



Rickshaw Cycle Drivers in Dhaka: Assessing Working Conditions and Livelihoods

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List of Acronyms

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladesh BDT (Local currency)
CBO	Community Based Organizations
DCC	Dhaka City Corporation
GK	Gonosastha Kendra (a Bangladeshi NGO)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NGO	Non-Government Organizations
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDs	Rickshaw Drivers
SSNP	Social Safety Nets Programmes
UNDP	United Nations Development Programmes
UPPR	Urban Partnership of Poverty Reduction
WB	World Bank

Abstract

This paper deals with the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka, Bangladesh. They constitute a large part of the urban poor and consequently face challenges in terms of health, income, social fragmentation and crime. In addition, state and police intervention add to the vulnerability of the rickshaw drivers. In terms of livelihood, it is found that the human capital (labor, health etc.), social capital (family, patron etc.), physical/productive capital (rural land, urban shelter and rickshaw), and financial capital (income, savings etc.) are the key assets which the rickshaw drivers manage by and large. Perhaps surprisingly, this study reveals that the rickshaw drivers by carefully managing these capital assets and relationships, normally succeed in having an acceptable livelihoods.

Keywords

Urban poverty, informal sector, rickshaw drivers, rural-urban migration, livelihoods, assets, vulnerability.

Chapter: 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

Urban expansion is attributed to population growth and rural-urban migration. Urban cities provide opportunities for many, specially the poor who are attracted by the prospect of a better livelihood (Ishtiaque and Mahmud 2011). However they reside in a dynamic state of vulnerability in terms of asset and livelihood. The rural poor, who relocate to cities like Dhaka, are mainly involved in the informal economy as rickshaw drivers (RDs), hawkers (i.e. roadside business), garment workers etc. which is the only source of livelihood for them. Amongst these migrant workers, about 30% get involved as manual transport workers (*ibid.*). This occupation is characterized by low wages, hard physical labor, and inadequate calorie intake relative to their hard labor. However, urban poor are largely ignored in the government policies and rickshaw drivers are not an exception. This paper aims to look into the livelihood conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city, in terms of physical, financial, social (especially family, patronage relationships), and human capital. The analysis then reveals the need to assess the existing government policies to tackle urban poverty to ensure a better livelihood for this group of urban poor.

1.2 Back ground of the context:

In most developing countries, informal sector is a significant part of the economy. According to ILO (1998), cited by Alam (2012), the informal sector consists of "small scale, self employed activities, mostly at a low level of organization and technology with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes". Where economy is not very hefty, job is inadequate, poverty is high, people tend to enter informal sector to survive. In countries like Southeast Asia, East Europe, Africa, and Latin America the rate of urban informal sector employment is within 15%. Other low income countries for example in Bangladesh, Nigeria, India etc. the share of the urban informal sector is 51%, which is quite high and plays a considerable role in country's economy (Kar and Marjit 2009). Webster's (1996) definition of informal sector is more acceptable considering the situation, "Very small enterprises that use low-technology models and do not refer to legal status". Generally informal sector activity refers to non-traded items in the economy. In many countries, informal sector produces the intermediate goods or process exportable/import substitute with a link to formal sector (*ibid.*).

In addition, in rural-urban movement, people are attracted to urban areas for better opportunities. Haan and Rogaly (2002) summarized that young adults prefer urban areas, who are more likely to have a probability to return on migration due to their life expectancy or in search of a better life. In addition, family strategies can involve sending young adults to the city for potentially remitting child. In fact, low skilled individuals are more likely to search for a manual job and high

skilled individuals come to find that their human capital might get a better reward than in rural areas (Lall and Selod 2006).

Bangladesh is a country of approximately 151 million people and Dhaka is a living place of 11.9 million people (BBS 2011) with a major influx of migrant population as a land of opportunities. According to one estimate, every year approximately 320,000 migrants enter Dhaka city (Hossain 2007).

The population involved in informal sector is an integral part to Dhaka's economy by providing much needed labor to manufacturing, services, and other sectors like urban transport work (van driver, rickshaw drivers etc.). But urban transport manual worker also does not have any specific definition as their job is not considered an official or legal occupation. In Bangladesh, the most popular local transport rickshaw is safe, convenient, and an affordable form of door-to-door transport. Rickshaw drivers manually peddle three wheelers to carry at least 2 adults weighing 150 kilo and work for at least 6 hours .For each sortie, they cover a distance of 5-6 kilometer and earn 30-40 BDT equivalent to less than 1 euro .Most of the cases; this work is regarded as a temporary work as it is very stressful (Begum and Sen 2004).

Officially, 80,000 licensed rickshaws are available (Menchetti 2005). But the actual number is at least 20% more which are unlicensed and plied in the streets of Dhaka in with informal consent of officials of the city corporation and the police. In contrast, according to Work for better Dhaka (2011), the authority had issued licenses for 79,554 legal rickshaws, 7,807 rickshaw-vans, 26 rickshaws for personal use, 108 rickshaw-vans for personal use, 120 push carts, and 14 horse carts. More than 90 per cent of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city come straight from the villages. This occupation employ over one million people (Rouse 2004).Substantial numbers of long-duration rickshaw drivers have lived in Dhaka city for significant periods, while recent rickshaw drivers tend to be recent migrants to the city and are likely to have made this move in search of a better livelihood. In one study, it showed that the average duration of residency in Dhaka city of rickshaw drivers is 11 years. About 60% of the rickshaw drivers are married individuals living with their family, i.e. the entire family has migrated to the city (Begum and Sen 2005).

Rickshaw driving is exclusively a male occupation and those who are illiterate, unskilled and lack in capital, choose this sort of an occupation due to the prospects of a regular and higher of income which was possibly not found in earlier. In addition, according to Begum and Sen (2005), recent entrants into rickshaw driving choose this profession for additional reasons such as lack of jobs in rural areas, higher incomes and/or peer influence. Lack of property (e.g. land) in rural areas, 'Push' the poor to enter into the urban informal sector whereas sometimes mutual interest amongst the RDs 'Pull' them to enter into informal economy. In addition, environmental shocks push them to cities for livelihood (Reuveny 2007).

From one perspective, the rickshaw driving is a huge source of needed jobs; the rickshaw drivers themselves clearly prefer it to begging. Further, unlike many other professions, it is fairly well-paid, involves a good deal of independence, and gives them a chance to choose their hours and

to rest when they wish. It is thus far less inhuman than many other professions like day wage laborer.

Labor is the most important asset of the rickshaw drivers and is directly or indirectly related to monetary exchange value through wage employment, self employment or the production of goods and services (Moser 1998). Thus, lack of commodity bundle may perhaps, create vulnerability regarding livelihood and asset including health. Vulnerability directly related with poverty, risk, and efforts to manage risk. Previous evidences show, urban poor are already incapable of managing risks, and rickshaw drivers in particular, are affected by health vulnerability which is related to occupational hazards. It appears that, except health, rickshaw drivers might be at risk in terms of capital (physical, financial, social etc.) and working conditions.

1.3 Problem statement:

The population involved in informal sector provided much needed labor to manufacturing, services, transport and other sectors. Though government has policies for urban poor like old age allowances, food rationing during emergency flooding, these social assistance programmes are not properly extended to the urban poor. For rickshaw drivers in particular, there appears to be no such programme to support their livelihood. In this paper, the problem is investigating how these urban poor (Rickshaw drivers) manage their livelihoods including incomes, assets and health. It is evident from the literature that this specific population is vulnerable in terms of assets, income, environment, health and other social services. On the other hand, negligence of government might lead the urban poor into a susceptible position as Harris (1989) puts, the expansion of informal or unregulated sector including declining of wages and income make these urban workers more vulnerable. Every year, approximately 320,000 rural poor enter Dhaka city (Hossain 2007) and get involved in the informal sector labor force under three major groups, enterprise heads (55%), hired labor (25%) and family labor(19%) where construction labor and transport labors(rickshaw drivers, van drivers) are included in enterprise heads or hired labor (Amin 1987). However, evidence shows that, with increasing size of middle class population, the demand for urban manual transport (rickshaw) of Dhaka will increase as well. Therefore, it is imperative that, the conditions under which the RD's work and survive needs to be thoroughly assessed so that the rapid growth of urban poverty and related vulnerability can bring into a halt.

1.4 Objective and research question:

Objective: This study aims to obtain a clear insight on several aspects of the conditions of the rickshaw drivers of Dhaka city, during and after their working year. Specifically, the study will explore the following:

- To assess their livelihood including family structure, incomes and assets, health and nutrition, as well as education.
- To assess their contribution in urban mobility.

- To help to create awareness amongst the government and NGO's as regards possible remedies for the problems identified.

Research Question: What are the livelihood and working conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka?

Sub-question:

- a) What are their livelihood conditions during their working year/period?
- b) What is the relationship between the owners and rickshaw drivers?
- c) What are the legal terms and conditions between transport owners (patrons) and rickshaw drivers?
- d) At what age and under what condition they usually leave the job?
- e) What happens to their livelihood after they leave their job?
- f) What governmental intervention policy exists to support these rickshaw drivers before and after they leave their job?

Hypothesis: Rickshaw drivers are vulnerable in terms of income, assets and health before and after they leave their occupation.

1.5 Justification of the study:

The manual transport workers in Dhaka city plays an important role in the socio-economic structure as they provide much needed labor to manufacturing, services, and other sectors. But their contribution in urban mobility is largely overlooked. However, it can be assumed that, due to poverty and vulnerability (i.e. income, health, and occupational hazards) the rickshaw drivers leave their job and remain poor for their lifetime. This study will address the massive problem of urban poverty in Dhaka and the case of RD's will help to understand the current problems. On the other hand, this study will aid in extracting the gaps of the existing government policies on urban poverty and will ask attention for the most urgent issues.

1.6 Methodology:

Sources of data: Mostly qualitative data was used in this research study. In order to answer main research questions and sub-questions, primary and secondary data were collected. For background information an extensive literature study was performed using journal papers, books, magazines, newspapers and the internet. A Specific questionnaire was used and carried out under the urban manual transport workers. Besides, for more information, focus group discussions (FGD), in-depth interviews and observations were conducted.

Study location: There are several areas in Dhaka with a high concentration of manual transport workers: Kamlapur, Mohakhali, Khilgoan. This study has been conducted on two selected locations Mohakhali and Khilgoan. From each location, two selected areas were chosen for collection of data

from the rickshaw pullers through, survey, interviews (also FGD) and visiting the households of the rickshaw drivers which allowed me to observe their behavioral and response mechanisms.

Sampling and sample size: Before the main survey, a quick field visit to the selected study areas was conducted to have an idea about the concentration of rickshaw drivers' population and their characteristics. This also helped to determine the way for approaching the ultimate study samples. For in dept interview and FGD an ice breaking session has been conducted which helped them to talk comfortably. From each area, two spots with high concentration of the target population was selected, and from each spot around 10-15 respondents enrolled. Snow ball technique has been used to identify the respondents. 50 rickshaw drivers (former and present) from 2 spots (in 2 selected areas) were included in the study.

Ethical issues: The study is reviewed and approved by the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and their verbal consent has been taken before taking interviews. The researcher also promised to share her results with the respondents after the completion of the research. All information was kept anonymous and confidential.

1.7 Experiences of study:

It was anticipated that availability of relevant data, while writing the research design will not be easy. Many data dates back to 2005-06. But that did not appear to be a constraint for the design since the trends is assumed to remain unchanged, particularly the main focus of the study. However data was upgraded during field work in Dhaka, and corrective measures were taken. During data collection this study faced the following challenges:

- It was quite difficult to talk with the respondents as some of them were very uninterested when they came to know it's not a government project.
- It was time consuming to explain the reason for the visits and interviews.
- Validity and reliability of the data was in threat due to the exaggeration tendencies regarding income, poverty levels and other basic information.
- In FGD only one respondent showed up and another arrangement needed to be organized.
- In FGD in general one participant tried to dominate the discussion all the time.

