



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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CHILD LABOUR CONDITION IN RESTAURANT SECTOR OF BANGLADESH**JASMINE JAIM****LECTURER****INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION****JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY****SAVAR, DHAKA****BANGLADESH****ABSTRACT**

Child labour is a sheer reality in Bangladesh. Though there are government rules regarding child labour, significant number of children is working in different sectors. This paper is to basically explore the overall scenario of the children at the age below 12 years working in restaurant sector. The study has unveiled that the total daily as well as weekly working hours are high. In addition, the study also concentrated on the starting and ending time, interval of work, holidays, vacations to reveal the acute scenario. Further, it has also been revealed that the other facilities to the children provided by the employers are not quite satisfactory. Moreover, sometimes the way to manage the problems of the children at working place is simply cruel. Government should take proper care regarding this issue.

KEYWORDS

Child Labour, Holidays, Labour Law, Time.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world the child labour issue is one of great concern. 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. The ILO's Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labor (SIMPOC) estimated that 211 million children, or 18 percent of children 5–14, are economically active worldwide (ILO, 2002). In fact, of the country concerned, child labour has been generally perceived more as a problem of poor developing countries, which are consistently facing challenges against poverty, high population growth, rising unemployment, natural disasters and so on (BBS 2003). Popular opinion in high-income countries often seems to hold that child labor in developing countries is nearly always a form of child abuse, in which children work in hazardous conditions in run-down factories (Edmonds, 2005).

In Bangladesh, with respect to land area the current population size is relatively large and a significant number of children are engaged in labour market. Out of 3,50,63,000 children of the age group of 5-14 years the number of working children was about 5 million (BBS, 2003). Due to legislation enforced by government rules there is very little scope for children to be employed in formal sectors. But in reality, many children are found working in formal sector as well as quasi-corporations. According to UNICEF's Asian Child Labour Report (1999), there are some 40 industries in Bangladesh which use child labour, often under hazardous conditions and with little regard for health and safety. Even children have been injured while engaged in underground mining, in maritime work and while operating or cleaning machinery in motion. In addition, child workers are regularly exposed to dangerous levels of dust, gases, fumes, heat and noise. Moreover, ailments like muscular-skeletal and respiratory-related are common among child labourers. (Priyangika 1999) A few years ago, the garment industry was the biggest source of employment for child workers in the formal sector. A 1991 study entitled "The Conditions of Garment Workers in Bangladesh" found 13 percent of the workers to be working children.

The minimum age for employment varies according to sector. The Mines Act prohibits children under 15 years old from working in mines. The Factories Act and Rules establishes 14 years as the minimum age for employment in factories. According to US Department of Labour there are no specific laws covering the informal sectors, such as agriculture and domestic work, although the majority of child workers fall under these categories. According to The Bangladesh Labour Code, 2006 (section 34) no child shall be required or allowed to work in any profession or establishment. However, the section 44 states exception to employment of child worker in some circumstances. Therefore, any child attaining the age of twelve may be employed in light work which is not dangerous to his or her health and development or which will not prevent him or her from education. However, in many sectors children of the age below 12 years are found working. Some sectors such as restaurants where a large number of children are actively working is not getting much attention. Therefore, this paper is to explore the condition of the children of the age below 12 years working in this sector.

OBJECTIVES

The broad objective of the paper is basically to explore the condition of the children of the age below 12 years working in restaurant sector. The specific objectives are mentioned below:

1. To find out the total working time, the starting and the ending time of work of the children.
2. To investigate the nature of the holidays and vacations of the working children.
3. To explore the facilities provided to the children by the employers.
4. To analyze the problems of managing the children in the working place.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study area of the research is Dhaka as there significant numbers of restaurants engage children for work. Total 40 restaurants are selected as the sample. The nature of this research required both primary and secondary data for consideration. Primary data were collected from the face to face interview of the restaurant owners. The data was collected in July, 2009. Secondary information further was collected from different books, web-sites and relevant academic journals.

AGE OF CHILDREN

Almost half of the restaurant owners (53%) engage one child in his work. Some (25%) engage two children and the rest of them (22%) engage three children in his restaurant. Therefore, in 40 restaurants there are 71 children. About half of them (51%) are of the age between 11 to less than 12 years and many (27%) of them are of the age between 10 to less than 11 years. The rest of them (23%) are even from 7 years to less than 10 years old.

TABLE - 1: AGE OF THE CHILDREN

Age (in year)	No. of Children	Percentage of Children	Cumulative Percentage of Children
7-8	1	1.41	1
8-9	5	7.04	8
9-10	10	14.08	23
10-11	19	26.76	49
11-12	36	50.70	100
Total	71	100	100

Source: Field Survey.

