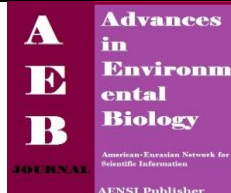




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## The Impact of Training on Ngo Beneficiaries' Education in Bangladesh: The Missing Link

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### ABSTRACT

Education is a key aspect for the socio-economic development of developing countries; in one view, the other view regards education per se as valuable because education is human right. The study focuses on the former perspective and examined the relationship between NGOs' training programmes as measured by the Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model, and educational development, one of the socio-economic development indicators of NGO-beneficiaries in Bangladesh. This relationship was assessed through a quantitative associational research design. From the study sites, three leading NGOs of three administrative districts of Bangladesh, a total of 300 responses were analysed using multiple regression analysis. The findings of the study provide good information on the above aspects, particularly from the view point of NGO beneficiaries, and finally, have revealed paucities of NGO intervention in filling the missing link between NGOs' training programmes and beneficiaries' education level.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the year 2000, 189 UN member states set eight millennium development goals (MDG), focused at human development that centred on the development of education, health, and income components to be reached by 2015. In the way of achieving these, developed nations have been contributing their aid to poor nations. However, the recent Human Development Report (HDR) stated that for the past 15 years there has been a low quantity of development aid and less relationship with the targeted development. Moe [37] found that foreign development assistance is targeted to support socio-economic development and has significant positive association with human development. So, readdressing the aid mechanism through extensive socio-economic programmes of the foreign development organisations, especially non-government, is an urgent priority of the recipient countries. The quality and effectiveness of development organisations will have a direct impact on the success on those development programmes, particularly on education sector.

A few studies conducted on the educational development, mostly in a top-down fashion where NGOs' own target and efficacy for their donor organisations are highlighted and beneficiaries' demand is neglected. On the other hand, NGOs' aid allocation for poverty alleviation as the means of economic development is extremely scarce [19], initiated for other than socio-economic purposes [4], consequently, brought insignificant development in Bangladesh [22]. There has been a lack of empirical studies of the effectiveness of development aids, through non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and its impacts on educational development in Bangladesh, and not much is known about it. Training is the intermediary means to materialise the NGO intervention in the implementation of development programmes among their beneficiaries. In order to improve development programmes of NGOs, this study conducts an empirical investigation into the relationship between the select-NGOs' training programmes and educational development of NGO beneficiaries. The findings and results of this study will benefit major key stakeholders, including donors, and NGO decision-makers of the recipient countries who play a major role in the development process. Human resources (HR) managers and NGO decision-makers in Bangladesh have been challenged to report the programme effectiveness of training. This article explores Bangladeshi NGO experiences from a cross-sectional perspective to understand better training evaluation issues towards educational development of their beneficiaries.

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## 2. Literature Review:

### 2.1 Development and Socio-Economic Development:

There is a considerable disagreement, though, exists among the world bodies or organisations in measuring the socio-economic development, a number of indicators prevailed in studies which constitutes influence on the development of NGO beneficiaries. *Beneficiaries* refer to the clients who are benefited by the socio-economic and training programmes of NGOs. Davies [14] defined *development* as outside intervention or “aided” development, and the definition of *socio-economic development* is given by Jaffee as the “ability to produce an adequate and growing supply of goods and services productively and efficiently, to accumulate capital, and to distribute the fruits of production in a relatively equitable manner [26]”. International bodies have been set up some components or categories of development indicators to promote. WHO promotes health, FAO agriculture, UNIDO industry, UNESCO education, and UNCTAD promotes trade. Consequently, a number of indicators have been taken into account by studies in common for socio-economic development such as income, nutrition, health, education, and housing [33,48].

### 2.2 Educational Development:

The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan described education as “a human right with immense power to transform” and claimed that on “its foundation rests the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development” [55]. The other view regards education per se as valuable because education is a human right [27]. In this study, the authors focus on the former perspective of education from *macro* point of view that education is important for the socio-economic development of developing countries like Bangladesh. Denison [16] in an empirical study regarding the role of education in the determinants of economic growth of the U.S. from 1929 to 1957, suggested that the factors of production in traditional economics (i.e., physical capital, labour, and land) could not explain America’s economic growth during this period. He, however, insisted that the advance of knowledge, which is brought about by education or human capital, better explained the growth of the U.S. Denison [16], in a later research findings, expressed that 23% of America’s economic growth from 1950 to 1962 to the improvement of education among labour forces. In a similar way, Krugman [30] concluded that the economic growth in East Asia is not due to the progress of technology rather to the improvement of the educational level of the labour force, and the growth of capital.