Despite the above mentioned challenges some unexpected positive experiences also came up.

- I became well accepted and trusted individual for the rickshaw drivers.
- They were very keen to help me when they heard the purpose of the research.
- They were supportive and co-operated with each other to answer all the questions. I found there is a very strong tie among the fellow drivers.

1.8 Limitations of the paper:

- This study was done on limited time frame.
- This paper is mostly qualitative, almost ethnographic study based on a limited sample size. Due to the scope of the paper, the sample size does not represent the general livelihood situations of the rickshaw drivers.
- A limited number of literatures have been found regarding the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city.

1.9 Organization of the paper:

This paper is organized into six chapters including sub-chapters. The second chapter is about the analytical framework focusing on the urban poverty, livelihood, asset vulnerability, patronage which will be used to analyze the data of rickshaw driver's livelihood and working conditions. An overview of Dhaka city, its population, poverty situation and policy is presented in chapter three. Chapter four and fifth provides an analysis of the research findings. Chapter four provides the basic concern of the rickshaw drivers and their position as an urban poor. To be discussed, the concluding chapter provides an overview of the research findings in relation to the key research questions, while further summarizing issues and information as regards to the main research topic of the livelihood and working conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city.

Chapter 2:

Analytical Framework:

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter aims to provide a brief discussion on the analytical approach followed in this study. This chapter has been structured on the basis of several issues like urban poverty, livelihood approach, asset vulnerability framework and patronage.

2.2 Poverty: Urban poverty

Poverty is a multidimensional aspect measured by low income, low human, social and financial capital and accessibility of services. In 1980's and 1990's, different researches discovered great variety in the extent and depth of poverty within the urban sector in the Third World. But in developed countries like UK, USA, urban poverty is often used specifically to refer to concentrations of deprivation in inner-city areas or peripheral social housing estates (Wratten 1995). The most common definition associated with poverty is lack or deficiency of the required needs of human being .Poverty is a kind of deprivation,a trap, which is difficult for people to escape without assistance. Being poor means that, a person is deprived of the decision-making process of his community, discriminated against in society, rootless from the community,environmentally unsafe and are vulnerable to various hazards and threat(Baker and Schuler 2004).Since 1990's the so called poverty agenda ,there are two polarized alternative approaches to understand poverty.First is the conventional which identifies income or consumption as the best substitute for poverty and second subjective that identifies the tecnocratic need of development professional ,but failed to understand the complex,diverse and realities in which the poor lives (ibid.).

Akin L. Mabogunje (2005) in his paper mentioned that in 1993 in Geneva, Switzerland, the Secretary-General called attention to the fact that poverty is another face of the generally dehumanising phenomenon of deprivation. To quote him:

"Deprivation is a multi-dimensional concept. In the sphere of economics, deprivation manifests itself as poverty; in politics, as marginalisation; in social relations, as discrimination; in culture, as rootlessness; in ecology, as vulnerability. The different forms of deprivation reinforce one another. Often the same household, the same region, the same country is the victim of all these forms of deprivation. We must attack deprivation in all its forms. None of the other dimensions of deprivation, however, can be tackled unless we address the problem of poverty and unemployment." (United Nations,1993)

Along with hardcore poverty another concept 'Cronic poverty' is also related to poverty which needs to be discussed in this context. Generally, chronic poor are those who live in severe and multidimensional poverty, a severe and constant lack of income, asset, health and other social services. The reasons behind chronic poverty could be economic or environmental shocks, the

absence of social protection, bad governance, discrimination regarding gender, ethnicity, age etc. Surprisingly, according to Wood cited by Hulme and Shepherd (2003) ,some people wish to stay poor to minimize vulnerability in terms of capital and other social services. Wratten(1995), challenged the usefulness of treating urban poverty as a separate group from rural poverty. To him this distinction is totally arbitrary but also very wisely identified four dimensions of urban poverty,which are attuned with both urban and rural poverty;urban environmental and health risks; vulnerability arising from commercial exchange;social diversity,fragmentation and crime;vulnerability arising from the intervention of the state.

However,poverty is a multidimensional concept, because, those who live below poverty line and stay in a long period of time, are poor. But, those who are always poor is chronically poor(Mitlin 2005). Generally, poverty and chronic poverty can be measured by using different indicators based on income,expenditure or consumption. On the other hand, recent researches are giving emphasis on asset,nutrition,education,human rights or a combination of these indicators (ibid.). Other indicators, like income or consumption measures, unsatisfied basic needs index, vulnerability can be chosen to measure urban poverty which could provide different results between the mega cities and small towns. These urban poor, cannot afford a basic basket of goods, cannot have access to basic needs including education, water, and housing, and experience an episode of income or health poverty over time, and the probability of vulnerability to other risks being raised (Baker and Schuler 2004).

It was already stated before that, poverty is a multi dimensional concept but there is a separation of characteristics between the urban and rural poverty. The urban poor live in overcrowded areas, face environmental hazards, lack a strong community and inter household network, and are victims of crime and violence etc. (ibid.). On the other hand, in addressing the issue on defining the urban poor, according to Bromers and Gerry cited by Lloyd (1979) , urban poor are not only those who are poorly paid but also who work in the so called informal sector;those who service the needs of the poor, in countless diverse ways and also serve the rich with their little wealth.

Though, informal sector is the life line for the less skilled urban poor,absence of rights and social protection is a characteristic of an informal economy. Furthermore, the workers are involved in informal economy, live in extensive poverty,lack access to basic social services, face exploitation, have no basic safety condition at work,struggle every day to survive and have little hope or no hope for better life (Alam 2012).

These urban poor, cannot afford a basic basket of goods, including education,water,nutrition, housing. They also experience an episode of income or health poverty over time (ibid.). Unlike rural poverty, urban poverty in developing countries has different problems regarding social, economical, political access. Baker et al. (2005) stated that many urban poor lives in slums or in remote peri-urban areas with limited access to jobs, social security and social services. This problem of access is linked to failure of economy, lack of equity in services including low living standards, social fragmentation and social exclusion.

2.3 Livelihood:

According to Chambers and Conway (1992) cited by Tao and Wall (2009): "A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recovers from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term."

In the livelihood framework the level of hardship and security can be drawn from the overall asset of an individual, household or group as there is a close relation between these two. Availability of assets is very important as it directly ensures security of individuals and also helps to increase the ability to influence the policy or programmes indirectly. Urban poor needs to have livelihood opportunities because if the livelihood policies are positive then it will improve income reduce vulnerability; ensure food security of the urban poor (ibid.).

On the other hand, a country's standard of livelihood informs us about the situation of the households and the activities they are engaged in. But the information on the power relations between and within the community, structural factors (e.g. values, norms etc.) are often curtained. In poverty absence of capital is given much more emphasis compared to an absence of entitlement. Usually livelihood approaches focus on material values like capital and ignore social use values of importance.

In order to survive, the urban poor adopt a range of livelihood strategies, try to deal with poverty, struggle to reduce their insecurity and also search ways to improve their social, political well-being including security, adequate living accommodation and political rights. Therefore they are not only concerned with income poverty, but also deal with other aspects of vulnerability (Rakodi 2001).

Rakodi and Jones (2002), define urban livelihoods as opportunities, strategies and assets. To them urban livelihood is the combination of five capitals, human capital (labor, household members, health);social and political capital (networks, reciprocity, trust);physical or production capital (shelter, transport, land);financial capital (available financial resources, savings, credit);natural capital (environmental resources). The urban poor use these set of capital as a coping mechanism. However, they might not have all of them at their expense.

To understand the situation and actions of the poor, development agencies and researchers developed different livelihood approaches. These approaches act as a guideline or frame work to design policies and practical interventions through which poor people can reduce their poverty. Poor people and their households is the key to know their situation. On the other hand, social, political, cultural factors are embedded in their household situation (ibid.).

In livelihood approaches, especially the contemporary approaches define livelihood as capabilities, resources and activities which are required for human to survive. But, it is important to focus on the other relational components, i.e. what kind of planning people take to meet the need and desire to survive. Interdependence and interrelations are important as individual's wellbeing depends on that. Individuals, whether rich or poor, urban or rural need to nurture themselves not only in infancy but during the whole life span. But for that, a healthy social self is mandatory where the perception of self developed through interaction with others. Social emotions like feeling of confidence, hope, inferiority come out through interaction including the perception of self, how people treat us, how we treat others, the influences, how we present ourselves every day. Individual, state, society are embedded and dependent for their own wellbeing. However, livelihood arrangements are not simply the gaining of more material well being or security, but it means the level of dignity, enjoyment which can only meet up by the society itself (Dijk 2011).

In developing countries, the livelihood strategies or approaches applied to rural areas and Bangladesh is not an exception. Most research on livelihood and strategies for the poor has been carried out in rural areas and largely ignore the urban poor. As mentioned by Jane A. Pryer (2003), little systematic study of the forms of vulnerability has been seen specifically in Bangladesh though several conceptual frameworks have been proposed to identify the urban vulnerable poor within the informal sector labor market. Practically, very few studies have been tested empirically to classify vulnerable groups within the urban areas and little attempts have been taken to identify the type of livelihood pursued by the urban poor.

2.4 Asset vulnerability:

The concept of vulnerability is often recognized as a synonym for poverty but it is not the same. Poverty is basically a static concept. On the other hand, vulnerability is more dynamic and people may move in and out of poverty. Vulnerability identifies the threat and the households' resilience, improving negative effects of a changing environment. At this point, the relationship between vulnerability and asset is important as assets and entitlements are the means of resistance through which the individuals, households, or communities mobilize and manage their hardship. To quote Moser (1998), "The more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are, and the greater the erosion of people's assets, the greater their insecurity".

The term capital consisted of produced durable things that can enhance a person's ability to perform useful work for his/her livelihood. In this context, the people's livelihood comprises of several capitals. In addition, the available capitals like natural, produced/physical, human, social, political and financial capitals are regarded as an accumulation of capital which, ideally, generates a flow of income or other benefits to the poor. Lack of access to physical or produced capital enable people to pursue their livelihoods, non-accessibility to human capital exclude the poor from well paid wage or self-employment opportunities in the non-farm sector (Rakodi 1999). Exclusion from these, automatically excludes the urban poor from political right to use.

The asset vulnerability framework provides a link between assets and vulnerability which can explain how and for what reasons people moved in or out of poverty and how they cope or adapt to the situation when they are vulnerable. Caroline Moser's asset vulnerability framework indicates vulnerability, as insecurity in the well being of individuals, households and communities faced due to changing environment. According to this framework -both tangible (labor, human capital, housing, social and environmental infrastructure) and intangible (household relations and social capital) goods are related with the vulnerability. Access to and utilization of these resources is vital for the urban poor which decides, people are able to move out or slide into the poverty. Practically, the urban poor themselves are the managers of their complex asset portfolio. However, this framework has opened up new links of argument and other approaches (Spicker et al. 2007). Bebbington (1999) termed these assets as capital in his framework. To him, assets are not simply resources that people use to build livelihood but these assets give the capability to be and to act. Assets not only allow them to survive, adopt and alleviate poverty but are also the basis of agents' power to act and reproduce transformation of resources. On the other hand, Rakodi (1999) termed this as "Capital asset framework" and argues that household may be able to alleviate poverty in a specified period but if assets degrade they might not be able to cope up in a subsequent period.

