

UNIVERSITY OF BARISHAL



A Project Proposal

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Serial No.	Headline	Page No.
01	Abstract	02
02	Introduction	02
03	Objectives	03
04	Materials and Method	03
05	Causes	04
06	Factors of Child Begging	05
07	Percentage	05
08	Prevention	08
09	Report on Child Street Begging in Barishal City, Bangladesh	09
10	Conclusion	12
11	References	12

Abstract

This research delves into the pervasive issue of child begging in Barisal City, Bangladesh. By examining the root causes, prevalence, and impacts of this social phenomenon, the study aims to shed light on the complex factors contributing to this issue. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, surveys, and observational studies, this research explores the socioeconomic conditions, family dynamics, and societal attitudes that drive children into begging. The findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to address this problem, including educational initiatives, poverty alleviation programs, and strengthened child protection systems.

Introduction

The sight of children, often malnourished and vulnerable, begging on the streets of Barisal City is a stark reality that underscores the deep-rooted social and economic challenges facing this region. Child begging, a complex issue with far-reaching consequences, has become an alarming phenomenon that demands immediate attention. This research delves into the multifaceted problem of child begging in Barisal City, exploring the underlying causes, the extent of the issue, and its impact on the lives of these children and the community as a whole.

Barisal City, like many urban centers in developing countries, faces a myriad of socioeconomic challenges that contribute to the prevalence of child begging. Poverty, lack of access to quality education, and the disintegration of family structures are just a few of the factors that push children into this exploitative situation. By examining these factors and their interplay, this study aims to shed light on the root causes of child begging and to identify effective strategies to address this pressing social issue.

The consequences of child begging are both immediate and long-term. Children who are forced to beg are often deprived of their childhood, exposed to various forms of abuse, and denied the opportunity to develop their full potential. Moreover, child begging perpetuates a cycle of poverty and can have negative implications for the overall development of a community. This research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on child begging and to inform the development of evidence-based interventions to address this pressing issue.

Objectives

- To determine the demographic characteristics of children involved in begging (age, gender, education level, etc.).
- To explore the family backgrounds and living conditions of these children.
- To understand the push and pull factors that compelled children to engage in begging.
- To assess the risks and vulnerabilities faced by child beggars, including exploitation, abuse, and health hazards.
- To identify the gaps in existing services and support systems for child beggars.
- To develop recommendations for effective strategies to prevent and reduce child begging in Barishal City.

Materials and method

A quantitative survey method involves systematically collecting numerical data to measure and analyze variables. This approach is ideal for identifying patterns, making generalizations, and drawing statistical conclusions. So, here quantitative survey methods were being used.

Below are key elements of that quantitative survey method which are strictly followed here:

1. Survey Design

- Objectives
- Hypothesis
- Variables

2. Questionnaire Structure

- Closed-Ended Questions
 - **Types of Questions**
 - ✓ **Multiple-Choice:** Choose one or more from a list (e.g., “Which of these features do you use the most?”), that kind of questions are being used here.
 - ✓ **Dichotomous:** Yes/No or True/False questions (e.g., “Did you find the product easy to use?”); these have also been used.

3. Sampling Techniques

- **Stratified Sampling:** The population is divided into subgroups (street child beggars), and participants are randomly selected from each subgroup.
- **Convenience Sampling:** Selecting participants who are easy to reach (though less representative).

4. Survey Distribution

5. Data Collection

6. Data Analysis

7. Reporting Results: To conduct that quantitative survey effectively, we needed to prepare several essential materials. Below is a sorting to what are included.

Causes

➤ Socio-economic Factors

1. **Poverty and Unemployment:** Extreme poverty often drives families to desperate measures, including sending their children to beg for money.
2. **Lack of Education:** A lack of education can limit opportunities for both parents and children, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.
3. **Family Breakdown:** The absence of one or both parents, due to divorce, separation, or death, can leave children vulnerable and at risk of being exploited.

➤ Social Factors

1. **Cultural Norms:** In some cultures, begging may be seen as a socially acceptable way to earn a living, particularly in times of hardship.
2. **Social Stigma:** Children from marginalized communities may face social stigma and discrimination, making it difficult for them to access education and other opportunities.

