

Education Creating Miracles for the Working Children — A Case Study on Working Children of South Asian Countries —

児童労働従事者への教育が生み出す奇跡
—南アジアにおける児童従事者教育の事例研究—

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〈Abstract〉

This paper argues education can play an important role and be instrumental in improving the overall well-being and dignity of people. It will also analyze new trends in educational programmes that try to improve the life of underprivileged and working children who live in slums. Human Resource Development is a key element for overall socio-economic development. Formal and Non-Formal Education and various vocational training can play vital roles in improving human resource development in developing countries. Through basic and technical education, it is possible to improve socio-economic conditions, employment, health and nutrition, the environment and the political freedom in the society. Education is the fundamental factor for achieving individual and national development goals. When considering the effects of education on economic productivity, a wide number of studies conclude that investments in education yield returns that are typically well above the opportunity cost of capital. The empirical findings of this paper reveal that there has been a dramatic change among the underprivileged and working children through general and technical education.

〈Keywords〉

Working Children, General and Technical Education, Employment

1. Education for All Children

In 1959 (Nov.) The *Declaration on the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. Education was declared the right of every child. In 1990 (Mar.) The *World Conference on Education for All* by the year 2000. The conference, co-sponsored by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund, the World Bank, and later UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), participants came to a global consensus on an expanded vision for basic education. In 1990 (Sep.) The *Convention on the Rights of*

the Child entered into force, codifying the right to education for all children into international law. In 1997 (Oct.) at The International Conference on Child Labor participating governments declared all work that interferes with a child's education unacceptable and agreed to create time-bound programmes for high-quality universal and compulsory basic education, with a particular emphasis on girls' education.¹ The UN's article 28 recognizes the right of children to education, requiring states, among other things, to provide free, compulsory, basic schooling, and to protect the child's dignity in all disciplinary matters, and to promote international cooperation in educational matters. Article 29 calls on governments to ensure that

1. Unicef, 'The State of the World's Children 1999' New York, p.12

education leads to the fullest possible development of each child's ability and to have respect for the child's ability and to have respect for the child's parents, their cultural identity, and their human rights.

The World Conference on Education for All (1990) marked a significant shift in the world's collective approach to education, broadening the notion of quality 'basic education' along with an understanding of its delivery. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Jomtien conference marked the emergence of an international consensus that education is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and democracy. Unfortunately, 'UNESCO World Education Report 1998 stated that 'nearly a billion people will enter the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names – much less operate a computer or understand a simple application form, and they are living now in more desperate poverty and poorer health than most of those who can.'²

Lockheed stated that, 'Completed primary education helps to alleviate poverty and to advance economic and social development. A diverse body of literature demonstrates that the adults in developing countries who have educational attainment, have higher individual earnings, greater agricultural productivity, lower fertility, better health and nutritional status, and more 'modern' attitude than adults who have lower educational attainment.'³ Controversy still exists regarding the relationship between education and economic development. Schultz (1961), first argued that education is the major force in acquiring the abilities, or human capital, that raise the productivity of workers. Schulz's analysis was quickly countered by Psacharopoulos (1975), who noted that individuals with more ability were likely to obtain more education than those with less ability, and that estimates of education's effect on productivity needed to account for individual ability. Poverty reduction is a crucial issue of the developing countries. Human development is an essential factor in overcoming this issue. A sound economic and social development ultimately depends on a well-educated



Working children live in slums in the urban area

population. It is seen by governments and individuals as a key vehicle in increasing national and individual incomes and bringing economic growth. 'Education makes individuals more productive in an economic sense. They are more able to contribute to the development of the local and national economy.'⁴ The reality shows that still many of the South Asian countries cannot provide educational facilities to their school-going age children. It is said that many "South Asian are illiterate because they are poor. The reverse is true; many of the South Asians are poor because they are illiterate." It is not necessary to argue any further about the South Asian situation; and it is clear that education is the central element for overall development in increasing national and individual incomes, health and improving the socioeconomic conditions.

