with marginality and poverty, a number of geographers have discussed children’s role as active ‘social agents who often take on adult responsibilities’ alongside with their own activities (Aitken et al 2006, Bosco 2010, Kallio 2012, & Katz 2004). Blerk et al (2009) argue that while agency is central to children’s geographies, it also requires understanding ‘the resources for agency that children have in any given context’ (p. 221). These debates are relevant to the understanding of marginalised children (e.g., Abebe 2008, Evans 2008 & van Blerk 2005) through the broader discussion of the childhood in the Global South. To this end, geographers have marked the construction of childhood as inherently spatial (e.g., Ansell 2009, Holloway and Valentine 2000, Kallio and Hakli 2011, Katz 2004, Skelton 2009 & van Blerk 2005). Spatiality of childhood emphasises on everyday practices that allow children to make connections to the world around them Kallio and Hakli (2011). These connections can lead to discovering the meaning of children’s environments (Satta 2015). During the last couple of decades, geographers have engaged with childhood studies ‘to advance understanding of southern children’s lives’ (Ansell, 2019: 51). For example, works of van Blerk (2005) in South Africa, Beazley (2003) in Indonesia with marginal children have explored ‘outside’ childhoods to explore their coping strategies as street children.

However, Diana (2020) mentions that geographers have ‘countered the dangers of ethnocentrism and demonstrated the truthfulness of the principle according to which childhood is constructed in different ways in different times and places’ (p. 3). For her, the understanding of childhood does not always ‘necessarily correspond to local representations and experiences of childhood and children in non-Western countries, since it often tends to normalize the childhood of the Global North as an aspirational ideal and that of the South as infantilized and undesirable’ (Diana, 2020: 2). Therefore, she points to the attention of childhood studies in the Global South by the geographers beginning in the 1990s ‘to highlight the importance of place’ (Diana, 2020: 3).

To this end, Nieuwenhuys (2013) argues that the 'very North/South divide is an ideological construct and is in itself problematic' (Nieuwenhuys, 2013: 5). I extend her argument by proposing that the construct of childhood needs to be dislocated from the constraints 'spatial metaphors' (McEwan, 2003: 340) and move towards a dynamic and diverse approach to developing an ontological view of childhood, inclusive of cultural contexts. Furthermore, and importantly, these approaches need to remain opposed to the tendency of inciting an 'epistemic violence' (Spivak, 1985: 258) as a result and/or absence of context, theory, and ideology.

Holloway and Valentine (2000) argue that there is a need for geography to engage with the various aspects of children's lives. It underscores the need to broaden our perspective on children's lives that are different and diverse. However, Horton and Kraftl (2006) posit that despite the 'profound' interest of children's lives in geography it is still 'largely unrealised' (p. 79). These arguments are relevant for this thesis to understand their rights from the dynamics of the everyday lives of street children in Dhaka. I will advance these arguments through empirical evidence in chapter 5. The discussion of children's geographies is divided into the following sections: approaches to childrehood, deconstruction of childhood, and multiplicity of childhood.

2.3.1 Approaches to childhood

According to James and James (2004), childhood is defined as a 'structural site that is occupied collectively by 'children' whereas a child – a 'singular term' – 'represent an entire category of people – children' (p. 14). The authors claim that these terms have specific 'meanings' and they are often interpreted differently (James and James 2004). To engage with complexity and contestation of childhood, Prout (2004) offers a view, in which he describes childhood as:

> Childhood is to be regarded as a collection of diverse, emergent assemblages constructed from heterogeneous materials. These materials are biological, social, cultural … and so on. However, they are not seen as pure materials but are themselves hybrids produced through time (p. 4).

The material factors in Prout's definition are not necessarily tangible but are a set of 'events and processes that are 'attached to meanings' (Cresswell, 2014: 11). In this vein, Prout's (2004) idea of materiality signals to a nuanced perspective on the complexities of childhood in different societies and contexts. For example, street children can demonstrate different traits of how they form network of support for their survival on the street. Accorging to Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003) street children in Ethiopia generally form bondings among themselves and are 'close-knit' while in Brazil their network can extend among their families and friends who may 'pre-date their street lives' (p. 85).

The materiality of childhood then plays a crucial role in geography to understand children's lives, their own experiences and views (Holloway 2014 and Skelton 2009). Ansell (2019) argues that children experience their lives differently, which is separated not only by time but also across space (see 2.4). The construction of childhood is largely known to have emerged from the Northern academics (Boyden 1997), in which childhood is an institution that offers protection, love, care, etc. to children (Holt 1995). By 'Northern' I do not, by any means, undermine the scholarly contribution of childhood from the scholars in the North but also to acknowledge their extensive application of multiple materiality and uneven social contexts to understand childhood at the margins in the Global South.

What I offer in this discussion is not necessarily to deviate from the views of the childhood discussed above but to carve out a canvas of specific childhoods among the street children of Dhaka in Bangladesh. I will also seek to explore how understanding of rights emerge from the perspectives of street children. But the experience of their childhood may still be unknown in Bangladesh not just because of the challenges of understanding the nuances of materiality and social construct, but also from the lack of wider intellectual provocation in children's geography about marginal childhood Dhaka. Despite having extensive literatures on the lives of street children in the Global South, learning about street children's perspective on rights in Dhaka can further cast a wider net of understanding children's lives.

From these discussions, I argue that street childhood in Dhaka offers a distinct view of childhood experiences from the Global South that illustrates the spatiality of their lived environments, experiences, and views. In the context of this thesis, this is relevant to show that many streets in Dhaka children are born into poverty and the socio-cultural assumptions

about them often render these children as socially excluded groups (Abebe, 2008: 281). Ansell (2019) posits that the exploration of the children in the Global South offer an understanding about children that exists outside of the 'normal' expectations of childhood. Her reference signals a connection to Judith Ennew's view on the lives of street children, whose 'childhood' does not fit within the normal construction of childhood, often filled with the experiences of marginalisation and exclusion (Ennew 2002), often depriving them of their rights. For example, Anangisye and Zhejiang (2020) discover that street children in various cities in Tanzania are deprived of their basic rights such as education due to their everyday attachment to the streets.

2.3.2 Deconstructing childhood

Scholarship in geography has discussed childhood in various ways. Kallio and Hakli (2010) suggest that childhood should be understood in relation to children's 'cultural and social institutions' (p. 3) (see *Institutional structure* in this section). Young (2003) emphasises on children's everyday experiences that are not only different across geographies, but they are also different from the 'idealised protected childhoods of the West' (Young, 2003: 607). Holt (1995) offers an insight into this. For him, although childhood can be a time when children are assumed to be protected and safe, not all children can have the luxury of these benefits. This is particularly relevant to the marginalised children who often confronts various forms of exploitation, harm, and lack proper caring environment (Evans 2008).

By putting the preceding discussion in the context of the street children in Dhaka, I will address four ways of approaching childhood, which are age (Hopkins and Pain 2007, Horten and Kraftl 2008), institutional structure (Holloway 2014 and Katz 2002), peer relationship (Evans 2008), and intergenerational relationship (Vanderbeck 2007). In a similar line of inquiry decades earlier Norwegian sociologist Ivar Frones also pointed to these factors to identify childhood. Frones (1994) claims generational relationship, children's relationship with one another, children's age, and 'institutional arrangements' to grasp the meaning of childhood (Frones, 1994: 148). Based on their life experiences and my interactions with the street children I worked with, these factors offer a relevant understanding to their everyday lives within the socio-economic and cultural contexts of their childhood. I will explain each of these factors in the following sections, the debates around them, and show how my work connects to them.

Intergenerational relationship

In this section, I will primarily discuss the state of adult-children dynamics. Although this closely related to power, which I will discuss in Section 2.4.2. The difference between the two sections is that here, I will set out a platform for the social dynamics of adults-children which will be discussed through effect of this relationship the lens of power in Section 2.4.2. In this sense, childhood may need to be understood as a 'continuum' of (Abebe, 2019: 1) of adult-children relationship. While the role of adults in children's life cannot be denied, children's agency should also carve out a place to acknowledge the continuity of adult-children dynamics.

In geography, there is an emphasis on the importance of children's intergenerational relationships because it remains largely 'under-researched' (Vanderbeck, 2007: 200). For Vanderbeck, then, this topic presents opportunities for understanding 'geographies of intergenerational relationships existing both within and between societies' (p. 215). In this sense, I will place the context of intergenerational relationship between the street children I worked with and their parents and 'other' adults in their lives to understand how this relationship affects their childhood.

To exlain further, I invoke Jenks' (1996) argument in which he claims that children's relationship to their parents is central to the discussion among many childhood experts. In fact, Jenks (1996) agrees that there is a relevance of parents' influence to the growth of children's lives, which is also known as 'contingency', an idea that illustrates how adult-child relationship is understood (p. 40). For example, in Bangladesh this relationship is based on entitlements of the social norms that require parents to protect their children which derives from the idea of 'guardianship', which aims to 'transform an unformed infant into the next stage of life' (White, 2007: 513). This example offers how generational values are place within societies where it is parents' duty to ensure the growth of their children into a 'fully socialized human' (White, 2007: 513).

Within this parent-children relationship, there is a sign of father's role as a dominant household member. Ball and Wahedi (2010) not only take notice of this, but they also mention that 'fathers make the major decisions concerning children's health care, education,

and social life' (p. 367). This paternal dominance is widely held within the broader cultural landscape in Bangladesh. As an example, Ball and Wahedi (2010) explain that 'a responsible father is considered one who provides financially for the child's basic needs and enforces obedience to rules' (p. 367).

These beliefs and practices are also engrained within children, which makes them harder to challenge. Blanchet (1996) offers a view of the children's position based on her research in Bangladesh by explaining that children are obligated to 'feel they owe it to those who have given birth (*jonmo dawa*) and have brought them up (*manush korano*) to repay their debt' (p. 85). Furthermore, she also observes that within the broader cultural practices in Bangladesh, children 'are not expected to take decisions about their lives' (p. 85). While these observations implicate lack of street children's voice, the overarching tenet of this thesis is to understand their perspectives on rights by giving them a platform to speak.

Children's relationship with one another

The vitality of children's peer relationship has been discussed among geographers. This relationship is central in understanding the spatiality of children's experiences of social interactions 'across multiple social and cultural contexts' (Evans, 2008: 1665). This peer relationship is also important to understand children's interaction with 'with spaces and places outside their immediate home environment', which is critical for the development of children's decision-making (Skelton 2009). This implies that outside of their relationship with their parents, children are influenced by their own peers in such a way that their peers create a 'subculture' in which children share specific rules and norms that are not shared beyond their own 'subordinate age group' (Frones, 1994: 157).

These subcultures play a key role for children to 'construct' and 'determine' their own 'social lives' (Prout and James, 1997: 8). What Prout and James (1997) suggest is that being able to construct their lives, children are no longer seen as 'passive subjects' within societies (p. 8). By alluding to the ability of children to construct their own lives, Prout and James (1997) argue that childhood is a manifestation of social phenomena that exist within the experiences of children. Children's relationship with their peers, however, do not always follow the logic of the others or the adults. In other words, these relationships mutate and necessitate within the experiences of the children and may not be known or understood by those who do not

share similar circumstances. Conticini (2005) discovers that the street children in Dhaka develop peers or networks with other children on the street in order to develop 'their dependence on social interactions and on the sharing of affection and trust' (p. 73). I will advance the discussion of children's peer relationship in section 6.5.

Children's age

For geographers attending to children's studies, age is referred to their 'biological reality' (Wyn and White cited in Hopkins and Pain, 2007: 287). However, age does not relate to the factor of biology alone. It evolves with children's experiences that is connected to their own circumstances (Hopkins and Pain 2007). The street children I worked often talked about their future – what they want to be or become in order to escape their marginal lives. In this sense, they lives are intertwined with present and future as Lee cited in James 2011 has explained '[c]hildren's lives and activities in the present are still envisaged … as a preparation for the future' (p. 35). Although 'preparation' for the street children in Dhaka represents their 'hope' for the future, hindered by uncertainties. Given these views, I am using 'age' through the lens of being and becoming, which I will explain.

Many children I worked with in Dhaka wanted to be someone else – becoming – from their own existence in their childhood through education (see 1.6) as a source of their pedestal for success and survival through the lens of aspiration (see 2.2). In geography, this point can be relevant to children's age because it implies a spatiality (Evans 2008) because it implies a movement from one stage of life to another. Uprichard (2008) argues that the emerging and ongoing discussion of being and becoming of childhood need to be discussed not as 'conflicting' stages of children's life but rather as a continual process that weaves into their capacity to develop agency as well (p. 304).

My framing of children's age in the context of this thesis then involves not only a paradigm of social relationship, but also as becoming as a reference to children's aspiration (see 2.2) rather than the chronology of lifecycle (Hopkins and Pain 2007) itself alone. With these distinctions in mind, which are far from clear, I provide below an overarching view of becoming by Nieuwenhuys (2013), which I will discuss empirically in section 6.4:

> The very intention of taking the child as a social being, rather than a becoming,

> that has been the concern … for now 20 years, has meant a paradigmatic revolution of which the consequences are yet to be fully appreciated and explored (p. 8).

Being and becoming are crucially linked to progression of childhood into the future (Uprichard 2007). The former means that the 'child is seen as a social actor in his or her own right', actively experiencing a childhood, while the latter means the child is 'seen as adult in the making', who does not have the 'skills' and 'features' of the 'adult they will become' (Uprichard, 2008: 304). Tisdall and Punch (2012) points to the tension between the two concepts, in which childhood can be seen as ''human becomings' rather than 'human beings'' (p. 250). This view, they argue, excludes the state of being of children (Tisdall and Punch 2012), which is also critical in understanding children's 'everyday realities of being a child' (Uprichard, 2008: 304).

To lessen the tension of being and becoming, Tisdall and Punch (2012) explain that rather than considering childhood through the lens of this binary construct, it would be critical to embrace both in order to consider the 'cultural and contextual variations' that are intricately connected to their childhood. For example, in many countries in the global South children from young age may engage in paid work to support their families. But this example may not be considered as an appropriate 'particaption' for children in a 'non-minority world' (p. 11). For this thesis, then, deciphering children's voices about their rights without considering being and becoming from their own socio-cultural contexts would remain a partial inquiry. Because it would deny the prospect of understanding children's future as an 'adult' (Uprichard, 2008: 305) from the engagements from their present (Hanson 2017).

Institutional structure

In discussing the make-up of children's institutional structures Frones (1994) describes 'institutionalization' as a 'process by which organized arrangements, chiefly the school system, influence children's lives and organize their days' (p. 150). This broadly defined term requires further unpacking. While institutions like education plays a larger role in how children's lives are constructed among sociologists, it can be put into a different context in geography where children may not be a part of the traditional education system but can have the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of their lives as a result of their relationship with their families. For this thesis, institutional structure is a significant marker for children's

aspiration for their future. For example, education is seen among children and their families as a pathaway for for better future, which I have discussed earlier is linked to their rights. This way, Holloway (2014) offers a relevant point. She argues that exploring the views of children on the institutions such as schools and families is equally important. Children's views, Holloway (2014) explains, may offer a grounded perspective about their lives, therefore, giving us an opportunity to understand the 'nature of their lives' (p. 386).

Some of the street children I worked with had to forgo their education (as a right, see 2.2.1) in favour of supporting their families. Earning money to support their families does not only derive from their own volition, but also from the insistence of their parents. Foregoing education for work emerges from the dire necessities of survival due to poverty. This condition among the street children in Dhaka I worked with challenges what Brooks-Gunn and Duncan (1997) claimed more than two decades ago that implied 'children are dependent on others' and that they 'cannot alter family conditions by themselves' (p. 55).

The families of some of the street children are dependent on their income to stave off dire necessities for survival, making the children a part of the societal system within marginalised communities that not only denies their right, but to compel them to accept the circumstances that deny their right. This interdependency can lend to the fact that the wellbeing of marginalised can be dependent on the role of NGO interventions in Bangladesh in terms of the promoting their rights (see 2.4.3 and 6.0). In this way, children's dependency on the adults signifies uneven power relations in which children's voices can remain silent.

The preceding discusions have highlighted the role of institutions on children's lives. On the one hand, education is broadly promoted as a right but, on the other hand, the socio-economic institutions can deny their rights due to poverty and demands of society to take care of their families. Kabeer (2003) have alluded to this contestation from the vantage of children's best interest. For her, to listen to children's voice it is equally important to respect the local traditions that require children to take care of their families. Similarly, Katz (1994) has shown in her work with Sudanese children about their social responsibilities that allows them to learn form their own environments. Lieten (2009) argues that children 'live their lives' (p. 17) and based on the circumstances they are entitled to choose what they want. I will advance these views in Chapter 5.0 to show how institutional structures can affect their childhood and

their rights in Dhaka. I now turn to the discussion of multiplicity of childhood to underscore spatially different lives of children.

2.3.3 Multiplicity of childhood

In this section I offer some coherent constructions of childhood in the Global South, which I metaphorically termed in the title as ‘‘else’ where’, a place other than everywhere. Alternatively and relationally speaking, then, ‘everywhere’ is positioned as a marker for the global knowledge of childhood largely emerged from the Global North (Boyden, 1997: 2), which remains a contested topic. The word ‘multiplicity’ has different meanings such as diverse, variety, and array. To apply these meanings to ‘multiplicity’, I combine it with the word ‘childhood’ so that collectively ‘multiplicity of childhood’ would denote as diverse childhoods, which I will develop I the following sections.

I place the discussion of ‘multiplicty of childhood’ (see title of this section) against the lives of the street children in Dhaka from various neighbourhoods, which represents the effect of poverty, vulnerability to harm and exploits, and marginalisation that consume their lives. On the other hand, children from these neighbourhoods experience unique circumstances that demonstrates unique ways of experiencing their childhood. In this sense, their childhood(s) represent how they respond to their corresponding social and environmental contexts such as the role of parents and other adults in their lives and ‘meanings and relationships … with local places’ (Percy-Smith, 1999: 501). On the one hand, there is a ‘universal’ view of childhood that signals children should be protected from harm and should be offered necessary provisions such as schooling for their development. While this rather optimistic view signals novel intentions for the benefit of the children, on the other hand, though, not all children can have similar opportunities due to the differences in socio-political and cultural differences that would ensure their safety, protection, and happiness (Holt 1995) on equal terms.

Locating childhood thus tells us that it has been a long-debated and an ever-emerging topic. By ‘locating’, I do not mean an ‘absolute’ place but ‘in a relative sense’ (Creswell, 2011: 235) within the academic thrust for knowledge-production about childhood. To place an overarching view of children from the well of Western ideals, borrowed from Jo Boyden’s view above, they are thought of as ‘weak’ and ‘small’ and thus need to be protected ‘from the

harshness of the world' (Holt, 1995: 9). I will address 'peripheric forms of childhood and child subjectivities' (Castro, 2019: 50) among the street children in Dhaka through the lens of childhood theories and constructs of childhood in order to engage with the 'plurality of childhoods' (James, 2010: 487).

Childhood theorists have long argued over this concept from various perspectives. Nieuwenhuys (2013) points to the colonial history for imparting children's (co)existence in the society. Colonial expansion was rooted in modernizing societies and representing those who are 'incapable of change', including children (Nieuwenhuys, 2013: 5). The modernizing principle during colonial periods highlights not just socio-cultural changes but also indicates how capitalism relates to modernization (Venn 2006). Nieuwenhuys (2013) argues that postcolonial ideologies challenge dominant Western discourses that are largely unchallenged and that 'open up intellectual spaces' for marginal populations (p. 4).

I have referred to postcolonial not to develop theory but to investigate the marginal conditions accustomed to being growing up as a South Asian in Dhaka, a city that is rooted in a deep colonial history of poverty and marginalisation among the street children. This representation pushes the need for a childhood of hope, sense, and sensibility of those protecting the children, including societies that are not necessarily represented by the differentiated 'lived experiences of … children of color, colonialism, and the violence experienced by Global South peoples' (Perez et al, 2017: 80).

Despite and because of these factors, Ansell (2019) offers some optimism for understanding childhood that are not only 'happy' and 'protected' (Holt, 1995: 5) but also those that exist outside of this norm by engaging with the contexts of how children encounter with their lived environments. By 'optimism', I mean the scope of ongoing pursuit of extending our knowledge of childhood. For example, Kesby and his colleagues (cited in Ansell 2019) posits that it is important to understand childhood from the context of the global South that does not always conform to the childhood elsewhere. In a similar fashion, Holt and Holloway (2006) posit that the childhood studies have not fully 'teased out' and, hence, it is critical for geographers to delve into the understanding of global childhood – both in the North and the South (p. 137).

These provocations then are central to understanding how street children in Dhaka can construct and articulate their rights, emerging from their own childhood experiences. This argument has a strong relevance to their childhood that is also 'fragmented by the diversity' (James and James, 2004: 13) of their everyday lives. Liebel (2004) reminds us of children's experiences that are relevant to 'a variety of everyday connections between various activities … and their meaning' are not always understood nor are they fully decipherable (p. 7).

Children at the margins

Scholars from the Global South have emphasised on the need for such a scale of understanding about marginalised childhoods. For example, in engaging with children's lives in India, (Balagopalan, 2011: 293) argues for the examination of 'separate but equal' understanding of global childhoods'. To address this lack of wider intellectual provocation about marginal childhood in the Global South, What I offer in this discussion is not necessarily to deviate from the views of childhood discussed above but to carve out examples of childhoods among the street children of Dhaka in Bangladesh that are spatially different from elsewhere. I will also seek to explore how rights are understood from the perspectives of street children, emerging from the nuances of materiality and contexts of social construct in Bangladesh.

Blanchet (1996) explains that children in the *slum* in Bangladesh are excluded in ways that they are perceived outside of the *samaj* (culture), a reference earlier to Ansell's childhood that falls outside the boundary of 'normative expectation'. The perception of children in informal settlements in Bangladesh then tells us about childhood that exists on the 'margins. I find it relevant to the lives of the street children in Dhaka from two dimensions -- social and spatial. For the former, this dimension is relevant to their marginal status that draws attention to their hierarchical existence as human beings within the urban culture (McFarlane 2011). For the latter, it invokes a sense of their everyday existence in the *bosti*, a place that reflects 'struggle' and 'aspirations' (Thieme, 2016: 109). Lancione and McFarlane (2016) argue that 'margins are produced and experienced in different ways in different cities' (p. 4). These multiplicities of production and experience, they explain, are situated within specific 'groups' who are 'forced to the economic, cultural, and political edges of urban society, located there because of the inequalities of the urban world they live in, not because of their own actions' (Lancione and McFarlane, 2016: 4).

Yet, the experience of survival (see 2.4.1) within the margins of society displays a sense of marginal children's resiliency to survive. For Conticini and Hulme (2007), resiliency is a form of coping strategies that enable marginal children to negotiate with the negative consequnences in their lives. According to Sondhi-Gerg (cited in Ali 2011), resiliency is a mechanism to 'withstand considerable hardship, and not only overcome it but also be made stonger by it' (p. 260). While both of these definitions are relevant to the context of street children in thesis, I argue that resiliency although provides capacity to survive harsh conditions, it does not necessarily make individuals stronger. Placing this argument against the context of this thesis, street children I worked with in Dhaka may have shown extraordinary resiliency to survive and dream, their lives can also operate between despair and hope. In this sense, despair can weaken their morale in the face of recurring adversity in ther lives. I will offer empirical evidence of children's resiliency in Chapters 5.0 and 6.0.

Geographers have discussed the ways in which street children 'negotiate' their lives within urban environment that are geographically varied (Ansell 2019). They adapt to the urban conditions to survive. Margins then are the places where children experience their 'lives and going ons' (McFarlane and Silver, 2016) and 'where they spent most of their time' and produce and (re)produce their everyday lives and identities (Beazley, 2002: 1666), like the street children in Jakarta from Harriot Beazley's research or to the street children in Dhaka from Sarah Atkinson-Sheppard's research.

The examples of Harriot Beazley and Sarah Atkinson-Sheppard illustrate how street children in Jakarta (Beazley 2002) and Dhaka (Atkinson-Sheppard 2017) adapt to the socio-economic conditions within their own respective 'urban' landscape and how their adaptation leads them to articulate their voices about who they are. These examples are not only pivotal in advancing my argument about how children's lived experiences within the urban environment can offer distinct perspectives about their lives, but they also offer opportunities for finding a pathway to 'listening to children's voices' (Ansell and van Blerk, 2005: 428). The urban environment is pivotal to the understanding of children at the margins. More than 500,000 street children are 'homeless, having no fixed address … residing in streets, slums and squatter settlements' (Chowdhury et al 2017). The street children in Dhaka draws a reflection of social and spatial exclusion, and marginalisation. Political geographers argue that in South Asian context people's lives at the margin revolve around the constraints of

their ‘belonging’ and access to entitlements and rights (Cons and Sanyal 2013). Alternatively, Fantahun and Taa (2022) discuss in their article about the conditions of street children in North West Ethiopia in which they feel socially excluded not because of their status as street children but also because they have no parents to seek support and love from. The conditions of being socially excluded and lack of support and love, puts them in a situation where they are being deprived of their basic needs such as education, food, and shelter.

However, I extend the preceding discussions and examples of street children in Northern Ethiopia by stating that street children’s association with marginal conditions in Dhaka does not necessarily remove their capacity to speak about issues that affect their lives. Evidence in cultural geography suggests that street children can demonstrate their capacity ‘for grasping opportunities the street could offer’ (Bordonaro, 2012: 417). What this means in the context of this thesis is that ‘street’ represents a metaphor for the experiences of their everyday lives that can offer meanings and context (Katz 2008) about what rights means for them.

Having said that, my focus of street children in this thesis offers an understanding of their perspectives of rights through geography and other cognate fields such as sociology, development studies, and anthropology. The other significance is to add a unique dimension of their lives from Dhaka. This would add to the growing interest of research of street children in the field of children’s geographies (Ennew 2000). I will advance our understanding of children at the margins as active social agents and decision makers in and about their lives (Bordonaro 2012, Skelton 2009 & General Comment 2017) that has been discussed through the lens of children’s geographies in this section through the empiricals of this thesis.

2.4 Geographies of street children

This section reviews geographies of street children. Street children has garnered significant attention from geographers interested in childen's studies, which also derived from the emergence of social construction of childhood (explained earlier) that recognises not only the agency of children but also their voice (van Blerk 2012). This attention has, however, largely remained within the focus of understanding street children's association on the street (van Blerk 2012) but not necessarily with their relationship between 'children's lives and wider society' (p. 2012). In the context of this thesis, by 'wider society' I mean children's association with outside of their immediate family(ies) and with those such as NGO communities that are intricately connected to their wellbeing. From van Blerk's study which focuses on street children's relationship with their families and community as part of 'wider society', I will also advance the notion of 'wider society' to show street children's perspectives on the importance of rights in Dhaka that also puts them in the path of adults (in) and the NGOs in chapter 6.

The CRC introduced in 1989 (see 1.4) did not include the words 'street children'. The indication of their rights through the 54 Articles can be traced through various Articles such as 19 and 20, which mentioned children's protection from dire circumstances such as violence, neglect, exploitation (Article 19), absence of family (Article 20). I am using the absence of 'street children' in the CRC as an analogy of a lack of their voice due to their marginal position in the society (Spyrou 2011). However, as time has marched on since the introduction of the CRC in 1989, Unicef, for example, has developed a definition of street children which is as follows:

> Any girl or boy for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults (Buggenhout, 2020: 96).

Judith Ennew's (2003) work with street children in Southeast Asia, Africa, and elsewhere has been instrumental in bringing into light the issues of street children among academics and practitioners. She has been influential in positioning the importance of children's voice. For

example, Unicef has provided qualifications for street children as ‘on’ and ‘of’ (Ennew and Swart-Kruger, 2003: 1). For the former, it means children who spend their time on the street but return to their families. For the latter, it means children who belong to the street because they do not have families. Judith Ennew criticised this binary assumption. For example, in Ethiopia, street children are often termed as ‘streetism’ by the ‘program workers’ to indicate children’s association with the street but in Kampala children associated with street are known as ‘Urban out of school’, meaning children who do not attend to school belong to the street (Ennew, 2003: 7).

These experiences are linked with not just various places and spaces in their everyday lives (van Blerk 2013 and Holloway and Valentine 2000) but also with the wider socio-economic and cultural contexts of urban Dhaka (van Blerk 2013). Doreen Massey, a noted British Geographer, analyses space from three perspectives. One, space represents interrelationality of people, infused with meaning and social relationships (Cresswell 2004); two, space represents heteregneity of existence in which individuals and communities attach meaning to spaces and their spatial identities (Cresswell (2004); three, space is dyamic, meaning if space is about heterogeneous relationships, then it is always evolving. These perspectives indicate that human relations are in need of understanding the complexity of their nature and context in which they take place. In this vein, Tuan’s (1979) definition of space offers a view of social relationship through experience as he posits ‘[t]he study of space, from the humanistic perspective, is thus the study of a people's spatial feelings and ideas in the stream of experience. Experience is the totality of means by which we come to know the world’ (Tuan, 1979: 388). However, the meaning of space can be abstract without understanding it from the context of place (Cresswell 2004 and Tuan 1979). In this sense, space needs to be placed within the context of place in order to understand the relationship between human relations and locations and the way we experience the world (Cresswell 2004).

Before moving onto the discussion of place, I define space, based on the discussions above and to put this in the context of the experience of their lives of street children in Dhaka, as where they can have a freedom to talk about matters that are relevant to their lives. By ‘talk’ I mean they are able to freely articulate issues that are relevant and important for them without the presence or the interference, or the influence of adults. Therefore, the word ‘freedom’ offers a relevant factor (see 2.2) for street children’s ‘struggle for their achievement’

(Massey, 2005: 11) not only in terms of their rights but also to have opportunities to talk about them. Blanchet (1996) discovers in her studies about marginalised children in Bangladesh that 'street children who have broken of from the families and fend for themselves have the greatest space to construct a world of their own' (p. 17).

Place for street children in Dhaka then represents a canvas of locations and locales. Agnew explains that a location is a physical place with particular coordinates, for example, while locale represents a 'material setting for social relations' (Cresswell, 2004: 7). Streets that are linked with children's lives (Miencke 2011) have distinct spatial identities, contributing to various subcultures of children who live on the street. In the context of this thesis, the emphasis on place is important because it offers a connection between rights and children's everyday lives (Holloway and Hubbard 2001), which shows that the place is 'something that has meaning for children in ways they can associate and express their own experiences … and network of interacting and interaction with the reality and imagination of discovering meaning' (Cele, 2006:36).

The lives of street children I came across In Dhaka are closely associated with several places, which offered clues to understanding about their relationship with places and lived experiences. For example, street children in Dhaka want to leave the environment of the informal settlement through their aspiration to become a *manush*, someone successful by escaping poverty and envisioning a better life for themselves and their families. Children at the shelter long for the protection and safety from the harms of street but their connection to Mazhar (the Shrine, see 4.4) still figures as a source of their identity and voice. The Shrine represents a space where children spend a considerable amount of time – a place for creating network of bonding and doing 'things' as children, which also provides a ground for understanding their rights. Collectively, through these associations of place, street children in Dhaka develop a sense of agency to talk about rights that affect their lives. According to Young (2003) places can offer insights into the way street children navigate through their everyday lives through the quest for survival and an intricate web of intrictate power and powerlessless.

2.4.1 Survival

Mitchell and Heynen (2009) describes 'geography of survival' as spaces and spatial relations in which not only people live, but especially whether they may live' (p. 611). For them, these terms also mean that for the poor, survival is linked to a network of support (Mitchell and Heynen 2009). This definition offers a relevance to this thesis because it highlights the dynamics of marginalised children's survival. Ennew and Swart-Kruger (2003) argue that physical survival is a central part of street children's lives. These markers offer relevant contexts for this thesis in a number of ways. First, they show children's lived lives are often associated with perils of the street, which require them to adjust to the circumstances that offer safety for them (Atkinson-Sheppard 2017). Second, they show the adverse conditions the children encounter to survive through the means available that 'make sense to them' (Conticini, 2005: 69). Third, Mitchell and Heynen's definition signifies street children's need to live, a point the CRC emphasizes in Article 6 through the lens of 'right to life' (The UNCRC, 1989: 4). As an example, Beazley's account of street children in Jakarta provides a snapshot of their lives that collectively exposes the three factors about survival I mentioned above. According to Beazley (2002), street children in Jakarta, Indonesia discovered some of these factors of survival to form networks of peer relationship not just to protect themselves from the harms of the street but also to survive the unpredictable street conditions. Similarly, Orme and Seipel (2007) show the survival techniques of street children in Ghana to support each other through financial and emotional support.

In conjunction with Article 6, the CRC articulates 'survival' of children. Leena Alanen reminds us that the CRC 'Convention has quite clearly provided researchers with the topic to study empirically' on a number of topics including exploring children's 'views and understanding of their rights' (Alanen, 2010: 7). In this thesis, I will explore survival as a contributing factor for street children in Dhaka to talk about their rights in Chapter 6.0. In geography, the notion of children's voice exemplifies the capacity to internalise their own lives and 'grasping opportunities that street could offer' (Bordonaro 2012 and Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003). By 'grasping opportunities' I mean children's ability to survive the adverse circumstances that also become contributing factors for them to talk about their rights. For street children, these opportunities also represent strategies for making decisions in their everyday lives (Rehnuma et al, 2018: 300) that are essential for their wellbeing.

From this thesis, then, wellbeing offers a relevant point for this thesis to underscore their connection to survival. In geography, wellbeing is associated with a variety of ways such as physical and social dimensions, and the role of context and space (Schwanen and Atkinson 2015). For Schwanen and Atkinson (2015), these factors are relevant in understanding of individual and collective wellbeing. These factors offer a strong relevance to the circumstances of street children in I worked in which the children discussed their wellbeing for their family and for themselves through the network of bonding in order to deal with their marginal conditions. For example, Conticini and Hulme (2007) explains that the wellbeing of street children in Bangladesh often derives from their quest of reducing their 'feelings of social exclusion' (p. 205) due to their social status. This is an important point for this thesis because it not only raises children's drive to enhance their socio-economic status, it also connects to their understanding of rights.

In the CRC, the word 'wellbeing', which is linked to children's care, protection and dignity as human being, appeared six times, from 'Preamble' through Articles 3, 9, 17, and 40. Tisdall (2015) argues that 'children's rights are increasingly seen as contributing to children's wellbeing, rather than children's wellbeing contributing to children's rights' (p. 782). I will advance this argument in this thesis to show (Chapter 6.0) how rights for street children in Dhaka can not only contribute to their wellbeing. To this end, I ground Conticini's (2005) position to highlight that the perception of children's wellbeing is influenced more by their social relationship than by material assets' (p. 70). What this means in the context of this thesis is that children's survival instinct may arise from their desire to live so that they can pursue their future for a better life. I will advance Tisdall's and Conticini's views in Chapter 6.0 to show the dynamics of survival, wellbeing, and rights. I now move to the discussion of power in children's lives.

2.4.2 Presence of power in children's lives

In this section I discuss the effect of power and powerlessness of street children. On the one hand, I will show that while their lives are connected with adults through uneven social dynamics of power, street children can also display power within their own environments. On the other hand, while marginal conditions in their lives can render them powerless, the state of their powerlessness can also function as a trigger to talk about their lives. To this end, then, power is important for this thesis because children's lives are deeply associated with

'powerful people' (John, 2003: 15). In her seminal book *Children's Rights and Power* she passionately argues while 'power and representation' are unavoidable in exercising children's rights, it is still imperative to regard children 'as a person' (p. 22). Her sentiment echoes the spirit of the CRC but she cautions that this spirit cannot be uphold unless children are respected. John's position, however, opens up the effect of power that affects children's rights. The effect of this power can weaken children's position (Punch 2007) in society. Power relations, then, are central to understanding the lives of children associated with the streets (van Blerk 2013) and the exploration of power as a factor for street children to talk about rights.

Power is an effect of social dynamics between adults and children, which can often morph into one another through a complex and geographically, culturally, and politically connected social relations between adults and children. When placing power against children's rights, the uneven social relationship between adults and children points to power of others over children's lives (Punch 2007). As an example, Conticini's (2005) research in Dhaka has revealed that NGO interventions are often linked with what services they offer to the children irrespective of their choices. When placing power against children's rights, the uneven social relationship between adults and children points to power of others over children's lives (Punch 2007).

In geography, the connection between children and their relationship to place has been comprehensively discussed (van Blerk 2013). The street children I worked with represented power to imagine and articulate rights from the experiences of interacting with their own environments (Aytac 2021) despite their marginal conditions. I place this argument against the notion of power as a 'disguise' (Allen, 2004: 5). For Allen, power operates as 'relational effects' (p. 95) within the socio-cultural landscape and these effects can tell us the nature of power. In this vein, he contends that power can exist in 'disguise' (Allen, 2003: 5). By 'disguise', then, I mean hidden power of children for forming and articulating their views.

Allen (2003) discusses the association of geography and power that I find relevant in the context of my fieldwork in Dhaka, in which power is an effect of the social relation that exemplifies authoritative practices among adults and children. Allen (2003) connects geography with power through 'relational effects' of social interaction (p. 95). Through a

series of business practices, for example, he explains that these relationships can detect the outcome of power through factors in 'disguise' such as deception, domination, and manipulation. For him, within the dynamics of social relations power is not always something that is being held, it can be also be 'enabling' (Allen, 2003: 39). I will advance this argument in chapter 6.0 to show evidence of how power operates as an 'enabling factor' in children's lives. The enabling factor indicates a form of capacity which I have discussed through various literature earlier (e.g., Bosco 2007 and Skelton 2009) in the context of street children's ability to express their views.

However, for Allen (2003), capacity as power alone cannot be held as a 'thing' (Sayer, 2004: 256), and, therefore, power needs to be examined through the dynamics of social relationships. From his view, I argue that capacity is a resource for children to display their power of expression. By adapting capacity as a tool for expression, capacity can be understood as not the end but the means for marginal children to express their views. By 'end' I mean, the outcome of their expression. Having said that, I define power as children's capacity to carve out a space to imagine and articulate about issues that matter for them. For this thesis, it is important to associate power with children's capacity (Skelton 2009) to express their views. Allen's rejection of capacity (Sayer 2004) as a source of power begs me to take an alternative approach in which I argue while power is imbued with social relations, it can be an enabling factor for drawing capacity to 'do something'. However, Gallagher (2008) argues that children are 'one of the most intensively governed groups in modern societies' relating to the needs of their entitlements like health and education (pp. 401-402). Matthew's (2001) provides an opposing view of this disenfranchisement of children by arguing that 'if children … are to be afforded the rights … and the entitlements of equality of opportunity, awareness needs to be raised and greater sensitivity shown to the tensions posed by their structural disadvantage that is an outcome of adult hegemony' (p. 117).

For many street children in Dhaka, their lives are intricately connected to their relationship with their parents or other adults in their lives. To make decisions about their lives involves ongoing negotiation and adjustments. While this may reflect, on the one hand, the influence of 'others' in their lives, on the other hand, the act of negotiation and adjustments also represent their capacity to deal with the adults. Beazley (2003) argues that street children can 'take responsibility for their own actions and have some control over their lives' (p. 108).

However, the social dynamics between street children and adults do not necessarily remove the ‘ever present’ effect of power. To this end, geographers have criticised the notion of power dynamics, in which unequal power relations between adults and children remains within the notion of the ‘powerlessness’ of children and the dominance of adults over them (Gallagher 2009).

Powerlessness and its effect

Following Gallagher’s introduction of powerlessness, I offer an understanding of powerless, and powerlessness about marginalised children in the Global South. Borrowing from Fine and Sandstrom, Holt (2004) posits that children can see adults as more powerful, putting them in a ‘relatively powerless position’ (p. 19). Marginalised children, particularly the street children, are rendered as powerless, who need adult interventions (Bordonaro 2012). John (2003) explains that this form of powerlessness could derive from the perception of being considered ‘not just ‘lower’ but not even a person’ (p. 52).

For many street children in Dhaka, their lives are intricately connected to their relationship with their parents or other adults in their lives. To make decisions about their lives involves ongoing negotiation and adjustments. While this may reflect, on the one hand, the influence of ‘others’ in their lives, on the other hand, the act of negotiation and adjustments also represent their capacity to deal with the adults. From these discusions, I define powerlessness as a condition of being poor, often unable to speak and and act on rights that matter for their lives and future.

To this end, I will bring the discussion of stigma associated with street children not just based on children’s ability to make decisions but on the basis of their subjugation borne out of their marginal status. Stigma is defined as a ‘spoiled identity’, a deviation of identity from the ‘attributes considered normal and acceptable by the society’ (Goffman cited in Verma et al, 2017: 496). This definition echoes the identity of street children as those who are ‘antisocial, immoral … in conflict not only with law but also the whole of society’ (van Beers cited in Ennew and Swart-Kruger, 2003: 84). However, despite these views of stigma which is associated with street children, Moncrieffe (2006) argues that ‘[s]tigma is most effective when persons come to accept the negative perceptions of themselves’ (p. 42). Based on his study in Ethiopia, Moncrieffe (2006) discovers the negative impact of stigma among children

of losing hope for their future. But stigma also becomes a part of their lives that propels them to go on with their lives, a trait of survival, among the children studied in Moncrieffe's research.

Similarly, Verma et al (2017) show that stigma cannot necessarily be a factor for children's negative consequences such as exploitation and discrimination in their lives. Rather, children can use stigma for daily survival. In the context of this thesis of street children in Dhaka, what stigma means is that while it remains attached to their lives and identity as *potho sishu*, it can work in favour of them to talk about their daily struggles through through the lens of right. To these ends, stigma is a key factor because as I will show in children's own words and photographs in Chapter 6.0 how it debilitates their lives. But, on the other hand, stigma can be a trigger as a capacity for articulating their rights.

This relational effect can have an effect of children in which they find themselves subjugated not only to their powerlessness but also to the control of others, which can amplify the effect of power dynamics of social relation (Amoore 2014, Foucault 1982 & Mills 2003) and adverse 'adult–child relationships' (West, 2007: 126). Myburgh et al offers a rather drastic view of the consequences of children's negative thoughts. For them, '[c]hildren living on the streets exhibit various emotional responses to their daily lived experiences, including the experience of negative emotions and suicidal ideation' (Myburgh et al, 2015: 6). Although in my fieldwork, I did not encounter any suicidal effect of street children I worked with, the discussions about staying alive (Chapter 5.0) and death (Chapter 4.0) have come up from the children, indicating their worth to survive as a human being.

To put children's subjugation above into a context, children in the Indian Subcontinent largely are not 'encouraged to express their views or participate in decision-making processes …. Children are seen as the property of parents and should respect and do what their elders tell them' (O'Kane, 2000: 702). For marginalised children, the experience of poverty often limits their voice and cripple their ability to control what happens to them (Narayan 2000). Children's decision-making about their lives among many children in Dhaka, as an example, derives from what their parents think are best for the survival of the family, a point Blanchet (1996) explains by lending to the cultural practices in Bangladesh, in which children often cannot make their own decisions.

However, for the street children I worked with this 'norm' does not always apply because many of them do not have or live with their immediate families. For them, then, they are responsible for making choices about their lives. Although their decision-making can have influence of 'other' adults in their lives. However, as Young (2003) indicates that for street children their relationship to the street can enable them to imagine and articulate their experiences about rights. Beazley (2003) argues that street children can 'take responsibility for their own actions and have some control over their lives' (p. 108) despite the crippling effect of poverty.

Holt (2004) similarly explains that despite the co-existence of adults and children in the society that can often render children in a 'relatively powerless position' (p. 19), their relationship cannot necessarily be reducible to the binary position between 'powerless' and 'powerful' (p. 13). In the contxt of this thesis, I interpret this as an opportunity not only for children to express views but also to open up a ground for contesting the adult-children relationship (Holt and Holloway 2006). To this end, I will next discuss the effect of NGO services on children's rights.

2.4.3 NGOs and their effect on children's rights

In this section I provide an analysis of NGO interventions to show that the NGOs play a profound role in street children's lives. NGO interventions to promote children's rights plays an important role for development. That children can have 'competence' (Bourdillon 2004) to recognise what is best for them points to, on the one hand, their agency, and on the other, the 'periphery of power' (Bourdillon 2004) of adults in their lives. This complexity points not only to children's rights but also to the NGOs as a potential source of addressing these issues (Annual Report 2010). According to Banks et al (2015) NGOs serve as a gateaway to the development. In the context of children-focused services in Bangladesh, NGOs are considered not only as a portal for broader social progress, but they are also deemed as an agent for the future of street children.

However, the NGO services in Bangladesh has become far from holistic. Rahman (2006) points out that NGOs in Bangladesh have shifted their orientation to become 'service delivery' (p. 454) agencies. Ahmad (2006) argues that the dependency on donors has not only made the NGOs in Bangladesh increasingly reliant on the funders, but it has also 'skewed

NGO activities towards donor-driven agendas for development rather than to indigenous priorities' (p. 632). Mir and Bala (2015) argue that the accountability 'frameworks for NGOs are rarely straightforward because they have multiple stakeholders' (p. 1835). This dependency signals recipients can become not only become the target but also get embroiled within the politics of development (Power 2010).

Ansell's (2014) observation also provides a relevant point to Ahmad's (2006) argument in the previous paragraph. For Ansell, 'a rights-based approach can be confined to limited areas of children's lives or may be hijacked by groups with particular agendas and consequently fail to serve children's interests (Ansell, 2014: 6). This scenario is problematic because the NGOs in Bangladesh often target marginalised children like those who are connected to the street to address the issues of their rights without being fully aware of what their 'rights' actually entails (Mahmud 2008). However, as Power (2003) argues, power can be a critical factor in geography to understand how it affects development interventions for addressing 'place specific' social struggles (p. 195).

The NGO service in Bangladesh began its roots in the rural areas with focus on marginalised farming communities. That focus began to shift in the 1980s and onwards due to rise in migration of rural communities to Dhaka, which also increased the presence of street children on the streets of Dhaka. In this sense, urban proliferation of the street children remains not only dominant but also an emerging issue of the 'root causes of streetism' (Ennew, 2003: 6) in Dhaka. Ennew (2003) uses this term to explain the conditions of street children in Ethiopia. For Ennew, 'streetism' means the marginal life of children associated with the streets. To put this in the context of Dhaka, Hai (2014) explains the 'familiar sight' of street children of those who 'are the most vulnerable, exploited and who face the highest risks' of facing adversity and uncertainty of their future (p. 46). Similarly, then, this term offers a relevancy to the children I worked with whose marginal lives were intricately connected to the NGO interventions in Dhaka, linked to their future and wellbeing.

In his article, titled *Children in Development*, Michael Bourdillon (2004) takes up on the 'importance of involving children in development projects' aiming to draw our 'attention to the importance of children as actors' (p. 99). In his interrogation, he discovers that children are assumed to be 'peripheral to development projects, and that adults can speak and decide

for them' (Bourdillon, 2004: 100). To advance Bourdillon's (2004) discovery, I use an example from Conticini's (2005) research in Dhaka in which one of the street children says 'NGOs give us what they want without asking us what is important for us. But we could not live without certain things we value important, and we do what we can to get them' (Conticini, 2005: 69).

Children, then, I argue, can become the children 'of' development, making them the subject of NGO interventions in many developing countries. White (2002) also explains that the NGO practice 'has a shadow side, where the driving force is not the needs of children, but the wish to oblige the donors and to give them what they want'. (p. 14). This evidence points to the reference of children's association with development where they become a subject of of development interventions (Ansell 2005). From these discussions, I argue that the commitments of the NGOs can be put into question for providing a sustained support for the children.

In his article, Bourdillon (2004) goes on to explain the 'importance of children as actors in shaping the societies in which they live' (p. 99). I do not disagree with Bourdillon's views. On the one hand, this thesis' overarching aim of examining how street children conceptualise the meaning of rights is situated within their capacity to speak. On the other hand, though, the role of adults in the context of development interventions in their lives cannot be denied. In other words, without the interventions from adults, their capacity is reduced to the point where they are thrown back into the vortex of marginalisation that renders them as 'invisible' (O'Kane, 2002: 698). I will advance these contrasting scenarios to show the effect of NGOs on children's views on their rights in Chapter 6.0.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the merits of three interrelated dimensions – rights, children's geographies, and street children – to frame the central question: How do street children in Dhaka understand their rights? The role of rights, children's geographies, and street children are discussed in relation to children's rights and are discussed with reference to rights and are drawn to frame the investigation of this thesis to explore the perceptions of street children's rights in Dhaka. Through the engagement with these interrelated strands, I will show in this thesis that street children's perspectives are relevant to understand the meaning of rights. To understand their perspectives, chapters four, five, and six will offer their perceptions of rights through various empirical analyses based on my interactions with the street children in Dhaka at three sites – Korail informal settlement, Mirpur shelter, and Dhanmondi Lake Park.

This chapter builds on the conceptual frameworks of children's rights (Alston et al 1992, Ansell 2005, Archard 1993, 2013, Blanchet 1996, Franklin 1995, 2002, Freeman 2011, Liebel 2012, Lieten 2009, Skelton 2016, Tisdall et al 2014, White 2007). Despite the difficulties of defining rights, I argued in this thesis that rights are a platform for recognition as humanbeing. My argument has derived from children's need to be recognised as humanbeing and also to have dignity to be acknowledged as rights holders. I have situated the discussion of rights in this thesis on the basis of citizenship, which for street children emerges as a result of their relationship with the environment. Their relationship with the environment is a key factor, in ways that influences them to talk about what rights are important. These rights are fundamental necessities for their lives (Archard 1993). However, it is not just the rights that are important. The articulation of their rights is projected onto their aspirations. Together with aspiration, their right is also built on their (lack of) dignity. However, their capacity to aspire can be restricted due to their marginal conditions (Appadurai 2004). I will show in Chapter 4.0 of this thesis that children can have the capacity to talk about these issues through the lens of their rights.

Children's geographies are important for the investigation of this thesis because they provide a central gateway to the understanding of children's everyday lives (Holloway and Hubbard 2013). The interaction of geography with their everyday lives offers a valuable insight into street children's rights (Ennew 2002). The lens of geography with children's everyday lives in terms of understanding their rights has also offered a platform for comparing childhood

that are protected and privileged (Young 2003) and those that are margnalised. It may also open up a space for intellectual debates on our understanding of local and global childhood (Ansell 2009).

To discuss street children, I build my thesis on exploring the importance of rights for them through the lens of their struggle, power, powerlessness that operates simultaneously in their lives. The survival is particularly essential for street children to denote not just as a strategy to deal with the adverse circumstances but to stay alive (Mitchell and Heynen 2009). The uneven social dynamics between adults such as parents and guardians and street children often render the children powerless to make decisions about their lives. The powerlessness can trigger the necessity for their survival not just to live but also to situate survival as a factor for street children to discuss their rights. The social dynamics is important for the necessity to negotiate with their contested lives and also to make decisions (Rehnuma et al 2018). For street children, it also enables them to develop their 'independent views' on rights that matters for them (Freeman 2007). I will discuss in Chapter 6.0 the views of street children's rights to advance the understanding of the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights.

3.0 Chapter Three: Methodology -- steps in learning about children's rights

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses methodological issues involved during my research process. Geography, as a discipline, has long utilised qualitative research to study human behavior (Winchester and Roffe 2016) which also requires robust ethical practices. It is therefore critical to explore these issues as Christensen and James (2017) explain that researchers must integrate ethics and their own reflexivity 'into their research practice ... making this integral to the research process' (p. 2). To this end, the narratives of the methodological choices of this chapter are largely driven by my concerns around ethics, which is addressed throughout this chapter.

I conducted an ethnographic study to pursue my investigation in Dhaka during 2018-19. I was fascinated with the ethnographic work of Sudhir Venkatesh, author of *A Gang Leader for a Day*. Conducting an ethnography through my fieldwork as a doctoral candidate became a reality for me. Equally important, the interest allowed me to understand ethnography's connection to geography. Having had the prospect of conducting my fieldwork in Dhaka gave me critical insights into the methodological issues about engaging with the geographic approach to place (Cairns 2013). By 'place', I mean not only the physical locations where I worked with street children, but also the ethical sensitivities of my presence in those places (Cairns 2013, Hay and Israel 2022). Finlay and Bowman (2022) have discussed the importance of place among geographers to understand the social hierarchies that influence people. This point is pivotal for understanding the context of adults-child social power dynamics (Davidson 2017) associated with street children's views on rights.

In the context of my multi-sited fieldwork in Dhaka, ethnography was central in understanding how this approach has represented children's voice and children's lives at various places through my my own identity and methods I used. In my ethnography, I have utilized several qualitative methods, such as photography, observation, and interview (see 3.9), which have become an important tool to discover and understand people's lives and experiences (Mason 2005, Marshall and Rossman 1999).

Geographers such as Hemming (2008) argues that qualitative methods can be 'beneficial for gaining deeper and complex' understanding of this 'social processes' (p. 152). Allowing children to use take photographs to explain rights, for example, has helped me to understand some insights into their perspectives that emerged from their own environments and experiences. As a fieldworker, I did not, however, always have an upper hand in the field, such as access to the children. I had to submit myself to the rules of the gatekeepers, who allowed me to interact with them at pre-determined times and locations. Yet, the approach allowed me to be 'there' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 3) where the children and their lives crossed paths (Cresswell 2004).

