

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT: A Case Study

Biswanath Gan¹

Samar Kumar Biswas²

¹*Cultural Research Officer, Cultural Research Institute, BCW & TD Department, Govt. of West Bengal, Kankurgachi, Kolkata- 700054, E-mail: ganbiswanath@gmail.com*

²*(Corresponding author) Associate Professor in Anthropology, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, West Bengal, E-mail: smrkbis@yahoo.co.in*

ABSTRACT

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The term social environment refers to the physical and social setting in which the human beings live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual is educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom they interact. The social environment has a great impact on child's social, emotional or psychological development. Development of children depends on some key factors like socio-economic, political and cultural context, social position and daily living conditions etc. Children development is mainly shaped by the social environment they experience during childhood period. The nature and quality of social environment influence the development of children. But there are so many children in our country whose developments are being affected seriously due to poor social environment and in this context the present studied children are a burning example. The focus of this paper is on the social environment that influences the development of children of the stone crushing families of Balasan River Basin, Darjeeling district, West Bengal.

INTRODUCTION

Social environment may be defined as the environment developed by humans as contrasted with the natural environment; society as a whole, especially in its relation to the individual. The term social environment refers to the physical and social

setting in which the human beings live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual is educated or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom they interact. A person's social environment is their society and all surroundings influenced in some way by humans. It includes all relationships, institutions, culture, and physical structures. The natural environment is the natural world around us: the ground, the trees and the air. The social environment is, collectively, all of the things that humans have overlaid on top of our world: our personal and societal relationships, our institutions, our cultures and our physical surroundings—all of the aspects and products of human activity and interaction. Sociologists, health researchers and others study how the social environment shapes who we are and how we live, especially how individuals are affected by such factors (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/social-environment>). Human social environments encompass the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact. Components of social environment include build infrastructure; labour markets; social and economic processes; wealth; social, human, and health services; power relations; government; race relations; social inequality; cultural practices; the art; religious institutions and practices; and beliefs about place and community. The social environment subsumes many aspects of physical environment, given that contemporary landscapes, water resources and other natural resources have been at least partially configured by human social processes. Embedded within contemporary social environments are historical social and power relations that have become institutionalized over time. Social environments can be experienced at multiple scales, often simultaneously, including households, kin networks, neighbourhoods, town and cities, and regions. Social environments are dynamic and change over time as the result of both internal and external forces (Barnett and Casper 2001, 465). However, social environment plays an important role in the progress of children and it obviously makes a future of the children. Children are affected by different environmental factors that impact healthy emotional environment. Without a healthy social and emotional environment, children will not feel safe about taking risks and exploring the world and this kind of emotional security is critical for those developmental skills. Children who struggle with an unstable situation at home can develop attachment issues that can impede their emotional development and lead to mental health issues later on. This is made worse if the economic environment is also unstable because those children will not have access to the level of care they

may need. The cognitive development of children is affected by their social, emotional, economic, and physical environment. If children don't have adequate social interactions at school and in the community, they don't have the opportunity for practical applications of their learning to promote healthy cognitive development. Without loving support from family in schooling efforts, children are less likely to succeed. Children whose families have economic hardship may struggle with adequate nutrition that would promote brain development. If children are being exposed to a dangerous physical environment, this exposure may have consequences on brain growth during early childhood (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/how-environment-impacts-early-childhood-development.html>). In every society differences in socioeconomic status translate into inequalities in child development (Hertzman *et al.*, 2010; Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010 Committee, 2010; Goldfeld and West, 2014 cited in Moore *et al.* 2015, 103). The circumstances in which children are born determine their exposure to environments that promote or compromise healthy development. Children's health, development and well-being can be compromised by a number of direct adverse experiences including: sustained poverty, recurrent abuse and neglect, parental alcohol or drug abuse, homelessness, and family violence. The trends regarding the prevalence of these problems in the families of children are worrying (Moore and McDonald, 2013 cited in Moore *et al.* 2015, 103). Inequities during the early years are especially concerning because of the nature of early childhood development (McCain and Mustard, 1999; Shonkoff, 2012 cited in Moore *et al.* 2015, 103). Experiences during early childhood play a major role in shaping later life (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007; Shonkoff *et al.*, 2009; Currie and Rossin-Slater, 2014 cited in Moore *et al.* 2015, 103). Physical and emotional abuse, neglect and family violence can have long-term consequences for the mental and physical health of children, as well as their social adjustment, academic achievements and employment histories in adulthood (Fergusson and Horwood, 1998; Reeve and van Gool, 2013; McLeod *et al.*, 2014 cited in Moore *et al.* 2015, 106). Parent-child relationships also influence the development of children. The health and well-being of children are strongly influenced by the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of their parents, care givers and family (Law *et al.*, 2012; Peters *et al.*, 2013 cited in Moore *et al.* 2015, 107). There are 472 million children in India under the age of 18 years. This constitutes 39 per cent of the total population in the country (Census 2011). In India the situations of children in the field of education, health and nutrition, economy etc. have not found