'When the Scandinavian countries began to legislate universal and compulsory elementary education in the beginning of the nineteenth century, this great reform movement was spurred of the argument that education was a prerequisite for improving agriculture, promoting industrialization, and for general speed-up of what we now call 'development'.⁵ Primary education has an important and direct role on national development and as well as productivity. In the early twentieth century, Japan reached the target of 100 percent literacy, and between 1945-65 Japan's net national production tripled. According to the 1970s population census of South Korea, the average number of children born to junior high school women graduates was 2.15 percent, but in the case of illiterate women it was 5.11 percent.

2. Unesco, 'World Education Report 1998' Paris, p.105

3. Maalaine E Lockheed, 'Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries' World Bank, Washington, 1991, p.2

4. Gould WTS, 'People and Education in the Third World' Longman, UK, 1993, p. 146

5. Naseer Jamadar, 'Education as the First Step to Development in Bangladesh' Master Thesis, 1992, p.16

Literacy is at the heart of learning, the core of Education for All (EFA) and central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Access to quality literacy learning opportunities and the development of literate environments are essential components of strategies for poverty reduction, equality, economic development and environmental protection. But the developing world is facing many social problems such as illiteracy, high infant-mortality, low life-expectancy, high population increase, and having serious economic constraints and a shortage of natural resources, urgently need to improve human resources through education for producing skilled manpower with the basic skills for sustainable social development. When the developing world reaches a certain point in creating human resources/manpower with basic skills then the developing countries will largely overcome their existing problems. In considering the effects of education on economic productivity, a wide number of studies conclude that investments in primary education yield returns that are typically well above the opportunity cost of capital. The social impact of education in developing countries is also positive.



Children collecting garbage for their living

2. Children Out-of School in South Asia

'South Asia is facing challenges with the high number of children being denied schooling. The magnitude of the numbers of Out-of School Children (OOSC) in the region remains staggering despite efforts towards universal primary and basic education. An analysis of household surveys shows that a total of **27 million children between the ages 5 to 13 are out of school** in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.'⁶ Due to extreme poverty and

natural disasters (e.g. Cyclone, Flood or Tsunami) usually rural poor people migrate to the big cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Karachi, Colombo and Dhaka) in order to find work in South Asian countries.

These migrants are living in slums and squatting near an industrial zone or a place where they can find more suitable job opportunities for them. Due to their family's economic constraints, instead of sending their children to school they encourage their children to work and earn money to financially support their family's daily expenditure, and finally these children become an important source of income for their family living.

Table 1: Out-of School Children in South Asia

Country	Primary School-age Children (%) of OOSC	Number of OOSC (million)
Bangladesh	16.2 million	2.6
India	6.4 million	7.8
Pakistan	34.4 million	6.6
Sri Lanka	1.9 million	0.03

Source: Unicef, 'South Asia Regional Report 2014'

The conflicting statistics in Table 1 reveal that school exclusion is a much more significant problem in some countries in the region than others. About 35 percent of primary school-age children are out of school in Pakistan. 16.2 percent in Bangladesh, 6.4 percent in India and 1.9 percent in Sri Lanka. The prospects of enrolling all children in education are influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors, including demography, socio-economic and cultural norms, governance and political stability. How these areas evolve over time have important implications not only for the educational development of the countries in South Asia, but also for the children's broader development opportunity (Unicef: 2014). South Asia has a major problem with children being denied schooling, with 17 million children of primary school-age and 9.9 million children of lower secondary school-age being denied. The opportunity cost of schooling depends on the options available for children not attending school. In other words there is considerable variation in opportunity costs which may partly explain the profiles of child labourers and out-of school children who work. Where opportunity costs are higher, this is more likely to

6. Unicef, 'All Children in School by 2015' Unicef Regional Office for South Asia, Kathmandu, 2014, p.4



Children are selling flowers on the street

act as a constraint on school participation particularly for low income households, where the additional income of household labor is particularly valuable. According to the last update (26 Oct. 2009) of ILO (International Labour Organization), on South Asian child labour as shown in Table 2, a good number of children in South Asian countries are working and are out-of school. Extreme forms of poverty play a crucial role. Child labour is part of a vicious cycle, with poverty as a main cause as well as a main consequence.

