

## **Child Labor and Poverty: A Study on Rajshahi Metropolitan Area, Bangladesh**

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**Abstract:** Child labor is now a burning question to all of us. Despite of international and national rules and laws, it has been expanding day to day due to some of reasons especially for poverty. It is observed that this issue is happened in mostly under developed and developing countries. This study mainly highlights that more than 80 percent of child labors engage with work at an early age which is major obstacle to build up them as a skilled manpower in future in the study are. At the same time child labor passes their day in work place as a result they deprived of entertainment and recreational facilities which is essential to ensure balanced physical mental maturity. Lack of consciousness and shorten outlook life child labor are not aware the importance of education and they are satisfied their present situation. As a result they deprived of all types of facilities which are essential to build up themselves as a skilled manpower in future. At the same time they have born in a poor family and poverty is a part of their life. They consider it is their out of fate. They can't overcome it by their own effort. So most of them are satisfied their income though it is quite insufficient to serve their family as a result they lead life time poverty. Finally they surrounded by the vicious cycle of poverty and lead life time poverty.

**Key Words:** Child labor, Education, Entertainment, Manpower, Maturity, Poverty.

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Date of Submission: 06-01-2020

Date of Acceptance: 21-01-2020

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Child Labor issue is one of the great concerns throughout the world. It is quite common for children of all types of societies to be engaged in some forms of occupation depending on the economic structure and level of development. As such, the phenomenon is not connected to any particular country or culture. In fact, of the country concerned, Child Labor has been generally perceived more as a problem of poor developing countries like Bangladesh. According to ILO estimates, there were 211 million children aged 5 to 14 at work in economic activity in the world in 2000 (ILO, 2002). This accounts for a little less than one-fifth of all children in this age group. About 73 million working children are less than 10 years old and the total economically active child population 5 to 17 years of age was estimated at 352 million in 2000.

Recent labor force survey 1999-2000 revealed that labor force participation rate of children ages 10-14 was about 39 per cent in 2000, which is strikingly high compare to other countries in the region. Which indicated that there are 4.69 million working children — some 15 per cent of the total 35.06 million children in the age group of 5–14 years. The total working child population between 5 and 17 years old is estimated at 7.42 million (BBS, 2002-2003). Child labor engages in formal and informal sector in Bangladesh. 93.3 per cent of all working children in the age group of 5–17 years operate in the informal sector. Agriculture engages 4.5 million (56.4 per cent children), while the services sector engages 2 million (25.9 per cent), and industry 1.4 million that means 17.7percent (Khanam, 2006), Children are working mainly in rural areas, because most of the poor and vulnerable parents live in remote villages. They do not have enough ability to take all the responsibilities of their children. Majority of the parents can only afford to offer the food and lodging but they cannot afford the educational expenses of their children. But education is the basic right of a children and only education can make him or her resourceful person and be a good quality citizen as well. But in reality, poor parents get relief when their children earn some money and accomplish the family needs.

Children are involved with earning activities especially on the worst form of child labor to earn money. The worst forms of child labor in five sectors (welding, automobiles, street children, battery recharging, and transport) were conducted under the supervision of the BBS with technical and financial support from ILO-IPEC (National Child Labor Survey, 2003). Moreover, value the current consumption of the household (which

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is gained by engaging the children in productive activities) and the human capital attainment of the children (child's schooling). However, According to the National Child Labor Survey 2002-03 (NCLS) out of the total 42.4 million children between 5 and 17 years, 7.4 million have been recorded as economically active children and 3.1 million have been estimated as child labor. About 81 and 5 percent cases reported poverty as either a direct or an indirect reason behind children's work (Baseline Survey on Child workers in welding establishment, 2002-2003). The cause of poverty ensures child labor by 81.1 percent to 88.7 percent from the year 1995-96 to 2002 respectively (Child labor survey, 2002-2003). A large of children involves in child labor to combat or reduce poverty, but in reality they can't reduce or combat poverty in long time. To explore this causal relationship we decide to study on this issue.

## **II. CONTESTATION ON RELATED ISSUES**

A nation has lost huge potential resource because of the employment activities of children. If a society desire to get qualified person, they must forgo the presence of child labor in economy. Every nation as well as family would like to make his or her children as a qualified person. There is no alternative way to develop our nation without improving human resource development. If we want to do so, our children should get proper education and training facilities which will bring up him or her to apply in our nation building activities. But it is observed that about 6.6 million Child workers of age 5-14 years out of 34.4 million of children in Bangladesh. Of those children engaged in economic activities 22.9 percent were sellers/vendors, 16.1 percent were factory workers, 5.7 percent were brick/stone breakers, 4.8 percent were agricultural workers, 2.3 percent were in crafts, 0.7 percent were in fish processing and 0.4 percent were beggars (Child labor survey, 1995-96). Out of 31 million children between the ages 5 and 14 years, 6.1 million were economically active, of which 1.9 million were between 5 and 9 years. Child workers represent about 12 percent of the total labor force of the country (Kane, 1996). According to the National Child Labor Survey 2002-03 (NCLS) out of the total 42.4 million children between 5 and 17 years, 7.4 million have been recorded as economically active children and 3.1 million have been estimated as child labor.