In urban areas, the urban poor constitute a stock of capital which can be stored, accumulated and sometimes used for other benefits. According to Chamber (1989) cited by Carole Rakodi(1999) though there is a clear trade-off between the stock of capital- natural, productive, human, social and political but they call on stocks of all type of capital. The urban poor access natural capital like water, energy and food that are highly commoditized in urban areas, unlike in rural areas. Access to physical or produced capital through which urban poor pursue their livelihood is an important element to reduce household poverty. For the urban transport manual workers, in particular rickshaw driver's labor is an asset which is an ability to manage their household situation. As skills and health matter in this regard, both quality and quantity of labor resources can be included in human capital. Along with skills, low educational level is significant as it excludes the poor from well paid wage or profitable employment in non –farm sector.

The concept of social capital varies from society to society. Among the urban poor, social capital is very important as it enables them to achieve their individual or community objectives. The social norms, trust, reciprocity which are embedded in social relations and social structure help the urban poor population to manage their vulnerability. But, it cannot be measured by specific indicators. In Bangladesh, the urban rickshaw drivers largely depend on social network or social capital though World Bank (1996) stated "Social networks are generally thought to be less robust in urban areas because of the mobility and heterogeneity of their populations" (ibid.). It is also argued that, not all social capital or all networks are effective for the poor. For instance, in relation to political and social capital, according to Booth (1998) cited by Rakodi (1999), political capital can be seen 'as a gatekeeper asset, permitting or preventing the accumulation of other assets upon which successful poverty-reducing growth depends'. In developing countries, misuse of political capital

prevents the poor to access other assets. Some evidence shows that, sometimes, local political leaders illegally occupied the government owned areas, set up semi structured houses (slums) and rent them to the urban poor. The local intermediaries help these political leaders to collect the monthly rent and help them to continue with such illegal achievement.

The literature on assets, entitlement and endowment not only opened up divergent objectives of different researchers but also overlapping categories which creates conceptual confusion. All these concepts are explained in a different manner but the core idea remains the same. Entitlement is a concept which refers to a notion that an individual deserves to have some particular rewards or benefits. As a member of any country every citizen is endowed with this entitlement by birth. It is the right of the individual to enjoy some common benefits with the legal framework of the society. According to Sen (1981), ownership of food is the most primitive property rights of the citizen and to maintain this, every society has specific rules and regulations. The entitlement approach concentrates on individual's entitlement to commodity bundles. When they have failed to accommodate this entitlement, they become vulnerable.

2.5 Patronage:

Concepts of patronage and Clientelism have proven hard to define, but most definitions have common characteristics of this relationship like dyadic relationships, contingency, hierarchy, and iteration. The basic relation between a patron and a client is that, the privileged individuals (patron) exchange goods, services or support with the less privileged individuals in return of loyalty and other contributions. Patron client relationships exist everywhere from urban to grass root level. " It is a system that has survived from ancient to modern times through informal codes, norms and values attached to it, which enables each actor to secure what he needs to survive within the social structure" (Omobowale 2008). Most literature argues that, Clientelism is inefficient on the one hand but important on the other. According to Scott (1972) cited by Allen Hicken (2011), Clientelism is an "Instrumental friendship," but the client may have little or no direct contact with their patron. These two groups of people might be connected by the brokers, instead of direct connection.

In some cases, for empowering urban poor, community based organizations (CBO's) are seen to play important roles. However, if poor people rather opt to seek and nurture individualistic, personal vertical relations with powerful patrons or brokers, it will naturally be more difficult to organize them. But it is also seen that, urban poor are not usually interested to engage in horizontal organizations like CBOs or in collective actions. Instead of that, they prefer vertical patronage for example relatives or intermediaries, where they have access to person or institution and they can protect their livelihood (de Wit and Berner 2009).

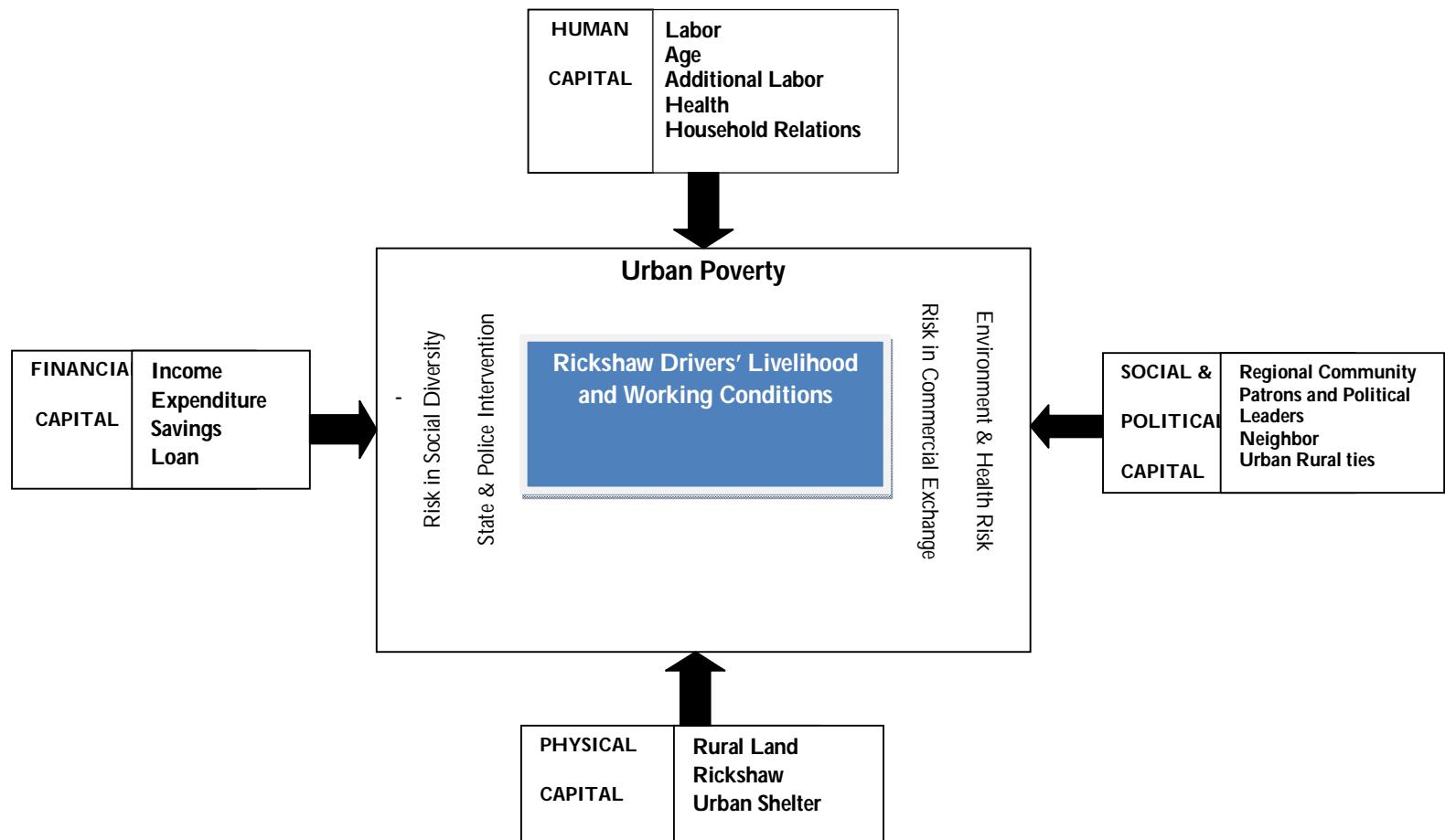
It was mentioned before, in informal sectors, the urban poor use their assets (income, labor, patronage etc.) to survive. Rakodi (1999) argues that in a given period the poor household might be upwardly mobile and move out of the poverty but it totally depends on the assets they have and use. But these assets might degrade in course of time and may put them in the same or a more vulnerable position. Along with livelihood strategies, the urban poor also mobilize their working conditions

horizontally, with the patron or through intermediaries. But as said earlier, though these patron-client relations are important, they are not always effective for them, to move out of poverty

2.6 Analytical Framework

The above diagram was prepared by considering the livelihood approach and assets vulnerability framework. The rickshaw driver's livelihoods include the above mentioned capital, which is the accumulation of various assets. This framework has been used in analyzing the livelihoods and working conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city in chapter 5.

Figure 1: Capital and Assets: Assessing Livelihoods of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city



Chapter 3

Bangladesh: an overview

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter aims to provide a brief profile of Bangladesh and its population, literacy, poverty situation and government's performance in managing poverty. Bangladesh is a developing country with low living standard, under developed economy and low human index comparing to other countries. Bangladesh is struggling with its population and seems to be bungling to manage that fact.

3.2 Bangladesh at a glance

Bangladesh is the largest deltaic plain in the world. In 1971 after the liberation war, Bangladesh became independent and got a new place in the world map. This Bengal delta is surrounded by hills and high lands in the eastern side and north and north-west side (van Schendel 2009). Every year, silt-laden water flows through this delta and it is the reason for the generally very fertile land of Bangladesh. This unique geographical character of Bangladesh influences the social, political, economical life of people. The largest deltaic plain, Bangladesh has gone through so many shocks. The liberation war of 1971 was the third big shock after the destructive famine in 1941 and the partition of 1947(ibid). These shocks made this country, economically vulnerable and it took several years to reconstruct the war-ravaged economy. On the other hand due to natural calamity like tornado,cyclone so many people lose their cultivable land, houses and survive arm to mouth. It is also important to point that the performance of government during these years were dismal in the context of policy, governance, carry out of democracy and the whole country is dealing with corruption difficulty in almost every corner of administrative units including politicization.

3.3 Population:

Bangladesh is divided into 7 divisions and Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh and one of the mega city of South Asia. It is situated beside the Buriganga River. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) (2012) July published its report that, currently the total population is 15, 2518015, the 8th mostly densely populated country in the world and the only in Dhaka city the population is 8,511,228. In addition, according to World Urban Areas Population and Density: a 2012 update, Dhaka is the 16th largest urban areas with a population estimated 15,414,000 and land area in square mile is 134, with a density of 115,000(New geography 2012).One estimate in 2008,the natural growth rate nationally is 1.40,in urban areas 1.22 and in rural areas is 1.51%.it is expected that with the total fertility rate 2.1 in million(2011),by 2050 in population will reach 217.54 million where in urban areas it will be 135.68 million (Statistical Pocket Book 2009).

3.4 Literacy:

The situation of literacy rate needs to be noticed. As stated earlier, literacy is very important to develop the life skills of every country but the definition of literacy varies country to country. In Bangladesh according to the BBS, a similar definition of literacy for has been used for the last three censuses, "Capacity to read and write a simple letter in any language" (Nath 2007). He also said that organization like BBS collects literacy data nationwide including districts and sub-districts level. On the other hand, Compulsory Primary Education Implementation and Monitoring Unit (CPEIMU) also administer literacy survey every two years. According to Samir Ranjan Nath (2007), in 1971, the literacy rate was 16.8% which increased into 59.82% in 2011. One report from BBS 2011,nationally 5 years and over can write a letter for communication (Literate) in both sex is 55.08, on the other hand, 7 years and over can write a letter for communication (Literate) in both sex 57.52%. male literacy rate is slightly higher which is 60.15% and female 54.84% (7 years and over). In urban areas (68.40%) the literacy rate is higher than rural (54.19%) areas. No education include 38.22% of the total population where male 35.88% and female 40.62%. in capital Dhaka the scenario is more or less same (BBS).

Government of Bangladesh is much concerned about the situation of literacy. It has taken several steps to reduce illiteracy in the country more specifically, one of the objectives with a strong national obligation is to trim down gender gap in literacy and to increase their literacy rate to 100% by 2006 (Mayuzumi 2004). Considering the importance of literacy in 1980 a Mass Education Programmes has been launched with a target to educate 40 million illiterates (11-45 ages). In 1990, after the world conference on Education for All the government took several steps to tackle this education for all programmes, with special emphasis on women. Recently, different development agencies including 450 NGO's are working in the fields to improve the condition of literacy.