The methods I used provided a landscape of broader understanding about people's lives by being there (Crang 2004), which, however, created tensions of 'power' between the researcher and the researched. I will introduce these tensions (see 6.0), ethical and otherwise, which were critical in exploring what and how children talked about their rights through the lens of ethnography. I used ethnography to conduct my investigation with the children about their understanding of rights. Rooted in anthropology and sociology, ethnography is an approach aimed at understanding particular social meanings, activities, etc. by combining several data collection methods such as observation and interview (Atkinson and Hammersley 2005, Genzuk 2003 & Hemming 2008). While I will discuss my methods in detail in section 3.9, I briefly mention them here to inform the readers that these methods were critical for my fieldwork because they offered me a window of exploring how street children in Dhaka have interpreted and articulated their rights by enabling me to get closer to their lives (Lees 2003).

The role of ethnography to understand children's lives has been widely discussed by various geographers (e.g., Barker and Weller 2003, Hemming 2008, Katz 2004, Matthews 1998). To this end, geography was central in my work. It directed my senses to locate and connect the different places – streets, park, and informal settlements -- of my fieldwork. I had to be in those places – the children's world -- before they revealed themselves (Cresswell 2004). Ethnography provided an insight into discovering the connections between children's perspectives and different places – their world (Agar 2008 and Herbert 2000) – they live. Being there was necessary for me to understand children's lives, which were relevant to their

everyday practices as a source of the meaning of rights. So, as a student in human geography ethnography made sense to me.

In conducting my ethnography, I utilised several qualitative methods – participant observation, interview, and photography as a visual method in order to investigate the meaning of children's rights. Genzuk (2003) argues that ethnographic studies utilise a combination of observational and interview methods. Participant observation (see 3.9) was particularly important as I have spent time and interacted with the children in Dhanmondi Lake Park. This method is often linked with ethnographic studies to study and observe those who are researched in the field (Herbert 2000). Interviews (see 3.9) turned out to be a critical method of gathering data as they helped me to re-construct children's meanings about rights that emerged from their voices. In addition to participant observation and interview, I have also used photographs (see 3.9) to analyse how they constructed the meaning of rights through the context of their everyday lives.

Christensen and James (2017) argue that methods must aim not only to investigate research questions, but they also need to be 'appropriate ... for its social and cultural context' (p. 4). The thrust for exploring voices of street children despite their marginal conditions has provided an opportunity for me to understand their rights from their own perspectives. My thesis aims to offer understanding of children's voices through the qualitative techniques I used in the field. I argue that these techniques are important not only to address the central research questions (see 1.2) of this thesis, but also to understand how they are utilised in the research process. In section 3.9, I will explain which method(s) I have used to answer my principal research questions. I have divided the chapter into several sections by maintaining an overarching chronology of the research process that took place in Dhaka. In this fashion, the first section will explain the context of Dhaka, focusing on why I have chosen to work in Bangladesh and Dhaka with the street children. This is followed by sections on my journey to Dhaka, engagement with the three oganisations I worked with, and the encounter with children. Then, I will explain the issues of identity and power followed by ethics, methods, and departure from the field. In the concluding remarks, I will offer a brief reflection on the research process.

Fig. 1. A group of street children in Dhanmondi, near the park. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

3.2 Context of the fieldwork

In this section, I discuss why I have chosen to conduct my fieldwork in Dhaka, Bangladesh with the street children. In doing this, I first provide explanation for my reason to work in Bangladesh followed by Dhaka and with street children – although I have highlighted these in section 1.7, the narratives here are grounded on practical and personal reasons.

Why Bangladesh?

As a self-funded student, I chose Bangladesh because I have always considered both Bangladesh and Dhaka as my home as my parents lived there in 'our' home. I could not afford to conduct my fieldwork in any other country on my own expenses. In this sense, coming to Bangladesh for my fieldwork seemed reasonable. Also importantly, what motivated me to come to Bangladesh was the fact that there has been a lot of work with the marginalised communities through various development interventions, which I explained in sections 1.6 and 2.4.3. In this sense, my fieldwork in Bangladesh has a strong relevance. Further, although being at *home* initially confounded me of my presence among the familiar surroundings of where I was born and where I grew up, it eventually helped me to orient myself in my *field* of work.

Why Dhaka?

I chose Dhaka because I was a self-funded postgraduate student research student (as mentioned above). Dhaka made sense because of my nominal accommodation and living expenses. I lived in our flat with my parents, who took care of my expenses, in the city. Furthermore, the central location of our home in Dhaka, provided me with ample access to public transportation to the field sites, a factor that helped minimise my travel cost. Importantly, Dhaka represented a hub of marginalised children who are associated with many NGOs in the city, working on issues such as children's rights, advocacy and awareness, safety and hygiene, education, etc. In Dhaka, there is also a substantial focus of NGO involvement with street children (Islam 2015, Kaiser and Sinanan 2020).

Why street children?

I was interested in street children because of the lack of sufficient studies, particularly in children's geographies, to explore the 'voices' of the marginalised children in Dhaka. While researchers have done works on street children in Dhaka, there is a lack of qualitative works to learn about the experiences of the children themselves (Miah and Reza 2014). In this vein, I realised that my ethnographic work may allow me to address this gap by engaging with the understanding of children's rights from their own viewpoints (Mason 2005). Furthermore, a secondary literature review prior to my fieldwork revealed that more than 55% of nearly four million street children in Bangladesh live in Dhaka (Islam 2015). To this end, my sentiment echoes with what Islam (2015) cites that these street children can be an 'asset' to Bangladesh as a future generation who possess the capacity to talk about their lives regardless of their marginal conditions (Blanchet 1996).

3.3 On to the field

The moment Emirates Boeing 737 took off from Newcastle International Airport, the realities of beginning my fieldwork set in. I was on that flight on my way to Dhaka, alone, as a fieldworker, a role that was unfamiliar to me. It was unfamiliar because I was unaware of how to be one. It got worse when the plane landed in Dhaka, some 10 hours later. Butterflies knotted in my stomach, anticipation yet anxieties of entering the field remained distant -- although I was there -- because of the looming and necessary logistics of acquiring the obligatory ethical protocols (Brown et al 2020 and Palmer et al 2014) from Bangladesh and setting up NGO collaboration, and other logistics were yet to be organised, coordinated, and

materialised. After arriving in Dhaka my next step was to get the necessary ethical clearance from the field. The process turned out to be a bulwark in the sense that I needed a clearance from the Bangladesh government that would supersede clearance from the individual NGOs. From my cultural familiarity, getting a clearance from Bangladesh would not be easy because there is a lack of uniform institutional ethical requirement for fieldwork with children.

'Everything is hard in Bangladesh. But everything can also be easy'

To find out about requiring formal ethical clearance procedure to work with the street children in Bangladesh, I went to see a high-level bureaucrat, *amla*. It is not uncommon in Bangladesh to get things done through a network of people to gain various 'goals and priorities (Zhengwen and Hoque, 2018: 158). To explain this further, as a Bangladeshi I was aware of the cultural practices where people in position of power can make things happen. So, I pre-emptively contacted a friend who knew the bureaucrat in the ministry that administered Bangladesh Social Science Research Council (BSSRC). I was at the time admittedly too eager to get my fieldwork started without any delay and to get the clearance without any hitch.

Returning to the *amla*, he was a secretary in one of the ministries in Bangladesh. I will not mention his name nor the name of the ministry he worked for in order to protect his anonymity and employment. A friend, who lives in the U.S. and who knows the Secretary, helped me to set up the meeting with him. Secretaries are powerfully positioned bureaucrats within the ministries in Bangladesh. I went to see the bureaucrat one morning as soon as the meeting was scheduled. His office was responsible, as mentioned earlier, for administering Bangladesh Social Science Research Council (BSSRC), the administrative body responsible for overlooking ethical clearance in Bangladesh.

After we exchange pleasantries in his office, the Secretary asked me about my fieldwork and the ethical clearance I was seeking from BSSRC. He mentioned to me that national-level ethics was not required, *dorkar nai*, for fieldwork unless it involved government-funded projects. I pressed on by mentioning that it would be important for me to have that in writing which I would need to share it with my university in order to begin my fieldwork. He thought for a moment and said: 'No problem, I will see what I can do to get you a clearance'. This

was a moment of relief for me as his words certainly carried confidence and weight of an *amla* who can get things done.

He then called someone and asked for the contact number who oversaw BSSRC. After getting the information, he called who oversaw BSSRC right away only to find out that his work phone had been turned off. The Secretary then placed another call and got hold of the BSSRC administrator's home phone. The bureaucrat then told me that he would talk to the BSSRC administrator the next day. What unfolded in that office was essential for my fieldwork to begin in Dhaka. Thomson (2009) posits that to enter the field it may be necessary to get the support of local expertise in the field during the early stages of fieldwork. This incidence also underscores my position as a fieldworker -- that I was at the mercy of the field.

'Everything is hard in Bangladesh, but everything can also be easy', said the Secretary as we continued to talk, which he insisted, over a cup of tea, which one of his assistants at ready had prepared and served. I tried to digest what he meant. I would not have had a lead to the head of the BSSRC in such a short period of time and not with any own effort alone. This experience reminded me, at the onset of my fieldwork, that power of the other stakeholders in the ground not only matters, but it was also necessary for conducting fieldwork (Mwambari 2019). After leaving the Secretary's office, I received a call from him that afternoon to go and see the head of the BSSRC the following day. After a brief meeting with the BSSRC head, I was assured to get the clearance by email. '*Thik ache*, my office will email you the clearance', the BSSRC head said. Within three or four days, the clearance arrived in a PDF format in my inbox. Armed with the clearance, I was ready to enter the *field*.

What transpired through this experience for me to grasp was that obviously I was not willing to circumvent the effect of power of *amla* nor did I want to once the process of getting the ethical clearance was set into motion. Getting the clearance was a necessary tool for my fieldwork to take place. On the one hand, I was fortunate enough to navigate through the channels of power in order to get proper credentials – required both by my university and its ethical requirement – to access the field. On the other hand, not every researcher entering the field in Dhaka may or may not have such an access to power and position. This is a paradox. Being educated in the West and having had the resources to access the proper network may

be a privilege for me but, in general, it may remain an issue for native. On top of that, in the absence of any proper channels of acquiring ethical clearance from BSSRC remains a challenge in Bangladesh. I, however, point out that for foreign or foreign-educated researchers from Western institutions, the process may not seem to be as cumbersome as it may seem for the native, *deshi*, researcher(s). What I mean here is that researchers from the latter category may have the luxury of enjoying some 'privileges' while in the field because of their (perceived) status as *bideshi*. Such a geographic divide emerges largely not only from the practices of Bengali culture but also from a broader prevailing attitude of favouring the 'others' in the Subcontinent (Pereira and Malik, 2015: 355).

3.4 Multi-sited approach: The fieldwork canvas

I worked with three NGOs in Dhaka. Working in multiple sites during ethnography has been linked with creating connections between the *sites* (Lapegna 2009 and Marcus 1995). For my own fieldwork, this was particularly important not only because I needed a gateway of access to the children, network of support and logistics, the NGOs also helped me widen the scope of children who experienced their lives differently at various locations I worked.

In terms of my multi-sited fieldwork, the decision to take on such an approach did not materialise during the planning phase of the fieldwork. Rather, it took shape after I embarked on it in Dhaka. I was in touch with a few NGOs in Dhaka before I embarked on my fieldwork. I contacted the NGOs as a part of my planning to collaborate with the NGOs for my fieldwork. Working with marginalised children was a sensitive issue, which requires to maintain strict ethical rigours of engagement with the children. With this in mind, I wanted to set up NGO collaborations that would allow me to access the children.

The NGOs I contacted included BRAC, Plan International, Save the Children, and *Aparajeyo*, a local NGO in Dhaka. I selected these organisations randomly based on their involvement with the issues of street children. However, only BRAC mentioned that it was possible to work with them due to their ongoing project affiliations with the street children in Dhaka. The others did not have any such projects at the time.

Once I arrived in Dhaka, I met with the head of BRAC's Urban Development Programme (UDP), and she mentioned that she could accommodate my research with the children in

Korail informal settlement. She had also suggested to me to investigate other NGO programs with the street children, which would provide me with a larger and wider 'data' set. The suggestion indicated existing network of efforts and efficacy of the NGOs in Dhaka dispersed across many neighbourhoods in Dhaka. In addition to Korail project, I was then put in touch by UDP (Urban Development Programme) with SEEP (Strategic Economic and Environmental Programme) and APON (Alor Pothe Nobojatry) Foundation. Upon my subsequent meetings and site visits, I decided to work with the three NGOs – UDP, SEEP, and APON Foundation.

These NGOs work on several projects such as providing education, protection, health and nutrition – 'enabling conditions of development' (Miller and Beazley, 2021: 2) -- for marginalised children that address children's well-being and aiming to address various forms of discrimination, violence, and exploitation against the street children in Dhaka (Atkinson-Sheppard 2018). Working with multiple organisations enabled me to make connections between various places (Crang 2005) where children lived, sheltered, and experienced their lives and to discern what all these meant in terms of understanding their rights. The 'geography' of the multiple sites helped to develop a broad perspective (Menga 2020) of the street children in Dhaka.

Working with this multi-site approach also posed a challenge not just from the logistical point of view but also from a sense of my own uncertainty and tensions of belonging to a specific group. In Duijn's (2020) words, 'as if I was everywhere and nowhere at once' (p. 282). For example, I needed to divide my time between the three NGOs, which I often had to explain to the NGO workers and the children. For the former group it was easy to understand but for the latter it was difficult for me to make them understand about my absence. Children often asked me these questions: why didn't you come yesterday or why won't you come tomorrow'? I responded in ways in which they would understand – not with the arcane 'multi-site' logic but with reasons for *not being* with them. 'I also work with children like you in other areas'. '*Oh accha*', or '*thik ache*' were among the responses from the children, which signalled not only their understanding of my absence, but also a connection between us.

This connection, to some extent, has enabled me to establish my relationship with the children from various sites (Crang and Cook 2007). By 'connection' I mean establishing a

degree of rapport with the children I worked with. This has helped me not only to become accepted to some degree by the children within their own environments and lives, it has also enabled me to learn that establishing such a rapport is essential in working with children in marginal conditions whose lives are preoccupied with poverty, lack of essentials for survival, including that of dignity as a humanbeing. One of the gatekeepers at APON once mentioned that my investigation about their rights was an opportunity for the children to interact with me. 'They (children) are happy that someone is interested in their lives', the gatekeeper further added. So, in this sense, a rapport between us facilitated my inquiry about their perspectives on rights, which was important for me to learn about the dynamics of working with marginalised children in the field.

The organisations

In this section, I briefly offer a profile of the three NGOs. SEEP is a mid-level NGO working in three districts in Bangladesh; APON Foundation is a grassroots agency working in Dhaka, while BRAC is a well-endowed NGO with a high-profile national and international recognition.

SEEP: The NGO runs a shelter in Mirpur, near the Shrine, popularly known as Mazhar, a prominent location for religious deity and assemblages of street children and their families where they live. The Shrine is a sacred grave of a 15th-Century saint, Shah Ali Baghdadi, who came to Dhaka from Baghdad and died in Mirpur, where his grave now stands within a large walled compound. The compound and the adjacent area in Mirpur have become a centre of street children where they live and work. Many of them, primarily boys, are engaged in harmful work while many girls are forced into sex work.

Fig. 2. A session with the SEEP children at Mirur shelter. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

APON Foundation: APON also runs various social programs specifically for the street children in Dhaka. Its key programs are based on educational support for these children through agency-led schools at various locations in the city. One such location is Dhanmondi Lake, a prominent park in an affluent neighbourhood, which also borders two informal settlements in neighbouring Rayerbazaar and Kathalbagan areas. The children I interacted with had attended an informal school for basic learning for children from these settlements in the park.

Fig. 3. Dhanmondi Lake Park. This is where I often sat down to talk to the children and reviewed my notes. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed

Fig. 4. An APON Foundation site. The programs for children are written on the wall. The second 'bullet point' lists the informal school for 'slum children' in the park. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

BRAC (UDP): The UDP runs multiple projects in Korail informal settlement near Mohakhali-Gulshan neighbourhoods. Primarily under the auspices of poverty reduction, UDP's project in Korail informal settlement aims to empower marginalised children through education, awareness, and advocacy programs. As one of UDP's flagship project locations, Korail informal settlement is the largest informal settlement in Bangladesh. The settlement (Fig. 6) is largest in Bangladesh with more than 100,000 people, situated near Gulshan and Mohakhali areas in Dhaka (Sinthia 2020).

Fig. 5. A tea shop where one of the Korail children worked. I often met the children here to interview and sat with them on the empty bench across from the shop and in front a shop where I took the photo from. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

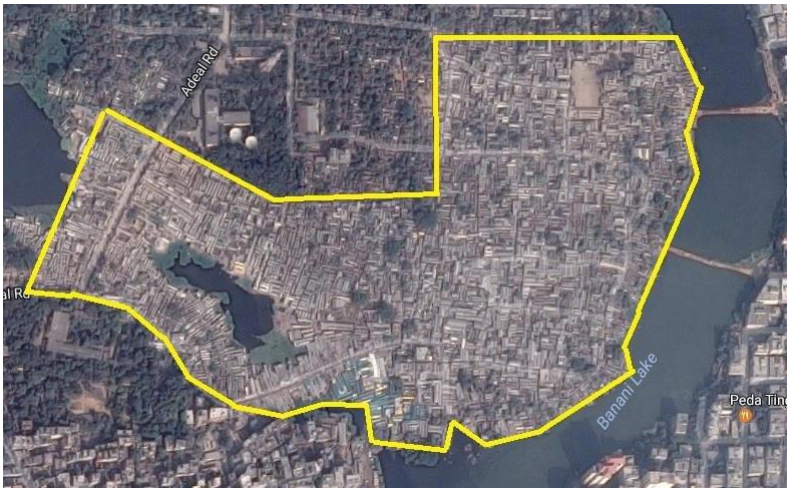


Fig. 6. A satellite image of the Korail informal settlement in Dhaka. The Banani Lake separates Mohakhali (on the left) and Gulshan (on the right) areas. Korail is in Mohakhali. Photo: Google Map.

Migration, matrimony: Issues with working with the NGOs

My 10-month fieldwork in Dhaka has culminated several experiences with the three NGOs I described above. These have introduced various challenges and complexities of fieldwork, my sense of duties as a fieldworker, and sensibility to the ethical considerations that I needed to consider not only to carry out my engagements with the children but also to maintain the integrity of my investigation. The following narratives will offer some of the challenges I encountered and resolve I sought while I was working with them. In discussing these issues, I keep the names of the individuals anonymous from each of the incidents below. Although protecting children from harm was central to my fieldwork, I was compelled by moral obligations to protect the identity and integrity of the gatekeepers and NGOs I worked with. Instead of using their real names, I have used 'NGO 1' and 'NGO 2' and removed references of the location of the sites.

NGO 1

Working with the NGO 1 gatekeeper became a bit awkward at one point when the gatekeeper asked me about the process of moving to the US, *America ki vabe jawa jai*. During our initial meet-and-greet session, I told him that I got a US citizenship. At one point he asked if I could *sponsor* him to go to America. It is common in Bangladesh for many people to dream about moving to the US and other Western countries but the accuracy of information about the migration process often gets skewed from word-of-mouth. The gatekeeper thought that someone with a US citizenship could sponsor people to move there. I told him that that was not true and that sponsorships are available through family, business, and employment. I was

not sure he believed me, but I had to be truthful because and I did not want to jeopardise our relationship. I plainly told him that I told the truth, *shotti kotha*. It was central for me to keep his trust for accessing the children.

This issue, thankfully, did not further come up between us. Maybe he understood my role as a *gobeshok*, maybe he *believed* what I told him. Both might be true, but I could not be sure. However, I was grateful to him for his continued support throughout my fieldwork. Based on what transpired, my sense is that he would not have discussed this if I had looked like a foreigner, *bidesh*i, to him, even though I was a US citizen. To him I was a Bangladeshi. This instance has shown that the relationship between gatekeepers and fieldworkers can get tested based on gatekeepers' expectation from the fieldworker. In my case, it emerged as a form of personal favour that I was unable to provide, and thus, my explanation had to be delicately balanced against trust and truth. At the same time, these were essential to keep my relationship with the gatekeeper (Ely et al 1991, Feldman et al 2003 & Glasius et al 2018) and to keep my focus on the fieldwork.

NGO 2

My being a single guy and having studied at a Western university put me in an awkward position among three single female workers at NGO 2 that I was not prepared to handle. Two of them once asked me where my family, *poribar*, was. Family meaning wife and children. I did not mind the question at first. I politely answered that I was unmarried. My answer followed with a question if I was going to get married. I explained that it would would have to be after my studies. Their curiosity further heightened with the statement that they were going to find me a bride. I tried to ignore it by trying to change the topic to the children but they persisted on talking about the marital status.

To them, my singleness in a society where people get married and have family at a relatively young age remained a curiosity, which they brought up in different ways by asking where I live, what my *father* does, who do I have in my family – questions that are commonly asked to select and/or judge potential bride/groom. I remained faithful in my answers but was uninterested in the topic of marriage. Yet, I had to accept these circumstances because they simply existed (Wojnicka 2020) and were 'part and parcel' (Brownlow, 2005: 582) of being a *single* researcher in the Bengali society. These situations left me in an awkward position

where I needed to be careful about any behaviour on my part that would have ‘consequences for the research process’ (Wojnicka, 2020: 2), particularly my ongoing interactions with the children at NGO 2. To handle this, I remained professionally engaged with the female workers by showing interest and discussing issues about the children.

3.5 Encountering the children

In this section, I highlight brief description of the children, selection of the children, and their expectation from me.

The children

The street children I worked with at SEEP were assigned to a shelter as part of the child protection programme for SEEP. Their age ranged from eight to 17, which included both boys and girls. For the girls, SEEP offered a 24-hour accommodation while SEEP provided half-day services during days for the boys. The SEEP staff collected these children from the street near the shelter to provide a safe ground. For many of the girls, SEEP’s shelter protected them from various harms of the streets such as mental and physical abuse by their parents and other adults they encounter in their lives, exploitation from some of the owners of the workplace where these girls seek jobs as dishwasher, cook, and helper. Most of the girls I worked with migrated from elsewhere to Dhaka due to abuse by their stepparents and other members of the families, poverty; a few have been separated from their families after they had moved to Dhaka; a few younger ones were born in Mirpur to the parents who had been living there.

The children from the APON were generally between eight and 15. A few older children also attended but rather sporadically due to their informal work as flower sellers and, cigarette, *biri*, sellers in and around the park. Although my interaction began with my observation at the makeshift informal school and to their everyday activities in the park, I also visited the nearby informal settlement they lived with the NGO staff. Most of these children lived with their parents and family members in a congested and contained spaces of the settlement where each family is allotted a roughly 8 feet by 6 feet room. Most families lived there with multiple members.

At the Korail informal settlement, most children live with their parents. Those who do not have parents live with their relatives such as grandmother and grandfather. These children are older, between 15 and 17. Most of them attend NGO-run schools in the settlement while some are looking for advanced education and are seeking jobs elsewhere to make a better living and to support their lives. A few works as store helpers in a neighbouring Gulshan market, while others stay home, doing nothing, finding nothing to do, hoping for something to do. Their lives are attached to the perception of being street children by the experiences of their marginalisation -- being children from Korail *bosti* -- and from the reflection of those who spend time on the street.

Selection of children: Why it mattered

The children I worked with were between the ages of eight and 17. It was by design because, on the one hand, I was looking to work with children old enough to articulate and understand what rights meant. On the other hand, I had to make sure that they were under 18 because at this age they are considered adults in Bangladesh (Unicef 2012). Children who engaged with the discussion about their rights were often *older* children – those between 14 and 17. However, the younger ones also engaged with the discussion about rights, verbally and visually – through drawings and writings (Cameron 2012).

The challenge with the younger children was to get them to talk, which they would not do because of their shyness, not able to articulate what they wanted to say. But despite their lack of their linguistic skills, the dynamics between the children was palpable. For example, the younger children at the shelter often mirrored what the elder girls said. They consented what their *apu* – the way a younger girl would call an elder girl in Bengali culture. However, this was not always the case, as I indicated in the previous paragraph. In some instances, the younger girls would express verbally and visually about how they understood rights. I would often encourage younger children to use their visual skills to express their thoughts. However, it was not always that their visuals reflected rights – they would randomly write their names, scribble on the notebook. For me, it was not necessarily an aberration from the inquiry of rights but a process in which their voice existed.

The dynamics of the children's participation did not merely exist within their *age*. It represented children's experiences about their lives and their capacity as *children* to talk

about rights. Furthermore, geographers have emphasised on the role of place that can influence how children experience their lives (Hopkins and Pain 2007 and Horton and Kraftl 2008). The role of place for the children I worked with had a profound effect on their maturity and capacity to talk about their rights.

For example, in Korail my engagements with the children about their rights often involved children between the ages of 14 and 17. They were mature for their age in terms of their life experience and were able to articulate their rights. Most of them had some form of schooling, many had worked and were working. Importantly, for many of them Korail was a place they wanted to leave to have a better life because the situation, *obostha*, and environment, *poribesh*, were not conducive to their wellbeing in Korail. This example is linked to the importance of place in children's lives (e.g., the boys of Korail) in ways that not only represents a place for living but also a place to leave to seek a better life. This anticipation of spatial movement from one place to another is linked to children's future (Kraftl 2008).

At the children's shelter in Mirpur, the depth of my discussion about rights often involved two girls – Rehana and Bithi – both of whom were 17. The experiences of exploitation and harms of the street have triggered Rehana and Bithi to discuss about their rights. The girls who were younger were also part of my engagement with them. They might not have the similar capacity to discuss about their rights the way Rehana and Bithi did, but they were *there* and they sometimes contributed to the understanding of rights through other means such as drawings and explaining the photographs they took to explain burial as a right (see 4.4). For example, their short comments were a testament to their participation in engaging with elucidating their right but the briefness of their acknowledgement cannot be ignored because it was their voice. However, on the other hand, this is an example of partial understanding of what they know about their right(s).

As I have mentioned earlier, the visuals of younger children (e.g., drawings and photographs) represented their expression – not always – about rights. For example, the drawing below shows a household yard with various rooms, trees, a flowing path to the home. These represented a sense of security for children – a home – where they would feel safe. A home they were separated from for various reasons – separation of parents, unwanted care of stepparents, poverty and migration, etc. These expressions, however, were not necessarily

complete in terms of they would define right but how they understood right (e.g., in the form of safety and security). In this sense, these are fragments of expressions in their lives that represented the totality of their existence through the vernacular of life at the margins.

Fig. 7. Drawing of a home, 'bari', by a girl at the Mirpur shelter.

The NGO staff in Dhanmondi Lake Park told me that the most children were too young (eight to 12) to discuss their rights, but it would be helpful to watch them and their activities that might reveal something about their rights. Some of the children, however, were older (between 13 and 15 years of age). The staff had also encouraged me to talk to *all* children. Accordingly, I observed, interacted with, and interviewed the children while they attended an informal school. Most children I interviewed understood the term rights, *odhikar* (See 1.5). Probably because of their level of cognitive maturity (they were attending an informal school in the park) and their age (between 12 and 15), they were able to discuss their rights. I will explain in chapter 5.0 about the discussion of rights with these children.

At the onset of my fieldwork, I used a 'process of elimination' in my selection of the children (Fetterman 2010). This led me to engage with a 'strategic sampling' based on my 'judgment' and 'assessment of the participants' (Wolcott, 2005: 92). In terms of significance of identifying the children in my fieldwork, I considered several questions: a) what opportunities will children have to shape the research? b) What will they be involved in and what it means to them? c) How will I clarify this? d) What are the benefits for children involved?

Using participatory methods of my fieldwork, my aim was to give children opportunities to tell how they understand their rights from their own experiences and voices rather than 'relying on the adult interpretation of their lives' (Schafer and Yarwood, 2009: 114). In this context, I told the children that they would have opportunities to participate, *ongsogrohon*, in a discussion, *alap alochona*, with me so that I will the opportunity to listen to them, *oder kotha shona*, about their rights. This declaration worked well with the children of UDP and SEEP but for the APON children in Dhanmondi Lake Park, the *alap alochona* about their rights required understanding about the children's *capacity* to talk about rights.

As I mentioned earlier, the NGO staff from APON had advised me on the strategies on how I should *get* them to talk about it. In this vein, most of my involvement with the children in the park was through observation although I interviewed a few children who were between the ages of 12 and 15. The observation was helpful in understanding children's everyday lives in the park through play. Because of their young age and perhaps because of the openness of the space, most children were perky and their attention span were not as concentrated as the children in Korail or the shelter where I was able to engage with the children in a sustained manner. Nevertheless, the openness of the park provided opportunities for me to reflect on children's everyday lives and construct an understanding of rights.

Generally speaking, to begin *alap alochona* with the children at all sites, I told them that it was voluntary and that they were not obligated to take part, *ongshogrohon*, in my research, *gobeshona*, and that they could leave any time during my encounter with them. Then I told them I would be *talking* to them about their lives, take their photos, *chobi*, and observe them. Furthermore, when I told the children that they would be taking photos as part of their analysis of their rights, *odhikar*, they seemed excited. In terms of observation, I had to find an appropriate word that would make sense for them. Therefore, I explained to them that I would be spending time with them, *tomader sathe thakbo*, a close reference to you must spend time with them, *oder sathe mishte hobe*. During the first couple of encounters, it seemed to me that children were trying to 'figure out' who I was. For example, on the first day of the meeting in Korail, when I asked a boy if he had any questions after I had talked to him, he told me that he did not know me well enough to ask any question yet. I acknowledged his assertion by using an expression in Bengali that linguistically translated

into ‘of course, of course’(twice), *accha, accha*. What it means in Bengali context is to give respect and acknowledge what the other person is saying.

To clarify children’s involvement with the fieldwork, I used verbal consent from the children. However, throughout my fieldwork with the three NGOs, they acted as the principal conduit for children’s consent. The staff had given me permission to work with the children. Researching marginalised children in Bangladesh can be challenging (as I have alluded to earlier). The tricky part is not only to remain ethical but also to discover ethical ways to engage with the children. To this end, getting consent from the children is not a linear process. Geographers have discussed the issues of ethics pertaining to ‘children-inclusive geographical research’ with marginalised children (Bushin, 2009: 235). Keeping these theoretical markers in mind, I felt compelled to remain engaged with the ethical considerations throughout my fieldwork.

My research project will likely benefit children from ‘explicitly teaching’ about the methods (such as photography) of telling their stories using hands-on technologies that would provide ‘unique insights’ into their lives and issues that are important to them. Having been able to tell the stories and participate in the research may also empower them in a way that they will have a chance ‘to be heard’ (Gallagher, 2009: 87) and to share and explain what changes, if any, they might like to see in their lives. In terms of benefit, I offer some cautionary notes. This thesis will unlikely to have any direct impact on the children I worked with. They knew they were part of a research, *gobeshona* in which I had inquired about their perspectives on rights. They did their best throughout the project to express, often eloquently and meaningfully, how they understood their rights. I’d share the findings of children’s perspectives to the head of the NGOs so that they would be able to interpret and analyse children’s rights against what has been articulated in the CRC. By doing so, it may help the policymakers, development practitioners, and academics to untangle some of the long-standing debates over children’s rights being too adult-oriented (Franklin 2002, Freeman 2011, & Liebel 2011) and, rather, focus on the perspectives of children in understanding the nuances of the CRC along with other studies that have been done elsewhere (Abebe 2008, Ansell and Blerk 2005, Bordonaro 2012 & Ennew 2003).

For the most of my fieldwork, I had little encounter with the parents of the children. The NGOs represented the children and it was decided at the beginning of the fieldwork that they would be the conduit between children and myself. Also, the gatekeepers at all three sites were responsible for taking permissions from the parents where applicable. However, I did come across a few parents during the home visit with the NGO staff. During these encounters, I had explained to them my role as a researcher and had asked questions like these: 'I'd like to talk to your child about their rights. Do you have any objection, *apnar kono di-mot ase*?' None of them denied me. I think it had to do with the research culture in Bangladesh with the children in marginalised communities where parents expect something good for their children from the research. The other issue is cultural, in which marginalised communities simply do not deny the outsiders from the privileged world. By 'world' I mean not necessarily someone from a foreign country but also someone from middle-or upper-class background in Bangladesh.

As I indicated above, getting consent from the children for me then was an issue that remained with me throughout my fieldwork. In this sense, the NGOs had a role in getting a 'broad' consent for me to work with the children and not to mention I also obtained an ethical clearance from BSSRC to work with the children. These tools have provided the technical legitimacy for me to work with the children. Yet, I felt these clearances alone were incomplete. They were ethical tools, but I also needed to be ethical to engage with the children. Therefore, I sought permission from the children whom I worked with.

However, I cannot say that I asked permission from *every* single child. This was particularly true for the children in the park with the APON Foundation because the Foundation constantly recruited *new* children (see 3.5). It was difficult for me to keep track of the new recruits. I had to adopt a technique to ensure ethical practices. Every child I interviewed, I made sure that I took his/her verbal consent. In hindsight, I have a sense that this has also helped me gain their respect as well. This also helped me to understand that despite the tensions of being ethical in the field, I was somewhat able to ensure children's participation in my 'research' that allowed them to talk about their rights.

Amago kichu diben na? Dealing with children's expectation

Before my fieldwork began, I came to understand that there was an ethical issue of participant expectation in the field (Grady 2005 and Head 2009). It was not uncommon for participants to receive gifts (Laws and Mann 2004). In my fieldwork, children's participation was free in two aspects. One, from a methodological point, I did not force them to participate in my investigation. It was voluntary. Two, which is relevant to the issue of expectation, I did not pay the children for their engagements with me.

In my first meeting with the children in Korail, I was confronted with a question: Aren't you going to give us something, *amago kichu diben na?* From my brief encounter with development work in Bangladesh prior to my own fieldwork in 2016 and from the literatures on ethics about giving gifts and incentives, this inquiry did not seem unreasonable to be interpreted as an expectation. However, in the context of my being a fieldworker bounded by ethics, once I heard the question, I was not really prepared to deal with this emotional *plea*, or so it seemed to me. During the planning process of my fieldwork, the learning about ethical issues in the field had come in the form of supervisory advice, lectures, and theoretical and empirical analysis, right out of hundreds of pages of books and journals.

Fig. 8. During a snack session I organised for children in Korail. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

Yet, my learning did not quite prepare me for how to deal with the four-word (from the Bengali phrase) question I mentioned above. Thinking about the struggle the children in Korail encounter at being a child -- often mired in poverty and lack of opportunities that hardly come and dreams that are hardly fulfilled -- became hugely pronounced in me not necessarily as a fieldworker but as a human. Then I had to switch to my other identity as a fieldworker to rationalise the question. I will discuss my identity in the following section (3.6), but I also feel it is important to mention here because my identity simply does not belong to a particular 'section', rather it reverberates throughout the narratives of this thesis.

Against their plea, I had to remind myself of my identity as a fieldworker bounded by ethical considerations. My transformation, however, posed a moral dilemma for me – whether to give them anything or not, will they be offended if I did not, how much to give, to whom -- a select few or all. I was deeply puzzled but, in retrospect, it provided some sense of sanctity for who I needed to be. In that sense, although it can be problematic, compensations are sometimes necessary that arises out of the fieldwork context (Ahmed 2021, Couch 2010 & Sherry 1983).

Returning to their question, I told them that I might bring gifts such as chocolate, pens, pencils, etc. Although the children in Korail raised this question, I understood that similar sense of expectations might not be unrealistic from children at the other sites. Therefore, I extended similar offers to them as well. The response from the children, including the Korail children, ranged from: 'Thank you, *Bhaiya'* to 'ok, *accha*' to 'when will you give, *kobe diben'*. These gifts were intended as my gratitude towards the children for participating in the research, an issue I also discussed with the gatekeepers who did not object because, for them, it was common for fieldworkers and other visitors in the community to provide something, *kichu-na-kichu*, for the children.

The question in the subheader for this section that I used to explain children's expectation emerged from the Korail informal settlement. Although I used this question as a context of their expectation, it would be unwise to apply to all children that I worked at other sites. However, their expectation materialised in other ways, but they had the similar meaning of *amago kichu diben na*. For example, at the Mirpur shelter I sometimes brought snacks such as cake, fruit, *singara*, *samosa* for the children, who appreciated my gesture. The adult

supervisors at the shelter did not object to it. In fact, they encouraged it by mentioning that children sometimes hoped for *things* from those who came to visit or worked with them. As for the expectation from the children themselves, they never asked for anything directly from me. However, they indicated that they would like to have good food, *bhalo khabar-dabar*. This signalled their expectation from me and whenever I returned to the shelter, I tried to bring *something* for them, but it was not always financially feasible for me.

In the park, I randomly bought chocolates and *jhal moori*, a popular spicy snack in Bangladesh, for the children. When I did that, I had to ensure that all children who were present got them. In one instance, I did not have enough money to buy for everyone, a girl (around eight or nine) was left out, and she left the group crying. I was not only embarrassed I was worried that I had offended the entire group of children. I had to seek help from the NGO staff. Luckily, they brought the girl back and bought some snacks for her. I told the girl that I was sorry. I was not sure she paid attention to my apology as she concentrated on her snacks. These circumstances indicate that there may not be any pre-determined rules for dealing with children's expectation in the field, but it is up to the researcher to assess the circumstances that may lead to handle as expectations arise.

3.6 Identity: Lost in translation

To discuss my identity, I primarily underscore here my moral indignation about it among the marginalised communities during my fieldwork. The following sections will provide some nuanced descriptions about how I have tried to negotiate with my identity through the lens of 'power'. I was perceived by the children and people in the communities as a 'researcher' (gobeshok) because many marginalised children are exposed to social interventions by the local and international NGOs in Bangladesh. To this end, throughout this thesis, I may also refer to myself as a *researcher* as my identity. Although there are examples in literature in which researchers were identified as, for example, 'a worker', or something else (Russell, 2013: 50), in my case I remained not only as a researcher, but also as *Iqbal Sir, Bhai, Sir* among the children. Furthermore, gatekeepers and NGO workers also used the word *researcher* spontaneously throughout my fieldwork.

My relationship with the children evolved during the fieldwork as I became *Iqbal Sir, Sir, Bhaiya*. It reflected a sense of rapport and respect between the children and me. Having

entered their lives truly humbled me. The fieldworkers and researchers in Dhaka, many of whom may come from abroad, are foreign nationals, and/or associated with foreign universities, encounter the children to get research *data* they require to produce reports and findings, which may or may not have any effect of the lives of the children and their well-being. Because I too was there to extract 'data', but I attempted to mitigate this conundrum through acknowledging this issue and by being cognizance of my relationship with the children.

The root of my identity, being born and grown up in Dhaka, has often tempted me to do *something* for the children. The plight of the children, their present, and what might the future held for them pained me. I wanted to offer financial help, buy *things* (e.g., clothing, food) for them. Yet, as a fieldworker, those were not under my *to-do* list. I had different purposes about understanding their rights. Despite well-intended arguments of not getting 'over involved' (Coffey, 1999: 106) with the participants and maintaining an 'ethnographic distance' (Coffey, 1999: 106) the realities of my fieldwork defied academic claims.

I was constantly confronted with why I was there. I was burdened with expectations of discovering 'something' about their rights as a fieldworker. Although I thought of myself as an insider from the familiarity of my cultural nuances, I was an 'outsider and an observer' (Rabinow, 1977: 79), which broadened the risk of being indifferent to the children's lives and burdened my role in engaging with the purpose of the fieldwork. In one of her earlier and seminal works as an ethnographer, Cindy Katz described the tension of an outsider both as a woman and as someone unfamiliar to the field of inquiry (Katz 1994). This also rings true to my own circumstances of fieldwork as someone unfamiliar to the culture of marginalised communities in Dhaka. Like her predicament, I operated somewhere in between the two binaries of an insider and an outsider (Katz 1994), unable to fit in but to assimilate with the children and their environment.

3.7 Power of the field

Relevant to my identity and positionality, the power dynamics in the field was a critical element of my fieldwork with the street children in Dhaka. In this section, I briefly highlight power dynamics at various levels – my power as a researcher, one that existed among the children and the gatekeepers, and tools of power I carried in my fieldwork.

Power of researcher

I knew I was a *deshi* researcher with a foreign passport from a foreign university. I could not change neither my 'look' as a Bangladeshi, nor could I deny the status of being educated in the West. I carried a badge and business cards that were necessary for not just as a proof of my identity but also as tools of my access to the sites. I could not avoid these essentialities. This awareness of insider and outsider (Thaper-Bjorkert and Henry 2003, Uldam and McCurdy 2013 & Zhang 2017) has somewhat helped me realised the presence of unequal power dynamics in the field and how these dynamics are 'mediated through the practices of adjustment, improvisation, bargaining' (Anderson, 2017: 504) with the circumstances of my fieldwork in Dhaka.

I was always conscious of the 'class' barrier between myself and the children I worked with. I accepted it but it was also important for me to understand the existence of it and to negotiate with it. Understanding its existence signals a power differential that stems primarily from the 'class' differences between the children and myself. I grew up in a middle-class family. My father was a civil servant. We were not particularly rich but my father's status as a first-class officer put our family within a respectable place in the society. This 'class' difference also heightens the cultural differences between the marginal communities and the ones that are outside of it (Vainoy 2003). I belong to one of those that exists outside. These communities include hyphenated classes of the society (lower-middle, upper-middle, upper-class, etc.). The people for the marginal communities often view themselves as poor, *gorib*, and consider those who are outside of it as rich, *borolok*. The literal meaning of *borolok* emerges from the perception of someone with status and power, and hence, with money. Although what counts as *gorib* and *borolok* in terms of financial gain can be subjective, the salient point that divides the two communities is (perceived) power differential (Thieme et al 2017).

Aside from my 'class' differences, as a 'researcher' from a foreign university I altogether held an identity of an outsider. While I could not disregard it, I tried to repel the perception that was associated with it throughout my fieldwork. I tried not to act a *borolok* by wearing fancy clothes, watches, etc. whenever I visited the children at different sites. I tried to remain non-descript among the presence of the children. It was not always helpful as I gave away my position as an outsider. I cannot explain it fully but perhaps it was the 'aura' of someone who

did not belong there was always present and visible. Despite this tension, I often wore a smile and tried to take interest in that was all around me.

Despite the unequal position of power between children and myself, children I worked with did not shy away from my presence. Yet, the presence and power operated in different fashions at different sites. In Korail, I often met with a core group of children. They were older, between 15 and 17. They called me *Iqbal Sir*. The word 'sir' was used as a respect for an older person. For them, the word 'sir' can also mean a schoolteacher, which obviously I was not. In this regard, I might appear as less threatening to them.

The girls at the Mirpur shelter called me *Bhaiya* or *Iqbal Bhai*. As they became used to my visits to them and the purpose of those visits, the girls seemed to have become comfortable around my presence. Rehana, one of the older girls, told me once that the girls liked when I was there. It was a revelation for me, but I wanted to find out the reason, so I asked her why that was. She said that it was because I was a good (man), *apni bhalo (manush)*. While I was humbled for their generosity, it signalled that the barrier of power between us might have eroded a bit.

The children in the park mostly called me 'Sir'. It was probably because of my participation in their schooling activities (see 3.9). Often, as I observed them, they would come to me to give them a few class exercises, which included math, English, and Bengali. When one came, others would follow. Sometimes, they jostled to get their exercises from me. Mostly the younger girls and boys (aged 8-12) would be involved in this. This indicated, on the one hand, their acceptance of me, and on the other, the ease of their presence around me. Both of which indicated that despite our differences, establishing a rapport between researcher and participant can dispel the influence of unequal power dynamics. For me, this was important to gain children's trust. Following these experiences, I somewhat felt my existence was accepted. Children acknowledged my presence among them. Although the barrier of unequal social hierarchy and power between us remained, it was a humbling feeling and a constant reminder to have acknowledged by the children that made it possible to work with them to find out about their rights.

Power of children

During the planning phase of my fieldwork, I had thought about dealing with power dynamics in Bangladesh where street children are thought off as those who are deeply veiled in deprivation and vulnerability (Conticini and Hulme 2007 and Henry 2003). It was not until my fieldwork that I began to realise while these were true, they too are empowered in ways they are adept at using their meagre position to exercise power over others, influencing understanding of power (Allen 2003). I was at the mercy of the children. Without them, my fieldwork would not have materialised. Without their presence, the purpose of my existence would seem irrelevant. Without their voice, the meaning of rights of marginalised children in Dhaka would remain untold.

Power of gatekeepers

The gatekeepers at Korail were the members of community who were responsible for overseeing wellbeing of the children and handling resources to the community from the donors. The Mirpur shelter gatekeepers were the staff paid for by SEEP. In my day-to-day coordination with the children at the Mirpur, I was assigned to liaise with three staff members, two of whom were in charge with the girls in the shelter and one with coordinating logistical and administrative operations. The gatekeepers at APON were two part-time teachers at the informal school in the park. At the onset of my fieldwork, they were assigned to work with me by the Program Directors of each of the NGOs. These gatekeepers were responsible for coordinating my visit with the children.

My collaboration with the gatekeepers reflected a relationship that promulgated not only access and availability to the children and entry to the field (Thomson 2009), but also a varied scheme of power dynamics. My access to the Korail and Mirpur children needed to be coordinated ahead of time by the gatekeepers, which sometimes was frustrating but it was necessary to ensure safety and availability of the children. At times, my frustration grew into anger because of the non-response of the gatekeepers to get back to me about my visit to the children in Korail and Mirpur. I was at the mercy of their phone call or a text message during my wait, which sometimes, lasted days. These situations reflected a form of power of the gatekeepers they were exercising over me. At the same time, I had to accept that they might have had other priorities and that it might not had been intentional. However, I was aware

about the ‘control’ of the information and ‘possessiveness’ of the children of the gatekeepers (Rabinow, 1977: 75).

Overall, the role of the gatekeepers has provided a systematic and carefully orchestrated representation of and access to the children. It became obvious that my position was also somewhat restricted by the powerful presence of the gatekeeper and the community members in charge of the children (Turnball et al 2009). I had to accept and understand the rules of the field. At the Dhanmondi Lake Park, I had a more congenial relationship with the workers who oversaw the children. This relationship is not necessarily unique, but it represented a form of collaboration through a friendship I developed with them.

Although I had to accept the power of gatekeepers in my fieldwork, I also acknowledged their support and role as a facilitator. This was important for me to not only accessing the children but also learning about the relationship that I developed with the gatekeepers. Despite some of the tensions with the gatekeepers, I mentioned earlier, I must also acknowledge that there was a sense of respect between us. Perhaps it emerged from trust and truths of the very circumstances (see 3.4) that led me to continue to work with the children. During my fieldwork, I managed to learn about the children and culture of the marginalised communities from the gatekeepers. It was a critical learning for me to understand circumstances and environment of the children, which often reflected how they understood rights.

Fig. 9. With the members of Korail community, including my gatekeepers (1st and 5th from left). Photo: A community organiser

Power of symbol

During this exchange of give-and-take situations, I was constantly aware of my position as a Bangladeshi (by born) fieldworker from a Western university with tools of authority (i.e., my campus card and business cards from Durham University) during my fieldwork. To this end, these became symbols of power. Durham student badge, for example, acted as a gate away to my access to the field and my identity as a 'researcher' in the community. I needed to wear it to visit the sites. Having seen a badge around my neck gave me an impression of being 'official'. This has also provided me a sense of security while traveling to various neighbourhoods in Dhaka.

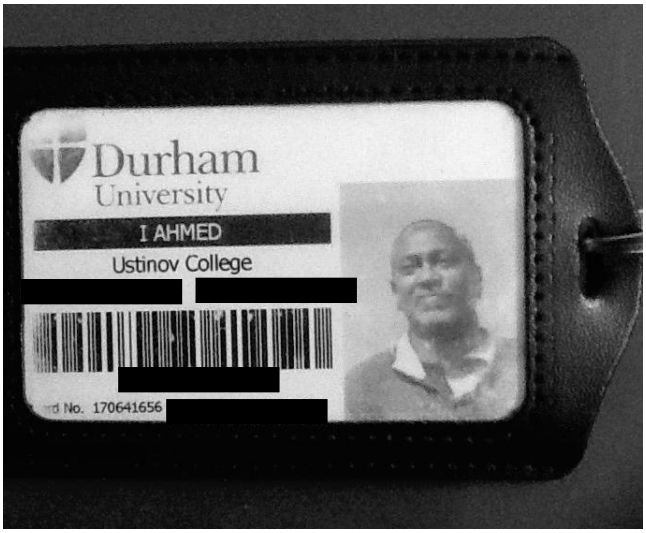


Fig. 10. My campus card. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

I was conscious of the tools of my identity, which I could not avoid because they were necessary for the validation of who I was (Thaper-Bjorkert and Henry 2004). In using those, I tried to remind myself of my moral and ethical obligations of my role to maintain the integrity of power of these tools, on the one hand, and, on the other, to find and establish a common ground with the participant (Paluck 2009). So, I remained conscious of what I wore, what gadgets I used, how I talked. I did not wear any watches (which I do not by habit), nor any fancy clothes; did not carry a smart phone; spoke in Bengali (thanks to my native-born skill) without mixing it with English so as not to come across as a *Banglish*, a term known in Dhaka for those who want to appear to be *smart*.

3.8 Ethics of fieldwork

This section offers a brief insight into the ethical concerns of my fieldwork with the street children in Dhaka. Ethical considerations in researching children have become a concern for particularly among geographers focusing on children's studies (Horschelmann 2021). Drawn from the CRC, Miggerbank and her colleagues argue that geographers are becoming more aware of the ethical issues of participation rights and protecting children from harm during research (Miggerbank et al 2021).

While I will discuss ethical issues of my research process in section 3.0, they will reverberate throughout the thesis. Bell (2008) defines research ethics as the fundamental principle of applying 'welfare of individuals' during research (p. 8). However, the circumstances of applying ethics also depend on the conditions of the 'field'. These conditions then can invoke the necessity of understanding 'researcher ethics' alongside 'research ethics', which can co-exist (Bell, 2008: 8). For example, to work with the street children in Korail informal settlement my plan was not only to establish a rapport with them but also with the Korail community. My gatekeeper has told me that the Korail commuinity is a where children lived and represent themselves as the children of Korail, *Korial-er chele-meye*, so it was important for me to learn about, respect, and gain respect of the community in order to conduct and gather information from the children about my research.

Drawing out children's voices can be problematic. As Kraftl (2013) argues that children's voices can be subject to the interpretation of the researchers who work with children. In this sense, in retrieving children's voices I was not able to distance my role as a mediator of their voice. Children's voices came through my own writings, turning children's voices into 'voices of children' (James, 2007: 262). James reminds us about this distinction. The former is what the children are saying while the latter is interpretation of what they are saying (James 2007) due to the inherent 'adulist' representation of understanding of their lives (Pykett and Disney, 2016: 148). While I remain ethically aware of this concern, I am also reminded by my own burden to tell what the children told me. I have explained more about this 'concern' and 'burden' in sections 3.5 and 3.7. My fieldwork with the children was driven by the principles of consent and anonymity in order to protect children from harm by maintaining their confidentiality and freedom to participate in the fieldwork and withdraw from it at any

time. To offer some of my ethical positions, in this section I briefly underscore how I have used consent and anonymity in the field.

Informed consent

Before I set out for my fieldwork, I began to develop consent forms not only for the children but also for their parents (see Appendix 1-2). As I have indicated earlier, my fieldwork experience generated only a few encounters with the parents. As such, I did not use the consent form that I developed. The reason is that as I got to the field, I realised that it might not also be feasible nor practical to 'read' the consent forms to the parents. Therefore, I used verbal consent. In addition, I had also developed information sheets for participants and parents (see Appendix 3-4), but I also understood that the how I use them might need to be adapted, depending on the circumstances in the field. The strategy for utilising information sheet for children and parents also followed similar suit.

These understandings also resulted from the literature on getting consent of the marginalised children. Abebe (2009), for example, brings up scores of circumstances of the marginalised children in Ethiopia, where some children did not have legal parents for authorising consents. Russell (2013) discusses getting verbal consent, in which circumstances may not allow fieldworkers to mediate through pre-drafted, written consent.

I asked questions of the children like what consent is, where Durham is, what research is, why universities do research? These narratives include some local words in Bangla that I used to communicate with the children in Dhaka. The aim was to make children comfortable, to understand what I am trying to say to them so that they can respond appropriately, to avoid confusion in my communication with them, and to give them a chance to be a part of my fieldwork (Alderson 2012).