➤ Economic Factors

1. **Rapid Urbanization:** As people migrate to cities in search of better opportunities, they may face challenges in finding stable employment, leading to increased poverty and begging.
2. **Economic Inequality:** The gap between the rich and the poor can create social tensions and drive vulnerable families into begging.

Factors of Child Begging		
Category	Factors	Explanation
Socioeconomic	Poverty, unemployment	Financial hardship forces families to send children to beg.
Cultural	Social norms	Charity encourages begging; societal acceptance normalizes it.
Urbanization	Migration, lack of resources	Families fail to secure livelihoods in cities like Barishal.
Family Issues	Neglect, Pressure	Children are neglected or forced
Child Risks	Health, trauma	Begging exposes children to illness, abuse, and stigma.



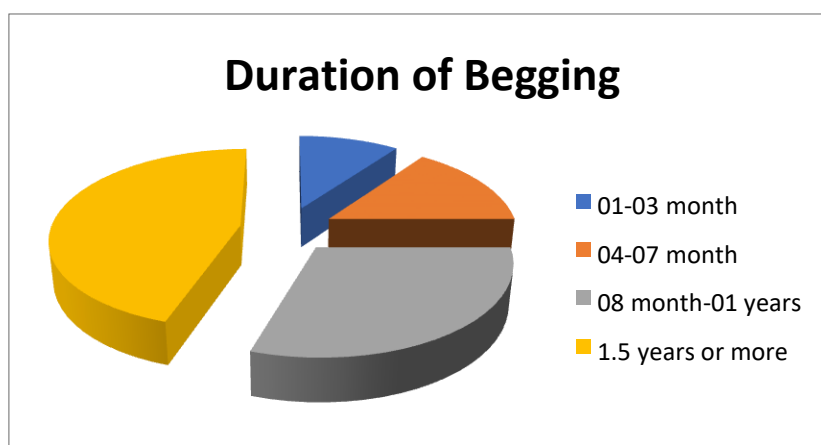
Street Child Begging, Barishal

Percentage

A survey was conducted in various neighborhoods of Barishal City to assess the extent of child begging. A total of 20 children, randomly selected from areas where begging is common, were interviewed. The results, analyzed as percentages, revealed the following insights:

Age Distribution: The majority of children involved in begging are between 9 and 12 years old, representing 55% of the total. Children aged 5 to 8 make up 35%, while those aged 13 to 15 account for 10%.

Duration of Begging: Most children (45%) have been begging for over two years. Around 30% have been involved in begging for 8 months to a year. A few have been engaged in begging for shorter periods, ranging from 1-3 months to 4-7 months.



Reasons for Begging: Family financial difficulties were the primary reason, reported by 45% of the children. Additionally, 20% beg due to lack of educational opportunities, and another 20% are pressured by their families. Other reasons account for 15%.

Family Size: 45% of the children come from families with 6-7 members, 30% from families with more than 8 members, and 25% from families with 4-5 members.

Primary Earners: In 45% of households, the father is the main breadwinner, while 20% rely on the mother. 15% depend on other relatives, 10% on a sibling, and in 10% of cases, there is no family member earning an income.

Begging Hours: Most of these children beg for 5-7 hours daily, with 50% of them begging for this duration. Meanwhile, 25% beg for 2-4 hours, and 15% for 8-9 hours.

Education: While 75% of the children are enrolled in school, only 20% of child beggars regularly attend. The reasons for not attending school include financial difficulties (37%), family pressure (26%), lack of interest in studies (16%), and other factors (21%).

Harassment: Approximately 65% of the children reported experiencing harassment or abuse during their time begging.

Future Aspirations: An overwhelming 95% of child beggars expressed interest in pursuing other professions, and if given the opportunity, 100% would leave begging. However, 85% cannot stop due to family demands, and 15% cite a lack of alternatives.

Companionship in Begging: According to the children, around 6-10 people (80%) regularly beg alongside them. Some mentioned 1-5 people (10%), while others said more than 15 people (10%).

