

The Socio-Economic Deprivation of the Child Laborer: Bangladesh Perspective

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This study explores the child laborer's status in terms of socio-economic deprivation which is considered important in measuring the well-being of life. The prime objective of the study is to investigate the nature, causes, and magnitude of the problem of socio-economic deprivation, and intends to unfold the intricacy behind the deprivation closely related to child poverty, vulnerability, and marginality in terms of health, education, living standard, social relationship and some basic amenities of life. In the study, a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools for data collection and analysis were used. Findings of the study reveal that child laborers are severely deprived of their socio-economic rights promised them in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), through unwilling or forced involvement in a variety of low or unpaid jobs. From the results discovered, the study suggests that a combination of economic growth, respect for labor standards, universal education and social protection, together with a better understanding of the needs and rights of children, can bring about a significant reduction in socio-economic deprivation of the child laborer.

Child labor is considered to be damaging and violate children's rights as it hinders the harmonious emotional, physiological, and psychological growth of the child retarding the full fruition of his productive and creative talents (Khaleda, 2001). Despite this horrific effect and the existing legal bar, the practice of child labor is alarmingly increasing around the globe, especially in the poor and developing countries (Ramesh, 1991).

It is estimated that around 150 million children aged 5 to 14 in developing countries, about 16 percent of all children in this age group, are involved in child labor (UNICEF, 2011). The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that throughout the world, around 215 million children under 18 years age work, many full-time. In Sub-Saharan African one in four children aged 5 to 17 work, compared to one in eight in Asia Pacific and one in ten in Latin America (ILO, 2010). Bangladesh is a contested terrain in this context and it has 7.4 million child laborers who constitute 16.6 percent of the total labor force of Bangladesh (Karim, 2011). The use of child labor in different fields of activities in Bangladesh is common and is also on the increase. The alarming rate of increase of child labor has attracted the attention of conscious citizens particularly social workers (Taher, 2006).

In Bangladesh a large number of children are engaged in economic activities either in formal or informal, urban or rural settings. They are found to work under a myriad of exploitive conditions and deprived in most of the cases, of what they actually need and deserve (Siddiquee, 2003). In an urban context, children are found to work under a myriad of exploitive conditions due to exigency of circumstances (Taher, 2006). It is a common scene in urban areas to see children working as domestic workers, garbage pickers, waste collectors, metal workers, leather and tannery workers, canteen boys, hotel boys, shoeshine boys, electroplate workers, newspaper sellers, rickshaw pullers, daily laborers, shop assistants, vendors, book binders, and transport helpers. They are mostly unskilled and uneducated (Sharma & Mitter, 1990). Most of these children are deprived from their socio-economic rights (Kanbargi, 1991). These children are deprived of reasonable or fixed wages corresponding to the quantum of their work. Additionally, holiday or vacation days are virtually non-existent for these children (Azom, 2010).

In the rural context of Bangladesh, children are engaged in a wide variety of work. They are engaged in plowing, manuring, sowing, weeding, harvesting, crop watching, transplanting, fishing, boating, cattle grazing, farm helpers, and domestic activities. These children are denied a decent wage, appropriate living quarters, and adequate meals and clothing (Khair, 2004). They are expected to work not go to school, work more for significantly less money than adults, have no access to health facilities, not be entitled to vacations or holidays off, and work in harsh and extreme conditions (Azom, 2010). There are some noted differences between urban and rural sectors of employment. However, the use and exploitation of children is almost identical (Taher, 2006).

Participation of children in the labor market deprives them of the opportunities for acquiring education, skills, and training which are essential for being equipped in the competitive circumstances of the contemporary society. This deprivation of opportunity makes them ultimately unable to stand for the demand of life, so that they cannot unfold their dormant potentialities nor can they contribute to their highest potential to society (Azom, 2010). These unfortunate children could have proved their merit if they had been given the chance to get education and training in the formative period of their lives (Singh & Verma, 1987).