Table 2: Number of Working & Total Children

Country	Working Children 5-14Years	Total Number of Children 5-14Years
Bangladesh	5.05 million	35.06 million
India	12.6 million	253 million
Pakistan	3.3 million	40 million
Sri Lanka	0.475 million	3.18 million

Source: <http://www.ilo.org/legacy/english/regions/asro/newdelhi/ipecc/responses/Bangladesh>

This implies that child labour cannot be addressed in isolation. Among factors contributing to child labour are rapid population growth, adult unemployment, bad working conditions, and lack of minimum wages, exploitation of workers, low standard of living, and low quality of education, lack of legal provisions and enforcement, low capacity of institutions, gender discrimination and traditional arguments in favor of child labour.

3. Education Problems in South Asia

It is said that many people in developing countries are illiterate because they are poor. The reverse is also true;

many of the people in developing countries are poor because they are illiterate. After the Second World War and even today, it has been observed that in many developing countries defense financial budgets very often exceed the amounts of money that is allocated for education. As a result, the educational sector is neglected and people have had less opportunity or access to education.

Developing countries face many problems such as economic constraints, lack of proper human resources, quality teachers and physical facilities at schools and political instability. In the last few decades many of their ambitious plans have failed to reach their target. It is time to think about how developing countries can move forward to reach the education targets of MDGs by the year of 2015 with their minimal resources. One-fifth of the primary school-age children still remain out of the school system. Most of these children are living in developing countries and particularly in South Asia, Latin America and African countries. The major problems and weakness in the primary education system are low enrollment, high drop-out rates and repetition. The reason/causes of these problems in relation to South Asia are discussed below in detail.

3.1 Children Out-of School and Working

In Bangladesh, because of unequal distribution of resources, family members' low income and unemployment many families depend on their children's earnings to survive. Most working children cannot afford the time to attend regular schooling. 23% of children (22% of females and 24% of males) aged 6-10 years of age are not in school. The Net Attendance Rate for Secondary Education is only 54.3%.⁷

'Working children are employed on average for eight to twelve hours per day. Due to the lack of access to education children become trapped in low-skilled, low-income jobs, which further push them into the vicious cycle of intergenerational poverty.'⁸ The factors that contribute to child labour in South Asia include parental poverty and illiteracy; social and economic circumstances;

7. Unicef, 'Child Equality Atlas: Pockets of Social Deprivation In Bangladesh' Dhaka, July 2013

8. UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2007' UNDP, New York, USA



Children from slums studying at UCEP School

lack of awareness; lack of access to basic and meaningful quality education and skills, internal conflict, migration and trafficking and high rates of adult unemployment and under-employment. Attitudes towards child labour also play an important role. In South Asia, children are perceived as ‘adults’ at an early stage. Children are expected to perform physical work equivalent to an adult as early as 10 years old in some developing countries. There is a great deal of commonality across the South Asian countries in the forms of child labour, most notably in the areas of:

- 1) Child domestic labour
- 2) Children in hazardous child labour
- 3) Children in export oriented industries; much of it is home-based
- 4) Child trafficking and migration (both internally and across borders)
- 5) Child bonded labour particularly in agriculture
- 6) Child labour in the informal economy, particularly in the urban areas

3.2 Low Enrollment Rates

The causes for low enrollment of children in South Asian countries are outlined below:

- 1) Parents’ illiteracy/low level of education
- 2) Parents’ lack of motivation for and about education
- 3) Parents’/family’s poverty pressure children to work instead of attending to school
- 4) Teachers’ unkind/unsympathetic attitude to students
- 5) Shortage of learning materials and an unattractive school environment
- 6) Schools lacks of sufficient seating room/seat benches

3.3 High Drop-out Rates

Dropout rate may be defined as a student who enrolls in a school but fails to complete the relevant level of the educational cycle. In South Asian countries, at the primary school level, this means that a dropout fails to reach the final grade (Grade V), and at the high school level the final grade is (Grade X). Dropout rates vary from one region to another, for instance there are rural-urban gaps. The following factors are very much related to children drop-out rates in South Asian countries.

- 1) The child works and earns to meet family needs
 - 2) The child is busy doing daily household work
 - 3) The child remains occupied with the family occupation
- There are other causes for dropouts which include geographical distance, inadequate physical facilities compared to the population density of a particular area, and the financial condition and low motivation and lack of interest in education of parents of school going children. Sometimes Muslims parents do not want to send their daughters to the school where teachers are male.

