

Role of Community Radio to Promote Non-formal Education: A Study on Radio Padma

Md. Satil Siraj*

Md. Mashihur Rahman**

Abstract: This study intends to assess the role of community radio to promote non-formal education (NFE) in the context of Bangladesh. NFE has been introduced in Bangladesh to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons for developing their life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilitates lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction. Community radio, although a very new alternative medium in Bangladesh, can also contribute to promote NFE in Bangladesh that has been evident in this study on Radio Padma, the first community radio station in Bangladesh. A ten-episode program titled “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*” has been broadcast on Radio Padma in a view to promoting non-formal education (NFE) and to aware and sensitize the community and marginalized people as well as NFE learners on several contemporary issues. Different methods and techniques e.g. interview, FGD and observation have been applied to assess the role of the program in this regard. Most of the respondents termed community radio as a useful medium for NFE and for its promotion. This study reveals that community radio can also be an effective learning tool of NFE. The article ends with some recommendations which would contribute to formulation of policies for the effective utilization of community radio in Bangladesh.

Key Words: Community Radio, Non-formal Education, Bangladesh

* **Md. Satil Siraj:** Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Rajshahi University

** **Md. Mashihur Rahman:** Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Rajshahi University

1. Introduction

It is apparent that in the last few decades, radio broadcasting remains the cheapest mode of information dissemination despite rapid technological changes in telecommunications. It plays a vital role in socio-economic and cultural development in a country. Among the various modes of radio broadcasting, community radio especially has an important role to play. Due to its focus on local concerns and aspirations and the interactive nature of its programming, community radio can be a powerful medium for education and development. The experience of a number of developing countries in using community radio for such purposes has clearly demonstrated its tremendous potential for strengthening grass-roots democracy (UNDP, 2010:3). It has been asserted in a report that community radio is "one of the best ways to reach excluded or marginalized communities in targeted, useful ways," and in giving them a 'voice' that matters most in development communication (Dagron, 2001). As a part of reaching marginalized people, community radio can also promote Non-formal education(NFE) that has already been evident in several countries like Namibia and Uganda (Thomas, 2001).

Although community radio is a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, this new media can also contribute to NFE in Bangladesh that has been evident in this paper. This study intends to assess the role of community radio to promote non-formal education in the context of Bangladesh. Radio Padma, a leading community radio station of the country based in Rajshahi city has been brought under investigation in this connection. Radio Padma, the first community radio station¹ in Bangladesh has implemented a program in a view to promoting non-formal education (NFE) and literacy issues through producing and broadcasting weekly radio programs which can also aware and sensitize the community and marginalized people as well as NFE learners² on several contemporary issues. The issues include education, health, nutrition, gender, vocational training which can equip the target audiences with knowledge and skills to improve life and livelihood.

Considering the above-mentioned vision, Radio Padma has implemented a program under a donor-sponsored project titled 'Promoting Non-formal Education through Radio Program'. A

program named “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*” (*we have to learn if we want to survive*) in this connection has been aired by the Radio Padma on every Thursday at 10.30 AM and 7.30PM from December 2011 to February 2012. A huge number of target audiences have listened to the program regularly. The project has come to an end as it has been implemented, Radio Padma is still continuing to broadcast the program feeling the necessity of continuation of such a program. It should be noted here that this is the first effort in the history of NFE in Bangladesh to promote systematically a program of its kind by a mass medium

2. Background of the study

2.1. NFE, poverty reduction and life skills development: Bangladesh perspective

In recent years, non-formal education (NFE) has become an important phenomenon in developing countries like Bangladesh where many international, national and local NGOs are providing non-formal education to the poor and disadvantaged groups for increasing their life skills development. In Bangladesh, over 700 NGOs are actively involved in basic NFE programs. There are many more NGOs not directly involved in running NFE programs, but they provide various types of social and financial support to schooling and literacy. The support includes financial assistance to NFE activities, preparing curricular materials and organizing training programs for teachers and supervisors. (Haq, 2010:1)

To mention here, NFE is a purposeful and systematically organized form of education that generally occurs outside the formal institutions; it is designed to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons of different ages and backgrounds, flexible in terms of organization, time and place, and may cover basic and continuing educational programs to impart basic literacy, including life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilitates lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction. (Zia-U-Sabur, 2007:1)