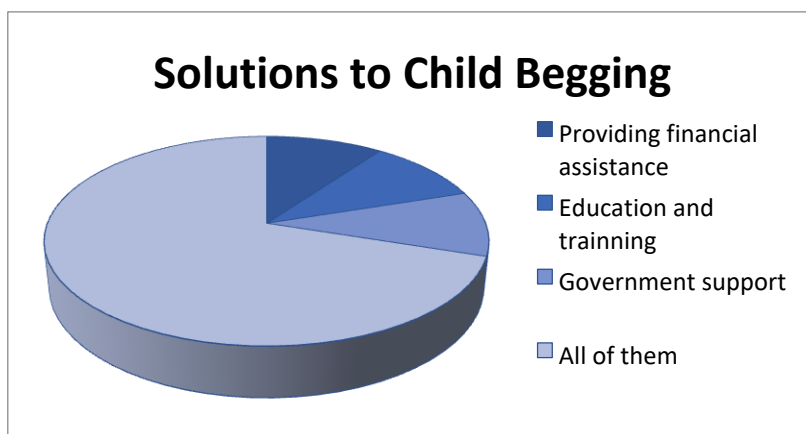
Daily Earnings: 95% of child beggars collect approximately 100-300 taka per day, while 5% earn between 400-600 taka. On days when they do not receive any alms, 15% go without food, 5% join other work, 10% wait for another opportunity to beg, and 70% resort to other activities.



Assistance: Only 10% of the children had received support from NGOs or government programs.

Child Beggars in Barishal: In Barishal city, 60% of child beggars are able-bodied but poor, 10% are disabled and poor, and 30% are helpless or destitute. Additionally, 10% of child beggars are involved in theft, another 10% in pickpocketing, and 10% suffer from drug addiction.

Solutions to Child Begging: According to the children, providing financial assistance, education and training, government support (70%) could help eradicate child begging.



Prevention

To prevent child begging in Barishal city, several strategies can be applied based on research and initiatives from other regions where similar issues are prevalent. Child begging is often driven by poverty, exploitation, and lack of education, with children being forced or coerced into begging by family members or criminal networks. Effective prevention strategies can include:

1. Legal Framework and Enforcement

Strengthening laws against child labor and exploitation, including penalties for those involved in forcing children into begging, is crucial. Law enforcement should be trained to identify and intervene in cases of child exploitation.

2. Social Welfare Programs

Expanding social safety nets and welfare programs to support low-income families can reduce economic pressure that often leads to child begging. Providing access to education, food, and healthcare ensures that children do not need to beg to survive.

3. Education and Vocational Training

Encouraging school attendance by offering free education, scholarships, and school supplies, along with vocational training for older children, can prevent child begging. Keeping children engaged in learning and skill development reduces their vulnerability.

4. Community Engagement

Raising awareness within local communities about the harmful effects of child begging and offering support to vulnerable families is important. Community leaders and religious institutions can play a pivotal role in discouraging the practice.

5. NGO Involvement

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can provide rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration services for children involved in begging. They can also advocate for better policies and offer legal and psychological support to the victims.

These strategies, when implemented in coordination with local authorities and community groups, can help reduce the prevalence of child begging in Barishal.

Report on Child Street Begging in Barishal City, Bangladesh

Child street begging has become a visible and concerning issue in Barishal City, Bangladesh. This report seeks to shed light on the factors contributing to child begging, the living conditions of these children, and potential solutions to mitigate this problem. The insights presented are based on field observations, interviews with affected children, and data from local organizations.

1. Background

Barishal City, located in the southern region of Bangladesh, is known for its vibrant culture and economic activities. However, it has also witnessed a rise in the number of children begging on the streets. These children, often seen at busy intersections, markets, and public spaces, face significant challenges, including poverty, lack of education, and exposure to exploitation and abuse.

2. Objectives

The primary objectives of this report are:

- To understand the socio-economic factors driving child begging in Barishal.
- To assess the living conditions and daily experiences of child beggars.
- To explore potential solutions to address and reduce the incidence of child begging.

3. Methodology

This report is based on data gathered from various sources, including:

- **Surveys and Interviews:** Conversations with 20 child beggars in Barishal City.
- **Observations:** Field visits to common areas where children beg, such as markets, traffic intersections, and bus terminals.