There are 28,290 welding establishments all over Bangladesh. An estimated 33.56 percent of the welding establishments are found in Dhaka city. The survey also estimated a national total of 39,031 child workers aged 5- 17 years in 28,290 establishments. On average, 33 percent of all workers in these establishments were children and they were mainly boys. The child workers working in the establishments have different working hours; 42 percent are used to work 9-10 hours daily, 39.1 percent work 7-8 hours, 11.5 percent work 11-12 hours and only 1.2 percent work more than 12 hours per day. Based on hours worked it is found that a child worker worked 9 hours on an average per day (Baseline Survey on Child Workers in Welding Establishment 2002-03). Although many reasons are involved in child labor but poverty is the main reason in Bangladesh. It is true that poverty is a major factor in the vulnerability of children to child labor. Families in 'real poverty' and without other coping mechanisms may see sending children out to work, even at a very young age and under conditions that expose them to extreme risk, as the only way to make ends meet. This has been described as "using child labor to borrow from the future for present consumption" (Betcherman et al., 2004) since it sacrifices the child's longer-term development on the altar of immediate returns.

There is a second form of poverty that is instrumental in pushing children into child labor. This is the 'sudden poverty' that occurs when a family that is generally coping is faced with an unexpected event that makes it suddenly or temporarily unable to meet its daily needs. This event may be a national or local event that affects large numbers of families, such as an economic crisis, natural disaster or outbreak of conflict, all of which disrupt the world of work and make earning an income more difficult (there is more on this below). It may also be a family crisis, such as sudden unemployment or illness of the breadwinner. In such situations, parents may consider that temporarily withdrawing a child from school to help the family in crisis is a legitimate response. In reality, such a move often leads to the end of the child's education and early entry into child labor (ILO, 2005).

Another study shows that, children come as child work because they are directly related with poverty. The CLS reports has been regrouped the distribution of causes of children's work in the three categories and accessible in 2002-2003, about 81 and 5 percent cases reported poverty as either a direct or an indirect reason behind children's work. The cause of poverty ensures child labor by 81.1 percent to 88.7 percent from the year 1995-96 to 2002 respectively (Md. Aoulad Hosen et. al., 2011). Poverty reduction policy is the pre requisite to fall down child labor. It very difficult to reduce child labor without declines the level of poverty. From all of the possible causes, poverty is the significant reason to raise child labor. Although poverty itself is a multidimensional factor, if we create new work opportunity to our poor people and reduce inequality between rich and poor, then child labor will decline. Because of 69.4% parents accept children's work to increase income (Baseline Survey on Child Workers in Welding Establishment 2002-03). 45 percent of the total population is living below the poverty line. So it's clearly appearing that parents accept child labor due to poverty. The children of these families are deprived of their basic needs like food, clothing, education, and health facilities

etc. in their own families. As a result, they are forced to make their own earnings. They involve various income generating activities such as work as a sellers/vendors, factory workers, brick/stone breakers, agricultural workers, work in crafts, fish processing and also various illegal activities such as beggars, prostitution, drug peddler. Among these industrial and welding sector is much hazardous for child worker, and tend of involving this sector increase day by day. About 52.1 percent children work as a child labor due to poverty and family needed more income. But 32.3% of them work as an unpaid worker or apprentice. 32.3% of them work as a unpaid apprentice, 34.1% and 29.2% work as a paid apprentice and regular paid worker. It also mention here that their payment is so insufficient 61.4% of them earn below 500 taka monthly and only 3.5% child labor earn above 1500 taka which is also insufficient to lead a better life than previous (Baseline Survey on Child Workers in Welding Establishment 2002-03).

### **Child Labor and Poverty**

There are about 150 million child laborers around the world, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the majority working on farms in Africa and Asia (ILO, 2019). A total of 27 countries which account for more than 10% of the world's population were found to have an "extreme risk" of child labor, with Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea and the Central African Republic completing the top five on the index (The Daily Star, 2019). This risky portion of children is seen mostly in the underdeveloped and developing countries including Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Turkey and Vietnam. In Bangladesh, child labor has been criminalized and the social structures are such that engaging children in the labor force are commonplace (The Daily Star, 2017). It is observed that a staggering 81 percent of children are engaged in risky works to add to the incomes of their families. Around 60 percent of the children work during daytime while 40 percent children work during daytime and nighttime despite the Shishu Ain, 2013 prohibiting it. Under the Shishu Ain, 2013 exploitation of children is a legal offence punishable with imprisonment for up to two years or a fine of up to 50,000 bdt or both. While the Act is not clear on what counts as exploitation, there should be no doubt that letting children engage in work in hazardous situations is not acceptable (The Daily Star, 2017).

In Bangladesh, 28 percent of the total population is children and among of them two million children work in perilous and hazardous conditions (The Daily Star, 2018). A study revealed that 39.7 percent is engaged in agriculture, 30.9 percent in services, and 29.4 percent in industry sector (UNESCO, 2018). This amount of children are engaged in different forms of agricultural activities for instance farming, harvesting and processing crops, tobacco, raising poultry, grazing cattle, gathering honey, and harvesting tea leaves, drying and processing fish, fishing harvesting and processing shrimp. It is also found that child labor are engaged in many forms of industrial activities such as quarrying and mining, including salt, producing garments, textiles, jute textiles, leather, leather goods, footwear, and imitation jewelry, manufacturing bricks, glass, hand-rolled cigarettes, matches, soap, furniture, aluminum products, metal products, plastic products, and melamine products, ship breaking, welding, construction, and breaking bricks, and stones. Moreover, it is seen that children are engaged in various kinds of services including domestic work, working in transportation, pulling rickshaws, and street work, including garbage picking, recycling, vending, begging, and shoe repairing, working in hotels, restaurants, bakeries, and retail and grocery shops, repairing automobiles. But it is a matter of regret is that children are engaged in lot of worst activities including forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of bricks, forced begging, use in illicit activities, including smuggling and selling drugs, commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, forced domestic work (Bureau of International Labor affairs, 2018). Children are bound to be engaged in these worst forms of activities due to poverty.