Non-formal education and its distinction with formal system have been discussed in innumerable books and articles (e.g. Brembeck 1971, Brembeck 1974, Coombs 1971, Harbison 1973,

Sedere 1981). Basic education is the area where formal and non-formal education overlaps (Haq, 2010: 1). The term has a range of meaning around the globe depending upon the existing provision and policy of the government (Hawes, 1979). NFE is flexible in terms of curriculum, organization and management responsive to the needs of special groups of learners and is inclusive of all who wish to learn. Continuing education combines under non-formal education in a limited way literacy with life improvement skills in consideration of practical needs of different population groups (Islam and Mia, 2007: 2). In fact, NFE is not age specific; children, adolescents and adults all can enroll in an NFE program. NFE does not require a school building; a structured place is good enough for a school. It is located close to the doorstep of the poor. The NFE school has community teachers who know the children and live close to the children. No school uniform is needed; the children of the poor can attend school with the dress that they can afford. NGOs provide the necessary learning materials, which include the primers, workbooks, slates, pencils etc. There is, therefore, no private cost. NFE's objectives are simpler and are attainable, aiming to provide basic education in reading, writing and numeracy with a degree of awareness in life skills. The successful children in the NFE schools may continue their education in the formal primary school as a regular student, which is described as main streaming (Haq, 2010: 1).

Bangladesh is a country where a large number of people are living below poverty line. According to a report³ published in 2013 Bangladesh ranked the sixty second position out of 137 countries. The national literacy rate has increased significantly but as per the latest literacy survey report of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the country's literacy rate of the population aged above 15 reached 59.82 percent while the illiteracy rate is 40.18 and the literacy of women is 55.71 percent. (BBS, 2010). The labour force, with the growth of population, will continue to grow for about 50 years more till the population becomes stationery. It is estimated that the labour force will grow from 55 million to 100 million over the next 20 years. The country has 6.6 million child labour force (aged 5-14), but in reality the number may be higher (Islam and Mia, 2007:1).

But here is a challenge of converting this large population into a skilled human resource. The Government of Bangladesh is committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as Education for All (EFA) by 2015. The EFA commitment is in line with the goals as envisaged in the EFA World Conference (1990) and the Dakar Declaration on EFA (2000).⁴ Asserting the strategic needs of non-formal education in reaching the national and global target of Education for All, the Non-Formal Education Policy was adopted by the Government of Bangladesh in 2006. The goal of NFE policy is to ‘contribute to fulfilling EFA goals and alleviating poverty as spelled out in the National Plan of Action II (2003 -15) and Poverty Reduction Strategic paper-PRSP (2005). The plan is to reduce illiteracy by at least 50% and move toward the realization of MDGs by improving peoples’ life conditions by 2015. The NFE Policy further stressed that “illiteracy and poverty, and abeyance of democratic values, institutions and norms are hindrances to participatory development and progress. The government recognizes that NFE, by expanding literacy and continuing education opportunities, especially to disadvantaged groups, can equip people with knowledge and skills to improve life and livelihood. The Government looks upon NFE as a key element of the effort to offer lifelong learning opportunities and create a learning society in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century”. This affirms the government understanding of the potential of NFE.

The government is also obliged to provide equitable opportunities for education not only to all children and adolescents, but also to all young adults and adults who have missed opportunities or have been earlier dropped out of the education system. The Second National Plan of Action (2003-15) accordingly sets targets in the fields of early childhood education, primary education (both formal and non-formal), and education for adolescents, young adults and adults emphasizing on basic and continuing education. In the same line, the NFE policy stressed on creating a community-based network of learning centers, extending opportunities for effective skill training and continuing education, and creating life-long learning opportunities for target population of all age-groups in a given community.

2.2. Community radio in Bangladesh, Radio Padma and NFE

Now we may understand, Bangladesh has an extensive program of NFE. Public sector as well as a number of NGOs is involved in this endeavor.

As a voluntary organization, Radio Padma, the first community radio station of Bangladesh, is also involving them for promoting NFE as a way of life skills development, reducing illiteracy as well as alleviating poverty of the disadvantaged people of Rajshahi region.