The role of education pertaining to the economic growth has been studied also at *micro* level, using the rate of return analysis of education. Schultz, Becker, Mincer, and Rees, the economists who developed the notion of human capital, contributed to the evolution of the rate of return analysis of education. Schultz [51] conceptualised the private benefit of education by using the cost of education, including forgone earnings as well as an individual’s income and the social benefit of education in economic growth (pp.5-11). Becker [11], based on Schultz’s conceptualisation, established the theoretical framework of rate of return analysis of education as explained by private rate and social rate. Rees [49] concluded that Schultz’s concept of private and social benefits of education is significant for governments of developing countries to allot resources for the education sector. In a similar vein, Psacharopoulos [45] opined that primary education continues to be the number one investment priority in developing countries and he further added that investment in women’s education is more profitable than that for men. Hence, educational development is the key to the socio-economic indication of NGO beneficiaries in Bangladesh, one of the representative countries of developing world.

### 2.3 Training:

A Chinese proverb says “To plan one year, sow seed; to plan ten years, plant trees; and to plan 100 years, develop human resources”. So, development of human capital through training is not a short-term strategy rather it should be addressed from the long-term perspective [17]. The definition of training does not change so much from one researcher to another. Noe [40] defined training as planned effort by a company to facilitate employees’ learning of job competencies. These competencies include knowledge, skills and attitude (behaviour) that are critical for organisational success.

Arend, examining one of the biggest South African NGOs, opined that the organisation has focused predominantly on meeting the demands of its donors, and subsequently has had limited capacity to meet its growing needs in regard to human resources and organisational development [7]. In a study on 20 development NGOs in Bangladesh, Huda, Karim, and Ahmed [24] found NGOs were facing shortage of qualified candidates, inadequate qualified female candidate, and poor academic background of applicants in the suburban and rural areas. More significantly, lack of training infrastructure and paucity of training need analysis which is directly concerned with the socio-economic and human resource development of their beneficiaries.

Human resource development is, still, an emerging area of research in the third world countries and has not received proper attention in Bangladesh [31]. Surprisingly, an inadequate number of studies have been conducted in this area so far in Bangladesh context [1,31], however, due attention on training and development is absent. This still remains an unearthed area for research. Moreover, few researches conducted by local researchers which were not supported theoretically as well as empirically.

#### 2.4 Kirkpatrick's Four-Level Taxonomy:

Kirkpatrick's classic four-level training evaluation model has been examined often [5,36,34]. Kirkpatrick's [28] four levels include: (1) Level I – reaction: measures how learners feel about learning/training; (2) Level II – learning: evaluates what was learned and retained from the learning experience; (3) Level III – behaviour/application: evaluates the degree to which learners apply what was learned on the job; and (4) Level IV – results: evaluates the impact that transfer of learning has on the business. Krein and Weldon [35] suggested that the four levels attempt to answer the following questions: (1) Level 1: how the participants feel about the training; (2) Level 2: what the participants acquired from the training; (3) Level 3: how much participants applied what they have learnt?; and (4) Level 4: how much company gain/benefits from this exercise?

Though, there is three-dimensional criticism exists in the literature [6,34], Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation has had widespread and enduring popularity because of its simplicity and its ability to help people think about training evaluation criteria [5]. Training evaluation has been an important subject in management studies and research as it is related to the issues of efficiency, effectiveness, and impact [50,28,23].

#### 3. Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between NGOs' training programmes as measured by the Kirkpatrick's [28] four dimensional training evaluation model (reaction, learning, behaviour, and result) and educational development for the socio-economic capacity building of NGO-beneficiaries.