3.4 Repetition

High drop-out rates have greatly increased repeaters in primary and other levels of education in South Asian countries. Repetition rates in South Asian countries vary according to the grade and geographical area. The main reasons for repetition of the primary school student in South Asian Countries are as follows:

- 1) Continuous absenteeism by students
- 2) Not taking the annual examination
- 3) Failing the examination

4. How to Overcome the Existing Problems

It is not a very easy to task, nor is it possible in the short-term to overcome all the existing problems in the educational system in South Asian countries. However, it may be possible to overcome the above mentioned problems and to achieve the universal primary education goals in the near future through the individual governments having long-term initiatives for educational programmes. This paper’s suggestions to reach the targets of MDGs by the year of 2015 are as follows:

- 1) The ruling government should have a strong

commitment to provide compulsory primary education to all school-age children.

- 2) The government should recruit more female teachers and improve training facilities for teachers.
- 3) The government should increase educational expenditure in the national financial budget.
- 4) Besides formal schooling, the government should also emphasize the Non-Formal schooling.
- 5) The government should establish a Village Education Committee (VEC) in every village. VEC would monitor and help to improve community involvement through Parents Teachers Association (PTA). VEC will be responsible for motivating and informing illiterate parents about the overall socioeconomic benefits of education and its impact on their children's future.

4.1 Utilization of the Existing Schools

The individual country's existing primary schools could be used in two to three shifts for the children and at the same time the school could be used at night for adult education, e.g. morning and afternoon for children and at night for adults. According to this proposal, schools can increase their enrollment of school-age children as well as contribute to the community by providing adult education.



Working children taking lessons at UCEP school

4.2 Church, Temple and Mosques Used as Feeder Schools

In South Asian context, particularly in the rural area, the religious leaders are respected by the people and play a vital role in the community. The religious leader has a respected position in the local community and knows the village's circumstances well. So the religious leader has considerable influence, allowing plans to become reality.

These religious institutions are used for prayers. However, it is not always used from dawn to dusk. So the government could utilize existing facilities of the churches, temples and mosques as education centers before and after prayer times. This kind of initiative for education centers could create an educational environment in the community for school-age children.

4.3 Collaboration with NGOs

In South Asian countries, due to economic constraints and lack of man power government should have bilateral and multilateral collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for underprivileged children's education. There are many NGOs are working for out-of school children's education in South Asian countries. NGOs have nationwide social networks and have workers living at the grassroots level both in the large cities and rural areas as well.

5. Educational Policies and Plans

The role of education and its development is at the heart of present debates, such as sustainable human development, poverty reduction, the promotion of universal human values and tolerance, and the challenge of new information and communication technologies policies. Therefore, decision-makers are responsible for developing a clear vision and relevant implementation strategies to take up the challenge of achieving the mission they are given, especially in the context of the Education for All.

5.1 Introducing of Non-Formal Education

What is Non-Formal Education? Non-Formal Education (NFE) is an educational approach that offers flexible timings and entry ages for children who never enrolled in, or for some reasons had dropped out from the formal education system. 'Non-Formal Education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impact adult literacy, basic education for out-of school children, life skills, work skills, and general culture.'⁹ The NFE system has been playing an important role in providing quality education to the underprivileged children in a friendly environment in which students receive individual

⁹. Unesco, 'Guidebook for Planning Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction' Paris, 2006, p.1

care and attention. In this system schools are managed on a participatory basis involving the parents in the planning and implementation process. NFE emphasize the following focal points in their education system;

- 1) Community Mobilization
- 2) Identification of Learning Needs
- 3) Preparing Lesson Plans
- 4) Participatory Learning
- 5) Using Learning Aids
- 6) Assessing Learning

