

Schooling Items for 150 school going children

Distribution report 3 and short evaluation.

Tala upazila in Satkhira district is a small upazila which lies in the south-western, climate vulnerable, coastal region of Bangladesh. With a population of 2,99,820 (BBS, 2011), the area has one of the highest poverty rates (46%, World Bank, 2016), percentage of untouchable/dalit communities (28%)(BBS 2011), and illiteracy rate (49.1%) in the country. Since the 90s, great advancements have been made in the field of education and the country has almost solved the problem of lack of schools. However, almost 50% of the people of Satkhira still remain illiterate. On top of that, 73% (Uttaran, 2018) of the girls in Tala upazila are falling victim to child marriage and the female dropout from school is also high (female: 42%, male 33%, Daily star, 28-Feb-2018). Uttaran has been working in the area for the past 33 years and by accumulating all their experiences, they chose the strongest platform to reduce the dropout rate and put a ban on child marriage through creating access to quality education for the underprivileged communities of Tala Upazila. These underprivileged households do not have a sustainable affordability in supporting their children in providing school tuition, educational materials which eventually leads to drop out of school, discrimination and child marriage. Hence, Uttaran decided to initiate a project called, “Schooling items for 150 school going children” where they planned to provide necessary educational materials like school bag, pen, pencil, geometry box, copies, school dress ,shoes and stipend. The project does not only necessarily provide schooling items for the underprivileged students but also helps in reducing dropout rate, discrimination against the underprivileged communities, increasing communities’ responsibility towards these children, reducing early marriage and allowing students to get quality education without any disruption. Uttaran would also like to mention the name of two schools Shishutirtho Primary School, Samakal High school and the local community who have also largely helped Uttaran to ensure the education of these children.

2018 is a year of new hope and goals for Uttaran to bring a beam of light to the dark days of the community residing in Tala Upazila. The first distribution of this project started by distributing school dress among 140 underprivileged students of Samakal Maddhyamik Bidhyapith on 16th May 2018. For that matter, the students received one set of cloth, support for school materials and was promised to receive one set of winter clothing. The second distribution was conducted by Uttaran in Shishutirtho primary school where 40 students were supported with school dress, copies and geometry boxes and simultaneously, Samakal Maddhyamik Bidhyapith provided dress to 10 more students and educational material to another 22 students.

Recently, while deciding and preparing for the third distribution, Uttaran has noticed that even if these students are coming to school being well-dressed with the received clothes, they do not seem to have proper shoes to wear and sometimes these students are seen attending classes without wearing any shoes at all. It created a social barrier among those students, making them feel low and gave a sense of not belonging with their classmates. In addition, Uttaran also thought about their discomfort during winter mornings while walking barefoot to school and not having a proper shoe to protect their feet from cold breeze. Hence, to halt the doubt among the students and protect students from winter, Uttaran along with the local community and Samakal Maddhyamik Bidyapith's teachers came together to turn this third distribution into a colourful event involving everyone. Uttaran's target through GlobalGiving is to raise \$10,000, from which \$2,9,29 has been raised so far and has been contributed to these three events. Since, Uttaran was unable to provide winter clothing as promised in the previous distribution for not having enough through crowdfunding, they planned to proxy that by providing long sleeve school dresses and to protect their feet from winter breeze, school shoes were decided to present as a surprise gift to the underprivileged students in this event.

To make this surprise gift a success, the first effort was led by the Samakal teachers who called the underprivileged students (Dalit, landless, extreme poor and single mother children) during the school hours and asked for their shoe sizes while keeping the distribution of shoes in the event as confidential to them. The students were obscure of what their teachers were up to.

Meanwhile, to raise awareness and responsibility among the community to ensure quality education for all the underprivileged students, Uttaran along with Samakal Maddhyamik Bidyapith started to prepare the distribution ceremony by announcing the event to everyone in the community and cordially inviting the parents and students to join the event on 20th November 2018. The event was held on the field of Samakal Maddhyamik Bidyapith where people from all walks of life from civil society, parents, other school teachers, NGO activists to the alumnus of the school were present to show their contribution, support and gratitude to promote quality education in the community.