#### 4. Research Questions:

The underlying research question that guided this study is: what is the relationship between NGOs' training programmes and the educational development of those NGO beneficiaries? The following sub-questions derived from components of the two constructs under study were addressed:

1. What is the relationship between training-reaction and educational development of NGO beneficiaries in Bangladesh?
2. What is the relationship between training-learning and educational development of NGO beneficiaries in Bangladesh?
3. What is the relationship between training-behaviour and educational development of NGO beneficiaries in Bangladesh?
4. What is the relationship between training-result and educational development of NGO beneficiaries in Bangladesh?

#### 5. Hypotheses:

The study examined the following research hypotheses.

- H1 There is a positive relationship between training-reaction and educational development.
- H2 There is a positive relationship between training-learning and educational development.
- H3 There is a positive relationship between training-behaviour and educational development.
- H4 There is a positive relationship between training-result and educational development.

#### 6. Significance of the Study:

This study is significant for the following reasons:

**Contribution to the theory:** Little is known about the relationship between NGOs' training programmes and their beneficiaries' educational development. Use of the four-dimensional evaluation model of training and educational development will add value to development studies at the individual level of analysis, especially, in the NGO sector in Bangladesh. Additionally, this empirical study is among few to examine the relationship between NGOs' training programmes and their beneficiaries' educational advancement from the beneficiaries' point of view.

**Contribution to practice:** The study identifies linkages between training programmes and educational development. Through this study, such linkage may enable NGOs to reduce costs associated with need assessment for training and increase the effectiveness of their programmes.

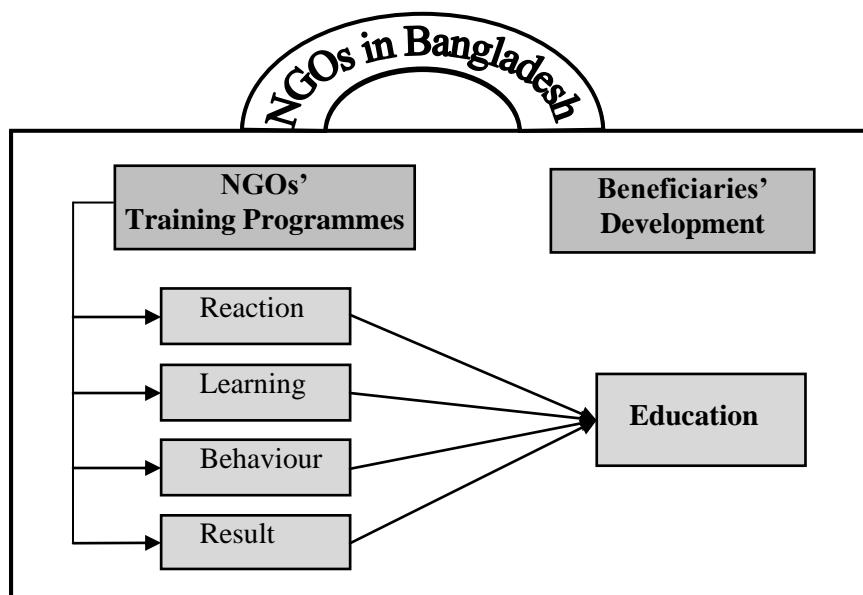
**Recommendations for future actions:** The study may help in shaping NGO programmes that managers can take necessary actions relating to occupational skill and income generating training development, which in turn, contribute to human capital development. The study may further highlight areas for future research.

#### 7. Theoretical/Conceptual Framework:

The study uses two well-grounded theories to measure the relationship between training programmes and educational development: Becker's [11] human capital theory, and Kirkpatrick's (1998) four-level taxonomy of training evaluation.

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework used to ground, or anchor, the study. The conceptual framework for this study focuses on understanding the relationship between NGOs' training programmes and educational

development of their beneficiaries' in Bangladesh. It identifies the relationship between the constructs (proposition) and the relationship between the research variables (questions or hypotheses) based on a review of relevant literature related to beneficiaries' training and their educational development. The study is divided into two categories of variables: NGOs' training variables and beneficiaries' educational development. Training variables include: reaction, learning, behaviour, and result [28].



**Fig. 1:** Theoretical/Conceptual Framework.

#### 8. Methodology:

The quantitative approach utilised survey methodology with associational correlational-descriptive, field-based, and cross-sectional study. This research, based on the purpose, is an applied or action research which is exploratory in nature, since, very few studies have been conducted in this arena. So, the motivation is to assess the NGOs' training programmes which will impact socio-economic capacity building of their clients through education.