Those children are especially vulnerable to adversities of inequalities including poverty of the family or the community is well-known. Even in a rich country like the United States, 22 percent of children are under 18, more than one in five, live in poverty. It is observed that poverty impedes "children's ability to learn and contribute to social, emotional, and behavioral problems" and "risks are greatest for children who experience poverty when they are young" (Ahmed, 2015). Moreover, a study revealed that it is not enough to have legal structures in place. Around 15 percent of the child workers who participated in the study said they are engaged in works on their guardians' interest while 10 percent of the children are at work as they are not enrolled in any school in Bangladesh. Therefore, we must take into account economic and social structures that propagate this situation (The Daily Star, 2017). In Bangladesh, in spite of poverty and capacity constraints, remarkable progress has been made in achieving child development objectives in health and education set in the Millennium Development Goals for 2015. Now the SDG agenda for 2030 has to be elaborated for Bangladesh and pursued with vigor. We owe it to our children and ourselves, not to fail, and to rise up to this challenge (Ahmed, 2015).

### **Theoretical Frame Work of the Study**

This study has been conducted on the basis of "Human Resource Development (HRD)" theory. Recent concept of development is "development for man so, develop the quality of man through education, training,

health, economy and political aspect. Generally Human resource Development considers people centered development. Main concept of human resource development theory is that the sustainable development depends on skilled man power not only man power. So human resource development theory emphasized on to build-up skilled and quality of a man

Main dimension of human resource development is education, training, health, nutrition, recreation, culture, economic development and environment protection. To build up a skilled manpower, developments of these dimensions are crying needs. Lack of education, training, entertainment, economic safety net, environment protection, health and recreational facilities poor and deprived children involve with child labor and they cannot build-up themselves as a skilled manpower which is the main obstacle to human resource development. As a result they become poor and which accelerates the child labor as well as they leads life time poverty in future.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a Social Survey research. All child labor under welding sector in Rajshahi City Corporation have been included here as research population and every child labor have been selected as unit of Analysis. Simple random sampling method has been used in this research. Total number of worker is 5789 and child worker 2006 in the Rajshahi City Corporation area (*Baseline Survey 2002-03*). A sample of  $(2006 \div 40) 50$  child labor and  $(5789 \div 290) 20$  labors that means 70 labors have been selected using random number table. Primary data have been collected from the child labor. Secondary data have been used in as per as necessity. Interview Schedule has been used as a method of data collection. A primary survey has been completed to collect information about age, education, income and others. Final interview have been conducted after compiling the formation of questionnaire. The questionnaire was structural in nature. The possible answers have been closed ended questions. For the convenience of the research, some open ended questions have been also included. The collected data have been quantified by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 20.0, and then collected data have been analyzed by using various statistical methods.

#### Objectives of the Study

To determine the role of child labor to combat or reduce poverty is the main objective in this study. Specific objectives are as follows;

- (i) To assess socio-economic characteristics of working Children.
- (ii) To collect information about the extent of exploitation and abuse at work.
- (iii) To assess occupational risk and health hazards, injuries, diseases and extent of disabilities of working children.

#### Hypothesis of the Study

- (i) Attempt to combat or reduce poverty accelerate child labor.
- (ii) Child Labor Accelerate Life time Poverty.

### IV. DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

This segment discuss the key issues of socio-economic characteristics of the child labor of the study area such as age, education, occupation of the respondent's guardians, wages, payment systems, reasons of working in the welding sector. Moreover, the extent of exploitation by the employers at workplace, wage disparity, physical oppressions, risks of working, harmful works, unfavorable working conditions, injuries, and also becoming disabled due to the risky works have been discussed throughout in this segment. After discussion of the above issues, it is observed that most of the children are the victim of physical or mental disturbances and oppressions at working place in the study area. They are paid with a minimum amount of taka which is not sufficient to maintain their family as well as maintain a standard living conditions. Furthermore, they are abused in many ways by the employers or seniors at work places and some of them are obliged to work risky and harmful works. As a consequence, they are becoming disabled in some cases with physical tortures.

**Table 1.1: Distribution of age of the respondents**

| Age   | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|       | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 6-11  | 9           | 18      | 0      | 0       |
| 12-14 | 22          | 44      | 0      | 0       |
| 15-17 | 19          | 38      | 0      | 0       |
| 18-20 | 0           | 0       | 9      | 45      |
| 21-23 | 0           | 0       | 8      | 40      |
| 24-26 | 0           | 0       | 1      | 5       |

|       |    |     |    |     |
|-------|----|-----|----|-----|
| 27+   | 0  | 0   | 2  | 10  |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 20 | 100 |

A closer look at the age distribution of child workers in the two age groups indicates that about more than half of the total employed persons are in the age groups 6-11 and 12-14. “Amongst the child workers in welding establishments about 52.5 percent were aged 15-17 years followed by 40.5 percent in the age group 12-14 and only 7.0 percent were in 5-11 age bracket” (Base line survey 2003). Table 1.1 show that there are about 31 very young children aged 6-14 years at work in welding establishments. It is also revealed from the above table that 62 percent of the workers in welding establishments are children.