The day-long event targeted on three key issues to be conveyed to the community. Firstly, to create a sustainable quality education by encouraging the community people and individual families to let their daughters and sons attend schools and continue their education. Secondly, the discussion focused on empowering the women by providing them equal rights as men in the society and how young girls has the right to continue their study and play on the field just like the boys in the family. Lastly, it was strongly perceived that the responsibility is not just for the NGOs to provide education to the young minds but also a duty of the community to let the young souls explore their creative world and their capabilities through quality education. Uttaran have tried to open the gates of perspectives by conveying the message among the privileged students that it is their responsibility to embrace each and everyone in their class despite of their caste,

religion and income standards in order to put an end in discrimination from the roots. Not only a message to privileged students but also empower the underprivileged student by assuring them that it is not their fault to belong to a poor family or being called Dalit or untouchables but it is the society to blame on having a narrow perspective on people belonging to Dalit, landless, single mother and extreme poor of the community. Along with this, encouraged the community to grow as one.

After the interactive session, Uttaran showed immense gratitude towards GlobalGiving in providing a platform which has helped to connect to the people worldwide in donating for this noble cause. The session ended with presenting 172 students with school dresses, copies, geometry box, pen, pencil and shoes supported by people from all over the world through GlobalGiving. The students were thrilled to receive shoes along with other educational materials, they can now walk with the same shoes as their classmates without feeling left out.

Through this event, the community got to be familiarized with the fact there were zero dropout among the supported students, discrimination in school has been strictly discouraged and there has been impressive results from students compared to last year.

Evaluation of the past three events:

GlobalGiving has made an opportunity for Uttaran to create a platform where they can gather funds from worldwide. To distribute educational materials, Uttaran proposed \$10,000 in total (\$30 to make a committee for distribution, \$1,350 for school bag, pens, pencils, geometry box and copies, \$3,975 for school dress and sweater, \$4,698 for monthly stipends for 150 students), out of which \$ 2,929 has been raised till now. Since, Uttaran has raised only 30% out of its goal through GlobalGiving, they have fall behind in providing monthly stipends to the students. Thus, in substitute of it, Uttaran negotiated with the authority of both Shishutirtho Primary school and Samakal Maddhyamik Biddyapith school to grant the education of these underprivileged students without any fees and both the school gratefully welcomed them. On the other hand, due to shortage of fund, Uttaran distributed shoes as one of the winter essentials instead of winter clothes that was supposed to be provided. The rest of the funds in supporting these distributions were covered by Uttaran's self finance and also from the communities belonging mostly from destitute and vulnerable to climate change and disaster. They came forward to contribute to this cause in ensuring quality education for their children which was indeed a highlight of this project and has largely helped to collect rest of the fund required to support these students.

Accompanied by these raised money, Uttaran has successfully conducted three events where they have distributed educational materials to more than 150 students of two schools, Shishutirtho Primary school and Samakal Maddhyamik Biddyapith. The latest event was conducted on 20th November 2018 as mentioned above where a strong message was conveyed

among the community on women rights, communities' involvement and responsibility and the duty of a friend in the school to ensure quality education and unite as one along with the distribution.

The supports were provided to 180 underprivileged children from Tala upazila. They were selected by the distribution committee formed under the project, consisting members from all aspects of the society, such as parents, civil society, elderly people, youths, school and college teachers of the community. By the term underprivileged, the committee includes extreme poor (income below \$2.per day), landless household, Dalit/Scheduled Castes and poor women headed families.

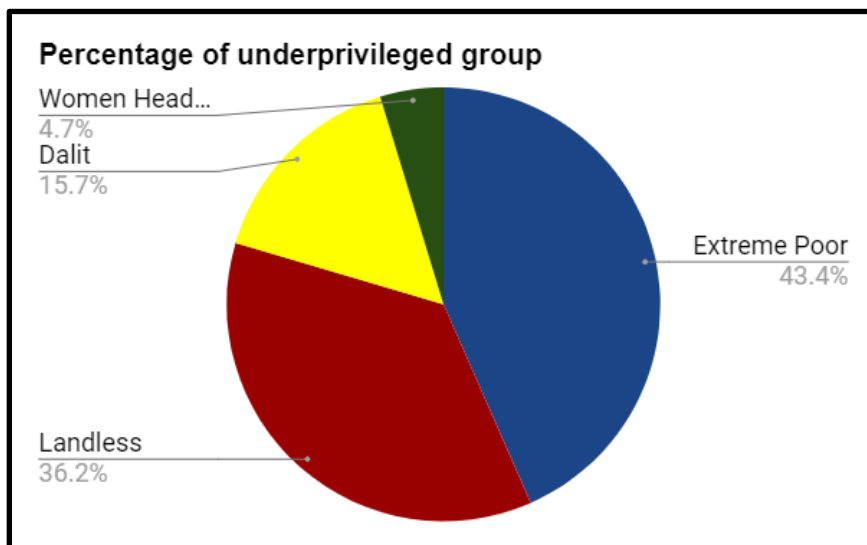


Figure 1: Percentage of each of the underprivileged group.