##### 8.1 Study Variables:

In this study, beneficiaries' education was examined as consequence of NGOs' training programmes. Hence, beneficiaries' education was the dependent variable under investigation. The three NGOs' training programmes (conceptualised in Kirkpatrick's four-level taxonomy – reaction, learning, behaviour, and result) were considered as possible predictors, hence, independent variables of beneficiaries' educational advancement.

##### 8.2 Subjects and Site:

The target population for this study included three leading NGO beneficiaries who were provided training and socio-economic programmes. This study has excluded the NGO-respondents with the following characteristics: (1) respondents from two large development organisations: Grameen Bank and ASA (The Association of Social Advancement); (2) the respondents who got the training less than two months and more than two years; and (3) respondents who were not benefited through other socio-economic programmes such as education at least between one year and two years for this analysis. The restricted probability multi-stage stratified sampling [52] was chosen as the sampling design because the 'NGO beneficiaries' had to fulfil certain criteria in order to qualify as respondents. The focus of this study was only three large NGOs who fulfil the criteria covering socio-economic and training programmes. Grameen Bank and ASA were dropped from the list of preference, since, Grameen Bank is neither NGO nor traditional bank [38]; on the other hand, ASA also similar to Grameen Bank operating only micro-credit having no training programmes for which did not fall within the purview of the research interest of this study.

The three development NGOs of Bangladesh were studied in this research. These three leading NGOs were established in the years 1972, 1976, and 1958 having operations in 64, 64, and 36 (out of 68 administrative districts of the country) districts, respectively. They also have staff strength of 46,674 (NGO A) and 4,240 (NGO C) in the executive and non-executive level. NGO B also has activities in most of the districts and in 24,213 villages and 2,110 slums throughout the country. The rationale of selecting these leading NGOs is based

on their coverage capacity, maturity of programmes and huge number of clients involved in multi-dimensional non-profit activities.

### 8.3 Procedure:

The study is based on a self report survey design, using cross-sectional data, acquired through questionnaires. The survey questionnaires were distributed among select NGO beneficiaries through field workers of randomly selected sample VOs (village organisation, a team consisting of 20-30 female members) under three districts (administrative units of the country) employing multi-stages stratified sampling method. Babbie and Rahman report that to carry out a pragmatic investigation into a large population like NGO sector in Bangladesh - the 'multi-stages stratified sampling' method is suitable and mostly used for survey among NGO beneficiaries [8,46]. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed among the sample areas. A total of 318 completed questionnaires were received, and after removing the ones with missing data, 300 usable questionnaires emerged (75% response rate).

### 8.4 Instrumentation:

The data used for this study were obtained through Kirkpatrick's [28] four dimensional model of training evaluation underlying Becker's [11] human capital theory. Demographic information items were also included in order to describing the sample. The survey consists of the following measures:

- The four dimensions of training evaluation is represented by 28 items derived from Barker [10], Barcala, Martin, and Gutierrez [9], Wilson [56], Pau [43], Price [44], Tai [54] and Al-Eisa, Furayyan, and Alhemoud [3], consisting of three adopted, 20 adapted, and five constructed to measure NGOs' training programmes. 11 items assess training-reaction, seven items assess training-learning, five items assess training-behaviour, and five items assess training-result.
- Beneficiaries' educational development is represented by a four-item scale (adapted) derived from McGranahan, *et al.*, [33], Rao [48] and FAO [20] that measures the NGO-beneficiaries' educational status.
- Five demographic items – age, gender, education, religion, and experience with NGO activities – were included in the survey to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

### 8.5 Unit of Analysis:

Nardi [39] defines unit of analysis as 'the element about which you are observing and collecting data, such as a person responding to a questionnaire, a school, an editorial, or a local business'. The study variables measured at the individual level, as unit of analysis which is integral to research design. Each individual and each subject treated as an individual source [52].

### 8.6 Statistical Analysis:

Three types of statistical analysis were conducted for this study using SPSS 19.0. First, factor analysis was conducted to determine construct validity, fit, and appropriateness of the instrument [21]. Second, for both instruments, internal reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of all scales [13]. Third and finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between predictor and criterion variables as highlighted in the research framework to test the research hypotheses. More specifically, multiple regression analysis was employed to identify the relationship between NGOs' training dimensions (independent variables) and beneficiaries' educational development (dependent variables).