satisfactory. In this connection the data shows that 1 in 4 children of school going age is out of school in our country—99 million children in total have dropped out of school (Census 2011). Out of every 100 children, only 32 children finish their school education age—appropriately and on the other hand only 2 per cent of the schools offer complete education from Class I to Class XII (DISE 2014 – 15 cited in <https://www.cry.org/statistics-on-children>). However, 19.8 million children below age 6 in India are undernourished (ICDS 2015, cited in <https://www.cry.org/statistics-on-children>). Only 9.6 per cent of children between 6 – 23 months in the country receive an adequate diet. 38 per cent (1 in 3) of children between 0 – 5 years are stunted in the country. 21 per cent (1 in 5) of the children in the country suffer from wasting. 36 per cent of children under 5 years of age are underweight in India. 58 per cent of children between 6 months – 5 years were found to be anaemic in the country. Total Immunisation coverage in the country stood at 62 per cent in 2015–16 (NFHS 4, 2015–16). However, total 12226 (2.7%) cases of sexual assault/insult to the modesty of children were found in India during 2016. On the other hand total 2488 (7.0%) cases of procurement of minor girls were found in India during 2016, out of which total 706 (2.4%) cases were found in West Bengal. However, total 36022 (8.1%) cases of crimes under POCSO were found in India during 2016, out of which total 2132 (7.3%) cases were found in West Bengal (NCRB, 2016). Fear of failure of examinations in the second highest cause of suicides in children. There are 10.13 million child labourers between 5 – 14 years in India. India has 33 million working children between the ages 5 – 18 years. In parts of the country, more than half the child population is engaged in labour (Census 2011). Komal Ganotra, the Director of CRY opined that “It indicates that children have become increasingly exposed to the risk of becoming victims in recent years. Child protection in our country cannot be ensured with just having legislations and numerous guidelines. We as a country need to commit in cultivating a culture of zero tolerance for violence against children. We should be vigilant and cognizant of the fact that children are at risk with gaps in infrastructure, processes and systems as well as people. It is non–negotiable for the state and other duty bearers to equip themselves in recognizing these risks and put robust systems and processes to access and eliminate the same” (<https://www.cry.org/statistics-on-children>).

Development of children depends on some key factors like socioeconomic, political and cultural context, social position and daily living conditions etc. Children development is mainly shaped by the social environments they experience during

childhood period. The nature and quality of social environment influence the development of children. In this connection the present study has tried to highlight the influence of social environments on the development of children in the stone crushing families. To meet the objectives of present research work the study has been conducted among the children of stone crushing families in Balasan River basin adjacent to Siliguri town of Darjeeling district, West Bengal.

