

Child Labor and Child Education in Bangladesh: Issues, Consequences and Involvements

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Abstract

The concepts of child labor and child education both are inversely linked with each other in terms of execution. Child labor does not allow child education and vice versa. Between the two types of economic ideologies normative approach promote child education but other ideology i.e. positive approach have preferred child labor. It is factual that, child labor, however, become a burden for every economy. It is a serious problem in any nation. Economy never accepts child labor and the high volume of child labor creates liability on economy. Any job of children always treated as the problem of underemployment through the labor market framework and all child work are strongly prohibited by ILO. The main aims of this paper find out the basic causes of children are recognized as child labor and try to know the causes behind existence a negative relationship between child education and child labor. In Bangladesh, the volume of child labor is so high, near about 4.7 million children, age limit of 5-14 years of age were economically active and percentage of labor force participation rate was 13.4 in the year 2002-03 [National Child Labor Survey (NCLS)]. On the other hand, the figure of informal activities of children is higher than above figure. If we compare with South-Asia, our labor force participation rate is higher than rest of the nations. So policy maker should concentrate to ameliorate education of children and reduce child participation (reduce in number) in economic activity as well as unpaid work.

Keywords: Child Labor, Issues, Consequences, Interventions, Child education, Market framework

1. Introduction:

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. Although many reasons are involved in child labor but poverty are the main reason and this cause mostly appearing in Bangladesh. Child labor engages in formal and informal sector in Bangladesh. 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.

There is no alternative way to develop our nation without improving humane 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. Though it is a long-run achievement and poverty creates obstacle to arrive at this destination. So we need increasing role and close monitoring of government to continue child education. Government has been taken different activities to do the same. We assess the government activities of child-education and find out a way, to keep in touch on education of children. So my research aims involve with

Government and Non Government education program for children, focus in different education program. This paper shows that, different causes are involving for being child labor, which is against of child education, specially analyzing poverty, malnutrition. This paper is based on secondary data of different articles, papers and book reviews.

2. Objectives:

This paper focuses on the activities of child labor in Bangladesh. The study concentrate on the causes of child labor in Bangladesh and examine the different factors are relating to child labor. Research aim is to mainly focus on the relationship between child labor and child education and evaluate the major causes of being child labor in Bangladesh and finally give some policy statements against child labor in Bangladesh. This research will help to formulate policies needed to arbitrate. The basic points of the objectives are

- i) To find out the basic causes of child labor in Bangladesh.
- ii) To know strength the existence of negative relationship between child labor and child education.

3. Methodology:

This study is based on secondary data. The main data sources are Bangladesh Labor Force, Primary Education Statistics in Bangladesh, National Child Labor Survey, BANBAIS (Ministry of Education), different articles of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, UNICEF, ILO, BGMEA (Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association) etc. These data are helpful to know the patterns and consequences of child labor and child education in Bangladesh and make a room to analyze the research objectives. Here, secondary data compiled by MS-Excel and MS- word computer software are applied.

4. Child-Work Accepted by Parents:

Our general people always live with poverty, 18.7 percent people are Hard-core poor (Less than or equals to 1805 kilocalorie, %), 51 percent people having without land, and 42.1 percent people are poor with Head-count ratio (Food intake method & direct calorie intake). So our poor parents have no alternative to put off child education. Most of the vulnerable parents give consent to their child for paid work. They know that child-education is the cost oriented matter and child-work is the income earning activities. Poor parents always want to get rid of poverty and the earning of children helps them to do the same. In that case, most of our poor parents like to take second option, i.e. they like to involve their children in work. This involvement may be paid or unpaid work.

Comparatively the paid work of children is accountable and preferable to parents. Money income of children helps family in many ways. About 69.4 percent of our parents accept child work to increase income. Although, we find many reasons to accept child labor of their parents such as unwilling to study (4.8 %), and repay loan (4.1 %) are the second and third causes, but these are not significant causes at all (Table 1).

5. Primary Level Enrollment of Children:

Primary education is first step for learning of children and it can make detachment to be child labor. So we have to concentrate on the enrollment in the primary level education in Bangladesh. Primary education is the basic need for every child. The enrollment in the primary education makes sure the basic education of children and it is opening the way to get human resource of nation. The number of the student enrollment in the primary level are gradually increases from the years 1990 to 2004. According to the Labor Force Survey (LFS) study (1990-91) showed 306.89 lac children were available to get enroll at the same period, so 186.39 lac children take away from basic primary education.

On the other hand, in the same period 59.29 lac children were economically active and child labor participation rate was 19.3 percent, here 127.16 lac did nothing i.e. they were not recognized as student or as employee. In 2002-03 NCLS study showed 184.3 lac children enroll in primary education out of 350.14 children and 46.92 lac were economically active, rest of 165.84 had no status (Table 2). Although the enrollment rate are rising but this figure does not follow the total number of children. We have lots of work to enroll our children in primary education. It is also factual that school facilities and other support for child education are not enough.

