

## **Situation of Child Labor: A Study on Slum Children of Mohammadpur, Gabtoli, Mirpur and Uttara areas in Dhaka City**

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### **Abstract**

*During the last two decades, Bangladesh has experienced an enormous increase in its urban population. Nearly 45% of the urban population of Bangladesh lives in Dhaka. Too much urban population has caused some serious problems in Dhaka city. These include child labor, growth of slum and so on. Among these child labor as being direct violation of Human Rights has become one of the most debated issue all over the world. Without having access to the minimum of the urban facilities these children are confronted with numerous socio-economic and psychological problems primarily caused by unhealthy housing, lack of social security, insecure and low income, and lack of health, education and recreational opportunities. These social imbalances have created differential attitudes towards each and every dimension of life and other issue crucial to the socio-economic development of our country. In the present study information on such types of aspects are tried to have in front.*

**Keywords:** *Child labor, slum, socio-economic and psychological issues.*

### **Introduction**

Child labor is one of the major problems in a developing country like Bangladesh. It engineers the demolition of future generations. If a child is made to work from an early age, with no scope of going to school, we are gradually narrowing the nation's potential to a few privileged people of the country. Thus, it is more practical to work at a firm policy to gradually reduce it. In this regard, The Bangladesh government has made a policy commitment to the issue of child rights.

Poverty and vulnerability sometimes necessitate children earning income or doing unpaid work to support themselves or their families. The low quality and limited relevance of education offered to many poor children may discourage them to education. Then the families and children calculate that working and learning skills are better investments than

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formal education. The social and cultural traditions in some context see work as an integral part of childhood and more valuable than education. Children's own desire to earn money, contribute to household incomes or finance their own or siblings schooling may result into their working. They seem that it may give them a sense of independence or value to their household and enhance their self-esteem.

The perpetuation of child labor has far reaching consequences. Such as, effects on physical development, effects on social advancement, effects on mental health, effects on socio-economic development, etc.

In such a situation it was urgent to investigate that in what extent these children are oppressed and how much they have to do in future and what actually we can do for them as the social workers. From this urgency, necessity for conducting a study on child laborers in the Dhaka City area was felt and a study titled by "Situation of Child Labor in Dhaka City Area" has been done.

## **Methodology of the study**

### **1.1 Principal Method**

The proposed study is explorative in nature. The principal method has been used here is Sample survey.

### **1.2 Area of the Study**

The Mohammadpur, Gabtoli, Mirpur, Uttara areas have been considered as the study area.

### **1.3 Sample**

Using purposive sampling technique 75 child laborers in this area has been selected as the sample size.

### **1.4 Data collection procedure**

Data has been collected mainly from the primary sources. An interview schedule has been used to have data from the respondents. The interview schedule has included both types of questions: open-ended and closed-ended. Side by side observation technique has been used here in order to ensure accuracy and precision of data provided by the respondents. Secondary sources like journals, and daily newspapers, have been also used here.

### **1.5 Processing analysis and interpretation of data**

On the basis of several characteristics collected data has been edited first then the data has been classified and finally tabulating the collected data, qualitative and quantitative analysis has been done.

## **Analysis of the study**

Among the most vulnerable groups in the present world child workers composed a big portion. In our study we have tried to find the answer of some questions how much neglected they are, and how they deal their life. Here we have also search some other but very much relevant information on their living patterns. We have presented the findings here categorizing in five sections.

**SECTION A) personal, familial and demographic information of the child laborers****Table-1: Distribution of the Respondents According to Their Age.**

N=75

Age (Year)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5-15	47	62.67
15-18	28	37.33
Total	75	100.00

All over the world child laborers are defined mainly on the basis of their age. UN, ILO and even many other international organizations defined child laborers as those children who have not complete basic educational period and this period is defined by 15 years. In the study according to those laws we found that there are so many child laborers are employed in the study area. Among them maximum are within the age limit of 5-15 years and the rest are within 15-18 years. Their percentage compositions are 62.67% for the first group and 37.33% for the second group respectively.