I needed to develop strategies having a dialogue with the children about their consent. For example, I had to maintain a good eye contact with them when I sought their consent to ensure they were paying attention to me. However, In Bengali culture, it is common for younger person not to make prolonged eye contact with an elderly person while the latter is speaking to the former. Making eye contact in this instance is considered rude and disrespectful to the elderly. Keeping this cultural trait in mind, I stopped frequently as I spoke

to get their attention by asking if they understood what I had said and to ensure that my eyes met theirs. Nevertheless, their gaze would eventually become downward, so I had to return to the process of stopping and asking.

I also discovered something revealing about the process of getting children's consent. During a meeting with the gatekeeper in Korail, which had taken place prior to my engagement with the children, was very happy to hear about the consent that I was planning to offer for the children. In response, he said that that would be a good learning for the children because in Bangladesh people 'hardly ask permission from each other'. That 'this would not only be an ethics lesson, *manobota*, for them [children] but they will also learn about manners, *vodrota*, he said. These character traits are linked to their becoming *manush* (see 5.4), an aspiration to become successful in life that children discussed in terms of their rights.

In some cases, when I visited children's homes, I discussed children's involvement with the fieldwork with their parents and got their verbal consent. I explained that I would get consent from the children as well. The parents did not object. As mentioned earlier, my interaction with children's parents was limited mainly because of the overall aim of this thesis to discover the meaning of rights from children's own perspectives.

Anonymity

Maintaining anonymity for fieldwork respondents is closely linked with privacy (Ransome 2013). According to Ransome (2013), due 'to the extent that social fieldworkers obtain personal information from people, observe and interview them, and generally intrude on their lives, the issue of privacy is ... to be taken seriously' (p. 39). To this end, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 as cited in Ransome (2013) states the following:

> No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to the attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks (Article 12: 39).

The anticipation of maintaining anonymity from these conceptual jargons did not necessarily tell me what to expect in Dhaka but it prepared my mental framework for how to handle what was to come. For example, I thought about how (not) to tell children's stories by keeping

their identity anonymous. There is a contrast in this about silencing their voice (Water 2018) as Vainio (2012) has cited the following:

> Some critics of anonymity have argued that anonymity maintains the same unequal power relations in research that prevail in society in general. Non-anonymity would give 'voice' and empower the participants, allowing their words could be heard, whereas anonymity obscures this possibility (p. 688).

Once in the field, I began to learn about negotiating this contrast. As an example, on the one hand, it was necessary for me to keep the voices anonymous when the children and other stakeholders specifically requested for it. On the other hand, often they did not object to me to using their real names and images. In fact, they insisted sometimes that I tell their stories. It was problematic for me because I did not fully understand why children did that. Although, I cannot fully ignore the cultural aspect of Bangladesh, in which it is a sign of disrespect for a younger person to disagree with an older person. In my case, it was not only the issue of age but also my status as a researcher that might have played a role in children's consent. To minimize these complexities, I collaborated closely with the gatekeepers to help me navigate through the nature of the participants such as their cognitive issues, family status and background, etc. to help me ensure that children's confidentiality and anonymity are protected (Abebe and Bessell 2014).

After I returned to Durham from the fieldwork, I have kept the data sources in a secure location at the university (i.e., locked cabinet, university-networked hard drive) and I have only made them available to my supervisors (when they were required during the review of the thesis draft). To protect the physical data sources such as my password-protected laptop, backup drives, and encrypted flash drives, I kept them locked up in a safe at my residence. Despite these safety measures, I remain overwhelmed with the burden of the carrying their anonymity. I feel I was empowered by the children to keep their trust, and, at the same time, I am fraught with the fear of carrying the burden of maintaining their identity. Following this, I turn to the methods I used during my fieldwork.

3.9 Research methods: Tools of the research process

This section discusses the methods I employed in my fieldwork in Dhaka. To discuss the methods, I will discuss how and why I have used these methods, what challenges I have encountered using them and how I have negotiated with these challenges. As mentioned earlier (see 3.1), I employed participant observation, interviews, and photography. These methods are not uncommon for conducting research with children in geography (Hemming 2008). Geographers Evan and Holt (2017) indicate that methods such as interviews, observation, and photography can be used in children's research as participatory methods to explore their lives. For them, these methods can offer an insight not just how to *use* them but also how to *use* them in order to research marginalised groups such as children in 'challenging contexts' (Evans and Holts, 2017: xiii). In this vein, through the methods I used my aim was to give children opportunities to tell their own account of how they conceptualise the meaning of rights so that their 'voices can be heard' (Gallagher, 2009: 87).

I will first explain participation observation, which was particularly employed with the children in the park to answer the second research sub-question about what childhood can inform us about their rights (sub-question 2, see 1.2). However, I also interviewed a few older children in the park to investigate what rights are important and what are the factors for street children to talk about their rights (sub-questions 1 and 3). Interviews were used throughout my fieldwork at all three sites to conduct the investigation of children's perspectives on rights. I used photography to answer question about children's conceptualization of rights (sub-questions 1, 2, and 3, see 1.2) with the children at Korail and Mirpur. I have also used my own photographs of children and various places they live and spend to reflect on and interpret their rights.

Participant observation

As a method, Laurier (2016) cites that participant observation is the 'foundation of ethnographic research' and is based on two 'parts' that include 'participation and observation' (p. 170). The former is 'spatial phenomena', in which 'researchers' absorb themselves in collecting information from a 'vantage point' while the latter is a process of building relationships with people, space, or events (Laurier, 2016: 170). Uldam and McCurdy (2013) provide an insight of participant observation as a method that allows 'researchers to immerse themselves in the research site and gain in-depth knowledge of an

environment and its practices' (p. 942). One critical element consideration of participant observation as a method is the role of researchers as insider and outsider (Laurier 2016, Sultana 2007, Uldam and McCurdy 2013). These roles also played a central part in my fieldwork where I existed not only within these binary identities but also as a 'continuum' (Uldam and McCurdy, 2013: 943).

In Dhanmondi Lake Park, my participant observation method was more pronounced. The NGO staff told me that the children who came to the program were too young (eight to 13) to discuss their rights, but it would be helpful to watch them and their activities that might reveal *something* about their rights (see 3.6). The staff had encouraged me to talk to them. Accordingly, I observed and interacted with the children while they attended an informal school and occasionally interviewed (see *Interviews* in this section) some of them.

In the park, my participant observation often turned into an active participation (Johnson et al 2006) in the activities that were associated with setting up the temporary school facility and engaging with children's learning activities. These actions precipitated through my ongoing interactions and my presence among the children. I became *Iqbal Sir, Sir* for the children. My identity of a researcher melted away in becoming someone else – also their teacher -- I was not prepared nor did I expect but I could not just simply reject them.

To further explain my engagements, I was compelled sometimes to assist in setting up the facility. Two NGO staff coordinated the set up but sometimes there was occasional delays, and one would have to set up the facility, which was chaotic. Maintaining the order of the children and setting up the facility was difficult. Therefore, I sometimes took part in helping the staff to roll out the mats, hanging the banner, etc. Other times, as I watched the learning activities, often student came up to me and asked to give them with their lessons. 'Sir, why don't you give me a math, *amake ekta onko den na?* was a question I encountered many times.

Fig. 11. Children in the park setting up their space for the informal school. Sometimes, I also took part in doing this to help the children and NGO staff. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

The NGO staff did not object. They told me that the children actually liked me, *pochondo korse*. This created a paradox of active and passive participation (Johnson et al 2006) in the field, in which I had to make a choice. I chose both because as an ethnographer I needed to internalise and understand my 'peripheral' and 'active' roles in the field (Johnson et al, 2006: 113). Mostly, it was important for me to recognise children's agency in their pursuit of education, which some of the children told me were important of their aspiration to become a physician, *daktar*, a police and others, revelations that I might not have discovered otherwise. Some of my roles of engagement not only emerged from what the circumstances necessitated, but they rose from my moral inhibitions of not helping the children and the NGO staff.

Interviews

During my fieldwork between 2018 and 2019, I interviewed around 70 children from the three sites combined. Most of the interviews took place with the children in Korail. The rest occurred with the children from SEEP (Mirpur shelter) and APON Foundation (Dhanmondi Lake Park). The interviews took place at different places with the uniqueness of their spatial characteristics, representing different forms of interaction and social dynamics (Massey 2005). For example, most of my interviews at Korail took place near a teashop (see Fig. 12) assigned by the gatekeeper. The engagements took place in a group setting in a form of dialogues. Sometimes, the children would offer me tea from the teashop – something they persistently insisted. This created a camaraderie between us. Children did not feel rejected, I felt welcome.

At Dhanmondi Lake Park, I engaged with the children near the informal school they attended (see 3.4). There, the attention span of the children was less because of their inclination to take part in various activities with the others. The openness of the park induced children to roam around freely.

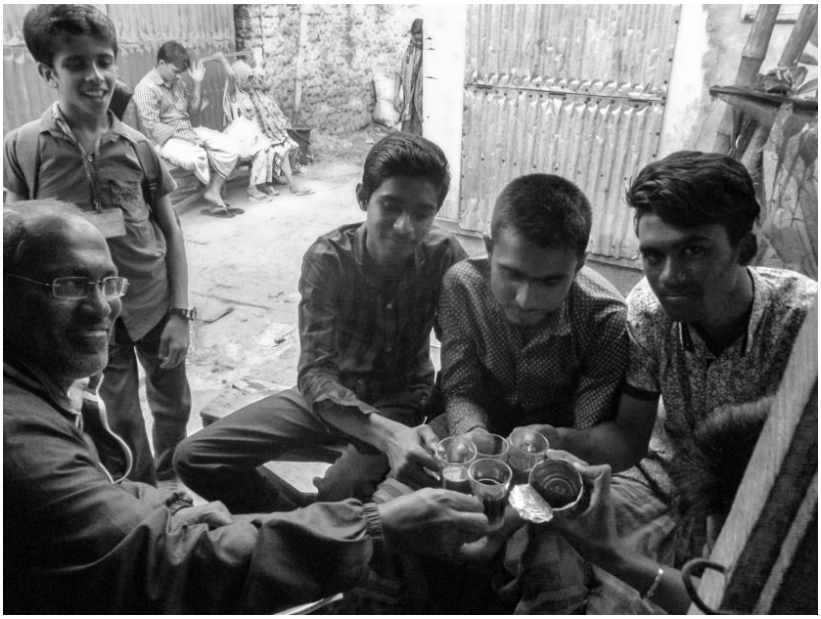


Fig. 12. Having tea with the boys in Korail informal settlement. Photo: Shaheen (one of the participants).

At the Mirpur shelter, I conducted my interactions with the children in one of the bigger rooms, children called, playroom, *khela-dhular ghor*. Similar to Korail, I generally sat around with the girls and talked to them but mostly two elder girls engaged with sustained dialogues while some of the younger ones played with each other or roamed around in other rooms. The adult counsellors were there but they did not remain in the room with the girls. Their absence provided a sense for the girls of not being overlooked or guarded during their encounter with me.

Because of the absence of the adults around them, the children in Korail and at the shelter were forthcoming in their discussion. I had sought permission from the gatekeepers not to have any adults around the children during my interactions, an agreement I negotiated with the gatekeepers (Ahmed 2021). Children were happy to see me when I met them, which often began with handshakes with the boys in Korail and 'how are you, *bhaiya*' greeting from the girls at the shelter, and often 'how are you*, Sir'* by the children at the park. These introductions were helpful for me to enter into their world.

I had prepared a list of interview questions before my departure for Dhaka for the children and their parents. I did not want to come across as just another, researcher, *gobeshok*, in the community just by firing off questions but I also needed to ensure children understood my questions. I used the set of pre-defined questions as my guide (see appendix 5) to conduct the interviews in the form of a conversation, rather informal interviews in order to make them personal and avoid creating a threatening nature of the questions (Fetterman 2010).

The questions were developed during the earlier phase of my research and they were targeted around the theme of 'child labour'. Although they were not entirely unrelated because many children I interviewed worked or were looking for work, my main topic evolved into their understanding of rights. So, I had to reorient some of the questions. My discussion about their rights, *odhikar*, involved explaining their own circumstances. Rather than asking 'what is *odhikar'*, I let the children talk about their lives. While this strategy was helpful, it often involved discussions about their lives and experiences that did not necessarily involve their understanding of rights. However, the spontaneity of their conversation allowed them to be heard.

Sometimes during the interviews, I gave children cues to carry on with their conversation. It was not intended to influence their views but to help continue with the flow of their articulation to end the awkward silence that descended upon us during our conversations. The silence muted and disrupted their voices. However, my interjection, on the one hand, seemed to be laced with a display of power of my influence to guide them to talk. On the other hand, their voices also punctured the silence to talk about their rights, in ways that emerged from the spontaneity of their response, which was to be heard and understood.

During the early phases of my interaction with the children at various sites, I did not always talk about rights. I wanted to establish a rapport with the children first. For example, at Mirpur shelter I did not engage with children's rights issues with the children until my third encounter. Prior to this, I discussed with children about their daily lives, education, work, their relationship with their parents, etc. Through the discussion of these topics my intention was to build a platform for discussing about their rights, how they understood it, what it meant to them, what rights were important for them. I intended to learn as much as I could about their everyday lives. Rather than asking about children's rights early in my research

phase, I first planned to get some insights about their lives. Equally important, I wanted to let them know me and establish an understanding amongst themselves about my work with them – the purpose of my 'research' and the importance of the children to this research.

During my conversations with the children about their lives, something struck me, which I could not deny, nor could I prove. Children often highlighted their anxieties and sufferings in their lives with greater length and details. I believed their stories. However, having associated with the NGOs, the children were subject to the development interventions for their safety, education, etc. I wondered about whether they exaggerated to attract my sympathies or something else. Literatures have discussed about marginalised children's exaggeration about the state of their lives (Kwong 2011 and White 2002). Despite these uncertainties, it was important for me to listen to their side of the stories.

At the beginning of my encounters with the children, I did not use voice recorders during the interviews. I was afraid this might give children an impression I was just another *gobeshok* in their lives to get data about them so at the beginning of my encounters with the children I took notes as I spoke to them. But as my fieldwork progressed and my relationship further developed with them, I began to use the voice recorders. This helped me not only to miss what they were saying and but also to preserve the details of their accounts.

Some of the younger children used drawings and scrawling on my notebook during the interview. I think it was important for me to establish rapport and their trust. Using my notebook to draw and scrawl on my notebooks offered a medium for children to interact with me comfortably (Atkinson-Sheppard 2018). For example, they would write their names, their favourite food or snacks on my notebook, which helped me to gain insights into their lives (see Fig. 13).

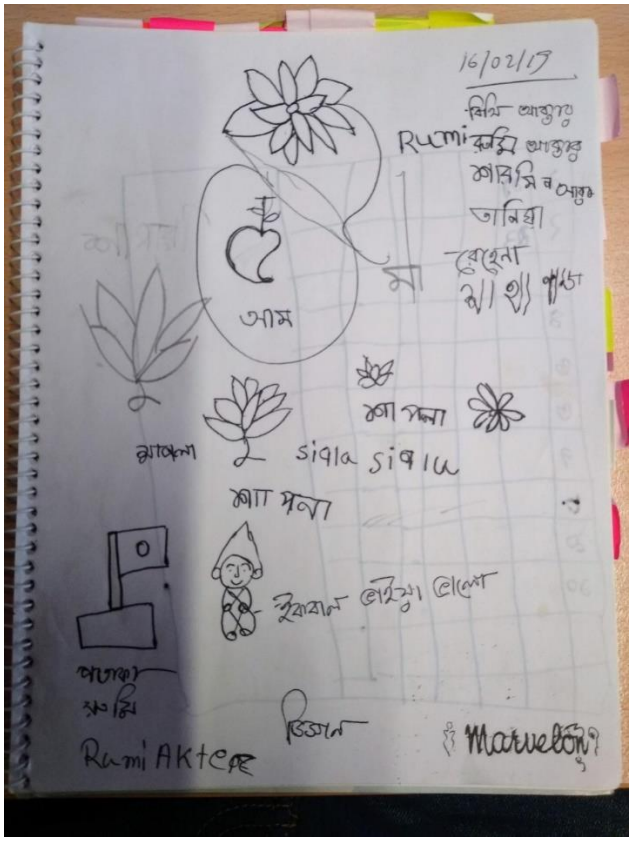


Fig. 13. Children wrote down their name along with drawings of flowers and fruits. Next to a 'flag' the human figure is 'me' and they wrote next to it: Iqbal bhaiya is nice. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

The open-ended interview techniques that I used helped me to emphasise on my own volition of earning a sense of trust among children and their guardians and other stakeholders responsible for allowing me to enter into their territory to discover the meaning of rights. To this end, Fetterman (2010) suggests that the interview provides a ground for establishing respect between the researcher and the participants. Yet, my inquiries about children's rights during interviews also lends to the subjectivity of imposing my provocation about their rights on children (Aitken 2018).

Photography

Photography as a method did not stand on its own in my fieldwork. Rather, it complemented interviews and observation I utilised. In using photography, I took verbal permission from the children from all three sites for me to reproduce their photos and to photograph them, asking whether I could use their name and identity in the narratives of my fieldwork and other public engagements such as the photo exhibition of children. The children gave me their permission. As I mentioned earlier, I also took permission from some of the parents I encountered.

Greenwood and Levin (1998) argue that qualitative social research should not have any priori limits nor should it be limited to any number of techniques. I used children's own photographs that showed what rights meant for children. They took various photographs of various subjects in and around their neighbourhoods to explain how they understood rights through lens of their connection to the streets, specific to their childhood (Young and Barrett 2001). By allowing them to take photographs, they became a part of my fieldwork investigation which gave them a role of becoming 'co-researchers' (Prosser and Loxley, 2010: 217). Prosser's and Loxley's (2010) claim reveals two key issues that are relevant to my fieldwork. One is that I used photos that were taken by the participants, and two these images provided a platform for analysing their characteristics that are connected to the epistemological claim of the fieldwork (Rose 2012) – analysing children's perspectives about rights.

I used three techniques to utilise and analyse photography. These are photo documentation, photo elicitation, and photo essays (Rose 2012). Through photo documentation, I took photos of the participants, the settings, their activities, etc. to understand the context of children's lives and experiences. I took photos of the children, fieldwork sites, and events throughout my fieldwork using my own camera and the ones I borrowed from the university.

Through photo elicitation, the participants took photographs to document various phenomena in their lives, which were discussed in the form of interviews to unpack what the subjects of their photographs meant in terms of their understanding of rights. In so doing, I did not give any cameras to the children because of two reasons: one, I did not have cameras for all children, which was not possible for me to acquire financially. Second, the gatekeepers in all sites had cautioned me not to give them any camera for they might lose it or break it. As an alternative, I suggested to give them mobile phones, which the gatekeepers agreed. So, I gave a mobile phone to the Korail children to take the photos. The children at the Mirpur shelter had agreed to use their own mobile phone. I did not give any mobile or any camera to the children at Dhanmondi Park mainly because I had conducted observation and interviews.

In terms of photo essay, I provided instructions to the children of taking photos in and around their neighbourhoods and projecting the meaning of their *odhikar*. I first told them that they would be writing an essay, *rochona*. Then I told them that they would not have to write

anything down. Rather they would take photographs to capture and explain those in terms of their *odhikar*. I used the analogy of an essay to make things easier for the children. The essays that teachers assign to pupils in Bangladeshi schools are called *rochona*. Although many children I worked with might not have attended formal school, they knew the term *rochona*. Linguistically, this was a common term among children in Bangladesh.
At first, children from both sites – Korail and Mirpur -- were confused. What pictures will we take? Where will we go? How many photos will we take? These were some of their inquiries. I further explained that they could any number of photos and that they could take photos of the places they could go. However, they would have to explain about *odhikar* in the photos. Through photo essays, I made interpretations of a 'social situation or problem' that were captured in the photographs (Rose 2012). These photographs included children's photos and that of mine. Children in Korail gave me about 10 photos while the children at the shelter took about 100 photos. I did not use all photos for the purposes of this thesis.

When I gave the assignments to the children in Korail and Mirpur, I did not impose any 'mandatory' requirement for the photo-taking responsibilities among the children. That, I thought, might not only create a barrier for their expression, but it might also be harder to 'know' who took the photos. When I got the photos back, I did not ask who took the photos. Rather, I focused on the content of their *rochona* as a collective project for their rights. It was an important part of my research process for them to communicate their own understanding of rights to me (Barker and Smith 2012). I also wanted to make sure that I did not 'offend' any children for undermining or omitting their photos. I, however, told the girls in the shelter that I might not be able to use all their photos for the analysis of their rights. While, this was true, the decision to omit some of their photos reflected my power as a researcher to choose what is necessary for the inquiry of my fieldwork (Katz 1994).

Photography, however, represented children's collective voice (Barker and Smith 2012). For example, my interaction with the girls at the shelter was uneven, meaning not all of them engaged with me with sustained dialogues as Rehana and Bithi did (as an example). Yet, the photography was their voice. The contribution of their perception of rights reflected through some of their photographs and during the discussion, in which some of the girls who had not been 'vocal' contributed to the meaning of those photographs (see 5.5).

I discussed with the gatekeepers about taking photos of the children and posting it for the purposes of my fieldwork – sharing it with academic colleagues via email, social media, published report, etc. They agreed to it, but they did not ask me to get children's permission. However, I sought permission from all children about using their photographs. The children gave me theirs. Why the gatekeepers did not seek children's permission and why I got theirs warrant following explanations.

One, from a Bangladeshi cultural point of view, there are reasons why the gatekeeper did not ask me to acquire children's permission: children simply did not need to be asked. This signals adults' role in children's life and lack of children's agency (Blanchet 1996). Two, children's permission indicates a cultural practice where adults are not to be questioned or denied. This issue points to unequal social relations in which children would not deny an adult as a sign of respect and fear, cultural practices that represent existenceial power relations in a patriarchal society (Sultana 2011).

In addition to giving their permission to use their photos, children were also keen on being photographed. Interestingly, in some cases they did not want to be photographed not because they did not want me to use their photos but they, did not look good, *shundor na*, for their photos to be taken. In other cases, children jostled and competed to be photographed. That left me in a position where I needed to use my discretion of ethical judgment and reason to use their photo by complying with their intention to be included and by using caution to protect them from any harm of using their photos in this thesis. Since my discretion plays a part in deciding their anonymity, it seems some of the principles of anonymity discussed earlier render these principles to remain within the paradox of 'unequal power relations' (Vainio, 2013: 688).

Despite these concerns, I have found photographing street children during my fieldwork insightful in terms of engaging with the ethical practices in the broader cultural perspectives in Bangladesh. For example, in Korail, children and adults alike are used to the visits of *others* such as researchers, both foreign and domestic, reporters, politicians, etc. When they do, children are always eager to be photographed with them. From this, while it is an accepted practice of photographing children (and other people), it poses an ethical

consideration about having consent of the people who are photographed (Coats 2014, Cooper 2017 & Rose 2008, 2012).

While I used statements such as if I could take and use their photos for my *gobeshona*, I had to be aware of the dynamics of the children and their responses from the three sites. In Korail, most of the children were old enough so I asked for their permission directly. Yet, I had to explain them why and how I might use their photographs. I explained that their photographs would be used for my *gobeshona* and that that I would share them with other teachers, *shik-kok*. The meaning of *shik-kok* in Bengali is 'teacher'. I used this word to simplify the arcane meaning (to the children) of 'academia'. I also explained them that their photos might be used in a photo exhibition. To this, they became excited and wanted to know if they would become 'famous'. By famous they meant if their pictures would appear in 'paper' (newspaper). I smiled not to make fun of their inquiry but to acknowledge their inquisitiveness followed by 'I will share with you your photographs when they are published, *chapa hoi*, in the 'paper''.

In the shelter, my interaction was mostly with the girls because they remained there for 24 hours. My encounter with the boys had to be limited because they only stayed during the day, when they mostly slept. The age group of the boys were between 14-17. When I asked permission to take their photos, they all readily accepted: 'No problem, *kono oshu-bidha nai*' was their response. Yet, I asked them: Do you have any question? 'It's ok, you do your work, *accha, apni apnar kaj koren*, came the reply. Perhaps, they did not want to ask me anything or they did not 'have' anything to ask. I was a bit worried because they might not have understood what or why I wanted to take their photos. I had to probe a bit further. 'You know why I want to take your photo? I asked. 'We know, you are a *gobeshok* and you came to learn about us, *amader somporke jante aschen*' one of them replied. 'Other people also came here to take our photos', the boy added. Then the adult supervisor intervened and said that it was no problem for me to take their photos.

I met with the girls in a group in the shelter when I interacted with them. The girls were between the ages of 8-17. When I took their permission, I asked them as a group first if I could take their photographs. Collectively, they all agreed. However, it was a bit problematic. The younger ones (between the ages of 8 and 9) followed the responses of the older girls. So, I had to ask separately the younger ones – there were about four among the ten girls.

Although they responded enthusiastically, 'Take our photographs, *amader chobi tolen*', I was still not sure about the extent of their understanding about my role. Rehana and Bithi, two of the older girls (aged 17) then explained to them that I was a *gobeshok* and that I was working with them. This discussion although about taking permission for photographing children, it is relevant in addressing how the 'consent' of taking photographs of the children took place for me – through not just my explanation but through the interventions of other participants. It was also important for me to notice that children were not only participating in my research, but also taking notice in it (Ergler 2017).

In the park, gaining permission was a bit chaotic among the younger girls. When I asked about their permission to be photographed, they collectively wanted me to take their photos. 'Take my photos', some of them yelled and grabbed my camera bag. Not knowing how to respond, I had to ask for the NGO staff for their advice. They have told them to line up so that I could ask their permission one by one. It worked out but the I had to repeat the same process often as there were ongoing recruits. As I continued to return to the park, I tried to become aware of the recruit(s) and made sure I took permission from the children.

While I grappled with the ethical concerns of photographing children, I developed a few strategies that had not only helped me to adhere to the ethical regulation, but they had also proved to be key nuances that prevented me from being questioned or harassed by the people during photography in the communities where children lived. When I took impromptu shots of children, I asked for their permission. Other times, children simply came up to me and asked to take their photos while there were adults around them. In Korail neighbourhoods, after I took the pictures, I remained calm, walked slowly but deliberately and purposefully. I did not appear to be 'fleeing' from the scene. Rather, I wanted people to know that I was here for a purpose. Sometimes after taking their photos, children often crowded around me to see their photographs, which was very helpful because it showed that I was taking an interest in the children as much as the children were interested in my presence and action. This also helped me to establish a sense of rapport with the children.

3.10 Departure and data analysis

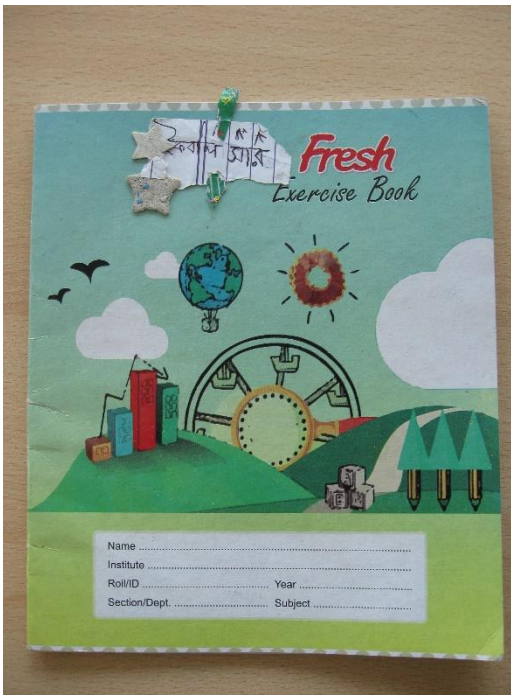
In this section, I briefly engage with my departure from fieldwork in Dhaka and data analysis, back within the pristine academic confines of the university in UK, a place I left for 10

months to conduct my fieldwork and having returned with the burden of deconstructing children's voices without their stirring presence.

Leaving ground

Belk et al cited in Franco and Yang (2021) argue that '[a]t best, fieldwork exit is discussed in relation to theoretical saturation which gives researchers an indication of when to exit fieldwork' (pp. 4-5). 'Theoretical saturation', they suggest, refers to when additional 'data' may not add anything significant to the 'emergent themes' (Franco and Yang, 2021: 5). I do not disagree. However, my departure suggests that I had left perhaps too soon to leave more stories behind. Perhaps, because of the time constraint, I simply had to stop and leave the field, putting me in an awkward state of mind (Taylor 1991). I was always afraid of leaving it, knowing I may not see them again. For example, towards the end of the fieldwork, Rehana from the shelter asked me if I was really leaving. I had to tell her that I was. She fell silent.

Despite this awkwardness, I believed there had to be an exit in order for me to return to the university to write up the thesis. However, this disconnection and reconnection were necessary in order to understand the phenomenon of my investigation (Michailova et al 2014). In this sense, I was ready to leave the field, taking with me the experiences and relationships I had with the street children in Dhaka. Before I left, children from SEEP and APON Foundation gave me farewell gifts. They reminded me of them. I try to carry their voices through the words in this thesis. It is an overwhelming burden to carry the responsibilities of translating and delivering what they told me. This also reminds me that I now not only exist in present but also within the constant memories of my fieldwork and the prospect of how the voices of the children from the fieldwork will actually help understand about their rights.



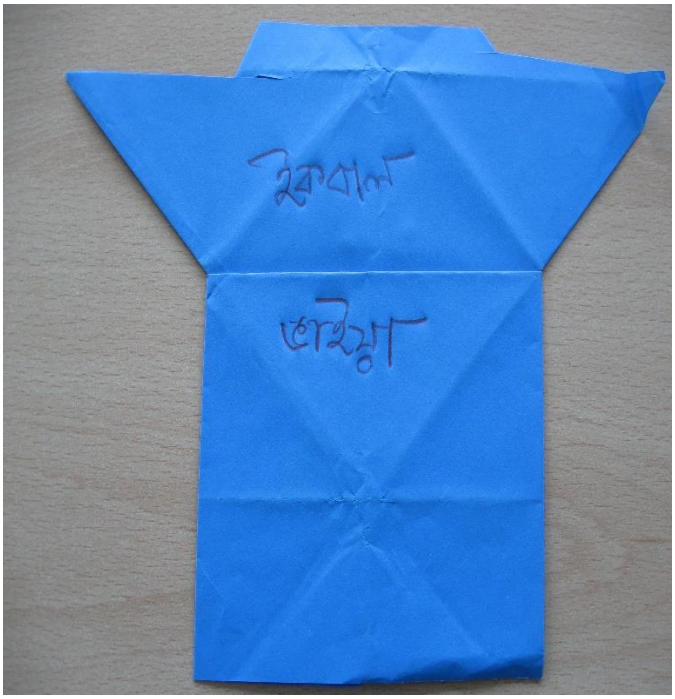


Fig. 14. Left. Gifts from the children. Left: a notebook from APON children. It is addressed as: Iqbal Sir; Fig. 15. Right: the children at the Mirpur shelter made a replica of t-shirt (like origami construction) I often wore when I visited them. It is addressed as: Iqbal Bhaiya. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

Fig. 16. I am wearing the blue t-shirt and holding the replica of it made by the children at the shelter. Photo: children at the shelter

I consider my departure from the field not only as a *researcher* but also as *Iqbal Bhai*, *Bhai*, or a *Sir*. In other words, it is also important not what 'data' I got from the field, but the personal relationship that I was able to establish with the children and the network of people I

came across during my 10-month fieldwork. The departure has provided me an opportunity to reflect on what is (not) learned about children's rights in Bangladesh and to seek further research engagements with the marginalised children, in not only Dhaka, but elsewhere as well.

Making sense of the 'data'

Since my return, I have had to take on a role of writing up, interpreting what I have discovered in the field, away from the presence of the children and other stakeholders. This role is inherently shrouded in power of my (in)capacities in conveying the messages from the field, making me aware of discipline and doubts (Menga 2020) of my own actions.

I began data analysis from the interviews that I transcribed while I was in the field. Within a day or two, I would listen to and transcribed some of the interviews. This helped to return to the children for inquiries. Besides, the recorded interviews, I had notebooks in which I gathered notes from the interviews. While I had notebooks designed for interviews, some of them I also used as fieldnotes. I found it easier for me to mix fieldnotes and interview notes in one notebook to juxtapose the data from the field. Mixing of fieldnotes and interview notes in one notebook did not affect neither data collection nor data analysis.

Besides fieldnotes and interview notes, I had photographs taken by children and myself, drawings of children as my main data archive. I also recorded my observations from the field in the form of email reflections to my supervisors. These reflections tuned out to be a source of my data analysis by delving into new ideas. I have developed an archive of nearly 3000 photos from the field. However, I used only a fraction of these in this thesis due to relevance of the research questions. I have a collection of more than 100 photos that children took as part of their analysis of rights. While some of them are used in this thesis, others are set aside which did not fit the scope of the investigation of this thesis.

Some of the children's drawings became a crucial source not only for understanding children's right but also for developing methodological approaches (e.g., establishing rapport) to this thesis. I have included some drawings in this chapter that underscore the methodological issues. I used one drawing (fig 7) that illustrated children's understanding of right through the lens of safety and security. However, I was not able to use other drawings

due to my own lapse of thinking while I was in the field. Sometimes, during the spontaneity of those drawings by the children, I failed to take the photos of their drawings although in some cases they drew on my notebook. This reminded me of my own lack of judgment in the field, which I regretted. I also learned from it about not being careless about and insensitive towards my responsibility as a fieldworker.

The relationship I had with some of the gatekeepers also proved to be my invaluable data 'source'. What I mean is I had established connections with some of them via social media (i.e., Facebook, Messenger, and WhatsApp). After my return to Durham, I remained in touch with them, which not only allowed me to inquire about the wellbeing and whereabouts of some of the children I worked with, but also gave me a platform to clarify a few points about role of NGOs in Dhaka. This connectivity showed that my data analysis is 'an ongoing activity and not something confined to one phase of the research' (McFarlane, 2004: 57). My relationship with these gatekeepers was not only bound by time and place (Campbell et al 2006) in the field, but it also remained off it.

The tension between absence of children's voice and emergence of mine in interpreting what the children articulated has been challenging. Yet, I needed to bargain with the interpretation of data analysis. Without it, children's voices about their rights would remain unheard, unspoken, muted. For decades, there has been a focus on discerning 'human experience' about their everyday lives as they are 'told' among cultural geographers (Pile, 1991: 458). Similarly, for children-focused geographers such as Louise Holt, it is essential for 'researchers to learn the language of the people they are attempting to research' (Holt, 2004: 17). These markers signal what I set out to narrate in this thesis – that of children's voice about their rights.

Despite my anxieties, then, I took a leap of faith for unravelling children's voices through my own writing. To do this, I gathered tools not only from my fieldwork but also from my learning experiences prior to and post fieldwork engagements with theoretical and empirical analyses. These tools included my fieldnotes, recordings, photographs, drawings, books, journals, and references to works of others in similar and disparate topic. Using these tools, I re-constructed what the children told me about rights through my own writing.

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the challenges and struggles of conducting my fieldwork in Dhaka between 2018 and 2019. But I cannot never deny the joy and thrills I experienced about being with the children I worked with, having spent some 10 months with them in three neighbourhoods in Dhaka. The 10-month fieldwork hardly made me an ethnographer. However, it provided a glimpse of the challenges and celebrations of (re)discovering the process being and becoming one in the field. Using ethnography, I gathered what they have told me about their rights. Ethnography was a process in which I used methods like observation, interviews, and photography to capture their voices.

I have learned that engagement with ethical considerations – prior to my fieldwork, during the fieldwork, and post fieldwork – was central to the decisions I made about methods and methodology. My fieldwork experiences in Dhaka taught me about reflexivity needed to engage with the children. This reflexivity has operated within both the ethical commitment and conundrum and a need to extend those ethical issues in order to remain not only in the field, but also away from it. What I cherish about my fieldwork is the cooperation I got from the NGOs and the gatekeepers in my everyday encounter with the children. Despite some challenges, my relationship with them taught me to reflexive about my own positionality. Their wisdom actually helped me to widen the scope of my methodological approach by using multiple sites to investigate the research questions.

I would also use a more comprehensive and wiser planning to use photography in future. The photos that I took often included the surroundings and environments in Korail informal settlement, Mirpur shelter, and Dhanmondi Lake Park. Despite taking consents of the children, their parents (not all as I mentioned as elsewhere), and the gatekeepers, the boundaries of ethical concerns still made me hesitant sometimes from photographing the children and their lives.

The reflection of children's reality of their everyday lives has been my own re-production of their representation. I remain in struggle to accept its authenticity and my capacity for re-production. However, I have come to terms to its representation as necessary and as best -- to say the least – to reflect as I could of its narratives against the reality, *bastobota*, of the children in Dhaka. I felt responsible for the responsibility of 'speaking for' (Jazeel and

McFarlane, 2007: 782) the experiences of the childhoods of those who spoke. In the views of Jazeel and McFarlane (2007), my responsibility, I felt, emerged as 'contextual—not arbitrary', one that remains as a necessary 'introspection' (p. 783). I have attempted to put emphasis on children's perspectives, using their own words, languages, and metaphors throughout this chapter with the hopes of representing 'how childhood(s) is/are constantly and creatively being reinvented' (Nieuwenhuys, 2013: 6) in Dhaka. However, my involvement with the children was limited, having spent my fieldwork in three sites which was also guided by the availability of children and instructions from the gatekeepers. As an ethnographer, I had to accept these rules of the field (see 3.7).

The narratives of this chapter are far from definitive, transparent, and understood. They are shrouded with 'doubt' (Amoore 2019) and opacity (Butler in Amoore 2019). In the chapters that follow, I will show that Amoore's 'doubt' signals my (in)capacity to have deconstructed my relationship with the street children in order to understand their voice while Butler's 'opacity' points to ethical conviction of knowing oneself (Amoore 2019). As a consequence, the understanding of children's rights would remain partial and challenging. I cannot remove the blemish for this uncertainty and imperviousness about how I might have represented the voices of the children -- facing with struggles and challenges -- in this thesis to mediate what they have told me about their rights, emerged through the spontaneity of their voices.

4.0 Chapter Four: Our rights, our voices

Next to the entrance of the Intellectual Martyrs Graveyard in Mirpur, Dhaka, there's a narrow street enveloped by six-to-eight-stories high apartment buildings on both sides of the street, some of which are under construction. I nervously took the street and towards the end of it, I found the shelter for the children, housed in one of the apartment complexes. This would be my first meeting with the children at the Mirpur shelter. A low and narrow entrance through a corrugated iron gate welcomed me to the world of the children, whom I did not know.

As I entered through the gate and took the stairs one flight up, a drawing on top of the entrance door jarred my nervousness back into the fieldwork instinct of finding out about their rights and lives. The drawing showed two colourful flying pigeons touching each other's beaks, each carrying a flower. A rolling blue sky hung over the pigeons. A large hand-written caption below it says *we are free*. What does the word 'free' mean to them? Does it have anything to do with their rights? These questions swirl through my head, not in any particular order of investigative inquiry. But the emergence of the instinct filled me with the prospect of learning about their rights.

Fig. 16. 'We are free'. Children's drawing in Mirpur shelter. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed, 2018.

4.1 Introduction

The following three chapters will show the understanding of right from street children's perspective through the burdens of their marginal lives – a discovery that I have come across from my encounters with the children in an informal settlement, a shelter, and a park. These burdens legitimise children's voices about their unsettling lives. The narratives of children will follow a logical mapping, offering meanings of their understanding of rights. I argue that in order to makes sense of children's rights, children's articulation within the specificity of their language, narrative, and interpretation that derive from the experiences of their everyday lives can offer a better an understanding of the perspectives on rights that affect their lives.

This chapter will focus on rights that are articulated by street children in Dhaka I worked with. This will be followed by an understanding of rights from their everyday lives in chapter five and the contributing factors for street children to talk about rights in chapter six. These chapters are interconnected through various themes (e.g., citizenship, dignity, survival, resiliency), which will offer contexts and meanings of rights. Through the analyses of these chapters, I will offer an understanding of rights of street children in Dhaka.

In this chapter (4.0), I offer empirical evidence and reasoning of what rights are important. The articulation of rights for children in the CRC fall into the broad categories of protection, provision, and participation (Ansell 2005, Hanson 2012 & Skelton 2007). These include right to adequate health care, food, clean water, shelter and education (provision), rights to protection against neglect and exploitation (protection) and rights to freedom of association, expression and participation (Franklin, 2002: 20). These categories of rights signal the intention of promoting children's wellbeing. It is noteworthy to mention here that children's perspectives will highlight some of these rights and the contexts in which they emerged, including the right to burial (see 4.4) that is not drafted in the CRC. These rights will be discussed in ways in which children understood from their own experiences and explained in their own language (Freeman 2012) and vocabulary. So, this chapter along with other empirical chapters will pay attention to the context, explanation, and language of the children. I first begin this chapter with the discussion of citizenship to address the importance of children's recognition as humanbeings, who are entitled to have basic rights for their wellbeing and future. The discussion of citizenship will set the tone for establishing children's identity in terms of their acceptance into a society as a valued member (O'Kane

2002). The subsequent analyses in this chapter will build on this notion by highlighting what rights are important for street children in Dhaka.

The chapter will then flow into the discussion of rights. To do this, I will explain empirical analyses of basic rights, *moulik odhikar,* for children. This will be followed by a discussion of burial right through the lens of dignity, a point that is not always evident in their lives due to their status as street children. This discussion of burial rights will be analysed through the premise of 'unwritten rights' (Ennew, 2002: 399). The children at the Mirpur shelter talked about this through their imagination which emerged from the experienes of their lives and perceptions of not having dignity as street children. The topic of dignity I mentioned above is not limited to this chapter alone. Rather, this will be discussed throughout the empirical analyses in other chapters.

I will then discuss children's participation so that they can have an 'opportunity to be heard' (Unicef, 2004: 5) through the experience of attending a seminar by two children from one participating NGO. For marginalised children like street children this engagement provided an opportunity for the girls to reflect on their lives which they often lacked (Hart 1992). Drawing from an experience of children's participation in it, this chapter will highlight how participation is understood as a 'right'. During my fieldwork, I often heard two expressions from the children (see 1.0). One is 'no one listens to us', *amader kotha keu shone na*; and the other is 'give us a chance to participate to talk', *amader ongshogrohon korar shujog den kichu bolar jonno* (see 1.5). These expressions will drive the discussion of understanding children's participation, in which children have discussed various aspects of rights. These two statements are relevant throughout this thesis to underscore children's perspectives on rights. However, in this chapter I will show participation as a 'right' for children and what it means for them to participate in a dialogue with others about their rights.

To investigate children's rights, I use Bengali -- children's mother tongue – words throughout this thesis for various reasons. One, using Bengali may offer some degree of authencity to children's voices. Two, this may also provide some degree of accountability to the readers who may or may not understand Bengali about the extent of my own positionality and (in)ability to represent the voices of children. To facilitate authencity and accountability, I

will use translations throughout the thesis, where appropriate, for the readers where Bengali was used.

The contribution of this chapter hinges on what rights are important for street children in Dhaka. The structure of this chapter is as follows. In the first section, I will discuss citizenship to underscore its relevance to their rights. Therefore, the discussion of citizenship will establish the importance of street children's existence as human beings, which will guide their discussion of rights. Then, I will discuss children's imagination and articulation about their right to burial. What follows is the discussion of children's participation in a seminar, highlighting its relevance for the children so that they can be heard. The section that follows will revisit what rights are important for children and what has been discovered through the dialogues with the children. In the concluding remarks, I will reflect on what rights are important for the street children in Dhaka that affect their lives.

4.2 Who are we (not)?

This section transpired from my discussion with Rehana and Bithi in Mirpur Shelter. The topic of citizenship played a pivotal role in discussing their rights. When I talked to them, the topic of citizenship did not necessarily emerge on a 'pre-decided' agenda. Rather, it came up spontaneously during my conversation about their concerns of not being a 'human' in the society. What followed a sustained dialogue with both of them about citizenship, that discovered the relevance of their articulation and understanding of rights. Rehana and Bithi were the older girls (both 17) who talked to me about various rights. During my fieldwork, the Mirpur shelter staff told me they were good at 'talking'. So, Rehana and Bithi took part in most of the discussions about rights and other related materials. Rehana and Bithi also told me that they had talked with 'other researchers' who came before me. For me, their ability to be good at 'talking' was an intriguing point because it showed their capacity to express their views. However, I will show in this thesis that other girls at the shelter also took part in discussing rights. The issue of citizenship is not a one-off discussion for this thesis because it exists in the lives of street children I worked with in multiple forms – perception as a *kangali* (Conticini 2004) because of their status and identity as street children, not being valued in society (Bourdillon 2010), not being considered a *manush*, human (Blanchet 1996). So, my discussions will reflect various ways that children talked about citizenship.

As the topic of citizenship unfolded with Rehana and Bithi, I asked them to clarify what they meant. 'Look, we are *potho sishu*, and d*esh, jati, shorkar* (country, culture, government) do not have time to look after us because we are superficial citizens (of Bangladesh), *naam-matro nagorik*; we can only speak our language', Bithi explained. The language, then, indicates a form of formal citizenship (Holston 2007) not necessarily through institutional requirement such as having a passport but rather it reflects their state of belonging as a citizen through a social process of recognising their language of Bengali as a citizen. Although the government of Bangladesh has instituted a system of acquiring birth certificate and national identity card for its citizens, both can be a bureaucratic nightmare to get them. Moreover, national identity card is available only to citizens over 18.

Returning to my discussion about citizenship I challenged both of them by asking what was the difference between citizen, *nagorik,* and, citizenship, *nagorikotto*? Bithi did not know what citizenship meant. Neither did Rehana. They both looked a bit puzzled. Bithi just reiterated that she was a Bangladeshi citizen. I said it was okay not to know the difference, but I also said that there was a difference, *parth-okko*. 'Explain (it), *ektu khule-bolen*,' Rehana urged. I explained that I may be a citizen, but as a citizen, I may not have everything I want as a citizen like having our rights we deserve, *amader prappo*. My intervention was perhaps a mistaken one because I not only gave them a clue, but I also interfered with their understanding through a leading attribute (Mohamed 2020) of what citizenship might mean to them. However, the children had mentioned government's role about their wellbeing, so my intention was not to disassociate the connection but to clarify the meaning of citizenship.

Bithi then explained how she understood citizenship. 'We may be deprived of our rights, but we are still citizens of Bangladesh, because I speak Bangla,' Bithi says. 'But we are not getting our rights as *citizens*,' she adds. 'We don't know how to get them. What can we do, *ki kormu kon,*' Bithi lamented? 'People do not always pay attention to our wellbeing, *bhalo mondo',* Bithi continued. Rehana clarified the statement by saying that not everyone might be helpful but there are NGOs like *this one* that give us things, but not everything. I asked for explanation about the 'things'. 'They do not *always* feel responsible for us; they do it for a limited time and then they stop providing for the things we need to survive', Rehana said. Bithi jumped in and fired away what those 'things' were. 'Like education, *porashona*, food,

khawa dawa, and shelter, *thaka,* our future, *amader vobisshot,*' she said. 'The *problem* is we can't get them on our own, we need *adults* to help us', Bithi added.

Rehana then reminded me how I explained citizenship to them. 'We understand now [the meaning of citizenship] but how can we get our *citizenship* if we did not get help from someone – we cannot do this alone', she said. She then reiterated that knew she was a Bangladeshi citizen, but she did not have the 'things' she needed to exercise her citizenship. 'We are here today but tomorrow we may not be here – the NGO is not going to keep us forever', she continued. 'We will then have to go back to the street', Rehana added.

The mentioning of 'people' and 'NGO' in their discussion signals that the meaning of 'adults' may have different meanings -- people in general who they come across in their lives and the 'NGO' as an institution, that plays a big role in providing safety for them from the harms of the street. For Rehana and Bithi, both meanings – 'people' and 'NGO' -- have a common thread as 'adults' who operate in their lives as a conduit for their wellbeing. They need the 'adults' not just to listen to them but also to become 'responsible' for their wellbeing so that they can exercise their citizenship through the 'things' – education, safety, food – that matter for their wellbeing (see 2.4). I will show in the subsequent sections more about these 'things' as rights. The topic of NGO emerged spontaneously from their discussion with me. So, it is relevant to bring this up here without disrupting the flow of the dialogue to indicate for the readers that NGOs are one of the key sources for promoting and providing rights for street children Rehana and Bithi. I will discuss the effect of NGO interventions on children's lives in Chapter 6.0.

Children's future discussed above represents their well-being through provisions such as education, which the street children have claimed as one of their rights. This right not only constitutes what they want to achieve in present but also what their 'present' can lead to a good life in future. Their dream of having a good life is associated with expectation of the NGOs being able to provide for the assurance and implementation of their rights (Falch-Eriksen and Backe-Hansen 2018).

The lack of *nagorikotto* (see 1.5) can render street children like Rehana and Bithi powerless to talk about their lives. Being powerless (see 6.5) is an ongoing state in their lives (Cook et

al 2015). To this end, the children's explanation about citizenship offered a relevance to their isolation and exclusion in the society. Children's ability to speak about their issues is not enough because 'even when children are consulted and given the chance to identify problems, they can seldom make changes on their own, since adults hold the reins of power' (Bartlett, 2002: 6). The interpretations of citizenship have unfolded how children think about rights against the, *bastobota*, reality, of their lives that requires adult interventions for them to enjoy their rights.

4.3 *I want to eat on a nice plate*: anthology of *moulik* rights

On a crisp and chilly morning, I met Abu in Korail informal settlement at a teashop. As we sat on a bench, a few other patrons of the shop quizzically trained their gazes on us. I made sure that the face of my university badge hanging from my neck was visible. My gatekeeper has brought Abu to me, so I was not worried about being interrogated by the locals about why I was talking to him, but I was aware of their presence. As I began to talk to Abu, he offered me a cup of tea. I was humbled but I politely refused.

Slowly we drifted into our conversation about his life. About his schooling, he said that he had to quit school because of poverty, which had propelled him to work to support his family. Within him, there was a strong sense of commitment to his family and, at the same time, a resignation about him from being out of school. He said that school was important because this would help him to get a better job and become more worthy in life so that he could be respected in society, *somaj*. 'How else education could be important for you? I asked. He did not understand my question. 'Do you consider education as your right? I reframed the question this way because I needed to discover how he understood and interpreted rights. I did not intend to pre-empt the context of right, but I did not want to be vague.

It is my basic right, *moulik odhikar* (see 1.5), he said plainly. *Moulik* is translated in Bengali as 'basic'. Asked to differentiate between 'right' and '*moulik* right', Abu was not forthcoming at first. He seemed a bit confused. But after a brief pause, he said that *moulik odhikar* was the one that they must have *first* to get out of their suffering, *koshto*. Education could show them the 'road', *rastha*, to be successful in life. As for the 'right', Abu said what was important for him was to survive, *beche thaka*, in life. 'This is my *right* too', he emphasised. His attention then veered into education, which was not exclusive to his survival

as a ‘right’ but operated within his understanding of *moulik* right – to find a way to survive and education, *porashona*, was a gateway for his survival. ‘Through education I can get a good job, *bhalo chakri*, and then I would get people’s, respect, *shomman*’, he explained. His education, however, depended on circumstances he could not control. His explanation underscores the connection between his rights and repect as a human being. For him, getting respect means to become someone respectable in society and his rights such as education is the gateway to earn people’s respect.

Abu attended an NGO-run school in Korail, but he had to quit. ‘I left school because of my parents’, he said. His parents wanted him to work so that he could support the family. Although he held no grudges for his parents to pressure him to work. ‘Unless I work my family would be destroyed, *dhongso hoe jabe’*, he added. Despite Abu’s departure from school due to his commitment to his parents, his decision invoked an example of wider cultural practices of commitment to families and familial duties in Bangladesh, where family members may benefit from helping each other. To some extent, Abu’s decision to give up his education indicates that he is willing to sacrifice his own aspiration to make an alternative decision that is no less valuable for him. However, he is powerless against pursuing his aspiration because of his commitment to his family, which could be construed as a powerful effect in his life (John 2003) that deny the prospect of fulfilling his right.

Abu wanted to continue his education but the time was not right for him. But his anxiety of not being able to continue his education was palpable. On the one hand, if he did not go to school, he would not get a *good* job, he said. On the other hand, he was aware of the reality that his family could not provide education for him due to poverty. Abu gave everything he earned to his parents so that his family could live. He was trapped by the dire circumstances of survival, which overpowered his *moulik* right. The embodiment of survival as a ‘right’ that he explained as a way to provide for his family took place at the expense of another, education. The understanding and transformation of ‘right’ in Abu’s life to survive in the city emerged from varying degrees power (see 5.0) and circumstances in his life. Abu’s life represents a vernacular of geography of everyday survival (Mitchell and Heynen 2009) and morality.