The supports were provided to 43.4 % extreme poor, 36.2 % landless households, 15.7 % Dalit/Scheduled Caste and 4.7 % Women headed households' children. Most of the families had a crossover between various groups, thus the groups were separated based on severity of the problem.

According to a recent survey by Uttaran the major discrimination faced by the students or the households are as follows:

Major discrimination

160 responses

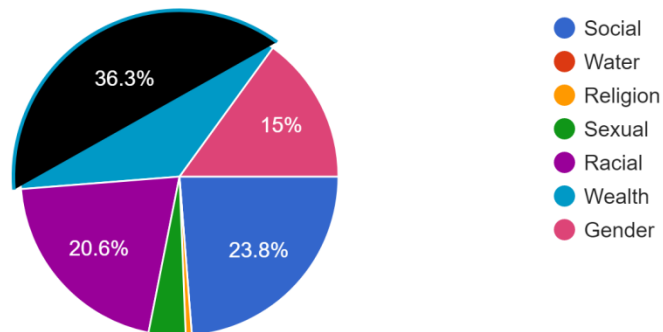


Figure 2: Major discrimination faced by the underprivileged community.

According to figure 2, the major discrimination faced by the underprivileged children are wealth discrimination 36.3 % followed by social discrimination 23.8 %, racial 20.6%, Gender 15%, Sexual 3.8 % and Religion 0.6%. It is common to find out that each of the household faces various discriminations.

Types of discrimination

160 responses

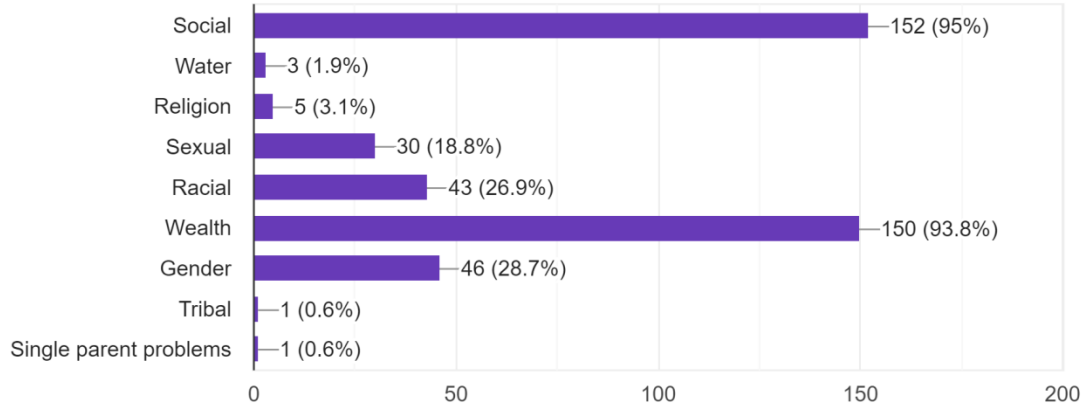


Figure 3: Discriminations faced by the underprivileged community.

The survey also understood the intensity of the discrimination the children or their family faces from the society.

Major discrimination scale

160 responses

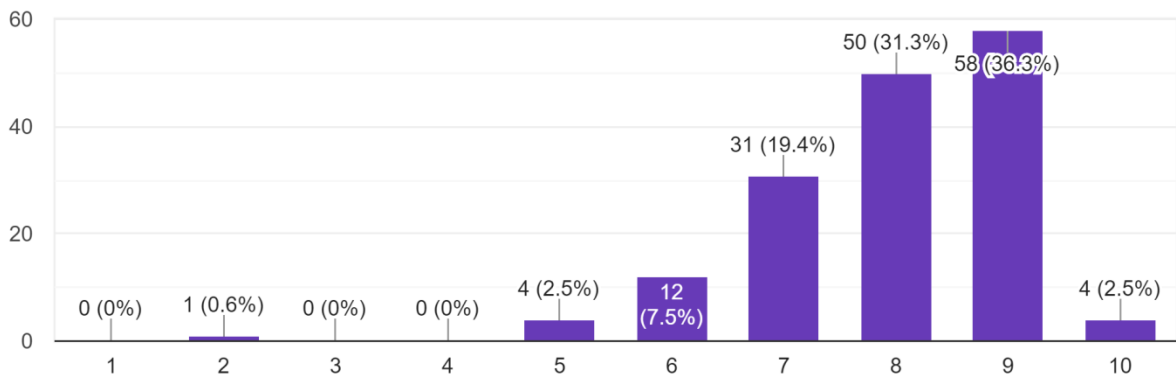


Figure: 4 Intensity of the major discrimination faced.