**Table-2: Distribution of the Respondents According to Their Permanent Address**

N=75

Permanent Address	Frequency	Percentage
By born in Dhaka	18	24%
Migration in Dhaka	57	72%
Total	N=75	100%

As it is found in national and international researches that people are migrating to Dhaka and also in other cities, the study also illustrates this truth. About 57 respondents are migrated workers who compose 72% of the total and only 24% born in Dhaka.

**Table-3: Distribution of the Respondents According to their Causes of Migrating to Dhaka.**

N=75

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Searching Job	19	25.33
Poverty	13	17.33
Natural disaster	06	08.00
Rural Conflict	29	38.67
Loan defaulter	2	02.67
Other's	06	08.00
Total	75	100.00

Now we are trying to illustrate the factors of migration. There are both push and pull factors forced the children to migrate here. We have found here basic five factors. Of those one is pull factor which is searching job. Among the research units 19 respondents, a second major group has answered it to be the reason of migration. Other factors are push in general which are poverty, natural disaster, rural conflict, and loan defaulter and worked to leave the village. In the findings we can found that 17.33% (13) answered poverty 8% (06) answered natural disaster, 38.67% (29) answered rural conflict and 2.67% (2) answered loan defaulter as the push factor to migrate from village to Dhaka.

## SECTION B) information on education, occupation and income of the child workers

**Table-1: Distribution of the Respondents According to their Educational Level**

N=75

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	10	13.33
Literate	16	21.33
Primary	30	40
Secondary	17	22.67
Others	2	2.67
Total	75	100.00

The children who have to become child laborer can't get time to prepare them for their later life because they get no opportunity to have education in some cases even not the primary only. In our study area this unexpected bitter truth can be found. The findings show that out of 75 respondents 30 (40.00%) have primary education only 17 of them get Secondary also but 13.33% (10) are totally illiterate and 21.33% (16) had the opportunity to read only ABC.

**Table-2: Occupational Diversity of the Respondents**

N=75

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Employee	46	61.33
Hawker	04	5.33
Day Labor	04	5.33
Small Business	06	8
Flower Selling	01	1.33
Garage	04	5.33
Other	10	13.33
Total	75	100%

Occupational diversity among the respondents can be found very much easily. They have to work at cloth store 13 (17.33%) book store 08 (10.67%) departmental store 15 (20%) as employer. They also work at tailors, Block- Batiks industry 05 (6.68%) garage 04 (5.33%) Some of them are day laborer 04 (5.33%) hawker (4:5.33) flower seller 01 (1.33). A few of them 06 (8.00%) also run small business. At all the sectors they have to do are hampering to their physical and mental health because working at garage, tailors, Block- Batiks shop are very much nasty and contains possibility of accident.

**Table-3: Starting Age in Works of the Respondents**

N=75

Age of Starting work	Frequency	Percentage
0-6	01	1.33
7-12	36	48
13-18	38	50.67
Total	75	100%

From the findings it is found that about 38 respondents (50.67%) have become child worker during the age limit of 13-18. Again 36 respondents (48.00%) become child labor at 7-12 years of old and one of them has to work for living from 6 years of age. So inhumane the scenery is we rear the general view that children should be given the first change to be the man of future. But this underprivileged section always remains poor and weaker sector of the society.

**Table-4: Working Days of the Respondents per Week**

N=75

Working Days	Frequency	Percentage (%)
07	10	13.33
06	62	82.67
04	3	04.00
Total	75	100.00

It is very much inhuman that 82.67% respondents (62) have to work 06 days week. The findings show 10 respondents (13.33%) have said that they have to work whole week. Again there are 04.00% respondents who consume three off days per week.