6. Students, Teachers and Institutions:

If we examine the child education on secondary level, we got lots of insufficiency of institutions, teachers and students. The number of lower secondary institute does not increase at the satisfactory rate and student enrollment gradually decreases from the year of 2000 to 2006. In 2006 only 5.92 lac get enrollment in the lower secondary level. Number of student enrollment also decreases in secondary level; it falls from 3.49 lac to 2.97

lac in the year between 2000 and 2006 respectively (Table 3). On the other hand, as our common people are so poor, they do not have enough money to continue a longer period of education of their children. So, short-term education such as polytechnic education, vocational education etc. is highly required for child-education.

But the number of short-term educational institutions is not follows as increase general educational institutions. Here only the number of polytechnic institute has increased from 27 to 117 in year of 2000 to 2006, but the figures of other educational institutions remain static. After completion of the commercial college degree, a student has the possibility to get job or arrange self-employment. In spite of, the knowledge or the degree of commercial college is very much job oriented, but the number of commercial college only by 16 and it remains static in between the year of 2000 to 2006. The knowledge of commercial college is highly applicable in different productive field and it's also creates new scope of job in urban areas in Bangladesh.

7. Causes of Dropout of Children:

If the children are habituate in work and getting test of earning money, it is difficult to return them actual track of education. So we must discourages all type of child work, the work may be paid or unpaid. Near about 50 to 60 percent of children are taken education facilities from UNICEF, ILO, BGMEA & Govt. who were engaged as garment worker. The main causes of dropout are poverty, shut down scholarship and lesson disliking. The rate of dropout is near about 70 to 74 percent because of poverty. The second reason of dropout is shut down scholarship given by MOU (MOU: Sign a Memorandum of Understanding between Government and UNICEF, ILO, BGMEA Regarding Terminated Child Labor from Garment Industry) has increased from 27 to 47 percent. Although, lesson disliking is the third reason, has increased from 13 to 19 percent, but these are less significant for male and female children respectively. Of them 19 percent of male student and 13 percent of female student did not like education provided by MOU (Table 4). So we have to emphasis on family poverty, ensuring regular basis scholarship from GO, NGO and UN organization to reduce child labor. We need a common and job oriented short-term lesson plan of child education. This plan will helpful to ameliorate child education as well as decline child labor in Bangladesh. Poverty is the main reason to take MOU education facility, so their dropout rate is high enough. Sustainable project is needed to complete the education of children; otherwise the parents never continue their children education responsibility because of harsh poverty.

8. Child-Labor Relates with Poverty:

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. Poverty reduction policy is the pre requisite to fall down child labor. From the different indicators to estimate poverty in Bangladesh, we consider poverty gap method, in national level, poverty only reduce 0.2 percent from the year 1999 to 2000 (Table 5). So it very difficult to reduce child labor without declines the level of poverty.

9. Children's Response for not attending School:

Poor parents do not encourage their children for attending school. But children always need strong and regular motivation for attending school. In contrast, our method of teaching for children, specifically lesson plan, brings monotonous character. Children are not getting attention of the conventional learning method. If they get pleasure by learning that is attract to children and continue their education. Now, children require regular motivation and encouragement of their parents to continue education. From children point of view, for not attending school mainly are lack of means (16.5 %), week in studies (16.4 %), home work barriers (7.3 %), engaged in economic work (6.8%), and engaged in wage employment (6.4 %) and so on (Table 6).. If we will secure school materials, regular motivation from parents and keep from paid and unpaid work to our children that increases child enrolment and decrease dropout rate.

10. Formal Child Labor:

There are two things simultaneously relates with child labor. One is the poverty that we have discussed; another is dependency of parents on the earning of children i.e. children contribute income earning to their families. If children stop working 8.1 percent parents fall in problem i.e. they hard to survive, significant number (68.9 percent) of parents living standard would fall and parents does not problem to live by 5.7 percent (BBS Report 2003). About 2.4 million of working children earned income and contribute of income to their families out of 7.4 million children. From these working children about 97.4 percent of income earning children contribute all or part their money income to their family. Only 64 thousand or 2.6 percent of income earning children did not

contribute income to their family. The pictures of contribution remain same regarding different age group and urban-rural areas i.e. around 95 to 98 percent children contribute to their family. Although children are very helpful to do household work to their parents, but the number of children aged 5 to 7 years who got hurt or become sick due to work. It was observed that out of 7.4 million working children about 0.6 million or 7.6 percent got hurt or sick due to their work. About 90.4 percent boys got hurt or sick regarding to the gender of children.