Community radio, a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, is a type of radio service that caters to the interests of a certain area, broadcasting content that is popular to a local audience but which may often be overlooked by commercial or mass media broadcasters.⁵ A community radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. The community can be territorial or geographical - a township, village, district or island. It can also be a group of people with common interests, who are not necessarily living in one defined territory. Consequently, community radio can be managed or controlled by one group, by combined groups, or of people such as women, children, farmers, fisher folk, ethnic groups, or senior citizens. What distinguishes community radio from other media is the high level of people's participation, both in management and program production aspects. Furthermore, individual community members and local institutions are the principal sources of support for its operation. (UNESCO, 2002)

As a result of series of advocacy campaign and movement, the Government of Bangladesh has been able to perceive the necessity of community radio in the context of Bangladesh and the Government has adopted Community Radio Installation, Broadcast and Operation Policy in 2008. At the first phase, the Ministry of Information, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh has approved 14 Community Radio Initiators for installation and operation of community radio in Bangladesh on May, 2010 resulting 14 Community Radio Stations to go on air for the first time in Bangladesh which are being operated now from different locations of the country.

Any ways, UNESCO, the leading organization of initiating community radio in several countries including Bangladesh, is also focusing on the role of community radio for promoting NFE in Bangladesh. According to the UNESO, Bangladesh's effort to achieve education for all is constrained by a wide range of challenges. Inadequate infrastructure, inaccessibility to schools and shortage of teachers keep a large number of children in remote and disadvantaged parts of the country out of school. Community radio has answers to some of these difficulties. It is this potential of community radio in imparting education which led UNESCO to team up with Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) in organising a seminar entitled "CR and Non-formal Learning" in Dhaka on December 9th 2010. (UNESCO, 2010)

It should be mentioned that as a medium of NFE, community radio is : (a) available: local and community radio services are common throughout the world. Where they are not available, it is relatively easy and not prohibitively expensive to set them up; (b) accessible: most people, even the poorest rural areas, have access to radio receivers and a source of power. Since education radio relies mainly on spoken word, it can speak to people directly and in their own language- even to those without the benefit of literacy; (c) affordable: educational radio programs are relatively cheap to produce and to transmit. The costs are dramatically less than those of television or video, and usually lower than print or face-to-face teaching and listening costs. (Thomas, 2001:3)

Nevertheless, Community radio is continuing to make a significant contribution to NFE in several countries. In the Oshakati area of northern Namibia, community radio is a part of non-formal education entitled "Cattle is our livelihood" to improve cattle keeping practices among local farmers. In the Apac community of northern Uganda, a potable solar or battery powered "suitcase radio station" broadcasts programs of local and timely interest, in an initiative co-sponsored by the Government of Uganda and the Commonwealth of Learning (Thomas, 2001:6).

As a community radio station, the main target of Radio Padma is marginalized as well as disadvantaged people of Rajshahi. A large number of people are living in Rajshahi who are far away from many of the fundamental rights like education, health, nutrition, medical,

housing facilities etc. Besides, most of them are not aware of and sensitized to issues like sanitation, safe drinking water, child care, mother care, early marriage, eve teasing, family planning etc. In this regard, Radio Padma wants to play a vital role to make people aware and sensitize about these issues to develop their life skills and help them reduce poverty that are main objectives of NFE in Bangladesh. Under this circumstance, Radio Padma implemented the program titled “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*” on these issues as a part of their commitment toward disadvantaged people⁶.

3. Implementation process of “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”

Considering the reality as discussed in the earlier sections, Radio Padma has broadcasted ten 30-minute long episodes under the program “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe” from December 2011 to February 2012. Each episode contained a particular issue aired on every Thursday at 10.30 AM and 7.30 PM.