**Table 1.2: Distribution of child labour household head on the basis of income**

| Income(monthly) | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-----------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                 | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| <2000           | 8           | 16      | 0      | 0       |
| 2,100-5,000     | 24          | 48      | 7      | 35      |
| 5,100-8,000     | 10          | 20      | 6      | 30      |
| 8,100-11,000    | 5           | 10      | 4      | 20      |
| 11,000+         | 3           | 6       | 3      | 15      |
| Total           | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Table 1.2 present that 16 percent family income below 2000 which is quite insufficient to serve a family. 48% of child labor and 35% of labor household income is 2,100-5,000. At the same time 16% of child labor and 35% of labor household income is above 8,100. The table represent that most of the family income is not sufficient to maintain a family in a proper way.

**Table 1.3: Child workers by reasons for leaving permanent place of residence**

| Reason for leaving residence | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                              | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Poverty/hunger               | 34          | 68      | 14     | 70      |
| No one take after me         | 5           | 10      | 0      | 0       |
| Ran away                     | 7           | 14      | 0      | 0       |
| Parents sent me away         | 4           | 8       | 0      | 0       |
| To support my family         | 0           | 0       | 6      | 30      |
| Total                        | 50          | 100     | 50     | 100     |

“37.2 percent of child workers have left their permanent residence due to earning, 24 percent due to parent’s compliance and 23.3 percent due to hunger” (Base line survey 2003). Table 3.3 shows that 68 percent of child workers and 70 percent of labor have left their permanent residence due to poverty/ hunger, 8 percent of child labor left their home due to parent’s compliance and 14 percent left their permanent place willingly (ran away). On the other hand, about 30 percent labor left their houses to support their family, about 10 percent child labor left because there was none to look after them.

**Table 1.4: Distribution of child workers who can read, write and currently study in educational institutions**

| Characteristics       | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                       | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Can read and write    | 26          | 52      | 13     | 65      |
| Cannot read and write | 24          | 48      | 7      | 35      |
| Total                 | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |
| Attending school      |             |         |        |         |
| Yes informal          | 6           | 12      | 0      | 0       |
| No                    | 44          | 88      | 20     | 100     |
| Total                 | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

In addition to their work 88 percent child workers are not studying in any institution. Only 12 percent of them are studying in informal school. Summarizing the data in the above tables we can see that amongst 50 working children in welding establishments 6 children or 12 percent are currently studying and none of the labor

again 44 children 20 labor are not currently studying; 52 percent and 65 percent of them had once been to school and they can read and write on the other hand 48 and 35 percent of the them had never been to school and they cannot read and write.

**Table 1.5: Distribution of child workers by reasons for not studying**

| Reasons for not studying              | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                       | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Cannot effort to educational expenses | 9           | 18      | 3      | 15      |
| Because of work                       | 12          | 24      | 15     | 75      |
| Parent did not send to school         | 5           | 10      | 0      | 0       |
| Not interested                        | 18          | 36      | 2      | 10      |
| No response                           | 6           | 12      | 0      | 0       |
| Total                                 | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Note: 12 percent child labors exclude here.

Table 1.5 reveals that 18 and 15 percent of child labor and labors are not attending school due to inefficiency to maintain educational expenses. 24% and 75% of them didn't attend school because of work. Finally 36% and 10% of the respondents didn't attend school because they are not interested in education.

**Table 1.6: Distribution of child workers previously engaged by type of work**

| Previously engaged    | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                       | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Did not work          | 47          | 94      | 17     | 85      |
| Child domestic worker | 1           | 2       | 2      | 10      |
| Auto mobile workshop  | 2           | 4       | 1      | 5       |
| Total                 | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

The table 1.6 shows that a total of 04 percent and 05 percent of child labor and labor were in automobile workshop, 2 percent and 10 child labor and labor respectively engage in domestic work, and 94 percent of child labor and 85 percent of labor are not involve any work.

**Table 1.7: Distribution of child workers by daily hours worked**

| Daily hours worked(hours) | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|---------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                           | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 8                         | 2           | 4       | 0      | 0       |
| 9                         | 1           | 2       | 1      | 5       |
| 10                        | 26          | 52      | 11     | 55      |
| 11                        | 5           | 10      | 1      | 5       |
| 12                        | 16          | 32      | 7      | 35      |
| Total                     | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

About 39.1 percent of the working children worked 7-8 hours a day and 42.0 percent worked 9 to 10 hours. On an average, child workers worked 9.0 hours a day (*Base line survey 2003*). Table 1.7 shows the distribution of child workers by daily hours of work. The child workers working in the establishments have different working hours; 32 percent and 35 of child labor and labor are used to work 12 hours daily, 62 percent and 60 percent work 10-11 hours, only 6 percent and 5 percent respectively work 8-9 hours. Based on hours worked it is found that a child worker worked minimum 10 hours on an average per day.

**Table 1.8: Distribution of income earned in Taka during last month by child workers**

| Earned during last month (Tk.) | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| <500                           | 6           | 12      | 0      | 0       |
| 501-1000                       | 9           | 18      | 0      | 0       |

|           |    |     |    |     |
|-----------|----|-----|----|-----|
| 1100-1500 | 8  | 16  | 0  | 0   |
| 1600-2000 | 14 | 28  | 0  | 0   |
| 2100-2500 | 6  | 12  | 0  | 0   |
| 2600-3000 | 4  | 8   | 3  | 15  |
| 3100-5000 | 2  | 4   | 8  | 40  |
| 5100-8000 | 1  | 2   | 6  | 30  |
| 8000+     | 0  | 0   | 3  | 15  |
| Total     | 50 | 100 | 20 | 100 |

31.0 percent of the child workers earned Tk. 301-500 per month followed by 30.4 percent with a monthly income of Tk. 100-300. Only 3.5 percent child workers earned Tk.1501 and more per month. “The average earning of child workers in welding establishments is found to be Tk. 536.6 per month” (*Base line survey 2003*). The income of the child workers during the last month of the enumeration period is quite insignificant. It is found that 31 percent have earned between 300 and 1000 taka, 56 percent between 1100 - 2500, 12 percent and 55 percent respectively between 2600 and 5000 and only 2 percent and 45 percent of child labor and labor have earned more than 5000 taka per month. This is quite insufficient to maintain their family.