CONCEPTUALIZING POVERTY, CLASS AND PERSONALITY

Poverty is one of the most persistent social problems plugging places across the globe. The family in the culture of poverty does not cherish childhood as specially prolonged and protected stage in the life cycle. The individual who grows up in this culture has a strong feeling of fatalism, helplessness, dependence and inferiority. People in culture of poverty produce little wealth and receive little in return. Chronic unemployment and under employment, low wages, lack of property, lack of savings, absence of food reserves in the home and chronic shortage of cash imprison the family and the individual in a vicious circle (Lewis 1966, 19–25). The theory of culture of poverty suggests that poverty is the result of people's values or cultural norms. In a way, it suggests that people who are poor have different cultural values than mainstream society. Basically, the theory suggests that we learn certain norms when we grow up in a family who is poor, and this shapes our life choices and opportunities. The anthropologists Oscar Lewis, who studied poor families in Mexico and Puerto Rico, produced one of the earliest writings on the culture of poverty. Lewis argued that children who grew up in very poor conditions, like a slum for example, will internalized feelings of hopelessness or desperation that characterize these living conditions. As these children grow up, they will be unable to take advantage of opportunities that exist, a kind of psychological phenomenon that accompanies living in dire circumstances (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/culture-of-poverty-definition-theory-examples.html>). In order to understand the fact, the present study has also been influenced by the theory of social class. According to Karl Marx class is the social position of a person in respect to other people's social position. In particular, class is a social position designated by a person's economic relationship to others. For example, a class position can be determined according to income, wealth, profession, training or education (Holt 2015:3). His views opened the door to the study how one's social class has a direct influence on one's life experience and life chances. He established the fact that one's social class dictated one's social life.

According to him if one is in the upper class, life was one of leisure and abundance, while those in the lower class lived lives of hardship and poverty (<https://study.com/academy/lesson/karl-marxs-theories-class-differentiation-and-revolution-socialism-capitalism.html>). However, to understand the formation of character or personality of the studied children the present study has tried to follow the theory of culture and personality school of anthropological thought. It is the fact that culture plays an important role in personality formation. There are so many scholars who deal with the role of culture in formation of character or personality and among them Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Linton, Kardinar, Cora-Du-Bois are mentionable. According to them, cultural practices are nothing but the character, or the temperament or personality of members of a particular group. They established the fact that culture is acquired, limited and learnt, it gives rise to character formation or development of personality traits before the period of adolescence. Ralph Linton (1945) defines personality as the individual's mental qualities the sum total of his rational faculties, perceptions, ideas, habits and conditional emotional responses. He states that there is a close relation between personality and culture of the society to which the individual belongs. According to him there are four main factors or determinants, which affect the personality formation. They are environment, heredity, culture and peculiar experiences. Personality is also determined by another factor namely situational experience. Here the people who interact with the child daily have a major influence on his personality. For example the personality of parents does more to affect a child's personality. The child learns everything from his parents' language to behaviour. In the type situational experiences the relationship of the child with mother, father and siblings affect profoundly the organization of his drives and emotions, the deeper and subconscious aspects of his personality. However, group influence is relatively greater in early childhood. Child's personality moulds by group interaction. Personality may also be inferred by social situations. A holistic study of personality can be done only by multidisciplinary approach like psychologists deal with mental attributes; anthropologists are concerned with the relationship between culture and personality, whereas sociologists can attempt to know with the influence of social environment (Kumar 2017, 6–8).

The social environment has a great impact on child's social, emotional or psychological development. It is said that family is a primary institution in which a child learns his or her behaviour, attitudes, norms, customs, values and any other capabilities and habits related to their socio-cultural life. Thus, it is a duty of every

parent to protect their children against all forms of exploitation and nourish them through proper socialization process to create a healthy and peaceful society because our child is a vulnerable asset and future wealth of society. So, as a member of a society it is our duty to protect this wealth. But there are so many children in our country are being exploited by their poor social environment and in this context my studied families are a burning example. The present study has been done among 250 families at Purba Rangia village of Balasan River basin, Darjeeling district, West Bengal.

AREA AND THE PEOPLE

The area under study namely Purba Rangia village is located at Balasan River basin adjacent to Siliguri town and lies at the foothill region of the Himalayas. The River Balasan comes down from Himalayas with natural resources to a great extent like sands, stones, boulders etc. which are used as the raw materials for urban constructions and it emerged out as a prime earning source for the people working in the stone field. Primarily the stone based occupation was the backbone of economy of the studied people. It was such type of economic sector where there was no need of monetary investment to do it. The stone based work was of various types such as stone collection, sand gathering, stone crushing, truck loading etc. The Balasan River bed provided them the land to establish a new residence. All the studied families in the village were migrants and it is surprising that a large number of them migrated from Bangladesh who belonged to Rajbanshi community, a chief scheduled caste of North Bengal.