But the literacy rate of Bangladesh seems to be appealing but it is evident to note that in India the literacy rate is 65% and in Nepal 42% which is higher than Bangladesh who has 150 million population, where half of the population is illiterate (Concern about Literacy).

3.5 Structure of the Government:

Bangladesh has a two-tier administrative system, comprising a central and local administration. This country exercises democracy with unitary form of government where president is the head of the state and prime minister is the head of the government. To assist the prime minister there are council of ministers. For administrative purposes the country is divided into 7 division consisted of 65 districts. In local level the districts are divided into upazilas (483) and under that thanas (599) and 4500 unions are effective (Dhaka City Corporation). For urban and local development there are 6 city corporations and 308 municipalities with specific responsibilities. In 1983, City Corporation was statute with the introduction of Dhaka Municipal Corporation. But in 1990 it was renamed Dhaka City Corporation and the local government. City Corporation Amendment Act (2011), now Dhaka City Corporation has been divided into two- Dhaka South City Corporation and Dhaka North City Corporation on the first day of december. The reason for renaming was the government wanted to make a drastic change to democratizing the city corporation. Under this amendment the mayor and

the commissioner will be elected by the direct election on adult franchise. According to the law the executive power is vested and exercised by the elected mayor for five years with an elected body. The corporation has eight standing committees and other committees to monitor and guide the diversified activities of the organization. The functions of Dhaka City Corporation divided into different departments which include revenue, social welfare, slum development, transport, public relation, information technology etc. (ibid.).

3.6 Nature of the governance, performance of political parties:

Bangladesh is practicing democracy since 1991, but there is a misconception in Bangladesh about Good Governance and Democracy. It is treated, contrary to the reality, as an end in itself. Good governance is a process through which, we can reach to the desired end. The desired end depends on the ideological understanding of the given society. Thus, development vision of the society may vary from society to society. During the last ten years, there has been a kaleidoscopic change in the global scenario. Bangladesh is not an exception but with worse situation in regards of good governance and democracy. According to Mohabbat Khan (2003), politics is dominated by money, people, and influence. People's voices are little hard and economic disparity is being widened day by day. The rich holds the most state patronage and ignore taxes. The state of Corruption in administration, reach in an alarming situation. In the private sector including banks, the sponsors, promoters and beneficiaries took loan using their influence and all of them exist in the upper strata of the society. There is also a culture of these upper strata to protect each other. In addition, he argued that middle class and lower class are largely deprived from their needs and incomes are squeezed out as a result of the escalating prices of expenses of day to day life (like bills, taxes, and house rents). Actually, Middle and lower class are besieged to live on in 'a man-made unjust' society and this gives rise to the social disparity (including changes in values, norms, cultures, morals) among the different classes of the society (ibid.).

On the other hand, in a democratic country the role of political parties are noteworthy for more stable and strong performance of government. But in Bangladesh, the cultures of political parties are more or less similar even it is big or small. Political parties are usually visible, during election and there is normally, a lots of power struggle between these parties. Non-cooperation is become a culture of these political parties with lack of constructive criticism. On the other hand, the structure of civil service is large and the officers are ill paid, lack of accountability and transparency leads to corruption and politicization is seen in most places. In this context the role of others like civil society or NGOs are also very frustrating in shaping up the country's economic, social and political profile (ibid.).

The situation of poverty alleviation is still is a hype, as government taken urban poverty alleviation programmes are not systematically executed. Along with NGOs and development actors, civil society can change the scenario. In the removal of poverty not only government and NGOs are needed to work but there is a great demand of active civil society. Civil society can play role not only to promote god governance but it is an instrument to remove poverty. In Bangladesh, the persistent poverty is the result of its own structure and process. Antonio Gramsci very nicely described how

the civil society asserted their hegemony indirectly to the society, by staying within the same dominant group. But the history of Bangladesh shows that the partial activities of civil society may be implicated in the ongoing reproduction of poverty. It is also need to note that still there is little hope to change the relationship of power in favor of the poor (Davis and McGregor 2000).

3.7 Dynamics of Poverty in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is basically an agro based country where 81.4% population lives in rural areas and 32% of the GDP derives from agriculture. 69% of agricultural laborers and 80% of the functionally landless are classified as poor. But due to bad harvest, natural calamities, ill health leads the rural poor, to insecurity and also it includes those are in the borderline of poverty (Sobhan 1998). Poverty and better livelihood trigger, the most migration in Dhaka metropolitan city. It is factual that, poverty situation is not uniform all over the country. HIES found that poverty is higher in northwest (57.4%) and incidence of extreme poverty was also high in northwest (43%) than the countrywide rural poverty (Khandker et al. 2010). In 2005, Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) reported, the overall poverty was 40% countrywide, where urban poverty was 28.4% and in rural areas it was 43.8% and the national poverty in Dhaka division was 19.90% with 9.60% of urban poverty (BBS). In Dhaka a persistent poverty is seen almost everywhere. The poor mainly lives in slums without proper basic needs and services. Dhaka's poor provides much needed labor, but mostly in informal sector, for example, rickshaw driving or other transport work, and trade workers. Despite the poor wages in the informal sector, there is a huge influx of rural migrants to the city, every year. One of the most immediate constraints, faced by this population is shelter. And in certainty 'as migrants continues to arrive, they often end up in illegal settlements on precarious lands with major environmental concerns" (World Bank 2007).

In addition, the access to basic services of these urban poor residents is very limited in context of water, sanitation, electricity, health and education. In most places, the slums are not in a legal area, as a result, government, NGOs and other donors overlook and do not provide any services. One study on urban poor reveals that, the reason of this inconsideration is lack of rights and access to the slum dwellers by the government, eviction of slum residents and the role of local leaders. So they are kept aside from the focal point even though they are in great need (ibid.).

The present poverty alleviation status raise a question on-is there any vision of Bangladesh government to alleviate poverty sincerely. It is important to say that, there are several programmes at work, targeted the urban and rural poor in Bangladesh, for eradication of poverty. But these programmes have high delivery costs and transaction cost as well. As Bangladesh is largely depends on aid this dependency encourages the transaction costs. This heavy dependence over foreign aid makes it difficult, for the government to carry out properly. In most cases these programmes are prepared by the foreign consultants brought by the donors and the ownership over of government seems to be very weak. This dependence also playing a vital role and one question derived who actually owns the policy-making process the governments of Bangladesh or the donor agencies (Sobhan 1998).

3.8 Neglecting the urban poor and urban poverty:

Bangladesh is predominantly an agro based country and remained until late twentieth century. After 1970 a shift has been taking towards urbanization. But it is also true that the ruling governments since independence were anti-urban poor. Bangladesh continues to picture themselves as a rural based country and thus give high importance in rural poverty reduction rather than urban. It can be said that government from the beginning ignore urban poor, if we see the first poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) where it was stated that "...a tendency...to equate the problem with that of a big city slum life...", generating visions of illegality, unsanitary environments and criminality (Banks et al. 2011). However, the rural areas are the rightful places for the poor and Bangladesh does not have any vision of 'Urban Future' which can allow the low income group a fair space. Some believes that investment over urban poor might inspire the poor to migrate more frequently. In 2008, 74% of the total population of Bangladesh lives in rural areas and this rate helped the government to overlook the need of the urban specific policies and programmes and the result is increasing the number of urban poor. Gradually, The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) has conducted several surveys in urban areas to address urban limitations, but the information's are mostly inaccurate and not fully represent the current urban poverty situation (ibid.).

Development partners, the World Bank and IMF with the involvement of domestic stakeholders prepared Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). PRSP describe the country's economic(macro), structural and social policies and programmes with specific focus on growth and poverty reduction. Interim PRSPs (I-PRSPs) review and analysis of a country's poverty situation portray the existing poverty reduction strategy and encourage implementing it in a participatory manner. The central focus of United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is to halving poverty between 1990 and 2015 and PRSPs aim is to meet that (IMF 2005). A noteworthy progress has been seen in poverty reduction and attainment of MGDs during the 1999-2000. Reviewing the progress, it was suggested that, Bangladesh is right on track regarding to a number of targets such as reduction of gender disparity, eradication of hunger, environmental sustainability (ibid.).

In 2003 march, Bangladesh's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), titled "A National Strategy for Economic Growth, Poverty Reduction and Social Development," was completed with considerable success in food security, social development and macro economy. In 16th December 2009 government identified five priority areas –macroeconomic stability and control over commodity price hike, actions against corruption, ensure adequacy of power and agency, elimination of poverty and establishment of good governance. The amended PRSP titled "Steps towards Change: National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction-II," with the time period between FY 2009-2011 (Bangladesh: Amended Poverty Reduction Strategy Place in Parliament 2009).

Different studies between 1973-74 and 1995 showed that poverty is decreasing but there is a tendency of appearing of extreme poverty. But in contrast it is said that it is not proved as there is no regular decrease throughout the whole period. It is argued that this decline happened in rural areas as because of the migration of the poorest towards the urban areas (Dubois 1997).

On the other hand BBS(1995), reported another more qualitative approach, uses indicators like the type of dwelling, the consumption patterns, the access to water and energy, the access to health and education services, employment opportunities, assets, social relationships, etc.. In most cases in urban areas, the poorest households' heads are laborers working in small production units or in transport services like rickshaw drivers, taxi-drivers, van drivers etc.

It is relevant to note that, the causes and process of urban poverty have not been systematically studied and much underestimated than rural poverty. Hypothetically, the migration from rural to urban areas contribute to increase urban poverty .Due to lack of employment and hostile environment poor people migrate, on the other hand the inadequate redistribution of urban growth results in lack of job opportunities and insufficient coverage of existing social safety nets.

But the main problem regarding this issue is there is little information to deal with above mentioned issues. As stated earlier, still there is no systematic in dept studies to address this problem. However an in-depth investigation is needed to know the actual reason behind urban poverty.

Government of Bangladesh and United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP) with a joint venture took a strategic plan 2008-2011 on poverty reduction and implementing the MGDs. The key issues was promoting inclusive growth, supporting and implementation of MGD based national development strategies etc. In 2000-2007 UNDP funded local partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction Project (LPUPAP) was the basis on which a new project The Urban Partnership for Poverty Reduction (UPPR) has been introduced. The project covered 30 towns including Dhaka with the purpose "To improve the livelihoods and living conditions of three million urban poor and extremely poor people, especially women and children" (UPPR n.d.). But in reality, the result was not satisfactory. In a daily news paper, Jugantor 2012, June 30th reported that the urban poor population cannot get the expected outcome from these projects. In Dhaka, only 1% gets the benefits and others are deprived. It is reported that, under the project, "Urban development and Bangladesh" (supervised by of UNDP, funded by UKAID and LGRD), in Bangladesh, 82 million people are poor and 30 million are extremely poor. And in urban areas, most poor and extreme poor are deprived of these benefits. On the other hand, the government for the first time is going to conduct a survey, to know the actual poverty rate in urban areas (under the supervision of BBS) (2nd June 2012, Jugantor). Before that, only the slum dwellers were included but this survey will include the urban poor, live outside of slums but contributing to increase urban poverty.