## 9. Results:

### 9.1 Factor Analyses of Study Variables:

Principal component factor analyses using the Varimax rotation option were employed to conduct factor analysis to determine the basic structure as well as dimensionality [53] of the study variables. Beneficiaries' education level items and four-component model of training evaluation items were factor analysed using Varimax rotation. The factor analysis of independent variables (reaction, learning, behaviour, and result) is presented as Table 1. A four-factor solution emerged dropping seven items (out of 28) explaining 72.18 per cent of the total variance in four training dimensions. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .808 indicating sufficient inter-correlations while the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi square = 4702.560,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The result of the analysis on the dependent variable (beneficiaries' education) is shown as Table 2. All items loaded on to one factor (dropping one item) where the total variance explained was 71.294 per cent. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .627 indicating sufficient inter-correlations while the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi square = 2424.815,  $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1:** Rotated factor and factor loadings for four training dimensions.

Items	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Training-Reaction				
reaction1	.786	.168	.149	.072
reaction2	.905	.117	-.014	.087
reaction3	.862	.101	.014	.059
reaction5	.710	.081	-.007	.035
reaction6	.714	.053	-.006	.034
reaction7	.859	.169	.105	.070
reaction11	.752	.133	.016	.088
Training-Result				
result1	.171	.840	-.002	.015
result2	.063	.874	-.029	-.102
result3	.108	.696	-.084	-.021
result4	.185	.887	-.031	-.026
result5	.171	.724	.153	.040
Training-Behaviour				
behaviour1	.242	.096	.609	.085
behaviour2	-.041	.050	.844	-.029
behaviour3	-.006	-.036	.828	-.081
behaviour4	.125	-.011	.564	.134
behaviour5	-.010	-.029	.930	.005
Training-Learning				
learning1	.064	.023	.065	.849
learning3	.159	-.083	.079	.797
learning4	.008	-.050	.010	.904
learning7	.074	.016	-.056	.664
Percentage of variance				72.179
KMO				.808
Approximate $X^2$				4702.56***

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table 2:** Factor loadings for Beneficiaries' educational development.

Items	Factor	
	Beneficiaries' education	
Education1		.938
Education2		.939
Education3		.606
Percentage of variance		71.294
KMO		.627
Approximate $X^2$		2424.815***

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

### 9.2 Reliability Analysis:

Reliability is the second criterion that ensures goodness of measures after factor analysis. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was conducted to determine the reliability of all scales. The reliability coefficients for NGOs' training programmes variables – reaction, 0.92; learning, 0.82; behaviour, 0.82, result, 0.88, and education of beneficiaries, 0.79; respectively, which exceed Nunnally's [41] recommended threshold of 0.70. Hence, the contention of the instruments used in this survey was both reliable, and valid as demonstrated by the factor analyses results.

### 9.3 Regression Analysis:

#### Education and four dimension of training evaluation:

The results of the regression analysis, as presented in Table 3, showed that there is a significant positive relationship between beneficiaries' education level and both behavioural dimension of training programme ( $\beta = 0.169$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and learning dimension of training programme ( $\beta = 0.117$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The relationship between beneficiaries' education level and result-dimension of training programme, although positive, is not significant ( $\beta = 0.024$ ), while reaction-dimension is negatively associated with training programme ( $\beta = -0.030$ ).

The regression results indicate that  $\beta$  value of the regression for behaviour dimension (training programme) was greater ( $\beta = 0.169$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than learning ( $\beta = 0.117$ ,  $p < .05$ ). So, NGOs' two training dimension (behaviour and learning) are the best predictors for beneficiaries' education (dependent variable). Further, although the predictors are significant, together they explain only 10.0 per cent of the variance in NGOs' training programmes, but these variables make a unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Hence, hypotheses H2 and H3 are accepted.