With the aim of eradicating child labor, many national and international efforts have been made. In 1989, the ILO adapted the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) to eliminate child labor worldwide. ILO also created the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) in 1992. Countries participating in the IPEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining the development and implementation of IPEC activities and the efforts to be undertaken by governments to eradicate child labor progressively. Bangladesh is signatory to the MoU (Khan, 2001). ILO has adopted other conventional rights in an effort to eradicate child work. In Bangladesh, there have been some efforts to eliminate child labor. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to ratify the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990 and was a member to first sign the declaration of the survival, protection, and development of children. Three national plans of action followed in 1992, 1997,

and 2004. However, the reality of the child deprivation in Bangladesh is that children are experiencing scarcity of income, resources, and basic necessities meaningful to their life regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or economic status. In view of the overall miseries, economic sufferings of the children, and needs to be met, it is necessary to undertake scientific investigation in order to know the nature, causes, and magnitude of the problem of socio-economic deprivation, and to develop some measures effective to reducing socio-economic deprivation of children.

The present study intends to unfold the intricacy behind the deprivation closely related to child poverty, vulnerability and marginality in terms of health, education and some basic amenities of life. Further, the study intended to explore the status of living standard and assess the level of the quality of life of the children economically and socially deprived.

Conceptual Orientation: Child Labor, Deprivation, Socio-Economic Deprivation, Child Rights in the Context of Deprivation

Deprivation

In Townsend's (1993) view, people are deprived if they lack the resources to participate in the normal social life of their community. People are relatively deprived if they cannot obtain at all or sufficiently the conditions of life—the diets, amenities, standards, and services—which allow them to play the roles, participate in the relationships, and follow the customary behavior which is expected of them by virtue of their membership of society (Townsend, 1993). Others have defined deprivation as a status of material and social harm (Kharmeh & Sondos, 2009). In this study, deprivation refers to a negative situation where people are unable to meet those social and economic needs which are fundamental to maintenance the well beings of life.

Social Deprivation

The indicators used in social deprivation are the followings: (1) education, health, and living condition of child laborer, (2) type of food provided to the child laborer, (3) frequency of enjoying social ceremonies and cultural functions, (4) social relationship (Meeting with family members, participation in occasions where employers attended)

Economic Deprivation

The indicators used in economic deprivation are the followings: (1) wage structure, monthly income, extra money for overtime work, bonus on special occasion, (2) working hours and monthly income, and (3) working environment and job satisfaction.

Child Labor

The definition of child labor varies from country to country or even from one act to another in the same country (Taher, 2006). Bangladesh is a unique example of variations. The Factory Act of 1965 fixed the minimum age of 14 for

admission to employment, the Shop and Establishment Act of 1965 set the minimum age of 12, the Employment of Children Act of 1938 set it at 15, and the Children Act of 1974 defined 'child' as a person under the age of 16 (Rahman, 1981). Due to a multitude of definitions and uses, the term child labor in this study will be used to refer to working children within the age between 5 and 18 years.

Child Rights in the Context of Deprivation

To guarantee the human rights of children is to invest in the future. Children's rights are the building blocks for a solid human rights culture, the basis for securing human rights for future generations. As human beings, children are entitled to all the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) and the various covenants that have developed from it. However, children also need special protection and care. They must be able to depend on the adult world to take care of themselves, defend their rights, and help them to develop and realize their potential. Children suffer many of the same human rights abuses as adults. However, they may also be targeted simply because they are dependent and vulnerable. Children forced by poverty or abuse to live on the streets are sometimes detained, attacked, and even killed in the name of social cleansing. Many millions of children work at exploitative or hazardous jobs or can be the victims of child trafficking and forced prostitution. Because children are easy targets, they are sometimes threatened, beaten, or raped in order to punish family members who are not so accessible.

The international community has long recognized the need to protect children from such abuses. The 1959 United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of the Child set out ten principles which provided a powerful moral framework for children's rights, however, which were not legally enforceable. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) elaborates rights according to the special needs and perspectives of the child. It is the only human rights treaty that covers the full spectrum of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights with stressing their indivisible and interdependent relationship.

Methods

The present study was quantitative as well as qualitative in nature. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and data collection techniques was used to obtain a comprehensive view of child laborer's deprivation in Bangladesh including a comprehensive review of existing literature, statistics, and field research among child laborer and the parents as well as teachers in Bangladesh. The field research conducted for this survey consists of two main sources of information: individual interviews with 225 child laborers within the age of five to 18 years; and ten focus group discussions with parents, teachers, and children. By the use of a purposive sampling method, the survey participants and the study area were selected. The study participants were selected from three city corporations in three divisions of Dhaka, Chittagong, and Rajshahi.

