

SITUATION OF WORKING CHILDREN IN DHAKA CITY

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ABSTRACT

Child labor is a common picture in developing countries like Bangladesh. But the working children those who are involved in economic activities are mostly deprive of their basic needs and rights. Focusing on these issues this study was conducted in Dhaka city, the capital of Bangladesh which is located in the central part of Bangladesh and well connected with all over the country. People come to Dhaka in search of work. Working children of Dhaka are not different from adults. The study was conducted on 250 working children among them around 66.7 percent were male & 33.3 percent were found female. Most of the children were found from Dhaka division background. Results showed that around 36.7 percent working children has no daily fixed work. Around 53.3 percent children earns more than 300 taka per day and 20 percent children earns less than 100 taka per day. Around half portion of the respondents had not the ability of reading & writing. Even 60 percent of them said they are poor & felt education as unnecessary. One fourth of the respondents couldn't receive treatment while their illness and those who receive treatment most of them beard the cost by themselves. About 30 percent of the respondents smoke & 40 percent of them are addicted to different types of drugs. Around 26.7 percent said they have only one cloth. They use to interchange it among their friends day by day. The study also found that they are in need of proper assistance from government and NGOs as well as society.

INTRODUCTION

Child labour has become a global concern and also an attracted attention of people now a days. It is considered as a product of an unequal society where a child has to work hard instead of going to school (Islam, 2014). Kamruzzaman (2018) showed that poverty is the main reason of child labour. This poverty emerges from unequal distribution of wealth in the society and this leads children to go to work. So it can be mentioned that poverty as one of its principal reasons. Children who are involved in work are deprived of their proper basic needs. The assistance from government and non-government organizations is not sufficient enough to

ensure their basic rights (Ahmed & Ray, 2014). This is not such ideal situation of a developing country like Bangladesh which is going through its first demographic dividend.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Child labour affects a child and his future life in many ways. Long and strenuous hours of physical activity affect a child's health which includes mental, physical and also social wellbeing (Islam, 2014). The poor children are deprived of their daily basic needs which is alarming for a developing nation like Bangladesh, because these children are the future of the nation. If they grow up with morbidity, less educational qualification, less skill and hazardous environment then how a nation can expect something better in future Kamruzzaman & Hakim (2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Zaman, Matin & Bin Gholam Kibria (2014)

Child labour' is such a concept which is generally used in international law to indicate forms of work that are harmful to children. Child labour has been declared illegal by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Actually, all work performed by children is not considered as child labour. Activities of a productive nature which are adapted to children's age and skills and do not interfere with their education and social wellbeing can positively improve their childhood development. However, child labour is significantly related with employment of children under conditions that are not appropriate for their age level. It is also deemed to include activities not directly related to economic production, such as illegal activities performed by children or hazardous household chores.

"Child labour: A priority for EU human rights action - Think Tank" (2019)

ILO approach Based on this resolution, the ILO has developed a methodology for its global estimates on child labour, which applies the following indicators: Ages 5 to 11: at least 1 hour of economic activity per week; Ages 12 to 14: at least 14 hour of economic activity per week in all forms of economic activity except permissible 'light' work, where light work is operationally defined as economic activity that i) does not exceed 14 hours per week and that ii) is not hazardous in nature; and Ages 15 to 17: work in designated hazardous industries or in designated hazardous

occupations, or for long hours. Long hours are defined as 43 or more hours during the reference week.

UNICEF uses similar indicators for estimating child labour, but also includes household chores. A child is considered to be involved in child labour under the following conditions: ' Age 5 to 11 years: At least 1 hour of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household services per week. Age 12 to 14 years: At least 14 hours of economic work or 21 hours of unpaid household services per week. Age 15 to 17 years: At least 43 hours of economic or unpaid household services per week.'

"International Labour Standards on Child labour" (2019)

At regional level, in 2017 ILO report on global estimates of child labour, 'Between 2012 and 2016, the proportion of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour decreased by only one percentage point, from 168.0 million (10.6 per cent) to 151.6 million (9.6 per cent)'. By far, the highest share of children in child labour was in Africa (22.4 percent), where a 1 percent increase was recorded from 2012 to 2016.