In Bangladesh, the Rickshaw drivers are a special hard-to-reach group in Dhaka who represent a large segment of the marginalized urban poor with limited access to resources and services. One NGO, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK) has started organizing the Rickshaw drivers and Van drivers into Rickshaw pullers Health Cooperative to ensure good health care to their family members. Rickshaw drivers and their family may suffer from Acute Respiratory Tract Infections, and other diseases liked diarrhea, dysentery, viral Fever etc. The member of GK will get full primary health care (both preventive and curative) and also has access to free family planning care and

nutritional advices only at BDT 100 equivalent to Euro 1.00 every year. Under the cooperative scheme, the family members of Rickshaw and drivers have access to the following services:-

- a. Free consultation from Doctors
- b. Vaccination free of cost
- c. regular antenatal (ANC) and postnatal (PNC) checkup free of cost
- d. Essential medicines at 50% price
- e. Only 120 BDT for safe delivery, Ultra sonogram, X-ray, for lab investigation of blood, stool, urine, all pathological tests at indoor admissions.
- f. Only at BDT 120- most of the surgical operation including Caesarian operation and Anesthesia.
- g. Each family receives a Family Health Record Book where basic health data are recorded.

(Gonosastha Kendra 2012)

Chapter 4

The Urban Poor: The Rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter aims to provide an overview of rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city and then conceptualize rickshaw drivers as a part of the urban poor. Wratten (1995) said, conceptualizing urban poverty is difficult, due to its arbitrary nature. But she argued that, some characteristics of poverty are closely identified with urbanization; Urban environmental and health risks; Vulnerability arising from commercial exchange; Social diversity, fragmentation and crime; Vulnerability arising from the intervention of the state and police. In the second half, by using the collected data from the study, this paper will consider the position of RDs as an urban poor starting from Wratten's four dimensions of urban poverty.

4.2 An overview: The basic characteristics of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka

Dhaka is known as the city of rickshaws and the capital of employment as well. In Bangladesh rickshaw is the most sustainable and environment friendly vehicle. Each and every year huge migrant populations enter Dhaka mostly for rickshaw driving. The reasons are various, but mostly because of unemployment, extreme poverty, landlessness caused by river erosion or other environmental shocks.

Rickshaw driving as an occupation is the most available job in Dhaka city. Lack of skills, educational qualification and poverty left the RDs with no other options. Of the sample of 30, 21 respondents identified the reason for their migration is to earn more or for better livelihood. However, only 3 respondents were the victim of environmental shock and the rest had other reasons.

The estimated average duration of rickshaw driving, of the sample rickshaw drivers (30) are more than 5 years. Of these, on an average, at least 5 years is spent on rickshaw driving in the Dhaka City and one year in elsewhere. But it is also important to note that, most rickshaw drivers (19 respondents) first took rickshaw driving as their first profession where only 11 respondents tried to pursue other jobs for 1-2 years. This result contradict with the result given by Begun and Sen (2005) where they stated, the recent joiners have been pursuing the occupation for 1-2 years and middle duration drivers for an average of 8 years. But, in their study the average duration of rickshaw driving as an occupation is 10 years where in this study it is 5 years or more.

The working condition for the rickshaw drivers is more or less same. In most cases, most rickshaws are rented and only 5 % rickshaw drivers owned their vehicles (Rashid et al. 2010). In the sample of 30, 22 rickshaw drivers hire the vehicle where only 8 have their own rickshaw. Some RDs who owns one or two rickshaws rent to the other RDs. On the other hand, there are several rickshaw owners who owns 10/15 rickshaws for rent on a daily basis. In both cases, the terms and

conditions are same. The rickshaw drivers could rent this rickshaw for two shifts then he has to pay 100tk (1 euro) to the owner. However, the driver can rent only for one shift (half day) for which he has to pay the rent about 50/60 BDT (50/60 cents). Usually the rickshaw drivers work only one shift because this occupation is exhausting. For a minimum wage (including rent) they have to work at least 6-7 hours per day.

4.3 Rickshaw drivers as urban poor:

Wratten's (1995) four dimensions of urban poverty refer to the fact that, the urban poor face environmental and health risks. This research found that, rickshaw drivers are vulnerable in terms of **environment and health risks**. High living density, overcrowded housing, the urban growth and inadequate access to water, sanitation are seen amongst the RDs. In Dhaka city about 90% rickshaw drivers' straight came from the villages. Employment opportunities attract the rural people towards cities. For housing they choose, cheap housing areas located on a lower cost land and lack of effective housing planning can cause environmental problems through which they could lose their assets, belongings and savings. For example, a devastating fire broke out in Kazibari slums in the capital, on 16th of May 2012, where 300 families became homeless (The Daily Star 2012). The RDs usually live in an overcrowded area and the average household size of the rickshaw drivers are 5 and on average the rickshaw drivers support 4 persons including him. In other words, 26 rickshaw drivers are married and have more than two living children and the rest reported four or more. It is found that the standard room size 8*8, where at least 4 people are reside. In addition, facilities like water and sanitation, the situation is not satisfactory. 25/30 people are sharing one toilet and one tap/tube well shared by 52 families. This has been found to be true that, there is a slight difference with other researches in respect to the average household size and the dependent. It can be assumed that, as these RDs live in an overcrowded, semi -structured/structured slum with unhealthy sanitation and lack of water facilities at a low cost and lead an environmentally risky and unhealthy life.

From Wratten's (1995) perspective, **the urban household requires money** to fulfill the basic need like electricity, water, food and rent which might be free in rural areas. In Bangladesh, the rural areas, in particular, do not have the facilities like electricity. People largely depend on natural water sources and the rural poor at least have a house to stay. Thus, they don't have to pay any money for housing and water. However, when they move from rural area they have to pay for all these commodities in urban area. According to Shahadat Hossain (2005) these urban poor usually do not enter into the more competitive formal sectors of urban employment because of their lack of education and employment training.

On the other hand, the household sizes of the RDs are quite large based on their income. The majority of Rickshaw drivers confirm spending a major portion on food and shelter and small portion for clothes, education, medicine and other services. On an average, RDs earn 300-400 BDT daily. For instance, the RDs spend a large amount of their income for food. As stated before, they generally have a large family; consist of at least 4 members. Only the RDs usually take 3 meals a day. In the sample of 30,14 rickshaw drivers buy small fish 5 times a week but usually buy bad quality

fish at low cost. Moreover, they rarely buy poultry items like meat, milk, eggs because of its high cost. They mainly buy rice, pulses, and vegetables at low cost from local shops. 90% of them consume rice and pulses every day. For housing, they pay monthly 2001-3000 BDT, which is quite high considering their daily income. The good news is, these rooms are equipped with electricity, provide gas and water facilities but in a shared manner. But unfortunately, too many people are sharing fewer facilities (gas and water) which create a difficulty during their day to day life.

However, as previous studies show, the educational background of rickshaw driver's children is actually better than their father. In this research, it is found that among 53 children of all sample RDs, 35 are going to school, only 4 are required to work for supplement household income and 14 are infant (0-5years). Other studies show that, the work participation rate of the rickshaw driver's children is higher in Dhaka city but this has not been found while doing the research. Though they are poor, they are trying to support their children for schooling. In this regard, the rickshaw drivers are paying the fees for schools and books regularly for their children.

Thus, to support their livelihood (family including housing, children, food etc.), they search for other option and the most available option is the engagement of their partner in some economic activity. But it is to be expected, the choice of work is also constrained because of lack of or no educational background of RDs partners. Half of the respondents' partners are employed regularly, in some economic activity, in specific working as domestic help (13persons), garments (8 persons) and others (10 respondents). They contribute at least 20% of the total monthly household income.

Poor urban neighborhoods are like a **melting pot**, where the people come from diversified occupation, culture, and region. As written stated among the urban poor, the relationships are more **impersonal and lifestyle, kinship and neighborhood** provide support to manage their livelihood strategies. It is evident from the study that, though people from different occupation reside in a same place (slums), on an average, most RDs prefer to have a reciprocal relations with their own community people (rickshaw drivers, own regional community).

However, after migration, more than half of the rickshaw driver's (19 person) first economic activity in Dhaka was rickshaw driving and the rest (11 respondents) were mostly engaged in small business, day laborers. Before choosing this occupation they gathered information through their regional community. There is a 'Push' and 'Pull' factor help them to take decision to enter this profession. From RDs perspective, poverty pushes them to accept this occupation after the migration. 23 rickshaw drivers found this profession most available or easy to earn and because of poverty they had to accept this profession. But rest 7 respondents had failed to get other jobs thus had to take this profession. However, in some cases, village brothers encourage them for better living. This kind of encouragement 'Pull' them to move from rural to urban areas. But, it is evident that the number is insignificant in this specific issue. Thus rickshaw driving seems to be easiest option for the urban poor especially in urban cities like Dhaka. One interviewee, a former rickshaw driver Ukiluddin age 72, has been living Dhaka for 60 years depicted his view as follows,

"I am living in Dhaka for 60 years; I saw how Dhaka is growing fast. Before 1971 there only several rickshaws in Dhaka actually there were no roads to go and also so less people. When we were a part of West Pakistan, we had to go for a driving license test and also health checks up was a must, then if everything is good, rickshaw drivers got licenses. After 1971 there were only 300 rickshaws and driving license test continued for some years but now everything has changed...too many people too many demands.... It is easy to enter this job....nobody think about their health as they need to survive."

However, in the category of crime; level of drug abuse, domestic violence, alcohol abuse etc. seen very insignificant. Out of 10 interviewees, only 1 reported abuse of drug by his son.

Lastly, from Wratten's view, **vulnerability arises from the intervention of the state and police**. It is true that involvement of state in alleviation urban poverty might be helpful for the urban poor but, in Dhaka, the government taken policies is not properly implemented. In addition, RDs are largely exploited by the policemen, demanding money from them while working. The reason came out from the study that, of the sample 30, 25 RDs are exploited by the police in roads. As in many roads, rickshaws are banned, RD's bribe the police (5/10 BDT) and get the entry into those roads. On the other hand, corrupted bureaucrats and political leaders regulate urban poverty programmes without understanding their needs and demands. In Bangladesh, the urban poor are not specifically targeted by any of the existing social safety net program. There are 30 specifically designed social safety net programs operated by the government of Bangladesh but among 30 programmes only 1 for urban poverty (Rahman et al.2011). Only one NGO 'Gonostastho Kendra' has been found providing health services for the rickshaw and van drivers and their family. But it is found that the rickshaw drivers are uninformed of these services. They are totally hopeless about the government and other political leaders and also the local leaders. There was a tendency to bully government for doing nothing only corruption.

In interviews and FGD there was a question about government involvement to alleviate/reduce poverty for the urban poor specially the rickshaw drivers. It was quite interesting when they gave their own opinion about the performance of the government specifically the political leaders. In one response of performance of government one respondent said,

"Every government is same so far...but Care-Taker Government is good but Army is the best for today's Bangladesh...the people working in government is so corrupted...may be government is trying to do something but the other members who are responsible to implement the projects taken by the government is so corrupted....that's why nothing is changing...governments first needs to ease out all these corruption...then you will see how smoothly government can implement their activities...."

In reaction to the monetary support from donors to the Bangladesh government, one respondent express his thoughts,

“ The money we get from donor agencies to reduce poverty or to restructure the environmentally damaged areas ,the government and the people related with them take percentages...government political leaders take 25%,government ministers and government officers get 25%, MP take 10%,local leaders like UP chairman and members take 15%, government fund take 25%....and the rest 5% they use it for development.....5% is nothing to do any kind of development in our country...we have so many problems and so many population....”

To the question on what steps government can take to improve their livelihood and working conditions and also what could be an alternative of this profession, the respondents came up with some interesting thoughts,

“ ...Between 100 people 10 people are rich,20 people are upper class and the rest 70 people are poor...but in these 70 people 10 people can survive but the rest 60 people are really poor so....first government needs to locate these poor...government can give rice, sugar, oil etc. in low price...we have this facility now but not regularly....and it's for everybody...health service is free in government hospitals but it needs to be maintained....for our children education is free but study materials in low price will also be very helpful...government can also give some lump sum money to start a small businessgovernment need to know that we don't want free things...we want to work and earn...we are not beggars...but because of price-hike it is quite impossible to maintain the standard we have now...”