While commitment to his family propelled Abu to give up his education, there are elements of moral and political reasoning of right (Liebel 2011) that Abu and three other participants also discussed with me during another session. One of the participants was caught by the shop owner for stealing from his shop. The participant who stole was hungry and did not have any money to pay for his food so he stole. A couple of the children thought it was not the shop owner's duty to provide for his meal but other children argued it was the shop owner's moral duty, *noitik daitto*, to give him food or the money to buy food. 'It was also necessary for the shop owner to help him because morality is important to help a *helpless* boy and to stop others like him from stealing', one boy said. Another one also took side of the boy and claimed that 'food, *onno,* is amader, our *moulik* right and we need food to survive. *Onek somoi*, many times, children like like us starve to death on the street, it is not right'. His claim strikes a chord with what one of the girls at Apon Foundation told me. According to her, she grew up on the street and often she did not have enough food but she received *oshalin* 'offer', inappropriate proposition from many adults from the local businesses in exchange for food. 'I know what hunger is. I went from house to house and worked in restaurants so that I could eat', she said. 'I want to eat on a nice plate,' she added with her voice cracking.

Returning to the discussion with the Korail boys, one said that it was the boy's moral duty not to steal. Abu who was present said that 'when you are hungry you don't know think about morality; what is important is to survive'. What transpired through this statement is the discovery of one right (survival, see p. 152) at the expense of the other (education). The struggle to survive represents the quest of living despite and because of dire circumstances of the young life of Abu and his friends at the margins, powered by their instincts of 'human survival' (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009: 615). While he is powerless to accommodate his education, he is also overpowered by the burden of family. It is noteworthy to mention that the discussion of survival in this chapter took place through the lens of basic rights that are necessary for the children. In chapter six, I will explore survival as a contributing factor for street children to talk about their rights. In the next section, I will discuss right to burial through the lens of 'unwritten rights' (Ennew, 2002: 399) because this right is not discussed in the CRC, nor are there any evidence of right to burial for children (see subsequent sections in 4.4). This right has been articulated by children at the Mirpur shelter and is an indication of their ability to imagine right from the circumstances and context of their everyday lives and

one that is important for to preserve their dignity as human being (Freeman 2007) even at their death.

4.4 Give us a proper burial

In this section, I introduce a right that the children in Mirpur shelter felt very strongly about due to their lack of dignity in the society as street children. This is about their right to burial. The children told me that they wanted to be buried properly at the location of their choice. Although the discussion about burial began through the discussion of their photos, it transformed into their right. As discussed earlier (see 3.9), I gave the children an assignment of taking photos of their surroundings in the context of their rights.

The discussion of right to burial represents a key feature in their views on rights because not only does it represent their skills to imagine and articulate a right that is not mentioned in the CRC or any other legal provisions in Bangladesh or elsewhere (see later in this section), it also underscored their sense of a lack of dignity as a human being, which precipitated this discussion. It'd be noteworthy to mention here two girls – Rehana and Bithi – mainly participated in the discusion about burial while some other girls also offered their views and acknowledgement (see also 3.5). The importance of this right is not necessarily about the hierarchy of the rights. It shows the spontaneity of their imagination and articulation, and also the importance of being a human being. The discussion that will follow highlights their process of participation (see 2.2.3), from which their expression about right to burial flows.

It is also important to mention here that my discussion about their photos began with all the girls at the shelter. We sat in a circle with the photos they took were placed in the centre. However, as the conversation went on, it was Rehana and Bithi who spoke the most while some of the other younger girls wandered off to another room, a few started to play amongst themselves while a couple of them remained seated with us. While the topic of right to burial precipitated from the explanation of their photos, Rehana and Bithi took charge of explaining burial as a right.

Right to burial: We want to be buried properly

I asked the group how the photos were connected to rights. 'We need to be buried properly, *amader bhalo vabe kobor dite hobe*, Bithi said without any hesitation. Rehana said that they deserved to be respected after death. 'Please give us a proper burial,' she pleaded. Bithi added that children like them always hoped to be remembered and respected after their death by having a proper burial even though they were deprived of the things, *onek kichu na pawa*, while they were alive. 'We may *live* on the street, but we want to die with dignity, *amra shomman-er sathe morte chai*, Bithi said plainly. This is our *odhikar*, right, claimed Rehana. I asked for clarification as to what rights they referred to. 'That we want to be buried, *ei je amader kobor dite hobe*,' said Rehana.

Bithi asked me whether they would be dishonoured as street children after their death by being left on the street. Rehana followed through forcefully. *Will we?* Their tension was palpable. I was not sure if the questions were directed towards me. I was taken aback at the assertion of their right to be buried. My mind began to reel from their keen sense of moral reasoning and from the certainty of my failure to offer any validation or vindication to the protection of their interest (Sommer et al 2010). But I was eager to listen more.

Fig. 17. A graveyard near their shelter in Mirpur.
Photo: children at the shelter

To explain why burial as a right was important, Bithi offered some contexts. She said that many children died on the street but not everyone was buried properly. According to her, the

curious onlookers usually pause to see the dead body, *laash*, but no one actually does anything until the police comes and takes away the body. Once the police take the body away no one knows what happens to it', Rehana said. 'This is not right', she firmly added. Have you experienced death of others on the street? I cut in. 'We have come across unidentified dead body, *bewarish laash*, of a child on the street', Bithi was quick to reply. With regard to the two photos (Fig. 18 and Fig. 19), I asked if the guy was dead. Bithi confirmed that the guy in the photo was not dead, but she told me that there was a similarity between the guy in the pictures and how a *bewarish laash* may lay on the street. 'There's no life, *jibon*, around him, just the dogs,' Bithi added, hinting the guy and his wretched condition lying next to the grave.

Correcting or contesting Bithi's statement about the onlookers above, Rehana said that sometimes people at the *Mazhar*, Shrine, take care of the unidentified dead body by giving them a proper burial. 'They collect money from others in the community to wash the body and perform rituals for burial,' she explained. 'They lay the dead bodies properly, Rehana added. 'But it does not always happen,' Bithi quickly pointed out. To this, Rehana said that the bodies often remained on the dirty ground. 'There is no dignity for him', Rehana said. They attributed the poorness for their lack of respect and dignity in the society. Their reasoning offers an insight into the fragility of their marginalisation and an experimental yet revealing 'mosaic of exchanges' (Thieme, 2016: 109) about a complex and imaginative right – a right to be buried.

Fig. 18

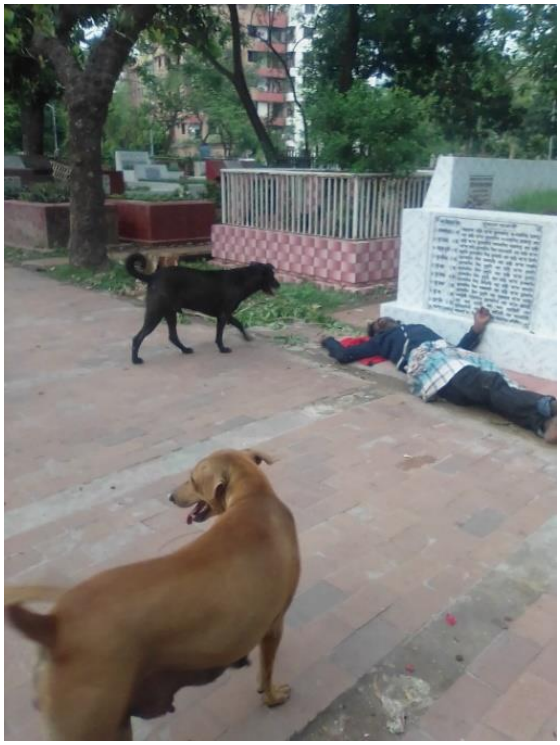


Fig. 19

A guy sleeping awkwardly next to a grave while stray dogs roam nearby. Photo: children at the shelter

Rehana's and Bithi's discussion about their citizenship in the earlier section offers a relevant look into their discussion on burial rights. To them society does not honour them because of their social status and their resentment is perhaps unassailable. Yet, they sought vindication at death. Placing this dichotomy within the conceptual framework of citizenship may hint a connection between their lives and poverty within the margins of the city in Dhaka. The children's life without dignity reflects on the circumstances of their lives on the margin without the certainty and promises they seek. There is no provision for burial right for street children in Bangladesh. Burial for the dead in Bangladesh is a ritual according to Muslim rules. These rituals and rules are not written as rights in Bangladesh. There are existing laws and regulations to protect the rights of the marginalised children in Bangladesh. But according to Rehana they are not necessarily accessible to all citizens, particularly those who belong to the marginalised communities (Siddiqi 2003). She said that *street children* should get their rights from the society and state, *somaj* and *rashtro*; but no one simply cared for them because they are poor, *gorib*.

To offer more contexts into the lack of their dignity, I asked children how the burial might be different from the rich and the poor. Rehana said that those who have money and homes, *taka poisha, ghor-bari*, were able to wash the dead bodies of their beloved ones and perform other formalities as soon as they die so that their soul would not suffer, *atta koshto pabe na*. She also said that people with money have relatives and dear ones who would attend the burial ceremony to support the surviving members of the families. I sense their spirituality. As a Muslim country, there are rituals of burial in Bangladesh, which applies to general masses – from an adult to a child. Those rituals are functions of burying the dead in particular ways. The following section is not necessarily about explaining burial as a right. It rather focuses on what this right actually means for them through the lens of dignity. In this sense, it offers few relevant points about children's vivid imagination and reflection on the rituals of burying the dead in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has introduced Children's Act in 2013 (see 1.4), comprehensively articulating a number of Articles adoped from the CRC. However, there are no provisions for right to burial. I will also explain later in this chapter about the absence of right to burial in literature and in provisions on children's rights in other countries.

Spatial arrangements of the dead

Bithi and Rehana emphasised the cleanliness and sacredness of the space for the dead. 'The dead body from a rich family is surrounded by people; there is an ongoing recital of Quran; there are scented candles, *agor bati'*, the girls explained. On the other hand, if someone died on the street, there was no one to call for the prayer, claimed Rehana. Another example of spatial placement of the dead is a wooden or an iron platform, *khatia*, where the dead is lain before the burial. 'Poor people cannot buy a *khatia* to carry the dead to bury', Bithi said. 'Their body is kept on the *maati-te*', ground, she added. 'But those with money can afford to buy an expensive *khatia*, to place the dead properly', Bithi said. There is a stark contrast between how the ritual of burial is purposed – the treatment of dead children (mentioned earlier) and the (imagined) dead body from a rich family. The contrast exposes the treatment of the dead through spatially induced arrangements. The unidentified body of a child remain on the dirty street, undignified and alone.

They navigated their next discussion into where the dead is buried -- the graveyard. 'The rich can bury their beloved ones in a private graveyard or a place of their inheritance set aside for

private burial ground -- *pari-barik kobor-sthan'*, Rehana explained. 'But the poor who is dead has nothing, nowhere to be buried', Bithi said, her voice rose in a mixture of anger or frustration. I gingerly asked why this was important -- to be buried at a private place? Both Bithi and Rehana began to speak. 'Well, this is the difference between rich and poor -- ability to buy a place for burial and not having a place to be buried', their explanation did not reveal much.

However, Bithi explained that there would be a marking, *ekta chinno*, on the grave, to indicate that that this is someone's grave (see Fig. 20). For her, a poor person would not have any *chinno*; no one would know where he/she would be buried. She pointed to the engraved area of the vertical wall of the white grave (Fig. 20) and explained that this was where the name of the dead was written. The mentioning of *chinno* offers a linkage to their identity (Ansari 2007) in ways that children want to be remembered by the others at death to establish their identity as a human being (Douzina 2002).

Fig. 20: the Arabic writings in black at the base of the grave implies some forms of identification of the dead. Photo: children at the shelter

The girls talked about another spatially induced arrangement of the dead, which was usually demarcated from those who did not have or own any private burial place. I asked them whether they had any place for burial in their ancestral home. 'No', they both nodded. 'There's nothing left in our village -- the river took everything', Bithi explained. She then

emphasised that Dhaka was the *place* where her identity was connected to because she was born here, grew up here. 'I want to die here, *eikhane morbo*', she said. 'Dhaka is everything to us', Bithi said. The attention to the detail that emerged from the children provides an indication of children's knowledge-production about 'revealing their perspectives' (Pink 2007, Siry, 2013: 2412) on burial right, based on their 'experiences with death' (Mahon, 2011: 62).

In relation to children's demand for the right to be buried properly because of their lack of respect (Liebel 2012). Through their imagination and articulation, the children at the Mirpur shelter talked about the importance of being recognised as a human being and being placed within the mantle of dignity as children. This is a revelation about their right. In addition, this warrants further inquiry about CRC's role in (re)defining the boundaries of developing children's rights that adults drafted and interpreted (Alderson 2017).

In the UNCRC charter of the CRC published by Unicef (2004), the word 'human' appears 22 times. Article 1 of the charter begins with definition of a child – every 'human being' under the age of 18 (Unicef 2004). Based on some of the discussions above in this chapter, children have problematised the words -- 'human being'. In my discussion with them, I never mentioned 'the CRC' to the children yet they were able to construct the connection between 'human being' and dignity, which resembles the principles of the CRC. However, some of the children in Korail and at the shelter were aware of the word *nitimala*, which rougly in English means laws and/or provisions. They explained to me that they had participated in a number of activities for the awareness of children's rights. To organise these activities, the NGOs had developed their own curricula based on the CRC. One of the NGO staff at the shelter gave me a copy of the curriculum. In it, one of the first activities for children included the identity of child – name, place of birth, information about family, etc. This particular activity is designed to establish a child's identity as a humanbeing. Children's ability to construct ideas about being human signals their capacity to develop a voice within them about what it meant for them to be considered a human being, a significant point for them to think about their rights.

Based on the circumstances in their lives, the experiences of Bithi, Rehana, and other children are such that they think society does not consider them as human beings in

Bangladesh. In making their argument, they have mapped the correlation between their lack of citizenship and rights that are critical for their existence. This argument is also accentuated by the perception of their status as *potho sishu*, which does not allow them to participate in dialogues with others about their conditions and, in the process, their voices are ignored. The opportunities that the children had with me to discuss their rights attest to understanding about rights for children like Rehana, Bithi, and Abu, who are marginalised, from their own experiences. What this also means then children's rights should tend to the voices of the children, who has the capacity to make decisions about their own lives (Freeman 2011).

Ethically comfortable or uncomfortably ethical?

During my conversation about burial with Bithi and Rehana other younger girls also remained in the room, sometimes sitting close to us, sometimes playing amongst themselves. Their presence made me uneasy, and I felt awkward about the discussion of death in front of them. I could not defeat nor silence my spontaneity to ask questions about the grim subject of death. I did not know how (in)appropriate it might have been to talk about death in front of and with the other girls who were younger. Would they have a nightmare? Would they be afraid to go to sleep at night? However, through this entire process, I became silenced in my ability to fully process and understand the information about burial as a right for I did not know what would actually happen to their demand of burial right.

An illusion or elusion

Children's discussion of burial as a right, then, remains elusive. On the one hand, the right to be buried is a powerful and vivid imagination. It offers a look into the perspectives of children about right to burial through their own perils and pessimism of life. This imagination represents not only their right to be buried but also their 'identity, representation and claims to authenticity' (Baker 1999 cited in Ianson, 2013: 108). Ianson (2013) also reminds us about the linkage between children's voice and the CRC, a connection that 'has led to … many research studies' (p. 108), including that of this thesis. On the other hand, I am unaware of any initiatives to provide children with a dignified burial. Children's 'recognition as competent subjects' and capable 'actors' for this right to be considered in Bangladesh still a subject that cast a doubt not only on their 'role in contributing to their realization' (Liebel, 2012: 12) but also on the unfamiliarity and uniqueness of the children's perspective of the right to be buried among the adult stakeholders.

I have talked to the NGO workers, not just at the Mirpur shelter but also elsewhere, to find reference to burial as children's right. The response I got was nodding and acknowledging that the children have spoken cleverly. There are no laws or provisions in Bangladesh about burial as a right. There is a wide literature (e.g., Lippman and Pursi 2022, Scheper-Hughes 1992 & Talwar et al 2011) on how children deal with death, but I struggled to find it as a 'right', either human or that of children. I have looked into some works of Muslim authors (e.g., Arfat 2013) who have discussed children's and women's rights in the context of Islamic laws. In those works, any direct references to (children's) right to be buried remained absent.

I have attempted to discover the linkage between burial and citizenship (e.g., Ansari 2007) but that connection too is remote from the literature. Ansari's (2007) article provides a relevance to the discussion of children's burial in the sense that burial is a process of rituals that needs to be followed, a point the children explained with a lot of details (see 4.4). The article offers a strong sense of attachment to 'place' and burial grounds -- that of the association between Shrine and their preferred burial site -- that the girls at the shelter discussed. However, the article does not necessarily establish a link between burial and citizenship. I discovered a reference to the connection between burial and citizenship in Pollack's (2003) work in which he discusses the 'right' to be repatriated for burial in home state. This article too offers a similar relevance as Ansari's to the 'homeland' of those who dies elsewhere.

The discussion of death of refugee children in Rygiel's (2016) work offers a look into the 'plight' of living through the grim circumstances of death and, in light of these fateful circumstances, she directs her attention to the 'possibilities for imagining … citizenship' (p. 546). From this, children's imagination of burial right lends to the imagining of rights that might be central to their dignity at death. A look into the literature on death and burial, by no means exhaustive, reveals some connectivity between death and children's marginal lives (Whyte 2005) and, furthermore, how this connectivity may contribute to their imagination of burial as a right.

Despite the previous discussions about literature on death, burial, and citizenship, the connection between burial as a right remains as an emotive demand that was discussed

mainly through Rehana and Bithi. Maybe it'd have helped to get opinion from other children at the park and/or Korail. But it did not register to me during my fieldwork. Now, I am bestowed with a long and passionate discussions about burial from the two girls at the shelter. However, despite my own fallacy, I do not want to disregard what Rehana and Bithi talked about because it was not only their perspectives that mattered, (lack of) dignity is a marker for common socio-economic and cultural grounds with street children from other sites. The lives of marginal children in Dhaka manifest from their lived environment (James and James 2004 and Liebel 2004). Their lives and experiences put them on street in the city. Their identity as, street children *potho-sishu*, is borne out of the streets in Dhaka. From these points, children's imagination on death is experienced as an extension of their lives, which represented a unique right that may or may not be heard (again).

4.5 Give us a chance to talk

The section explores children's participation at a seminar at International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), an NGO in Bangladesh. This discussion will be followed by some reflections on participation from some of children in Korail. For the participating children from Mirpur shelter to attend the ICCCAD seminar was an example of children's (non)participation in dialogues with others to talk about their lives. Broadly speaking, the seminar offered an opportunity for them to show that they too have a voice in society about their lives and rights (Archard 2013, Hammersley 2015, Liebel 2011 & Siddiqui 2003) and through their presence (Aitken 2013). The seminar was organised half-way through my fieldwork. It was a spontaneous idea of mine to collaborate with ICCCAD, which had a weekly slot for research dialogue with researchers, participants, collaborators, scholars, and academics. It is noteworthy to mention here that my familiarity with ICCCAD began when I did a fieldwork with this organisation for my masters's degree at Institute of development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex.

Through my professional connection with the head of ICCCAD, I asked him if he would be interested to host a seminar for street children. He agreed and subsequently invited the children. For ICCCAD the purpose was to introduce the 'real' street children to their researchers who'd be benefited to learn about their lives. By 'real', I mean a close encounter with street children. But, for children at the shelter this was an opportunity for them to tell their stories to others so that they'd be learn about their lives in hopes of helping them. When

I introduced the idea about the seminar to the children, they were excited to have an opportunity to represent themselves in a 'meeting' with *boro-boro lok*, important people, about their lives. When I explained the word 'seminar' they did not know what it meant so I explained to them that it was a kind of interaction where they'd have a chance to talk to other people. 'Oh, it is a *meeting*, Rehana claimed. I concurred with her by saying that it was a form of meeting. Most importantly, for them the opportunity to participate in the 'meeting' offered getting respect in their lives by being able to talk to people who were interested in them. The shelter administrator eventually agreed but on condition that ICCCAD pay for travel and meal for the shelter participants and the guide. The shelter could not afford additional transportation and they would miss their lunch and snacks at the shelter so their meals must need to be provided at the seminar. ICCCAD readily agreed to these conditions.

As I shared this news with the children at the shelter, they were excited to have the prospect of going elsewhere and talk about their lives to others. Geography played a role for their excitement as their excitement grew out of the anticipation of being away from the confines of the shelter. On the one hand, shelter is their home, which provide their safety and security, yet they are willing to be away from the confines of the shelter. This is an indication of 'bewildering ways' of how people relate to their places (Holloway and Hubbard, 2013: 25).

We want to go too

As for the selection of the children to attend the seminar, I had no role in it. The shelter decided Rehana and Bithi for their skills to speak in front of people (*manush-er shamne kotha bola*) (see also 4.2). This is a phrase – being able to talk in front of people – people use in Bangladesh. I also signaled Rehana's and Bithi's speaking earlier in this chapter. Although I had no say in selecting the children, I was happy that the arrangement took place for Rehana and Bithi to have an opportunity to share their stories.

Other younger girls wanted to go. But the shelter decided against it on the ground that they were young and that they might not be able to talk. A few of the girls pouted and resisted but to no avail. The female staff stepped in and talked them out of it. This incidence is a reflection of the authority of an NGO (Rahman and Tasnim 2023). The girls were young but it did not necessarily mean that they were incapable. On the other hand, the shelter wanted to

ensure that their participants would not only project a positive image among the guests but would be capable of discussing their issues.

The visit

This event highlighted the importance of children's opportunity to speak so that others can hear about their lives. To this end, the seminar was an opportunity for children to express their views (Aitken 2013 and Skelton 2007) on rights and their lives. The audience of the ICCCAD seminar was a group of researchers, both Bangladeshi and non-Bangladeshi. Some of the researchers were working on the effects of adverse climate conditions such as flood on children. There were about 16 researchers. Four were visiting researchers from Italy, the UK, Canada, and Sri Lanka.

For the researchers from abroad, although they could not understand while Rehana and Bithi spoke, I offered an introductory briefing about the purpose of the seminar. After the seminar, I also had a chat with non-Bangladeshi researchers to explain some key points like the background of Rehana and Bithi, how and why them came to the shelter, the conditions they faced on the street. I also spoke to the Bangladeshi researchers after the seminar about their thoughts on the format of the seminar.

They told me it was *unique* because it gave them an opportunity to meet with *street children* in person and learning about their *situation* from their own experiences. 'I have lived in Dhaka all my life and I have seen so many street children on the street, but I have never met one before', one attendee told me. 'I am more interested in learning about *their* rights now because I work with children and their families in Saathkhira', said another. Saathkira is a coastal area in Southern Bangladesh where some of the ICCCAD researchers worked with local children and their families, who were affected by adverse climate conditions.

The encounter with the mehman

This encounter provided opportunities for Bithi and Rehana to interact with the researchers. For them, it was different, *onnorokom*, encounter with the NGOs because they had an opportunity to talk to new people (*Apu* and *Bhai* or *Bhaiya* as they called them). In Bangladesh, it is common for both men and women to call each other 'apu', 'apa', 'bhai,

‘bhaiya’. This mannerism shows respect for each other. Calling someone by name, unless they are younger or are friends, is generally considered a sign of disrespect and offence.

Returning to the opportunities, there was something else. To get there, ICCCAD arranged a car for us to be picked up from the shelter. The children were excited about riding the car because they not only felt like guests, *mehman*, but they also felt *respected*. Being both *mehman* and *respected* were relevant to their dignity as *potho sishu*, which they thought they did not receive from the people of the society, *somajer manush*. For Rehana and Bithi, the seminar provided an opportunity to share the experiences of their lives with others in a society where such opportunities for participation (*ongshogrohon*) for marginal children do not always exist (Bordonaro 2012 and Hart 1992).

Opportunity: Having a chance to talk

The children were excited to have the opportunity to tell their stories to those who wanted to listen to *them* and those who did not know about *them*. One of the girls emphasised on ‘them’ by indicating that people did not necessarily want to talk or listen to the *potho sishu,* like them. ‘That is why we were very happy and proud’, one of the girls said to me.

After making an introductory briefing about the conditions of street children in Dhaka, I told the audience that the purpose of the seminar was to give the children an opportunity to interact with the researchers, which would provide an opportunity for them to interact and meet with street children in person. Following my introduction, Rehana and Bithi spoke about their own experiences. It was Rehana, however, who spoke most of the time because it seemed Bithi struggled for words at times. Perhaps, it was the unfamiliar crowd that made her uneasy, but I told them beforehand that they could stop at any time if they did not feel comfortable. After Rehana and Bithi concluded their talk, they fielded questions from some of the researchers. The shelter staff also talked briefly about the role of the shelter.

As the seminar proceeded, Rehana and Bithi talked about their home they had left and their ongoing experience living in the city. They discussed what brought them to the streets and talked about the perils of the streets. They also mentioned how they survived it and what brought them to the shelter. ‘We wanted to live and survive’, Rehana said to which Bithi did not say anything but she nodded forcefully to acknowledge Rehana. ‘No one treated us nicely

but we do not deserve the', Bithi followed. 'So, one day we saw an *apu* from an NGO who told us about a nice place to stay', she offered her story about how she came to the shelter. As the seminar went on, both girls became relaxed and they exchanged questions and answers about their lives on and off the street and their future from a crowd of about 20 researchers.

Although the participation at the seminar was a fulfilling experience for both girls, I needed to discover more about their participation in the seminar. So, I sat down with Rehana and Bithi at the presence of other girls a few days later to find out about their experience. I told them to tell their *golpo*, stories, about their experience at the 'meeting'. *Golpo* attracted the other girls to listen. They both said that participating in the seminar was a good experience because had an opportunity to talk to the others. 'It is our, right, *odhikar*, to be able to tell our stories to the others who are interested', Rehana said. 'Yet, we cannot participate everywhere', she added. 'Here [at the shelter], if we have a problem, the 'NGOs' listen to us, help us but if I go out on the street to tell people about our lives, no one will listen to us, no one will give a *damn* about us', Rehana said. 'What do you mean by 'NGOs' listen to you?' I interrupted. Rehana readily answered that by 'NGO' she meant people who work for the NGO. For Rehana then the NGO is not only an institution, but also as people.

I apologised for the interruption and asked them Bithi and Rehana to continue their discussion. 'No one has time for our senseless matters, *ajai-ra bepar*', Bithi followed up with what Rehana was saying about 'no one caring' for them. I sought explanation. 'We cannot participate in many places, *shob jaigai*, because people don't give us the opportunity, Rehana said. 'We are not valued as a human being, *manush*, and because of that we do not have the chance to participate, *ongshogrohon*, to talk to other people', Bithi added. Rehana then added an evocative reason by saying that no one listens to them because they do not have anything, *kono kichu nai*. 'So, we need help from the *adults* to live, *beche thakar jonno',* Rehana added.

Rehana and Bithi, however, offered an optimistic and an alternative view about their participation at ICCCAD. 'In that place (ICCCAD seminar) they (the participants) did not know about, children like us, *amder moto chele-meye*, who always struggle, Rehana said. 'When they listen to our stories, they might have a different perception about us and then they'd be able to understand the reality, *bastobota*, of our lives', Rehana added. 'Then more

people will come forward to learn about our *odhikar*', Bithi said. Furthermore, Rehana's point about not having an 'opportunity' or a 'chance' epitomizes the complexity of children's capacity to discuss their rights against those who provide (Federle 1994). Her understanding and articulation of her circumstances reveal that she has the ability 'understand' the circumstances of her lives and can show 'reasons' for her arguments (Freeman, 2007: 12).

The sense of exclusion from the mainstream society emanated from her account. The despair did not betray her longing for fitting in and belonging somewhere to empower their self-worth (Matthews 2003, Thomas 2007). Children like Rehana and Bithi are constrained not only by their ability as children but also by the perception as *potho sishu* that restricts their ability to speak and be heard about their issues. This also indicates that their issues depend on the actions of the adults to provide what the street children need (Lieten 2009).

Participation issues for street children in Dhaka reflect enduring indifferences and ambiguity of uneven social relationship between them and the adults in their lives. Children's participation then is interconnected with this social process, in which children like Rehana and Bithi expect to have abilities to exercise their right to participate in dialogues with others who would listen to them about issues that affects their lives. This presents a paradox that is often associated with children's participation. On the one hand, it promotes children's views and voices but, on the other hand, it does not remove the role of adults from their lives.

Children's experience at ICCCAD may be a one-off opportunity for them to talk about their lives within an environment that has been 'arranged'. I do not want to disregard the enduring experiences of children's participation in the seminar to talk about their lives. However, from my fieldwork with the street children, it would be important to consider the realities of street children to engage with their rights without fully considering and understanding the context, circumstances, and views of the children and their lives (Alderson 2017). That said, for children like Rehana and Bithi *potho sishu*s in Dhaka does not always have grounds for participation in dialogues with adults. At least, not in the sense that their views will have an impact on adults who are responsible for their wellbeing. To this end, I reflect on what Rehana said earlier about children like hers might remain a 'senseless matter' to many within the broader cultural landscape in Bangladesh. This means that street children's participation can remain a tokenistic phenomenon (Hart 1992). Rehana's concern is that voices of children

like hers about their rights may never really come into fruition. Although, the ICCCAD seminar offered an opportunity for the children from the shelter to talk about their rights but there is no guarantee what may actually come of it.

Views of participation from Korail

Bithi's and Rehana's reflection provided a similarity of reasons about the importance of being listened to between what the boys in Korail told me during one of my interactions with them. They said it was necessary, *dorkar*, for children like *us* to participate in dialogues, *alochona*, with the adults not only to let them know about children's problems and issues, but also for them to know about the children who are marginalised, *dushto*. Shaheen from Korail told me that his demand, *dabi*, from the society is to get an education, *porashona*, and a good job, *ekta bhalo chakri*, so that he can provide for his family. He seemed worried that *no one* paid attention to what they wanted. So, he emphasised on the importance of *amader kotha*, our views. Yet, he acknowledged that he has no dignity, *shomman*, in the society, *somaj*, to speak for his rights because he is poor and that no one listens to him. 'I don't know what will happen to me', he lamented. His anxieties reflect the existence of unequal power relations (see 5.0) and how it can immobilise their participation and what it means for his life (Skelton 2007).

Shaheen also explained to me that the adults did not give them a chance to talk because they are young. This implies that children are not supposed to take part in discussions with adults about their own matters in Bangladeshi culture (Blanchet 1996 and Siddiqui 2003). 'The elders do not listen to us', Shaheen said. Although this may not apply exclusively to Bangladesh, the adult-children relationship in Bangladesh operates within specific cultural rules and contexts (Blanchet 1996). Despite these issues, Shaheen showed drive and determination for his future. 'There will be problems but we must claim our rights to survive and dream', he added.

4.6 Reflections on our rights, our voices

I examined children's perspectives to offer meaning of rights from their own voices and within specific cultural contexts (Cameron 2012, Harwood 2010, Holt 2004 & Vandenhole 2012) in Dhaka. In this sense, a connection between children's perspectives and rights they have imagined, articulated have been aimed at the relevance to the argument that children are

‘persons’ and that are able to make decisions about issues that are important to them (Bordonaro 2012, Ruiz-Casares 2017 & Franklin 1995). Throughout the discussion of the empirical narratives of this chapter have contributed to the meaning of rights, which have emerged through the force of their insurgent voices.

In this vein, a key contribution of this chapter is to draw out children’s capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2004) for their rights. While the marginal conditions in their lives cannot be denied and are relevant to realising their rights, they can actually invoke children’s dignity to talk about their rights using the circumstances and contexts of their lives. In this vein, the findings of this chapter about children’s aspiration can shed further nuances of children’s perspectives on rights, providing an extensive analysis of street chidlren’s rights in Dhaka. This is a significant contribution to the literature which signals children’s lack of capacity to aspire due to their marginal condition (Appadurai 2011). The evidence from the participating street children in this chapter suggested that given the opportunity they could imagine and articulate their future. However, the future may be uncertain because of the overwhelming presence of street-ness and stigma (see Chapter 6) attached to their lives.

For the children, the discussion of rights precipitated from their (lack of) citizenship. This issue stems from children’s exclusion in the society, which also deny their voice and choice (Davis and Hill 2006). However, the marginal position, which often constraints their choice of opportunities, of street children in Dhaka does not necessarily exclude them from talking about their rights. That said, the marginality of street children actually played a pivotal role for them to talk about their lives. This signals their intention to have dialogues with adults in their lives, which also indicated that street children did not necessarily lack complete lack of voice, nor does it mean that they are unable to take actions for their own lives (Beazley 2003).

Education for street children is a basic right and it came through the layers of suffering and lack of respect, which signifies an awareness of their own lives (Freeman 2011 and Kabeer 2003). Education is the platform for future. To pursue future, children must survive which is also a right for them. The survival here is key to understanding his choice of rights by being resilient because it illustrates not just the specific context and circumstances in children’s lives in Dhaka for discussing their rights, it is also important to learn how street children in

Dhaka can develop strengths to resist their marginal conditions (Ali 2011) and hope for a better future through education. Food is another basic right which is linked to the moral demands (Freeman 2007) of rights on the basis of children's needs to survive. These basic rights are critical for children and the contexts and circumstances that are attached to their narratives signal a pattern of chilren's logical expression about rights.

The discussion of right to burial is a significant contribution to the burgeoning debates on children's rights literature because the empirical evidence shows imagination and articulation of rights that emerge from their own experiences and circumstances, which often render them undignified. However, children's imagination (about right to be buried) and anxieties (not having dinity as human being) about this particular right indicate that they have the capacity to recognize, articulate and are capable of 'taking their rights seriously' (Liebel, 2012: 12), even if they are imagined and hold the prospect of being un-purposed. Although in 2017, the UN introduced a new document (General Comment 2017) in which it acknowledged the children with street conditions. The article did not introduce any new 'rights' that are already in the current CRC. However, it emphasisd on Articles – 2, 3(1), 4, 5, 6, 12, and 15 that are relevant to street children.

Still, the right to burial is not discussed in the CRC and from the evidence of this chapter it is possible to draw further inquiries about their rights. One, right to burial may not guarantee any form of 'institutionalized enforcement' (Liebel, 2012: 27) in Bangladesh, an anxiety the children have talked about and two, if the first holds true, then, it hints that any discussion of rights of children and by the children needs to be valued against their 'conscious awareness' and that adults need to consider children's views for the benefit of their future (Alderson 2010); three, children's views on right to be buried can open up policy implications by the adults responsible for realising a new understanding of children's rights as their 'representatives' (Archard, 1993: 55) not just in Bangladesh and but elsewhere.

The evidence of participation in the seminar has shown the intent of the children wanting to speak so that others can hear about their lives against the unforgiving circumstances of their lives. This concern is evident where children's existence in society can be excluded through neglect and exclusion (Abebe 209 and Conticini 2004). The contribution of this chapter highlighted two opposing circumstances of street children in Dhaka to show why speaking

and being heard was important for them. This signals a geographical contribution of understanding about children's lives (Yarwood and Tyrrell 2012) of particular background (e.g., street-connected) from the context of Bangladesh.

The emphasis on wordings like 'State parties' at the beginning of most CRC Articles and the 'children shall … be provided the opportunity to be heard' in Article 12 (Unicef 2004) indicate that the rights of children are dependent on the interventions of the 'adults''. In this sense, these adults need to provide children the opportunities that Rehana and Bithi sought in their lives. Following this, an ongoing adaptation and interpretation of children's rights need to be adapted within the local contexts (e.g., law and policy) in which children live and experience their lives. What I imply here is that there is not only a need to emphasis on the views of children in order to understand what matters to them (Archard and Uniacke 2020), adults need to ensure that children have the means to pursue their hope for a better a life.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that in order to makes sense of children's rights, children need to articulate them within the specificity of their language, narrative skills, and understanding that derive from the experiences of their everyday lives. The chapter what rights are important for street children that set the tone for understanding their rights in other chapters as well. Some of these rights include education, food, shelter, safety, job, and to be buried properly. Education is central to the children. They had mentioned that education was the way out of poverty and better life for them. These rights have shown the importance of children's participation (Liebel 2012 and Skelton 2009) in decision-making about issues that are important for them. For street children in Dhaka, these rights emerged from the experiences of their own lives as being poor and marginalised (Wouter 2014). Most importantly, it was their own views which they expressed in a manner suitable to their capacity and conviction. To this end, their expression of rights may seem partial (Baraldi and Cockburn 2018) in the sense that in some occasions they did not know how to respond or did not know the answer. But it is not to say that their partial views lack clarity, Infact, they were forthcoming about acknowledging their inability to answer. However, in doing so they also left a void in their lives, which may have affected their views on rights.

The discussion of citizenship provided a relevant context children's lack of dignity, which derived from children's assessment of being ignored by their adult counterparts. The interpretations of citizenship have unfolded about the way children thought about rights against the, *bastobota*, reality, of their lives, requiring adult interventions for them to claim their rights (Veloso 2008). This chapter has shown that it is important to understand and pay attention to children's language, interpretations, and imaginations (Freeman 2011). Also importantly, to understand children's rights there is a need to look beyond principles of the CRC alone. It is also important to learn and understand how children can attain their rights from the circumstances of their own lives (Abebe 2007). The discussion of rights by the street children in this chapter have provided some evidence that they can be geographically different (Kallio and Mills 2016). For example, the basic rights among children in Korail are understood through the lens of morality, which signals that society has a responsibility for them to provide for their rights on moral grounds. On the other hand, for girls in the Mirpur shelter right to burial is prominently seen through the lens of their sense of dignity. The logic behind signals their lack of respect in the society.

Following this, the children in this chapter showed how dignity was connected to their rights so that their voices be heard (Archard 1993 and Roche 1999). To this end, I have not only shown that children's views are important to discuss what rights are important, I have also shown the capacity of children's participation (e.g., the example of the ICCCAD seminar) to articulate those rights from the context of their own lives. This one-off event may have offered an opportunity for some street children to share their views on rights and lives with others but it also increases the tensions among children for being ignored by the adults. Hence, their participation may remain within the anxieties of being 'tokenistic' (Hart, 1992: 9) and the implication is that nothing may actually happen because street children's issues may simply mean 'senseless matter' (according to Rehana's commnet earlier).

Following this, I have discussed the importance of dignity through the right to burial. The contribution of this chapter lends to the understanding of how street children recognised the importance of being a human through a proper burial – an imagination of a right for them -- from the experiences of unfortunate circumstances in their lives. This example pointed out their lack of status as human beings in the society (Skelton 2007). Dignity in this sense offers children's insight into their reasoned arguments about the burial, which was important to

understand children's views (Sommer et al 2010). However, their views on burial as a right are also linked with socio-cultural factors and those who are in position of power. This marker is central to understanding children's relationship with adults who do not care for those who are *gorib*, poor. The implication that arises from this anxiety is that the prospect of their right to burial right can remain unattended and unaddressed.

5.0 Chapter Five: Our lives, our rights

'This is our dunya, world'

Fig. 24. A boy from APON Foundation sitting on the edge of a playground. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

5.1 Introduction

In 1945 Hans Maeder, an educator and founder of a non-profit school, Stockbridge, in the U.S., published an article in *Childhood Education*, called 'Children are the same everywhere'. I draw an inspiration to (dis)locate childhoods *everywhere* from this article for this chapter to engage with the dynamics of the institution of childhood (Holt 1995, Holloway and Valentine 2000, 2000a, 2000b & Skelton 2012) by drawing on some of Maeder's encounters with children across the world. To elaborate, the content of the article explains Maeder's inquiry about childhood 'everywhere'. As an educator who had emigrated from Germany to America, he harboured a sincere curiosity about children 'with different skins and looks and languages' and if they were 'really different or if they are alike' (Maeder, 1945: 204).

The narratives of his article begin with his interaction with a group of Danish children that includes a game of football and a discussion with them by a campfire followed by Maeder's trips and encounters with children in England, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. During these interactions, the children inquire about children in other countries. Interestingly, Maeder (1945) discovers that there is 'little difference' between the children in European countries but some of the children were indeed curious about children with 'slanting eyes' or of different colour and language (p. 204).

Fast forward to a Kenyan plantation, Maeder came across children who are 'pitifully poor' (Maeder, 1945: 205). During one of his interactions with the children, he gave them a set of marbles, which at first children tried to eat but later discovered the 'typical marble game which children play everywhere' (Maeder, 1945: 205). On this, Maeder (1945) conceded that he had given them no instruction about the game. In another account, he discovered that the children were playing 'hide-and-go-seek'. Maeder (1945) pondered '[w]hether they had learned this game from a white child I was unable to find out' (p. 205). This, perhaps, signal, in Maeder's understanding, that the children at the plantation are not capable of learning on their own merits.

So, to examine what can children's everyday experiences offer about our understanding of rights, I argue that childhood for the street children in Dhaka derives from a multiplicity of socio-economic factors, which are not necessarily identical to all children, and this places

their childhood in a canvas of multiple meanings. I also argue that these 'meanings' can lend to the understanding of their rights, emerging from their own marginal experiences associated with the streets Abebe 2007, Ansell 2005, Bourdillon 2017). Drawing on these, I will discuss what their everyday lives inform us about rights. In this sense, the contribution of this chapter hinges on the distinct experiences of street childhood in Dhaka.

The children I encounterd were situated in a number of places. Their everyday lives and experiences are the manifestation of their belonging to the street in the city (Smith and Katz 1993). For the children I encountered, the 'street' included various locations such as parks, playground, sidewalk (footpath), streets in the city, various localities of Dhaka (e.g., Mirpur Mazhar – The Shrine), and shopping malls near Korail informal settlement. For children's geographers such as Marijke van Buggenhout, the existence and everyday presence of the street children in different locations represented their space for belonging that holds specific 'meanings' about their lives (Buggenhout, 2020: 100). Similarly, the identity as, *potho-sishu*, street children, is borne out of the streets in Dhaka (Meincke 2011) for the children I worked with and learn from about their complex, contested, yet a celebratory life they live as street children as they learned and adapted how to survive and dream. These 'streets' represented a canvas of intertwined shades of struggle, survival, and serendipity.

The perception of Maeder in 1945 about children 'elsewhere' still resonates among geographers focusing on childhood studies. This chapter will show the connection between children's everyday lives and their perception of rights from street children in Dhaka through the context of their everyday interactions in and association with a park. The discovery of rights in this chapter then traces back to the idea of children's capacity (See 2.2.1) for becoming 'social actors and agents' (Skelton, 2007: 168). In this vein, I focus on the voices of children in articulating their rights, a capacity I have considered as being actors and agents of their own volition and expression of views, emerged from the context of their everyday lives, a point Judith Ennew forcefully propagated (Editorial 2014).

The structure of this chapter is as follows. I will first set the tone of this chapter by highlighting a brief sketch of the treatment of street children in Dhaka. This is relevant for this thesis because the rights are linked to the experience of margnalisation. In this sense, my intention is to offer the readers a broader snapshot of the lives of street children that are

embroiled with abuse and harassment (Buggenhout 2020). I will then discuss the connection between rights and children's everyday lives through their world of playing at Dhanmondi Lake Park followed by the experience of becoming of the children through the lens of their aspiration. The last section will highlight children's everyday lives through the lens of their struggle and what it means for their rights. In the reflection section, I will unpack everyday practices and experiences of the street children in Dhaka to underscore how street children negotiate with their everyday lives associated with rights. Finally, in the concluding remarks, I will signpost some of the discoveries of children's everyday lives from various localities in Dhaka what their lives inform us about rights. It is noteworthy to mention here that the cases I have chosen in this chapter will show the nunaces of children's everyday lives in a park (see 5.3) and the perception of rights emerged from the context and circumstances of their daily interaction in the park. In section 5.4, I will show the children's aspiration through the lens of rights such as education, which would be a critical factor for their future (well-being). In this sense, this section (5.5) will highlight the importance of becoming. The last case (5.6) will underscore children's rights through their struggle.

5.2 A prelude to urban and marginal childhood(s) in Dhaka

One slender boy, about 10-12 perhaps, came up to the tea stall (Fig. 25-26) across from BRAC University, where I was having tea before I head out to interview the children at the nearby Korail informal settlement, the largest in Bangladesh. The boy started to ask for money from the nearby university students. No one gave him anything. 'Get lost, *ja bagh'*, one of the students scolded the boy. He did not seem to be dejected nor fazed by the crude refusal.

There was something about him -- something flashy, suave, and confidence. He was dressed in a soiled white full pant, a striped shirt, and a scarf stylishly wrapped around his neck. He tiptoed next to a water fountain and a row of glasses set aside for the students, nonchalantly grabbed a glass, and started to drink water from the fountain. No sooner he finished his drink, when one of the teasellers threw a bowl of water at him. 'Get the hell out of here, you bastard, *chudanir pua'*, he barked at the boy. The boy quickly moved away but could not escape the water, which drenched his shirt and scarf.

Yet, he remained unperturbed by the violent reaction as if he was used to this treatment. He stuck his tongue out, made a face, and held up his groin through his pant towards the teaseller from a safe distance. Then he turned around and disappeared around the corner. The teaseller murmured something under his breath and returned to his tea.

Figs. 25-26. The boy (left), he drinks water which is forbidden for him (right). Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

As I paid for my tea, I asked the tea seller if the boy came here regularly. '*Aree bhai*, see brother, they come and go', came a casual reply, waiving one of his arms dismissively. These treatments and perceptions for the *potho sishu* in Dhaka reflected children being neglected and subjugated to the indifference of mainstream society, dislodged from the reality of children's lives and consumed by the fear of the menacing children who roam the street, bare chested, *khali gai*, and, bare feet, *khali pai*.

The children I observed during my fieldwork in Dhaka are attached to the street. Their lives were situated within the connection and dis-connection from it. Some lived in makeshift huts and corrugated tin-roofed houses in the informal settlements in Korail, Kawran Bazaar, and Rayer Bazaar. Some lived on the street, unhinged by the points of locations depending on their (un)availability; alleyways, swarmed by the (un)certainties of harm; in parks, guarded and guided by nature. Many came from broken families, many escaped the violence in them, many escaped mental and physical abuse by their (step) parents and other adults in their families, many were born in the street, many are born into it, many escape it to live on their own.

Urban margins (see 2.3.2) are inescapable from the lives of street children in Dhaka, for within it swirls unmistakable scenes of marginality that consumes their lives. These scenes

expose children's naked truth about their abject poverty and vulnerability to the dire circumstances of 'poverty, experience abuse, exploitation … health problems', 'domestic violence', 'sexual abuse, 'police brutality' on the streets of Dhaka (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2015: 238 and Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017: 417). Urban margins expose the streets where children (re)imagine their lives, despite their troubles, those that sometimes are full of 'miracles' that holds hope but no guarantees that anything is 'ever going to happen' (Ward, 1978: 22, 52). Rising urbanism in Dhaka has diminished many open spaces, forcing the children to remain inside or resort to other forms of entertainment such as visiting shopping malls and attending movies. Many marginalised children have claimed their childhood in the city park as 'outside children' (Karsten, 2016: 76). These children represent a childhood in the city through their acceptance as street children.

5.3 Playing and living: Children in the Dhanmondi Lake Park

More than one million children roam the streets of Dhaka. The Bengali for street is *rashta*. The actual number varies but the truth is children are plainly visible on the streets of Dhaka. The street is where a large number of the street children learn to perpetuate their everyday lives. The street does not merely represent the street per se, but it also means various spaces and places (see 2.4) the children spend their time – parks, street corners, sidewalks, schoolyards, playgrounds and others. Their childhood is intertwined with the intricacies and nuances of survival not just on the street but also as children.

Kings, queens, and kingdoms

Dhaka is their city. The streets are their kingdoms. The children called themselves kings and queens. While these attributions are similar to Samantha Punch's (2007) research with children in Bolivia (see p. 195), these terms are articulated in my research by street children I interacted with in this chapter. It is also noteworthy to mention that I came across Samantha Punch's article after I had completed my fieldwork. Rahat, one of my participants who is 13, at the Dhanmondi Lake Park told me that he had spent most of his day there with his friends. 'This is our world', he said. He explained the 'world' as being the park where he played and spent time with other children from a neighbouring informal settlement. He further said that he did not like being at home – he just slept there. My visit to the settlement revealed about his home, a mere 8 feet by 6 feet cement structure, which he shared with his father. He mother had passed away. His father, a daily labourer on a contract basis, often spent his time,

when he was not working, with his partner. So, he sent Rahat to the park for his own privacy. To get to the park Rahat and his friends from the settlement needed to cross a main thoroughfare every day, putting them at risk. While the idea of safety of children in the park has generated a debate among 'pro-risk' and 'risk-averse' designers and planners in many developed countries (Wainwright 2019), the everyday lives of the street children in Dhanmondi Lake Park is a naturally occurring phenomenon. The Park is where children learnt to cope with their environment and carved out a place for themselves not necessarily built for them.

Rahat's connection to the park was not spontaneous nor was it by design. He was thrown into an environment where needed to find a place for himself. He adapted to the freeness and excitement of the park. It nurtured him; it pleased him. In it, he found a refuge. To draw a context of Rahat's life in Dhanmondi Lake Park in Dhaka, Nicola Butler and architect Jennette Emery-Wallis (Educate Nigeria 2019), a pro-risk advocates for children's playgrounds, explain children's experience in UK as a way of creating a freedom for children to manipulate and explore the resources available to them. In their experiences with the children in the playground, for example, they encounter children's manipulation of water and sand, two naturally existing elements where they play. The conditions between children in the park in UK from above and those in Dhanmondi Lake Park were somewhat similar. They offer how street children develop a connection with the urban environment within the context of their everyday social circumstances (van Blerk 2012).

Rahat and his friends discovered techniques to catch small fishes with plastic bottles they collect from the recycling bins in the park near the banks across the length of the lake. They put live baits, worms (*kechos*), in the bottles half-filled with water, which they used to attract the fish by holding it down in shallow waters. If they made *good* catches like a three-to-four inches long 'gappi' fish (Fig. 27-28), they sold it in the park. He used the money from selling the fish to buy snacks, *jhal muri*, *chanachur*, and food for his everyday needs, which he shared with other children. 'We play together, we eat together, we stay together, *amra ek sathe kheli, khai-dai, ghumai'*, he said (Fig. 29-30).

Figs. 27-28. Boys displaying their catch of 'gappi' fish from the lake in Dhanmondi Park. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed

Children's play and strategies to relieve hunger seem to be instinctive. Finding a way to acquire food in the food, however, talks about his creative and learned practices, in which Rahat discovered not only his own but also of the others' necessity for food.

Rakib, a boy from Korail informal settlement offered his view on play in a rather holistic manner. Accordng to him, play, *khela-dhula*, is a right because 'it helps 'children' to develop their mind; if they can develop their mind, they can study better, and if they can study better then they have the *shujog*, opportunity, to have a better future'. His explanation offers a nuanced view of how he mapped right and play. However, this is not to say that his view is 'better', it is different from that of Rahat in Dhanmondi Lake Park, a place that is connected with his everyday life. In this vein, children's geography has alluded to these explorations and discoveries. A finding by Katz (2004) in Sudan similarly reflects children's ability to explore and exploit resources from the environment he lives and thrives in and learns from to survive and to make connection with the space and place through his 'lived experiences' (Aitken, 2018: 30).

Returning to Rahat, I asked him about his rights. 'What are your rights? I tried to be direct. He did not answer immediately. He was silent in his thought. Then he punctured his silence. 'We roam around, eat, stay together – this *is* our right, our *dabi*', he said, emphasising all of these as a singular noun and claiming his right as *dabi*, a Bengali word for demand. The use

of language describing his rights, Rahat's expression offers a revelation of how right is defined through language (Freeman 2012 and Kabeer 2003).

About his rights Rahat said that 'We *need* to eat to survive', he said. 'This is my right too, *eitao amar odhikar*' he further claimed. He said that he did not always eat at home because his father sometimes worked so he was not around to cook for him. He mother passed away some years ago. 'How can we grow up, *boro hobo*, unless we eat? Although this assertion was in a question form, it was a statement, which mapped a connection between food and growing up. *Boro hobo* in Bengali also multiple meanings. One, it means what Rahat implied – to grow up in the sense of physical development. Two, it means to become successful in *future* by means of education, job, salary, etc. The second meaning is closely related to *manush howa*, which I will discuss in chapter six. 'What about roaming around, *ghora-ghuri*, and staying with the others? I asked. 'We are children, *pola-paan,* and we are *free* (spoken in English) to roam around, *ghora-ghuri,* in the park but we also need to stay together with our friends', he explained about *ghora-ghuri* with an emphasis on freedom as children. Then he added, 'Staying together is also our right'. He explained that there are bad people, *kharap lok*, who did 'bad things' so he and his friends always stayed together to avoid them. I did not ask him further about the 'bad people' and the 'bad things' because I thought it could be *traumatic* for him. Friendship signifies safety and security for the children, which is discussed in the CRC as children's right to be safe. Within the context of the childen in the park, being together is a mechanism for them to develop a safety net to create bondages that embody their resourcefulness to survive the perils of the street (Mitchell and Heynen 2009).

