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CHILD LABOUR IN THE ERA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM JHENAIDAH CITY OF BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The existence of child labour in developing countries like Bangladesh is undoubtedly a serious problem in the era of sustainable development. Undoubtedly to abolish child labor from all level is not so easy. The current study was intended to assess the livelihoods pattern and causes of being involved as a child labour in Jhenaidah city-Bangladesh and to find out the ways in which child labour can be diminished gradually. This study was exploratory in nature where convenience sampling was adapted, seventy-five children aged less than 18 years were interviewed with an interview schedule. The extent and prevalence of child labour in a country are being considered as a significant indicator of how far-off that country stays away from the overall sustainable development. The results of this study demonstrate that majority (17/22.67%) children engaged in performing work in shops or hotels. The X^2 ($p < 0.5$) results elucidate that there exists gender difference in child abuse and harassment. The rate of physical and mental abuse and torture was higher in male children, in contrast, the prevalence of sexually harassment and abuse by slung was significantly higher in female children. The working hours as an average above 7 hours or more, and per day wage of a children in Jhenaidah found just above 1.4\$ (120 BDT). The principal component analysis indicates that lack of parental employment facilities which has directly related to poverty found as the foremost reasons for a child to make involvement as a labour before completing age 18, this result is not only applicable for Jhenaidah but also possibly applicable for

all developing countries. Besides, father's education and death of mother were the important indicator of being child labourer. The ways of eliminating child labour is not so easy task because the problem has been indissolubly embedded in our society for long. Hence, it requires moral, political will and commitment from all people in the society for ending and eradicating child labour. Alongside all these, international organizations must make sure their robust participation in enhancing this process.

KEYWORDS

Child labour, Determinants, Child rights, Child abuse, Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's children are considered as the future driving forces of the overall development strategy for any countries or the world. The socio-economic condition and human development progression make Bangladesh in a new position in the globe (Alam, 2009). And very recently the country has upgraded from Least Development Country (LDC) to lower-middle income country (Hasan et al., 2018). Bangladesh has outshined all human development capital indicators that are very astonishing. But some prevalence concerning issues like child labor sometimes blurs the all achievement in human development or human rights. Because the eradication of child labor is a matter of human rights (Von Stein, 2016). The term child labor refers to the involvement of the children under the age of 18 in any type of work that keeps away from the rights as children including right of attending school (Khakshour et al., 2015). Child labor is a significant problem in developing countries which has devastating effect on physical and emotional development of young workers (Rahman, 2018).

The existence of child labor in developing countries like Bangladesh is undoubtedly a serious problem in the era of sustainable development (Zaman et al., 2014). Bangladesh is widely recognized as the frontline acquirer of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in this last two decades, child enrollment and universal access to primary education have been achieved overwhelmingly (Richter et al., 2017). Even the economy of Bangladesh has strength than any other times. The GDP is going up an average up to 7% or more. However, all these successes are coexisting with inequities. Because there are still lots of excluded children are growing up without basic amenities and the growth and development do not reach all children in the same way. Poverty, unemployment, prompt urbanization, degradation of moral values, family's segregation is responsible for the deprivation of basic needs from the children and thereby, they are forced to live on the streets away from family harboring, security and supervision (Khatun, 2013).

In a statement of ILO (2017) a total of 152 million children—64 million girls and 88 million boys involved in child labor all over the world, one in ten of all children worldwide and nearly half of all those in child labor – 73 million children in absolute terms – are in hazardous work that directly endangers their health. Moreover, the street girls are forcefully trafficked and abused by the wicked people. For the mental, physical, moral and physiological progress of homeless children, to make welfare for the children is very essential and urgent needed (Khatun, 2013). Further, in the 21st century, millions of children face a lack of social safety nets, scarcity of resources and many glitches (Islam et al., 2013, UNICEF 2010). Additionally, basic human needs and privileges like

foods, shelters, clothes, medicine, health, and education play significant roles for the growth of the boulevard progenies (Sayeed 2011). Most of the children in Bangladesh are involved in different types of working activities from where they earn money to support their families. Economy is very essential to live in the societies of a country (Engelgau et al., 2019).