Literature on urban poverty shows that, being a poor, individuals are deprived of many needs as “Deprivation manifests itself as poverty; in politics, as marginalization; in social relations, as discrimination; in culture, as rootlessness; in ecology, as vulnerable” (Mabogunje 2007). In addition, it can be assumed that the livelihoods of the RDs as an urban poor in Dhaka city is more or less same. They are poor and exposed to different aspects of vulnerability every day. The next chapter will explore the essential capitals through which the RDs manage their livelihood portfolio.

Chapter 5

Rickshaw drivers: Livelihoods and Working Conditions

5.1 Introduction

The current analysis will focus on the livelihoods situation and working conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city. This chapter presents the findings based on qualitative analysis. The present analysis aims to find out the notion of rickshaw drivers vulnerability in terms of income, assets and health before and after they leave their job. To avoid duplication of common elements and the risk of overlapping, the livelihood approach and asset vulnerability approach are merged to assess the livelihoods of the rickshaw drivers. Under the structure of livelihood approach, Moser's asset vulnerability framework has been borrowed partially and is used to analyze this paper. This analysis is divided into several point using the livelihood and asset vulnerability framework; human capital (age, health, additional labor, household relations); physical capital/productive capital (rural land, rickshaw, urban shelter); financial capital (income, expenditure, savings, money lenders); social and political capital (patron, regional community/neighbor). In this approach, natural capital has been excluded as in Dhaka an insignificant number of RDs household use natural capitals like firewood.

5.2 Livelihoods and asset vulnerability: Rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city

Bangladesh is a country with rapid growth of population and poverty. Better living, better job; better opportunities lead the rural poor towards urban areas which increases the urban poverty in cities. This migrant population absorbed into the informal sector basically in petty occupations like rickshaw driving, street vending and selling etc. Rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city are major occupational group in the urban informal sectors which include much support to the transport services.

The rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city are the manager of their complex assets portfolio. They are mostly self-employed with a low paid job in informal sectors. Rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city immediately take the occupation arrived from the rural areas. The average monthly income is only 6000/7000 BDT (60/70 Euros). But the intra household differences are quite significant comparing to those household where female or other members are participating in economic activity (include average 3000 BDT per month). Economic participation to the work force is the main survival livelihood strategy for these rickshaw drivers. That why, the female participation in urban areas among the poor are higher than the rural counterpart.

In this study, two approaches are merged into one as the concept of capital and assets can be considered as same. Capital is the accumulation of assets where assets are the fractions of different capitals. For instance, land, housing are the physical assets but accumulation of all these can be termed as physical/productive capital. Evidences on livelihoods approach and assets, the description vary based on the situation to be analyzed. According to David Sanderson (2000), in livelihood

approach, assets play the role to strengthening households. He also termed the different capitals of individual as an asset in his paper.

5.2.1 Human capital:

From Rakodi's (1999), perspective for improving the well being human capital facilitate people to take advantage of economic opportunities. However, Moser's study on asset vulnerability identified labor as a specific asset. To analyze the collection of assets of RDs, under human capital, some specific indicators given by Moser like labor (considering age as it is related with labor), additional labor, household relations and health have been identified.

Firstly, the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city consider their **labor as the most valuable asset** in their livelihood. Based on their labor, they migrate from rural areas and immediately take this occupation. Among 30 respondents, out of poverty 21 of them migrated from rural to urban area and an insignificant number are the victim of environmental shocks. In addition, 19 rickshaw drivers took this occupation immediately after the migration, where 18 responded agreed that this occupation is the easiest way to earn and survive. This urban poor population is pushed or pulled by several reasons and take this occupation with low pay and long hours. In addition, lack of choices based on education level and skills cannot permit them to enter in the formal labor force.

Age is a factor which related with labor. Different evidences and this study show that, the RDs usually enter this occupation at a young age. The average age of the sample rickshaw drivers are around 36 years which indicates that they primarily concentrated in the age interval of 35-39(27%), assuming dropping sharply after age 45. Yet, 20% of the sample rickshaw drivers aged 40 and above. Thus, an insignificant proportion of them are below 20-25 years. According to Begum and Sen (2005), only 5% rickshaw drivers are aged over 60 and above and the average age of the sample was 38 years. They also indicated that although the children and adolescents are sometimes visible as a rickshaw drivers but it does not put any significance as the number is too small. The findings of this study have the same opinion regarding this information. The estimated daily average income amongst 30 RDs, 16 rickshaw drivers earn 300-400 BDT (equals to 3/4 Euros), 9 respondents earn 500-600 BDT (5/6 Euros) and only 5 earn 200 BDT (2 Euros). The differences of income depends on, other occupational feature (loan, too many children, health issues, age) than duration of their job. It could be assumed that those who work for more than 8 hours can earn 500-600 BDT than those who work for 5-6 hours (200 BDT). It is obvious that, those who drive rickshaw 6/7 days a week can earn more than those who work for 4/5 days. On the other hand, it is also observed that rickshaw drivers aged 25-37 work longer than 38-45 aged rickshaw drivers. It is also identified, because of exhaustion, poor health, malnutrition rickshaw drivers cannot work longer period.

Secondly, the common coping strategy of rickshaw drivers is inclusion of **additional labor** (women and children). It is evident that increasing number of working members helps the economic situation of the household. On the other hand, data showed that the rickshaw drivers prefer their partner to join in the labor force to manage their livelihood. In the sample, it is reported that 10 out of 30 households, women are actively working in informal sector. As most of them are uneducated,

unskilled and have to consider their household responsibilities they don't have the choice to enter competitive labor markets .Though additional labor reduces vulnerability but the data shows that most rickshaw drivers exclude their children from labor force. It is also true, additional labor can bring significant economic changes in the livelihoods. The data on additional labor revealed that those households have additional labor can add at least 20% more income than the households.

In addition, it is identified that another important asset which cushioning their livelihood is **household relations** specifically their family (wife and children). Despite the importance of labor and productive assets, household relations work like a cushion through which they minimize their level of vulnerability. As mentioned earlier, household's ability to mobilize additional labor depends on household structure, characteristics and the relationship of other family members. The factors like birth and death, too many children, marriage conflict, polygamy, non cooperation of the adult children or drug abuse of the children may place their household relations in an adverse vulnerable situation. But interestingly, the conducted study found, on an average they maintain high-quality reciprocity with their family members. For example, two interviewees have two legal wives. Both wives are helping to support their (RDs) livelihoods by staying one in the village and the other partner in Dhaka with the RD. On the other hand, it is assumed that family members will act as an asset including adult children. But an exceptional case has been found, where the adult child put the whole family into a vulnerable situation. The following quotation is an exceptional case reported in the research.

"My name is Md sultan, age 48; I came to Dhaka in 1972 at the age of 6/7. In the beginning I started working as a sugarcane seller then I worked in a ration shop with his uncles and continued for 8/9 years. But I did not earn much through this work. Then I took the profession of rickshaw driving. I am driving rickshaw for 20 years. I earned a lot at least I could take care of my family and I bought some lands in my district Bhola. But river erosion took everything that's why I don't go to my village....why will I go...I have nothing there. I have 2 sons and one daughter but my eldest son ruined everything....because of him I lost what I have earned and savedtwo years back he worked with the local dish antenna community...but the money he collected from the customers, he spent all of them with his friend in drugs and poker...and then the office asked him to pay the amount....I had to pay otherwise he will be arrested...he is my son....but he did not change at all... he had a relationship with a girl...and without asking, he got married to her...now all of them staying with us in this small room...they got a baby recently....7 people are staying in this 8*8 room.....my son is recently started working in a shop ...salary is 3000 BDT, let's see what he will do now...I tried to make a plan for my life...me and my wife had a plan to start a small business and go back to my village...but situation changed.....because of my son's mischievous behavior we have no way to go out from this situation..."

Lastly, in terms of **health as a human capital or asset**, rickshaw drivers are vulnerable especially in health issues including their family members. Health is the most valuable asset to the urban poor. As they work on informal sector like rickshaw driving, labor is their primary asset. In Bangladesh the urban poor have limited access to the existing health care services (government hospitals and NGOs) and the rickshaw drivers are not an exception. Of the sample, on an average 18 RDs suffer from fever and cough, 5 of them met accidents and 9 faced other health related issues including family members. The health seeking behavior of most rickshaw drivers are same for themselves. The frequency of using government hospitals is 5 people and 23 prefer pharmacies without the consultation of the doctors. It is noted that, they have a fear of government hospitals and the reason might be lack of attention of the doctors, lack of medicine and poor quality of services. In response of taking services from the government hospitals, Alamin, age 27 said,

“....In government hospitals they won’t help you...they ask money for medicine, injections but doctor is free....some days ago I went there because of stomach pain...doctor gave me medicine but I did not have money at that time and I also thought it’s a government hospital medicine will be also free but they were asking money for medication...I was unable to pay at that time...they said, sell your kidney and pay the bill....at that time I feared they will really take away my kidney....”

In response to the query on when they will leave this occupation, amongst the 30 sample rickshaw drivers 25 said it will depend on their health to think to leave the job. On a sustained basis they cannot continue rickshaw driving because physical exhaustion is associated with this occupation. Most rickshaw drivers who work 5/6 days a week, report incapability to continue rickshaw driving everyday because of arduous labor. Very few RDs, works every day, with a significant reason like children’s education or debt to pay. Surprisingly, despite the strenuous labor, the most RDs don’t consider to change this occupation. It can be assumed that easy earning along with lack of skills and education doesn’t leave them much option to choose.

5.2.2 Social and political capital:

Though many analysts do not acknowledge social relations in rural areas (Rakodi 1999) but in urban areas social capital is one of the significant assets of the urban poor, furthermore Moser (1998) addressed social **capital as an asset**. Based on the above, the identified social capital of RDs comprised of several assets like, urban-rural network, trust and reciprocity, patron-client relationship etc.

Social capital is the expected collective benefits derived from cooperation between individuals and communities and social capital is also not static. The study found that, to preserve social capital, the RDs in Dhaka city maintain a reciprocal relationship with their own regional community and social networks. The rickshaw drivers depend on these stocks of social capital (rural-urban tie, regional community and patron) to manage their livelihoods and working conditions. As rickshaw driving is the main occupation, they maintain a close relationship with their

own regional community in Dhaka city. However, the rural-urban ties among the rickshaw drivers found very strong. They feel better identifying themselves as villagers rather than city residents. On an average, most rickshaw drivers visit their village at least 2 times a year. Evidence shows that meeting relatives, look after their former homestead and agricultural lands are the main reason for visiting villages. It is reported that this urban-rural network provide initial information about the accommodation, employment and adaptation of city life to the migrated rickshaw drivers. For example, before entering as a migrant to Dhaka city, a RD usually confirms that his own regional community will help him and this network will facilitate him until he settles down. A strong reliance and reciprocal relations has been noticed amongst all the RDs, particularly, their own village group. For instance, Abdur Rhman, 48 years old, has one rickshaw and sometimes he rent his rickshaw to other rickshaw drivers. By profession he is also a rickshaw driver, his rickshaw has been stolen just the same day of the interview. The following is an example of strong trust and cooperation of two RDs.

"I gave my rickshaw to my younger brother (from the same district) ...as he lost his job in garments...I aware him about these rickshaw thieves....but he is naive...so he lost my rickshaw..... rickshaw driverthere are several groups of rickshaw thieves In Dhaka city...it is their business...they will first go to the market and buy a big bag of rice...then they will ask the rickshaw driver to help him and he will look after the rickshaw...when the driver leave his rickshaw they disappeared form that place...you cannot identify them as they dressed up like a sophisticate person...in every registration plate mobile number of the owner is written...and they will give a call for money and will tell you where to come ...usually they ask 6 to 7 thousand BDT....I am waiting for that call now...I cannot ask my village brother to repay me he has no job....so I will wait until they call...otherwise I will decide what to do...."