HOW DOES SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AFFECT CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Case Study 1: Pradip Barman, a 14 years old boy belonged to Rajbanshi community. He got involved in stone crushing and truck loading activities. Both of his parents were involved in stone based job. But their earning was not enough for living. Pradip was motivated by his parents to do this work. He was doing this work for last five years. At the beginning often he used to take food and other necessary things to the stone crushing field for his working parents. Owing to busy working schedule he could not manage adequate time for study at home. He was first generation learner and due to this fact he could not hope to get the proper guidance and care from his parents. His parents could not provide private tuition, books, note books etc. to him. In fact, if he attends the school regularly then their earnings get reduced and if

the earning got reduced then they had to face serious problem. Moreover, there was no proper and sufficient room as well as electricity in the house and this problem mainly faced by him because due poor light and lack of room he could not study well at night. He had a fear of scolding and often sound beating by his parents if he was absent in work. Besides these, they had no proper shelter to live. They had a broken house that had to be repaired immediately but due to utter economic constraints they could not repair it. In rainy season the insider atmosphere of the houses became dump and its floor became muddy and clammy which might have resulted in illness like fever, cold–cough as he has to suffer from it. They fetched water from neighbours well for drinking, cooking, bathing and also for other domestic purposes but it was always uncovered and as a result the water got polluted with tree leafs and various dust particles. Their family atmosphere as well as social environment was so problematic. His father was alcoholic who used to consume alcohol every day in the evening. But his father got aggressive whenever he developed alcohol. His father used abusive words and broke all the household stuffs within the access and also beat his mother soundly. His father used to create a chaos in the family and had a conflict with other family members. Often Pradip was threatened by his alcoholic father. His father never loved him; instead he had to be beaten up by his father. There was no love, affection and cooperation in the family. In his family the relationship was based on economic performance. Even, there was a regular clash between father and mother due to any small affairs in daily family life. Moreover, the inter–familial and intra–familial conflict was common to notice in their family. Ultimately his childhood was being affected badly due to these reasons and since very beginning his pattern of thought gradually began to develop with the matter related to stone crushing work.

Case Study 2: Kamala Roy, a 14 years old girl belonged to Rajbanshi community. She got involved in stone based job. She did both stone collection and crushing activities in the stone field. Both of her parents got involved in stone based job. But their earnings could not provide them a minimum support to run their family. To meet the needs they provoked Kamala to do this work. Kamala was doing this work for last five years. She was busy with this job for the whole week. She was scolded bitterly and even beaten up by her parents if she would absent in the stone field which created a fear into her mind. She and her rest family members lived in a broken and *kachha* house and it was made of single little room. There was very much moisture in the room and the moisture entered through rain which was falling on

their leaky roof. But her parents could not afford to repair it. Due to little space in the room she could not sleep well at night and also could not maintain her privacy. There was no electricity and sanitation facility in their house. Due to poor light she faced serious problems at night. They could arrange food not more than twice a day and it was just rice, pulses and little amount of vegetables. They could rarely manage required animal protein like meat, egg and fish in their diet. They could hardly manage a little breakfast with tea and porridge. Even in many cases they had to starve. They used to suffer from various diseases and ailments throughout the year but had no capacity to bear the expense of treatment. They could never purchase all the doctor prescribed medicines and even could not maintain its full course also. They could not afford to see the specialist doctors due to unbearable expense and often they had a quarrel at home over these matters. To get a relief from tension her father used to consume alcohol everyday and also used abusive words and beat them soundly. She could not study at home and even she had to absent in the school for maximum days in a week. Besides stone crushing job, she had to do necessary domestic chores. The parents could not provide her private tuition and other necessary educational requirements. Moreover, she had no well and clean dress. Due to rough use of dress in the stone field it became dirty soon. She had to collect stone every day from the river resulted in her dress got drenched but could not change it. Even she had no well school dress too and she had a quarrel with parents for making a new school dress. However, her family failed to ensure her proper shelter, nutritious food, required dress, treatment and necessary educational requirements. Due to poverty her family could not celebrate many religious festivals and even there was not sufficient space at home for house deity and due to this fact she and her family were deprived of its enjoyment. Besides these, her parents failed to sustain a good family environment because there was a frequent conflict between her parents in daily family life due to any affairs like poverty, alcoholism, treatment of children, food, education etc. In her family it was common to notice that the parents became aggressive in nature. Moreover, her family atmosphere was not in favour of peaceful living which had a negative influence on her wellbeing.