**Table-5: Factors Working behind for Becoming Child Labor of the Respondents**

N=75

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Home Escaping	22	29.33
Poverty	62	82.67

Family Disorder	03	04.00
Step Fathers' Torture	02	02.67
Cheating	6	08.00
Natural Disaster	37	49.33
Step Mothers' Torture	04	05.33
Want of Job	11	14.67
Other Causes	05	06.67

In the study result we can find out of the major causes working behind becoming child laborers is poverty which is dominant as it is answered by 62 respondents (82.67%). Then natural disaster caused 37 respondents (49.33%) to be child laborer then home escaping also another major cause of becoming child laborer and it composed (29.33%) respondents. Other factors are family disorder (3:4.00%) step fathers torture (2:5.33%) cheating (6:8.00%) these another pull factor also caused 11 respondent to became child laborer which is want of job (14.67%) other causes composed by 5 respondents (6.67%) at should be mentioned that in some cases it was found that more than one factor was responsible is making someone child labor.

**Table-9: Per Month Income of the Respondents**

N=75

Income per month	Frequency	Percentage
0-3000	43	57.33
3000-6000	26	34.67
6000+	06	08.00
Total	N=75	100.00

Monetary and non-monetary benefits earned by the child workers remain lower than that of others. So, majority of the respondents' (43: 57.33%) wage limit is up to 3000 per month. Second major portion-26 respondents' (34.67%) wage limit is 3000-6000 tk. Only 08% (6 respondents) get more than 6000 taka per month.

**Table-11: Nature of Appointment of the Respondents**

N=75

Nature of appointment	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	13	17.33
Temporary	60	80
Contractual	02	2.67
Total	75	100%

Appointment of the child laborers here are not permanent in major (only 17.33%) where 80% appointments are temporary and only 2.67% are contractual. This scenario in a great extent is responsible for low production. Because having no contract with the employer, workers don't want to work up to their capacities and they work according to their wage only.

**Table-12: Spending Sectors of the Wage**

N=75

Sector of spending income	Frequency	Percentage
Buying food	68	90.67
Buying dress	62	82.67
Education	11	14.67
Transportation	65	86.67
Saving	15	20.00
House rent	59	78.67
Pay to parents (Partially)	25	33.33
Pay to parents (Total)	19	25.33
Others	1	1.33

Child workers are in the second portion of the society and they also have to manage with different needs but their first priority is getting food. Ninety percent respondents answered like this. Then 82.67% respondents have to spend for dressing. Another 82.67% respondents' first spending sector is transportation. Only 17.67% spend on education purposes and 20% can save money. A large portion (78.67%) of the respondents has to pay for house rent. After all the casts, 33.33% respondents said that they can help partially their parents.

### **SECTION C) food habit, dressing and residential information of the child workers**

This is the section that is related with three points of basic human rights. Food, dressing and residence. All these are the prime three points and the standard of living of any section of the society can be imaged by these points. Child workers are of that weaker section of the society who can't afford to any area of these easily. Only the first two they can maintain (100%) but the all others can't. In section we will discuss this in brief.

#### **Food Habit of the Respondents**

**Table-1: Place of Taking Lunch**

N=75

Place	Population	Percentage (%)
Footpath	04	5.33
Employees House	12	16.00

Working Place	36	48.00
Hotel	23	30.67
Total	75	100.00

These are footpath, employer's house, working place and hotel. Nearly half of the respondents (48.00%) answered that they take their lunch at workplace that means there is very much limited opportunity in beak because in some cases they have to work in the time of taking food. The second major portion takes lunch at hotel (30.67%). Again 16.00% answered they got opportunity in taking lunch in the employer's house. But it's a great regret that a portion of the respondents (5.33%).