Kamruzzaman & Hakim (2016)

In Bangladesh There are almost 700,000 children under the age of 15, working in urban areas, which is 17 percent of the total urban labour force. They work in industry, transport, commerce, domestic service, metal & leather factories, and construction and also in garment factories. Around 65 percent of the total labour force in Bangladesh of 50.1 million works in agriculture. In rural area, most children work for their families, the boys in agriculture and the girls mainly working at home. Those families, who are landless, work for rural landowners with their children in the fields. Most of the families those are rich, use children in their homes as domestic helpers and for cattle tending and other agriculture work. Children also work in small shops, tea stalls, factories and the fishing industry. Most working children do not have the opportunity to attend school. They lead their life from hand to mouth. They are deprived from basic needs which is really alarming for a nation.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Though there are huge researches on child labour status in Bangladesh or all over the world but only a few researches have been conducted which really addressed their basic need status especially for those working children who live in urban area. This paper has focused on the status of several basic need among the working children around Dhaka city, the capital of Bangladesh. By addressing the focused points the country can ensure a better world for its future resources.

OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the study is to analyze the situation of working status and basic needs of the working children who are seen around of the Dhaka city.

The specific objectives are:

1. To know about their basic demographic characteristics
2. To know about their working status
3. To know about the status of their basic needs
4. To know about their level of awareness & benefit from government and NGOs assistance.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study adopted quantitative research strategy and cross sectional research design. The study used primary data source where data was collected using purposive sampling from 250 working children who lived in Dhaka city the capital of Bangladesh. Before the main research pre-testing of the primary questionnaire on at least 30 respondents was conducted in the selected areas. The researchers visited the places at different times of the day and used a simple structured questionnaire with both open and closed questions for the interview. The collected data has been analyzed descriptively by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study as usual like other studies have some limitations; especially conducting research on such a topic is not an easy task among the children those who are involved in

working activities even also due to resource constraints. As a result it is expected that some sort of unintentional errors might remain, though all possible attempts and precautions has been taken to minimize the errors.

SURVEY RESULTS

1. Background Features of The Working Children

Estimate of Working Children by Age, Sex & Previous Residence

68 percent of the respondents belong to 10-14 years age category where only 8 percent respondents found who belong to 5-9 years age category. Out of 250 children 66.7 percent were male & 33.3 percent were female. Most of the children were found from Dhaka division background around 53.3 percent, then Comilla 20 percent & Sylhet 13.3 percent. 6.7 percent were found both from Khulna & Chittagong but no respondent were found from Rajshahi, Barisal & Rangpur. Both most of the boy & girl children were from Dhaka division.

Religion and Marital Status of the Respondent

Among the respondents almost 72 percent were found Muslim & around 28 percent found were found Hindu. No children were found Buddhist & Christian or any other religion. 7 percent of the respondents were married in which most of the respondents were female children.

Duration of Staying In Dhaka and With Whom Staying

Most of the children were staying in Dhaka more than 5 years in percentage they are 40 percent. 30 percent of them are in Dhaka more than two years. Less than three months & one year were also found among them. Around 33.3percent children were living with their parents, 26.7 percent were living with their friends or similar group of children, 16.7 percent were living alone in Dhaka. A few number of children were living with their relative, known person & abandoned parents.

Working Status of the Children

Around 36.7 percent working children has no fixed work. On asking they said that they use to do anything they get. They mainly depend on seasonal business opportunity. Many of them sells puffed rice, flower, and works at shop & hotel. Some girls use to work at nearby houses as part time job. 50 percent of the children works 8-12 hours. 26.7 percent less than 8 hours, 13.3 percent 12-15 hours and around 10 percent children use to work more than 15 hours. Around

53.3 percent children earns more than 300 taka per day, 16.7 percent 100-200 taka, 10 percent children 200-300 taka & 20 percent children earns less than 100 taka per day.

Education & Health Status of the Working Children

Asking on the question of the ability of reading & writing 46.7 percent children said yes. Among them 28.6 percent are currently attending at school. Among whom are currently attending school 77.8 percent are at primary level. Both 11.1 percent are in secondary level & others like vocational training centers & Madrasha. Among them 25 percent of each use to go govt. institution & non formal institutions for study others go to Madrasha & NGO related institutions & others. Around 57.1 percent children gets educational support from their parents, siblings provide 14.3 percent & others are provided by benevolent person or group or voluntary organizations 28.6percent. The children who are not currently attending school 90.9 percent had attended school before. Most of them completed primary level 70 percent, secondary 25 percent & 5 percent are others. On the question if you attended school earlier, why you stopped going to school, 60 percent of them said they are poor & felt education as unnecessary. 20 percent said they lost interest, 15 percent said their family members forced them not to going school any more half of this percentage is girls & 5 percent said that the environment of the school was not good for learning.