Linking to his experience on *ghora-ghuri* as play, which is a right for Rahat, I juxtapose a similar reflection from Rakib, a boy from Korail. He expressed play as *khela-dhula*, which was important for him because it allowed them to develop their mind, *mon bikash kore*. He argued that unless they could develop their minds, they would not be able to focus on their studies, *pora-lekha* (I will develop the focus on education in the following section). But I pause there to mention that education is central to the families of Bangladesh, regardless of the social hierarchy. Rakib's linkage of play to education reflects a similarity of views about play as a right and a mapping of right to play with education.

Returning to Rahat, I explain a few points on *ghora-ghuri* (play), safety, and food as rights that came through his explanation. Earlier, in my discussion about right, Rahat claimed play, safety, and food as his rights because they were important for him to survive and grow up. The element of safety strikes a chord with the Article 19 of the CRC in which children's protectiuon from violence, abuse, and neglect is articulated. However, his experience of safety meant abuse from the 'bad people' in the park. What this implies is a form of abuse that the street children suffer at the hands of the perpetrators. So, in this sense Rahat's account of safety is relevant not only to the discussion of right, but also how this can be interpreted against the CRC. Food is a key element to tackle his hunger so that Rahat can stay healthy, a factor he explained as one of the requirements for his own welfare. Freedom in Rahat's life contributes to his 'thought and conscious' (Bissell, 2003: 52) in explaining his rights. These perceptions of rights are textured in his wellbeing. Through his young years, his reflections on right are his own thoughts, manifested through the environments he is familiar with.

For Rahat, these rights are experienced and explained from his everyday experiences in the park. The rights Rahat articulated have a reflection on protection and provision of the CRC principles (Ansell 2005). Children need food for their development (Article 6) whereas *ghora-ghuri* also reflects Rahat's 'freedom of association and to freedom' (UNCRC, 1989: 6), which is reflected though his play with his friends to catch fish in the park, for example. These linkages have shown that principles of these rights are not only confined to the CRC alone. They are reflected through the notions of children's experience and what matters to them (White 2007).

On a broader level, the rights that Rahat explained are associated with street children like him. Yet, these rights are only his views. How these rights may be appropriated for them is another matter. I will show later in chapter six that the NGOs play a pivotal role in their lives as a provider for their rights. If this is the case, then, on the one hand, I remain skeptical of the CRC as a guiding document in which children views are given a prominence through participation (Archard 2013 and Skelton 2007). On the other hand, I do agree with the language of the CRC rights that are often enshrined in the hands of others (Archard 1995), in other words, adults. This is particularly crucial for the perception of street children in

Bangladesh, which not only renders them weak to claim or to act on their rights, but also removes the spirit of children's capacity for imagination.

Figs. 29-30. Girls staying together and selling balloons at night in Dhanmondi Lake Park; Arif, a boy, is in the foreground (right photo). Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

Wainwright (2019) provides a fascinating account of architect Aldo van Eyck's vision of 'tools of imagination' (see online) which illustrates Eyck's post-second war planning and building of fence-free parks along street side for children with 'open-ended structures' rather than outfitting them with typical 'swings' and 'roundabouts' (see online). The aim for this was to develop children's creativity (Wainright 2019). Aldo van Eyck's and Lady Marjory Allen's idea of creating open spaces (Fig. 35) for children to allow them to be free and exercise their imaginations is also evident from the everyday realities for a group of children like Rahat (Fig. 31-34). The street children described in this chapter so far have talked about rights that emerged from the experiences of their lives. For example, in his own words, Rahat's rights are expressed in terms of his needs and demands, which represent not only an interpretation of rights but also an interchangeable meaning of right through language of street children (Kabeer 2003). This way, the expression of their views is an important principle of children's rights in the CRC. For Rahat, exercising his imaginations allows him to articulate his rights.

Returning to Aldo van Eyck, the idea of creating this form of space for children is to allow children to 'play without walls … and spilling over into the rest of the city' where they would be considered 'lord of the city', 'forcing children ... to be more aware of each other, making the city feel like a more equal, accessible place' (Wainright, 2019: online). The everyday experiences of the children in the park in Dhaka underscored how the idea of freedom as a

right was propagated (Askins 2016). From their everyday experiences, children displayed freedom of their views on rights. This is a form of agency which they are unlikely to be aware of.

The agency is an element of childhood that is associated with right in ways that children, especially those from the marginal conditions, search for their capacity to act on their self-interest (Bordonaro and Payne 2012). I am not suggesting here that street children like Rahat's encounter is a representation of what street children in other locations may think of as right(s). Their life, thickly textured in poverty and marginalisation, is always shifting. These factors may influence their views on right. But what transpired from my encounter with each child is a snapshot of his/her views on right that is embedded within the everyday experiences their lives, including their hope.

Figs. 31-34. Children building clay homes with rain water and mud in Dhanmondi Lake Park in Dhaka, Bangladesh; Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

Fig. 35. Aldo van Ayck's design of a park for children in the Netherlands; Photo: The Guardian.

5.4 Of becoming: Children at crossroads

Somewhere deep in the jungle of narrow, long, and interconnected alleyways of Korail informal settlement, sat a small shop of corrugated tin and half-empty shelves. Most patrons there were not to buy things but to have tea, *cha*, the source of main cash flow for the owner. The shop had been my meeting place with the children. We often sat in front of the shop and talked. This section about the Korail boys is about their hopes of becoming something, *manush howa* (see 2.4). The specific language of becoming, emerged from children's words not uncommon in Bengali culture, is not necessarily in contradiction of what Nieuwenhuys (see 2.4.2) suggested but is re-dressed by the experience of children's own lives in my fieldwork as a source of right produced through their aspiration (see 2.1), a key point for this thesis. Because aspiration is linked with children's hope and some of them mentioned it is their right to hope for something – to become someone, to do something, etc. In this sense, aspiration can be seen as a right. I will show some evidence of children's aspiration through the lens of right in the following section.

Spatial (dis)location between being and becoming

In this section, I introduce some empirical evidence about children's state of being and becoming through the lens of education and aspiration as rights. Most children I interviewed in Korail are between 15 and 17 years of age. Some attended NGO-run free community schools, some dropped out, some had no opinion about school, some did not care about school. Children often talked about their future of becoming someone through the lens of education, *porashona*, which they considered as a right. However, education also offers a

contradiction in their lives. While they showed their commitment to education not all of them have the opportunity to pursue it because of the commitments to their families (van Blerk 2012). Yet, their acknowledgement of education is an example of dislocation between being and becoming through their aspiration, which is layered in hope, frustration, uncertainty, and denial. To explain these, I highlight below discussions of four boys from Korail informal settlement.

Jainul: I used to go to school, but poverty forced me to stop. I don't feel bad about it; I appreciate education because it gives us *shomman*, respect, but I need to help my family now. I have no intention to go back to school because I am saving money to open a restaurant and live well elsewhere with my family. My l*okkho*, goal, is to provide for my family and my *lokkho* is also my *odhikar*. (Recordings from 01/12/2018).

Chan: Chan never went to school because he needed to help his family. He has two brothers but none of them helps their father. They often skipped family responsibilities. The burden of supporting his family and his father fell on Chan. Besides, he never liked school. When asked why, Chan simply says he, does not know, *ami jani na*, but I have a responsibility and a dream to help my family. (Fieldnote from 10/12/2018).

Rabiul: I want to study because I want to live well with my family by getting a good job. So that I don't have to eat just one meal a day. But it is difficult to study here because the environment, *pori-besh*, of *bosti* is chaotic. Moreover, some schools cannot take all the children. All children like me need help to go to school because it is our *moulik* right. (Recordings from 11/12/2018).

Abu Kalam: I gave up education to take care of family. I could not bear sight of their pain. But my work as a cleaner is not good but I cannot get a good job *now*. I am trying to help my family with what I can but in future I hope to get a good job somewhere. (Fieldnote from 03/01/2019).

The discussion of becoming someone through the lens of education, *porashona*, and aspiration played an important part in addressing its linkage to their everyday lives, whether they attended, left, or never liked school. Those who wanted to go to school put an intrinsic

value of education and getting educated, connected to their way out of the *bosti*, as they called it. This is a marker of hope for children like Abu to escape the marginal conditions in their lives. Being at school seemed to be a relevant point in their lives. Particularly, in Bangladeshi culture education figures large among families, rich or poor. School is a part of their childhood as Holloway and Valentine (2000) posit schooling as a cultural institution.

Yet, the reality of not being able to and the prospect of losing what they wanted to become were associated with the development interventions (see 5.0) by the NGOs who worked in Korail informal settlement. Furthermore, as children experienced poverty and marginalisation, their childhood constantly shuttled between the spontaneity of being children and the (un)certainty of becoming *someone successful*, so that their relationship with their families would be strengthened. For Jainal who never intended to go to school had a reason – poverty. There was a hint of frustration in him about leaving school. Yet his struggle has not stopped him from aspiring for his future. His *lokkho*, goal, as a right, is to take care of his family. In Bangladesh, *lokkho* also means aspiration.

The children's account of wellbeing through the lens of their living environment in Korail is intricately connected to their own lives shared and associated with their families. In Bangladeshi culture, in which 'family' is central in social relationships (Kabeer 2012 and Rahman 2009), the lives of the children depend on the health of their families. What this means is if they can support their families, the children will eventually prosper in future. The future for Jainal, Rabiul, and Kalam, for example, is bound with what they hope to achieve – an aspiration to have a better life. For Chan, life is layered with denial about education because it was not a possibility for him to escape the responsibility of the survival of his family so he accepted the absence of formal schooling in his life. For Kalam, life swings between uncertainty and reality of his life.

For children like Jainal and Rabiul I interviewed talked about wanting to study, *pora-lekha korbo*, so that they can become a *manush*. Because it is one of their basic rights, *moulik odhikar* (which I also indicated in Chapter 4). In the broader culture of Bangladesh, parents (regardless of their status and stature in the society) emphasise on children's education. However, in the informal settlements like the one in Korail many children had to stop their education at class V because it was provided as a free service by the NGOs. After that,

children need to go to school outside of Korail where they have to pay for it. Many parents cannot afford to continue education for their children. Upto class V education in the inforla settlement is provided by the funding from various NGOs such as BRAC, EduCo, Via Lise.

For the children I discussed in this chapter, aspiration involves something to look for in the future (Kraftl 2008). It is linked with their hope, meaning they seek 'something better' for their lives, infused not only with 'potentialities and possibilities' (Anderson, 2002: 224), but also with uncertainty and anxiety. Children's aspiration as a right emerged from their own struggles in life. This emergence perpetuated their own views that matters to them, markers that are commissioned in Article 12 of the CRC. In this sense, aspiration and rights are not necessarily separate entities in their lives. They are bound together in children's lives.

Chan did not mention about his future but his choice to give up school to support his family was a choice he made. It was a decision he made, borne not only out of the circumstances of his life but also from the partial knowledge about why had left school. However, what he said should be acknowledged as a viewpoint that he developed from the experience and context in his life. This resonates with Article 9 of the CRC, which provides a pathway for the opportunity for children to make their views presented and respected (Liebel 2012). By 'partial' I mean whatever he told me about his life and his unawareness of his appreciation for school, accounts that may not seem much but they offered a marker for his contentious decision-making between right to education and his commitment to family.

The children's interview above showed that they all had aspiration in some forms – either by doing something worthwhile for their families and themselves and by becoming someone, an entrepreneur in Jainal's case. These aspirations then are linked to their right, which I mentioned earlier. The ongoing contestation between where children currently live in and the one in which they want to be implies a reference to spatial dimension of their rights. In their present lives, they want to have education, which could lead them to somewhere better – a reference to future. This future is wrapped in aspiration of becoming someone else. Yet, their lives are connected to the reality of their marginal circumstances.

5.5 Stuck in struggle

This section underscores how the accounts of rights emerge from the experiences of children's struggle as street children in Dhaka through the photograph of children at Mirpur shelter.

We have no future

It was just another day with the girls in Mirpur shelter, another passing day in the midst of their struggle for survival as children without the comfort of their parents. The girls were looked after by the shelter staff. '*Bhai*, what's the point of counting days; what matters is that we are alive', said Rehana,17, one of the girls known as 'apu' to other younger girls. Being an 'apu' to other girls also signals a sense of safety and care, a form of 'protective agency' (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017: 422).

The struggle of the children I encountered often emerged from their 'lack of things' like not being able to school, not having their parents (*ma-baap*), not having anyone (*keu nai*) to rely on for their future (*vobisshot*), of which they often said did not exist (*kono vobisshot nai*). Their struggles reflected a contrast to the optimism and promises of the CRC holds but cannot always necessarily fulfil. Perhaps, it is a mechanism, a tool to address the 'rights, privileges, duties, responsibilities of adult citizens be made available to any young person' (Holt, 1995: 1).

Fig. 36. A girl from the mainstream family going to school; Photo: Mirpur girls.

The children at the Mirpur shelter took the photo above (Fig. 36). It showed a girl in her school uniform is on her way to school. The children's interpretation was that the, *family*-r *chele-meye-ra*, (family children – a term the girls in the shelter used for identifying the children from higher classes) had everything, *shob kichu*, they needed and wanted. They saw the mother was taking the child (in the photo) to school (the mother cannot be seen in the photo). But the children at the shelter did not have anyone to take them to school. 'See how they, *family-r baccha-ra*, are enjoying their rights and we are not', Bithi pointed out. They had family members and servant, *chakor*, (in children's words) who took the children to school and brought them back. 'These children are protected and have everything, but we are uncared for and have nothing', added Rehana. For them, then, rights are influenced by socioeconomic factors. For children who are rich may enjoy the privilieges of right than those children like Rehana and Bithi who are poor and have no one to support them. In this vein, children's views on education signifies partialty of rights, not so much in their meaning but in their accessibility by those who are privileged despite the universal appeal to the right to education for children in the CRC (Baraldi and Cockburn 2018).

To further explain, Rehana said that the family children got to play and talk every day with their parents; they were not deprived of the things that we want like proper education, nice clothes, someone to rely on. 'But the street children, like us, are ignored and overlooked by the society, *somaj*, because we are poor', Rehana said. As a result, the street children can feel lonely because they have no one to rely on, no one to depend on for their *vobisshot*, according to Rehana. Then she offers a revelation: 'We are stuck in one place (*ek jai-gai*)'. Being stuck implies children's lives remain within the vortex of their anxiety, uncertainty, deprivation – a composite of their everyday struggle.

The struggle of children like Rehana is then spatial but its stationary, remain in one place, *ek jai-gai*, which does not change. *Ek jai-gai* is a place of location where the children are stuck – the shelter. However, this shelter is also a metaphor for their struggles of (un)becoming, something to look forward to elsewhere, which may or may not exist for the children. This relationship of metaphorical and existenceial states is what Smith and Katz (1993) describe as the 'metaphor of locality … a multi-dimensional experience' (p. 68). It also reveals children like Rehana's reality, which embodies the world they live in, the world that is dealt for them in their 'present experience' (Ostrow, 1981: 281).

To mark her life as a *potho sishu*, Bithi, another girl at the Mirpur shelter, offered an emotive view of the street. She said that street is the source of power of having the freedom to do whatever she wants – there is no one to look over her shoulder. 'The street is the place where they can be whoever they want to be – a child, a thief, *chor*, worker', Bithi added. The indication here is about different roles they take on to survive on the street. Importantly, street provides a spatial reference to their social identity and belonging – an association they are unwilling to dislocate and dispossess from their lives, even while they remain safe at the shelter.

Children's marginal status has contributed to the emergence of rights from their own voice and views, which is a manifestation of the struggles of their lived experiences in the society they live in (James and Prout 1997). On the one hand, these experiences disclose children's existenceial circumstances – lack of protection and provision – and on the other hand, these marginal conditions provide a space for them to imagine having those protections and provisions, forged through their own 'views' that matters for their lives. This revelation, emerged from the canvas of children's own depiction and deliberation, produces a connection between children's everyday struggle and rights.

The photo of the girl in a school dress has produced the discussion of right among some of the girls at Mirpur shelter. It is primarily about the right to education. The explanation of the girls is not necessarily about claiming education for themselves but how right to education is being denied because of their circumstances. This is important to remind the readers that children's perspectives in this thesis is not just about rights but also how they are produced in their lives. In this sense, lack of education as a right affected how their lives turned out and what it meant for the prospect of their future.

In this vein, the discussion of future then is linked to their aspiration as a right. While it is important for street children to aspire for a better life, future remains a paradox for them. This paradox in their lives borne out of the frustration. On the one hand, they seek safety from the perils of the street but on the other hand, the circumstances of deprivation such as education prompted them to return to the street. This spatial paradox (Holloway and Hubbard 2001) signals conflicting moments in children's lives, in which the rights they seek can be consumed by the overpowering circumstances in their lives.

5.6 Reflections on children's everyday lives

In this chapter, I discussed how street children in Dhaka I worked with negotiate with the everyday nuances of their lives that are connected to their rights. To bring this connection into perspectives, I explored children's everyday experiences in Dhanmondi Lake Park, discussion of rights through children's photo at Mirpur shelter, and my interviews with children in Korail informal settlement. The aim here was also to introduce the narratives of children's own voices, languages, codes, and metaphors they have learned about their lived lives. Through these tools of expression, I have shown show how the various conditions in their lives had emerged and situated through the lens of their rights. To this, my aim was to show these can be understood as metaphors for 'specific set of … circumstances' (Smith and Katz, 1993: 70) about their rights from the context and circumstances of their lived experiences.

The childhood of the children in the Dhanmondi Lake Park is understood through a dislocation from their homes and re-location of their existence. From this context of their everyday experiences in the park and the surrounding environment of the city, their childhood evolved, which enabled me listen to them and watch them as *kings* and *queens* of the city (Punch 2020). The childhood experiences of the children in the park became visible through their presence, surrounded by opportunities and dangers. The Park represented a projection for their spirited and anguished childhood marked by celebration and 'imagination of hope in the midst of their amputated dignity as human being' (Mizen, 2005: 126) through a myriad of everyday practices, which 'highlights children's being in place, their feelings and thoughts toward places, and their relation to their families' (Murnaghan, 2019: 416).

Rahat and his friends may or may not remain oblivious to this because they are too young but the everyday practices of their activities for play and survival in the park and away from home open up possibilities to 'weighing up alternatives' to how 'children deepen their understanding' (Allen, 2003: 167) not only about the environment they are closely associated with but also how 'rights of … many children are constrained by the environment they live in (Lieten, 2009: 10). Two things about the children and their childhood emerged out of Dhanmondi Lake Park. Using Rahat's example, one is his dis-location from home and the other is how childhood for the emerged for the street children in the city. Rahat's connection to the park is enforced by his father. Rahat is forced to re-discover his childhood in another

place. Through the freedom of the park and among the company of his friends, he seeks refuge. Children's domain, however, is largely limited to the park so in this sense their embodied childhood experiences are limited by the 'physical constraints' of space (Ansell, 2009: 199). Despite these constraints of space in their lives, 'play' has featured as a key activity for Rahat and his friends. This evidence has contributed to the literature of children's rights that highlighted the importance of their interaction with each other, creating a subculture (Frones 1994) in the park where Rahat and his friends develop trust for each other and hope for future and survival through the lens of rights. For them, playing in the park and staying together are a necessity that emergd out the of the context of their own lives (Abebe 2007) in Dhaka.

As a contribution to the connection between right and children's everyday lives, this chapter has shown the dynamics of Rahat and his friends in the park that is unique to their lives and the language in which they understood play as a right – through the lens of 'ghora-ghuri' in Bengali. This evidence shows the ability to understand the use of spaces (van Blerk 2006) in the park, unveiling a unique way of understanding not just what play means but how it relates to their right. The implication of their everyday lives through my empirical observation has generated some insights into the lives of children's peer relationship, generating an understanding of the social dynamics of children's everyday lives and rights which can advance further conceptual and empirical explorations about the social dynamics of street children with their environment.

For the children in Korail, the conception of education, *pora-shona*, seems to have an effect on children -- as an after-effect of the development interventions and their own views on education as a right which can lead them to a better future. It is not entirely clear how they perceive success as an effect of education other than what they believe it is. I am also unsure of their capacity or the capacity of their education they seek to improve their lives in terms of their hopes of getting good jobs and providing a better life for their families. This lack of clarity, however, seems to emerge from the everyday struggle of their lives and unseen but imagined future. This temporal dilemma, then, of being and becoming is connected with and relevant to the ongoing marginality of the children's lives I encountered. Uncertainty in becoming something, *boro howa*, and their struggles of being 'a child' is part of children's

everyday lives that seldom appear as disciplined, formulated, and pre-written prescription of promise and hope.

The implication of the dynamics between being and becoming in children's lives is a key contribution to this chapter because it highlighted the importance of both in their lives. For them, both present and future are important for their lives. Rather than seeing them children as becoming (Tisdall and Punch 2012), this chapter has shown that the childhood of the street children in this chapter also depends on their present being. The future of becoming as an aspiration – a term linked with children's rights which I have shown in Chapter 4.0 – has emerged from the state of their current being. Therefore, the implication of the dynamics of being and becoming compliments the markers of children's relationship to their everyday life and their rights in the context of Dhaka.

In this vein, children's present and future operate as a continual process in their lives (Uprichard 2008). This argument holds merit, particularly in light of the children's experience and hopes of future in Korail. However, what remains problematic for these children is the absence of their experience of childhood in the present with the burden of becoming a force for the future. Age becomes blurred for their identity as children and their (in)capacity to become responsible adults.

Through the experiences of children in Mirpur shelter, I have highlighted what emerged as their struggle and survival as children. Through these experiences, they have drawn a canvas of childhood that is often at odds with the realities of circumspection and constellations of anxiety, ambivalence, fear, and frustration. The portrayal of the family girl in the image they took is a symbol of what they seek but remains farther from their reality. Their desolation of what the other girls can have – education and a clarity of future, everyday familiarity of their family members, and unassailable care – perpetuates their own insecurity as street children.

Samaj is considered an institution, not just understood and articulated by the children, but as a wider societal understanding, that legitimises ways of life in Bangladesh (Blanchet 1996). Furthermore, children's submission to the state of their abject identity as street children, *potho sishu*, is connected to the marginal experiences they encounter as children. The construction of their identity as a *potho shishu* by the children signals a childhood that is

going nowhere, that they are stuck, in a place, *ek jaigai*. It implies nothing is going to happen to happen because they are poor. The sense of (lack of) place is their life is not only a metaphor but also a reality that represents their childhood and childness as 'victimized, disadvantaged, and vulnerable' (Diana, 2020: 5).

What is evident from the children in Mirpur is that their childhood and experience of being children at the shelter remained a struggle between searching for answers they seek and places they want to be – something and somewhere that are perpetually being produced and re-produced as 'ambivalence' and 'displacements' (Liebel, 2020: 58). These conditions perpetuate their stuck-ness in one place, making them often attracted to the freedom of streets where they imagine being powerful through their actions without being watched and guarded by the adults at the shelter.

This contribution offers an insight into the broader understanding of children's struggle for survival by being resilient. By examining their lived experiences (James and Prout 1997) in a shelter, this chapter has provided an understanding of their strength for survival that emerges from the depth of their adversity, invoking a sense of their everyday existence (Thieme 2016) and ongoing struggle for their rights as street children. The implication of the evidence from this chapter may provide some insights for policy makers and academic alike to re-think the importance of children's voices. This connection and disconnection, location and dislocation of the Mirpur children in relation to the streets also signals a spatial reference to the identity and (un)belonging that perpetuates an ongoing revelation of how childhoods are experienced (Holt and Holloway 2006).

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that childhood for the street children in Dhaka derives from a multiplicity of socio-economic factors, which are not necessarily identical to all children, placing their childhood in a canvas of multiple meanings and how they have lent to the understanding of their rights. I framed this argument with the second dimension -- what can children's everyday lives inform us about how they develop an understanding of their rights and how they articulate this understanding?

The children in the park then remind us of what the Article 12 articulates -- those children have the right to express their views in their lives. The expressions of the children in the park came through not only their verbal accounts but also through their acts of being in the park. Being in the park have propagated their right to protect themselves from the harms of 'bad people'. It also revealed a provision – safety – necessary for the children to roam freely in the park.

This chapter has shown that future figures large in the imagination and articulation of the street children and their childhood (Hopkins and pain 2007 and Uprichard 2008). To this end, the connection between being and becoming in their lives as street children (Uprichard 2008). Through the lens of geography, this chapter has shown the dynamics of their present and future which are important for street children I worked with. These distinctions are critical for understanding their rights. The existence of children, on the one hand, indicates their present, while, on the other hand, these children are also desperate for their future to escape their being as street children Kallio and Hakli 2016). This tension has produced their aspirations, an indication of their future that is unknown and uncertain. These aspirations represent not only as their right to express their views and voices but also how their aspirations culminate the meanings of their rights. The factor of becoming is deeply entrenched in children's relationship with their families. The evidence in this chapter indicated that family dynamics could influence on how they imagined and articulated their rights. This evidence is a reminder of the declaration in the CRC that suggests that the 'child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society' (UNCRC, 1989: 3) may not apply for the street children in Dhaka.

The rights that emanated from children's views and voices are not unfamiliar to those that are commissioned in the CRC but what is unique is the context, imagination, and articulation of children that are absent in the languages of the CRC. Perhaps, by engaging with what we do not know about childhood not through any 'dominant framework' (Prout and James, 1997: 10) of knowledge but with an open carafe of curiosity that can fill and re-fill the void of further unknowns and unknowing about ways in which marginalised childhood(s) in Dhaka informed us about the importance of rights to street children in this chapter.

6.0 Chapter Six: Our streets, our voices

'Here, we can dream'

Fig. 36. A girl at Mirpur shelter looking out the window. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

6.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter with a story from my encounter with the children in Dhaka. During one of the sessions with the girls at Mirpur shelter, Rehana told me about their experience about living at the shelter, which was housed at an apartment complex. The property owner sometimes behaved badly with them, she claimed. The other girls chimed in. 'He shows no affection, *ador*, to them because they are street children', the girls said. 'He scolds at us for nothing', said Rehana. The property owner also behaved badly with the counsellors and teachers, according to Rehana and the other girls, showing his power as a property owner. 'That's why the madams keep quiet (when he scolds at us)', Rehana added. 'We feel bad when someone scolds at us', said Bithi, another girl. These statements reflect the effect of lack of care, love, and power in their lives. To these ends, then, this chapter will address the contributing factors -- veiled in struggle, power, and powerlessness in their lives – that trigger the children to talk about their rights.

The attitude of the landlord reveals a trace of general (abusive and uncaring) attitude of the mainstream public towards the street children in Bangladesh. This view is relevant to notion of stigma (see 2.4.2) that often plays out in a wider society for the children connected to the streets. On a broader perspective, in Bangladesh the 'prevailing perception of mainstream society is that these children live in absolute deprivation' who are called *kangali*, a derogatory term loosely translated for those who are destitute (Blanchet 1996 and Conticini 2004).

Rehana said that those who are in power (from the example of the property owner) are immune from being challenged of their behaviour. To explain this, Rehana plainly mentioned 'Because they are powerful'. 'That is why we remain scared of these powerful people', she added. 'But we are powerful too', Bithi acknowledged. 'Our power is in the Shrine', she said. 'Here we are kings, *raja*; no one dares to say anything to us; here we can dream', Bithi added, beaming with excitement. Many children like Rehana and Bithi were born and brought up in the Shrine (see 2.4) where they developed a special bond through a network of support and extended family, offering them a sense of belonging (Jack 2010) and resiliency to survive (Reza and Bromfield 2019). In the midst of their struggles and challenges, the children at Mirpur shelter embody a strong sense of resourcefulness, turning their imagination and capacity to recognize their power not just to understand their own

predicament but to use power as a source of articulating their dreams. In this vein, I argue that street children can have the capacity to understand the power of others and of their own from the circumstances of their lives. I will show in this chapter not only how this capacity propels them to survive but also how it can become incapacitated against the power of others in their lives. Through the continuum of conflicting capacity in their lives, I will show what this mean for their rights and more specifically I will show the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights. These factors facilitate discussions or conversations about rights. In this vein, the contribution of this chapter is to draw on the experiences of the children to discuss how survival, power and powerlessness are situated within their everyday lives.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: in the first section, I will draw on the experience of children's survival as 'street' children. In the second, I will focus on the effects of power of adults in children's lives. To this end, I will discuss the effects of unequal power relations between street children and adults followed by the role of NGOs as a source of accommodating their rights. I will then analyse children's powerlessness. In the reflection section, I will analyse the meaning of how children's experience of survival, power, powerlessness is associated with rights. Following this, I will summarise the understanding of the contributing factors for them to talk about their rights to conclude the empirical analyses.

6.2 Survival: I want to have a good life

Sharif (16) came to Dhaka when he was 12 after losing his parents to ailments. Unable to cope with the bad treatments, *kharap bebohar*, he fled one day on his own with one half-pant and a tattered shirt, *chira*, he had on, and a towel, *gamcha*, around his neck to protect himself from the elements of weather to flee the pain, *jontrona*, of his uncle and to make a living on his own to make his own life, *nijer jibon*. That was four years ago. The pain has not receded, but it has morphed into his struggle for survival in the city, near the Mirpur Mazhar (see 3.4). Despite his struggle for survival, Mirpur was home. He accepted the chaos and confusion, *ganjam*, of Mirpur because he had learned to thrive in it and create his own destiny, *vaggo*. There is a semblance of his life in Colin Ward's Calcutta (now Kolkata) in which the 'city is an irresistible magnet' for the young and the runaways, for city offers 'promise of variety and excitement' (Ward, 1978: 52). The following is a slice of Sharif's everyday life:

Sometimes I cannot sleep at night. The gang members, *maastans*, and police come and kick us out from the sidewalks I sleep with other boys. We go from place to place to find a place to sleep. By the time we find a place, it is already morning. Then I have to look for something to do, something to find for survival – anything will do. A dishwashing job, a helper for the, *leguna* (a four-wheel scooter), to ferry the passengers, *jatri*.

Fig. 37. Children sleeping on the street (Sharif is not among them). Photo: Mirpur girls.

At the Mirpur shelter, Sharif was a resident but only during the days since the shelter did not provide 24-hour accommodation for the boys due to funding constraints. It is an irony that the shelter cannot protect him at night -- he is left into its darkness and uncertainties. He and boys like him finds a way to navigate the long nights of desperation to make it to the dawn of the day when he can come to the shelter to find sleep and food. The unassuming yet violent cycle of Sharif's everydayness signals a constant travelling between living and leaving (Andrioni 2018).

Sharif did not have an expectation from life or anybody or anything. He accepted his fate. 'I don't want to dream; there is no point *laav nai'*, Sharif said. 'The society is tough, and everyone is busy, and no one helps the others without any self-interest, *shartho*, he added. 'So, I, find my way *nijer rastha dekhi*. I steal from others to survive, *beche thakar jonno*', Sharif plainly admitted. He and a network of other boys preyed upon women in the market (that remains open at night) who carry their handbags. When the moment is right, they swipe open the chain of the bag and steals whatever is in the bag. Sharif called this, manoeuvring

the chain, *chain khuli-lagai*. Based on value of the stolen stuff, Sharif gets his share, *ekta percentage* (in English), of cash. The gang that supported this activity was part of a network (Atkinson-Sheppard 2018), which protected and provided for him to stay alive (Mitchell and Heynen 2009).

I asked Sharif about his *odhikar*. 'What about our *odhikar*? He fired back immediately. Before I could respond, he answered. 'I just told you about my right'. 'I need to stay alive, *beche thakte hobe,* and this my only, *ek matro*, right, he said. 'If I can stay alive, *jodi ami beche thaki*, I can fulfil my other rights', he added. I asked him about his 'other' rights. 'To have a good life, *shundor jibon,* eat good food, *bhalo khabo*', he said. 'Can you tell me about *shundor jibon*? I asked him. 'I don't know yet, *ami ekhono jani-na*', he replied. I was not sure if he did not want to talk to me about them or he did not know what they were, but I did not press further. The rights he discussed came through spontaneously yet there is a sense of logical reasoning in how he has described them. They do not necessarily describe a hierarchy or preference but an indication of sketching his life through a group of rights he has mapped out for his future. However, his views on rights also seemed to be partial because he could not or did not explain what he meant by 'good life' but he offered a logical explanation later that I will explain in this section.

Survival is central to Sharif's life in terms of his rights. I want to bring a key point about survival and staying alive for Sharif. These two are not necessarily disparate factors but are interconnected because he indicated what he needed to do to stay alive – to survive – in order to 'fight back' (Mitchell and Heynen, 2009: 613) and deal with the shadows of uncertainty that the city has thrown at him. The instincts and strategies to do so represent how he manages his life by explaining the opportunities the street offers him (Bordonaro 2012). Sharif's experiences tell us about his insistence to take actions to deal with the experiences of his own life (Jeffrey 2012) -- the threats he encounters on the street, means and tactics he uses to manage his life during the dire conditions at night. The resistance he exercises can be connected to the agency of the street children possess and display to survive (Abebe 2008 and Atkinson-Sheppard 2017), a factor for him to think about the importance of rights.

Similarly, the girls at Mirpur shelter formed a safety group where the older children act as a guardian, *gar-jian,* to protect us from the bad people, *aje-baje lokh*. Rehana, the older girl,

became some of the girls' protector. Because she was older other girls called her 'apu' or 'apa' (Fig. 38). In a broader Bengali culture, an older girl is called 'apu/apa'. Her role is to look after, *dekhe rakha*, the younger ones. This represents a form of 'shared responsibility', an agency, arises out of their everyday experiences and a 'life situation' to provide levels of comfort and security, which evolve her role as a guardian for the other girls (Liebel, 2020: 28). For the street children, the reliance and trust of an 'apu/apa' is critical to survival for their encounters with the daily routines.

The girls formed a bond within the confines of their everyday lives at the shelter. This bondage provided a privacy, secrecy, and security for the girls. 'We stay together share our pains, *koshto*, and stories, *golpo*, about our lives', Rehana said, who also protected them for their mischievous acts from the shelter staff. 'Sometimes children steal foods from the kitchen, but I try to protect them by telling the staff to forgive and forget because they are young, *choto*', according to Rehana. 'To them, I am the big sister, *boro bon*', adds Rehana. Her relationship with the other younger girls embodies not only protection but also proliferation of friendship, trust, and care that the children seek to survive and live (Askins 2016, Orme and Seipel 2007).

Fig. 38. One of the younger girls in Mirpur shelter drew this tree which symbolises Rehana 'apu' as their protector. Photo: Children at the shelter.

The protection and safety become unglued on the street, which puts the girls on the street in precarious position. Some become addicted to sniffing glue, *gul*, and *yaba* (a common and prevalent drug in Bangladesh across layers of societies). 'There is a *syndicate*, which distributes these drugs especially to the girls', Rehana and Bithi collectively point out. This environment on the street exposed them to vulnerable and harmful circumstances.

Furthermore, Rehana and Bithi told me that peer pressure, *songo-dosh*, presence of adults who preyed on the children, gang members often pull the girls into these activities. 'That's why we like to stay in the shelter with Rehana *apu*', said Tania. 'By staying together, we can dream for our future', Tania added. Asked what dreams meant, Tania thought for a moment and looked at Rehana in search of answers. Rehana insisted her to tell whatever she thought was right. 'My dream is to *boro hobo* do something good in my life', Tania conjured up her strength to answer. 'My dream is my right; to achieve my dream I have to stay alive', she added. Rehana then stepped in to clarify the connection between dream and right. She said that 'dream' for them means to become 'someone' and to do 'something' good in their lives. This is similar to *manush howa* (see 2.4 and 5.4 as well), a point in this instance emerged through their survival as a factor for talking about rights for Tania. 'That is why safety is important for us because it offers a guarantee to survive', said Rehana.

However, protection from the law enforcement agency like the police can be unscrupulous. Children do not trust the police because they think police are corrupt and are involved with dealing drugs. 'They take drugs and bribes and sell drugs', Bithi plainly said. Motala and Smith (2003) explain based on their research in South Africa that the street children often 'fear' the police because of their abuse of the children. The experiences and evidence from Bangladesh and South Africa show that despite geographical and cultural distances, the everyday practices of the street children can be situated within the similar circumstances of struggle, survival and support systems (Motala and Smith 2013).

Returning to Sharif, as a part of his ongoing survival he wanted to become a *leguna* driver someday but if that does not happen 'I will accept whatever my life holds, *je-tai hobe jibone*, he said. 'What can we do, we don't have any education so I cannot to do anything good, *bhalo kichu*', he further added. His submission to uncertainty of his life and admission to lack of education – a platform he sees as being a way out of his state of dismal existence – echoes a void in the life of street children. However, wanting to become a *leguna* driver signals his state of future for survival but he is also deeply skeptical about it. He said that for street children like him, 'plans' do not exist on the 'street'. 'Nothing is certain', he said. When I asked him if could not plan anything at all, he said that he did not know how to plan. 'We do not know what we will do tomorrow, *kalke*, Sharif said. 'We may eat lunch in the shelter today, *ajke*, but we do not know if we will tonight, *aaj rate*', he added. For Sharif, the reality

of existence as a *potho-sishu* at the margins provides a life etched in the anxieties of his exclusion and dispossession. Despite his anxieties, Sharif has also demonstrated his capacity to determine his own predicament to survive through his aspiration by becoming a *leguna* driver. He considers his survival as a right, which emerged from his instincts of survival in ways that he sees fit for his life (Beazley 2002 and Conticini 2005).

6.3 Power and right: *Here we can dream*

Returning to the comments of Bithi in the introduction about being *king* in the Shrine, for the children at the Mirpur shelter the Shrine is a unique place, a theatrical stage, where many street children spend their lives. The children who are at the transitional shelter run by SEEP came from the Shrine, where they spent most part of their lives. The unequal social relations and marginality of children's everyday lives are uniquely different between the shelter and the Shrine, situated a mere half kilometre away from the shelter. The Shrine is a place (see 3.4) in terms of everyday visit for mass people and space in terms of the children's situated-ness where formality, the practice of religious rituals and deity, and informality, a place to live and leave for children, converges and diverges. For the children, most importantly, this place represents power, through a sense of freedom, which in this instance offers a significant factor for discussing her rights.

The Shrine

According to Bithi, although she felt safe within the safety of the shelter, she still longed for the sights and sounds of the Shrine. 'I like to take a walk and hear everyone around me there when I feel bad', she said. Rehana added that being there – within the familiarity, tensions, and struggles – enabled them to think about having a better life with proper education, care, and safety. The Shrine signified peer connection, bond, and representation of her own and as other children like herself.

Importantly, the familiarity of the Shrine invoked the girls to think about their rights that were far removed from them. 'From here, we can dream about our *rights* that are there, *oipare*', Bithi has said. *Oipare*, means 'on the other side' in English. Her sense of place invokes not just the spatial difference between her two worlds, here and there, it also denotes how her experiences of 'here' can actually draws out her aspiration for their rights. This is relevant here for the children at the shelter, where they can reflect on their lives through their

hope. It is also relevant for the understanding the social and cultural circumstances in which their lives are associated with. These circumstances have reflected the ways in which the importance of rights existed in their lives.

Bithi thought that children in the mainstream society, whom she and others in the shelter identified as 'family children', were endowed with opportunities for proper education, *bhalo pora-lekha* by attending to schools and surrounded by parents and loved ones who took care of them. On the contrary, Rehana talked about the danger in and around the Shrine they faced from adults – store owners, random revellers who hung around gang members, *maastans*. They enticed them with treats and threats to take advantage of them, according to Rehana. 'They don't treat us as humans like we have no rights, *odhikar nai*, in this society', she said.

'The struggle, however, makes us think about the *things* we don't have, *things* we want. We think about going to school just like the family children do, the nice clothes they wear,' Rehana continued. The *things* she explained are their rights. 'These are our rights', Rehana claimed. 'There are more rights, Bithi chimed in. 'The family children have families to look after for them, they have a place to live where they are safe', she added. 'We have nothing', Bithi lamented. 'We maybe poor, *gorib*, and *potho sishu* but we deserve to live like a human being and we deserve our respect', she added. The struggle of the streets of Rehana and Bithi is defined by the deprivation of not only the needs for a healthy family environment and parental care but also the lack of provisions for basic rights (Skelton 2007) such as food, shelter, and clothing. Through the struggles in their lives these children have recornised the intrinsic worth of rights through the lens of their identity as human being. The struggles reinforced their right to be seen as individuals deserving respect, care, and opportunities for their future.

The perspectives of Rehana and Bithi provided some insights into why and how they associate rights with the place – the Shrine -- that symbolises their destitution and deprivation. First, The Shrine (see 3.4) is a place where Rehana and Bithi along with other girls at the shelter feel empowered in hopes of claiming their rights as children. In this sense, the Shrine offers the girls at the shelter to think about possibilities for imagining their rights. Second, the Shrine then is not not just geography, a place. It is a system that is instrumental in deciphering the meaning of sense and sensibility, belonging and dispossession of Bithi's

and Rehana's aspirations. These aspirations emerged through the connection and connectibility with their perception and experiences of rights that are important for them and for their future.

Children's association with the Shrine reflected their habituation to the street life (Tucker 2010). 'Despite the dangers, *be-podh*, we can find strength to be ourselves but at the shelter we *feel* like we have no one, *aponjon*, to care for us', Rehana said. 'At the Shrine, we have power but at the shelter we feel like caged birds, *bondi pakhi*', added Bithi. By 'power' Bithi means that girls like her can find a sense of belonging and familiarity of their own environment. 'Bondi pakhi', on the other means, that although they are fed and taken care of from the harms of the street and bad people, *kharap lokjon,* the girls do not have a sense of connection with the shelter. 'We think we are just a responsibility, *daitto,* to *them* (the NGO and the NGO workers)', Rehana said. This association and disassociation represent a contested choice of power. On the one hand, it is associated with the familiarity of the Shrine among the girls, and, on the other hand, it represents their linkage to the uncaring presence of the adults in their lives.

The reflections about the claim that children are uncared for may not be fully verified in the sense that during my presence the staff had provided all the children need (e.g., snacks) when it was time for them to receive such snacks. It represented a caring attitude for the staff of the shelter who were in charge of the children. However, I was not there always and I could not say what the children experienced at the hands of the adults at the shelter. It is not uncommon for NGOs to operate in financial constraints such as lack of staff. In those cases, the stress of overworked staff might have construed as 'uncaring' for the children.

On a broader level, the children's sentiment echoed a negative perception towards the street children who are thought of as 'vagrants', 'runaways', 'urchins' (Balagopalan, 2014: 30), labels attached to their abject lives. In this vein, the perception of being uncared for is embedded with disregard for them by the society through neglect and stigma (Verma et al 2017). But the role of NGOs cannot be ignored to tackle rights of street children in Dhaka despite their constraints. In the following section, I explain the effect of NGO interventions in the lives of street children I encountered with.

6.4 Presence of NGOs in children's lives: We are *vaggoban* to have them

Throughout my fieldwork in Dhaka, the children I worked with spoke about the NGOs and their services at various times. In this section, I reflect their voices as a cluster of experiences that often have shared meanings about what the NGOs are (not) doing for their wellbeing. To this end, I offer a prelde to NGO interventions in Dhaka through my encounter with an NGO staff.

Prelude to NGOs in Bangladesh

This section offers a brief scenario of NGO 'culture' in Bangladesh based on my observation and interaction with the NGO officials (e.g., Directors, fieldworkers) in Dhaka. By 'culture' I mean the ways in which NGOs operate within the socio-cultural and economic context of Bangladesh. Broadly speaking, in this chapter, I discuss this 'scenario' of the NGO culture from what the NGO staff and the children told me about NGO services.

During a recruitment trip for children from an informal settlement in Dhaka, I asked the accompanying NGO worker how often the recruiting took place. Once a month, he said. 'It is important for us to make sure that the number of the children in the school does not go below the threshold', the NGO worker said. 'Why', I asked. 'It is a mandate', he replied. 'We are told from upstairs, *upor theke*, that we must recruit and maintain a certain number of children each month in our program', added the NGO worker. The NGO worker was one of the few part-time teachers who was involved with recruiting from various neighbourhoods in Dhaka and running an informal school where the NGO was assigned to serve the needs of the street children. 'Cycle of poverty, *dorid-rota*, often remains with these children's lives, so we need to be with the children to help them, but we cannot do everything, *shob kichu*, every time, *shob somoi*', he explained. 'Because there are limitations', he also added.

'Sometimes the NGOs do not have enough money to support the children, so they have to rely on the sponsors for their money', he said, using NGOs in a general term. 'Sometimes, the upper management ignores our suggestion for what needs to be done on the street level', the worker said, using his own experience at the NGO he was working. 'They [NGOs] need to provide reports to the sponsors', added the NGO worker. 'As a fieldworker, we know these children well and what they go through in their everyday lives, but we often cannot say what we want to', he said.

In relation to the views of the NGO worker, I also offer as a context from two children's view on what the NGOs are (not) doing. First, Runa, a 17-year-old-girl who had been a recipient of APON Foundation since she was 14, said that the NGO had saved her life. 'My parents wanted me to be married, *biye dewa*, but 'Apon' came in and advised my parents against it and they offered me free schooling', explained Runa. 'My life has changed since', she added. 'I learned to speak for myself, I can now write and read and I talk about these with other children', Runa added.

Second, Runa's comment about the contribution of NGO and the change in her life echoes what Rehana, another girl in Mirpur shelter, also said about the help, *sahajjo*, the NGO provided her and other girls like herself to save them from being on the streets. 'We are lucky, *vaggoban*, to have them and we thank them', said Rehana, referring to the NGO workers who collected them from the streets. 'But we don't want to live here forever; we want to have a good life, *shundor jibon*', Rehana also claimed, her statement filled with aspiration. Followng this, I begin with my encounter with two children, Rakib and Tamanna, both 15, at the Rayerbazaar informal settlement who were enrolled at an education program with the APON Foundation.

The effect of NGOs on children's rights

Two years ago, Rakib and Tamanna used to collect scattered firewoods, *lakri*, from Dhanmondi Park and sell them for money. 'We were *potho sishu*, street children, like the other children', said Tamanna, the girl. With the help of APON Foundation they were able to change their lives. They attended school, studied (hard) through APON's free education program. As a result, they were eligible to take a national exam, Secondary School Certificate (SSC). At the Rayerbazaar school run by APON they got extra tutoring as part of their preparation. Tamanna wanted to become a lawyer and the boy, Rakib, a public servant. Most importantly, they did not want to consider themselves as *potho sishu*.

Tamanna and Rakib thought that without education they cannot reach their potential. 'Education enlightens, *alokito*, people to get out of the dark, *ondhokar*', Rakib said. The usage of the term *ondhokar* by Rakib implies a bleak future. In explaining *dark*, Rakib mentioned about the ongoing poverty in his life that often became a threat to his aspiration through education to become a public servant and considers the NGO (APON Foundation)

can provide for this education so that he can achieve his goal of becoming a public servant. The discussion of education as a right here is intended to show the importance in their lives as a right.

'This (education) is our right', he added. This signals that education is a source of his aspiration to have a better future. In the context of Bangladesh, to go to school and have education, for children (regardless of their status and stature in the society), is almost like a second nature. Families in Bangladesh consider the benefits of *education* is central to their *manush howa* (Arends-Keunning and Amin 2001), a term I have explained elsewhere in this thesis. Children also learn about the value of education from their parents and guardians. The term 'porashona' is then widely understood as a common cultural value in Bangladesh. Children like Rakib and Tamanna living in poverty often carry aspirations to leave the dire circumstances, seeing education as a 'future pathway' (Morrow, 2013: 258). In this vein, NGOs in Bangladesh are often seen as a gateway for children's rights-based programs such as education (Bhandari 2017). However, I became curious about *alokito* and wonder if they are coached to say this to the outsiders like me, development practitioners, funders, etc. It is not uncommon for the NGOs to train and instruct them to say certain things to certain people. Young children can adapt to the training ground of the NGOs so might say what needs to be heard in order to accentuate the struggle of their marginalised world as street children (Kwong 2011).

Although my curiosity stems from the evidence of NGO practices from the works of others, I cannot completely verify this from my own work. White's (2002) explanation (see 2.4.3) about NGOs having a 'shadow side' about obliging what their donors want rings somewhat true. It arises from the reference of *alokito* as a way of glorifying the work of NGOs the children are associated with. However, I did not know how to assess the 'truths' about what the children said about their future. Yet, in a wider context, the *alokito* incidence does not necessarily cast a shadow on the views of children about their reflections on the glorification of the NGOs. The context of *alokito* represents children's views on how they have mapped their future – through their right to education which could offer a pathway for their aspiration of becoming someone they aspire to be. In this vein, the example of *alokito* represents the importance of children's views on rights and what the NGOs can do to provide for them. Through my curiosity then I do not intend to undermine Rakib's view on *alokito,* but I have

introduced it as evidence of the influence of NGO presence in children's life in Bangladesh. Rakib said that his family was poor and could not support him to fulfil his dream. 'Alone, I cannot do this; I need APON to stay with me', he added.

Tamanna told me that children are entitled to know the difference between dream and reality, *shopno* and *bastobota*. Tamanna explained that her dream is to finish her education, *porashona,* successfully so that she could fulfil her right, *odhikar,* to become a lawyer, *ain-jibi*. Becoming a lawyer would give her an opportunity to advocate for children's rights in Bangladesh. 'But the reality is not so straightforward, *soja na*', she said. 'There are obstacles, *badha-bipotti*', she added. To explain the obstacle, she alluded to what Rakib had said earlier about his fear of APON not being able to support him. 'We are hopeful but we are concerned, *chinta ashe*, too', Tamanna said. She then also added by saying that children like them could not simply rely on the NGOs and that the government, *sorkar,* and the society, *somaj,* must need to help them. The point of reliance on the NGOs is a key point in terms of how the NGOs can remain a provider for children's rights. So, I asked Tamanna to explain this.

Tamanna said that the NGOs could not provide for 'all children', *shob chele-meye,* so others, *onninno-der,* like the *sorkar* need to come forward to make sure that our rights are acknowledged. The meaning of powerful people to Tamanna meant those who had power, *khomota*, including the 'NGOs', to do something, *kichu kora,* for the children like Tamanna. What is interesting is Tamanna's mentioning of the government. It is very brief but it indicates a political tone of Tamanna, which she may not be aware of due to her tender age. However, these discussions offer Tammana's thought process that projects a capacity to articulate her views on right in her own language (Freeman 2011) The role of state, NGO, and the society, however brief, that Tamanna offered shines a light on the emphasis on NGOs in the lives of children like hers for whom rights are important for their future. Equally important, her discussion about powerful people revealed her own understanding about thepowerful people who are in a position to provide for the wellbeing of children like hers.

In the similar vein of Tamanna's reflections about worries and anxieties on rights, the girls at Mirpur shelter told me that they were worried about ending up on the street because the NGOs could not always provide for their rights. 'We need training and education so that we can, stand on our own feet', Rehana said. On the street, despite the dangers and harms, they

developed extraordinary resilience to survive. Yet, in the shelter, they remained worried and anxious about their protection. ‘We don't want to be victims anymore, Sharmin, another girl at the shelter said. ‘We want to be safe from the bad people, *baje lokjon*’, Bithi, from the shelter, said. ‘But if the NGOs cannot help us, they will harm us’, Rehana added. She argued that there are, many NGOs in our country, so number of NGOs is not the problem but the NGOs does not *always* have the capacity to take care of the bad people’, Rehana pointed out. At the time of this discussion, funding for the shelter from an international organisation was only a couple of months from expiry with no possibility of extension despite after months of negotiation between the NGO and the donor. The NGO had been talking to another local NGO to relocate some of the girls. The other NGO did not have the capacity to take in all the girls. Two months separated the girls at the shelter from being dislocated from their safety and unity into an uncertainty and disconnectedness.

The embodiment of the sanctuary of care and protection for the girls seems to disappear through their anxiety about future (Katz 2008). For them, future remains uncertain which is also a companion of children’s everyday lives. This uncertainty emerged from the inability of the NGO to take care of them, according to the girls. Furthermore, it is also about the indifference of the NGO towards them, a fear the children also discussed. ‘The NGOs do not care about our wellbeing, *bhalo-mondo*’, said Rehana. ‘They give us a lot of things’, Rehana admitted but then she reverted back to the criticism. ‘But not *everyone* cares’, she said. ‘They provide things for us for a limited time and then we fall into the same situation we came from like before, *ager moto’*, Bithi added. The ‘everyone’ emerged from the sentiment of the girls. This meant both the *NGO* and the people, *lokjon*, who are in charge of it who may have the capacity to do something for them. These acclimations of uncertainty, inability, and lack of care materialise rather spontaneously with a sense of innocence about not knowing and not having control of others about the consequences of their lives (Coll 1986).

Despite these concerns both Rehana and Bithi pointed to the comforts of the NGO help for their safety and wellbeing. As a result of the shelter interventions, the girls like Sharmin, Bithi, and Rehana remained safe from the harms of the street, but their anxieties do not necessarily dissipate about their future. ‘We are worried about our *vobisshot*, future’, Bithi said. ‘Our future is our right’, claimed Bithi. I sought an explanation about her future as a right. ‘We want to stay alive, *beche thake chai*, so that we can teach the other girls how to

stay alive with *shomman*, respect. To reach our future we need to stay alive so that one day we can do something good, *bhalo*', Bithi explained. 'But if we end up on the street, we cannot survive', she added.