In Bangladesh, a large number of populations are illiterate and poor. As a result, the poverty-ridden family cannot afford to ensure enough facilities for their children. Under such circumstances, parents consider their children better to support their profession or involve in any other job to add extra family income and which thus lead to child engagement in various occupations (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). In addition, low income of the family, social complications, family segmentation, divorce of the parents, the death of mother or father, second marriage of the parents play the momentous role to enhance the children's life more vulnerable and miserable (Amin et al., 2005, Webbink et al., 2013, Webbink et al., 2015). Basically, the children of these poor families are involved in garbage collecting, waste management activities, collecting papers and pots, begging, industries, helper of buses or trucks, a rickshaw puller, home servants or other things (Junaid et al., 2017, Rahman, 2018). Even they become engaged in theft, robbery, criminal activities, prostitute and drug addiction (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2016, Nwazuoke & Igwe, 2016). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals lists the ending of all kind of child labor to fulfill the Goal 8: 'Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all' (Edmonds, 2015). Thus, the current study was undertaken to assess the livelihoods pattern and causes of being involved as a child labor in Jhenaidah city-Bangladesh of the child labor in Jhenaidah city-Bangladesh and to find out the ways in which ways child labor can be obliterated.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Study Method

Exploratory research method was employed to conduct the current study. "Exploratory research is a research conducted for a problem that has not been studied more clearly, intended to establish priorities, develop operational definitions and improve the final research design" (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013).

2.2. Study Area

This study was conducted in Jhenaidah Paurashava of Khulna division, Bangladesh. This study was undertaken to assess the livelihoods pattern of the child labor in Jhenaidah city of Khulna division. Jhenaidah Paurashava comprises with nine wards and 34 mahallas. It occupies an area of 44.33 sq. km. of which 40.86 sq. km. is under Paurashava. According to BBS-2011, the total population of the Upazila is 455,932 of which 228,155 are males and 227,777 are females. The sex ratio of the Upazila is 100, which have remarkably decreased in 2011 as against 108 in 2001 (BBS, 2011). This area was purposively selected to full-fill the objective. In Jhenaidah city there have found lots of child labor. Data were collected from March to April, 2018.

2.3. Sampling Procedure and Size

The population comprised of all children who were involved in different works age below 18 met the sampling criteria. The unit of analysis in this study was determined as the children age below 18. Convenience sampling was employed to take interview of the children. Convenience sampling

is a non-probability sampling that involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand (Lisa 2008). Altogether 75 children were interviewed with an interview schedule. This sampling was adapted because the number of child labor in the Paurashava was undefined.

2.4. Statistical analysis

Simple descriptive study was used to identify the frequency, mean and percentage of the study participants. The chi-square test of association was used to ascertain whether their difference between sex and different variables. The Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was ran to justify which variables have been playing extremely in the child's life to be involved as a labor before completing 18 years of age. Data of the current study was analyzed with help of SPSS.23 windows version.

3. RESULTS

Background information plays significant roles to know about the characteristics of the study participants. Following the information age, sex, religion, family types, family sizes, education as well as years of schooling discussed in the (Table 1). The present study was carried out with 75 children who were involving in various works before finishing up age till 18. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic profile of the respondents. Data have revealed that majority (68%) respondents were boys, while (32%) were girls. Majority (40%) respondents were from the age group between 15 and 17 years. Around 63% children had completed primary level of education, whereas (24.0%) have had in secondary level. But a majority portion of the respondents never been to school or only they can sign their name. The data also describe the religious characteristics of the respondents where majorities (81.3%) were from Islam and rest of (18.7%) followed Hinduism. Further, the data illustrated how many family members possess a child. It can be seen that about 57.3% families of the children occupied 5 to 7 family members; whereas 22.7% had above 7 family members and another were have at least 2 or 4 family members. Furthermore, the data in the above table delineated that approximately two-third child were from rural areas.