Case Study 3: Sanjeeb Barman was a 13 years old boy. He got involved in both stone crushing and stone collection activities. In his family he lived with his father, mother and two younger sisters. Both of his parents got involved in stone based job as prime earning source. But their earnings could not meet to expense of necessary livelihood requirements. Sanjeeb was motivated by his parents to do this work. He

had been doing this work for last five years. The concept of stone crushing job was gradually developed in his mind from the very beginning. He was first generation learner and due to this fact he could not hope to get the proper guidelines from his parents. His parents preferred more to send him to stone field as their anger found expression in bitter scolding and sound beating either for absence in work or raising eyes from work. Indeed, the burden of economic responsibility of the family was imposed upon the Sanjeeb at the very beginning of life. However, to get rid of poverty his parents forced him to do the work. So, he had to go to the working field sacrificing all the recreations like participation in various sports and games, watching television, gossiping with peer group etc. and it was not in favour of his wellbeing and he was the worst sufferers from blossom into a healthy child. Further, their housing condition was not in favour of living. Their dwelling house was broken and *kachha* type of two small sizes rooms with *kachha* floor made of wattle walls, corrugated tin roofs and devoid of proper ventilation. In rainy season the insider atmosphere of the houses became dump and its floor became muddy and clammy. They had to face a lot of difficulties in living. Besides these, Sanjeeb failed to meet the necessary requirements like nutritious food, proper dress, education etc. He could not eat to the fill and therefore, he had to do the work hungry in the stone field. Again, he had no well dress and warm clothes as well. As a result during winter season he got weakened by cold and found to work in the stone field while shivering. He had to suffer from lot of difficulties. Even, his family could not afford to see the doctor with necessary diagnostic tests and also failed to meet the expense of purchasing all the doctors' prescribed medicines. Due to busy working schedule neither he could play games nor could manage adequate time for other recreations too. Even, he could not study at home due to lack of adequate time. Moreover, he went off to school for maximum days in a week and often for the whole week as well. The parents scolded him bitterly if he was absent in work. Apart from working involvement, Sanjeeb had to help his mother in necessary domestic chores. The family atmosphere was not in favour of living. His father became habituated with taking alcohol every day in the evening and made chaos in the family. There was a frequent conflict between his father and mother due to any small affairs. The relationship between parents was based on economic performance. Indeed, the poor socio-cultural environment had a serious impact on his living. A regular quarrel, threatening, reproach, gambling etc all were happened before him every day and he had to grow up under these circumstances.

Case Study 4: Rita Barman was an 11 years old girl. In her family she had her father, mother and an elder brother and sister. They migrated here from Bangladesh in the year 2003 due to poverty and political unrest as well. Under this situation, they came in Balasan river basin and made a house of two little rooms on the River bed. They lost their economic resources and finding no other alternatives, the stone based occupation became the only way of making their living. After migration both her parents got involved in stone based job but their earning was not enough for proper maintenance of their large family. She was reading in class IV. Due to ignorance and poverty her parents could not afford to provide required educational materials like books, note books, private tuition etc. Moreover, Rita could not maintain regular schooling owing to her busy working schedule and due to this fact she had to drop out of school. She was first generation learner and due to this fact she did not get any support from her parents for education. Hardly they could take breakfast with tea and pup rice. Due to poor income they could not manage food more than twice a day and it was also poor nutritious. She had her lunch with rice, pulses and little amount vegetable and it was same in the dinner. The nutritious food like meat, fish, egg, milk, fruits etc. were almost absent in their diet. Moreover, their living condition was very much poor and unhygienic. They lived in *kachha* and broken house and it was ill ventilated and damp. Rita sated that at the time of illness her parents could not ensure better treatment, medicine and food for her. She had no well dress. Her parents could not provide required dress and even they failed to purchase the school uniform for her. Ultimately they were going through a tough condition due to utter economic constraints. Therefore, her parents had an urgent requirement of extra earning to augment their family income. Rita confessed, she was provoked by her parents to do this job when she was only 7 years little baby. She admitted that her working involvement had an adverse impact on her studies. She had a fear of scolding if she was absent in work or even raised her eyes from work. She had to do this work against her will. Their family atmosphere as well as social environment was not in favour of her wellbeing. Her father was alcoholic and consumed alcohol every day in the evening. Her father got aggressive whenever developed alcohol and used to create a chaos in the family. Often Rita was threatened by her alcoholic father if she would absent in work. There was no love, affection and sympathy in their family. In fact, the poverty, migration, lack of proper shelter, inter-familial and intra-familial conflict, alcoholism, gambling, illiteracy and ignorance of parents, day long working involvement of parents or guardians in the stone field, motivation of parents to get