4. Key Findings

4.1. Demographics and Age Distribution

- The majority of child beggars in Barishal are between the ages of 9 and 12 years (55%).
- Children aged 5 to 8 years make up 35%, while older children aged 13 to 15 account for 10%.
- Most of these children come from large families with an average of 6-7 members.

4.2. Duration and Reasons for Begging

- Many children (45%) have been involved in begging for over two years, while others (30%) have been begging for 8 months to a year.

- The primary reason for child begging is family financial difficulties (45%). Additionally, 20% of children reported begging due to lack of educational opportunities, and 20% said they were pressured by family members to beg.
- Other reasons include family crises, loss of parental income, and in some cases, exploitation by adults who force children to beg.

4.3. Daily Routine and Experiences

- Most child beggars spend 5-7 hours daily on the streets, trying to earn small amounts of money, with typical earnings ranging between 100-300 taka per day.
- 65% of these children reported experiencing some form of harassment, including verbal abuse, physical threats, and exploitation by adults.
- Despite their circumstances, 75% of child beggars are enrolled in schools, but only 20% attend classes regularly due to economic pressures, family responsibilities, or lack of interest.

4.4. Living Conditions and Safety Concerns

- Child beggars often live in informal settlements or slums with inadequate access to clean water, sanitation, and healthcare.
- Many of these children are at risk of abuse, trafficking, and drug addiction. Reports indicate that some children are coerced into begging by gangs or adult handlers who take a portion of their daily earnings.
- 10% of children reported being involved in illegal activities, such as pickpocketing, under pressure from adults.

4.5. Aspirations and Future Outlook

- An overwhelming 95% of child beggars expressed interest in leaving the streets and pursuing alternative livelihoods if given the opportunity.
- All children interviewed said they would stop begging if they had access to education, vocational training, and stable family support.

4.6. Causes of Child Begging

The issue of child begging in Barishal City is multi-faceted, driven by several interrelated factors:

- **Poverty and Economic Hardship:** Families struggling to make ends meet often rely on their children to contribute to the household income, leading them to beg on the streets.

- Lack of Education: Limited access to education and financial constraints prevent children from regularly attending school.
- Family Dynamics: In many cases, children are forced to beg due to family pressure or exploitation by relatives.
- Lack of Government and Social Support: Insufficient social welfare programs and lack of coordinated efforts to address child poverty contribute to the persistence of child begging.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Expanding Access to Education

- Establish more community schools and provide incentives such as free meals, uniforms, and school supplies to encourage attendance among child beggars.
- Implement flexible school schedules to accommodate children who need to balance family responsibilities.

5.2. Vocational Training and Livelihood Programs

- Introduce skill-building programs for older children and their families to equip them with skills for alternative livelihoods.
- Offer micro-loans and financial assistance to families to reduce their dependence on child labor.

5.3. Strengthening Child Protection and Law Enforcement

- Enhance monitoring by law enforcement agencies to protect children from exploitation, trafficking, and abuse.
- Create awareness campaigns to educate the community about the dangers of child exploitation and encourage citizens to report cases of child abuse.

5.4. Collaboration Between Government, NGOs, and Community Organizations

- Develop comprehensive programs that involve the local government, NGOs, and community groups to address the root causes of child begging.
- Provide shelters and rehabilitation centers for children who are homeless, trafficked, or addicted to drugs, offering them a safe environment and access to essential services.

6. Outcomes

Child street begging in Barishal City is a significant issue that affects the well-being and future of many children. It is primarily driven by poverty, family dynamics, and lack of access to education. Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive approach that involves

improving access to education, providing vocational training, and strengthening child protection mechanisms. With coordinated efforts from the government, NGOs, and local communities, it is possible to reduce and eventually eliminate child begging, providing a brighter future for these vulnerable children.

Appendices

- Survey questionnaire used for interviews
- Additional data tables and charts on demographics and earnings

Conclusion

Child begging is not just a problem for Barisal City; it is a crisis that demands immediate attention. We cannot stand idly by while children are exploited and deprived of their basic rights. It is incumbent upon all of us – government officials, NGOs, businesses, and individuals to take action. By donating to relevant charities, volunteering our time, and advocating for policy changes, we can make a tangible difference in the lives of these children and build a more just and equitable society.

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