Table 1. The demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Boys	51	68
	Girls	24	32
Age	Below 6-8 Years	11	14.6
	9-11 Years	17	22.7
	12-14 Years	17	22.7
	15-17 Years	30	40
Religion	Islam	61	81.3
	Hinduism	14	18.7
Number of family members	2-4	15	20.0
	5-7	43	57.3
	Above-7	17	22.7
Level of Education	No formal education	2	2.7
	Only Sign	8	10.7
	Primary (1-5)	47	62.7
	Secondary (6-10)	18	24.0
Birth Place of the Respondent	Urban Area	20	26.7
	Rural Area	49	65.3
	Migrated From Other Area	6	8.0

Based on the factor loading values this study assigned the factors/reasons into various rank order. It is denoted by the (Table 2) that highest factor loading value achieved by “lack of employment for parent” which can be considered as the prime cause of being involved as a child labor. And the second highest value attained by father’s education. Death of mother which was the third chief cause of a children to be involved in work before age 18 whereas poverty was the fourth important determinants of child labor.

Table 2. Causes of being involved in child labor

Causes/Factors	Factor Loading Value	Rank
1. Poverty	0.672	IV
2. Starvation	0.610	VI
3. Torture of Step Parents	0.392	X
4. Father’s education	0.722	II
5. Mother’s education	0.434	IX
6. Lack of Accommodation	0.667	V
7. Lack of Employment for parent	0.747	I
8. Death of father	0.699	VII
9. Death of mother	0.521	III
10. Torture of Other Family Members	0.515	VIII

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value .539

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square 106.253

df: 45

Sig.<0.001

Table 3 demonstrates the professions which are frequently performed by children in the study area. A very large portion (22.67%) children were involved in performing work in shops or hotels. Whereas above 17% were engaged in collecting various garbage materials while the other children were involved in doing various kinds of works in the area, and nearly 14.67% children were engaged as a day labour.

Table 3. Common profession performed by children

Name of the Occupations	Sex of the Respondent		Total
	Male	Female	
Work in Garage	9 (7.84%)	4 (16.67%)	13 (17.33%)
Bus Helper	7 (13.73%)	0	7 (9.3%)
Home Servant	3 (5.88%)	5 (20.83%)	8 (10.67%)
Day Labor	9 (7.84%)	2 (8.33%)	11 (14.67%)
Work in Shops/ Hotels	13 (25.50%)	4 (16.67%)	17 (22.67%)
Begging	4 (7.84%)	3 (12.5%)	7 (9.3%)
Pulling Rickshaw / Van	3 (5.88%)	0	3 (4%)
Selling Flowers/ Foods / Newspapers	1 (1.96%)	3 (12.5%)	4 (5.33%)
Others	2 (3.92%)	3 (12.5%)	5 (6.67)
Total	51	24	75

Table 4 demonstrates the average working hours, daily and monthly income of the child relying on their working hours. Results indicate that a child being obliged to work at least seven hours in a day on an average. The average daily income was just above \$1.45 (85 rates) or BDT 120 taka. A child earned about 2551 BDT or \$30 (\$1=BDT 85 rates) in a month. Thus, it can be said that the mean per day and per month income of Bangladeshi children is very low, but they have to work more in a day.

Table 4: Working hour and income distribution of the children

Variables	Category	Percent (N=75)	Mean & Std.
Working Hours in a Day	Less than 5 Hours	24.6%	Mean-7.12 Std. Deviation- 2.78
	6-9 Hours	48.5%	
	More than 10 Hours	26.9%	
Per day Salary	Below-100 BDT	56.2%	Mean-120.87 Std.-86.90
	101-200 BDT	40.7%	
	Above-201 BDT	3.1%	
Per Month Income	Below- 2500 BDT	66.2%	Mean-2551.33 Std.-1988.84
	2600-5000 BDT	25.7%	
	Above 5100 BDT	8.1%	

Table 5 depicts the male-female difference in childhood abuse among working children. The prevalence of taking drugs and liquid was significantly higher in male (27.45%) compared to female (25%). Besides the percentage of taking pan, tobacco and cigarette was much higher in male child laborer (48%) than female (14.67%). The rate of physical and mental abuse and torture was higher in male children, in contrast, the prevalence of sexually harassment and abuse by slung was significantly higher in female children.