involved in work, absence of parents or guardians at home during day time, same living condition of her peer groups and other neighbouring people etc. all these situations were not in favour of her to grow up in a healthy way. Thus, the aforesaid social environments had an adverse impact on her wellbeing.

In the present study, it has been observed that the lives of the studied people were immensely connected with stone based work. Most of them were migrated from Bangladesh. They were forced to come here due to poverty and several socio-political turmoil of Bangladesh. The overall situation forced them to get detached from their close kins and neighbours that affected their solidarity and unity badly. They were compelled to leave their early place of residence, land and property. They became homeless, roofless as well as resourceless. They had to face a serious economic setback and other problems including adjustment with new socio-cultural setup. However, finding no other alternatives, they accepted the stone based job for eking out a living. But they were paid very little remuneration which was not enough for maintaining the livelihood. Under these circumstances, they could realize that the involvement of their children in this work was an urgent requirement to get rid of poverty a bit. Thus, migration as well as displacement brought a turning point in their way of living including socio-cultural practices which might have an adverse impact on their livelihood, and obviously it was liable for involvement of the children in stone based work.

The development of the studied children got obstructed by their poor social environment. Since very little the studied children began to observe the working activities of their parents and other elder members in the stone crushing field resulted in their mental setup got developed with the working atmosphere and its related issues that made them familiar with such environment. They had no other way but following their livelihood pattern. In this way they were growing up. In the studied families the relationship between father, mother and their children was mostly based on economic performance where the love, affection, sympathy etc. were almost absent. There was a frequent conflict between husband and wife due to any small affairs in daily family life. Under these circumstances most of the children felt both emotionally and situational helplessness. The confusion, fear and despair were developed into their mind. From an early childhood their psychological feelings had turned into serious complexities and frustration that robbed them from their childhood. The regular conflict and chaos due to any small affairs or uses of filthy language, alcoholism of the elder male members, gambling, torturing women and children etc. became an integral part of their daily life. The alcoholism of fathers

created a tension in their families. They got aggressive and made chaos in the family when they were drunk. As a result, the family atmosphere got affected seriously that had an adverse impact on mental as well as emotional health of the children and the children could not pay attention to their studies. Besides these, the continuous depression of the parents might have a negative impact on the psychological development of the studied children. Even they could not play games and failed to enjoy their childhood. Thus the socio-cultural environment was not in favour of their overall development. Moreover, the concerned children were exploited very much and also debarred from right to live in various ways. Under these circumstances their socialization as well as enculturation process had been taking place since early childhood and gradually they got accustomed with this socio-cultural environment. Besides these, peer groups, neighbouring people, surrounding environment etc. were the significant agents of socialization but these children got opportunity to learn several malpractices including quarrel, conflict, chaos, hassle, dirty language, alcoholism, gambling etc. from them. As a result, emotional as well as behavioural problems were found to be developed among the children. Even their socio-religious life also got affected seriously that had a negative impact on the progress of children. The securities of food, shelter, dress, health and treatment, education, etc. were very much lacking and the studied children were the prime victims of it. Their life became uncertain and their solidarity and unity got lost which made them helpless. They were debarred from all the rights to be grown up of a child. It is the fact that the studied families were failed to ensure the right to proper nutritious food, shelter, dress, health and treatment facilities and necessary educational requirements to their children. In reality, the children worked against their will under hazardous environment and if truth be told due to familial pressure they had no other means but getting involved in this work.