In addition, another social capital of the RDs is the rickshaw owners who act as a patron. As Allen Hicken (2011) said patron-client relationship is an **instrumental friendship**. But, when a partner becomes more superior than the other in his capacity then this instrumental friendship turns into a more patron-client relationship, where the privileged (patron) has the capacity to provide goods, services or support to the less privileged person (Wolf 1966). In this study, most Rickshaw owners act as a patron as they are much more privileged than the RDs in general. It is found in the study that the rickshaw owners provide support to the RDs and there is a mutual cooperation between the rickshaw drivers and rickshaw owners. On an average, most rickshaw drivers are very satisfied with the relationship they have with the owner, where only 2 reported unsatisfied. It is found that the patron (rickshaw owners) usually offer tangible/intangible assets (flexible terms and conditions, take less rent) to the client (RDs). For example, the Rickshaw Owners Shamiti (cooperative) fixes the rent usually based on the period of rent and condition of the rickshaw. Recently, the Shamiti decided the rent to be BDT 80 for the half day and BDT 110 for the full day. However, the findings show that the rickshaw owners are usually flexible regarding the rules, specially the rents. This is mainly out of sympathy towards the RDs and also out of fear of losing

their business. On the other hand, there is no specific written legal terms and conditions between the owner and rickshaw drivers. But some unwritten and informal rules are commonly practiced and abided by all RDs and rickshaw owners throughout the city. For instance, an unwritten rule between RDs and rickshaw owners is, change of any small parts of the vehicle will be paid by the RD's; but in case of large expenses the rickshaw owner will take the responsibility. Similarly, if the rickshaw is captured by the police/accident, it is the responsibility of the owner to collect the rickshaw from the police station. It can be assumed that the rickshaw owner has an interest to uphold reciprocity with the rickshaw drivers as they want them to rent their rickshaw regularly, in return the RDs will take a good care of his asset. This type of reciprocity helps rickshaw drivers to support their working situation as well as livelihoods which can be exemplified by the following quote of a rickshaw owner, who was formerly a rickshaw driver,

" I was a rickshaw driver but I have changed my life...I worked for 4/5 years in this profession then I set up a small shop by my savings and continued for 20 years...I saved some money and bought 8 rickshaws in the beginning and then I raised it into 20 rickshawsthe good part is as I started this business long back I have legal rickshaw license and I am also a member of "Rickshaw Owner Welfare Shamiti"and in this area everybody respect me for my honesty and kindness....in rickshaw owner shamiti we have a committee and they decide how much money we will take from the driver in each rent....this time the committee decided to take 70 BDT for new rickshaws and 60 BDT for old rickshaw...but I take 50 BDT from them as they are very poor...and it will be a pressure for them....but I don't have the ability to change their life or do something for long term for these drivers... I don't have any political link nor I am very active in Rickshaw owners shamiti....I am not dishonest, selfish and greedy for power.if I want to do something for the drivers they(The committee) will harass me...." (Rickshaw owner Kaka, age 64,)

Interestingly enough, the patron-client relationship may also have unexpected effect. Sometime this relationship may put them into a vulnerable situation. For example, in 26th March 2011, The Daily Star reported that "Dhaka Metropolitan Police extended a ban on rickshaws to eight new roads in addition to 13 roads where non-motorized transport like rickshaws are not allowed to run. Thousands of rickshaw drivers were rampaged through parts of the capital city vandalizing hundreds of vehicles and forcing police to close many roads to traffic, causing huge tailbacks and sufferings to commuters, including school children and women. At least 50 people were injured. The police said that the rickshaw drivers provoked by the rickshaw owners carried out the vandalism".

Surprisingly, political capital as a useful context with politicians or the use of brokers to get access to individual (policy) benefits appears largely absent. In response to the question of the performance of the local politicians most RDs reported the same. To quote them,

"Usually the politicians come to us before election and promise to give everything...they don't promise any specific benefits....they said, give us your vote and we will give you what you want...but their promises are very vague and we don't believe them...still now we did not get any benefits from the politicians...they can make promises but don't know how to fulfill those promises."

This is in marked contrast, for example to what is mentioned in India made by de wit and Berner (2009).

5.2.3 Physical/Productive capital:

In the livelihood approach of Rakodi and Jones (2002), physical/productive capital is the basic infrastructure and a tool through which people pursue their livelihoods. However, Moser (1998) argues that to rural poor land is the main productive asset in contrast, for urban poor housing/shelter is a productive capital. From the above indication, the study discovered that, the RDs consider owning a **rural land/house** in their own region or owning a **rickshaw** in Dhaka, as a productive asset. The study shows, the RDs who are working for more than 5 years, reported some productive assets like rural land/house or rickshaw including other small productive assets like television, radio, mobile etc. On the sample of 30, 23 RDs own a piece of rural land/house in their region and among them 8 also owns a rickshaw. On the other hand, it was assumed that those who are working for longer years could have their own vehicle but a large number of them rent rickshaw on a daily basis. It is difficult for the rickshaw drivers to own a rickshaw as it is expensive, fear of rickshaw thieves, lack of spaces to keep rickshaws etc. Other reasons could be unsettled lifestyle, job changes, and frequent visits to rural areas. Instead of investing on vehicle, the trends among RDs are to buy a piece of land or build a house in their village first, then on rickshaw. Assets can degrade during the time; it can be assumed that they can face challenges if they lose their rural land/house (river erosion or other environmental hazards) or rickshaw (theft, accident, captured by police). In addition, to cope with this situation, the RDs might take financial support using their social capital.

Though, Moser's asset vulnerability framework (1998) focused on housing as an asset for urban poor, but in the study, it is identified that, the RDs first consider rural land/rickshaw as their primary productive asset. However, to support Moser's focus on housing it can be said that **urban shelter is an asset** for the RDs- the only living place for them. The urban poor in Dhaka city have little access to urban land and they mostly stay in a rented house. Though it was said that the urban poor made their houses on vacant private and government land but it is seen that rickshaw drivers on the sample, including interview and FGD, they lives in a semi-structured or structured houses provided by private owners. But they used to living in single roomed housing with an average of four persons in one congested room. Of the single headed households/hostels, most live in an awful situation, with twenty to thirty people living in a single room. The standard room size is commonly 8ft. by 8ft., for hostel it is 20ft. by 20ft. On an average, 21 rickshaw drivers pay monthly is 2001-3000 BDT including urban amenities. These rooms are equipped with electricity (one light, one fan),

gas facilities, access to tap water and latrine provision. However, all these facilities are shared. The places they are staying have the access to the city's water supply and they collect water for drinking, from a common municipal tap or from hand tube wells. But it is also true that, they have to invest longer period as there is only one source of water(approximately 52 families).In cooking facility, on an average one stove is shared by 5 and more family(18 respondents). In response to sanitation, 24 rickshaw drivers reported that, one toilet is shared by 21-30 people (Only male toilet).

In one response of sharing latrine and cooking facilities one rickshaw driver Shajahan (38) said,

"We have to stand in the queue early in the morning for toilet and for cooking our family have to stay in queue, otherwise it will take too much time to start your day....but we already practicing it for several years so we are used to it..."

5.2.4 Financial capital:

Financial capital is the available financial resources for the people to support their livelihood. In this study, financial capital of RDs has been classified into two sources of financial resources; firstly the **income** including expenditure, saving and secondly, **traditional credit arrangements**. Firstly, rickshaw driving is the main source of income of the RDs. On the sample of 30, the estimated daily average income of 16 rickshaw drivers is 300-400 BDT (equals to 3/4 Euros), where 9 respondents earn 500-600 BDT (5/6 Euros) and only 5 earn 200 BDT (2 Euros). The differences of income depends on other occupational features (age, large family, loan) rather than duration of their job .It could be assumed that those who work for more than 8 hours can earn 500-600 BDT than those who work for 5-6 hours (200 BDT). It is obvious that those who drive rickshaw 6/7 days a week can earn more than those who work for 4/5 days. On the other hand, it is also noted that rickshaw drivers aged 25-37 work longer than 38-45 aged rickshaw drivers. In terms of expenditure, the RDs in Dhaka city mostly spend their earning to meet up the basic needs, specifically food, shelter and health. The average monthly expenditure is 6000 BDT. On the other hand there is a difference in household expenditure. The study shows that the expenditure of single headed households is comparatively lower than those who live with their family. On the sample of rickshaw drivers, some of the rickshaw drivers spend their earning in the rural areas where their family is living. In contrast, the household expenditure of the rickshaw drivers living with their family, at least 30% higher than single headed household. It is assumed that the price of every commodity including housing is higher in urban cities. Interestingly, from in dept interview and FGD it came out that some households earn by renting the space to other individuals which add extra money on their monthly average income.

In terms of savings, 14 rickshaw drivers save money every month and rest 16 does not have the ability to save. However, it is seen that these rural migrants achieved some economic mobility through this occupation initially but it does not keep them away from poverty in long run. The possible reason could be that most RDs take this occupation to survive.

However, **traditional credit arrangement** under social capital (mentioned by Moser) is a great source of financial support for the RDs in Dhaka. It is found that, the RDs in terms of crisis obtain a huge support from the neighbors, regional community and fellow rickshaw drivers. But the RDs preferably try to maintain a relationship with their own regional community or relatives. At the time of economic crisis, along with these financial/social capital (regional community, fellow RDs, relatives), formal money lenders act a significant role as well. It can be assumed that as all the RDs (including regional community/relatives) economic condition is poor, it may not be possible to provide loans when ever needed. In that situation, the RDs prefer informal/formal money lenders. in terms of debt, among 30 respondents, 17 rickshaw drivers reported of **debt** (they have to pay every month) and 13 have no debt. The main reason for borrowing money is for health care issues (9 rickshaw drivers), to buy/build up a rural land/house (5 respondents) and 3 borrowing money for other reasons like accident, case etc. These poor RDs borrow money with an interest from their fellow drivers/regional community (10/12%) or formal money lenders within the same interest rate. An insignificant number reported to prefer NGOs to borrow money. In an interview Md. Abdur Rahim (40) said,

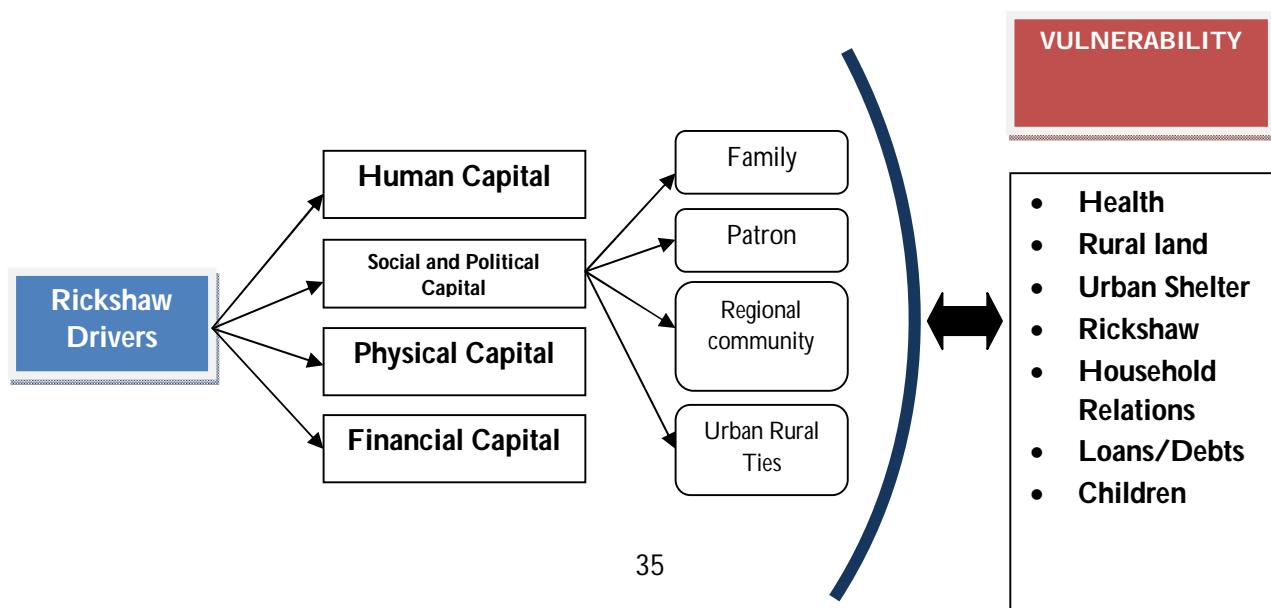
“Loan is not a problem...there are plenty of people who will offer you loan...the problem is when you take loan with interest then you have to pay more than what you took...but when we are in trouble...we had to take loan from them...but if you take loan your blood will turn into water to repay it...”