Intensive interviews with the Radio Padma authority and the production team reveal the details of the process through which the program had been implemented. A ten-member team—comprising male and female—of Radio Padma has been assigned to produce and broadcast the weekly NFE related program titled “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”. In order to orient them about the issues, two day-long orientation session have been arranged. Besides, the team has met the NFE service providers for gathering necessary information, experiences, impact and successes of NFE so that they can make their programs effectively. Moreover six Focus Group Discussions (FGD)—three FGDs with the NFE learners of Rajshahi and three with non-learners of NFE programs— with the target audiences have been arranged to explore the contents and formats of the program. After completion of the process, ten topics had been selected to be covered in ten episodes. Following are the topics of the episodes:

- a. Basic education and literacy ;
- b. Pure drinking water and sanitation;
- c. Child marriage;
- d. Tuberculosis (TB);
- e. Drug addiction;
- f. HIV/AIDS;
- g. Mother and child care;

- h. Family planning;
- i. Health and nutrition;
- j. Violence against women and eve teasing.

During broadcasting the episodes, Radio Padma maintained professional relationship with the NFE service providers who helped a lot the production team in selecting topics. As per their suggestion, Radio Padma aired the episodes during the learning sessions (10.30 AM) of NFE centers so that the learners could be able to listen to the radio programs at the same time. The objective of this initiative is very clear—promoting NFE as well as important issues related to NFE that might be a help for the target people to meet their information needs.

At the beginning stage, five NFE service providers working in Rajshahi district had been contacted by Radio Padma in this connection and had been oriented about the process of producing the episodes. Under this project sound system with FM radio facility were supplied to the selected five NFE service providers to help the learners to listen to the episodes during their listening hours. Moreover, the NFE service providers helped Radio Padma to get feedback from the learners.

Under this project Radio Padma arranged sound system with FM radio facility in five selected places for non-learners with different age groups to help them to listen to the episodes.

4. Assessing the role of “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”: working definitions, methodology and data collection

4.1. Working Definitions

NFE - purposeful and systematically organized form of education that generally occurs outside the formal institutions; it is designed to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons of different persons of different ages and backgrounds, flexible in terms of organization, time and place, and may cover basic and continuing educational programs to impart basic literacy, including life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilities lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction.

NFE learners - The people who are getting opportunity of non-formal education system.

Non-learners - The people from marginalized group who never availed any sort of NFE or formal education.

4.2 Methodology:

This attempt to assess the role of “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe” has been made after broadcasting all of its episodes. Our endeavor was to explore the usefulness of the program for the audiences or any sort of changes in their behavior and awareness. To what extent the program helped the audiences in learning about the issues covered in the episodes are also major concerns of the study.

Different methods and techniques have been used to conduct this study on the basis of its nature and objectives. In order to collect the necessary data, Interview, Focus Group Discussion and Observation methods have been applied.

A pre-designed questionnaire with a set of open-ended and close-ended questions has been provided to conduct the study. 100 respondents—50 from NFE learners of five NFE service provider centers and 50 from the marginalized community—have been selected randomly for interview. However, a pre-test was conducted among 10 respondents to test the effectiveness of the questionnaire and to find out possible inadequacies, ambiguities, and problems. After the pre-test, necessary corrections and modifications were made in the questionnaires.

In FGDs there were six sessions. Three sessions have been conducted with learners of NFE service providers and two other sessions have been conducted with the participation of the people from marginalized community. The rest session was conducted with the team of Radio Padma who were assigned to make the programs.

Observation method has been used without asking and informing the respondents directly so that they might not sense anything during the sessions of FGD and interview in order to get more reliable and authentic information. The expression, attitude, mood, style of speaking etc. of the respondents have been tried to observe with due attention to get an overall evaluation.

Moreover, Desktop Review method has been applied to get the secondary source of data which supplemented to write this paper.

4.3. Sources of data:

Necessary data have been collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from the key informants through using the methods of FGD, interview and observation. On the other hand, secondary data have been collected from the various sources such as published books, leaflets, research reports and documents. The secondary sources of data have been used to supplement primary data.

4.4. Data processing and analysis:

After data collection, some errors were detected and all the data were edited and corrected accordingly. Tabulation, coding and simple statistical treatment with graphical presentation have been used to analyze and present the data of the study.