In this sense future is connected to right because it offers children a pathway for envisioning a worthy life, in which gaining respect as a human being is important for them. In this vein, gaining respect signals children's worthy of life not just in terms of their dignity but also for the prospect of having a better future. For the street children I worked with, the reality of their rights to be fulfilled depends on the NGOs. Yet, the NGO services do not necessarily always reflect what rights children seek and need. This chapter has shown this conflict, one which becomes the source of children's powerlessness and how it affects not only their rights but also their lives at the margins (Thieme 2016).

6.5 Powerlessness: *Gaan geye ki hobe?*

In this section, I provide narratives of some of the street children in Dhaka to discuss how powerlessness affects their rights. In so doing, I will offer the practicality of multi-faceted socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions (Zeiderman 2018) that can be threatening to generating their voice (Aitken 2015, Archard 2010, Cornwall and Coehlo 2006, Holloway 2014 & Mosse 2004). But, on the other hand, I will also show how these cultural conditions can be contested to offer street children a platform for acknowledging a contributing factor for their discussion of rights.

Amra tokai

During one of my encounters, Bithi from Mirpur shelter showed me a song she wrote. The translation of some of the lines of the song reads like the following:

We want our rights
We will flourish by your touch
If we want to succeed
We must have our rights.
We are *tokai* but
Don't call us *tokai*
Don't trample us
We have no one
We want our rights.

The song epitomizes the yearning for their rights through the everyday struggles and challenges of being marginal in the society, their uneven social relationships with the adults in their lives, and hopes for their future. The first line set the tone for the song – that they demand, *dabi*, their rights because they are important for their future. Yet, the song urgently underscores the intervention of adults who could provide for their rights. The song then takes a sharp turn in identifying the adults as an interference who 'trample' the children. Although the word 'trample' is an allegory of power, it also signals a plea for care – that the children have no one to look ater them. The song ends with a strong demand for rights – that they 'want' their rights. Although the song highlights children's desperate plea for their rights, it also underscores their lives, alone, helpless, and in need of care. Children's plea in this song is layered with a stubborn recurring demand of rights (see also 2.2.1 and 5.3).

To explain about the relevancy of the song to power and rights, I begin with the word 'tokai', a cartoon character created in the late 1970s by a renowned artist in Bangladesh, Rafiqun Nabi, who was famously known as Ronobi. First, I draw on some similarities between the children at the shelter and *tokai*. The subheading of this section 'amra tokai' means 'we are *tokai*'. The character is a street child in Dhaka, who survives by scavenging food from the dustbins. The word 'tokai' originates from Bengali word 'tokano', which means collecting.

Hence, his name ‘tokai’. Tokai became a powerful symbol for not just street children; it was also about humanity, humility, and poverty in Bangladesh.

Following the Independence War in 1971, Bangladesh fell into a deep socio-economic crisis that lasted for decades. As a street child in the city, *tokai* just does not scavenge for food, he speaks about good deeds and morality with people he encounters on the street (Sarkar 2017). He is not afraid of talking about bad and immoral deeds, *kharap ebong osoth kaaj*, committed by the powerful people in the society. Tokai became a national phenomenon, which still reverberates today across societies in Bangladesh.

When I asked them how they came across *tokai*, the girls told me that ‘they *just* know about it’. One girl, Sharmin, reminded me that they are the *tokais*. According to Conticini’s (2005) observation of the marginalised children in Dhaka, societal perception of them de-humanises them because of their ‘depravation’ as being, kangali, someone of ‘being almost nothing’ and ‘having almost nothing’ (p. 72). Yet, despite their marginality like *tokai*, they spoke about their lives and ‘others’, particularly about their experience with the NGO and their relationship with the staff.

Second, I point to the second line of the song which means that children are at the mercy of others to get what they need, an indication of their dependency on the ‘NGO’ not only for their survival but also for advocating for their rights (Nieuwenhuys 2001). While I will explain street children’s views on the NGOs in the next section, I offer here a brief note about the powerful effects of NGO in the lives of the children at the shelter that is reflected on the song. What the words ‘flourish by your touch’ indicates children’s hope for their future depends on the acts of the NGO. Sharmin mentioned that the NGO is stairway to their *dreams*. This dependency signals children’s subjugation to the assistance and services of the NGO.

Gaan geye ki hobe?

Returning to the song, life for the street children I encountered with is often shrouded with hopelessness. Separated from their families (for some) while others do not have any, these children rely on their destiny, *vaggo*, for what future holds for them. They live with hopelessness, which dominates their lives. Hopelessness derives from the uncertainties they

live through while at the same time they also feel powerless to do anything about it. So, lack of hope and powerlessness often co-exist in their lives triggered by poverty and from the effect of power as dominance by others in their lives (Allen 2003, Archard 1993 & Hai 2014).

The girls told me that when they showed the song that Bithi wrote to one of the NGO staff. They were told there was no point of singing, *gaan geye ki hobe*. They were asked: 'Are you going to become a singer, *tomra ki shilpi hoba naki*?' The second question may seem to be a 'fair' question but the meaning of it implies an irony – that 'it is no point for you to become a singer' in Bengali context. The girls took an offense to these comments, but they did not 'talk' back because the staff was a senior member – an *Apa* – and they could not speak against her, *torko korte parbo na*.

Speaking 'up' against an elderly is a sign of disrespect in Bangladesh. So, the girls did not challenge the staff. This particular example signals to a patriarchal practice that not only embodies the culture of … dominance; it also empowers those who are in control (Hapke 2013). The uninterested staff for the song children sang signals a trace of adult role in children's lives that are not accepted by the children as a hindrance to their aspiration. 'There is no point of arguing with them', said Rehana. The children need the protection, she said. Then she also said that not everyone was like her (who made the comment). 'This is our life', Rehana added, signaling their lives pendulating between hope and hopelessness.

Of leaving: I don't want to live in this gutter

Rokibul, a boy from Korail informal settlement told me that he wanted to leave the *bosti* for a better life elsewhere but he was stuck here, *eikhane*, because he did not have proper opportunities such as schooling to build a platform for better life. 'This is a *gutter*, I don't to live here', Rokibul said. He reiterated the lack of proper education, which was important for him and, other children like him in Korail. 'Education is a right for us, *amader jonno,* and this can open up opportunities for a better life for us' Rokibul said. But he said that children like him had no power. 'Because no one listens to us', he said.

Rokibul's experience offer a glimpse into the connection how power affects their rights, which is not only related to his education but also to his aspiration to become someone and to

be somewhere else. First, power constrains Rokibul's life because of who he is, a child, and his position, a street child, which renders his status as those who do not want to be listened to. This signals that in order for marginalised children to claim or recognise their rights, society needs to respect them (Liebel 2012). In Bangladesh, this can be problematic because of the overwhelming negligence and indifference towards the street children (Islam 2015, Clarke 2016 & Hai 2014).

For street children, the presence of the adults in their lives means that, first, poverty often forces them to submit to the demands of supporting their families at the expense of their own aspirations. Second, the burden of street children to protect their families can be debilitating to pursue their rights. Rokibul pursues education and his aspirations to seek a better life so that he can escape poverty and the place that consumes his childhood in favour of being somewhere better. Rokibul's intention of being from one place to another might be a reactionary effect from the existing circumstances that co-exists with the cultural systems and practices in Bangladesh. But, on the other hand, to go somewhere better in search of his aspiration cannot also be ignored. To this end, the following sections, 'The System', 'Shame', 'Learning', and 'Duty' will also offer circumstantial evidence in children's lives to establish why they think rights are important for them.

The system

The socio-economic and political system in Bangladesh hinder children's will to speak (Blanchet 1996). They could not say anything because they simply weren't allowed to. In addition, they could not say anything because there was no *space* for them to talk. Rokibul's reflection of his life as a poor boy in an informal settlement, stuck within the belongings of an urban fabric of life (Gervais-Lambony 2014), offered such a context. Similarly, Sharif and the other boys at the Mirpur shelter offered a resignation about their lives. He said that the *system* (in English) in the country, *desh*, and the society, *somaj*, ignored street children, *potho sishu*, like them. 'There's no one to take care of our future, *vobisshot*, and our dreams, *shopno'*, he said. 'So, we need someone to *push* us in the right direction, *thik pothe*, Sharif added. The *someone* means the NGOs who has the *power* to show them their rights, according to Sharif.

While these explanations offer a justification for the contributing factors for him to talk about rights, they also imply that the marginalised children are dependent on 'someone' in Bangladeshi society (Blanchet 1996), making them weak to make decisions on their own. These reflections signal that children's rights emerged through children's aspiration and anxiety are disrupted by the state of their marginality, stigma, and adults who are part of the system of the society. It then signals how unequal social relations exercised through power over the children (Foucault cited in Gallagher 2008) can weaken or disable their rights.

Shame

I met with Yusuf in Korail who had to drop out of school earlier in life due to migration and work but once his family relocated to Korail, he had an opportunity to return school. At 17, Yusuf thought he was too old to go to school with the younger children. It was a matter of shame, *lojja*, for him. In Bangladesh, it is a stigma to be an elder student among the younger ones. Yusuf worked with a local leader, *sardar*, in the community who paid him for various things he did for the *sarder*. I did not ask what he did for the *sardar* because it might put him in an awkward position. He said that his mother was worried about his lack of education and that she wanted him to go back to school but Yusuf was reluctant because he was too old to be with a class full of younger children to pursue his education, which he acknowledged as a right. 'Education is *our* basic right for *manush howa* but I cannot fulfil my right now because I am too old', he explained.

Yusuf's self-awareness about his age was a dominant factor, which he could not escape to pursue his right. So, he accepted his life without education. According to Yusuf, many older children like him were unwilling to return to school because of the fear of facing stigma and ridicule not only from the younger children but also from the teachers. The effect of *lojja* for Yusuf is shown through the multiple layers of his about his inability to pursue his education. He did not say education was *his* right. But discussions from this chapter and others, I have shown that education as a right is central to them. In his explanation, Yusuf alluded to lack of education as a consequence of a societal practice in Bangladesh (Kabeer 2003) that affected his decision to pursue education. Yusuf's experience is an example of his awareness of stigma that can deny children's rights, which are important for children like him to pursue a better future.

Learning

Jainul, another boy similar age as Yusuf, agreed with the stigma of being older. He offered a holistic solution. He thought education should not have a limit for someone to benefit from it. But his refusal not to go to school did not come from the stigma of being too old but from the commitment to his family. He said that his priority was to support his family and to open a restaurant by saving money from his jobs, which would allow him to learning about the business skills he needed to run a restaurant. His views were based on a rationale for children to 'reskill' (Katz 2004) from their lived experiences in order to prepare for their future. Jainul reiterated this point by mentioning that his life gave him options to learn from, even if they were not from the classroom, which he regretted but something he was also learning to accept. 'I need to move on', he said. Jainul's rationale to 'move on' can be attributed to the logic of 'futurity' (Kraftl, 2008: 82).

From the lens of geography then his vision for future to learn about business is linked to some forms of prosperity in future, which would allow him to escape the current conditions of poverty. In this vein Jainul's future represents a childhood of hope that holds promises of future (Kraftl 2008) through his learning skills. The experience of Jainal has provided some evidence what rights are important through the lens of aspiration. Not a right in its own meaning, aspiration has provided a marker for his decision-making about what is best for his life. In this sense, the importance of right for him has emerged in the form of capacity to become an entrepreneur, which is not only important for him to support his family but also to pursue a better future.

Duty

As I sat with Sohel, a 16-year-old boy, on a mid-day in Korail, sadness emanated from him of not being in school. He too like Yusuf needed to work to support his family. Consequently, the schooling age was gradually escaping from his life. Sohel regretted not being able to go to school when he sees a school in the neighbourhood. He wished he could return, he said. But he felt powerless, *khomota-nai*, to do anything about it because his family depended on his income, he added. 'This is my *other* duty', he plainly admitted. By 'other duty' he meant taking care of his family. 'Since I cannot go to school, I need to do something for my family', he said. His sense of duty was a symbol of his environment that expected him to take care of his family, a responsibility that was judged by the others as well in society. His experience is

similar to Abu's mentioned above but I reflect Sohel's experience of being deprived of education and being committed to aspiration from a different trajectory.

Abu referred to *samaj* as a platform for respect, *shomman*, in society for an education person. Sohel, however, referred to *samaj* as a source of shame, *lojja*, if he did not help his family. While the example of both children signals decision-making, in this section I bring to the fore Sohel's circumstances. For Sohel, his act of decision-making emerges from his state of poverty that affects his life. Poverty then is a crucial context for making decision in his young life (Skelton 2007). His decision-making derives from the circumstances of poverty that not only affects him but also affects his family. What this means then is the process of decision-making in contingent upon children's environment in which they live (Hart cited in Skelton 2007).

However, the effect of *samaj* as a source of 'power' is equally relevant (Blanchet 1996). For Sohel, he is aware of the power of *samaj* has on his life. The social norm in Bangladeshi culture promotes a reciprocity of care – parents for their children and children for their parents. By 'children for their parents' generally means children's taking care of their older parents. The essence of the 'care' culture in Bangladesh also indicates that children 'owe their parents something in return' (Khatun, 2018: 367). For him, it would be source of great shame in *somaj* if he ignored his responsibility to take care of his family. This resonates a way of life among many marginalised children in Bangladesh (Blanchet 1996). For Sohel, then, he not only falls subject to the power of *samaj* to take care of his family, but he also practices it (John 2003). By this, I mean Sohel does not have a choice to abandon his family, which compels him to accept the power of *samaj*, and abandon his own aspiration. The duty and obligation to the family then becomes a form of protective power (Tew 2006) that enable Sohel to internalise his experience and to become a protagonist for active social actor (Clark 2010) to pursue their dream and decision-making. Sohel's duty to his family at the expense of his education is similar to other children I discussed above. Supporting the family is a duty Sohel along with other children is bound by the strength of and obligation to social bondage and, at the same time, confoundedness of the struggle to fulfil their alternative dream(s).

'Moila' people: stigma in children's lives

As a child growing up in an informal settlement, it was common for children like Abu to subjugate themselves to a form of stigma because of their marginal status. This could derive from the perception of not having a *daam* (in Abu's words), value, as a human being (John 2003). To offer a link between stigma and right, I discuss the following photos that children from Korail captured as part of their photo essay assignment (see 3.9). The left photo (Fig. 39) shows two litter pickers in the city while the right photo (Fig. 40) shows a boy collecting litters from a landfill. The Korail boys offered a meaning of stigma through these images. The litter pickers had no option of doing anything better because they did not have education (in children's assumption). People in the city did not care about them because they collect rubbish, *moila*, from people's homes.

Socio-cultural perception plays a part in amputating the will of children like the litter pickers in the photos (that the children in Korail took) to exercise their voice and rights. When I sat down with them to discuss the photos, they said that the boys in the photos could not say anything because they simply weren't allowed to. In addition, they could not say anything because perhaps there was no *jaiga*, space, for them to talk. 'They are stuck with their dirty vans, *moila gari*', commented Shakib. Space as *jaiga* refers to important markers for the litter pickers' place in society. One, while *jaiga* in Bangla means a physical place or location, for the litter pickers, *jaiga* or space underscores a lack of their social status that renders them silent (Boyden 1993). Two, *jaiga* also refers to a location where the litter pickers belong – a place in which their lives are stuck because no one cares about them.

In doing this kind of work, they have also become a *moila* to other people, making them vulnerable to the life they had as litter pickers. 'Maybe they want to have a better job, go to school', Shaheen, a boy from Korail said. 'But no one cares about the *moila-wala*', he added. A similar view was also emerged from the second image. The boy in this photo although collected litter he was not a litter picker as the other one. He is called *tokai*, a reference for street children I provided earlier. 'Their lives are same, *eki-rokom* -- they are poor and helpless', Shaheen said. 'How can they have a chance to explore their right?' It was not a question directed at me but he delved into it by saying that children do not deserve to 'do this', meaning litter picking. The evidence from his explanation from these photos has shown

how he perceives right so that this can be answered in terms of the contributing factors that propel them to talk about their rights.

These explanations struck a chord earlier with the girls in Mirpur shelter where they felt no one cared about them. Care here is a revelation from the children because it is associated with right. From the formal language of the CRC, it broadly talks about children have the right to be cared for by the society. In a similar vein, the life of the litter pickers is void of care because of their status and stature in the very society that is supposed to take care of them. Yet, these children are stuck within the belongings of an urban fabric of life (Gervais-Lambony 2014). In explaining the photos, the Korail boys did not explicitly mention care as a right. But the evidence and explanation suggest that lack of care accentuates their marginal lives and, on the other hand, it also renders them incapable of being cared for, an antithesis of the moral principles of the CRC. The explanation from the photos of the litter pickers also suggest that the children have the ability to recognise the value of having rights as a testament to their worth as children in society (Ansell 2019).

Fig. 39. The left photo shows two litter pickers in the Gulshan/Mohakhali area. Fig. 40. The right photo shows a boy collecting litters from a ground. Photo: Korail children.

6.6 Reflection: our streets, our voices

In this chapter I explained the contributing factors that propels street children to talk about their rights. In doing this, I foregrounded the context and the circumstances of their own lives through the lens of survival, power and powerlessness. These factors did not follow a hierarchy of events, rather they were producd through the dynamics of their interrelationship. To this end, I have highlighted in this chapter that while street children do not always experience the effects of rights they deserve and claim, nor can they advocate for them on their own because they are weak and no one listens to them (Aufseeser 2017), they can have the capacity to talk about their rights from various contributing factors in their lives.

Survival for some of the children is a key factor for them to talk about their rights because it signals their instincts for the necessity to stay alive (Mitchell and Heynen 2009). Survival then is woven into the fabric of their life and right. In a world of uncertainty, their rights – to have a better life and to live, for example – are a sanctuary for safety, protection, and dignity. Through the experiences of neglect, denial, and harms of the street they find solace in the idea that rights would not only protect them from the dangers of the street but also offer a promise of good life so that they can live their lives (Mitchell and Heynen 2009).

The everyday lives are important for street children in ways they possess capacity for articulating and imagining their lives, not only about their present but also about their future. For example, children at the Mirpur shelter felt strongly about their association with the Shrine because it represents their identity and a sense of belonging. It is also a source of they understand their lives which gives them a 'sense of power' and 'authority' (John, 2003: 47) to (re)think about their lives despite and because of their live at the margins of the society. Through the association of their lives with the Shrine Rehana and Bithi have not only articulated their aspiration through the lens of the quest for their survival but also about their power to talk about their aspiration.

In this vein, I have shown evidence of children’s power to understand the perpetutity of the vulnerability of their lives through exploitataive individuals and deprivation from societal inequality. This power enables them to have a space for talking about their own predicament and for demanding their rights. In this sense, the Shrine becomes a mediator and a symbol of their resistance to their marginality and a platform for empowerment in hopes of claiming

their rights as children. Furthermore, this association is a testament to imagining their lives and power they claim. However, it also disembarks as a contested choice, not being able to disassociate their lives – marginal and stigmatised -- without the presence of the adults who are *uncaring*. These views of power as social dominant relations and as an agent of deviant and dominant cultural practices offered a relevant platform for dissecting how rights were interpreted and articulated by street children in Dhaka, representing a vernacular of urban chaos and complexity.

This issue of power is a contribution of this chapter on how burgeoning power can drive children to understand their own circumstances to acknowledge that through power they can voice their grievances, demand rights and pursue a better future. Although the connection between power and articulation of right here less subtle than what John (2003) and Punch (2007), for example, have indicated, what is important to show from this chapter is the dyamics of power in children's lives from the context of their lives in Dhaka that enables them (Allen 2003) to acknowledge the importance of rights. In this vein, the implication of this study shows that power and powerlessness can exist within the lives of street children in ways that can imagine and articulate their rights despite the marginal circumstances in their lives, which puts them in a 'relatively powerless position' (Holt, 2004: 19) in society due to their status as street children. However, the dynamics of power and powerlessness within the lives of street children can also open opportunities for further exploration in Dhaka and elsewhere.

In this vein, this chapter has also contributed to the concept of stima through the empirical analysis by showing that although stigma is generally associated with negative perceptions of marginalised children in society (Ennew and Swart-Kruger 2003 and Moncrieffe 2006). This contribution lends to an understanding of street children in Dhaka from the context of their everyday lives and understanding the importance of rights. The findings of this chapter from the context of Bangladesh may offer evidence-based insights of children's rights, providing a guideline for analysing street children's rights elsewhere.

During my fieldwork at Mirpur shelter, I requested the NGO staff to allow the girls to take me to the Shrine for a visit that figured large in their lives. But the request was denied on legal grounds. The shelter could not leave the children under my supervision alone and the

shelter did not have any additional staff or resources (e.g., funding) to coordinate such a visit. Being unable to accompany the children of the shelter to the Shrine to get a deeper understanding about the connection between the Shrine and children's lives is a shortcoming of this study. So, the implication of this is the verbal accounts that I am bestowed with about the dynamics of children's lives at the Shrine. This absence could offer grounds for future research on the association between street children's rights and the Shrine.

Despite having some forms of power to address their rights, children's lives largely remain overshadowed by uncertainty and anxiety about their future. Having their dreams confronted by the reality of their lives can produce a form of powerlessness within children that is associated not only with the assumption of their own incapacity to act but also because of the uneven social dynamics between them and the adults. Children are denied because of their status as *potho sishu*, an identity that operates principally within the guise of marginalisation and stigmatisation (Ansell 2014). From these arises street children's anxieties and uncertainties about their lives and issues they care about. Their anxieties also emerge from their lack of voice and place in the society that cannot promise their rights, a sentiment that is keenly expressed by the children through the song. This sentiment is associated not with the ability of their own but with the power struggle with those who have the power to provide (Gallagher 2008) for their rights.

The chapter addressed some understanding of the NGO interventuons as a people-centred approach (Hulme 2001 and Pearce 2010) that offers services for the improvements of many marginalised communities in Dhaka (Habib 2009). To this end, this chapter discussed how development interventions address children's rights through the provision of various services such as education. Through these services, children's lives materialise in various ways. First, rights become children's aspirations (see 2.4); second, aspirations also become a concern for children from the fear of not being able to reach their goals; finally, these services also become a questionable topic for the development initiatives for the NGOs. This chapter addressed these through children's perspectives about NGO practices that promote their rights which are important for their survival and future.

From the evidence of this chapter, children's views on the NGOs touch on the sincere and spontaneous criticism and honest and humble recognition of what the NGOS are doing and

not doing. The children have discussed the importance of education as their aspiration to get out of the dire circumstances of their marginalisation. So, they sought help from the NGOs. They acknowledged the opportunity and security they experienced because of the NGO interventions. They also acknowledged that NGOs sometimes fail to do their part, making them despondent against the uncertainty of their future. This complexity is beyond the scope of this thesis but what would be relevant to notice is that despite opportunities to speak about their rights, it is not entirely clear what the NGOs can do to ensure their rights. That the NGOs 'fail' is a humble reminder from the children. It is also a marker that they do not fully understand the inability of the NGOs, which turns their humbleness into a despair.

On the one hand, children approve and acknowledge what the NGOs are doing. On the other hand, their approval evolves into a state of denial and uncertainty about the role of NGOs. The views of children emerged from their experiences with the NGOs. This is another contribution of this chapter which explains the work of NGOs derived from children's own experience, providing insights about the NGOs from a 'particular standpoint' (Wells, 2009: 15) in which children talk about their education as an aspiration and their right they think they deserve to receive to remove themselves from the marginalisation and perils of their circumstances.

The evidence from this chapter suggests that the lack of NGO action(s) leave them uncertain about their future. This uncertainty triggered their instincts for survival so that they can have a better future. The instincts of survival (Mitchell and Heynen 2009) offer some evidence of their understanding of rights. First, rights are important for them because they deserve a better life. To this end, their thoughts constantly travelled between the state of being hopeful, grateful, and skeptical about the NGOs. Second, because of the marginal conditions in their lives, it is important for them to have rights so that they can have an opportunity to have a better life as dignified human beings (Freeman 2007). In this vein, their perspectives on rights are positioned through the lens of education as a pedestal for their aspiration so that they can be *somewhere* else to escape poverty in their lives and become *someone* else to help other children. This is an embodiment of children's aspirational journey, which depends on the services of the NGOs.

This chapter has offered a contribution about the dynamics of NGO and street children in Dhaka as part of their relationship with their environment (Ansell 2009, Holloway 2014 & van Blerk 2012). Through the critique and the demand about their rights street children has shown that their relationship is an ongoing negotiation and struggle with the NGOs about their future and wellbeing. On the one hand, they consider NGOs as providers for their rights but, on the other hand, the inability of the NGOs can also put them into despair, making the development interventions in Bangladesh a vernacular of social struggles that are specific to Dhaka (Power 2003). The implication for the relationship between the NGOs and street children is while the development interventions offer hope for the marginalised groups in Bangladesh, it can also offer opportunities for re-thinking NGO policies for implementing their rights for street children.

The ongoing existence of power, powerlessness, and stigma in their lives contribute to power struggle and how this affects children's rights in this chapter. On the one hand, powerlessness weakens them as street children in society yet, on the other hand, it does not fully incapacitate them to talk about their lives. In fact, power propels the children to talk about their rights on their belief that they rights can offer them the future they seek and can be realised. In exploring children's perspectives on rights, my focus was on their lives. Although I had to come in conact with the NGO staff, the implication – which may offer ample opportunities in Dhaka or elsewhere in Global South due to NGO interventions -- for children's power and powerlessness need to be further investgated.

These reflections signal that the thoughts about children's rights disrupted by the factors of survival, power, powerlessness, and stigma. The evidence of this chapter signals that there is an unequal social relations exercised through power over the children (Foucault cited in Gallagher 2008), weakening or disabling their rights for many street children in Dhaka. The implication of this social relations between the society and the street children in Bangladesh offers provocation for a 'stronger consideration of their interests and needs and their participation' (Liebel, 2012: 201) that can also advance the understanding of rights street children's rights elsewhere.

6.7 Conclusion

In addressing the contributing factors for street children to talk about rights, I argued that street children can have the capacity to understand the power of others and of their own from the circumstances of their lives. These circumstances often lead them to put an emphasis on their rights. This chapter has shown that these factors can also be responsible for their freedom (Herod and Lambert 2016) to articulate not just about their rights but as factors that propels them to talk about rights. Being poor and living at the margins of the society (Thieme 2016) accentuated children's position in this thesis as powerless (Ennew 2003) that weakened their voices (see 2.4.2). Yet, through their agency, street children have shown the capacity to internalise their understanding of the demands of their lives, including their rights. Through this internalisation, they often had to make their decisions – on their own and from the compulsion of their experiences – in and about their lives, embedded within the social dynamics in which adults often figure large in their lives.

From the jagged reality of their disadvantaged lives, some of the street children in Dhaka I mentioned in this chapter carve out a world of their own through their instincts of survival, which invokes their aspiration for their education, safety, job – for example -- as their rights. Yet, their imagined world can be too farfetched to become a reality for them, which is central for them to envision their rights. The stigma the children carried remains a burden for them. In this chapter, I have shown that children seek their rights through the dynamics of power and powerlessness (Verma et al 2017). The lifecycle of poverty, politics, and perils of the everydayness of their lives could constraint their power to act and speak not only on their own but also on their own behalf. The implication of decision-making by Sharif, Abu, Bithi, Jainul, Rehana, Rokibul and the others represents an understanding of children's rights in Dhaka. Equally, this implication also open grounds for further inquiry about their rights in a society that can disable their power and render them silent (Blanchet 1996).

7.0 Conclusion: (Re)-locating rights of street children in Dhaka

Thank you, children!

Fig: 41. A group of children at Korail informal settlement. Photo: Iqbal Ahmed.

7.1 Introduction

I began this thesis by asking the following question:

- How do street children in Dhaka understand their rights?

This question has been addressed through the following three dimensions:

This question will be discussed through three dimensions, which are as follow:

- What rights are important for street children?
- How do they negotiate with the nuances of everyday lives that are associated with rights?
- What are the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights?

I conducted an ethnographic fieldwork in Dhaka to understand rights from the perspectives of the street children. Ethnography was important because, as I have shown in section 1.1, there is a lack of qualitative studies on the views and voices of the marginalised in Bangladesh (Miah and Reza 2014). The ethnography then offered me a platform for engaging with the street children in Dhaka to explore their understanding of rights, which emerged from their own voices. Although there is evidence of research on children in Dhaka, including the lives of the street children (Blanchet 1996, Sarah Atkinson-Sheppard 2015, 2017, 2018, White 2002), my research has focused on exploring the voices of street children in Dhaka.

This thesis may not offer 'solutions' to children's problems in their lives. The benefit of this research may derive from the emphasis on street children in Dhaka that can add evidence of children's perspectives on rights, enhancing further debates and discussions on children's rights literature. This thesis has analysed how street children in Dhaka understood their rights through the experiences from the world around them. I argued that children's perspectives are central to understanding the depth and the context of children's rights that are articulated in the CRC. Regarding theoretical and empirical analyses in this thesis, this chapter will draw together the answers to the questions above in order to make the argument, and its significance, clear. There are five sections in this chapter. In the first section, this chapter will revist the research questions. The second section will offer some gaps and limitations of this thesis. The third section will offer key contributions and policy/practice implications

followed by the future research on children's rights. To end the thesis, the final section will offer some reflections on this thesis.

7.2 Re-visiting the research questions

In this section, I explain how this thesis tackled to answer the main question through the three key dimensions of this thesis. I will address these questions through socio-economic, cultural, political, and geographical contexts of the street children in Dhaka, based on the empirical analyses of this thesis. To answer thesis, I have argued that in order to makes sense of children's rights, children need to articulate them within the specificity of their language, narrative skills, and understanding that derive from the experiences of their everyday lives. I also argued that given the opportunity, children could talk about their lives and issues that affect them.

In this thesis I have shown a number of rights that are important for street children in Dhaka I worked with in various locations. While I will explain in details about what rights are important in 7.2, I offer here a broader view of some of these rights to set the tone for the findings of this thesis. Having said that, the rights in this thesis are produced through imagination and articulation of the children's own circumstances and contexts. Some of these rights are known as basic rights such as their right to education, clothing, shelter, heath, and food (Kabeer 2003 and Skelton 2007). While these rights have been discussed among academics in geography and other cognate fields such as development studies and sociology in the context of other cities (e.g., Addis Ababa and Jakarta), I have shown in this thesis some understanding of children's rights from the perspectives of street children in Dhaka. Wellbeing and lack of dignity often remain the central concerns for many of the children to have rights, which are connected to their present, past, and after death. Street children in Dhaka I worked with claimed education, food, and shelter as their important rights for their present condition. For their present, street children in Dhaka have also talked about survival as a right because for them staying alive figures large in their lives that are often associated with perils of the street (Conticini 2004). For future, aspiration as a right (see 5.4) to become successful, to escape poverty, to own a business, to take care of their parents and families to name a few figures large among many street children. In many instances, aspiration as a right operates within the anxieties of street children due to their lack of dignity as human beings. Dignity, *shomman*, as a human being also becomes a central focus of their right to burial even

after their death. To seek respect from people in the society, right to burial emerged as a right that is not discussed in the CRC (Ennew 2002). This particular right is a vernacular of children's imagination and articulation through which they sought dignity after death.

The rights that emerged in this thesis from the perspectives of street children did not necessarily follow a hierarchy. What I mean is while these rights did not necessarily follow a sequence of importance. Throughout my inquiries about their rights, the street children responded with a logic about how they offered their understanding of rights that are important for them based on the circumstances of their lives. The understanding of their rights is also partial (Baraldi and Cockburn 2018). I am not undermining children's views in this thesis, in fact, it is critical to understand how meaning of rights is constructed through children's voices that are spontaneous and relevant to their own environments in Bangladesh that often renders their voice muted (Blanchet 1996).

The understanding and context of rights that street children discussed were both similar and different across the locations in which they belonged to. In this sense, there is a distinction between 'rights' and 'understanding and context of rights'. The street children I talked to often clearly mentioned specific rights such as education, food, play, survival, etc. However, what is similar as well as different is how they understood them based on the context of their lives. (Lack of) dignity as a human often transpired children's discussion of rights. For example, for children in the informal settlement in Korail education transpired for them to talk about it as a right, which would provide them a better future and dignity in society. On the other hand, for the girls in the Mirpur shelter dignity was important to earn respect from society through their right to burial. In both instances, dignity was a common factor. These instances provided evidence of not just what rights are important that emerged from the experiences of their childhood but also the factors that are important for them to talk about their rights.

Drawn mainly from geography other cognate disciplines in social sciences such as anthropology, development studies, and sociology, this thesis has sought to contribute to the literature on children's rights. From the empirical analyses, the thesis has situated my research on how rights have understood by the street children in Dhaka in their own voices. Their voices have emerged from the experiences of their own lives. Extracting perspectives

from street children in three locations in Dhaka, this thesis has discussed how they talked about their rights – what rights are important, what can the nuances of their everyday lives tell us about rights, and the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights. In this vein, this thesis extrapolated perspectives of rights from street children in Dhaka.

The contribution about *moulik odhikar*, basic rights in Chapter 4.0 lends to the views on rights that are essential (Cockburn 2021). The evidence from this shows the language in which they can be defined and known and how it operates within the undertstandings of children. The contribution of right to burial has offered an insight into street children's right that does not exist (Ennew 2002) because the adults have simply not thought about it (Alderson 2017). The contribution on chilren's participation and the right to be heard explains the contested relationship between children and adults that can render street children's participation as less meaningful (Hart 1992). In Chapter 5.0, the contribution of childhood shows that rights can be spatially different (Kallio and Mills 2016) by exploring children's perspectives, languages, and contexts of their lives. The contribution of Chapter 6.0 lies in understanding the factors such as power can be an enabling factor (John 2003) for some of the street children I worked with to express their views on rights despite their marginal position in the society (Holt 2004).

Sub question 1: What rights are important for children?

In chapter 4.0, the discussion of rights from through the discussion of citizenship and participation. The former set the tone for the empirical analysis in this chapter and throughout the empirical chapters on the basis that they deserve respect and dignity as citizens, who deserve to have rights. Children's view about citizenship offered a logic about their isolation and exclusion in the society. On the one hand, they felt out of place as children without the 'things' they lack in their young lives. On the other hand, children also felt lack of citizenship denies their dignity as human beings (Freeman 2007).

For the Mirpur children, the lack of rights is linked with their lack of citizenship. Because of poverty and their status as street children, they felt society denied them their citizenship and voice. They were deprived of the 'things' (education, food, safety) they deserved as citizens. The status of their citizenship is superficial, often rendering them powerless to talk about their lives and depriving them of their rights. The contribution here is to show how

citizenship operates within the landscape of rights for street children in Dhaka. For them, it is linked to their dignity, which validates the point that citizenship is a necessary function for claiming not only rights but also to find a place for street children in society with respect.

For the street children in Dhaka whom I worked with, the word *ongshogrohon* meant participation. They understood and explained this term in the context their lack of opportunity to engage with 'people' in the society to talk about their lives. For street children, their status as *potho sishu*, which derives from poverty and marginalisation, often denies their dignity as human beings. Children's right to be heard is addressed in the Article 12 of the CRC (Unicef 2004). I offered a distinction and linkage between right to express views and be heard. The right to express views means an opportunity for children to express their views. Although both participation in dialogue to express their views and be heard for street children in Dhaka are limited (Bosco 2010), marginal circumstances can encourage them to talk so that 'others' would hear about their rights and children would be heard.

Children's imagination and articulation of rights precipitated from their lack of participation, *ongshogrohon*, in dialogues with others to talk about their lives so that children's issues can be heard, *kotha shona*. In this sense, participation and to be heard in Chapter 4.0 set the tone for this thesis in order to understand how children talked about their rights. In this chapter, children's articulation about not being able to participate in dialogues with others was juxtaposed against their participation in a seminar, which reflected the importance of participation. Street children constantly struggle to fit in and to empower their self-worth (Matthews 2003, Thomas 2007) because are often excluded from the mainstream society because of their status as *potho sishu*.

However, despite their exclusion and common perception in society about being destitute, street children in Dhaka they have demonstrated that could participate in having dialogues with others to talk about their lives, which would give them a chance to be heard. These experiences have contributed to the literature in geography and other cognate fields by showing that street children in Dhaka, those whom I worked with, live their lives at the hands of perils and poverty; yet they too have the capacity to speak about (Kallio and Mills 2016) and imagine rights that can be meaningful in understanding what the CRC does and does not include in its charter through what Ennew (2002) describesd as unwritten rights.

Children's experiences offered a platform for imagination and articulation of what rights are important for children. These rights have often reflected from the lens of dignity and aspiration. Education, for example, is central to many children and is reflected throughout this thesis. They had mentioned in chapter 4.0 that education is their basic right, *moulik odhikar* because it is a way out of poverty and a better life for them and that is why it is important for children. In chapter 5.0 education has been discussed as a lack of right that want to achieve in conjunction with its importance for their future as a right. There is another point of revelation in which children in Korail have mentioned their basic rights included food, shelter, and education. In the prevailing culture of Bangladesh this is a slogan for rights (Kabeer 2003) that is familiar among children. So, this understanding of rights adds to the literature as a particular way of knowing and perceiving rights through language and culture in Bangladesh.

The evidence from this chapter also indicates that the basic right is linked with moral obligations. According to the children adults need to have morality, *noitikota*, to provide for their wellbeing and, on the other hand, children also need to commit to their moral obligations to society (e.g., not stealing from others). This example contributes to the literature on rights in terms of its linkage to morality (Archard 1993, Liebel 2012 & Freeman 2011). What this means is children are aware of the morality of adults as provider for their rights. Importantly, this also shows that children ought to have rights although it does not necessarily establish pathways for them to claim their rights. This is a limitation for this thesis, which opens up a possibility for future research on assessing children's capacity to claim their rights.

The right to burial precipated from children's sense of their lack of dignity. The children in Mirpur demanded their 'right to be buried' so that they could be remembered and respected, even if they were deprived of the 'things' they needed while they were alive, after their death by having a proper burial. The discovery of burial right represents imagination of children's reasoned arguments for their right (Freeman 2007), which holds hope for the dignity they deserve. Their logic of reasoning then showed that education for street children represents their aspirations for future; their material needs such as safety and shelter relate to their (lack of) citizenship; and right to burial represents their dignity as human beings.

Through right to burial children expressed that they wanted to be buried near the Shrine, *Mazhar* (see 3.2), because everyone knows them there and they grew up here. In the process, they developed a special relationship with this place from their soul, *attar somporko*, but also with the *Mazhar* and its locality and the people around it. In geography, this point is central to understanding children's relationship with their living environment (Young 2003). This relationship has shown an understanding their rights through the lens of dignity and connection to place in children's lives.

Children's imagination and articulation of right to burial is a significant contribution to this thesis on the perspectives on rights from street children at the Mirpur shelter. Through in-depth ethnograohic data analysis, this thesis has generated new empirical insights that contribute to the existing knowledge base of rights that are not commissioned in the CRC (Ennew 2002). The right to burial shows the importance of rights through the lens of dignity. The implication of this contribution sheds light on the complexities and nuances of a right that does not exist in the CRC or any other legal provisions in Bangladesh and elsewhere (see 4.4), unveiling previously unexplored dimensions of children's right to burial and providing a rich understanding of children's rights from chidlren's debilitating sense of not being afforded the dignity they deserve by the society even as street children. This evidence provides some insights into further conceptual and empirical exploration by children's geographers and scholars specialising in children's studies from other disciplines to challenge and expand the boundaries of the CRC.

Another contribution arises from sub-question one is the evidence of new and unchartered right – right to burial – as explained by some of the street children in this thesis that has not been discussed in the CRC (Ennew 2002). The implication of this finding shows that right to burial is just not a 'right', it also represents power and capacity (John 2003) of children's imagination and articulation in their own language and understanding of a right based on their dignity as humanbeings (Freeman 2007) and the circumstances of their own lives as *potho sishu* in Dhaka. The implication for this new right also enhances the scope for the CRC to be inclusive about children's rights that arise from the local contexts, which can be intergarted into the broader universal appeal for children's rights in future.

Sub question 2: How do they negotiate with the nuances of everyday lives that are associated with rights?

I discussed childhood in chapter 5.0 to explain how rights can be understood through the everyday lives of street children in Dhaka. In doing so, I discussed childhood as a construct that are produced through specific cultural contexts and what this means for the street children in Dhaka in terms of understanding their rights. My approaches to learning about the childhood and moved towards the plurality of it. This intention seemed be logical in order to understand the similarities and differences in their lives.

The contribution of childhood focuses on how rights can be understood through the perspectives, languages, and contexts of their everyday lives as street children. The empirical discussions of this thesis have shown that street children at the three locations, despite their identity linked to being street children, have different ways of imagining their lives. For the children in Korail informal settlement, life is about moving away from the place to escape poverty; for the children in Mirpur Shelter, they also crave being out there (the Mazhar and the street) to get away from the uncaring adults and their rules. Children in the park are drawn to it because they want to get away from the adults at home so that they can be free. Through the canvas of this multiple childhood(s), children have demonstrated what rights meant in the context of their own environments. This is a significant contribution to understanding children's lives 'everywhere' and 'elsewhere'. My investigation about childhood issues offered an understanding of the interactions and connections children make in their lives across various boundaries in their lives (Ansell 2009).

The experiences of children in Mirpur shelter have introduced childhood that is often at odds with the realities of the shelter and the dangers of the streets. Shelter is the place that allowed them to dream of what they wanted and wanted to become. At the shelter, they also experienced a restricted life, prompting them to long for the freedom of the street they were plucked from. Despite living in the relative safety of the shelter, children wanted to go to school and sought comfort in their families. Yet, they were unable to get what they wanted, which introduces their own insecurity as street children. In this sense, being stuck in a place represents not only a metaphor but also about the reality of their childhood. These tensions also perpetuate their attention to the freedom of streets where they imagine being powerful through their actions without being watched at the shelter.

The approaches to investigate the childhood in disparate localities where children lived was centred on relying on the children's perspectives, using various images, drawings, and narratives from recordings and field notes to bring into the focus of their childhood. In doing this, I used children's own languages, drawings, and photos. These experiences have shown their capacity to think about their aspirations through various means such as education. I argued that childhood for the street children in Dhaka derives from a multiplicity of socio-economic factors, not necessarily identical to all children, and this places their childhood in a canvas of multiple meanings. I also argued that these meanings can lend to the understanding of their rights.

For the children in Korail, they were caught between their childhood, being a provider due to poverty and lack of opportunities, and hope for future. The future for them was an opportunity to escape poverty. For them, education as a platform for becoming successful. I have shown in my empirical analyses that children rely on education as a gateway to their future. The children's discussion about work was also closely associated with their (lack of) education. Work was often seen as a platform for their transition into a provider. Despite their hope for future, what remains problematic for children in Korail, however, is the absence of their experience of childhood in the present with the burden of becoming a force for the future. The implication of this void is that it shows a contrasting view of children's rights – lack of rights in the present can deny their life in future, in the context of street children in Dhaka, where rights and lives of street children can remain unexplored and unrealised (Tisdall and Punch 2012).

The preceding discussion about children's future lends to the contribution of understanding childen's being and becoming from the specific context in Dhaka that may extend our knowledge of the relationship between being and becoming as a continual process rather than either being or becoming. The contribution also lends to our understanding about the relationship between age and being and becoming. The evidence in this thesis reveals that age is not necessarily a factor for children's spatial movement through their aspirations from one state of their lives to another. Given the context and circumstances of street children in Dhaka in this thesis, their marginal status constantly prompts them to be 'somewhere' better. Yet, the future for these children resides in their own awareness. This contrasting state of being

and becoming among street children in Dhaka is a marker for understanding the evoling relationship beween being and becoming. The implication of this is that the relationship between being and bcoming offers opportunities for further longitudinal studies that may enable children's scholars to find out what happens to children in future.

The investigation of rights in the park is conducted through their everyday presence and practices in the park, away from their parents and guardians. From the context of their everyday experiences in the park, their childhood evolved, which enabled me to listen to them and watch them as kings and queens of the city. The identity of their childhood represents an entanglement of the tensions between adults and children (Karsten 2016). For children in the park, it represented freedom from their parents and guardians at home.

This association represented both literal and allegorical meaning of their childhood. On the one hand, their status as street children put them within the outer boundary of normal childhood. On the other hand, being out there on the street also meant 'outside children' (Karsten, 2016: 76). These children did not necessarily discuss about their rights, but their childhood shows the freedom they seek, things that matter for their young lives. This position is relevant to the principle of the Article 12 that articulates children have the right to express their views in their lives. The expression for the children in the park took place through their activities time spent in the park. This also turns out to be a limitation for this thesis because most of them were young and could not articulate rights. Only Rahat showed enough maturity to talk about it. However, this opens an opportunity for longitudinal research with more 'mature' street children in Dhaka and elsewhere to get their perspectives on rights.

Sub question 3: What are the contributing factors for street children to talk about their rights?

In Chapter 6, I discussed the contributing factors that propels street children to talk about their rights through the lens of survival, power, and powerlessness. I have mentioned earlier that these factors are not mutually exclusive nor do they follow a hierarchical approach, rather they are produed through the dynamics of the context of children's lives. In this vein, these factors are often linked. The chapter showed that the children can possess power that can give them 'authority' (John, 2003: 47) to imagine and rethink about their lives. This power can emerge from their own marginality that gives them the power of imagination to

articulate their voice about their rights. In this vein, the chapter showed the contrast of power in children's lives. On the one hand, it weakens children their capacity, but, on the other hand, it also strengthens them to think about the possibilities of present and future, wrapped in their sense of dignity as human beings and aspirations. For children then it is important to think about their rights through the lens of survival.

I discussed the role power in children's lives and its effect on their rights. In so doing, the chapter argued that marginalised children can have the capacity to understand and exercise power of their own yet in their own lives often experience powerlessness that amputates their ability to exercise it against the powerful adults and institutions. Through this argument I have answered what are the contributing factors for street children to talk about rights. The chapter showed that the children can possess power that can give them 'authority' (John, 2003: 47) to imagine and rethink about their lives. This power can emerge from their own marginality that gives them the power of imagination to articulate their voice about their rights. In this vein, the chapter showed the contrast of power in children's lives. On the one hand, it weakens children their capacity, but, on the other hand, it also strengthens them to think about the possibilities of present and future, wrapped in their sense of dignity as human beings and aspirations. In this sense, achieving their dreams, in other words aspirations, preceipated from their need to survival. To this end, survival as a right demonstrated their strength to aspire for the future (Kraftl 2008).

I also sought to add some perspectives to the unequal power relation as a contribution factor for street children to talk about their rights and its connection to the decision-making from their own points of view. Their narratives in this thesis provided some evidence of power of street children. Children's everyday lives allow them to possess capacity for articulating and imagining their lives, not only about their present but also about their future. For example, children at the Mirpur shelter felt strongly about their association with the Shrine because it represents their identity and a sense of belonging. The Shrine, for the children, is also a source of how they understand their lives which gives them a 'sense of power' and 'authority' (John, 2003: 47) to (re)think about their lives despite and because of their live at the margins of the society. Children's relationship to Mazhar indicates that space can be a 'reservoir' of their childhood experiences (Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson, 2014: 614), mixed with a canvas of power and relationships (Massey 2005). Through these experiences, the Shrine invokes the

imagination of their rights that matters to them. The implication of their imagination about rights signals how street children use the cues from their environments to talk about rights that are important for their lives.

The evidence from this thesis then contributes to the literature on rights associated with power (John 2003). By examing the power dynamics of adult-street children relationship, this thesis enhances the awareness and presence of power as a contributing factor for street children to talk about their rights. The social dynamics have shown that the adult-children dynamics in societies where marginal children have no or less space for participation in decision-making or in engaging with diologues with adults about their lives (Skelton 2007 and Thomas 2007). I have examined these challenges about childhood of the street children in Dhaka, their (lack of) rights, and struggle with power dynamics with the adults in societies, (non)participation in making decisions about their lives in specific cultural contexts in Dhaka. I offered some perspectives to the unequal power relations and its connection to the rights of the street children within the local contexts in Bangladesh. I argued that whether imagined or real, marginalised children could have the capacity to understand and exercise power of their own yet in their own lives often experience powerlessness that amputates their ability to exercise it against the powerful adults and institutions. I also argued that despite their marginal status, children do have the capacity to internalise their rights. Through this internalisation, they often make decisions – on their own and from the compulsion of their experiences – in and about their lives. In this vein, power and powerlessness co-exist in their lives. But this existence has also drawn out their instincts of being not reognised and not having dignity as street children, which triggered them to explain their rights.

In analysing how power influences children's rights, I have discussed social relationships between adults and the street children in Dhaka. I argued that the issue of power operates within the uneven social relationships between adults and children. I highlighted these dynamics through children's own experiences with various adults in their lives (see 2.5). Adults in the lives of street children primarily mean their parents, guardians, NGOs who influence everyday lives, including their decision-making. For some of the children in Korail, their parents influenced them to give up their education so that they could work to support the family. This experience has shown how power and powerlessness operate in children's lives. On the one hand, they give up their education because of the circumstances in their lives,

which renders them powerless. On the other, despite succumbing to the powerlessness of their ongoing marginalisation, they make decisions to support their families because they believed it was their duty even if it meant to give up their opportunity to pursue their basic rights such as education (Kabeer 2003).

In marginalised areas, NGO-run projects often provide the means for education. Education is linked to children's future. In the marginalised areas such as Korail informal settlement NGO-run projects often emphasise on education as a necessity for children. The meaning of 'necessity' also means education as a platform for children's future. Education is highly prioritised among children within the broader cultural practices in Bangladesh (Blanchet 1996). This might be the reason street children in Dhaka were aware of education, *pora shona*, as a tool for success in life. On the one hand, this discovery then offers validates the literature on children's rights, emphasing the importance of essential rights for children such as right to life but, on the other hand, it has also showed what basic rights can include in the context of children's lives in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

NGO interventions are often expressed through the lens of future by the children. Their dream of having a good life is associated with expectation of the NGOs being able to provide for the assurance. Yet, the capacity of the NGOs is not easy to understand nor so transparent in their practices. On the one hand, NGOs in Bangladesh are more effective in short-term services. However, it is not to say that they do not undertake and provide long-term benefits. Based on the experiences of the children I came across in Dhaka, the future remains uncertain for many street children. Because there is an ongoing tension between the expectation of the children and the NGO capacity – what they can and cannot do – to fulfil children's rights.

To discuss development interventions for children's issues, I argued that NGOs play a critical role in addressing rights of the marginalised children in Bangladesh. In engaging with this argument, I focused on the broader debates on development interventions through the NGOs. This chapter has discussed specific development context in Bangladesh with the focus on NGOs in addressing children's rights. That the street children in Dhaka continues to dwell in uncertainty and hope, making their everyday lives become a constant battle between unequal power relations between the adult world and what rights matters to them that affects their lives. The thesis has shown that the NGOs plays a critical role for the well-being of the street

children in Bangladesh (Haque 2002). However, to address children's rights and their future they need to focus on both short-term and long-term (Berry 2014) commitments while improving their organisational practices (Srinivas 2009). In this sense, the development interventions in Bangladesh requires further inquiries and provocations in order to understand what they can offer to the realisation of the rights of the street children. Having said that, the implication for NGO interventions shows the power NGOs have on the lives of street children in Dhaka and the power struggle can then turn into a factor for the children to talk about the role of NGOs have on their lives in terms of promoting and advocating for rights.

The findings about the influence of NGOs on children's rights from this thesis contributes to the effect NGOs may have on children's lives and, therefore, shows a contested relationship between some of the children and the NGO. Because of their socially-conscious engagements, NGOs are heralded as a safe haven for the safety and survival of street children. But, on the other hand, the perceived failure of the NGO also offered them a ground not only for critiquing the NGO but for claiming their rights. The implication of this somewhat contested relationship offers an insight into further exploration of policy and practices by the practitioners.

7.3 Gaps/limitation of the thesis

This section will address research gaps and limitations on few topics, which include agency and capacity, postcolonial childhood, and urban Dhaka. In the following sections, I provide a brief description of each of these.

Agency and Capacity

I have explored agency in this thesis through the lens of children's capacity to talk. For scholars of childhood studies, capacity also means that children would be able to undertake active role in societies to represent themselves (Prout and James 1997). For the street children in Dhaka, the idea of taking an 'active role' seems to be a bit farfetched, considering the unequal power relations between them and the adults and their broader perception as *potho shishu*. However, this offers an opportunity for future research. I have discussed children's capacity as a function for them to talk about their lives (Freeman 2001, 2003). However, capacity for the marginalised groups also mean that they can function to achieve things for themselves for their wellbeing based on the resources available to them (Sen 2005). In this

thesis, the exploration of what resources children have is not necessarily discussed. Whereas children's voices can be an asset, it warrants further investigation about the capacity of the voice as a 'resource' so that they would be able to achieve 'things' on their own.