**Table 1.9: Is this amount of income is sufficient to maintain your family (only for the labor)**

| Sufficiency of income | Labor     |         |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
|                       | Frequency | Percent |
| Yes                   | 5         | 25      |
| No                    | 15        | 75      |
| Total                 | 20        | 100     |

From the above table, it is seen that 25 percent of the adult labor opines that their income is sufficient to maintain their family on the contrast of 75 percent labor opines that this income is not sufficient to maintain their family.

**Table 1.10: Distribution of child worker's earnings by nature of spending**

| Nature of spending             | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Give enter amount to parents   | 14          | 28      | 0      | 0       |
| Give partial amount to parents | 30          | 60      | 12     | 60      |
| Pay for family expenses        | 2           | 4       | 17     | 85      |
| Keep some as pocket money      | 37          | 74      | 4      | 20      |
| Clothing                       | 16          | 32      | 2      | 4       |

Note: Due to multiple responses / answers provided, the percentage total would not be 100.

Child workers and labor have different types of expenditure met from their income. Study revealed that “about 51.1 percent of workers share their income with their parents, 45.3 percent spend it as pocket money, and 25.5 percent surrender their whole income to their parents” (*Base line survey 2003*). It is also found that 60 percent of workers share their income with their parents, 74 percent and 20 percent spend it as pocket money, 28 percent surrender their whole income to their parents, 4 percent of child labor and 85 percent of labor spend for family expenses and 32 percent and 4 percent spend for purchasing cloths. It is important to note here that no child worker meets their educational expenses from income

**Table 1.11: Child workers by their job satisfaction with current wages/salaries and working due to parent's loan**

| Characteristics                       | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                       | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Satisfied with wages                  |             |         |        |         |
| Satisfied                             | 22          | 44      | 5      | 25      |
| Not satisfied                         | 28          | 56      | 15     | 75      |
| Total                                 | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |
| Child workers have loan from employer |             |         |        |         |

|  |    |     |    |     |
|--|----|-----|----|-----|
| Have loan                              | 2  | 4   | 2  | 10  |
| No loan                                | 48 | 96  | 18 | 90  |
| Total                                  | 50 | 100 | 20 | 100 |
| Currently working due to parent's loan |    |     |    |     |
| Working due to parents loan            | 12 | 24  | 1  | 5   |
| Not for parents loan                   | 38 | 76  | 19 | 95  |
| Total                                  | 50 | 100 | 20 | 100 |

Most of the child workers are satisfied with their jobs due to various options. “A large number of them (36.7 %) are satisfied because they are providing financial support to their families” (*Base line survey 2003*). Table 1.11 present that 56 percent of child labor and 75 percent of labor are not satisfied with their wages. 96 percent of child labor 90 percent of labor doesn't receive any loan from their employer. On the other hand only 24 percent of child labor and 5 percent of labor currently works due to parent loan.

**Table 1.12: Distribution of child workers by age of first starting work**

| Age of starting age | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                     | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| <10                 | 16          | 32      | 1      | 5       |
| 11-13               | 27          | 54      | 6      | 30      |
| 14-16               | 6           | 12      | 13     | 65      |
| 17-19               | 1           | 2       | 0      | 0       |
| Total               | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Table 1.12 reveals that 32 percent of child labor and 5 percent of labor age of first starting work was below 10 years. 54 percent of child labor and 30 percent of labor age of first working age is 11-13 years. It would appear from this table that more than 80 percent of child labors engage with work at an early age which is major obstacle to build up them as a skilled manpower in future.

**Table 1.13: Distribution of child workers in terms of how they spend leisure time**

| Types of recreation                           | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|---|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|   | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Watching television and radio/ listening song | 11          | 22      | 2      | 10      |
| Playing/watching games                        | 3           | 6       | 0      | 0       |
| Gossiping with friends/relatives              | 19          | 38      | 6      | 30      |
| Work with family                              | 2           | 4       | 12     | 60      |
| Nothing                                       | 15          | 30      | 0      | 0       |
| Total   | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Child workers have varieties of recreation during their leisure time. It is seen that “about 44.2 percent spend their leisure by watching television, 22.7 percent by playing/watching games, and 21.3 percent by gossiping with friends” (*Base line survey 2003*). Child workers have varieties of recreation during their leisure time. Study reveals that about 22 and 10 percent respectively spend their leisure by watching television and radio or listening song, only 6 percent child labor by playing/watching games, 38 percent and 30 percent of child labor and labor by gossiping with friends, 4 percent and 60 percent respectively by working with family and 30 percent child labor pass their leisure time without any task (returning from work place they take their meal and go to bad). This table present that most of the child labor passes their day in work place as a result they deprived of entertainment and recreational facilities which is essential to ensure balanced physical mental maturity.



**Table 1.14: Distribution of child workers who had ever fallen sick at work**

| Sick      | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-----------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|           | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Felt sick | 24          | 48      | 13     | 65      |
| Not sick  | 26          | 52      | 7      | 35      |
| Total     | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Table 1.14 reveals that 48 percent of child labor and 65 percent of labor fallen sick at work. On the contrast of 52 percent and 35 percent of them didn't fall sick at work. Study explores that 22 and 10 percent had burn injuries, 6 percent and 5 percent suffered from headache, 22 percent had back pain due to heavy load.