**Table-3: Table on Food Taking per Week**

N=75

Food Name	Daily	3-4 Days in a weekly	Weekly	Half monthly	Monthly
Fish	13 (17.33)	44 (58.67)	14 (18.67)	0	2 (2.67)
Meat	0	22 (29.33)	34 (45.33)	12 (16.00)	4 (5.33)
Fruits	5 (6.67)	8 (10.67)	23 (30.67)	10 (13.33)	3 (4.00)
Milk/Egg	4 (5.33)	15 (20.00)	15 (20.00)	13 (17.33)	8 (10.67)
Sweets	1 (1.33)	4 (5.33)	24 (32.00)	8 (10.67)	0

In case of protein taking we can found 17.33% takes daily, 18.67% weekly and 2.67% takes monthly. Again in case of meet no one takes daily, 45.67% weekly, 16.00 half monthly and 5.33% Takes monthly. In case of eating seasonal fruits respondents are less positive as we see 6.67% takes daily, 30.67% weekly, 13.33% half monthly and 4.0% takes monthly. Taking egg or milk also less positive in answered. In the findings we found 5.33% takes daily, 20.00% weekly, 17.33% half monthly and 10.67% Takes monthly.

**Table-4: Source of Drinking Water**

N=75

Sources	Population	Percentage (%)
Tube well	02	2.67
Tap	67	89.33
Filtered water	06	8.00



### Dressings Management of the Respondents

**Table-5: Arrangement of Dress**

N=75

Sources of Dress	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Get from Workplace	07	09.33
Own earned	50	49.33
From Parents	23	17.33
Others	5	06.67

There are only (9.33%) respondents have got dress from workplace, but the majority (49.33%) arrange dress themselves. Parents also sometimes manage dress for their child as we found that 17.33% got dress from parents and this happen mainly in the occasions. Again in some cases (6.67%) they also get dress from friends or other sources like any rich man in the village.

**Table-6: Number of Dresses**

N=75

Numbers	Population	Percentage (%)
<5	16	21.33
5-10	37	49.33
10-15	13	17.33
15+	15	20.00

We can found that there are some respondents (20.00%) who have more than 15 dresses. Majority (49.33%) answered that they have 5-10 dresses and 17.33% have 10-15 dresses. Because of this magical answer deems that, laborers here try to manage with urban life and they think putting on different dress helps them to be matched with the urban society

### SECTION D) information on health personal hygiene and recreation.

**Table-1: Sickness of the Child Worker in Last Six Months**

N=75

Opinion	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	32.00
No	51	68.00
Total	75	100.00

As we see, a huge number of child workers (24:32.00) have a record of being sick in the last six month. One of every three child worker suffers a major disease in last few months.

**Table-2: Number of Sick Child Worker Who Take Medicare**

N=75

Situation	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Takes Medicare	23	95.83
Doesn't Take	01	4.17
Total	24	100.00

According to the respondents, 23 out of 24 child workers who has a record of being sick in the last six or odd month took medicine or Medicare.

**Table-3: Medication Center of the Sick Child Worker**

N=75

Medicare Centers	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Pharmacy	7	33.33
Local Doctor	3	14.28
DMC	7	33.33
BSMMU	2	9.52
Trauma Center	2	9.52
Total	21	100.00

One third of the respondents here have a record of being admitted or taking professional help of doctors of Dhaka Medical Hospital. Nearly 15 % took advice of local doctors, and rest of 20 % respondent went to, BSMMU or Trauma Center.

**Table-4: Types of Sickness**

N=75

Sickness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fever with headache	07	38.88
Jaundice	03	16.67
Typhoid	03	16.67
Diarrhea	02	11.11
Crippling	02	11.11
Chest pain	01	5.55
Total	18	100.00

Now here is the descriptive analysis of types of sickness the child workers suffers. Most of the workers suffer from Fever with headache (38.88), Jaundice (16.67), Diarrhea (11.11), and Crippling (11.11).

**Table-5: Information on Chances to Take Part in sports**

N=75

Chances	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	64	80.00
No	15	20.00
Total	75	100.00

Sports and physical implement can be noted as a part of mental soundness of a child. Here is an interesting statistics related to chances to take part in sports. Almost 80% of the child worker has chance to participate in the sports. And 15 of the 75 respondents do not have the chance to participate in any kind of sports.