Chapter 6 Conclusion:

The study was conducted to answer a specific question "What are the livelihoods and working conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city?" with an assumption that the RDs are poor and vulnerable in terms of income, assets and health during and after they leave their occupation. To answer this, some key issues like urban poverty, capital assets, and livelihoods were taken into consideration. The study reveals that as an urban poor, the RDs live in overcrowded housing including inadequate access to water, sanitation and other social services. However, in terms of capital assets, the RDs livelihoods are mainly constituted with human capital, social and political capital, physical capital and financial capital but in varying degrees. Interestingly, the capital assets they have, social capital is considered as one of the most important capital along with human capital.

On the other hand, they use social capital not only to manage their livelihoods but also for working conditions. The RDs mostly maintain a reciprocal relationship with their households and with the rickshaw owners. However, it was found that there is no specific age limit for the retirement of the RDs but the observation notified that they usually leave the occupation after the age of 40 because of arduous labor. After leaving the occupation, they mostly depend on their family and adult children. Surprisingly, most RDs reported to survive better than before they entered the occupation. The study also revealed that despite the fact of being poor, they are not always vulnerable. But there is a very thin line between being poor and being vulnerable. By assessing their livelihoods it can be perceived that RDs do not have a secure set of assets (mainly finance) that can protect them vulnerabilities in the long run. Social capital in terms of family, regional community, rickshaw owner (patron), found to be a significant asset that cushions them from major vulnerabilities and crisis. Along with the above, the reciprocal relationship in the form of trust, faith and cooperation has been observed as a major strength for the RDs. The following diagram is presenting the capital assets that have been used by the RDs to sustain their livelihoods.

Figure 2: Environment & Health Risk Capital assets of the rickshaw drivers: cushioning vulnerability



However, in Bangladesh, there are 30 specifically designed social safety net programs directly operated by the Government of Bangladesh but only 1 for urban poverty (Rahman et al., 2011). Hence, the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka are normally quite unhappy and frustrated about the performance of the governments and politicians.

In addition, United Nation's central focus on Millennium Development Goals was to half the poverty by 1990-2011. In response to that Bangladesh government and UNDP took poverty reduction programmes with the purpose to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of the three million poor in 30 towns including Dhaka. But, again the outcome was not as it was expected. Several evidences show that only 1% gets the benefits and others are deprived. The situation in other countries is quite different than Bangladesh. For instance, in India, there is a close relationship between urban poor and the brokers, where the urban poor individuals get benefits through the brokers (de wit and Berner 2009).

It will be very ambitious for this study to provide any recommendation and expect any fruitful outcome of it, given that the government and NGOs are not implementing the existing policies effectively. This paper therefore recommends that the existing policies for the urban poor need to be implemented first, with special focus on the RDs. In addition, government and NGOs need to ensure extensive promotion of the availability of such policies and relevant services specially targeted towards the RDs. It needs to be remembered that the RDs are in need for a slight push in order to make a significant difference in their livelihoods and working conditions.

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Appendices

Annex 1 Profile of the respondents in the in-depth interviews:

N=10

Name	Background	Date of Interview
Abu Bakar Siddik	36 years old RD. Working for 10 years, more than 4 children. At the time of interview he was physically sick. He has 4 rickshaws, but did not mention while interviewing.	Interviewed on July 29 th 2012 at his home.
MD. Abdur Rahman	48 years old. Working for 15 years. He has two wives and one staying in Dhaka. At the day of interview his rickshaw has been stolen.	Interviewed on July 29 th 2012 at his home.
MD. Shajahan	54 years old. Worked for 30 years, now working occasionally. 4 children, wife and 1 child is working, comparatively economically stronger than other RDs.	Interviewed on July 29 th 2012 at his home.
MD. Halim	38 years old. Working for 12/15 years. Has loan because of daughters marriage/wanted to start a small business	Interviewed on August 1 st 2012 at his home.
Kamal Hossain	32 years old. Working for 7/8 years. Sublet his room to other persons.	Interviewed on August 1 st 2012 at his home.
MD. Alamin	27 years old. Working for 7/8 years. Victim of environment hazard.	Interviewed on August 2 nd 2012 at his home.

Name	Background	Date of Interview
MD. Shahin	33 years old. Former rickshaw driver. Worked for 10 years. Now private car driver.	Interviewed on August 2nd 2012 at his home.
Ukil Uddin	72 years old. Owns rickshaw. Worked for 30 years. All the children are helping their parents. Happy with his life.	Interviewed on August 3 rd 2012 at his home.
Kaka	60 years old rickshaw owner. Former rickshaw driver.	Interviewed on August 3 rd 2012 at his home.
MD. Sultan	48 years old. Victim of environmental hazard. He has a drug addicted son.	Interviewed on August 2nd 2012 at his home.

Annex II Data collection Tools: FGD Session

N=10

International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)

Erasmus University of Rotterdam

The Hague, Netherlands

A Study on

Rickshaw Cycle Drivers in Dhaka: Assessing Working Conditions and livelihoods

Guidelines for FGD Session

Ice-Breaking: An ice-breaking session has been conducted by introducing the main objective of the discussion to the RDs and also basic introduction of the researcher. The whole session was recorded prior to the permission of the RDs.

Issues for discussion:

1. Basic information about livelihood including family structure, incomes and assets, health and nutrition, as well as education.
2. Working conditions, relationship between RDs and Rickshaw owners and their contribution in urban mobility.
3. Performance of government in terms of urban poverty alleviation and possible remedies by the RDs for the problems identified.

Annex III

Questionnaire of the Research:

N=30

Title: livelihood and working conditions of the Rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city

[This questionnaire is developed to collect the information of livelihoods and working conditions of the rickshaw drivers in Dhaka city. The data collected from this research will be used only in the research. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research. 15-20 is needed to fill up this form]

Name :

Age : (a) 20-24 (b) 25-29 (c) 30-34 (d) 35-39 (e) 40 and above

Education Level :

Type of work : (a) Regular (b) Part time (c) Seasonal

1. Which district you came from?

.....

2. Duration of stay in Dhaka:

Less than 1 year (b) 1-2 years (c) 3-4 years (d) 5 years and more

3. Why did you come to Dhaka?

.....

4. What was your job before coming to Dhaka?

.....

5. What was your first job in Dhaka?

.....

6. Why do you choose rickshaw driving as an occupation?

.....

7. For how long you are driving rickshaw (Years)?

Less than 1 year (b) 1-2 years (c) 3-4 years (d) 5 or more

8. How many days work in a week?

(a)2 days (b) 3-4 days (c) 5-6 days (d)7 days

9. Types of ownership-

(a) Own rickshaw (b) Rented

(b)

10. Working hours in a day?

(a) 3-4 hrs (b) 5-6 hrs (c) 7-8 hrs (d) Others

11. Daily income?

(a) 200 BDT (b) 300-400 BDT (c) 500-600 BDT (d) 600 or more BDT

12. Behavior of the rickshaw owner (1) Very bad (5) Very good

0 1 0 2 0 3 0 4 0 5

13. Behavior of the passengers?

0 1 0 2 0 3 0 4 0 5

14. Behavior of the police?

0 1 0 2 0 3 0 4 0 5

17. Housing related Information:

1.	Monthly rent of the room(BDT)	800- 1000	1001-2000	2001- 3000	3001 or more
02.	Gas,electricity and water is included with the rent	Yes		no	
03.	Size of the room?				
04.	Member staying in one	Relationship	Age	Gender	Married/unmarried
					Education
					Occupation

	room?					
a)						
b)						
c)						
d)						
e)						
05	Fuel use in cooking?	Gas	Electric heater	Kerosene stove	Wood	
06	How many families share one stove?	2 families	3 families	4 families	5 families or more	
07	Adequate water supply and collection of water?	Yes				
		No				
08	Other electricity facility?	Yes			No	
09	How many person share one toilet?	15-20 person	21-25 persons	or more		

16. Family related Information

Dependents over income	3 persons	4persons	5 persons	6 persons
Wife's occupation?				
Children's	Boy/girl	age	class	opinio

occupation							
Family's monthly income?							
Family's monthly savings?							
Any family debt?(if yes, explain with reason)	Yes						
	No						
Sources of loan?							
Assets?							
Visit to village?	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 or more			

17. Nutrition related information:

Protein intake in last 7 days:

Name of the protein	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 times or more
Fish					
Meat					
Milk					
Egg					
Pulses					

18. Health related information:

Do you suffer any of the following diseases in the last three months?

Name of the disease	Yes	No	Cost
Tuberculosis			
Dhereoha			
Eye problem			
Cough			
Fever			
Accident related diseases			

For medical service where do you go first?

(1) Pharmacy	(2) Government Hospital	(3) Non government Hospital
(4) NGO clinic	(5) Doctors Chamber	(6) Homeopath
(7) Traditional medication	(8) Unani	

19. The relationship among the other rickshaw drivers?

.....

20. Do the fellow rickshaw drivers provide support at the time of crisis?

.....

21. Do you have any future plan for the children?

.....

Annex IV

Development of tools:

By using specific concepts like poverty, asset, vulnerability, patronage and some indicators which are mentioned above a well-designed questionnaire was developed to collect data through face-to-face interview with the respondents. In addition 10 in-depth interview has been carried out for which semi-structured guidelines/checklists was developed. 3 case study and observation method also been conducted in this study. The questionnaires were pre-tested in areas outside the sample and revised on the basis of feedback received from field-testing.

The quantitative questionnaires will mainly cover the following information of study respondents which include rickshaw drivers and their family, Rickshaw owners, rickshaw driver's opinion regarding political leaders and government:

- Socio-demographic and economic characteristics, family structure, health and nutrition, education.
- Legal terms and conditions with transport owners.
- Health care seeking behavior.
- Their contribution to urban transport sector and urban mobility
- Perception about their own future after retiring from rickshaw pulling.

Quality control:

A number of measures were undertaken for quality control:

- i) Pre-testing and ice –breaking session: Before launching the actual study, all the techniques and tools were tested and modified. For in dept interview an ice breaking session has been conducted.
- ii) Preparation of field guideline: A field guideline detailing the definitions used, identification of prospective respondents, the steps to be followed during data collection, and trouble-shooting measures were prepared for the data collector.

IV) Supervision: Effective and supportive supervision was ensured on a continuous basis. The investigator supervised the data collection and verifies the validity, accuracy and completeness of data through on-the-spot checking.

Annex V Picture Gallery: Life of manual Transport workers: Rickshaw Drivers in Dhaka City