5. Assessing the role of “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”: major findings

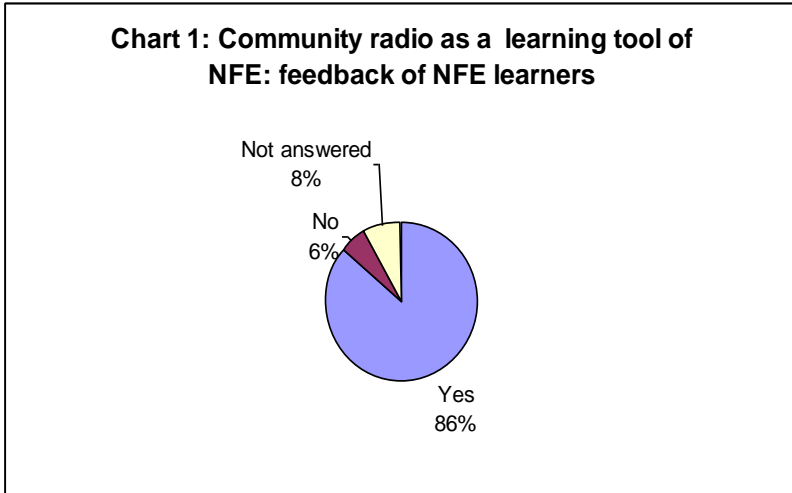
5.1. Facts and figures:

Exact facts, figures and findings have been elaborately discussed here in this part. From this discussion, we can depict an idea regarding the facts and figures obtained from the FGDs, interviews and observation.

5.2. Achievements and observations of NFE learners and non-learners from “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*”:

Table 1 : Community radio as a learning tool of NFE: feedback of NFE learners

Feedback of respondents	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Yes	43	86
No	3	6
Not answered	4	8
Toal	50	100



- Incorporating community radio as a learning tool of NFE: NFE has been introduced in Bangladesh to meet the learning needs of educationally disadvantaged persons for developing their life skills, work skills, general culture, and facilitates lifelong learning and enhancement of earning capabilities for poverty reduction. The Government looks upon NFE as a key element of the effort to offer lifelong learning opportunities and create a learning society in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This affirms the government understanding of the potential of NFE. But this widespread program is generally overlooked frequently by mainstream mass media broadcasters. Radio Padma is filling the gap in this regard at least through NFE related program titled “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”. This is the first initiative of its kind where any broadcasting medium has explored its potentiality to supplement the NFE programs. All of the respondents from NFE learners had admitted that such kind of program helped them a lot. Because, most of the topics and issues generally discussed in their classes had also been portrayed in Radio Padma with more communicative ways helping them perceive the issues properly that would facilitate them to develop their life skills. That is why most of the

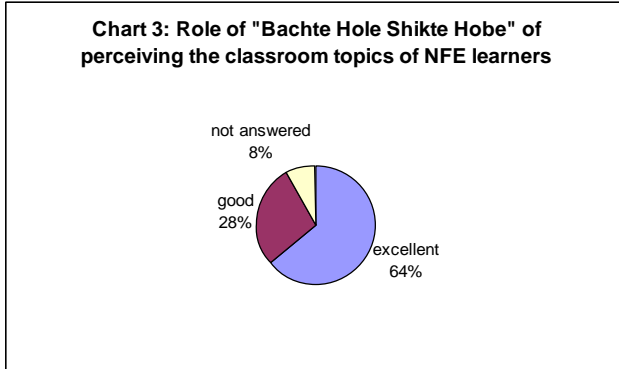
respondents (86%) suggested incorporation of community radio as a learning tool (shown on the table 1).

Table 2 : Experiences of dealing with the issues presented in "Bachte Hole Shikte Hobe" : feedback of non- learners

Feedback of respondents	Frequency	Per cent (%)
never dealt so clearly with those issues previously	41	82
very often dealt with those issues previously	9	18
Total	50	100

On the other hand, table 2 shows that most of the respondents (82%) from non-learners has cited that before broadcasting this program, they have not heard or approached so clearly in such a communicative way with the issues like basic education and literacy, pure drinking water and sanitation, child marriage, tuberculosis(TB), drug addiction; AIDS/HIV, mother and child care, family planning, health and nutrition. Only 18% of the non-learners respondents said that they have some sort of sound idea about the issues before broadcasting this program.