The burden of economic responsibility of the family was imposed upon the children at the very beginning of life. They had to do work hard altogether for all the day in the stone field but they earned very little as compare to their work amount. With this poor income they could not meet what they needed like proper shelter, food, dress, health, education, other livelihood amenities, enjoyment, etc. To augment the family income and for maintaining very minimum requirements of the family members they had no other option but involvement of children in the work. With their parents and adult family members the children had to work hard throughout the day. In this regard, particularly the children had to face many difficulties. Due to utter financial constraints, busy working schedule, and poor educational background

the parents could not take proper care of their children. They had a serious economic problem. All the family members including children worked hard altogether for the whole day in the stone field but their payment was very little. With this little earning they could not manage all the expenses of necessary requirements for living.

A child should have good health, but these studied children did not get this opportunity. Because, to become healthy the food, proper shelter, dress, health and treatment etc. are very much required. Though, they could manage food twice a day but it was insufficient and poor nutritious. In their daily diet they could eat rice, pulses and little amount of vegetable curry but could rarely manage fish, egg, meat, fruit, milk etc. Even they had not the full meal and often they had to starve. As a result they had a burning sensation in their stomach due to hunger and often they had to work hungry in the stone field. However, the daylong hard manual labour with less nutritious food made them weak very much which might have caused malnutrition. However, the living environment was not simply in favour of them as it was very much unhygienic and polluted with waste disposal and human excreta. They had a serious problem of shelter. They had no proper shelter and in most of the cases their houses were broken, suffocated and moisturized. The moisture entered their homes was through rain that was falling on their leaky roof and as a result the living environment became unhygienic. Due to lack of room and sufficient space in the room all the members had to share the single little room. As a result, they could not maintain their privacy and the children also faced serious problem in their studies. Moreover, they had no well and clean dress. In fact, due to over working and rough use of dress it became dirty soon but the habit of washing and the frequency of changing clothes were hardly noticed among them. Many of them had to collect stone and sand every day from the river and due to this fact their dress got drenched but they could not change it as they had no alternative. Due to poor income the parents failed to provide a new dress to them and even many of them had no school uniform too and owing to this fact they had to be scolded by their teachers. Even, they had no proper warm clothes as well and due to this fact during winter season they became weak by cold and found to work in the stone crushing field while shivering. The working atmosphere of Balasan River bed was very much polluted and unhygienic. They had to do the work all the year round paying no attention to biting cold of winter and scorching heat of summer. The hard manual work as well as hazardous working condition might have resulted in various ill-health problems. Due to hazardous working environment, unhygienic and poor living condition, lack

of required food and various mal practices the children were found to be sick and diseased throughout the year. For treatment of diseases they depended upon the untrained quacks of local medicinal shops and traditional medicine men. Owing to poverty they could not afford to see the specialist doctors in private chambers and they failed to bear the expense of proper medical check-up for long time with necessary diagnostic tests and prescribed medicines. Due to poor earnings in many cases they had to stop treatment in the middle. It is the fact that they worked hard altogether for the whole day in the stone field. Due to this fact a major section of the studied children could not manage adequate time for their schooling and even also for studies at home. Due to busy working schedule during day time they became very irregular in school attendance and they lost interest in their studies. Many children in the studied families were first generation learner and as a result, the children did not get proper guidance for education from their parents. Further, owing to lack of proper shelter and little space in the room they could not pay attention to their studies and also could not write and read the books due to lack of electricity. Moreover, the family atmosphere was not in favour of them. Most of the fathers became habituated with taking alcohol every day in the evening and made a chaos in the family. Besides these, the inter-familial and intra-familial conflict was common to notice in their daily life. As a result, their educational environment got affected seriously; even the children could not pay attention to their lesson. Apart from these, due to untiring hard manual labour they used to suffer from serious physical pain at everyday night and owing to this fact they lost their keenness on studies. Moreover, the regular physical and emotional tortures of alcoholic fathers, regular conflict, scuffle, abuses etc. made them impatient and as a result they could not pay attention to their studies. As a whole, they lost all their interest, concentration and eagerness to their studies. Thus, it is true that all the situations were not in favour of their overall progress and development.