**Table 1.15: Child workers wearing protection materials**

| Characteristics                     | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                     | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| <b>Wear protection materials</b>    |             |         |        |         |
| Wear protection materials           | 13          | 26      | 3      | 15      |
| Not wearing protection material     | 37          | 74      | 17     | 85      |
| Total                               | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |
| <b>Type of protection materials</b> |             |         |        |         |
| Boot/shoe                           | 1           | 2       | 0      | 0       |
| Gloves                              | 1           | 2       | 0      | 0       |
| Musk for eyes                       | 8           | 16      | 3      | 15      |
| Others                              | 3           | 6       | 0      | 0       |
| No response                         | 37          | 74      | 17     | 85      |
| Total                               | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

\*Note: 74 percent 85 percent respondents exclude here

The child workers who are engaged in various types of hazardous work are required to be well protected while at work. But the situation is such that many child workers are not aware of their safety matter. Table 1.27 shows the number of child workers who wear protection materials for avoiding occupational risk. A total of 26 percent and 15 percent workers wear protective dress during their work but 74 percent child labor and 85 percent labor do not use any protective measure which may lead to any accidents/injury. The protective materials are of different types. About 16 percent and 15 are used to wear masks for eyes, 2 percent child labor wear gloves and 2 percent child labor use boots /shoes as means of protection

**Table 1.15: Child workers willing to go to school if opportunity provided**

| Characteristics         | Child labor |         |
|-------------------------|-------------|---------|
|                         | Number      | Percent |
| Willing to go to school | 23          | 46      |
| Not willing             | 27          | 54      |
| Total                   | 50          | 100     |

Table 1.15 reveals that 46 percent are willing to go to school if opportunity provided. It is also found that 54 percent of them are not willing to go to school. It would appear from this table that most of the child labor are not aware the importance of education and they are satisfied their present situation.

**Table 1.16: Distribution of child workers by their present/future plan if financial and other assistances are provided**

| Present/future plan   | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                       | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Open welding workshop | 23          | 46      | 10     | 50      |
| Study                 | 14          | 28      | 0      | 0       |
| Don't know/don't say  | 1           | 2       | 0      | 0       |
| Purchase land         | 6           | 12      | 6      | 30      |
| Start small business  | 6           | 12      | 4      | 20      |

|       |    |     |    |     |
|-------|----|-----|----|-----|
| Total | 50 | 100 | 20 | 100 |
|-------|----|-----|----|-----|

A survey revealed that “nearly 39 percent are willing to open a welding workshop, 30.6 percent want to start small trading/business, 12.3 percent are in favor of study” (Base line survey 2003). The child workers have expressed different opinions as to their present and future plans if they are provided with financial and other assistance. Nearly 46 percent and 50 percent are willing to open a welding workshop, 12 percent and 20 percent want to start small trading/business, 28 percent child labor are in favor of study and 12 percent and 30 of them want to purchase land.

**Table 1.17: Comparison of child workers by reasons of job satisfaction and reasons and reasons of disliking**

**Reasons of job satisfaction**

| Reasons of job satisfaction  | Child Labor |         | Labor  |         |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                              | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| No response                  | 15          | 30      | 6      | 30      |
| Able to support family       | 19          | 38      | 12     | 60      |
| To arrange own food expenses | 5           | 10      | 0      | 0       |
| Good income                  | 10          | 20      | 2      | 10      |
| Others                       | 1           | 2       | 0      | 0       |
| Total                        | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

**Reasons of disliking**

| Reasons of disliking   | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                        | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| No response            | 35          | 70      | 14     | 70      |
| Unable to go to school | 13          | 26      | 0      | 0       |
| Less wages             | 2           | 4       | 6      | 30      |
| Total                  | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

It is important to see that most of the child workers are satisfied with their jobs due to various options. A large number of them (38% and 60%) are satisfied because they are providing financial support to their families, 20 percent and 10 respectively are satisfied for good income, 10 percent are content for managing food.

On the other hand 25.3 percent of child workers don't like welding because of tiresome nature of job, 4 percent and 30 percent due to less wages, 17.7 percent for frequent sickness due to work. 26 percent child labor opines that due to their inability to go to school they dislike the work.

**Table 1.18: Distribution of child workers by their perception regarding health care, education and work environment**

| Characteristics                                      | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|--|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|  | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| <b>Knowledge of welding work not good for health</b> |             |         |        |         |
| Know   | 15          | 30      | 13     | 65      |
| Don't know   | 35          | 70      | 7      | 35      |
| Total  | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |
| <b>Know better to go to school instead of work</b>   |             |         |        |         |
| Know   | 30          | 60      | 4      | 20      |
| Don't know   | 20          | 40      | 16     | 80      |
| Total  | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |
| <b>Abused at work place</b>                          |             |         |        |         |
| Faced abused   | 18          | 36      | 7      | 35      |
| Not faced abused                                     | 32          | 64      | 13     | 65      |
| Total  | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

About health care a notable number of child workers do not know whether or not welding activity is harmful to their health. Out of 50 child workers 30 percent and out of 20 labor 65 percent know that their work is not conducive to their health. An overwhelming majority of child workers (60% and 20%) know that they are supposed to go to school instead of working and (40% and 80%) are unaware of it. Finally 36 percent and 35 percent of them faced abuse at work place. Among the abused child labor 12 percent and 10 percent were rebuked, 24 percent and 25 percent were beaten.