- "Bachte Hole Shikte Hobe" helped NFE learners to perceive their class topics: According to the respondents from NFE learners, this program has helped them to perceive the issues more clearly although they had some sort of sound idea about the topics depicted in "Bachte Hole Shikte Hobe" before broadcasting this program. It should be cited that these issues are discussed in their class lessons. It has been shown on the Chart 3 that 64% of the respondents from NFE termed the program excellent, whereas 28% termed it good and only 8% did not reply clearly.

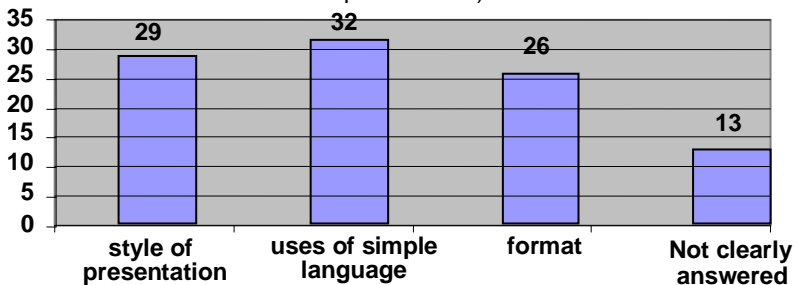


74% of the NFE learners respondents claimed (as shown on the Table 3 and Chart 4) that the style of presentation, uses of simple language and format(drama, Gambhira⁷, Music etc.) helped them a lot that is not generally observed in their classrooms.

Table 3: Causes of preferring “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”:
feedback of NFE learners (multiple response)

Causes	Frequency	Percent (%)
style of presentation	29	58
uses of simple language	32	64
format	26	52
Not clearly answered	13	26
Total	50	100

Chart 4: Causes of preferring “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”: feedback of NFE learners(total respondents:50)



- **Contents:** The contents (issues) covered in “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*” have not been disliked by any of the respondents from NFE learners and non-learners. 83% of the respondents from NFE learners said that the contents were very much relevant to their lives whereas 17% of them identified the issues to be fairly relevant to their lives.

On the other hand, 91% of the respondents from the non-learners said that the contents are very much relevant to their lives against 9% of the respondents who termed the issues as fairly relevant.
- **Format:** Mixed opinions have been emerged concerning the format of “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*”. Among the respondents from NFE learners, 86% liked drama, 81% liked music and 65% liked gambhira. Only 54% liked report and discussion. It should be noted here that most of the respondents opted for more than one format.

Among the respondents from non-learners 91% liked drama, 75% liked music and 76% liked gambhira. Only 52% liked reports and discussions.

Why did most of the respondents like drama, music and gambhira more than of reports and discussion? 82% respondents from NFE learners and 88% of respondents from non-learners said that they can easily enjoy and perceive the contents of drama, music and gambhira more than of reports and discussion.
- **Perception level:** What was the perception level of the respondents? How much did they able to perceive the issues depicted on “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*” that helped them to take positive attitude while facing issues? It was a challenge to measure. Any ways, it was tried to explore the perception level during FGDs. It has been observed during FGDs that the knowledge and perception level of NFE learners are much higher than that of non-learners. As the NFE learners are remaining under a learning environment, they could easily understood the issues discussed in “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*”; where as the non-learners are not getting any

opportunity to avail NFE or any sort of formal education , that is why they could not able to perceive easily like NFE learners all of the issues discussed on “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”.

- Suggestions regarding Contents: Ten different issues related to life skills development of disadvantaged people in ten episodes have been depicted on “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*” under the project titled Promoting Non-formal Education through Radio Program. However, most of the respondents urged more issues to be covered that will help them for their life skills development.

The respondents said that issues like dowry, legal aids, trafficking, human rights, vocational training, tree plantation, disaster preparedness etc. should be covered. Among the respondents, 52% opted for dowry, 47 % for legal aids, 42% for trafficking, 35% for vocational training, 43% for tree plantation, 37% for disaster preparedness. It should be noted here that most of the respondents opted for more than one issue.

- Continuation: As it has been discussed earlier that most of the respondents urged more issues to be covered on “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe” that will help them for their life skills development, it has been proved the target audiences appreciated the program. 88% of the respondents showed their interests to continue this as they felt that this type of program can help to develop their life skills.