It is postulated that a person learns several things from the existing socio-cultural setup. In their daily life they observe and learn the habits, practices, behaviour, way of living etc. It is the fact that culture is learned and shared and it is transmitted from generation after generation. Here in the studied area it was common to notice that most of the children born in extreme poverty. They were dispossessed of their basic needs and rights to grow up in a healthy way. Even they were deprived of getting love, affection, sympathy, kindness as well as proper care of their parents. From the very beginning they had to see a continuous hard struggle of their parents

to feed them. In most of the cases, mother took their little baby to the stone field. As a consequence, from the very beginning their pattern of thought was surrounded by stones, sands and other stone crushing implements. So naturally, an inclination for the same was gradually developed into their mind and perhaps they could be able to adjust themselves with such type of environment. They used to observe in their daily life that during day times so many people were busy with different types of stone related activities in the stone field such as stone collection, sand gathering, stone crushing, truck loading etc. In this way children gradually learnt these activities and got involved in this work. Most of the children did not get adequate co-operation from their parents to fulfil their requirements. Even they did not get any cooperation as well as proper guidance from their neighbours, relatives and other elder members of the family; rather they got prompted by them to follow their livelihood pattern. Besides these, the peer group also plays an important role in socialization process. But in the studied village it was common to notice that most of the members of peer group were going through about same situation and they were also motivated by each other to do the same. Obviously it was due to same socio-economic and cultural practices of the families. Thus, it may be said that social environment is most influential factor for the development of children.

GENERAL OBSERVATION

In the context of the overall environmental situations including socialization, enculturation and livelihood, a continuous pressure and despair were prevalence in the studied stone crushing society. The children had not the full meal and even they had no proper shelter for living well. They were lacking of required dress. Even their parents failed to ensure required treatment facilities with proper medical check-up and necessary diagnostic tests. In many cases, their parents had to stop treatment in the middle due to unaffordable expense. In most of the cases, their educational matter was very much neglected. Moreover, many of them could not participate in games and sports due to their daylong working involvement in the stone field resulted in their mental recreation got obstructed badly. In fact they had to do a continuous hard work against their will in the stone field ignoring all adverse situations. They were rebuked if they raised their eyes from work and even in many cases also beaten up by their parents. Thus, they had to work in the stone field sacrificing all their enjoyments and merriments, schooling and also ignoring the fact of sickness but these were essential matters for their proper grow up and development. As a result,

since early childhood their mindset started to develop with the thought of stone based activities and allied things. They could not focus on other things as their earnings could ensure a security in augmentation of family income. However, the intra-familial and inter-familial conflict or uses of filthy language, alcoholism of fathers, torturing women and children, gambling etc. were common to notice among them and they became familiar with it. Thus, the socialization and enculturation process of children was taking place under these unhealthy situations. It is said that family, peer groups, neighbouring people, local environment etc. are the important agents of socialization but these were alarming in the studied area resulted in the children were growing up under poverty, illiteracy, conflict, chaos, alcoholism, gambling etc. They used to lead a frustrated and disorganized life. This everyday observation and imitation deeply affected their practical life. For being illegal migrant the deprivation and exploitation in several fields made a frustration among them. It is true that after birth they were growing up under various crises, conflict, psychological pressure and frustration. The actual flourishing of child's mind which was expected to be happened but it was not seen among them. The children need to be grown up in a healthy and proper way because they are the future of a nation, but the studied children were exceptional. Rather in lieu of getting mild or gentle nature, these working children became furious, hungry, depressed, sick and illiterate. In the context of socialization, this stone based society was completely different. Their prime motive was to survive by any means and therefore to augment their earnings they had no other options but sending their children to work. The children's psychology was badly influenced by poor socio-emotional climate at home which might have resulted in several psychological complications including depression, confusion, fear, despair, lack of attention, aggressive nature etc. among the studied children. It is the fact that every child needs love, care and affection which can only be given by their parents. It is in the hand of parents to make a happy and stable family life. The mental as well as emotional problem of the studied children was blamed on parents whose practices were failed to provide an emotional security to their children. The continuous depression of parents might have resulted in a psychological problem among the studied children. Thus, the grow-up and development of the working children was too much vulnerable. Their daylong working involvement as well as utter financial constraints deprived them of all their fundamental needs and rights like opportunity of education, health and treatment, dress, proper shelter, security of proper nutritious food etc. for their development. It is the fact that these children were growing up in such an environment which was

desecrated with poverty, crisis, illiteracy and ignorance, conflict, hassle, tension, anxiety, fear, despair and frustration that influenced their overall progress and development.

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