**Table 3:** Regression for beneficiaries' educational development

Independent Variables	Beneficiaries' Educational Development
Training-Reaction	-0.030
Training-Learning	.117**
Training-Behaviour	.169***
Training-Result	.024
F – Value	4.682
R <sup>2</sup>	.101
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.080

Note: \*\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \* $p < .10$

#### 10. Discussion:

The analytical results of the present research have shown that NGO beneficiaries' perceptions of their educational development were positively and significantly related to second and third training dimensions (learning and behaviour). The training-behaviour is stronger, in relation, than learning (see Table 3). This relationship is supported by human capital theory [51,10] which suggests that expenditure on training in order to impart knowledge and developing skills increases the individual's (here beneficiaries) lifetime earnings and productivity with a view to achieving socio-economic capacity building in the society.

The result of the hypotheses testing revealed that a positive and significant relationship between NGOs' training initiative and beneficiaries' educational advancement suggests that the more a person learns and acquires skills and knowledge in training, the more likely that individual develops a strong feelings of confidence in the society where he lives in. The significant positive relationship suggests a number of conclusions. First, participations in training activities helps NGO-beneficiaries' network, improve their occupational performance, involve in income-generating activities, and attachment to education for occupational skill development, individually as well as with family.

The insignificant relationship between NGOs' first and fourth training dimension (reaction and result) and beneficiaries' educational development can be attributed to a number of reasons. First, NGOs' lack of appropriate participants as most of the time the same beneficiaries were chosen who are the team leaders of VOs (village organisation). Second, training need analysis and inappropriate programme that reflected in the first phase of training (reaction), and finally brought insignificant outcome in the last phase (result). This justification asserted by the researcher of this study during data collection as well as by a number of study findings [12,17]. For more justification, McEvoy [32] stated that trainees often tend to complete their training in a state of excitement, such that their immediate favourable reaction is much higher than feedback reactions measured later. In a similar vein, Dixon [18] also concluded that good reactions do not necessarily transform to later phase-good learning.

Dhakar and Newaz [17], in their cross national study on Bangladesh and Nepal, found inappropriate and insufficient human capital development programme. Their findings are in agreement with Brown and Bessant's [12] study wherein supportive, flexible, and multi-skilled workforce is sought. Otherwise, the NGOs can not retain their critical staff for imparting training and knowledge to their beneficiaries [2,47]. Consequently, lead to the shortage of qualified staff, inadequate qualified female fieldworkers needed in the suburban and rural areas will remain to continue [24], which will, in turn, bring their objective to achieve educational development of their beneficiaries into question.

#### 11. Future Research:

There is still dearth of research carried out on the dimensions of training towards educational development. In order to design future research directions, a number of recommendations can be made. It would be beneficial to conduct a longitudinal study in different geographical locations and cultures with more number of NGOs permitting both causal assessment and results generalisation. As argued by O'Driscoll, Brough, and Kalliath [42], the use of a longitudinal approach would essentially be able to determine whether the effects of the predictor variables persist over time. In general, it is more acceptable if the R-square value in multiple regression analysis is higher. However, in the present study, the value for R-square in the regression is only 10.0 per cent. This can be explained that educational development can be explained by the other predictors such as human capability, network, socio-organisational, and socio-political influence as well as those arising from the contextual factors such as notion of equality, and empowerment of women in household decision-making may be equally important in predicting educational development of NGO beneficiaries.

#### 12. Conclusion:

Interpreting the relationship between NGOs' training programmes and beneficiaries' educational development is a critical factor in assessing the performance of NGO activities with their ambitious missions and visions. Development is still perceived as a transfer of resources. Based on the conceptual framework, the researcher addressed the research questions through examining the nature of and reasons for the observed

disparity between what NGOs say and what they are keen to materialise. The study is underpinned by the study findings that bring insight of socio-economic development of the NGO beneficiaries, particularly the development NGOs in Bangladesh. The findings extend the existing body of knowledge examining the effects of training dimensions towards educational development of NGO clients. The present research, moreover, has empirically supported the human capital theory to be applicable in the context of Bangladesh [11] in explaining the relationships between predictor and outcome variables. In essence, the results affirm that training variables have significant relationships with socio-economic development indicators. Specifically, the NGO managers who concentrate more on their training programmes and education as moral endeavour, the development of their beneficiaries will be high. On the other hand, NGO managers who perceived micro-credit or other economic aspect, as the only vehicle of economic emancipation, the real socio-economic development of their beneficiaries believed to be loomed large.

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