Postcolonial childhood

I have signalled a brief encounter with postcolonial view on childhood in this thesis following a view of Dutch scholar Olga Nieuwenhuys, indicating colonial history for imparting children's (co)existence in the society. It'd be a noteworthy point here to mention that such an exploration about street childhood in Dhaka can further compliment the present status of street children through the examination of postcolonial history and critique. The postcolonial exploration may offer opportunities to address nature and history of street childhood in Dhaka and unravel a broader construction of childhood. Such a thrust for engaging with the street children in Dhaka to investigate their lives within the urban dynamics of the city where they remain everyday fixture of the city streets is perhaps necessary to the understanding of a wider marginalised childhood in the Sub-Continent. To these ends, a postcolonial critique of street childhood in Bangladesh would be an opportunity to share such knowledge with the global academic audience.

Past childhood

The discussion of being and becoming in this thesis provided evidence of street children's encounters with the environment in their lives to show how their present is linked to their future aspirations. This thesis could have further benefited from the discussion of children's 'past' (Hanson, 2017: 281) to highlight the dynamics of their relationship with present and future. While the investigation of this thesis has provided some evidence of connection between their rights and their present (being) and future (becoming), the third element – past – could have also offered a more 'productive lens' of the experiences of their childhood (p. 282). Further research on children's past within the conext of being and becoming would provide opportunities for discovering a new dimension of their perspectives on rights and for re-examining the ideals of the CRC, which can look into 'rights related to children's … past' (Hanson, 2017: 283).

Wellbeing

The discussion and interpretation of 'wellbeing' in this thesis requires further exploration. I have largely addressed wellbeing in terms of what is 'good' for their lives. Tisdall (2015) argues that often children's rights contribute to the wellbeing of the children rather than 'wellbeing contributing' to their rights (p. 782). This is an important point of understanding children's rights. My discovery about the meaning of children's rights derived from the first point of Tisdall's argument, which means that it remains unknown whether children's wellbeing is understood as a right. However, this offers a glimpse into future research about children's rights.

Urban Dhaka

In the context of street in Dhaka, I addressed why Dhaka was important for this thesis. However, I felt that there is a limited 'urban' focus. Despite providing a some understanding of children's marginality within the settings of urban margins in Dhaka such as Korail informal settlement and the exploration of their childhood(s) from these margins, what would have strengthened this thesis was to explore the connection between children's experiences with the environment (Ansell and van Blerk 2005) and their perception of rights. Future research can address this gap.

7.4 Key contributions for policy and/or practice

This thesis has made notable contributions to the existing body of knowledge in the field of children's rights. Through an extensive review of literature on three principal strands – rights, children's geographies, and street children – a 10-month ethnographic fieldwork in Dhaka, and a detailed yet interpretative analysis (by me) of street children's views on rights, this thesis has advanced the understanding of rights from the perspectives of street children in Dhaka and the implications on their lives. The key contributions of the thesis can be summarised as follow:

Finding the voice

This thesis has been about finding street children's voice about their rights in Dhaka. In this context, Blanchet (1996) in her studies in Bangladesh discovered that children in Bangladesh have no voice. This is a keen observation about children in Bangadesh but I have taken a different approach to her discovery to explore finding the voice of street children in Dhaka. This is a contribution to the burgeoning literature on marginal childhood. The thesis has shown that given the opportunity, street children in Dhaka are can express their views on their rights based on their own experiences. In this vein, I offered some evidence that despite their marginal circumsances, street children can have voice about issues (e.g., their rights) that matter for them. However, children's understanding of the context and its connection to their rights are not always understood. That said, Dhaka is home to more than a million street-connected children. Often on the street, children are home, a place on their own where their belonging thrives through their wits and skills to survive. Their experience on the streets in Dhaka offers not only a geographical understanding of their lives (Holloway 2014 and Skelton 2009), but also the role of children's environment to discover the meaning of rights (Katz 2008). The implication of this finding is to recognise the need for further research on the pathways for children's voices to be integrated into policy practices.

The role of state in Bangladesh to addess rights-based issues in this thesis lends to a minimal view due to the focus on children's perspectives. From theoretical point of view, the commitment to addressing children's rights in Bangladesh is evident from the ratification of the CRC and the adoption of the amdended Child Act of 2013 (Siddiqui 2003). Although the state continues to provide various social services, NGOs and civil societies share the bulk of the work including rights-based programs for street children and other marginalsed communities in Bangladesh (Rahman 2010). Empirically, I did not engage with the government bodies to investigate their role on addressing the issues of street children. Whether the voices of street children about their rights would reflect policy and/or development practices in Bangladesh remains to be seen. This is a limitation of this thesis and future research can address this gap.

Ethnography and street children's rights in Bangladesh

This thesis offers a significant contribution to the relative absence of qualitative study on street children (Miah and Reza 2014). Despite the works of scholars from various disclipline

(e.g., anthropology, sociology, development), the study on rights from the perspective of street children of this thesis, then, adds to the burgeonin interest of the lives of street children's issues among scholars and practiotioners in Bangladesh and elsewhere. To this end, the ethnographic study on street children in Dhaka has provided some new insights into the meaning of rights that emerged from their own perspectives. The exploration of the street children in this thesis has shown the meaning-making of rights from the context of their world around them. The thesis has discovered that given opportunity children can have the capacity to talk about their lives and rights which are intricately connected to each other to underscore making sense of their rights that matters for them. My nearly year-long ethnography has provided me an insight into their lived environments (Katz 2004). Had I not spent time with them, the discvery of right to burial might have never known. In fact, as an example, by establishing rapport with the children and gaiming their repsect and trust enabled me to discover not just about their rights but their skills in which they imagined and artiuculated them.

In this vein, I want to pre-empt the perception of street children as *Kangali* (Conticini 2004) or street urchins (Balagopalan 2011). Because it is not always about the marginality in their lives, it is also about how society in Bangladesh internalise prejudice and perception of 'othering' of the street children, which is embedded within the broader social and cultural practices. To this end, the works of scholars such as Conticini (2004) and Atkinson-Sheppard (2017) provide a well-observed evidence of adverse conditions of street children in Bangladesh, including how societal perceptions often render them unheard and unrecognised. I do not disagree with that. Yet, I do not want to dwell on these perceptions of the society in Bangladesh. The cultural practices that marginalise street children need to be reoriented and re-learned. Otherwise, rights for street children in Bangladesh may remain as well-intentioned slogans. In this sense, this thesis may offer new insights into the ongoing conceptual and empirical exploration of children's rights through ethnography among academia and practitioners not only in Bangladesh but elsewhere.

Global vs local childhood

A significant contribution of this thesis lies in engaging with the conceptual debates on global and local childhoods (Ansell 2009) and in locating these debates in the context of the childhood and the perspectives of street children on their rights from three disctinct locations

in Dhaka. I have placed the emphasis on the global understanding of childhood (e.g., Holt 1995, Maeder 1945 & Tisdall and Punch 2012) within the local contexts in Dhaka to show the perspectives on rights from the experiences of their own lives. Street childhood in Dhaka for the children I worked with represent a culmination of places and experiences in their lives. These are not always same for 'all' children I came across however, there is a common thread that bound their childhood experiences – poverty. These experiences have contributed to multiple meaning of rights, which also reminds us that children's rights are 'inherently' geographic and are 'appreciated very differently in different parts of the world' (Kallio and Mills, 2016: xi). This contribution shows the importance of rights emerged from the particular locations where street children in this thesis lived.

The evidence of children's existence in the park, the shelter, and the informal settlement signals the importance of place for the participating street children in the park to conjour up their capacity to express their views on rights. Returning to the claims of Kallio and Mills (2016) and Ansell (2009) above about local and global childhoods and rights being geographic (Kallio and Mills 2016), the experiences of the street children at different locations illustrated a pivotal point of understanding rights. Children's understanding of rights for this thesis emerged from their own experiences which were not always similar. Although socio-economic factors such as poverty and stigma are part of their everyday lives. Having said that, the conditions of their lives such as lack of repsect and dignity humanbeings contributed to the articulation of their rights. For example, while dignity is associated with education for some children, it is also connected to their life after death through the lens of right to burial. These similarities and differences of their lives contributed to the understanding of street children's rights in Dhaka. The implication for this evidence can offer some insights into the studies of childhood by geographers and scholars from other cognate fields to explore childhood experiences, surrounded by opportunities, dangers, and resiliency, about their rights across geographical boundaries (Ansell 2009).

Meaning of children's rights through the experience of childhood(s)

The evidence from Chapter 5.0 in this thesis has provided significant contribution to the understanding of the nuances of street children's everyday lives that are connected to their rights. To this end, I offered a different approach of understanding children, which the CRC broadly defines children as those who are under the age of 18 (Hart 1992). This may not be

enough to underscore the childhood experienced by the street children in Dhaka. Through the dynamics of multiplicity of childhood (Alderson 2017), the empirical analyses from Chapter 5.0 have shown multiple childhood experiences in different localities in Dhaka. These experiences have offered: 1) new understanding of childhood that exist within marginalised communities; 2) discovery of children's imagination and articulation of rights that emerge from their own environments and experiences.

The childhood experiences of street children in the park in Chapter 5.0 prompted me to argue that the childhood of the street children in Dhaka exist in multiple forms – in ways in which children experience their lives. The findings suggest that the combination of location and context provided a platform for exploring children's childhood not only based on the principle of social construct but also on the geographical context (van Blerk 2009), in which their childhood was deeply connected. The idea of freedom (Federle 2011 and Herod and Lambert 2005) has come through the experiences of children from various locations. The children in the park demonstrated freedom through their activities in the park. At the shelter, the children sought freedom by their desire to return to the Shrine, a place where they felt powerful. The freedom offered specific meanings that emerged through the explanation of their rights. The evidence from Chapter 5.0 along with 6.0 have shown that freedom for street children meant freedom of expression in ways they were familiar about imagining and articulating their rights, emerged from the circumstances and contexts of their lives (Abebe 2007 and Ansell 2009). The implication, then, of discovering rights from the context of children's own childhood(s) is that it may allow grounds for further research in understanding rights of the marginalised children not only in Dhaka but elsewhere as well.

NGO practices in Bangladesh

A significant contribution of this thesis lends not only to the effects of NGO interventions on rights but also to the dynamics of NGO and street children. Through their views on rights, this thesis has shown how their rights are influenced by the services of the NGOs. The ethnographic account of this thesis has garnered some key insights into the dynamics of NGO-street children. This is a key contribution about the association of street children in Dhaka with the NGO interventions. This association has particularly discovered why street children think rights are important for them and in ways the NGOs are associated to unravel this question. The rights are important because for them because rights are a lifeline, woven

into the fabric of survival. In their world of uncertainty, rights represent safety, protection, and a chance for dignity. Street children in this thesis have talked about the role of NGOs in providing for their rights. Their perspectives were mixed but critical to understand the contributing factors for street children to talk about rights. The exploration of this thesis discovered, on the one hand, they are dependent on the NGOs, but, on the other hand, this dependency is fraught with uncertainties about what the NGOs can and cannot do for them. These opposing sentiments are based on children's experiences and expectations of the NGOs who can provide for their aspirations (Lewis 2015).

The NGO practices in Bangladesh have implications of the way they operate within the broader cultural landscape in Bangladesh. There is an inherent power relationship between the NGOs and their donors and between the NGOs and the recipients of their services (e.g., street children). There is a potential for the NGOs in understanding the effect of their relationship with the children. Furthermore, there is a stronger recognition of understanding how NGOs acquire their funding and how it affects their services to provide for the rights-based service for street children and their marginalised groups. Some evidence of complexity of this process is particularly evident from the NGO relationship with their donors in Bangladesh, which can make the NGOs less accountable (Ahmed et al 2010) to their commitments to the children. While I do not disagree with Ahmed and his colleagues, I suggest undertaking more holistic approaches by the NGOs such as focusing on qualitative exploration of their lives. Such an approach could lead further awareness of the complex lives of street children and the demand of rights in their own ways (Federle 2011, Freeman 2002 & Kabeer 2003).

7.5 Future research

From methodological point of view, it was at times a difficult study for me because of my status as a member of middle-class population, engaging with street children in various locations with whom I have very little socio-economic similarity. I was known as a *borolok*, someone rich, someone rich by translation and someone both rich and powerful by perception of the children I worked with (see 3.7). In a way, I was an outsider to them. I do not know how to amileorate this class difference nor do I know how to remove the marginal conditions of street children. Having said that, it might be worth a future study on the institutional instruments in Bangladesh or elsewhere from policy perspectives to explore what might be

needed to lessen the marginal conditions of street children and to alter societal perception on them.

7.6 A return to the shelter: We are Free

To end this thesis, I return to Mirpur Shelter. I draw my attention to the drawing 'We are Free' (see 4.0), which stoked my senses about inquiring about children's rights. This thesis has shown that street children in Dhaka understood their rights in several ways. Rights reflected 'freedom' in their lives – through their aspirations and everyday lives and their ability to imagine and articulate them. Children's voices were a constant reminder of their struggle and survival. In this sense, there are moments of optimism and evidence of new insights in this thesis about how meaning of rights emerged from street children in Dhaka.

This materialisation is an epiphany of revelation about children's voices and views that affect their lives. But at the same time, it is also evident that their lives are entangled with the adults through social relationships that are bound by a degree of unavoidable power relations. For street children, this is a paradox. On the one hand, they have shown that can have freedom and can have the capacity to talk about their lives. But on the other hand, capacity and freedom they seek may also be denied or weakened because they are not only poor and powerless but remain at the mercy of the power of adults.

My anxiety then about the impact of their voices remains shrouded in doubt. I may sound pessimistic. Yet, optimism for me is wrapped in a reality that signals street children in Dhaka, despite their ongoing societal status as *tokai* -- children outside of the normal landscape of childhood (Ennew 2002) -- there are ongoing commitments by NGOs, civil societies, government to address not just the needs of the street children, but also to raise conscious among wider population about the issues of street children through advocacy and awareness programs. Academics – locally and globally – have shown their veracity to engage with various social experiments aimed at understanding children's rights in Bangladesh.

These engagements, however, need further theoretical and empirical discoveries about children's rights from the context of urban settings in Dhaka and elsewhere. These intellectual engagements could advance the emergence of children's rights that may

encourage, challenge, collaborate, and dissent with the pedagogy of new learning about children's rights.

Appendices

Consent Form (Participants)
Appendix 1

Project Title: Understanding lives of the urban working street children in Dhaka
Investigator: Iqbal Ahmed

We are doing a research study about ***understanding your lives and how you understand your rights (odhikar) and capacity to make decisions about your lives that are important to you***. A research study is a way to learn more about people. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, ***you will be asked to be interviewed, observed while you are in your classroom at your [organisation], where you work, you live and take part in learning about and taking photos about your lives, explaining what these mean to you, help me understand your stories and life experiences.***
Not everyone who takes part in this study may not benefit from this study. A benefit means that something good happens to you. We think these benefits might be ***being respected and listened to***, ***learning about new skills***, ***being able to express your thoughts and share your experiences*** that may help NGO officials, community members, and/or government officials become aware of your conditions such as education, work, health and discover new things about your lives. You may not be directly benefit from being in the research, but it aims to learn about you and factors that are important to you. The results and/or the outcome of the study may help you and others like you in the future.

I would like to use an audio tape in the classroom, in the group discussion, and as I interview you one-on-one to make sure that I remember accurately all the information. I will keep these tapes in my home which will be locked in a cupboard, an *almirah,* and they will only be used by me. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you decide to stop after we begin, that's okay too. Your parents know about the study too.
Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study, but you may be provided meal(s), gifts such as chocolate, pen, pencil, and may have opportunities for site visits. Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life.
When we are finished with this study we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your name and/or your photo, unless you want me to, or that you were in the study.
If you decide you want to be in this study, please write and sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.

_____ _____
(Sign your name here) (Date)

Consent Form (Parents)
Appendix 2

Project Title: Understanding lives of the urban working street children in Dhaka
Investigator: Iqbal Ahmed

Your child(ren) is being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what we will ask your child(ren) to do, and the way we would like to use information about your child(ren) if you choose to allow your child(ren) to be in the study.
We are doing a research study about ***understanding children's lives and how they understand their rights (odhikar) and capacity to make decisions about their lives that are important to the children***. A research study is a way to learn more about people.

If you decide that you want your child(ren) to be part of this study, ***your child(ren) will be asked to be interviewed, observed while they attend to the programs at BRAC, where they work, live and take part in learning about and taking photos about their lives, explaining what these mean to them, help me understand their stories and life experiences.***

Not everyone who takes part in this study may not benefit from this study. A benefit means that something good happens to the child(ren). We think these benefits might be ***being respected and listened to***, ***learning about new skills***, ***being able to express child(ren)'s thoughts and share their experiences*** that may help NGO officials, community members, and/or government officials become aware of their conditions such as education, work, health and discover new things about their lives. Your child(ren) may not be directly benefit from being in the research, but it aims to learn about the factors that are important to them. The results and/or the outcome of the study may help your child(ren) and others like them in the future.

I would like to use an audio tape in the classroom, in the group discussion, and during interviews to make sure that I remember accurately all the information. I will keep these tapes in my home which will be locked in a cupboard, an *almirah*, and they will only be used by me. Your child(ren) do not have to be in this study if you do not want them to be. If you decide to stop your child(ren) to stop participating in the research after they begin, that's okay too.

Participation in this study will involve no cost to you and the child(ren). The child(ren) will not be paid for participating in this study, but they may be provided meal(s), gifts such as chocolate, pen, pencil, and may have opportunities for site visits. Their participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life.
When we are finished with this study we will write a report about what was learned. This report will not include your child(ren)'s name and/or your photo, unless you want me to, or that they were in the study.
If you decide you want your child(ren) to be in this study, please write and sign your name.

I, _____, want to be in this research study.

_____ _____
(Sign your name here) (Date)

Information sheet for participants
Appendix 3

Project title: Understanding the lives of the urban working street children in Dhaka

Project duration: *October/November 2018 – July 2019*

Introduction: Hello, my name is Iqbal Ahmed. I am a student from Durham University in UK (*bilat*). I came here to do a research (*gobeshona*). Do you know where *bilat*, UK is? It is a country in the European continent (*mohadesh*). This country (*ei desh*) is also known as the country for the English people (*Ing-rej-der desh*). Let me also explain where Durham is. What is research? Why does a university do research?

Durham: Durham is a small (*choto*) city (*shohor*) in UK (*bilat*). It has a big Cathedral (*Girja*) where Christian people worship (*dhormo palon kore*). The city is situated in north (*uttor*) of London. There is a similarity between Durham and villages in our country (*amader desher gram*) because there are lots of trees and farmlands (*jomi/khet*) in Durham.

What is research?: The purpose of research, *gobeshona*, is to find out more about something – such as children like you – your dreams, rights, dignity (*tomader shopno, odhikar, and daam* in the society). So, as a researcher, *gobeshok*, I am here to work with you to find out about your lives. Discovering about your lives may help you and/or the children like you in the future.

Why does a university do research?: Universities conduct their research to learn about lives of people, place, and things to make this world a better place to live. Through this research, my university (*amar bhissobidhalaya*) is trying to learn about your lives and children like you. This may benefit you in the future by making policy makers (*montri/minister*) aware of the issues that are important to you.

Invitation to participate: I am here to invite (*amontron*) you to participate in a research study on how children like you and what can be learned from your own perceptions (*tomader choke*) and experiences (*ovhigotta*). I will explain what you will be doing, what your rights are, and what will be done with the data I collect. If you agree to participate, please fill in the next page and return it to me.

What is the research about? I am doing this research study about understanding your lives and how you understand your rights *(odhikar*) and capacity to make decisions (*bolar ebong korar khomota*) about your lives that are important to you.

How will you be involved? If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to be interviewed, observed while you are in your classroom at BRAC, where you work, you live and take part in learning about and taking photos about your lives, explaining what these mean to you, help me understand your stories and life experiences. I will work with you to make sure that you enjoy these activities. Participation for you is free. *However, you will not be paid for participating in this study, but you may be provided meal(s), gifts such as chocolate, pen, pencil, and may have opportunities for site visits.*

Risks, benefits and confidentiality: There are no known risks to participation in this study. You will not be paid for your participation; however, I may arrange trips and/or provide meals, small gifts if there are budgets available. You will be contributing to our knowledge your lives and the issues that are important to you. The data I collect will not be associated with your name or with any other personal details that might identify either of you, unless you want me to use your name, personal details, and identify you in any publication during and after researChapter

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw: I will ask your permission before I begin the study. I will make sure that you understand you can stop your participation in this research activities at your own will. You may also choose to withdraw from this study at any time. Any data you have provided up to this point will be deleted.

If you have any questions about what you've just read, please feel free to discuss with me. This project has been approved by the Research Ethics Geography Sub-Committee (REGS) at Durham University. If you have questions or comments regarding your own rights as a participant, please feel free to contact me at 0172 626 1719 or iqbal.ahmed@durham.ac.uk.

Thank you for your help!
Iqbal Ahmed

Information sheet for parents
Appendix 4

Project title: Understanding the lives of the urban working street children in Dhaka

Project duration: *October/November 2018 – July 2019*

Introduction: Hello, my name is Iqbal Ahmed. I am a student from Durham University in UK (*bilat*). I came here to do a research (*gobeshona*). As you may know, it is a country in the European continent (*mohadesh*). This country (*ei desh*) is also known as the country for the English people (*Ing-rej-der desh*).

What is the research about? I am doing this research study about understanding the lives of children who work and who lives are connected with street in their everyday lives. The research is also about learning how your children understand their rights *(odhikar*) and capacity to make decisions (*bolar ebong korar*) about your lives that are important to them.

How will your children be involved? If you decide that you want your children to be part of this study, they will be asked to be interviewed, observed while they are in the classroom at BRAC, where they work, and live. They will also take their own photos about their lives to explain what these mean to them, which will help me understand their stories and life experiences more. Participation is free for your children. *They will not be paid for participating in this study, but I may provide meal(s), gifts such as chocolate, pen, pencil, and opportunities for site visit (ghora ghuri) as a gratitude for their participation in the researChapter*

Risks, benefits and confidentiality: There are no known risks to participation in this study. Your children will be contributing to our knowledge about their lives and the issues that are important to them. The data I collect will not be associated with their name or with any other personal details that might identify either of you, unless you and your children want me to use your name, personal details, and identify you in any publication during and after researChapter

Voluntary participation and right to withdraw: Please understand that your children can stop their participation in this research activities at their own will. They may also choose to withdraw from this study at any time. If that happens, any data they have provided up to that point will be deleted.

If you have any questions about what you've just read, please feel free to discuss with me. This project has been approved by the Durham University. If you have questions or comments regarding your own rights as a participant, please feel free to contact me at 0172 626 1719 or iqbal.ahmed@durham.ac.uk.

Thank you for your help!
Iqbal Ahmed

Appendix 5

Mapping of the questions for **street children** in Dhaka

Question	Relevance	Topic
What is your name?	To gain/establish rapport, trust	Intro/general
What is your age?	To gain/establish rapport, trust	Intro/general
How many siblings do you have?	To gain/establish rapport, trust	Intro/general
Where do you live?	To gain insights into their urban living condition	Intro/urban informality
Who do you live with?	To gain insights into their urban family lives	Intro/general
Do you go to school?	To gain insights into their cognitive skills	Education/rights
Why not? If ans. is no	To gain insights into their socio-economic status, agency	Socio-economy/agency
Why did you leave? If attended school but left	To gain insights into their socio-economic status, agency	Socio-economy/agency
What do you do?	To gain insights into their working lives/informality	Work/urban informality
Why do you work?	To gain insights into their agency/informality	Agency/urban informality
How did you get this work?	To gain insights into their network and negotiation skills	Work
How long do you work in a day?	To gain insights into their working condition	Work
How long have you been working?	To gain insights into their working condition	Work
Do you get holidays?	To gain insights into their working condition/rights or lack thereof/informality	Work/rights
How do you get paid?	To gain insights into potential exploitation (or not)/informality	Work/rights
Do you get food?	To gain insights into potential exploitation (or not)/basic needs	Work/rights
Would you like to go to school?	To gain insights in their agency, action, space	Education/rights
Who makes the decision in your family?	To gain insights into the power structure of the family	Family
Do you give advice to your parents/brothers/sisters?	To gain insights into the hierarchy of the power structure/balance	Participation
How do you do this?	To gain insights into their agency and action	Participation
What do you do when you don't work?	To gain insights into their social development or lack thereof	Participation
Do you have any rights?	To gain insights into their understanding of rights	Rights
What are they?	To gain insights into their understanding of rights	Rights
Does anyone talk about your rights to you?	To gain insights into the potential gatekeeper into their life for change	Rights

Are the jobs dangerous?	To gain insights into the informal working condition	Informality
Did you ever get hurt?	To gain insights into the informal working condition	Rights
Did you tell your boss when you got hurt?	To gain insights into the informal working condition and rights	Rights/informality
What did they do/say?	To gain insights into the informal working condition/rights	Informality
Are there other workers like you? How many?	To gain insights into the informal working condition	Informality
Do you talk to them?	To gain insights into the network and skills	Rights/agency
How do they feel about the work?	To gain insights into the understanding of children about their work and life	Agency/participation
Do you have friends at work?	To gain insights into the network of children	Agency
What do you want to do when you grow up?	To gain insights into the rights, agency, participation of children	Agency/rights/participation

Bibliography

Abdullah, T. (2015). *Cholo Boro Hoi*. Dhaka: Bhasachitra.

Abebe, T. (2007). Changing livelihoods, changing childhoods: patterns of children's work in rural Southern Ethiopia. *Children's Geographies*, 5(1/2), 77-93.

Abebe, T. (2008). Earning a living on the margins: begging, street work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa. *Human Geography*, 90(3), 271-284.

Abebe, T (2009). Child Labour in the Global South: A review and critical commentary. *Norwegian Centre for Child Research*, 3, 11-28.

Abebe, T., and Bessell, S. (2014). Advancing ethical research with children: critical reflections on ethical guidelines. *Children's Geographies*, 12(1), 126-133.

AbouAssi, K. (2012). Hands in the pockets of mercurial donors: NGO response to shifting funding priorities. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(3), 584-602.

Abouassi, K. and Trent, D., L. (2016). NGO accountability from an NGO perspective: perceptions, strategies, and practices. *Public Administration and Development*, 36, 283-296.

ADB. (2008). Asian Development Bank. *Civil Society Briefs*, 1-16.

Agar, M., H. (2008). *The Professional Stranger: An informal Introduction to Ethnography*. New York: Academic Press.

Ahmad, M., M. (2006). The 'partnership' between international NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and local NGOs in Bangladesh. *Journal of International Development*, 18, 629-638.

Ahmad, M., M. (2007). The careers of NGO field-workers in Bangladesh. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 17(3), 349-365.

Ahmed, I. (2021). Ethical Research with Children: Reflections from Fieldwork in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in M.O. Ajebon, Y.M.C. Kwong & de I. Astorga D. (Eds.), *Navigating the Field: Postgraduate Experiences in Social ResearChapter* Cham: Springer.

Ahmed, Z., Hopper, T., and Wickramsinghe, D. (2010). Hegemony, counter hegemony and NGO accountability change: BRAC in Bangladesh, in *Sixth Asia Pacitic Interdisciplinary Research in Accounting Conference, Sydney, Australia*, 1-40.

Ahsan, M. (2009). The potential and challenges of rights-based research with children and young people: experiences from Bangladesh. *Children's Geographies*, 7 (4), pp. 391-403.

Aitken, C., S. (2001). *Geographies of Young People: The Morally Contested Spaces of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Aitken, S., Estrada, L., S., Jennings, J. & Aguirre, A. L. (2006). Reproducing life and labor: Global processes and working children in Tijuana. Mexico, *Childhood*, 13(3), 365-387.

Aitken, S., C., Lund, R., & Kjorholt, A., T. (2007). Why Children? Why Now? *Children's Geographies*, 5(1-2), 3-14.

Aitken, S., C. (2015). Children's rights: A critical geographic perspective, in W. Vandenhole, E. Desmet, D. Reynaert & S. Lembrechts (Eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Children's Rights Studies*. London: Routledge.

Aitken, S. (2018). *Young People, Rights and Place: Erasure, Neoliberal Politics and Postchild Ethics*. London: Routledge.

Akhter, M. and Chaudhuri, J. (2013). Real Time Monitoring for the Most Vulnerable: Pre-Primary Education in Bangladesh. *IDS Bulletin*, 44(2), 1-16.

Alanen, L. (1994). Adult-child relations as class relations in Childhood matters: Social theory, practice and politics, in J. Qvortrup, M. Bardy, G. Sgritta & H. Wintersberger (Eds.), *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics*. Vienna: Avebury.

Alderson, P. (2000). *Young Children'; Rights: Exploring Beliefs, Principles and Practice, 2nd Edition*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London.

Alderson, P. (2008). Consulting with young children and taking risk, in P. Alderson (Ed), *Young Children's Rights: Exploring Beliefs, Principles and Practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Alderson, P. (2010). Younger children's individual participation in 'all matters affecting the child', in B. Percy-Smith, N. Thomas (Eds.), *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives from Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Alderson, P. (2012). Rights-respecting research: a commentary on 'the right to be properly researched: research with children in a messy, real world', *Children's Geographies*, 2009, 7, 4, Children's Geographies, 10(2), 233-239.

Alderson, P. (2017). Common Criticisms of Children's Rights and 25 Years of the IJCR. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 25, 307-319.

Allen, J. (2003). *Lost Geographies of Power*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Ali, H., M., A. (2014). Microcredit and power: examining how and why women encounter domination in Bangladesh. *Development in Practice*, 24(3), 327-338.

Amoore, L. (2014). Power, in R. Lee, N. Castree, R. Kitchin, V. Lawson, A. Passi, C. Philo, S. Radcliffe, S. M. Roberts & C. W. J. Withers (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Human Geography*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Amoore, L. (2019). Doubt and the algorithm: on the partial accounts of machine learning. Theory, *Culture & Society*, 36(6), 147-169.

Anangisye, W., and Zhejiang, J. (2020). Voices of School-Age Street-Children Denied Basic Education in Tanzania. *The African Review*, 47, 223-246.

Anderson, B. (2002). A principle of hope: recorded music, listening practices and the immanence of utopia. Geografiska Annaler: Series B, *Human Geography*, 84(3-4), 211-227.

Anderson, E. (2013). Dhaka, Bangladesh: Walking Between Slums and Dreamworlds. *Final project for Urban Anthropology: Global Cities, Arizona State University*, 1-25.

Andrioni, F. (2018). Street children at the interface with social reality. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 5(2), 44-61.

Annual Report. (2010). Enhancing NGO engagement with the Committee on the Rights of the Child. *NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1-24.

Ansari, H. (2007). 'Burying the dead': making Muslim space in Britain. *Historical Research*, 80(210), 545-566.

Ansell, N., Blerk, v., L. (2005). 'Where we stayed was very bad ...': migrant children's perspectives on life in informal rented accommodation in two southern African cities. *Environment and Planning*, 37, 423-440.

Ansell, N. (2005). *Children, Youth and Development*. London: Routledge.

Ansell, N. (2009). Childhood and politics of scale: descaling children's geographies. Progress in *Human Geography*, 33(2), 190-229.

Ansell, N. (2014). The convention on the rights of the child: Advancing social justice for African children?, in A. T-D. Imoh and N. Ansell (Eds.), *Children's lives in an era of children's rights: the progress of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Africa*. London: Routledge.

Ansell, N. (2016). Globalizing education from Christian missionaries to corporate finance: Global actors, global agendas, and the shaping of global childhoods, in N. Ansell, N. Klocker & T. Skelton (Eds.), Geographies of Global Issues: Change and Threat. Singapore: Springer.

Ansell, N. (2019). Global South research in children's geographies: from useful illustration to conceptual challenge, T. Skelton and S. C. Aitken (Eds.), *Establishing Geographies of Children and Young People.* Singapore: Springer.

Appadurai, A. (2004). The capacity to aspire: Culture and the terms of recognition, in V. Rao and M. Walton (Eds.), *Culture and Public Action*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, California.

Aptekar, L., and Abebe, B. (1997). Conflict in the neighbourhood: Street and working children in the public space. *Childhood*, 4(4), 477-490.

Archard, D. (1993). *Children: Rights and Childhood*. 2nd Ed. Routledge: London.

Archard, D. (2013). Children, adults, best interests and rights. *Medical Law International*, 13(1), 55-74.

Archard, D., and Uniacke, S. (2021). The Child's Right to a Voice. *Res Publica*, 27, 521–536. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11158-020-09491-z.

Arends-Keunning, M., and Amin, S. (2001). Women's capabilities and the right to education in Bangladesh. International Journal of Politics, *Culture and Society*, 15(1), 125-142.

Arfat, S. (2013). Islamic perspective of the children's rights: an overview. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 2(1), pp. 1-9.

Askins, K. (2016). Emotional citizenry: Everyday geographies of befriending, belonging and intercultural encounter. *Transactions, IBG*, 515-527.

Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (2005). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 2nd Ed. London: Routledge.

Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2015). The gangs of Bangladesh: Exploring organized crime, street gangs and 'illicit child labourers' in Dhaka. *Childhood*, 24(3), 416-429.

Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2017). Street children and 'protective agency': Exploring young people's involvement in organised crime in Dhaka, Bangladesh. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 16(2), 233-249.

Atkinson-Sheppard, S. (2018). *Street Children and Dhaka's Gangs: Using a Case Study to Explore Bangladeshi Organized Crime*. London: Sage Publications, Ltd.

Aufseeser, D. (2014). Control, protection and rights: A critical review of Peru's begging bill. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 22(2), 241-267.

Aufseeser, D. (2017). Street children and everyday violence, in C. Harker et al. (Eds.), *Conflict, Violence and Peace, Geographies of Children and Young People*. Singapore: Springer.

Aytac, F., K. (2021). Children's right to the city: The case of street children. International Sociology, 36(4), 605-622.

Baker, B. (1999) What is Voice? Issues of Identity and Representation in the Framing of Reviews. *Review of Educational Research*, 69(4), pp. 365-383.

Balagopalan, S. (2014). *Inhabiting Childhood: Children, Labour and Schooling in Postcolonial India*. Delhi: Palgrave MacMillan.

Ball, J., and Wahedi, M., O., K. (2010). Exploring fatherhood in Bangladesh. *Childhood Education*, 86(6), 366-370.

Banks, N., Hulme, D., & Edwards, M. (2015). NGOs, states, and donors revisited: still too close for comfort? *World Development*, 66, 707-718.

Baraldi and Cockburn (2018). Introduction: Lived Citizenship, rights and participation in contemporary Europe, in C. Baraldi and T. Cockburn (Eds.), *Theorising Childhood: Citizenship, Rights and Participation*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.

Barker, J., and Weller, S. (2003). 'Never work with children?': The geography of methodological issues in research with children Qualitative ResearChapter *Qualitative Research*, 3(2), 207-227.

Bartlett, S. (2002). *Building Better Cities with Children and Youth. Environment and Urbanization*, 14(2), 3-10

Bartos, A. (2016). Children and young people's political participation: Acritical analysis, in P. K. Kallio, S. Mills, & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Barragan, S., Erogul, M., S., & Essers, C. (2018). 'Strategic (dis)obedience': Female entrepreneurs reflecting on and acting upon patriarchal practices. *Gender, Work, and Organization*, 25(5), 575-592.

Batti, R., C. (2014). Challenges facing local NGOs in resource mobilization. *Humanities and Social Science*, 2(3), 57-64.

Baumgart, S., and Kreibich, V. (2014). Spaces, rights and resources. *Engineering Sciences, German Research*, 1-11.

Beazley, H. (2002). 'Vagrants wearing make-up': Negotiating spaces on the streets of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *Urban Studies*, 39(9), 1665-1683.

Beazley, H. (2003). Voices from the margins: Street children's subcultures in Indonesia. *Children's Geographies*, 1(2), pp. 181-200.

Bebbington, A. (2004). NGOs and uneven development: Geographies of development intervention. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(6), 725-745.

Bebbington, A., J., Hickey, S., & Mitlin, D., C. (2008). Introduction: Can NGOs make a difference? the challenge of development alternatives, in A. J. Bebbington, S. Hickey, & D.C. Mitlin (Eds.), *Can NGOs Make a Difference: The Challenge of Development Alternatives*. London: Zed Books.

Bell, S., and Payne, R. (2009). Young people as agents in development processes: reconsidering perspectives for development geography. *Third World Quarterly*, 30(5), 1027-1044.

Bendell, J. (2006). Debating NGO Accountability. *UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLA)*, 1-104.

Benitez, S., T. (2000). Street children's rights and the convention on the rights of the child: a study of acceptance and observance in Mexico and Ecuador. *Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, Working Paper*, 1-35.

Bennitez, S., T. (2011). State of the world's street children. *Consortium for Street Children, Street Children Series 2*, 1-101.

Berry, N., S. (2014). Did we do good? NGOs, conflicts of interest and the evaluation of short-term medical missions in Sololá, Guatemala. *Social Science & Medicine*, 120, 344-351.

Bhandari, M., P. (2017). Role of Nongovernmental Organization in Bangladesh. Are They Challenging the Government Power? A Case Study from Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). *Socio Economic Challenges*, 1(4), 6-22.

Binns, T. (1995). Geography in development: Development in geography. *Geography*, 80(4), 303-322.

Bissell, S. (2003). The social construction of childhood: A perspective from Bangladesh, in N. Kabeer, G. B. Nambissan, & R. Subrahmanian (Eds.), Child Labour and the Right to Education in South Asia. Needs versus Rights. Dhaka: UPL.

Biswas, R. K., Kabir, E. & Khan, H., T., A. (2019). Causes of Urban Migration in Bangladesh: Evidence from the Urban Health Survey. Population Ressearch Policy Review, 38, 593–614. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-019-09532-3.

Blanchet, T. (1996). *Lost Innocence, Stolen Childhoods*. Dhaka: The United Press Limited.

Blomley, N., and Pratt, G. (2001). Canada and the political geographies of rights. *The Canadian Geographer*, 45(1), 151-166.

Bordonaro, L., I. (2012). Agency does not mean freedom. Cape Verdean street children and the politics of children's agency. *Children's Geographies*, 10(4), 413-426.

Bosco, F., J. (2007). Hungry children and networks of aid in Argentina: Thinking about geographies of responsibility and care. *Children's Geographies*, 5(1-2), 55-76.

Bosco, F., J. (2010). Play, work or activism? Broadening the connections between political and children's geographies, Children's Geographies, 8(4), 381-390.

Bosisio, R. (2012). Children's right to be heard: What children think. *International Journal of Children's Rights*. 20, 141–154.

Buggenhout, M., V. (2020). Street child spaces: Belonging, conflict and resistance in the city of Durban through the eyes of street youth. *Children's Geographies*, 18(1), 96-109.

Bourdillon, M., F., C. (2004). Children in development. *Progress in Development Studies*, 4(2), 99-113.

Bourdillon, M. (2017). Thinking About Street Children and Orphans in Africa: Beyond Survival, in A. Invernizzi, M. Liebel, B. Milne & R. Budde (Eds.), *'Children out of Place' and Human Rights.* Switzerland: Springer.

Boyden, J. (1997). Childhood and the policy makers: A comparative perspective on the globalilation, in Allison J and Alan P (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood*. London: Falmer Press.

Brooks-Gunn, J., and Duncan, G., J. (1997). The Effects of Poverty on Children. *The Future of Children*, 7(2), 55-71.

Brown, C., Spiro, J. & Quinton, S. (2020). The role of research ethics committees: Friend or foe in educational research? An exploratory study. *British Educational Research Journal*, 46(4), 747-769.

Brownlow, A. (2005). A Geography of men's fear. *Geoforum*, 36, 581-592.

Bühler-Niederberger, D. (2010). Childhood sociology -- Defining the state of the art and ensuring reflection. *Current Sociology*, 58(2), 155-164.

Burkart, K. and Khan, M., H. (2008). Megacity Dhaka – informal settlements, urban environment and public health. *Geographische Randschau*, 4(1), pp. 4-10.

Burke, C. (2008). 'Play in focus': Children's visual voice in participative research, in P. Thompson, (Ed), *Doing Visual Research with Children and Young People*. London: Routledge.

Burra, N. (2003). Rights versus needs: Is it in the 'best interest of the child?', in N. Kabeer, G. B. Nambissan, & R. Subrahmanian (Eds.), Child Labour and the Right to Education in South Asia. Needs versus Rights. Dhaka: UPL.

Bushin, N. (2009). Interviewing with children in their homes: Putting ethical principles into practice and developing flexible techniques, in L. v. Blerk and M. Kesby (Eds.), *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. London: Routledge.

Cairns, L (2006). Participation with purpose, in E. K. M. Tisdall, J. Davis, M. Hill, & A. Prout (Eds.), *Participation for What?: Children, Young People and Social Inclusion*. London: Policy Press.

Cairns, K. (2013). Ethnographic locations: the geographies of feminist post-structural ethnography. *Ethnography and Education*, 8(3), 323-337.

Cameron, E. (2012). New geographies of story and storytelling. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(5), 573-592.

Campbell, L., M., Gray, N., J., Meletis, Z., A., Abbott, J., G. & Silver, J., J. (2006). Gatekeepers and keymasters: Dynamic relationships of access in geographical fieldwork. *The Geographical Review*, 96(1), 97-121.

Castro, L., R., d. (2019). Why global? Children and childhood from a decolonial perspective. *Childhood*, 27(1), 48-62.

Cele, S. (2006). Children's geographies, Communicating Place Methods for Understanding Children's Experience of Place. *PhD Dissertation, Stockholm University*, 1-236.

Chambers, R. (2004). Ideas for development: reflecting forwards. *IDS Working Paper*, 238, 1-46.

Chawla, L. (2001). Evaluating children's participation: Seeking areas of consensus. *PLA Notes*, 42, 9-13.

Cheney, K., E. (2012). Killing them softly? Using children's rights to empower Africa's orphans and vulnerable children. *International Social Work*, 5691), 92-102.

Choudry, A., and Kapoor, D. (2013). Introduction, in A. Choudry and D. Kapoor (Eds.), *NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions and Process*. London: Zed Books.

Chowdhury R., Sarkar M. (2018). Education in Bangladesh: Changing contexts and emerging realities, in R. Chowdhury, M. Sarkar, F. Mojumder & M. Roshid (Eds.), *Engaging in Educational ResearChapter Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*. Singapore: Springer.

Chowdhury, E., H. (2015). Rethinking patriarchy, culture and masculinity: transnational narratives of gender violence and human rights advocacy. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 16(2), 97-114.

Chowdhury, S., Chowdhury, A., S., Huq, K., E., Jahan, Y., Chowdhury, R., Ahmed, T. & Rahman, Md, M. (2017). Life style and risk behavior of street children in Bangladesh: a health perspective. *Health*, 9, 577-591.

Chowdhury, D. (2009). Theorising patriarchy: The Bangladesh context. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 37, 599-622.

Chowdhury, E., H. (2007). Negotiating state and ngo politics in Bangladesh. *Violence Against Women*, 13(8), 857-873.

Christensen, P., H. (2004). Children's Participation in Ethnographic Research: Issues of Power and Representation. *Children & Society*, 18, 165–176.

Christensen, P., H., and James, A. (2017). Introduction: Researching children and childhood: cultures of communication, in P. Christensen and A. James (Eds.), *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*. London: Routledge.

Clark, T. (2010). Gaining and maintaining access: Exploring the mechanisms that support and challenge the relationship between gatekeepers and researchers. *Qualitative Social Work (QSW)*, 10(4), 485-502.

Clarke, C., J. (2016). 'I get scared if I sleep alone': Street children in Bangladesh. *The Guardian*. Date accessed: 10/09/21. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2016/may/02/bangladesh-street-children-scared-sleep-alone.

Coats, C. (2014). Thinking through the photographic encounter: Engaging with the camera as nomadic weapon. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 15(9), 1-23.

Cockburn, T. (1998). Children and citizenship in Britain: A case for a socially interdependent model. *Childhood*. 5(1), 99-117.

Coffey, A. (1999). *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*. London: Sage Publications.

Coll, R. (1986). Power, powerlessness and empowerment. *Religious Education*, 81(3), 412-423.

Cons, J., and Sanyal, R. (2013). Geographies at the margins: borders in South Asia -- an introduction. *Political Geography*, 35, 5-13.

Conticini, A. (2004). We are the kings: The children of Dhaka's streets. *PhD Thesis, Manchester University*, 1-375.

Conticini, A. (2005). Escaping violence, seeking Freedom: Why children in Bangladesh migrate to the street. *Environment & Urbanization*, 17(2), 69-81.

Conticini, A., and Hulme, D. (2007). Escaping violence, seeking Freedom: Why children in Bangladesh migrate to the street. *Development and Change*, 38(2), 201–227.

Cook, A., Whitzman, C., & Tranter, P. (2015). Is 'citizen kid' an independent kid? the relationship between children's independent mobility and active citizenship. *Journal of Urban Design*, 20(4), 526-544.

Cooper, V. L. (2017). Lost in translation: Exploring childhood identity using photo-elicitation. *Children's Geographies*, 15(6), 625-637.

Cornwall, A. and Coehlo, V. (2006), in A. Cornwall and V. Coelho (Eds.), *Spaces for Change? The Politics of Citizen Participation in New Democratic Arenas*. Zed Books: London.

Couch, J. (2010). Our lives, our say: street and working children talk about their rights in Delhi. *Journal of Social Inclusion*, 1(2), 151-166.

Courville, S. and Piper, N. (2004). Harnessing hope through NGO activism. *The Annals of The American Academy*, 592, 39-61.

Cowden, M. (2012). Capacity, claims and children's rights. *Contemporary Political Theory*, 11(4), 362-380.

Craggs, R. (2014). Development in a global-historical context, in V. Desai, R. B. Potter (Eds.), *The Companion to Development Studies*, Third Edition. London: Routledge.

Crang, M. (2004). Qualitative methods: touchy, feely, look-see? *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(4), 494-504.

Crang, M. (2005). Qualitative methods: there nothing is outside the text? *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(2), 225-233.

Cresswell, T. (2008). Towards a politics of mobility. Environment and Planning D: *Society and Space*, 28, 17-31.

Cresswell, T. (2011). Place, Part I, in J. A. Agnew and J. S. Duncan (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Human Geography*. New York: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Cresswell, T. (2014). Place, in R. Lee, N. Castree, R. Kitchin, V. Lawson, A. Paasi, C. Philo, S. Radcliffe, S., M. Roberts & C., W., J. Withers (Eds.), The SAGE Handbook of Human Geography. London: SAGE Publications.

Davey, C. (2010). Children's participation in decision-making. *Children's Rights Alliance for England, A Summary Report on Progress Made up to 2010*, 1-16.

Davidson, E. (2017). Saying It Like It Is? Power, Participation and Research Involving Young People. Social Inclusion, 5(3), 228-239.

Davis, J., M., and Hill, M. (2006). Introduction, in E. K. M. Tisdall, J. M. Davis, A. Prout & M. Hill, *Children, Young People and Social Inclusion: Participation for what?* Bristol: The Policy Press.

DESA. (2014). Promoting Empowerment of People in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment integration and full employment and decent work for all. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Social Policy and Development, 1-175.

Devine, J. (2003). The paradox of sustainability: Reflections on NGOs in Bangladesh. The ANNALS of the American Academy, 590, 227-242.

Devine, J. (2006). NGOs, politics, and grassroots mobilisation: Evidence from Bangladesh. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 1(1), 77-99.

Dejaeghere, J., and Lee, S., K. (2011). What matters for marginalized girls and boys in Bangladesh: A capabilities approach for understanding educational well-being and empowerment. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 6(1), 27-42.

Desforges, L., Jones, R., & Woods, M. (2005). New Geographies of Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 9(5), 439-451.

Diana, C. (2020). Global South childhoods, in Daniel T C (Ed), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood Studies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Disney, T., and Lloyd, J. (2020). Towards geographies of child protection. *Geography Compass*, 1-13.

Disney, T. (2021). Geographies of Children and Childhood. [Online]. Accessed on: 10 November 2021, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199874002/obo-9780199874002-0193.xml.

Djohari, N., Pyndiah, G., & Arnone, A. (2018). Rethinking 'safe spaces' in children's geographies. 16(4), 351-355.

Doka, K., J. (1999). Disenfranchised grief. Bereavement. *Care*, 18(3), 37-39.

Duijn, C. (2020). Everywhere and nowhere at once: the challenges of following in multi-sited ethnography. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 9(3), 281-294.

Editorial. (2014). Judith Ennew: A personal tribute. *Childhood*, 21(2), 151-160.

Edmonds, K. (2012). Beyond good intentions: The structural limitations of NGOs in Haiti. *Critical Sociology,* 39(3), 439-452.

Edwards, M. (2008). Have NGOs 'made a difference?' From Manchester to Birmingham with an elephant in the room, in A. J. Bebbington, S. Hickey, & D. C. Mitlin (Eds.), *Can NGOs Make a Difference: The Challenge of Development Alternatives*. London: Zed Books.

Educate Nigeria. (2019). 'We're cosseting our kids' – the war against today's dangerously dull playgrounds, Education Nigeria, Art and design, 31 October [Online]. Available at: https://proofreadmyessay.co.uk/writing-tips/harvard-referencing-how-to-cite-a-newspaper-article/

Eekelaar, J. 2016. Two dimensions of the best interests principle: Decisions about children and decisions affecting children, in E. E. Sutherland and L-A. B. MacFarlane (Eds.), *Implementing Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Best Interests, Welfare and Well-being*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ergler, C. (2017). Beyond passive participation: From research on to research by children, R. Evans, L. Holt & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Methodological Approaches*. Singapore: Springer.

Ennew, J. (1995). Time for children or time for adults, J. Qvortrup and M. Bardy, G. Sgritta & H. Wintersberger (Eds.), in *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics*. Vienna: Avebury.

Ennew, J. (2002). Outside childhood: Street children's rights. In B. Franklin (Ed.), *The New Handbook of Children's Rights*. London: Routledge.

Ennew, J. (2003). Difficult Circumstances: Some reflections on 'street children" in Africa. Children. *Youth and Environments*, 13(1), 1-18.

Ennew, J., & Plateau, D. P. (2019). Children and armed conflict: A global perspective. *Children and Armed Conflict*, 5(1), 1-19.

Evans, R., and Skovdal, M. (2016). Defining children's rights to work and care in sub-saharan africa: Tensions and challenges in policy and practice, in K. P. Kallio, S. Mills & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Evan, R. and Holt, L. (2017). Editorial: Geographies of Children and Young People. Methodological Approaches, in R. Evan, L. Holt & T. Skelton, (Eds.), in *Methodological Approaches*. Singapore: Springer.

Evans, B. (2008). Geographies of Youth/Young People. *Geography Compass*, 2(5), 1659-1680.

Ezenwa-Ohaeto, N. (2015). Fighting Patriarchy in Nigerian Cultures Through Children's Literature. Studies in Literature and Language, 10(6), 59-66.

Fairhall, N., and Woods, K. (Children's views on children's rights: A systematicliterature review. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 29, 835-871.

Falch-Eriksen, A., and Backe-Hansen, E. (2018). Human Rights in Child Protection: Implications for Professional Practice and Policy. Cham: Palgrave and MacMillian.

Fantahun, T., and Taa, B. (2022). Children of the street: The cause and consequence of their social exclusion in Gondar city, North West Ethiopia. Cogent Social Sciences, 8(1), 1-12.

Faria, C., and Mollett, S. (2020). 'We didn't have time to sit still and be scared': A postcolonial feminist geographic reading of 'An other geography'. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 10(1), 23-29.

Farid, S., and Mostari, M. (2015). Lives and livelihoods of children living in street situation in Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Bangladesh Research Publications Journal, 11(1), 40-48).

Federle, K., H. (1994). Rights flow downhill. *The International Journal of children's Rights*, 2, 343-368.

Feldman, M. S., and Bell, J., & Berger, M. T. (2003). *Gaining Access: A practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

Fetterman, D., M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step*. 3rd Ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Finlay, J, M., and Bowman, J, A. (2017). Geographies on the Move: A Practical and Theoretical Approach to the Mobile Interview, *The Professional Geographer*, 69(2), 263-274.

Fisher, S. (1981). Power and Powerlessness in Appalachia: A Review Essay. *Appalachian Journal*, 8(2), 142-149.

Fisher, W., F. (1997). Doing good? the politics and antipolitics of NGO practices. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 439-464.

Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.

Franco, P., and Yang, N., E. (2021). Exiting fieldwork 'with Grace': reflections on the unintended consequences of participant observation and researcher participant relationships. *Qualitative Market Research: an international journal, University of Sussex*, 1-26.

Franklin, B. (1995). The case for children's rights: A progress report, in B. Franklin (Ed.), *The Handbook of Children's Rights: Comparative Policy and Practice*, London: Routledge.

Franklin, B. (2002). Children's rights: an introduction, in B. Franklin (Ed*), The New Handbook of Children's Rights: Comparative Policy Practice*. London: Routledge.

Freeman, M., D., A. (2002). Children's rights ten years after ratification, in B. Franklin (Ed.), The New Handbook of Children's Rights: Comparative Policy and Practice. London: Routledge.