5.2 Target to Achieve Educational Goals

Outside of the governmental mainstream education system many organizations are providing education for destitute and working children in South Asian countries. Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP) is one of them. The intention of this paper is to analyze UCEP's multifaceted activities through a case study and provide some evidence that how education could play an important role to improve underprivileged and working children's lives. UCEP's vision is to be a leading human resource development organization in providing cost-effective Non-Formal Education, market skills training and employment promotion for urban poor working and distressed children in Bangladesh. UCEP came into being in order to provide opportunities for schooling of the poor working children in urban locations and thereby, help increase their access to better socio-economic opportunities through proper access to basic education. UCEP commits itself to enhancing opportunities for basic education for out-of school children. To provide education to the underprivileged and out-of school children the following four points should be taken into accounts;

- 1) Quality of education
- 2) Text books/curriculum
- 3) Trained teachers
- 4) Management/budget allocation

6. Glimpses of UCEP History

A native of New Zealand, L.A. Cheyne first came to West Pakistan (now Pakistan) to work with an engineering firm by teaching the children of foreign engineers on

assignment there. In 1970, when a devastating tornado hit East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), he was asked by a British relief organization to help set up a project for the newly destitute. Taking a year's leave of absence from the engineering firm, Cheyne headed east. Throwing himself wholeheartedly into his first association with a volunteer agency, Cheyne had just completed establishing a mother and child health clinic in the hardest hit area when the 1971 war of independence broke out and Bangladesh was born. The destruction in the wake of the Tornado paled beside the tragedy and human misery left by the war, and the new nation faced an even greater crisis than before.

'In 1970, a study on Child Labor in Dhaka city conducted by Professor Ahmadullah Mia. The study was published in 1972 under the title *'Our Unfortunate Children as Labourers'* that described and analyzed the living condition of urban poor children who did not have any schooling and, instead, were engaged in selling physical labor in order to eke out a living. The same study suggested some approaches and outlines at alleviating the family condition of the working children. The problem was magnified in the post-liberation war situation of 1972 when there was an enormous increase in the number of destitute children and large scale migration of rural poor families into the cities.'¹⁰

'Cheyne worked with the Directorate of Social Welfare in planning an educational program to get homeless kids off the streets. But just as he had won the enthusiasm and approval of the government, the struggling government couldn't afford to institute the program by itself, but Cheyne was unwilling to give up on his project. He went to work to find a sponsor. The Danish government responded



Girls taking a placement examination

¹⁰. Mominul H.Khan, 'Illustrated Newsweekly' July 1992, p.37

with a grant for a 3-year project, and the Bangladesh government agreed to provide a building. The original plan was for only one school serving about 400 youngsters. But when post-war circumstances delayed the use of the government building, Cheyne went ahead and started UCEP anyway, opening a part-time school at Dhaka University's Institute of Social Welfare and Research in July 1973.¹¹ One of Cheyne's social workers went to a local market where many boys were shining shoes or working as coolies. He sought out prospective students and simply told them a new school was being started for youngsters like themselves if they were interested. These children are on the street because they can't find any other alternative place for their living. They quickly see the value of an education to avoid an otherwise bleak future. The goal of the programme is to turn futureless, illiterate street hawkers into skilled tradesman with hope for lives of dignity and respect.

7. An Introduction of UCEP

Today, UCEP is an active NGO, it administers its services to the poor and distressed children in large city areas in order to improve the social and economic condition of such children and their families. The philosophy of UCEP is that education and technical training services should prepare the working children for better employment and at the same time, make them fully conscious of their rights and obligations so they can live as proper and participative citizens with dignity in the society. Now-a-days, UCEP is the largest NGO of its kind that produces skilled manpower for the industrial sector of Bangladesh. UCEP graduates are working competently in renowned industries at home and abroad. The main strength of UCEP Programs is the revision of the curriculum of the technical schools on a regular basis to meet the ever-changing need of the job market. This is done in consultation with and the direct involvement of the leading industries of the country who are also the major employers of UCEP graduates.

UCEP has initiated the 'Child Rights Forums' with the participation of UNICEF and a great number of NGOs. These forums emphasize that the children cannot be seen in isolation of its immediate environment, and that the improved standard of living for the children and their

families is highly dependent not only on access to education but, to a great extent, on the child's upbringing in a social environment which is adequately supportive of the child's interests and potentials. These forums collectively attempt to establish the rights of children and for the purpose of pragmatic means. Recently, World Bank has stressed the replication of UCEP Model in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries for the socio-economic uplifting of the distressed working children. The World Bank praised the role of UCEP in paving the future of thousands of underprivileged working children. The Bank also appreciated the training facilities at UCEP and was impressed by the keen interest of the children in learning their lessons.