Researcher or policy maker has been introduced different program to decline child labor in Bangladesh. If we want to do this, we need to know about the statement of the children who already engage in work. We get a positive statement from the child worker to continue work i. e. working children are interested to work. The survey result shows that the highest proportion of working children (51.3 %) want to work on a full time basis for boosting their income and 10.2 percent of children looked after their family business on a part time basis.

Child labor, both paid and unpaid, should get discouragement from all economic institution, it creates obstacles to enroll in school. Here economically active children have taken 41.9 percent responsibility, while 58.1 percent liable as non-economically active children to enroll in school. To improve and uphold our human resource, child education should keep going and hassle free.

11. Malnutrition of children:

Our children will be future leader. So as a parents or a policy maker, we have a huge responsibility to build our children as a resourceful person. But our children not only engage in child work them also suffering with malnutrition. Child malnutrition can be calculated by weight, height with respect to age status of children. According to survey (BBB: 1998) represents that in total, 57 percent of children were underweight(**underweight**: Weight for age (WAZ): It shows underweight of children, severely underweight (less than or equal to $-3Z$, moderately underweight ($-2 Z$ to $-2.99 Z$) and normal (greater than $-2 Z$), 51percent were stunt (**stunt**: Height for age (HAZ): It represent stunted children, severely stunt (less than or equal to $-3Z$, moderately stunt ($-2 Z$ to $-2.99 Z$) and normal (greater than $-2 Z$)) and 17 percent were wasted (**wasted**: Weight for height (WHZ): It represents wasted children, severely wasted (less than or equal to $-3Z$, moderately wasted ($-2 Z$ to $-2.99 Z$) and normal (greater than $-2 Z$)). With the regional context, malnutrition situation is better in urban areas. But the condition is worse in urban slum areas. In urban areas slum, non-slum difference is very high. Malnutrition problem of children severely affect in urban slum areas. But malnutrition by gender does not show significant difference between boys and girls. Malnutrition is common in all group of income earning children. Over 40 percent children are underweight and 30 percent children are stunted even in the higher expenditure group (over Tk. 12000 per year).

12. Comments and recommendations:

We have to strongly emphasis on child labor issue. This issue broadly creates negative effect in our economy both in short run and long run. The nation has been lost great potential by the expansion of child labor participation rate. There is no alternative way to improve our economy without reduce child labor in Bangladesh. Again, it is not possible to eradicate child labor in Bangladesh within the short period of time. Gradually, we are able to shift our children from work to education. We know that, many reasons are involved behind children become labor in formal and informal sector. 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.

We need to provide proper and unique education in primary study level, then we should introduce different and practical education program in the secondary level for our poor children. That will helpful for getting job, as well as, ensuring self-employment. We have to secure quality education support from GO and NGO institutes. Their education program should be equipped on economic and social perspective and it must sustainable for particular period of time. It had better that if both bodies put forward for the child education program with mutual understanding.

Child education and child nutrition both are the prerequisite for human development in any nation. Both conditions are positively relates with each other, i.e. if child education improve it enhances child nutrition as well. But our children are suffering severely with malnutrition and the malnutrition strongly affect of our child worker. We need to take some awareness program to poor parents about child education. Without hard to survive, the majority of parents can give their children to continue education. If the poor parents get aware about future prospect of their children through proper education, they will motivate to their children to affix education. Parents and children both must have same goal about the future prospect of their family as well as nation.

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Table 1. Why Parents Accepts Children's Work?(Percentage)

Reasons for Working	Area		Total
	Urban	Rural	
To Increase Income	69.7	69.3	69.4
To Repay Loan	3.5	4.3	4.1
To Help in Family Business	2.7	2.5	2.5
No Good School Close by	.3	.3	.3
To Make him Self-reliant	4.7	2.8	3.2
Cannot Bear Expenses of School	3.9	3.7	3.7
Unwilling to Study	5.2	4.7	4.8
Others	9.9	12.4	11.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Rushidan R.I. (2005) BIDS

Table 2. Student Enrollment in Primary Level (1990-2004)

(In Lac)			
Year	Total	Student	
		Male (%)	Female
1990	120.5	66.6 (55.3)	53.9
1991	126.35	69.1 (54.7)	57.25
1992	130.17	70.49 (54.2)	59.69
1993	140.67	75.26 (58.5)	65.41
1994	151.81	80.48 (53.0)	71.33
1995	172.8	90.94 (52.6)	81.90
1996	175.8	92.19 (54.4)	83.61
1997	180.32	93.65 (51.9)	86.67
1998	183.61	95.77 (52.2)	87.84
1999	176.22	90.65 (51.4)	85.57
2000	176.68	90.33 (51.1)	86.69
2001	176.59	89.9 (51.0)	86.69
2002	175.62	88.42 (50.3)	87.20
*2003-2004	184.3	93.59 (50.8)	90.72
*2004	179.53	90.47 (50.4)	89.06