Table 5: Male-female comparison of child abuse

Factors		Sex of the Respondent		<i>p</i> -value ¹
		Male	Female	
Taking Drugs and Liquid*	Yes	14 (27.45%)	6 (25%)	0.044
	No	37 (72.55%)	18 (75%)	
Pan, Tobacco and Cigarette*	Yes	36 (48%)	11 (14.67%)	0.038
	No	15 (20%)	13 (17.33%)	
Physical/Mental Abused by Public*	Yes	17 (22.67%)	7 (9.335%)	0.002
	No	34 (45.33%)	17 (22.67%)	
Sexually Harassed*	Yes	8 (47.1%)	9 (52.9%)	0.036
	No	29 (70.7%)	12 (29.3%)	
	No Comment	14 (76.5%)	4 (23.5%)	
Physical/Mental Tortured*	Yes	32 (62.7%)	14 (58.3%)	0.001
	No	19 (37.3%)	10 (41.7%)	
Abused by Slung*	Yes	29 (56.9%)	14 (58.3%)	0.002
	No	22 (43.1%)	10 (41.7%)	
Stop Payment	Yes	28 (54.9%)	12 (50.0%)	0.445
	No	23 (45.1%)	12 (50.0%)	

*Factors significant at $p < 0.05$

¹*p*-value obtained from chi-square test.

4. DISCUSSION

The entire paper was an endeavor to assess the child labor situation in an urban setting of Bangladesh carried out in Jhenaidah city of Bangladesh. This study explored some in depth scenario which need to be solved within short times. Because in the era of sustainable development to keep existing child labor is really unbecoming. A study carried out by Ray (2002) in Nepal and Pakistan where he disclosed that gender bias was more prevalence in case of Pakistan than Nepal. He pointed out that boys were more likely to work longer hours than girls in Pakistan, while it was inverse in Nepal. However, in this study, male children were more tend to engage in working sectors than female. This is constant finding of some previous studies (Webbink et al., 2013, Amin et al., 2004, Rad et al., 2015). The reason to involve more boys than girls might be male children seem to be stronger as well as have higher power for working, thus parents tend to exploit largely them for labor (Chang et al, 2011).

Moreover, the results depict that almost two-thirds of the children were from rural areas. Many studies in Bangladesh also revealed that the child labor is overwhelming higher in rural areas than urban areas (Uddin et al., 2014, Alam et al., 2008, Ahad et al., 2018). Low education, ignorance, poverty and opportunity of works in rural areas may play the vital role for higher prevalence of child labor (Ray, 2002, Rad et al., 2015). Also, the majority of the children were aged between 15 and 17 years old. This is also a consonant findings of some previous studies that with the increase of age, the probability of child labor increases (Rad et al., 2015, Serra, 2009, Shafiq, 2007).

The current study exposed that majority (22.67%) children were involved in shops or hotels. About 17.33% were engaged in collecting various garbage materials and 14.67%) children were engaged as a day labor while the other children were involved in doing various kinds of works including home servant (10.67%), bus helper (9.33%), rickshaw/van puller (5.33%). On the basis of 'Child labor survey, 2013' data, approximately 40% child labor were engaged in agriculture sector and 40% worked in various type of industries and rest were involved with service sectors

including domestic work, transportation sectors and repairing automobiles shops (Rahman, 2018). In a recent study by Ahad et al. (2018) in Bangladesh, about 20% were automobile worker, 18% were rickshaw puller and 13% were domestic labor. However, the percentage may vary by geographical locations (Webbink et al., 2013).