8. UCEP's Mission, Vision and Objectives

The mission of an organization may be described as a general statement, which defines the organization's essential of fundamental purpose and philosophy. While in practice, mission statements can be simple or detailed, they basically address three key questions: (1) Why does this organization exist? (2) What unique or distinctive competence it has? and, (3) What particular niche(s) will it occupy? Mission: to improve the socio-economic condition of the urban poor children to a certain level so that they can effectively participate in national development with enhanced capacity and dignity and the fulfillment of their basic rights. The vision of an organization can be differentiated from its mission in one critically important way. While the mission details the purpose of the organization, the vision sets a concrete target to be achieved. UCEP's current vision is to be the leading human resource development organization in providing



Girl student is her practical training class

11. UCEP, *Creating Miracle for the Working Children' Dhaka*, p.7

cost-effective non-formal education, marketable skills training and employment promotion for urban poor working children. Objectives of UCEP are:

- 1) To raise the socio-economic conditions of the urban poor working children
- 2) To enable the urban poor to participate effectively in the national development
- 3) To enhance the capacity and dignity of the urban poor children
- 4) To help the urban poor children in fulfillment of their rights.

8.1 Main Activities of UCEP are:

UCEP's main activities are Integrated General and Vocational Education (IGVE), Technical Education (TE), Employment Support Service (ESS) and Child and Women Rights Advocacy (CWRA), Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER). The socio-economic impacts of UCEP's multifaceted activities are tremendous: One is the basic education and training received by the working children who have had the opportunity to take advantage of UCEP general and technical education. In more positive terms, this group has acquired an education which would enable them to work in the given environment with general ability and consciousness. So UCEP's general and technical education is creating miracles for the working children and empowering them to live in the society with dignity.

8.2 Integrated General & Vocational Education

UCEP General Schools run 2 sessions a year, each of six months, with a target of 135 schooling days per session. In practical terms, this means, a child can complete 2 grades in a given year enabling him/her to complete grade V and VIII in 4.5 years, including six months preparatory schooling. There are certain basic requirements that have to be met. Firstly, a child is admitted only if he is a working child. Secondly, both his parents and his employers must agree to let the child attend school. The reasons why these conditions are made are that the child's wages may come down and the parents must agree to it and the child may also need to take time off to attend classes, and so the employers' concurrence is essential.¹² Curricula and Syllabi of the National Curriculum and

Textbook Board (NCTB) form the basis of the UCEP uses the same curriculum in an abridged form, incorporating the essentials, to shorten the school year. General education consists of a three-year course of basic learning which brings the children to an academic standard equivalent to grade five in the public school system, and a one-year bridging course aiming at preparing the students for UCEP technical education. The bridging course is considered equivalent to grade eight under the public school system. The bridging course includes English, Bangla, Mathematics, Social and Physical Science. The learning contents are so selected as to meet the general academic requirements and be an orientation to technical education along with an introduction to employment prospects in various trades. In this manner, UCEP education remains comparable to the mainstream, while the target group spends a shorter period of time in the school.

From the very beginning, UCEP takes the initiative and identifies the working and underprivileged children and then continues by getting in touch with their parents and employers. The infrastructure to run the school is provided, at least in part, by the government, local authorities and the community. These schools are usually located in slum areas to attract children to the schools; UCEP schools are established in the vicinity of areas where there are concentrations of working and underprivileged children (e.g. slums and industrial zones and so on). UCEP offers several shifts throughout the day so the children can attend school at their convenience. Children continue to work and earn while they attend school. Each shift is 2.5 hours long and has four lessons per day. This allows a child to choose a shift of his/her convenience in consultation with their guardian/employer.