**Table 1.19: Comparison between Willingness of child workers to stop welding Causes of stop welding**

| Willingness of stop welding | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                             | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Want to stop                | 20          | 40      | 4      | 20      |
| Don't stop welding          | 30          | 60      | 16     | 80      |
| Total                       | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

| Causes        | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|---------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|               | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| No response   | 30          | 60      | 16     | 80      |
| Want to study | 18          | 36      | 0      | 0       |
| Less income   | 2           | 4       | 4      | 20      |
| Total         | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Table 1.19 reveals that 40 percent of child labor and 20 percent of labor want to stop welding, and 36 percent child labor and none of labor want to stop welding due to study on the contrast of only 4 percent of child labor and 20 percent of labor want to stop welding due to less income on the other hand 60 percent child labor and 80 percent labor are not willing to stop welding because they think it's the only way to earn money and serve them.

**Table 1.20: Percentage of child workers who would advise siblings or friends to work in welding establishment**

| Advice to work in w. establishment | Child labor |         | Labor  |         |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|
|                                    | Number      | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Will advise                        | 6           | 12      | 2      | 10      |
| Never advise                       | 44          | 88      | 18     | 90      |
| Total                              | 50          | 100     | 20     | 100     |

Table 1.20 reveals that 12 percent of child labor and 10 percent of labor opines that if someone wants to work as welder they support them. But 88 percent child labor and 90 percent labor opines that they never support them because they think it's time for study not to work and welding is not a healthy and safety profession.

**Table 1.21: Comparison of the major finding of the study**

| Characteristics                                | 1991 population census | 2001 population census | NCLS 2002-03 | BLS Auto sector, 2002-03 | BLS Welding sector 2002-03 | Present Study |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Literacy rate (5 years and above)              | 29.8                   | 42.5                   | 52.1         | 43.4                     | 48.0                       | 52.0          |
| Average monthly wage of child Worker* (in Tk.) | *                      | *                      | 858          | 470.2                    | 536.6                      | 1365.0        |
| Average weekly hours worked                    | *                      | *                      | 28.5         | 55.8                     | 54.0                       | 58.6          |

**Test of Hypothesis**

**Hypothesis 1; Attempt to reduce or combat poverty accelerate child labor**

Relationship between house hold income and causes of leaving home

| Cause Income | Causes of leaving home |                      |                     | Total     |
|--------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------|
|              | Poverty/hunger         | No one look after me | Parent sent me away |           |
| <2,000       | 7 (20.6%)              | 0 (0%)               | <b>1 (16.7%)</b>    | 8 (16%)   |
| 2,100-5,000  | 19 (55.9%)             | 3 (30%)              | 2 (33.3%)           | 24 (48%)  |
| 5,100-8,000  | 6 (17.6%)              | 2 (20%)              | 2 (33.3%)           | 10 (20%)  |
| Above 8,000  | 2 (5.9%)               | 5 (50%)              | 1 (16.7%)           | 8 (16%)   |
| Total        | 34 (100%)              | 10 (100%)            | 6 (100%)            | 50 (100%) |

Child labor,  $\chi^2$  Value= 13.462 df = 6 r = .269

This table shows that  $r = .269$ , so causes of leaving home positively related with house hold income (*poor positive relation*). By using  $\chi^2$  we justify the significance of this relation.

$H_0$  = Poverty is not responsible for leaving home and engage with child labor

$H_1$  = Poverty mostly responsible for leaving home and engage with child labor

Here table value of  $\chi^2 = 12.59$  when  $df = 6$  and in 5% significance level. But the calculated value of  $\chi^2 = 13.462$ . So alternative hypothesis is accepted here and we can say that house hold with less income or poverty is responsible for child labor.

**Hypothesis 2; Child labor accelerate life time poverty**

Relationship between income of the labor and their expected amount of money to support their family

| Satisfaction Income | Satisfaction of the respondents |            | Total     |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|
|                     | Yes                             | No         |           |
| <5,000              | 1 (14.3%)                       | 10 (76.9%) | 11 (55%)  |
| 5,100-8,000         | 6 (85.7%)                       | 3 (23.1%)  | 9 (45%)   |
| Total               | 7 (100%)                        | 13 (100%)  | 20 (100%) |

Labor,  $\chi^2$  Value= 7.21 df= 1 r = .601

Above figure shows that  $r = .601$  so, relationship between income of the labor and job satisfaction with expected amount of money to support their family is (*partially positive*). To justify significance of the relation we used  $\chi^2$  tests.

$H_0$  = Income is not related to job satisfaction and also life time poverty

$H_1$  = Income related to job satisfaction and also life time poverty

The table value of labor  $\chi^2 = 3.84$  when  $df = 1$  and in 5% significance level. But the calculated value of  $\chi^2 = 7.21$ . So alternative hypothesis is accepted and we can arrive at this decision that income related to job satisfaction and life time poverty.

**Major Findings**

Major findings of the study are;

- This study indicates that about more than half of the total employed child are in the age groups 6-11 and 12-14. Child labors engage with work at an early age which is major obstacle to build up them as a skilled manpower in future.
- Most of the house-hold income of the child labor is quite insufficient to serve a family. Due to less income parents accept child labor. 68 percent of child workers and 70 percent of labor have left their permanent residence due to poverty/ hunger.
- Education is the basic requirement to build up skilled man power. Education is the basic right of a children and only education can make him or her resourceful person and be a good quality citizen as well. But in reality, poor parents get relief when their children earn some money and accomplish the family needs. 88 percent child workers are not studying in any institution. Only 12 percent of them are studying in informal school. 52 percent and 65 percent of them had once been to school and they can read and write.