Data Collection

The present study considered both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source of data was the children who were working in a variety of economic activities at different jobs being affected by socio-economic deprivation. Further, documents relating to socio-economic deprivation were consulted as secondary data source. In some cases, parents and guardians from the children's families of origin were consulted to gather more in-depth information.

In order to obtain pertinent information from working children, a questionnaire was produced and a general strategy established with focusing on a balanced sex, regional, and ethnic composition of interviewed children. A questionnaire comprising a set of questions on socio-economic deprivation of children—along with quality of living, use of materials and basic necessities, housing conditions—was administered to the sampled population. Data were collected using face-to-face interviews with a structured questionnaire. A trained team of four persons—three of social work graduate students and one student in development studies—conducted interviews with working children guided by the questionnaire prepared in Bangla. On average, each interview conducted with a working child lasted 15 to 20 minutes. All interviews were carried out within the child's working environment. In general, children reacted positively to the interviews even though in some cases there was an atmosphere of mistrust and a sense of understanding that child labor is seen as an illegal or immoral activity. In addition, ten focus group discussions with children, parents, and stakeholders were conducted in different locations, regions, and participants with various backgrounds to draw out a more comprehensive picture of the problem in Bangladesh.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data analysis were used. Descriptive statistics were used in analysis and interpretation of data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis.

Results and Discussion*Age and Sex of the Child Laborer*

The survey was conducted with 225 child laborers. The gender balance is 64 percent male and 36 percent female. Previous studies draw a different picture in this regard: In the National Child Labor Survey (NCLS), the proportion of boy and girl child workers, in the age group of 5 to 17 years, is 73.5 percent and 26.5 percent, respectively (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2003). In Taher's study (2006), gender balance constitutes 52.5 percent and 45.5 percent respectively. Khan's study revealed 74.2 percent boys and 25.8 percent girls (Khan, 2001). Interviewed children had an average age of 12.97 years with an insignificant difference between boys and girls. Clustered into four age groups (see Table 1), the data reveal that 2.7 percent of children are below 8 years old, followed by 12.0 percent aged 8 to 11 years, 53.3 percent aged 11 to 14 years and, 32.0 per-

cent aged 14 to 18 years.

Table 1

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHILD LABORERS BY AGE AND SEX (N=225)

AGE (in year)	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5 – 8	0	0.0	6	2.7	6	2.7
8 – 11	18	8.0	9	4.0	27	12.0
11 – 14	79	35.1	41	18.2	120	53.3
14 – 18	47	20.9	25	11.1	72	32.0
Total	144	64.0	81	36.0	225	100.0

Education Level of the Child Laborers and Rights Violation

Bangladesh is obliged under both national and international law to protect and promote the rights and interests of children. Education is one of the basic and fundamental rights of children. Out of the total child population (aged 5 to 17) 42.3 million, however, there are approximately nine million children not attending school (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2003). Child laborers of Bangladesh do not have access to an education or training and are deprived their rights in this country. The Child Labor Survey (CLS) found that 36.4 percent of the working children are not going to school at all. Further, Khan (2001)'s study indicated that 38.3 percent of child laborers are not going to school. The present study shows the education level among the child laborers that 40 percent had no formal education (see Table 2). Previous studies have supported these findings. Khan's study found that about 50.7 percent child workers completed between class one to five. Only 9.3 percent of child workers completed an education of class five to ten. In this study, it was found that 40 percent of child workers had no formal education. This is due to growing up in an impoverished family where education is generally not emphasized nor feasible. Often the cost of a formal education and necessary materials is a preventing factor for families in poverty. Many of the children in this study (28.3%) cited their guardian's inability to bear educational expenses as the main reason for not attending school while about one-fourth of the children were unwilling to go to school (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 1996).

Table 2

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHILD LABORERS BY EDUCATION LEVEL (N=225)

EDUCATION LEVEL	N	%
No education/illiterate	90	40.0
1 – 2 class	69	36.7
3 – 5 class	45	20.0
6 – 8 class	21	9.3
9 – 10 class	0	0.0
Total	225	100.0

Nature of Job of the Child laborers

It is commonly found in the urban settings that children of both sexes are working in unorganized, semi-organized sector, with some cases in the organized sectors (Karim, 2009). As regards nature of employment and status of work, Table 3 reveals that 15.6 percent were employed in book binding or printing activities, 13.3 percent are engaged in garbage pickers, 11.1 percent works as transport helper. The highest percent (18.7%) of the child workers were found in household activities as same as hotel and restaurants workers. Apart from that a significant percent of child workers were employed as newspaper seller (6.7%), flower seller (6.7%), and grocery shops (5.3%).