In 2013, IGVE program served 42,070 students through 53 IGVE schools in 8 districts that went beyond UCEP's initial target. The boys and girls ratio stood at 51:49. In the same year from UCEP 9,367 students attended the Primary Education Completion (PEC) and another 1,122 students sat for the Junior School Certificate (JSC) examination. As for PEC 93.86% student passed whereas it was 94.12% for JSC. UCEP always welcomes children with disabilities and

¹². Neera Burra, 'Child Labour and Education' Unesco-Unicef, Paris, 1989, p. 72

in 2013 a total of 955 of them attended UCEP's education program. Despite sincere efforts by teachers and administrators in ensuring an inclusive atmosphere, gaps are still there in regards to creating more disability friendly school infrastructure and sensitizing teachers and fellow students.

Table 3: IGVE Graduates Achievement at UCEP

Items	Target	Achievement		Total
		Boys	Girls	
Students Number	41800	21315	20755	42070
Attendance %	90%	90.2%	90.3%	90.3%
Dropout rate%	5%	4.8%	5%	4.94%
IGVE Graduates	8550	4401	4198	8599

Source: UCEP Annual Report 2013, p.5

8.3 Technical Education (TE)

Technical education, considered to be UCEP's flagship programme, offers a range of 26 trade options as well as a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) vocational education for a certain number of children. With 10 technical schools in 8 districts, UCEP is a well-reputed technical education provider among the target community and employers. Technical Schools run two shifts per day, each of 3.5 hours long, so that working children can continue in their jobs while they acquire skills in the technical schools. The UCEP Technical Schools are the second tier in the transformation of the working children into productive human resources. The technical schools provide skills training in different market driven trades, SSC (Vocational) course for the brighter students and provide financial support for continuing their education in



Students in an automobile repairing class

government Polytechnic Institutes for a diploma in engineering courses. 'The technical schools have imparted technical training to 5501 students with boys to girls' ratio of 59:41 in its 10 technical schools in 2011. The average student's attendance rate was 96.65% while the dropout rate was only 1.79%. At the same period 5150 (3072 boys and 2078 girls) students completed their technical education from UCEP technical schools.¹³ After completing the UCEP's general education its Technical Education offers courses in the fields of Electronics, Repair of Refrigerators and Air Conditioners, Printing, Carpentry, Welding and General Fitting, Automobile Repair, Textile, Tailoring and Export-oriented Garment. So students can choose one of the above courses according to their desire and ability (based on their academic results in general and bridging courses). These courses make efforts to make UCEP concept market-related and to encourage direct participation to the Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (SME) in the technical education and vocational training as well.

Both UCEP and SME facilitate the process of employing of technical school graduates and are also creating cooperation and encouraging direct participation of the local job market with respect to the technical education and their achievement of skills. Technical Education, which is regularly faced with huge demand from communities to accommodate more children, is focusing on the ways it can do more. This type of education programme replicated in other places e.g. outreach model to serve areas where there the demand is high but UCEP does not have prior interventions and replication of innovations (e.g. evening course). TE is working on improving capacity of its instructions and making its skills development more demand-driven.

8.4 Employment Support Services

'Employment support services (ESS) helps UCEP graduates find jobs. The rate of employment continues to remain quite high. UCEP affiliation with different employers has consistently benefitted students with 95% of UCEP graduate getting jobs within 6 months of graduation. Such partnership, in fact, benefits UCEP in numerous ways, e.g. apprenticeship opportunities for

¹³. UCEP, 'Annual Report 2012' Dhaka, p.9

UCEP student, and having industry-experienced resource personnel for training and upgrading curricula.¹⁴ Some of them go abroad as a skilled labour and particularly girls prefer to move to their village. In recent days, advertisements in the newspapers state “UCEP graduates preferred”, these are clear indications of the willingness of preparedness of prospective employers and the community as a whole to accept UCEP graduates, by dint of resulting from a strong sense of discipline, integrity and etiquette that are imparted to each and every UCEP graduate through the socialization process that takes place in UCEP schools every day.

UCEP Integrated General and Vocational Education are creating miracles for the working and underprivileged children in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries.

Table 4: UCEP Graduates Achievement in Jobs

Year	Boys	Girls	Employment	%
2009	2,436	1,662	3,308	80.6
2010	2,599	1,843	3,721	83.7
2011	2,668	2,016	3,474	74.1
2012	3,072	2,078	4,278	83.0
2013	3,431	2,409	4,552	77.9

Source: Research department of UCEP, 2013

In Bangladesh, the unemployment rate is very high but there is a great demand of UCEP graduates in small and medium scale industries. In recent days, there is a new trend among the UCEP graduates. Some of them prefer to continue their further studies in government and other polytechnic institutions instead of their employment. As shown in the table 4, in 2009 (80%), 2010 (83.6%), 2011 (74.1%), 2012 (83%) and in 2013 only 77.7% of UCEP graduates are employed and rest of the graduates are continuing their further studies.