- 66 percent of child workers are engaged in welding work for 1-3 years followed by 20 percent engaged about less than a year. 14 percent working children are reported to have been working for more than 4 years. On the other hand 55 percent of labor works more than 4 year. 30% Of them work as a welder 7-9 year and 15% labor work as a welder more than 9 years.
- 32 percent and 35 of child labor and lobar are used to work 12 hours daily, 62 percent and 60 percent work 10-11 hours, due to work in long time they deprived of entertainment facilities which is essential to ensure their physical and mental maturity.
- The income of the child workers during the last month of the enumeration period is quite insignificant. 31 percent have earned between 300 and 1000 taka, only 2 percent and 45 percent of child labor and labor have earned more than 5000 taka per month. 75 percent labor opines that this income is not sufficient to maintain their family. About 60 percent of workers share their income with their parents, 4 percent of child labor and 85 percent of labor spend for family expenses. It is important to note here that no child worker meets their educational expenses from income.
- The child workers who are engaged in various types of hazardous work are required to be well protected while at work. But the situation is such that many child workers are not aware of their safety matter. Only 26 percent and 15 percent workers wear protective dress during their work but 74 percent child labor and 85 percent labor do not use any protective measure which may lead to any accidents / injury.
- About 46 percent are willing to go to school if opportunity provided. The child workers have expressed different opinions as to their present and future plans if they are provided with financial and other assistance. Nearly 46 percent and 50 percent are willing to open a welding workshop, 28 percent child labor are in favor of study.
- About health care a notable number of child workers do not know whether or not welding activity is harmful to their health. An overwhelming majority of child workers (60% and 20%) know that they are supposed to go to school instead of working and (40% and 80%) are unaware of it. Finally 36 percent and 35 percent of them faced abuse at work place. A large number of child workers (90%) and 65 percent labor are unaware of the minimum age of starting work because of their lack of knowledge.

### **Policy recommendations**

Child labor is now recognized as a major socio-economic problem. It prevents children's inherent potentiality to become a productive force of the country. It is not possible for the Govt. of Bangladesh to eradicate child labor completely at present as about 45 percent of the total population is living below the poverty line

#### **a) Preventive approaches**

**i. Education:** Education is the backbone of a nation. It should be compulsory, relevant, meaningful and universal. The content of education should be changed so that it encourages children to study. The focus should be on vocational and skill oriented education.

**ii. Income generating programs:** Income generating programs should be widely introduced by the government and NGOs for those poor families who are compelled to send their children to work instead of sending them to school.

#### **b) Protective approaches**

**iii. Sensitized law enforcement:** Awareness of law-enforcing agencies is not very much centered on children's rights and the protection of children working in risky environment. There is a wide range of complaints against government agencies regarding children's rights when their cases are handled in courts of justice. There should be a child-friendly justice system, and people involved in such areas should be trained about the rights of children.

**iv. Counseling and socialization:** Awareness rising for the owners/employers of the welding establishments is most important on such matters as basic requirement for the vulnerable children like those who have left home, who have no home, no parents etc. Improvement of their work conditions and opportunities that assist the child worker to combine school and work would be practical. Socialization and mainstreaming is important to minimize the gap between those children who are excluded by the society and the people in the society who does not consider them as social elements.

**v. Reintegration:** The children engaged in welding work whose parents are willing to take them back should be reintegrated into their families. A part of the rehabilitation process should be directed towards providing vocational or entrepreneurship training to child welders which should be arranged by the Government, NGOs and various private welfare organizations.

**vi. Informal and vocational education:** Informal education has been found to be an effective way of increasing literacy among younger children. Once literate, they should be given vocational training so that they can earn a decent living. Experience shows that formal education is not practical for these children as the time required to obtain a degree is long and the job prospects in the formal sector are very low. On the contrary, vocational

training can provide them with valuable skills which they can put to immediate use if the training is adapted to the availability of jobs in the market. There must be some support for the creation of employment opportunities for skilled workers generated by vocational education.

**vii. Public awareness:** Initiative should be taken to publish the harmful aspects of child labor in welding sector. Different media like television, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards etc. can play an important role to decrease and discourage child labor in the country to a considerable extent. It is, therefore, necessary to create an environment so that the society recognizes these children as human beings and this can be accomplished through public awareness programs focusing on child rights and development.

## V. CONCLUSION

After the above discussion, it can be summed up that children are compelled with engaging themselves in injuries and dangerous mode of works due to the poverty. Poverty makes them helpless and distress in the society of the respondents in the study area. The society cannot accept them as a potential citizen and also treat them as a marginal segment of the state. As a marginal member of the society, they have to struggle to live and maintain a minimum standard life. Their struggle begins with working in the available places such as groceries, factories, engineering workshops, and welding. It is seen that welding sector is the common place to get a job for children in Rajshahi metropolitan area. But the consequences of this sector are miseries and badly negative for instance, child worker in this sector are oppressed and abused by the employers and seniors at workplace, physical torture, payment disparity, wage discrimination, and finally some of the cases becoming handicapped and disabled. But it is matter of regret is that these handicapped and disabled workers do not get adequate compensation and support from either employers or governments in the study area. It is observed that lack of proper execution of government rules and laws, they are engaging in these risky and harmful jobs as well as they do not get their legal rights and support. As a result they remain poor and living under lowest standard of conditions in the society. Finally, it can be said that poverty surrounds them and makes them poor.

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