Table 3

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHILD LABORERS BY TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT (N=225)

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT	N	%
Households	42	18.7
Grocery shop	12	5.3
Hotel/Restaurant	42	18.7
Newspaper seller	15	6.7
Flower seller	15	6.7
Welding workshops	6	2.7
Automobile workshops	3	1.3
Garbage picker	30	13.3
Transportation helper	25	11.1
Book binding/printing press	35	15.6
Total	225	100.0

Income and Working Hours of the Child Laborers

Wages serve as the main incentive for child labor. Wages may be paid on daily, weekly, or monthly basis. For the purpose of this study, wages have been taken consideration as a phenomenon of payment on monthly basis. It can be observed from the data in Table 4 that 50.2 percent out of the total child workers had a monthly income of less than Tk. 600 (7.50 USD). In addition, the highest percent (27.6%) of child workers had monthly income of between Tk. 301 – 600 and 13.3 percent had monthly income of between Tk. 601 – 900. In the study, it was found that less than one percent (0.9%) of child workers had incomes of more than Tk. 2,101 (26.3 USD). Presented data show that child workers have insufficient wages to meet minimum basic needs such as nutritious food and health care services.

Table 4 shows that amount of working hours do not necessarily ensure higher pay. Child workers who work four to six hours per day receive on an average Tk. 487.8 (6.00 USD) only as their monthly wage. Those who work six to eight hours per day receive on an average an amount of Tk. 707.5 (8.8 Tk. 781.0 (9.8 USD) and children who work 10 to 12 hours per day receive on an average Tk. 858.3 (10.7 USD) for the same period. The average monthly income of child

laborers is Tk. 770.0 (9.6 USD) per month.

Table 4

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHILD LABORERS BY INCOME AND WORK HOURS (N=225)

MONTHLY WAGE (Taka)	WORK HOURS (per day)					TOTAL
	4-6	6-8	8-10	10-12	Over 12	
0-300	3 (1.3)	5 (2.2)	13 (5.8)	22 (9.8)	8 (3.6)	51 (22.7)
301-600	2 (0.9)	11 (4.9)	17 (7.6)	23 (10.2)	9 (4.0)	62 (27.6)
601-900	2 (0.9)	3 (1.3)	8 (3.6)	14 (6.2)	3 (1.3)	30 (13.3)
901-1200	1 (0.4)	4 (1.8)	11 (4.9)	13 (5.8)	-	29 (12.9)
1201-1500	-	2 (0.9)	7 (3.1)	11 (4.9)	5 (2.2)	25 (11.1)
1501-1800	-	3 (1.3)	3 (1.3)	11 (4.9)	-	17 (7.6)
1801-2100	-	-	-	9 (4.0)	-	9 (4.0)
2101-2400	-	-	2 (0.9)	-	-	2 (0.9)
Total	8 (3.6)	28 (12.4)	59 (27.1)	103 (45.8)	25 (11.1)	225 (100)
Mean	487.8	707.5	781.0	858.3	570	770.0

*Note. Figures within parentheses indicate percentage

Extra Money for Overtime and Work Bonus on Special Occasions

Most of the child workers in this study engaged in overtime work in order to earn extra money but they did not get extra money in mostly cases. The study revealed that many of the child workers (46.7%) did not receive a bonus on special occasions or holidays while 33.3 percent of the child laborers did receive a bonus on religious festivals such as Eid or Puja. The study also revealed that a significant portion of child laborers (33.3%) agreed that getting bonus on special occasion depends on the will of employers. It was observed in this study that, child workers attempt to be available on holidays for extra money as well as wanting to satisfy their employer and hopefully receive a bonus. The study revealed (see Figure 1) that half of the child workers did not get extra money for overtime work, while 33.3 percent did receive a small amount of extra money.