Before broadcasting the program, 78% respondents from non-learners did not feel earlier about the importance of NFE for life skills development. Now those people are feeling urge to avail NFE for their betterment.

6. Conclusion and recommendations:

Bangladesh has a variety of programs on NFE in which both public and NGO sectors are involved. However, we have not seen any of the mass media involved with this process although we know mass media can be used as an effective tool of education.

As we have discussed earlier that this reality prompts Radio Padma to broadcast ten 30-minute long episodes titled “*Bachte Hole*

Shikhte Hobe” from December 2011 to February 2012. Each episode has been aired on every Thursday at 10.30 AM and 7.30 PM. The key goal of this program was to promote NFE through producing and broadcasting weekly radio programs which can also aware and sensitize community and non-learners marginalized people as well as NFE learners on several contemporary issues like education, health, nutrition, gender issues, vocational training which can equip the target audiences with knowledge and skills to improve life and livelihood.

It was evident that the team of Radio Padma has become capable enough of making programs for disadvantaged people. In fact, this was a learning process of Radio Padma to work in this type of field that is meaningful to a community radio. In fact, Radio Padma is bridging the gap in this regard at least through NFE related program titled “Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe”. This is such a kind of initiative where first ever any mass medium has explored its potentiality to supplement the NFE programs.

It has been mentioned earlier in this paper that this study has been conducted after all the ten episodes had been aired to assess whether it is helpful to the audiences or any sort of behavior changes or awareness of the audiences have taken place or not. In this study, overall positive signs have been manifested. In a word, this type of venture has been proved as fruitful. Any ways, some recommendations can be drawn here:

- As mainstream mass media broadcasters frequently overlook NFE programs, Radio Padma tries to lessen the gap through this program to be the first broadcaster to respond the issue. All of the respondents have admitted that such a kind of program have helped them a lot and suggested incorporation of community radio as a learning tool for NFE. Therefore, this is a time for incorporating community radio in NFE process.
- Style of presentation, uses of simple language and formats (drama, Gambhira, music etc.) proved to be a great help for the respondents as this style is not generally observed in their classrooms. Hence, the NFE service providers may

consider using community radio as a supplementary tool for running their programs.

It has been observed during FGDs that the knowledge and perception level of NFE learners are much higher than that of non-learners. Staying in a learning environment NFE learners could easily understand the issues addressed in “*Bachte Hole Shikhte Hobe*”. On the other hand, the non-learners could not be able to perceive easily like the NFE learners as they did not get any opportunity to avail NFE or any sort of formal education. Moreover, before broadcasting the program, 78% respondents from non-learners did not feel the importance of NFE earlier for life skills development. Now they are feeling an urge to avail NFE for their betterment. So space for NFE in Rajshahi region should be widened more.

- 88% of the respondents showed their interests on continuing this type of program as they felt that it could help develop their life skills. So this type of program in Radio Padma as well as in other community radio stations should be continued at regular basis. In a word, community radio can be an effective tool for spreading NFE in Bangladesh.

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Endnotes

1. The Bangladesh Government has adopted Community Radio Installation, Broadcast and Operation Policy in 2008. At the first phase, the Ministry of Information has approved 14 Community Radio Initiators for installation and operation of community radio in Bangladesh on May, 2010. Among them, Radio Padma has started its formal operation on October 7, 2011 from Rajshahi. Radio Padma has been entitled as the first community radio station as it started broadcasting before other ones.
2. The people who are getting opportunity from non-formal education system.
3. <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?c=bg&v=69>
4. Bureau of Non-formal Education, *Mapping of Non-Formal Education Activities in Bangladesh*, 2009. P-10

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- 5 . http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_radio
 - 6 . This opinion has been obtained from an interview with the Chief Coordinator of Radio Padma.
 - 7 . *Gambhira*: A type of folk song popular in the northwestern region of Bangladesh. The gambhira reflects contemporary social problems through witty dialogue, songs, dances and jokes. The main characters of a gambhira are a maternal grandfather and his grandson. (source: *Banglapedia*, available at: http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/G_0011.HTM)