Freeman, M., D., A. (2007). A Commentary on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Leiden: The Netherlands.

Freeman, M., D., A. (2011). Why it remains important to take children's rights seriously, in M. Freeman (Ed), Children's Rights: Progress and Perspectives Essays from the International Journal of Children's Rights. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Frones, I. (1994). Time for children or time for adults, J. Qvortrup and M. Bardy, G. Sgritta & H. Wintersberger (Eds.), in *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics*. Vienna: Avebury.

Gabriel, J. (2021). Listen to the voices of street children: A case study in Trinidad and Tobago. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 16(5), 212-218.

Gade, D., W. (2001). The Languages of Foreign Fieldwork. *Geographical Review*, 91(1-2), 370-379.

Galway, L., P., Corbett, K., K., & Zeng, L. Where are the NGOs and why? The distribution of health and development NGOs in Bolivia. *Globalization and Health*, 8(38), 1-13.

Gallagher, M. (2008). Foucault, Power and Participation. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 16, 395–406.

Gallagher, M. (2009). Rethinking participatory methods in children's geographies, in LV Blerk and M. Kesby (Eds.), *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. Routledge, London.

Gaskell, C. (2008). 'But they just don't respect us': young people's experiences of (dis)respected citizenship and the new labour respect agenda. *Children's Geographies*, 6(3), 223-238.

General Comment. (2017). General comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 1-21.

Genzuk, M. (2003). A Synthesis of Ethnographic ResearChapter Occasional Papers Series, Rossier School of Education, *University of Southern California, Los Angeles*, 1-11.

Gervais-Lambony, p. (2014). Contentious identities? Urban space, cityness and citizenship, in S. Parnell and S. Oldfield (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook on Cities of the Global Sout*h. Routledge: London.

Gilbert, A. (2014). The new international division of labour, in V. Desai, R. B. Potter (Eds.), *The Companion to Development Studies*, Third Edition. London: Routledge.

Glauser, B. (1990). Street children: Deconstructing a construct, in A. James, A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporay Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*. London: Routledge.

Glasius, M., de Lange, M., Bartman, J., Dalmasso, E., Adel del Sordi, A., L., Micaelsen, & Ruijgrok, K. (2018). *Research, Ethics and Risk in The Authoritarian Field*. Cham: Palgrave and MacMillan.

Grady, C. (2005). Payment of clinical research subjects. *Journal of Clinical Investment*, 115(7), 1681-1687.

Grant, T. (2017). The complexity of aspiration: the role of hope and habitus in shaping working-class young people' aspirations to higher education. *Children's Geographies*, 15(3), 289-303.

Greenwood, D., J. and Levin, M. (1998). *Introduction to Action research: Social Research for Social Change*. London: Sage.

Grundling, J., and Grundling, I. (2005). The concrete particulars of the everyday realities of street children. *Human Relations*, 58(2), 173-190.

Gupta, A., and Ferguson, J. (1992). Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference. *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), 6-23.

Gutierrez, I., T., Miller, P., J., Rosengren, K., S., & Schein, S., S. (2014). Diversity in children's understanding of death. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 43-61.

Habib, E. (2009). The role of government and NGOs in slum development: the case of Dhaka City. *Development in Practice*, 19(2), 259-265.

Hackenbroch, K. (2011). Urban Informality and Negotiated Space, disP - *The Planning Review*, 47(187), 59-69.

Hadfield-Hill, S. (2016). Children and Young People in Changing Urban Environments in the Majority World, in K. Nairn, P. Kraftl & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Space, Place, and Environment*. Singapore: Springer.

Hai, Md., A. (2014). Problems faced by the street children: a study on some selected places In Dhaka City, Bangladesh. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 3(10), 45-56.

Hammersley, M. (2015). Research ethics and the concept of children's rights. *Children & Society,* 29, 569-582.

Hanson, K. (2012). Schools of Thought in Children's Rights, in M. Liebel (Ed.), *Children's Rights from Below: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. London: Palgrave and MacMillan.

Hanson, K. (2017). Embracing the past: 'Been', 'being' and 'becoming' children. *Childhood*, 24(3), 281-285.

Hapke, H., M. (2013). Theorizing patriarchy: Development paradoxes and the geography of gender in South Asia. *Gender, Technology and Development,* 17(1), 1-29.

Haque, M., S. (2002). The changing balance of power between the government and NGOs in Bangladesh. *International Political Science Review*, 23(4), 411–435.

Haque, M., S. (2004). International Review of Administrative Sciences. *IIAS*, 70(2), 271-290.

Harcourt, D., and Hagglund, S. (2013). Turning the UNCRC upside down: a bottom-up perspective on children's rights. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 21(4), 286-299.

Harlow, J., Golub, A., & Allenby, A. (2013). A review of utopian themes in sustainable development discourse. Sustainable Development, 21, 270-280.

Hart, R. (1979). *Children's Experience of Place*. New York: Irvington Publishers.

Hart, R. A. (1992). Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship. *Innocent Essays, Florence: Unicef,* 1-41.

Hay, I., and Israel, M. (2022). Caring about research ethics and integrity in human geography, S. Henn, J. Migglebrink, & K. Horschelmann (Eds.), *Research Ethics in Human Geography*. London: Routledge.

Haynes, J., Murris, K. (2001). Opening Up Space for Children's Thinking and Dialogue. Opinion Paper, *Annual Meeting of the United Kingdom Reading Association*, 1-13.

Head, E. (2009). The ethics and implications of paying participants in qualitative research. *Chapter International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4), 335-344.

Hecht, T. (1998). *At Home in The Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Hemming, P., J., (2008). Mixing qualitative research methods in children's geographies. *Area*, 40(2), 142-162.

Henderson, J., V., Shalizi, Z. & Venables, A., J. (2001). Geography and development. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 1, 81-105.

Henderson, J., and Denny, K. (2015). The resilient child, human development and the "postdemocracy". *BioSocieties*, 1-27, doi:10.1057/biosoc.2015.24.

Henry, M., G. (2003). 'Where are you really from?': Representation, identity and power in the fieldwork experiences of a South Asian diasporic. *Qualitative Research*, 3(2), 229-242.

Herbert, S. (2000). For ethnography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24(4), 550-568.

Herod, A., and Lambert, R. (2016). Neoliberalism, precarious work and remaking the geography of global capitalism in A. Herod and R. Lambert (Eds.), *Neoliberal Capitalism and Precarious Work: Ethnographies of Accommodation and Resistanc*e. Cheltenham: Elgar.

Hicks, D. (2014). A geography of hope. *Geography*, 99(1), 5-12.

Hill, M., Davis, J., Prout, A., & Tisdall, K. (2004) 'Moving the participation agenda forward'. *Children and Society*, 18(2), 77–96.

Hirai, H., Hiyane, A. (2021). How can NGO interventions break the poverty trap? Evidence from at-risk youths in the Philippines. *Development in Practice*, 1-14.

Hint, D. (2011). 'Wales is my home': higher education aspirations and student mobilities in Wales. *Children's Geographies*, 9(1), 23-34.

Holloway, L., S. and Valentine, G. (2000a). Spatiality and the New Social Studies of Childhood. *Sociology*, 34(4), 763-783.

Holloway, L., S. and Valentine, G. (2000b). Children's geographies and the new social studies of childhood, in S. L. Holloway and G. Valentine (Eds.), *Children's geographies: Playing, living, learning*. London: Routledge.

Holloway, L., and Hubbard, P. (2013). *People and Place: The extraordinary Geographies of everyday Life*. Oxon: Routledge.

Holloway, S., L. (2014). Changing children's geographies. *Children's Geographies*, 12(4), 377-394.

Holloway, S., L., and Pimlott-Wilson, H. (2014). Enriching children, institutionalizing childhood? geographies of play, extracurricular activities, and parenting in England. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(3), 614-627.

Holloway, S. L, Holt, L. & Mills, S. (2019). Questions of agency: capacity, subjectivity, spatiality and temporality. *Progress in Human Geography*, 43(3), 458–477.

Holt, L. (2004). The ‘voices’ of children: de-centring empowering research relations. *Children’s Geographies*, 2(1), 13-27.

Holt, L., and Holloway, S., L. (2006). Editorial: Theorising other childhoods in a globalised world. *Children’s Geographies*, 4(2), 135-142.

Holt, J. (1995). *Escape from the Childhood: The Needs and Rights of Children. Holt Associates*: Cambridge.

Hopkins, P., and Pain, R. (2007). Thinking Relationally. *Area*, 39(3), 287-294.

Horschelmann, K. (2016). Dissent and Youth citizenship, in in K. P. Kallio & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Horschelmann, K. (2021). Childhood is a foreign country? Ethics in socio-spatial childhood research as a question of ‘how’ and ‘what’, in S. Henn, J. Miggelbrink, & K. Horschelmann (Eds.), *Research Ethics in Human Geography*. London: Routledge.

Horton, J., and Kraftl, P. (2006). What else? some more ways of thinking and doing ‘Children's Geographies’. Children’s Geographies, 4(01), 69-95.

Horten, J., and Kraftl, P. (2008). Reflections on Geographies of Age: A Response to Hopkins and Pain. *Area*, 40(2), 284-288.

Horten, J,, Kraftl, P., & Tucker, F. (2008). The challenges of ‘Children's Geographies’: A reaffirmation. *Children's Geographies*, 6(4), 335-334.

Hosen, A., Khandokar, S., H., M., & Islam, M. (2010). Child Labor and Child Education in Bangladesh: Issues, Consequences and Involvements. *International Business Research*, 3(2), 1-8.

Hossain, S. (2012). The informal practice of appropriation and social control – experience from a bosti in Dhaka. *Environment & Urbanization*, 25(1), 209-224.

Hossain, Z. (2020). *Manush Howar Golpo*. Dhaka: Janata Prokash.

Hulme, D. and Edwards, M. (1997). NGOs, States, and Donors: An Overview, in D. Hulme and M. Edwards (Eds.), *NGOs, States, and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?* London: Macmillan Press.

Hulme, D. (2001). Reinventing the Third World State: Service Delivery and the Civic Realm, in W. McCourt and M. Minogue (Eds.), *The Internationalization of Public Management: Reinventing the Third World State*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Hulme, D. (2008). Reflections on NGOs and Development: The elephant, the dinosaur, several tigers but No owl, in A. J. Bebbington, S. Hickey, & D. C. Mitlin (Eds.), *Can NGOs Make a Difference: The Challenge of Development Alternatives*. London: Zed Books.

I'Anson, J. (2013). Beyond the Child's Voice: towards an ethics for children's participation rights. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 3(2), 104-114.

Imoh, A., T-D., and Ame, R. (2012). Introduction, in A. T-D. Imoh and R. Ame (Eds.), *Childhoods at the Intersection of the Local and the Global*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Institute of Child and Human Development (ICHD). (2013). Building institutional capacity to conduct training for kindergarten (kg) in promoting early childhood development and pre-primary education. *ICHD Report*, 4-36.

Islam, M. (2014). Women, Politics and Patriarchy: A Case of Bangladesh, in M. Alston (Ed), Women, Political Struggles and Gender Equality, in *South Asia. Gender, Development and Social Change*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Islam, Md., R. (2015). An Experience about the Living Conditions of Street Children in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. Journal of Poverty, *Investment and Development*, 16, 1-7.

Islam, M., R. (2015). NGOs' Social capital development initiatives for social welfare: Bangladesh experience. *Global Social Welfare*, 2, 167–176.

Islam, M., R. (2016). NGOs, *Social Capital and Community Empowerment in Bangladesh*. Singapoer: Palgrave Macmillan.

Islam, M., S., (2019). An assessment of child protection in Bangladesh: How effective is NGO-led Child-Friendly Space? Evaluation and Program Planning, 72, 8-15.

Isin, E., F., and Turner, B., S. (2007). Investigating citizenship: An agenda for citizenship studies. *Citizenship Studies*, 11(1), 5-17.

Jack, G. 2010). Place matters: the significance of place attachments for children's well-being. *British Journal of Social Work*, 40, 755-771.

James, A. (2011). Agency, in J. Qvortrup, W. A. Corsaro & M-S Honig (Eds.), *The Palgrabe Handbook of Childhood Studies*. London: Palgrave MacMillian.

James, L., A. (2010). Competition or integration? The next step in childhood studies? *Childhood*, 17(4), 485-499.

James, A and James, L., A. (2004). *Constructing Childhood: Theory, Policy and Social Practice*. New York: Palgrave.

James, A. (2007). Giving voice to children's voices: Practices and problems, pitfalls and potentials. *American Anthropologist*, 109(2), 261-272.

Jamil. I. (1998). Transactional friction between NGOs and public agencies in Bangladesh: Culture or dependency? *Contemporary South Asia*, 7(1), 43-69.

Jazeel, T., and McFarlane, C. (2007). Responsible learning: cultures of knowledge production and the North-South divide, *Antipode*, 39(5), 781-789.

Jenks, C. (1996 and 2005). *Childhood*. London: Routledge.

John, M. (2003). The fourth 'P': the issue of power, in M. John (Ed.), *Children's Rights and Power: Charging Up for a New Century*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Johnson, J., C., Avenarius, C., & Weatherford, J. (2006). The active participant-observer: Applying social role analysis to participant observation. *Field Methods*, 18(2), 111-134.

Jones, J., and Maanka, M. (2021). Children's rights and entitlements. *University of Dundee*. Online access: https://www.dundee.ac.uk/corporate-information/childrens-rights-and-entitlements.

Jordan, L., Tuijl, P., v. (2006). Rights and responsibilities in the political landscape of NGO accountability: introduction and overview, in L. Jordan and P., v., Tuijl (Eds.), *NGO Accountability Politics, Principles and Innovations*. London: Earthscan.

Joronen, M., Rose, M. (2020). Vulnerability and its politics: Precarity and the woundedness of power. *Progress in Human Geography*, 1-17.

Kaiser, E., and Sinanan, A., N. (2020). Survival and resilience of female street children experiencing sexual violence in Bangladesh: A qualitative study. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 29(5), 550-569.

Kabeer, N., Nambissan, G., B., & Subrahmanian, R. (2003). Needs versus rights? Child labour, social exclusion and the challenge of universalising primary education, in N. Kabeer, G. B. Nambissan, & R. Subrahmanian (Eds.), *Child Labour and the Right to Education in South Asia. Needs versus Rights*. Dhaka: UPL.

Kabeer, N. (2012). Empowerment, citizenship and gender justice: A contribution to locally grounded theories of change in women's lives. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 6(3), 216-232.

Kabeer, N., and Sulaiman, M. (2014). Assessing the impact of social mobilization: Nijera Kori and the construction of collective capabilities in rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal for People-Centered Development*, 16(1), 47-68.

Kallio, K., P., and Häkli, J. (2010). Political geography in childhood. *Political Geography*, 29(7), 1-9.

Kallio, K. P., & Häkli, J. (2011). Tracing children's politics. *Political Geography*, 30(2), 99-109.

Kallio, K., P. (2012). Desubjugating childhoods by listening to the child's voice and childhoods at play. ACME: *An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 11 (1), 81-109.

Kallio, K. P., Hakli, J., & Backlund, P. (2015). Lived citizenship as the locus of political agency in participatory policy. *Citizenship Studies*, 19(1), 101–119.

Kallio, H. (2016). Youthful political presence: Right, reality and practice of the child, in T, Skelton, KP Kallio, & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Kallio, K., P, & Mills, S. (2016). Editorial: Geographies of Children and Young People's Politics, Citizenship, and Rights, in K. P. Kallio & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Kapoor, D. (2013). Social action and ngoization in contexts of development dispossession in rural india: explorations into the un-civility of civil society, in A. Choudry and D. Kapoor (Eds.), NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions and Process. Zed: London.

Karsten, L. (2016). City kids and citizenship. Urban Europe. *Wageningen: The Amsterdam University press*, pp. 75-81.

Katz, C. (1991). Sow What You Know: The Struggle for Social Reproduction in Rural Sudan. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 81(3), 488-514.

Katz, C. (1994). Playing the Field: Questions of Fieldwork in Geography. *Professional Geographer*, 46(1), 67-72.

Katz, C. (2004). *Growing Up Global: Economic Restructuring and Children's Everyday Lives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Katz, C. (2008). Childhood as spectacle: Relays of anxiety and the reconfiguration of the child. *Cultural Geographies*, 15, 5-17.

Keller, P. (2021). What art history reveals about the rise of anti-feminist women. [Online]. [Accessed: 01 May 2021]. Available from: https://psyche.co/ideas/what-art-history-reveals-about-the-rise-of-anti-feminist-women?utm_source=pocket-newtab-global-en-GB.

Kennedy, C. H., Hussain, I., & Zaidi, S., A. (1999). Reconsidering the Relationship between the State, Donors, and NGOs in Bangladesh. *The Pakistan Development Review*, 38(4), 489-510.

Khair, S. (2001). Street Children in Conflict with the Law: The Bangladesh Experience. *Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law*, 2(1), 55-76.

Khan, A., A. (2021). Advancing children's geographies through 'grey areas' of age and childhood. *Geography Compass*, 1-14.

Khatun, R. (2018). What do grown children owe their parents? A moral duty and legal responsibility in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Law, Policy and The Family*, 32, 363-373.

Kid's Rights. (2020). *KidsRights Index*, 1-26.

Koller, D., and Farley, M. (2019) Examining elements of children's place attachment, *Children's Geographies*. 17(4), 491-500.

Kraftl, P. (2008). Young people, hope, and childhood-hope. *Space and Culture*, 11(2), 81-92.

Kraftl, P. (2013). Beyond 'voice', beyond 'agency', beyond 'politics'? Hybrid childhoods and some critical reflections on children's emotional geographies. motion, *Space and Society,* 9, 13-23.

Kwong, J. (2011). Education and identity: The marginalisation of migrant youths in Beijing. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(8), 871-883.

Lancione, M., and McFarlane, C. (2016). Life at the urban margins: Sanitation infra-making and the potential of experimental comparison. *Environment and Planning A*, 0(0), 1-20.

Lansdown, G. (2010). The realisation of children's participation rights: critical reflections, in B. Percy-Smith, N. Thomas (Eds.), *A Handbook of Children And Young People's Participation: Perspectives From Theory And Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Lapegna, P. (2009). Ethnographers of the world…united? Current debates on the ethnographic study of "globalization". *American Sociological Association*, XV(1), 3-24.

Larkins, C. (2013). Enacting children's citizenship: Developing understandings of how children enact themselves as citizens through actions and acts of citizenship. *Childhood*, 21(1), 7-21.

Laurier, E. (2016). Participant and non-participant observation, in N. Clifford, M. Cope, T. Gillespie & S. French (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography*. London: Sage Publications.

Laws, S., and Mann, G. (2004). So you want to involve children in research? A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children. *Save the Children*, 1-76.

Lee, I-F, (2016). Paradoxical Moments in Children's Contemporary Lives: Childhoods in East Asia, K. P. Kallio & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Lees, L. (2003). Urban geography: 'New' urban geography and the ethnographic void. *Progress in Human geography*, 27(1), 107-113.

Lewis, D. (2015). NGOs and civil society, in A. Riaz and M. S. Rahman (Eds.), Routledge *Handbook of Contemporary Bangladesh*. London: Routledge.

Lewis, D. (2019). 'Big D' and 'little d': Two types of twenty-first century development? *Third World Quarterly*, 40(11), 1957-1975.

Liebel, M. (2011). *Children's Rights from Below Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan: New York.

Liebel, M., and Invernizzi, A. (2017). Introduction, in A. Invernizzi, M. Liebel, B. Milne & R. Budde (Eds.), *'Children out of Place' and Human Rights*. Switzerland: Springer.

Liebel, M. (2020). *Decolonizing childhoods: From exclusion to dignity*. University of Bristol: Polity Press.

Lieten, G., K. (2009). *Working Boys and Girls at Risk*. Dhaka: The University Press Limited.

Lipponen, L, and Pursi, A. (2022). Children's grief: repertoires of practices in institutional early childhood education and care. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 29(3), 215-235.

Lister, R. (2005). Unpacking children's citizenship, in A. Invernizzi and J. Williams (Eds.), *Children and Citizenship*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.

Lister, R. (2007). Inclusive citizenship: Realizing the potential. *Citizenship Studies*, 11(1), 49-61.

Low, S. (2017). *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place*. London: Routledge.

Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927-942.

Maeder, H. (1945). Children are the Same Everywhere. *Childhood Education*, 21(5), 204-208.

Mahon, M., M. (2011). Death in the lives of children, in V. Talwar, P. L. Harris & M. Schleifer (Eds.), *Children's Understanding of Death: From Biological to Religious Concepts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mannion, G. and I'Anson, J. (2004). Beyond the Disneyesque: Children's Participation, Spatiality and Adult-Child Relations. *Childhood*, 11(3), 303-318.

Mannion, G. (2007). Going Spatial, Going Relational: Why "Listening to Children" and Children's Participation Needs Reframing. *Cultural Politics of Education*, 28(3), 405-420.

Marcus, G., E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95-117.

Marshall, C., and Rossman, G., B. (1999). *Designing Qualitative Research*, 3rd Ed. London: Sage Publications.

Marshall, T., H. (1950). *Citizenship and Social Class and Other Essays*. Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press.

Mason, J. (2005). *Qualitative Research*, 2nd Ed. London: Sage.

Massey, D. (2005). *For Space*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Matthews, H. (1998). The Geography of Children: Some ethical and methodological considerations for project and dissertation work. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 22(3), 311-324,

Matthews, H., Taylor, M., Percy-Smith, B., & Limb, M. (2000). The unacceptable Flaneur: The shopping mall as a teenage hangout. *Childhood*, 7(3), 279–294.

Mbise, A., T. (2016). The diffusion of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) more than the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) in Africa: The influence of coercion and emulation. *International Social Work*, 60(5), 1233-1243.

McEwan, C. (2003). Material geographies and postcolonialism. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 24(3), 340-355.

McFarlane, C. (2004). Travelling knowledges: urban poverty and slum/shack dwellers international. *PhD Thesis, Durham University*, 8-246.

McFarlane, C. (2011). The city as assemblage: dwelling and urban space. *Society and Space*, 29, 649-671.

McFarlane, C., and Silver, J. (2016). Navigating the city: dialectics of everyday urbanism. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 42, 458-471.

McGregor, A., Challies, E., Overton, J., & Sentes, L. (2013). Developmentalities and donor–ngo relations: Contesting foreign aid policies in New Zealand/Aotearoa. *Antipode*, 45(5), 1232-1253.

McIntosh, I., Punch, S., & Emond, R. (2016). Creating Spaces to Care: Children's Rights and Food Practices in Residential Care, in K. P. Kallio & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

McNamee, S. (2000). Foucault's Heterotopia and Children's Everyday Lives. *Childhood*, 7(4), 479-492.

McNeill, P., and Chapman, S. (2005). *Research Methods*, 3rd Ed. London: Routledge.

Meierotto, L. (2009). The uneven geographies of transnational advocacy: The case of the Talo Dam. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 90, S279–S285.

Meincke, A., L. (2009). Street children: Occupiers of the invisible public space. *Consortium for Street Children, Paper Prepared for the Socio Design Foundation*, 1-8.

Meincke, A., L. (2011). *Children's Voices Paper: Nothing About Us, without Us*. London: Consortium for Children.

Menga, F. (2020). Researchers in the panopticon? Geographies of research, fieldwork, and authoritarianism. *Geographical Review*, 110(3), 341-357.

Mercer, C. (2006). Working with partners: NGOs and CBOs, in V. Desai and R. B. Potter (Eds.), *Doing Development Researh Chapter*. London: Sage Publications.

Miah, H., A., & M. and Reza, M., I. (2014). Exploring the processes and consequences of child labour in building resilience of the extreme poor: The genealogy of child labour in Northern districts of Bangladesh. *Practical Action, Bangladesh, Working Paper*, (25), 1-29.

Mia, Md., T. and Islam, M. (2021). Legal Protection of Street children in Bangladesh: with References to International and National Laws. *Journal of Asian and African Social Science and Humanities*, 7(2), 34-49.

Michailova, S., Piekkari, R., Ritvala, T., Mihailova, I., & Salmi, A. (2014). Breaking the silence about exiting fieldwork: A relational approach and its implications for theorizing, *Academy of Management Review*, 39(2), 138-161.

Miggelbrink, J., Horschelmann, K., & Henn, Henn, S. (2021). Reflecting research ethics in human geography: A constant need, in S. Henn, J. Miggelbrink, & K. Horschelmann (Eds.), *Research Ethics in Human Geography*. London: Routledge.

Miller, A., and Beazley, H. (2021). 'We have to make the tourists happy'; orphanage tourism in Siem Reap, Cambodia through the children's own voices. *Children's Geographies*, DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2021.1913481.

Mills, S. (2017). Voice: sonic geographies of childhood. *Children's Geographies*, 15(6), 664-677.

Mills, S. (2003). *Michael Foucault*. Routledge: New York.

Mills, S. (2013). 'An instruction in good citizenship': scouting and the historical geographies of citizenship education. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 38, 120-134.

Mir, M., and Bala, S., K. (2015). NGO accountability in Bangladesh: Two contrasting cases. *International Society for Third Sector Research*, 26, 1831-1851.

Mirza, H. (2013). Political settlement dynamics in a limited-access order: The case of Bangladesh. *ESID Working Paper*, 23, 1-62.

Mitchell, D, and Heynen, N. (2009). The geography of survival and the right to the city: Speculations on surveillance, legal innovation, and the criminalization of intervention. *Urban Geography*, 30(6), 611-632.

Mizen, P. (2005). A little 'light work'? Children's images of their labour. *Visual Studies*, 20(2), 124-139.

Mizen, P., and Ofosu-Kusi, Y. (2010). Unofficial truths and everyday insights: Understanding voices in visual research with the children of Accra's urban poor. *Visual Studies*, 25(3), 255-267.

Mohamed, S., Q. (2020). Openness and spontaneity in fieldwork are essential to the situated researcher. LSE Blog, accessed on 15/11/20, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/02/03/fieldwork-situated-researcher-identity-diaspora-somalia/.

Moller, J., and Skaaning, S-E. (2010). Marshall Revisited: The sequence of citizenship rights in the twenty-first century. Government and Opposition, 45(4), 457-483.

Moosa-Mitha, M. (2005). A Difference-Centred Alternative to Theorization of Children's Citizenship Rights. *Citizenship Studies*, 9(4), 369-388.

Moosa-Mitha, M. (2019). The political geography of the 'best interest of the child, in T. Skelton and S. C. Aitken (Eds.), *Establishing Geographies of Children and Young People*. Singapore: Speringer.

Morrow, V. (2013). Whose values? Young people's aspirations and experiences of schooling in Andhra Pradesh, India. *Children & Society*, 27, 258-269.

Mosse, D. 2004. Power relations and poverty reduction in R. Alsop (Ed.), *Power, Rights and Poverty: Concepts and Connections*. Washington D.C.: The World Bank.

Motala, S., and Smith, T. (2003). Exposed to Risk: Girls and Boys Living on the Streets. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 56, 62-72.

Muinzer, T., L. (2014). The law of the dead: A critical review of burial law, with a view to its development. *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 34(4), 791-818.

Murnaghan, A., M., F. (2019). Play and playgrounds in children's geographies, in T. Skelton and S. Aitken (Eds.), *Establishing Geographies of Children and Young People*, Singapore: Springer.

Murray, J. (2019). Hearing young children's voices. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 27(1), 1-5.

Mwambari, D. (2019). Local positionality in the production of knowledge in Northern Uganda. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, 1-12.

Narayan, D. (2000). Poverty is powerlessness and voicelessness. *Finance & Development*, 37(4), 18-21.

Nieuwenhuys, O. (2001). By the Sweat of Their Brow? 'Street Children', NGOs and Children's Rights in Addis Ababa. *Journal of the International African Institute*, 71(4), 539-557.

Nieuwenhuys, O. (2013). Theorizing childhood(s): Why we need postcolonial perspectives. *Childhood*, 20(1), 3-8.

O'Kane, C. (2000). The development of participatory techniques: Facilitating children's views about decisions which affect them, in P. Christensen, A. James (Eds.), *Research with Children: Perspectives and Practices*, 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge.

O'Kane, C. (2002). Marginalized children as social actors for social justice in South Asia. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 32(6), 697-710.

O'Neill, O. (1988). Children's Rights and Children's Lives. *Ethics*, 98(3), 445-463.

Olowu, D. (2002). Protecting children's rights in Africa: A critique of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 10(2), 127-136.

One, T, S. (2007). Defining rights: Children's rights in theory and in practice. *Peer Reviewed Paper, He Kupu*, 41-57.

Onis, Z., and Senses, F. (2005). Rethinking the Emerging Post-Washington Consensus. *Development and Change*, 36(2), 263-290.

Orgad, S. (2013). Visualizers of solidarity: organizational politics in humanitarian and international development NGOs. *Visual Communication*, 12(3), 295-314.

Orme, J., and Seipel, M., O. (2007). Survival strategies of street children in Ghana: A qualitative study. *International Social Work*, 50(4), 489-499.

Ostrow, J., M. (1981). Culture as a fundamental dimension of experience: A discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of human habitus. *Human Studies*, 4, 279-297.

Ovi, D., A. (2021). Street children in Bangladesh: Rights under the legislation and Government roles. *The Business Standard*. [Accessed on 17 February, 2022]. Available from: https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/street-children-bangladesh-rights-under-legislation-and-government-roles-207697.

Palmer, J., Fam, D., Smith, T. & Kilham, S. (2014). Ethics in Fieldwork: Reflections on the Unexpected. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(28), 1-13.

Paluck, E. L. (2009). Methods and ethics with research teams and NGOs: Comparing experiences across the border of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo, in C. L. Sriram, J. C. King, J. A. Mertus, O. Martin-Ortega, & J. Herman (Eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. London: Routledge.

Pansardi, P. (2012). Power to and power over: Two distinct concepts of power? *Journal of Political Power*, 5(1), 73-89.

Paprocki, K. (2018). Threatening dystopias: Development and adaptation regimes in Bangladesh. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 108(4), 955-973.

Parkes, A. (2013). *Children and International Human Rights Law: The Right of the Child to be Heard*. London: Routledge.

Parkes, A. (2016). Making space for listening to children in Ireland: State obligations, children's voices, and meaningful opportunities in education, in T. Skelton (Ed), *Geographies of Young People and Children*. Singapore: Springer.

Pearce, J. (2010). Is social change fundable? NGOs and theories and practices of social change. *Development in Practice*, 20(6), 621-635.

Percy-Smith, B. (1999). Multiple childhood geographies: giving voice to young people's experience of place. *Doctoral Thesis, University College, Northampton*, 1-554.

Percy-Smith, B., and Thomas, N. (Eds.) (2010), *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation*. London: Routledge.

Percy-Smith, B. (2010). Councils, consultations and community: rethinking the spaces for children and young people's participation. *Children's Geographies*, 8(2), 107-122.

Percy-Smith, B. (2011). Children's voice and perspectives: The struggle for recognition, meaning and effectiveness, in: S. Roulstone and S. McLeod (Eds.), *Listening to Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs*. Havant: J&R Press.

Percy-Smith, B., and Thomas, N. (2016). Negotiating active citizenship: young peopl's participation in everyday spaces, in K. P. Kallio, S. Mills & T. Skelton (Eds), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Perez, M., S., Saavedra, C., M., & Habashi, J. (2017). Rethinking global north onto-epistemologies in childhood studies. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 7(2), 79-83.

Pereira, V., and Mailk, A. (2015). Making sense and identifying aspects of Indian culture(s) in organisations: Demystifying through empirical evidence. *Culture and Organization*, 21(5), 355-365.

Petras, J. (1999). NGOs: In the service of imperialism. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 29(4), 429-440.

Philo, C. (2000). 'The corner-stones of my world': Editorial introduction to special issue on spaces of childhood. *Childhood*, 7(3), 243-256.

Pink, S. (2007). *Doing Visual Ethnography*. 2nd edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Pluck, G. (2015). The 'street children' of South America. *The Psychologist*, 28(1), 1-23.

Pollack, C., E. (2003). Returning to a safe area? The importance of burial for return to Srebrenica. *Journal of Regugee Studie*s, 16(2), 186-201.

Porter, G. and Abane, A. (2009). Increasing children's participation in African transport planning: reflections on methodological issues in a child-centred research project, in L. v. Blerk and M. Kesby (Eds.), *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. London: Routledge.

Potter, R., B. (2014). The nature of development studies, in V. Desai and R.B. Potter (Eds.), *The Companion to development Studies*, 3rd Edition. London: Routledge.

Power, M. (2003). *Rethinking Development Geographies*. London: Routledge.

Power, M. (2010). Geopolitics and 'Development': An Introduction. *Geopolitics*, 15(3), 433-440.

Prosser, J., and Loxley, A. (2010). The application of visual methodology in the exploration of the visual culture of schools, in D. Hartas (Ed.), *Educational Research and Inquiry: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. New York: Continuum.

Prout, A., and James, A. (1997). A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems, in A. James and A. Prout (Eds.), *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood.* London: Falmer Press.

Prout, A. (2004). *The Future of Childhood: Towards the Interdisciplinary Study of Children*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Punch, S. (2002). Research with children: The same or different from research with adults? *Childhood*. 9(3), 321-341.

Punch, S. (2007). Generational power relations in rural Bolivia, in R. Panelli, S. Punch & E. Robson (Eds.), *Global Perspectives on Rural Childhood and Youth: Young Rural Lives. Routledge Studies in Human Geography*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Punch, S. (2020). Why have generational orderings been marginalised in the social sciences including childhood studies? *Children's Geographies*, 18(2), 128-140.

Pykett, J., and Disney, T. (2016). Brain-targeted teaching and the biopolitical child, in T, Skelton, KP Kallio, & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Quennerstedt, A., Robinson, C., & I'Anson, J. (2018). The UNCRC: The voice of global consensus on children's rights? *Nordic Journal of Human Rights*, 36(1), 38-54.

Rabinow, P. (1977). *Reflections on fieldwork in Morocco*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Rahman, S. (2006). Development, democracy and the NGO sector theory and evidence from Bangladesh. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 22(4), 451-473.

Rahman, Md., M. (2009). Temporary migration and changing family dynamics: Implications for social development. *Population, Space and Place*, 15, 161-174.

Rahman, M., Kabir, M., & Shahidullah, M. (2007). Participation of adolescents in household decision-making process in Bangladesh. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 32(2), 123-127.

Rahman, S., and Tasnim, F. (2023). The role of NGOs in ensuring local governance in Bangladesh: from the perception of other actors of governance. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Regional Science*, 1-28.

Ramakrishnan, K. (2016). Grand visions fizzle on the margins of the city, in M. Lincione (Ed), *Rethinking Life at the Margins: The Assemblage of Contexts, Subjects, and Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Ransome, P. (2013). *Ethics & Values in Social Researh*. Chapter: Palgrave MacMillan, London.

Rashid, T. (2012). Grameen and the Politics of Development in Bangladesh. *India Quarterly*, 68(3), 215-230.

Ray, P. (2010). The participation of children living in the poorest and most difficult situations, in in B. Percy-Smith, N. Thomas (Eds.), *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation: Perspectives from Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge.

Rawls, J. (1999). *A Theory of Justice, Revised edition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Reith, S. (2010). Money, power, and donor–NGO partnerships. *Development in Practice*, 20(3), 446-455.

Reynolds, P., Nieuwenhuys, O., & Hanson, K. (2006). Refractions of children's rights in development practice: a view from anthropology – introduction. *Childhood*, 13(3), 291-302.

Reza, H. (2017). Networks, social ties, and informal employment of Bangladeshi street children. *Childhood*, 24(4), 485-501.

Reza, Md. H., and Bromfield, N. F. (2019). Poverty, vulnerability and everyday resilience: how bangladeshi street children manage economic challenges through financial transactions on the streets. *British Journal of Social Work*, 49, 1105-1123.

Ridge, T. (2006). Children and poverty, in E. K. M. Tisdall, J. Davis, M. Hill, & A. Prout (Eds.), *Participation for What?: Children, Young People and Social Inclusion*. London: Policy Press.

Roberts, H. (2000). Listening to children: And hearing them. In P. Christensen & A. James (Eds.), *Research with children: Perspectives and Practices*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Roche, J. (1999). Children: Rights, participation and citizenship. *Childhood*, 6(4), 475-493.

Rose, G. (2008). Using photographs as illustrations in human geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 32(1), 151-160.

Rose, G. (2010). On the relation between 'visual research methods' and contemporary visual culture. *The Sociological Review*, 52, 24-46.

Rose, G. (2012). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. 3rd Ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Roy, I., Raquib, T., A., & Sarker, A., K. (2017). Contribution of NGOs for socio-economic development in Bangladesh. *Science Journal of Business and Management*, 5(1), 1-8.

Russell, L. (2013). Researching marginalised young people. *Ethnography and Education*, 8(1), 46-60.

Rygiel, K. (2016). Dying to live: migrant deaths and citizenship politics along European borders: transgressions, disruptions, and mobilizations. *Citizenship Studies*, 20(5), 545-560.

Salazar, G. (2008). Second-Class Citizens in the Making: The Rights of Street Children in Chile. *Latin American Perspectives*, 35(4), 30-44.

Sarkar, S. (2017). Tokai caught in a vicious cycle. *Financial Express*. [Accessed on 17 February, 2022]. Available from: https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/tokai-caught-in-a-vicious-cycle-1507389922.

Satta, C. (2015). A proper place for a proper childhood? Children's spatiality in a play centre, in A. Hackett, L. Procter, & J. Seymour (Eds.), in *Children's Spatialities: Embodiment, Emotion and Agency*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Savyasaachi and Butler, U., M. (2014). Decolonizing the notion of participation of children and young people, in E. K. M. Tisdall, A. M. Gadda & U. M. Butler (Eds.), *Children and Young People's Participation and Its Transformative Potential*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sayer, A. (2004). Seeking the geographies of power. *Economy and Society*, 33(2), 255-270.

Schafer, N. and Yarwood, R. (2009). Involving young people as researchers: uncovering multiple power relations among adults, in L. v. Blerk and M. Kesby (Eds.), *Doing Children's Geographies: Methodological Issues in Research with Young People*. London: Routledge.

Schimmel, N. (2006). Freedom and autonomy of street children. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 14, 211–23.

Schurmann, A., T., and Mahmud, S. (2009). Civil society, health, and social exclusion in Bangladesh. *Journal of Health Population Nutrition*, 27(4), 536-544.

Schwanen, T., and Atkinson, S. (2015). Geographies of wellbeing: An introduction. *The Geographical Journal*, 181(2), 98-101.

Scott, S., Miller, F., & Lloyd, K. (2006). Doing fieldwork in development geography: research culture and research spaces in Vietnam. Geographical Research, 44(1), 28-40.

Sen, A., and Ariizumi, H. (2020). Poverty, human development, and global childhood. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 21(1), 1-14.

Shamim, N., H., (2017). *Shishu Odhikar*. Dhaka: Muktochinta.

Sherry, J., F. (1983). Gift giving in anthropological perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 157-168.

Siddiqui, K. (2003). *Better Days, Better Lives. Towards a Strategy for Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Bangladesh*. Dhaka: UPL.

Sigurdsen, R. (2020). Children's Right to Respect for Their Human Dignity, in T. Haugli, A. Nylund, R. Sigurdsen, & Lena R. L. Bendiksen (Eds.), *Children's Constitutional Rights in the Nordic Countries*. Koninklijke Brill NV: Leiden.

Sinthia, S., A. (2020). Analysis of urban slum: Case study of Korail slum, Dhaka. *International Journal of Urban and Civil Engineering*, 14(11), 416-430.

Sircar, O., and Dutta, D. (2011). Beyond compassion: children of sex workers in Kolkata's Sonagachi. *Childhood*, 18(3), 333-349.

Siry, C. (2013). Exploring the complexities of children's inquiries in science: Knowledge production through participatory practices. *Res Sci Educ*, 43, 2407-2430.

Skelton, T. (2007). Children, Young People, UNICEF and Participation. *Children's Geographies*, 5(1), 165-181.

Skelton, T. (2008). Research with children and young people: exploring the tensions between ethics, competence and participation. *Children's Geographies*, 6(1), pp. pp. 21-36.

Skelton, T. (2009). Children's geographies/geographies of children: Play, work, mobilities and migration. *Geography Compass*, 3(4), 1430-1448.

Skelton, T. (2012). Geographies of children, young people and families in Asia. *Children's Geographies*, 10(4), 473-479.

Skelton, T. (2013). Young people, children, politics and space: a decade of youthful political geography scholarship 2003–13. *Space and Polity*, 17(1), 123-136.

Smith, T., A., and Dunkley, R. (2018). Technology-nonhuman-child assemblages: reconceptualising rural childhood roaming. *Children's Geographies*, 16(3), 304-318.

Smith, N., and Katz, C. (1993). Grounding metaphor: towards a spatialized politics, in Michael K. and Steve P. (Eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity*, London: Routledge.

Smith, D., M. (1999). Geography, community, and morality. *Environment and Planning*, 31, 19-35.

Sommer, D., Pramling, I., & Hundiede, K. (2010). Forward, in D. Sommer, I. Pramling, & K. Hundiede, *Child Perspective and Children's Perspectives in Theory and Practice*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Sparke, M. (2007). Everywhere but always somewhere: Critical geographies of the Global South. *The Global South*, 1(1/2), 117-126.

Spivak, G., C. (1985). The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives. *History and Theory*, 24(3), 247-292.

Srinivas, N. (2009). Against NGOs? A critical perspective on nongovernmental action.

Stafford, L., Harkin, J-a., Rolfe, A., Burton, J., & Morley, C. (2021). Why having a voice is important to children who are involved in family support services. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 115, 1-15.

Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *Chapter ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6 (3), 374-385.

Sultana, A. (2011). Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis. *The Arts Faculty Journal, Dhaka University*, 1-18.

Sultana, F. (2018). An(Other) geographical critique of development and SDGs. Dialogues in *Human Geography*, 8(2), 186-190.

Sylva, K. (2010). Forward, in D. Sommer, I. P. Samuelsson & K. Hundeide (Eds.), *Child Perspectives and Children's Perspectives in Theory and Practice*. New York: Springer.

Talwar, V., Harris, P., L. & Schleifer, M. (2011). *Children's Understanding of Death: From Biological to Religious Conceptions.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tariquzzaman, S., and Hossain, N. (2009). The Boys Left Behind: Where Public Policy has Failed to Prevent Child Labour in Bangladesh. *IDS Bulletin*, 40(1), 31-37.

Taylor, (1991). Experiencing fieldwork: an inside view of qualitative research leaving the field: Research, relationships, and responsibilities, in W. B. Shaffir and R. A. Stabbins (Eds.), *Experiencing Fieldwork: An Inside View of Qualitative Researh*. Chapter Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Tew, J. (2006). Understanding power and powerlessness towards a framework for emancipatory practice in social work. *Journal of Social Work*, 6(1), 33-51.

Thaper-Bjorkert, S., and Henry, M. (2004). Reassessing the research relationship: location, position and power in fieldwork accounts. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 7(5), 363-381.

The Daily Star. (2021). Rise of youth. [Accessed on 28 February, 2022]. Available from: https://www.thedailystar.net/rise-of-youth-51048].

The New Age. 2021. Rehabilitate street children, SCAN urges government. [Accessed on 14 February, 2022]. Available from: https://www.newagebd.net/article/140222/rehabilitate-street-children-scan-urges-government.

Thieme, T. (2016). 'The Ghetto Will Always Be My Living Room': Hustling and Belonging in Nairobi Slums, in M. Lincione (Ed), *Rethinking Life at the Margins: The Assemblage of Contexts, Subjects, and Politics*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Thieme, T., Lancione, M., & Rosa, E. (2017). The city and its margins Ethnographic challenges across makeshift urbanism: Introduction. *City*, 21(2), 127-134.

Thomas, N. (2007). Towards a Theory of Children's Participation. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 15, 199–218.

Thomson, S. M. (2009). 'That is not what we authorised you to do … ': Access and government interference in highly politicised research environments, in C. L. Sriram, J. C. King, J. A. Mertus, O. Martin-Ortega, & J. Herman (Eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. London: Routledge.

Tisdall, E., K., M. (2012). The Challenge and Challenging of Childhood Studies? Learning from Disability Studies and Research with Disabled Children. *Children and Society*, 26(3), 181-191.

Tisdall, E., K., M., and Punch, S. (2012). Not so 'new'? Looking critically at childhood Studies. *Children's Geographies*, 10(3), 249-264.

Tisdall, E., K., M., Gadda, A., M., & Butler, U., M. (2014). Introduction: children and young people's participation in collective decision-making, in E. K. M. Tisdall, A. M. Gadda & U. M. Butler (Eds.), *Children and Young People's Participation and Its Transformative Potential*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tisdall, E., K., M. (2015). Children's Wellbeing and Children's Rights in Tension? *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 23, 769-789.

Tucker, I. (2010). Everyday spaces of mental distress: the spatial habituation of home. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28, 526-538.

Tuan, Y-F. (1979). Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective. *Philosophy in Geography*, 20, 387-427.

Turnbull, B., Hernandez, R., & Reyes, M. (2009). Street children and their helpers: An actor-oriented approach. *Chapter Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 1283–1288.

Uddin, N. (2019). Empowerment through participation in local governance: The case of Union Parishad in Bangladesh. *Public Administration and Policy*, 22(1), 40-54.

Uldam, J., and McCurdy, P. (2013). Studying Social Movements: Challenges and Opportunities for Participant Observation. *Sociology Compass*, 7(11), 941-951.

Ulleberg, I. (2009). The role and impact of NGOs in capacity development from replacing the state to reinvigorating education. *International Institute for Educational Planning*, UNESCO, 1-43.

Unicef. (Undated). What are human rights? [Accessed on 01 March, 2022]. Available from: https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-are-human-rights.

UNCRC. (2010). The United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child. *Unicef, UK*, 1-16.

UNHCR. (2011). States of denial: A review of UNHCR's response to the protracted situation of stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Policy Development and Evaluation Service United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1-36.

Unicef. (2004). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, *Unicef*, 1-14.

Unicef. (2011). National Budget: Are the commitments to the children of Bangladesh being kept? *Unicef,* 1-48.

Unicef. (2012). Inequities in Early Childhood Development: What the data say: Evidence from the multiple cluster surveys. *Unite for Children*, 1-17.

Uprichard, E. (2007). Children as 'being and becomings': children, childhood and temporality. *Children & Society*, 22, 303–313.

Vainio, A. (2012). Beyond research ethics: anonymity as 'ontology', 'analysis' and 'independence'. *Qualitative Research*, 13(6), 685-698.

Vainoy, M., G. (2003). 'Where are you really from?': Representation, identity and power in the fieldwork experiences of a South Asian diasporic. *Qualitative Research*, 3(2), 229-242.

Valentine, G. (2000). Exploring children and young people's narratives of identity. *Geoforum*, 31, 257-267.

Valentine, G. (2003). Boundary crossings: transitions from childhood to adulthood. *Children's Geographies*, 1(1), 37-52.

van Blerk, L. (2005). Negotiating spatial identities: mobile perspectives on street life in Uganda. Children's Geographies, 391), 5-21.

van Blerk, L. (2006). Diversity and difference in the everyday lives of ugandan street children: The significance of age and gender for understanding the use of space. Social Dynamics, 32(1), 47-74.

van Blerk, L., Barker, J., Ansell, N, Smith, F., & Kesby, M. (2009). Researching children's geographies, in L. v. Blerk and M. Kesby (Eds.), Doing Children's Geographies; Methodological Issues in *Research with Young People*. London: Routledge.

van Blerk, L. (2012). Berg-en-See street boys: Merging street and family relations in Cape Town, South Africa. *Children's Geographies*, 10(3), 321-336.

Vandenhole, W. (2012). *Localizing the human rights of children, in M. Liebel (Ed), Children's Rights From Below*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Vanderbeck, R., M. (2007). Intergenerational geographies: Age relations, segregation and re-engagements. *Geography Compass*, 1(2), 200-221.

Venanzi, A., D. (2003). Street children and the excluded class. *IJCS*, 44(5), 472-494.

Veloso, L. (2008). Universal citizens, unequal childhoods: children's perspectives on rights and citizenship in Brazil. *Latin American Perspectives*, 35(4), 45-59.

Venn, C. (2006). *The Postcolonial Challenge: Towards Alternative Worlds*. London: Sage Publications.

Wainwright, O. (2019). We're cosseting our kids – the war against today's dangerously dull playgrounds. *The Guardian*. [Accessed on 25 July, 2020]. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/oct/31/were-cosseting-our-kids-the-war-against-todays-dangerously-dull-playgrounds-wellcome

Ward, C. (1978). *The Child in the City*. London: The Architectural Press.

Warming, H. (2019). Trust and power dynamics in children's lived citizenship and participation: the case of public schools and social work in Denmark. *Children & Society*. 33, 333-346.

Water, T. (2018). Ethical Issues in, Participatory Research with Children and Young People. In: Coyne I., Carter B. (Eds.), *Being Participatory: Researching with Children and Young People*. Cham: Springer.

Wazed, S. (2010). Migration and street children in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 2(1), 35-42.

Wells, D. (2009). Local Worker Struggles in the Global South: Reconsidering Northern impacts on international labour standards. *Third World Quarterly*, 30(3), 567-579.

Wells, K. (2015). *Childhood in a Global Perspective*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wells, K. (2016). Governing the global child: Biopolitics and liberal subjectivities, in N. Ansell, N. Klocker, & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Geographies of Global Issues: Change and Threat*. Singapore: Springer.

West, A. (2007). Power Relationships and Adult Resistance to Children's Participation. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 17(1), 123-135.

White, S. C. (2002). From the politics of poverty to the politics of identity? child rights and working children in Bangladesh. *Childhood*, 14(4), 505–520.

White, S. C. (2007). Children's Rights and the Imagination of Community in Bangladesh. *Journal of International Development*, 14, 725-735.

White, S. (2010). Depoliticising development: The uses and abuses of participation. *Development in Practice*, 6(1), 6-15.

White, S. C., and Choudhury, S., A. (2010). Children's participation in Bangladesh: Issues of agency and structures of violence, in B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas (Eds.), *A Handbook*

of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice. London: Routledge.

Whyte, S. R. (2005). Going home? belonging and burial in the era of AIDS. *Journal of the International African Institute,* 75(2), 134-172.

Williams, S. (2002). Children's Express: a voice for young people in an adult world, in B Franklin (Ed), *The New Handbook of Children's Rights*. London: Routledge.

Winchester, H., P., M., and Rofe, M., W. (2010). Qualitative Research and its Place in Human Geography, in I. hay, *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press.

Witteborn, S. (2010). The role of transnational NGOs in promoting global citizenship and globalizing communication practices. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 10(4), 358-372.

Wojnicka, K. (2020). Sex and the Fieldwork: Gender, Sexuality, Nationality, and Social Class in Research on European (Heterosexual) Men. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-10.

Wolcott, H., F. (2005). *The Art of Fieldwork*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

Wood, B., E. (2013). Young people's emotional geographies of citizenship participation: spatial and relational insights. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 9, 50-58.

Wood, B., E. (2016). A genealogy of the 'everyday' within young people's citizenship studies, in K. P. Kallio & S. Mills (Eds.), *Politics, Citizenship and Rights*. Singapore: Springer.

Wouter, V. (2014). Child Poverty and Children's Rights: An Uneasy Fit. *Michigan State International Law Review*, 22(2), 609-636.

Wyness, M. (2018). Children's participation: Definitions, narratives and disputes, in C. Baraldi and T. Cockburn (Eds.), *Theorising Childhood: Citizenship, Rights and Participation*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan.

Yarwood, R., and Tyrrell. (2012). Why children's geographies? *Geography*, 97(3), 123-128.

Yarwood, R. (2016) Citizenship, in P. Daniels, M. Bradshaw, D. Shaw, J. Sidaway and T. Hall (Eds.) *An Introduction to Human Geography*, 5th edition. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Yi'En, C. (2014). Telling Stories of the City: Walking Ethnography, Affective Materialities, and Mobile Encounters. *Space and Culture*, 17(3), 211-223.

Young, L., and Barrett, H. (2001). Adapting Visual Methods: Action Research with Kampala Street Children. *Area*, 33(2), 141-152.

Young, L. (2003). The `place' of street children in Kampala, Uganda: Marginalisation, resistance, and acceptance in the urban environment. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 2003*, 21, 607-627.

Young, L. (2004). Journeys to the street: the complex migration geographies of Ugandan street children. *Geoforum*, 35, 471-488.

Zeiderman, A. (2018). Beyond the enclave of urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 1-13.

Zhang, J., J. (2017). Research ethics and ethical research: some observations from the Global South. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 41(1), 147-154.

Zhengwen and Hoque. (2018). A study on the cultural influence on business negotiations: Evidence from Bangladesh. *International Business Research*, 11(1), 157-169.

Zohir, S. (2004). NGO Sector in Bangladesh: An Overview. *Economic and Political Review*, 39(36), 4109-4113.