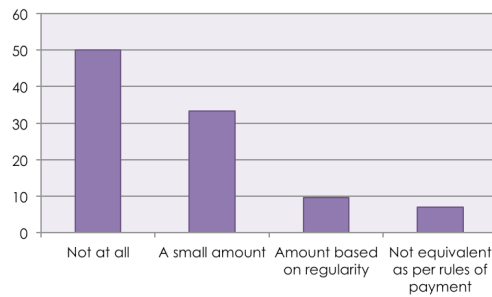


FIGURE 1. Extra Money for Overtime work

Working Environment of the Child Laborers and Rights Violation

Child laborers enter the labor market to make out a living for family and self. As

to the environment of the job places, child laborers passed their comments on the issues relating to the job and working condition and level of satisfaction. Figure 2 shows that 32 percent passed a negative opinion about the job and environment. However, a considerable number of child workers (25.3%) responded that the job and environment where they worked was supposed to be healthy and sound for long term laborious work while 40 percent responded that the job and working environment are moderate.

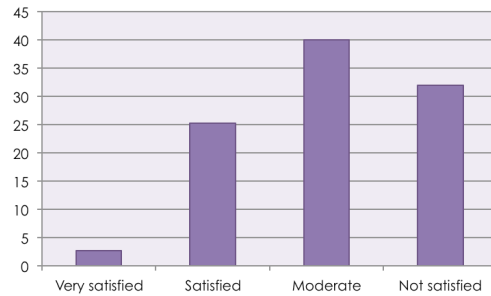


FIGURE 2. Level of Job Satisfaction of the Child Laborers

This study showed that 76 percent out of total respondents reported that long working hours is the main problem (see Table 5). Although Taher (2006)'s study indicates that 61.3 percent of child workers state lengthy working hour is the main problem. More than 29.3 percent of child workers reported that their working environment lacked recreational facilities. Around a quarter of child workers (24%) that the main problem in the work place is punishment administered by employers while 13.3 percent mentioned that the work place lacks medical facilities.

Table 5

FEELINGS OF THE CHILD LABORERS ABOUT THE PROBLEMS AT WORK (N=225)

FEELING ABOUT WORKING CONDITION	N	%
Long time work	171	76.0
Insufficient ventilation	30	13.3
Risk of emergencies	15	6.7
No medical facilities	30	13.3
Inadequate toilet/ bathroom	39	17.3
Not spacious room	18	8.0
No recreational facilities	66	29.3
Crowded work place	3	1.3
Raff behavior / punishment by employer	54	24.0
Total	426	100.0

*.Note. More than one answer was possible.

Health Status of Child Laborer and Deprivation Nature

Children engaged in work are exposed to a variety of hazards (e.g., dangerous

machinery, falling objects, pesticides, chemicals, and abusive employers) that have the potential to seriously damage their health (Taher, 2006). In addition to such health risks, the sheer exhaustion induced by physical labor can be expected to place stress on the body and provoke illness. The study revealed that 46.7 percent of child laborers reported good health and 18.7 percent reported fair health status. A significant percentage (20%) of child workers' health condition were found to be poor and 10.7 percent reported that their health condition is very poor. Unclean living conditions, strenuous working conditions, and the lack of a balanced diet contributed to poor health for many of these children. The study showed that 18.7 percent of the child workers suffered from fever and cold and many suffered dysentery; 20 percent indicated influenza; 16 percent skin diseases; and 9.3 percent suffered jaundice. Previous studies including Khan's study (2001) indicated that 35 percent of child laborers suffered influenza while another 35 percent were affected both influenza and cough. Most of the child worker had experienced biological diseases because of poor and unhygienic work environments. Regarding the expenses related to illness, Figure 3 shows the parents carry expenses during sickness in the case of 48 percent; employers did so in the case of 20 percent, and 26.7 percent of child laborers incurred the cost themselves.