Health Status of the Children

76.7 percent said yes when they feel sick they take treatment. 46.2 percent take consultation from doctor of hospitals & 53.8 percent from persons of pharmacy. On asking who use to bear the cost 51.9 percent children said they bear the cost themselves. About 44.3 percent children get support from their family. 50 percent of the children said they had to work although being sick. 80percent of the children said they have permanent place of sleeping.

Among that 80 percent children. 55.2 percent said they use to pay for that. 52.4 percent has to pay more than 600 taka per month.38.1percent has to pay between 300-500 taka. 40 percent of the children use open place for toilet.36.7 percent use public toilet & 23.3 percent use government place. 80 percent of the children use to take bath daily & 13.3 percent at least once a week. Among them 53.3 percent use soap every time, 23.3 percent almost every time & 23.4 percent not regularly use soap while bathing. 30 percent of the respondents smoke & 40 percent of them are addicted to different types of drugs.

Food Intake & Clothing of the Children

Around 60 percent of the children said that they can take regularly 3 meals in a day in full stomach & 6.7 percent said they take regularly 3 meals in a day but not in full stomach. 50 percent of them eat foods from the nearby restaurants. 40 percent of them eat from the street small food shops & some of them also use to eat from begging from people, they are around 6.7 percent. On the asking about the quantity of their clothes, 26.7 percent said they have only one cloth. They use to interchange it among their friends day by day. 46.7 percent said they have at least 2-4 clothes & some of them said they have more than 5 clothes. 63.3 percent children have winter cloths.

Organizational Assistance

Table 1 shows that around 36.7 percent children knows about at least one organization that provides assistance for the poor children. Who knows about this about 63.6 percent are beneficiaries of such kind of organizations & 36.4 percent knows but does not get any assistance from these organizations. Sometimes these assistance are overlapping from different type of organizations. Data shows that most of the organization provide them education, food & cloth assistance.

Table 1: Organizational assistance of government and NGOs

Type of assistance	Percentage (N=250)
Educational assistance	71.4 %
Food assistance	71.4 %
Cloth assistance	57.1 %
Shelter assistance	42.9 %
Health assistance	23.3 %
Financial assistance	14.3%

SUGGESTIONS

1. Most of the children were staying in Dhaka more than 5 years in percentage among them a significant portion, around half of the working children were living with their friends or similar group of children and alone. Government and non-government organizations have to ensure their residence and also security because living in such environment can be dangerous for female children.
2. As more than one fourth of the working children had no fixed work, it indicates that they were involved in such kind of activities because of poverty. In this case government or NGOs can take intervention like they can start such school where children will get financial support instead of coming to school.
3. More than half of the respondents were unable of reading & writing and a significant portion of the respondents felt education was a luxury for them. Government has to address this point and make education available for everyone free of cost.
4. Around one fourth of the respondents said that they don't receive any treatment during illness and those who receive, most of them beard the cost by themselves. So health system should be flexible for these working children addressing universal health coverage.
5. There needs strong law to address their addiction to drugs and awareness campaign is much needed to make them aware about its negative sides.
6. A significant portion of the children don't have more than one cloth and also they don't have winter cloth. Cloth is a basic need of a citizen of a country. Government and NGOs have to increase their assistance in this regard.

CONCLUSION

Children are the future and aspirations of the nation. But the working children in Bangladesh are deprived of their proper legal rights. They have not enough socio- economic security. They are deprived of accommodation, education, medical treatment, entertainment, even food. Since they don't get nutritious food, they suffer from malnutrition (Ahmed & Ray, 2014). The government and the civil society should act to preserve their rights and stop their labour. They should be given opportunity for proper education. They should be dressed and treated

properly. By educating and treating them properly, government can develop their living standard. Actually childhood is a vital and powerful experience in each individual's lifetime. It is the most important and impressionable period of learning. Society and government have to ensure such an environment where the rights for every children will be ensured to make them skilled resource for the country in future.

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