Source: Ministry of Primary & Mass Education (Primary Education Statistics in Bangladesh, 2002). Madrasa students are also included in the year of 2002-2004

Table 3. The Number of Student, Teacher & Educational Institute in Different Level

Institutions	No. of Institutions			No. of Teachers			No. of Students (In 00000)		
	2000	2004	2006*	2000	2004	2006*	2000	2004	2006*
Lower Secondary Higher Secondary (In 000)	2.85 12.61 1.42	3.98 13.40 1.58	3.13 15.05 1.59	17.75 156.4 24.37	28.35 178.2 29.22	21.23 195.7 31.39	6.96 67.53 3.49	7.43 71.03 3.14	5.92 71.93 2.97
Polytechnic Institute	27	77	117	775	1329	1343	.19	.27	.27
Graphic Arts Institute	01	01	01	15	16	16	.0024	.0026	.0026
Vocational Institute	51	64	64	455	792	800	.058	.084	.085
Commercial College	16	16	16	130	189	191	.027	.037	.038
Dakhil	4.9	6.0	6.44	60.48	75.96	87.35	17.66	22.38	19.0
Alim	1.08	1.22	1.35	18.0	22.08	23.94	5.05	5.56	5.04
Fajil	1.02	1.03	1.04	19.61	21.86	22.29	5.67	6.04	4.13
Kamil (In 000)	.14	.16	.19	3.83	3.96	4.98	1.20	1.09	1.28

Source: BANBAIS, Ministry of Education

* Estimated

Table 4. Terminated Child Labor from Garment Industry did not take Education Facility Provided by UNICEF, ILO, BGMEA & Government with MOU and Causes for Dropout (Figures considers as Percentage of total Children)

Causes	Student			
	Taken Education Facilities		Taken Education Facilities but Finally Dropout	
	Male Child	Female Child	Male Child	Female Child
1.Poverty	60.0	50.0	70.0	74.0
2.Unwillingness of Parent	3.0	11.0	13.0	20.0
3.Will not get job from MOU School's Learning	5.0	12.0	-	-
4.Lack of Awareness of MOU School	22.0	17.0	-	-
5.Dislike Lesson	-	-	19.0	13.0
6.Lack of Time After Job	-	-	2.0	8.0
7.Shut-down Scholarship Given by MOU	-	-	47.0	27.0
8.Very Limited Scholarship Given by MOU	-	-	31.0	17
9.Marriage	-	-	1.0	5.0
10.Others	13.0	13.0	20.0	21
No of Total Children	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

Source: Pal-Majumder (2006) BIDS.

Table 5. Poverty as a Reason behind Children's Work (Percentage)

Type of Reasons: Parent's Response	2002	1995-96
Directly Related to Poverty	81.1	88.7
Indirectly Related to Poverty	5.0	-
Remotely Linked with Poverty/ Others	14.9	11.3

Source: Rushidan R.I. (2005) BIDS

Table 6. Reasons for Not Attending School Last Week: Children's Response (Percentage)

Reasons	Area		Total
	Urban	Rural	
No School Close by	0.5	2.8	2.2
Engaged in Economic Work	5.6	7.2	6.8
Lack of Means	16.5	16.5	16.5
Week in Studies/ Not Interested in Studies	15.7	16.6	16.4
Failed in Classes	2.2	3.5	3.2
Afraid of Teachers/Teaching	0.2	0.7	0.6
Sickness	2.6	2.5	2.5
Invalid	0.7	0.5	0.5
School Vacation	0.3	0.2	0.2
House Work	5.2	8.0	7.3
To Help in Family Business	4.9	6.0	5.7
Engaged in Wage Employment	8.0	5.9	6.4
Family Earning Work	1.0	0.9	1.0
Family does not Allow	7.0	5.3	5.7
Others	29.5	23.4	25.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Rushidan R.I. (2005) BIDS

Table 7. Distribution of Children Non-enrolled in School by Activity Status

Boys/Girls	Status	Number (000)	Percentage
Boys	Economically Active	1786	48.7
	Not Economically Active	1880	51.3
	Total	3666	100.0
Girls	Economically Active	768	46.4
	Not Economically Active	888	53.6
	Total	1656	100.0
Boys and Girls	Economically Active	2554	41.9
	Not Economically Active	3536	58.1
	Total	6090	100.0

Source: Rushidan R.I. (2005) BIDS

Table 8. Distribution of Underweight, Stunted & Wasted Children

Indicators	Rural	Urban, Non-slum	Urban, slum
Underweight	59.3	46.3	72.6
Stunted	52.9	42.9	54.1
Wasted	17.2	13.2	24.9

Source: BBS (1998): Child Nutrition Survey of Bangladesh, 1995-96