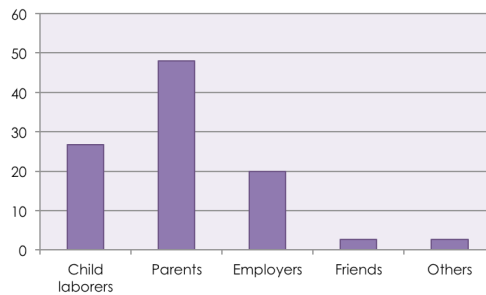


FIGURE 3. Distributions of Child Laborers by Cost of Expenses During Sickness

Social Network/Relationship and Rights Violation

A significant proportion of the child laborers mostly came from poor and disadvantaged families and they did not get any opportunity to enjoy social and recreational activity. Table 6 shows that 18.7 percent of child workers never have the opportunity to enjoy cultural programs. About 36 percent were found to sometimes participate in cultural functions, but many of them needed permission of the employers to participate in social and cultural programs. Of the child workers, 20 percent very infrequently had the opportunity to participate in recreational programs.

With regard to taking time off to visit family members, Table 6 shows that 9.8 percent out of the total child workers reported that they were able to meet their family members like parents, siblings, and other relatives once a year. More than 31 percent of the child workers got the chance of meeting their families more than twice a year. While 36.6 percent of the child workers had the

opportunity to meet family members and relatives as often as they wished. It is noted that 2.4 percent of child workers were not given an opportunity to spend time with family within a year. In fact, they were employed with a long term contract by the employers with their guardians. Usually, this pattern of child work was found in the domestic sphere.

Table 6

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABORERS BY ENJOYING THE CULTURAL FUNCTIONS

ENJOYMENT OF CULTURAL FUNCTIONS	N	%
Regular	54	24.0
Sometimes	81	36.0
Very often	3	1.3
Very infrequent	45	20.0
Never	42	18.7
Total	225	100.0

Table 7

MEETING FAMILY MEMBERS PER YEAR (AMONG CHILDREN NOT LIVING WITH PARENTS)

MEETING FAMILY MEMBERS (per year)	N	%
Once	12	9.8
Twice	24	19.5
More than twice a year	39	31.7
As many as possible	45	36.6
Never	3	2.4
Total	123	100.0

More than sixty percent (64%) of child laborer were not allowed to attend the special occasions where the employers participated. In this regard, social customary practices and prestige issues coupled with the honor and prestige of the employers, child workers were not invited to attend social and community parties. Only 8 percent and 13.3 percent got the chance of participate in birthday and marriage ceremonial parties respectively. The society, especially in participating social occasions mentioned above.

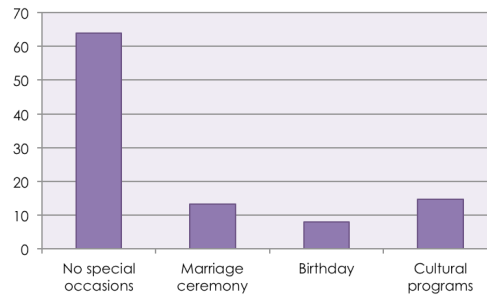


FIGURE 4. Distribution of Child Laborers by Rate of Participation in Occasions

Living Condition and Meals of Child Laborers

The majority of children who came from poor and disadvantaged families are unable to enjoy a home life with family and friends. Taher's study (2001) found that, 28.0 percent of child workers live in rentals and 17.5 percent shared the rental accommodation. However, the present study found that about 12 percent child workers lived in a rental. In addition, a few child workers (2.7%) lived in the relative's house. A large number of children 45.3 percent are living in a rental in a poor residential area.

Table 8

LIVING PLACES OF THE CHILD LABORER

PLACES OF LIVING	N	%
Rented mess	27	12.0
Slum	54	24.0
Road side/Bus station/Railway Terminal	24	10.7
Rented house in poor residential area	102	45.3
Living in relative's house	6	2.7
Employers house	12	5.3
Total	225	100.0

A significant portion of Child Laborers (24%) live in slums. A significant portion of child laborers (10.7%) actually had no address at all and their living places is temporary, for example, sometimes road side, bus station, or railway terminal. Most of them are garbage pickers and hawkers while 5.3 percent of child workers live in an employers' house. This study reveals 32 percent of child workers resided in the houses made of brick wall and tin roof/tin-shed and 14.7 percent live in tin-shed with muddy fence house pattern. Twenty-four percent of child workers live in a Kacha house which means a non-permanent structure, the floor, roof, and wall of which are made of mud, bamboo, jute sticks, grass, and leaves. On a positive note, 16 percent of child workers are living in semi-concrete house and 4 percent are in building because of employers house living. Also, it was observed in the study that due to inability to rent large or adequate spacious room or houses for sleeping, many of the workers rented a single room and lived there with a myriad hardships.