Present study found that children are bound to work at least 7 hours in a day which is in line with previous study in Bangladesh (Kuddus & Rahman, 2015, Kamruzzaman, 2015). Long hours of work (more than 20 hours per week) in childhood period is directly linked with negative behaviors, sleep deprivation, health hazard and child development (Roggero, 2007, Beegle, 2009, Edmonds, 2015.). Besides, the children who have to work long hours a day often do not present in school (Roggero, 2007). Although, the children work more than 7 hours in a day, the present study revealed that more 90% children earn less than \$2 per day. Previous study also demonstrated that the average amount of earning of the working children in Bangladesh is less than \$2 per day (Summerfield et al., 2017)

Results of the PCA exerts the possible causes of children to be being involved as labor before completing 18 years of life. In this regard researchers considered the highest factor loading value to assign the factors into different rank order. Obtained results indicate that lack of employment for father's/mother's and death of mother accompanied the highest loading values and correspondingly the others factors.

Parents' unemployment status is closely linked to family income. There are several studies where family income is identified as an important indicator for child labor (Basu & Van, 1998, Ray, 2002, Amin et al., 2004, Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005, Siddiqi, 2013). Besides, poverty played the fourth prime reason to force a child to be being engaged as a labor which is supported by many literatures (Togunde & Carter, 2006, Ersado, 2005, Basu & Van, 1998, Ray, 2002, Amin et al., 2004, Webbink et al., 2013, Webbink et al., 2015, Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005, Fors, 2012, Anker & Melkas, 1996, Siddiqi, 2013). Children of poor households tend to work more if the family cannot afford the education cost and let then involve in working sectors for earning and maintain the family. In labor market, there is a high demand of children as they are paid less with almost same work. Children in developing countries have significant contribution in family income, for instance, the working children age between 10 and 12 years contribute around 7.5% and from 13 to 15 years old children add 12% of the total household income in Peru (Anker & Melkas, 1996). Unemployed and poor parents take it as a reasonable option and sometimes force their children to earn money for their family. The employment status of the adult members of the family and substantive changes in family income decline the child labor (Fors, 2012, Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005).

Father's education was the second largest factor that influence child labor. This is also a constant findings of the previous studies (Okpukpara & Odurukwe, 2006, Goswami & Jain, 2006, Rickey & Jayachandran, 2009). Further, consistent with Cardoso and Souza (2004), the study found that death of mother has significant impact on child labor.

Current study had found coherent results of previous studies from different developing countries where child workers were frequently faced by mental, physical and sexual harassment and abuse (Gharaibeh & Hoeman, 2003, Rahman, 2018, Hadi, 2000). The prevalence of the physical and mental torture and harassment was higher among boys whereas sexually abuse was more frequent in girls. This result also supported by previous studies (Hadi, 2000, Roby, 2005). Additionally,

among the child laborer, different kinds of drug addiction was a common scenario which is also similar findings of some past researches (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2016, Nwazuoke & Igwe, 2016).

4. CONCLUSION

The entire paper was attempted to assess the child labor scenario in a district-Jhenaidah. The severity and prevalence of child labor in Bangladesh demand many detailed studies in order to unlock the countries situation of child labor. Bangladesh is considered a country which has shown a commendable achievement in attaining MDGs and determined to achieve the undertaken SDGs. But the existing child labor situation may blur all of our attainment if the situation exists in the upcoming time. Already the government has implemented some sort of admirable initiatives to obliterate child labor but the rate and prevalence of child labor dare to question the installed initiatives regarding removing child labor from all stages. The policy and rules of all regulations must make sure to apply for removing child labor in Bangladesh. As the country has constitutional obligations to stop all kinds of violence against children and in order to eliminate child labor from the country government must urgently take action by aligning and implementing National Child Labor Elimination Policy-2010. But the ways of eliminating child labor is not so easy because of child labor problem which has been indissolubly embedded in our society for long. Therefore, it requires moral and political will and commitment from all the segments of the society.

Following the recommendations would be an assistance to end child labor in Bangladesh;

- Food-for education programs should be inserted in all villages so that students of a poor family cannot stop going to school for lack of food,
- Arranging part-time income generating schemes for poor students,
- Strengthening institutional capacity so that they can implement all child policy independently,
- Creating awareness in all levels of peoples and social mobilization is paramount needed,
- Social media and television media must come forward to telecasting different programs on the bad sides of child labor,
- Arranging adequate financial support would be utmost initiatives to end the child labor from Bangladesh.

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