8.5 Child & Women Rights Advocacy

One of the important activities of UCEP is child and women rights namely that is Child and Women Rights Advocacy (CWRA) has been implemented to make people in the community aware of child and women rights issues. ‘In 2012-13, through 24 partner NGOs the first phase of

CWRA was completed in 10 districts where there were no UCEP education programmes. This didn’t allow the highest benefit from the advocacy. Therefore, in 2013 an initiative was taken to start the CWRA in the areas where UCEP has schools.¹⁵ CWRA with others NGOs emphasizes that children and women cannot be seen in isolation of their immediate environment and still improve the standard of living for the children and women. Their families are highly dependent on not only access to education but, to a great extent, on the children’s upbringing in a social environment that is adequately supportive of the children’s interests and potentials.

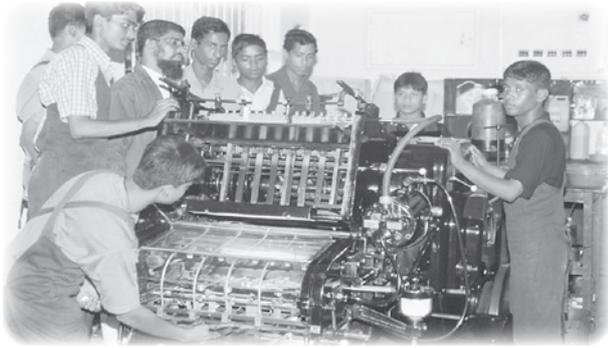
9. Social Impact of UCEP’s Activities

The impact of the holistic approach of UCEP on underprivileged and working children empowerment is long-lasting, pervasive, and significant and encompasses the graduates, their families and the community. The greatest impact of the UCEP is the breaking, by young graduates, of the vicious cycle of poverty. They and their families come out of the perpetual poverty as a result of UCEP intervention. The socio-economic impacts of UCEP activities are tremendous: One is the basic education and training received by the working children who have had the opportunity of taking advantage of the UCEP general and technical school curriculum. In more positive terms, this group has got an education which will enable them to meaningfully relate their immediate work and environment to their life and assist them to work in the given environment with more general ability and consciousness.

The indirect social impact of UCEP is considered in terms of the positive changes in the condition of the families where from the children are from. The children who participate in UCEP, and its staff, who get in touch with their (children) families, work as ‘change agents’ to influence the life style of family members, value of children’s education, commitment to a more consciousness family and social living for a higher standard of health and well-being. All these have significant bearings on the future of the children and others in the families. Those who get better employment as a result of UCEP education/

¹⁴. UCEP, 'Annual Report 2013' Dhaka' p.11

¹⁵. UCEP, 'Annual Report 2013' Dhaka' p.12



Printing machine operation and repairing

training, contributes to raising the economic condition of their respective families.

At a broader perspective, the social impact of UCEP is viewed to be an increased awareness and participation of the community people in promoting educational opportunities for disadvantaged children who have taken up work at a young age for survival. The process as such complements all other efforts addressed to popularizing and establishing the children's right to education and opportunities for social living free from exploitation.

10. Concluding Remarks

Needless to say, universalization of education cannot solve the all of the existing problems in developing countries. But the education can play an important role in producing human capital or human resources with basic skills that is necessary for agriculture, industrialization, information communication technology and the overall social development in developing countries. In this regard there is no alternative to develop the universalization of the country's educational programmes. Here, the education means not only how to read and write to acquire a certificate, but also life style itself. It is also considered that 'education' is an essential component of the overall national development strategy. Within this national policy framework, UCEP committed itself to enhancing opportunities for basic education for out-of-school and working children. Its activities significantly have contributed not only to the national objective of education for all but also to the development of human resources. UCEP activities thus complement the government efforts in this regard.

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