Furniture and Amenities Used For Living by the Child Laborer

Child Laborer are poor and marginalized and earn a small amount of money by selling their labors, compromising their childhood to find a way out of extreme poverty. Child workers live in poor residential areas or slums in a congested unhealthy environment and suffer a serious lack of basic necessities. This study shows that because of financial crisis, child workers could not manage their required necessities and amenities for living (see Table 9). Of the total child workers, 26.7 percent had very few amenities for living. It was observed in this study that 20 percent of child workers used only wooden bedsteads with low quality sleeping materials.

Table 9

FURNITURE AND AMENITIES USED FOR LIVING BY THE CHILD LABORER

AMENITIES USED BY THE WORKERS	N	%
A few, not sufficient	20	26.7
Only bedstead	15	20.0
Cannot by necessary things	15	20.0
More than one	25	33.3
Total	75	100.0

Twenty percent of child workers did not buy required things because they slept in the houses or shops of the employers who provided required materials for living. With regard to the supply of water, electricity and sanitation arrangement in the living places, this study shows that 60 percent of child worker drank water supplied by city water authority (WASA) and did other works such as washing, cleaning, and cooking with the same water. Among the child workers, 17.3 percent enjoyed all facilities in terms of using electricity, water, sanitary latrine and more because they were found to live in the houses or shops of the employers. A significant number of children (13.3%) use a tube well as the main source of water. A small percentage of child workers did not access to electricity and water.

Results of the Focus Group Discussions

In total, ten focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted with children, parents, and teachers of the child laborers. The main purpose of the FGD was to determine public opinions, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the nature and magnitude of child labor's deprivation in Bangladesh.

When participants were asked to express their views regarding child labor, almost all the participants stated without exception that child labor is a serious social problem in Bangladesh. The majority of the participants thought that child labor is a reality in Bangladesh due to economic and social hardship of many families. Most of the participants recognized that the possible negative impact that child labor has on the educational welfare of children includes non-regular school attendance, school dropout, and the non-enrollment of children in school. Regarding their perception of child labor as positive or negative, the vast majority of participants stated that work is not appropriate for children when started at an early age and if too heavy. The type of work performed should be commensurate with the child's age. Focus group participants also tended to articulate the belief that education should come first for a child and that time for play is important.

Participants were also asked to express their views about the wages and work hours of the child laborers. Most of the participants argued that employers use children in work for maximization of profit. Children often work in unhygienic and unsafe environments. The majority of the participants think that child laborers face discrimination in terms of their working hours and wages. A majority of the participants believed that child laborers are severely deprived of social activities and family environments. They believed that child laborers should be

given an opportunity to meet with family whenever they wished and have access to social and cultural activities. When asked what can be done to prevent child labor, the participants responded that a combination of economic growth, respect for labor standards, universal education, and social protection, together with a better understanding of the needs and rights of children can bring about a significant reduction in child labor in Bangladesh.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Children come to the labor market to earn a living for family and self. It is implied that under compelling circumstances of extreme poverty, parents send their children to the labor market. These children are the victims of exploitation. This study found that the very nature of their work is often inhumane and hazardous as well as detrimental to their growth and development. This study also found that child laborers are deprived of all opportunities of growth and development and forced to remain satisfied with low wages throughout their lives as unskilled workers. In spite of all the odds, the study revealed that child labor is a harsh reality in Bangladesh socio-economic system as elsewhere in the world. According to the United Nations, every child shall have, without discrimination as to race, color, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property, or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the state. Children should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their involvement in work is harmful to emotional and physical health and likely to hamper their normal development. In order to protect the children from suffering, abuse, deprivation, and exploitation, this study suggests that the following issues should be taken into consideration. First, states should set age limits below which the paid employment of child worker should be prohibited and punished through enforcement of the laws suitable for child labor. Second, child poverty should be alleviated in complying with the goals of new millennium development. Third, economic development, for children, should be enhanced so that they can attain maximum well-being. Fourth, systematic and pragmatic labor laws in the case of child labor should be developed by the government in order to save children from employer's exploitation and deprivation. Fifth, child education should be ensured in order that they can invest their energy and productivity for living a better life and make a brighter future.

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