Figure 4 helps to identify the intensity of the discrimination the children and their family faces. Through analyzing the data we understood that the most common and severe form of discriminations are wealth and social, which can largely be solved under this project. One of the key activity the project does beside ensuring quality education of the underprivileged children is to develop a sense of responsibility among the community the need for education, equality and responsibility to do good.

The project till now have supported 180 students with school dress, shoes, educational materials and free of tuition. It's been 8 months since the project started and we have already noticed and gathered excellent results.

The changes observed were:

- 1) Zero dropout rate among the students who were supported under the project.
- 2) There was no child marriage among the supported students. Simultaneously, a youth volunteer team has already been formed who actively works against child marriage and abuse.
- 3) The attendance has improved by 12 %.
- 4) Results have improved by almost 20% which was calculated by taking average based on half early examination results of before and after the support.
- 5) Youths from all walks of life are enthusiastic to participate in various extracurricular activities in school
- 6) Communities are more concerned about the issue and created a change in perspective by stepping forward in ensuring quality education for their daughters and sons by supporting morally and even monetarily.

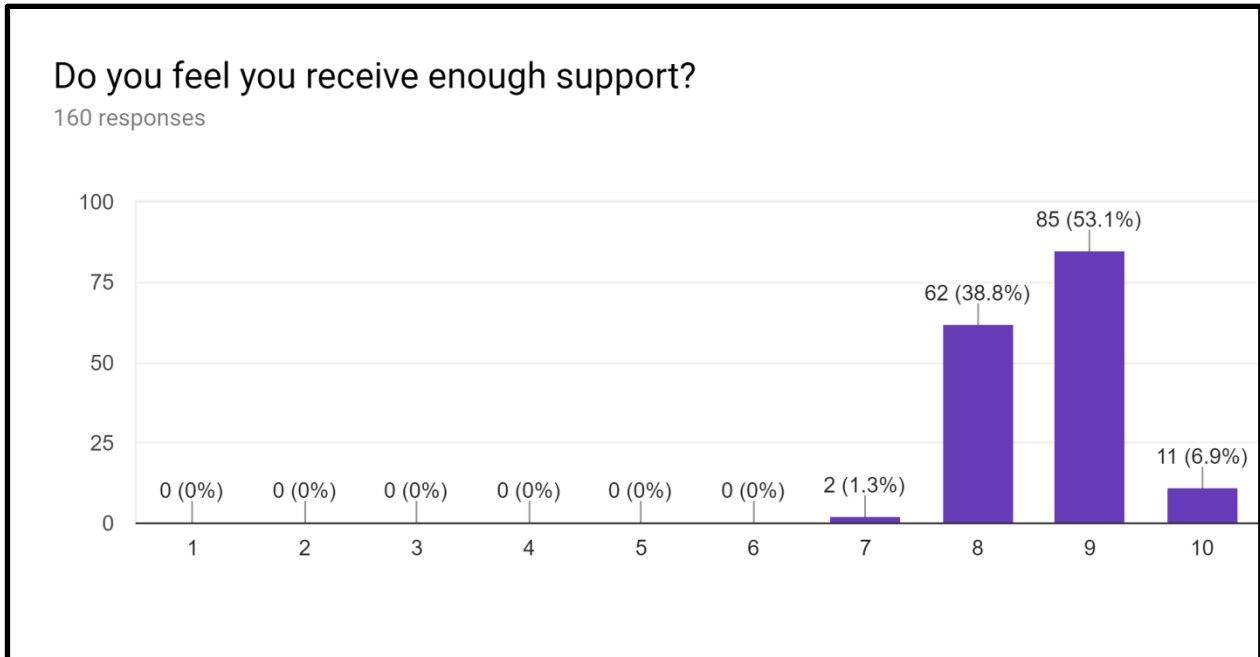


Figure 5: It portrays the satisfaction level among the households who were supported.

According to Fig 5, the supports have been well received by the children and their family which has been creating and bringing a positive change in their life. The positivity that runs in the community through these distributions has motivated more people to contribute whole-heartedly for the noble cause in ensuring quality education. The supported students now feel a sense of belonging to the society being less discriminated which eventually increases their motivation in studies. Not only it worked as a drive in their academic life but they have also become more enthusiastic in involving themselves in school activities which has helped their schools to achieve various praises and milestones nationally. Recently, Shishutirtho has been featured in the Daily Star, the national newspaper of Bangladesh for providing excellent quality in education to the primary level students and alongside, Samakal High School has been awarded as the Best school of 2017 of Tala upazila by the Government.