**Table-6: Place of Sports**

N=75

Places	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Play ground	15	23.44
Park	12	18.75
Footpath	20	26.67
Inner place of the market	17	22.67
Total	64	100.00

Nearly one fourth respondents mentioned play ground as their place for sports. They actually use to play cricket and football in rainy days. Nearly half of the respondents named street, footpath, and park as their play ground. This is because of unavailability of free space in this part of Dhaka city.

**Table-8: Information on media of Recreation**

N=75

Media	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Radio	08	10.67
Television	57	76.00
Cassette player	02	02.67
Video CD	06	08.00
Dish	08	10.67
Others (Mobile)	13	17.33
Computer	01	01.33

Among the all respondents around three fourth of them mentioned television as their main media of recreation. Most of them use television as the main source for entertainment, and use it for watching movies, drama, programs, and sports. It's noticeable that, the number of workers mentioned mobile phone for source of entertainment.

**SECTION E) information on working environment and risk for child workers**

**Table-1: Reasons behind the Thinking of Income as Insufficient**

*N=75*

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not enough for their meals per day	01	1.33
Can't afford to take proper treatment	02	2.66
Can't afford to spend for recreational purpose	02	2.66
Can't afford to deal the full month	23	30.66
Can't afford to day new cloths	06	04.00
Can't afford to send enough money to house	15	20.00

The 39 respondents, who gave a negative answer for satisfaction statement, had faced another question consist the reason for their un-satisfaction. Only one of them said the salary is not enough for his three meals per day.

**Table-5: Information of Leisure Period of the Child Workers**

*N=75*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	39	52.00
No	36	48.00
Total	75	100.00

Leisure is one of the major basic needs for the workers around the world. And for the child worker the need has bigger importance. Most of the child worker working in the new market aria has the chance for participate in leisure period. And 48 percent workers don't have the chance in particular.

**Table-6: Opinion about Working Environment**

*N=75*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Good	07	9.33
On an Average	52	69.33
Bad	16	21.13
Total	75	100.00

Very small number of respondents ensures a healthy working environment. And around 20 percent of the whole respondent population expressed negative opinion about their work place. Most interesting thing is around 70 percent of the respondents answered an average statement.

**Table-7: Factors Accountable To Bad Working Environment**

N=75

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Light deficiency	3	4.00
Excessive sound	2	2.66
Very hot	4	5.33
Inadequate defecation service	3	4.00
Noisy Environment	2	2.66
Noisy Environment	5	6.66
Noisy Environment	0	00.00
Nasty Environment	2	2.66
Bad Smelled Environment	4	5.33

Those who answered bad environment of their work station, has to face another question about factors accountable to bad working environment. Here few of them agreed with multiple options.

**Table-13: Information on Torture of the Child Workers.**

N=75

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	21	28.00
No	54	72.00
Total	75	100.00

This table is on information on torture of the child workers. In the new market area there is no big deal of torture over workers, because of the unity workers. But there are some incidents that can be listed. 28 percent of child worker has minimum one memory of being tortured by senior worker or by owner. 72 percent don't have such a kind of memory.

**Table-14: Information on Torturer on Child Workers**

N=75

Torture	Frequency	Percentage (%)s
Employer	15	71.43
Colleague	06	28.6
Total	21	100.00

This table is on information on torturer on child workers, those 21 respondents who has record of being tortured by the colleague or owned had to face another question for specific information. 71 percent of those 21 respondents informed they were tortured by the employer, and only 28 percent of them have record of being tortured by their colleague.

### **Findings of the study**

- The extent of child work is being everywhere in Bangladesh.
- Different dimensions of child work
- Labor force participation of children.
- Households using child for Productive Work Within and Outside the Household
- Participation of school-aged children in Economic Activities.
- Participation of Children in the Labor Market.
- Abuse of children in trafficking, industrial works, household labors, early marriage, biri factory, forcedly prostitution, begging, less wages, helping in the vehicle etc.
- Deprivation from education of child.
- The govt. has taken initiatives but it is needed to increased and effective by laws and order.

### **Suggestion of the study**

- a) **Technical Cooperation** : Technical cooperation is a significant step in this direction. Technical cooperation program like the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) can play and has played a significant role in the release and rehabilitation of child laborers in the less developed countries, as seen from the experience of Bangladesh. Involvement of international agencies is imperative to break the cycle of vested interests, powerful elites and unscrupulous middlemen who want to preserve the present state of affairs
- b) **Economic Growth** : Their study that the less developed countries cannot expect to achieve this, if during the process of their growth, a huge portion of their human resources remain uneducated and untrained, trapped in a cycle of poverty, illiteracy and death. Child labor in countries like South Korea and Japan decreased as their economies grew strong and it is well known that the bases of their economic growth were sown when education was made compulsory for all children.
- c) **International Aid** : Technical assistance in the form of aid and know-how are important. Such assistance can help defray the expenses relating to,
  - free and compulsory primary education for all children,
  - implementation of part-time income generating schemes,
  - developing the technical and managerial capacity of those involved in the rehabilitation of child labor,
  - strengthening institutional capacity in the form of organization development,
  - research for combating child labor, and
  - Awareness raising and social mobilization.
- d) **Education** : Increasing Budget in Education
  - Providing Non-formal Education
  - Underprivileged Children's Education ProgramEducation systems have to be reoriented to suit the needs of child laborers and designed for different age groups in such a way that in due course the children, irrespective of the

age at which they enter the system, become healthy and productive adult members of society. **Situation of Child Labor in Dhaka City Corporation Area**

- e) **Rehabilitation** : It is also important to consider fruitful activities in which released and rehabilitated children may engage after school hours in order to prevent their drifting towards unlawful and criminal activities. Combining beneficial work and education in the form of non-formal education as mentioned above is necessary, as such forms of child work help to fill leisure time, especially in places where organized outside activities are absent to keep children away from streets, crimes and criminals.
- f) **Addressing Special Needs** : It is also important to consider fruitful activities in which released and rehabilitated children may engage after school hours in order to prevent their drifting towards unlawful and criminal activities.
- g) **Relocating in Beneficial Activities** : A safety net is a good idea to relocate the released children to other beneficial activities. Progress may be slow, but similar ventures like the one adopted in the garment industry of Bangladesh is a necessity.
- h) **Corporate Social Responsibility** : It is also important to ensure that corporate responsibility is voluntary and extends to all domestic industries and not confined to a select few. Brazil's example is relevant here. In 1995, the Volkswagen Company in Brazil initiated a series of studies with the aim of eliminating child labor in vehicle production assembly lines.
- i) **Mobilization of Civil Society** : Mobilization of civil society has to be a necessary component of the strategy. The problem of child labor has reached the consciousness of the society in Bangladesh. A movement for attitude change and raising awareness gains ground. This involvement will facilitate the formation of interest groups which are essential for enforcing legislation.

### **Conclusion**

Children are probably the most neglected members of society and hardly have any voice, even within the home. As a result, they are consistently becoming easy victims of all sorts of violence. Though there is the Children Act 1974 purported to dealing with juvenile justice, even that, too is inadequate. Furthermore, the legal system, especially the criminal justice system – and more specifically the law enforcement agency – are indifferent to such laws and more often than not treat children just as they would treat adult criminals. Violence against children must stop and the judiciary, law enforcing agents and the parents and guardians of children themselves, must be sensitized to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the laws protecting children in Bangladesh. Furthermore, children need to be protected from vested interest groups and acts of impunity towards children by those purporting to protect society must be dealt with seriously and in accordance with the law.

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