All the children are males in here. In restaurants children are well known as "Glass Boys". Generally, these children are engaged in calling customers, cleaning, serving, washing dishes and so on.

WORKING TIME OF THE CHILDREN

The starting time of work of children varies from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m. specially because some work in shifts. For engaging children for preparation of breakfast, generally (at 42.50% cases) the work starts before 7 a.m. At large number of restaurants (30%), children start work around 6 a.m.; even the work can be start at 5 a.m. It should be mentioned that no young person (may also child workers attaining the age of twelve) shall be required or allowed to work in between 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. according to section number 41 of the Bangladesh Labour Code, 2006. Again, considering the ending time it has been revealed that in most of the restaurants (62.50%) children work after 7 p.m. For the purpose of dinner in many restaurants children work upto 10 p.m. (22.50% cases) and 11 p.m. (15% cases) or even upto 12 p.m. (10% cases). Situation is quite different in a few restaurants (5%) where children are engaged in preparing sweet food and beverage (faluda, lassi etc.) start their work at 4 p.m. and end at 4 a.m. excluding 2 hours for sleeping.

TABLE - 2: STARTING TIME OF WORK

Starting Time	No. of Restaurants	Percentage of Restaurants
5.00 a.m.	1	2.50
5.30 a.m.	2	5.00
6.00 a.m.	12	30.00
6.30 a.m.	2	5.00
Before 7.00 a.m.	17	42.50
After 7.00 a.m.	23	57.50
Total	40	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

TABLE - 3: ENDING TIME OF WORK

Ending Time	No. of Restaurants	Percentage of Restaurants
Before 7.00 p.m.	15	37.50
After 7.00 p.m.	25	62.50
8 p.m.	2	5.00
9 p.m.	2	5.00
10 p.m.	9	22.50
11 p.m.	6	15.00
12 p.m.	4	10.00
4 a.m.	2	5.00
Total	40	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

On an average the children work for about 11 hours 30 minutes per day. However, the highest time is 17 hours for 15% restaurants. Besides, most of the employers (75%) provide interval for one time and some employers (7.50%) provide interval for two times basically for taking meal. However, the average interval time is 45 minutes. And per week the average working hour is 75 hours 15 minutes. In this regard it should be mentioned that this practice is far more inconsistent with the existing law. According to the Bangladesh Labour Code, 2006 (sub-section of 2 of section number 41) no young person (may also child workers attaining the age of twelve) shall be required or allowed to work in any establishment for more than 7 hours in any day and 42 hours a week. The law further declares (in subsection 4) that if any young person works excess hours, his total working hours shall not exceed 48 hours a week in case of establishment.

TABLE - 4: TOTAL TIME OF WORK

Criteria	Time
Average Total Time of Work per Day	About 11 Hours 30 Minutes
Average Interval Time per Day	About 45 minutes
Average Total Time of Work per Week	75 Hours 15 Minutes

Source: Field Survey.

HOLIDAYS AND VACATIONS OF THE CHILDREN

Many of the employers (45%) do not provide any holiday to the children. Some (17.50%) provide half holiday and the rest of them (37.50%) provide one day as holiday. However, the young persons or the children have the provisions for weekly holiday according to the law (sub-section of 7 of section number 41, Bangladesh Labour Code, 2006).

TABLE - 5: NUMBER OF HOLIDAYS

Type of Holiday	Number of Employers	Percentage of Employers
No Holiday	18	45.00
Half Holiday	7	17.50
Holiday (for 1 Day)	15	37.50
Total	40	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

Almost all employers (95%) provide vacations on two Eids. On an average, the children have 5 days vacation on Eid-ul-Fitre and 6 days vacation on Eid-ul-Azha. Few employers (7.50%) also provide vacations on religious occasions such as Shab-e-barat, Shab-e-kadar, other government holidays and so on.

FACILITIES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN

Some employers (80%) provide salary but in lump sum amount. According to the restaurant owners for similar type work they provide or would provide almost 2 or 3 times more salary to the adult employees than that of the children. A 2002 child labor survey found, where much attention has been paid to child labor in the garment industry, only 1.2 percent of children 5–14 working as paid employees. (Edmonds, 2005)

Considering other facilities, generally, in restaurants (95%) children are provided with food. Half of the restaurants owners provide all meals, many (40%) provide one meal and some (5%) provide only snacks. Many employers (42.50%) provide clothing basically one in Eid. Most of the cases (70%), children stay at the shop or at home of the owners. However, only a few (7.50%) go to school though primary education is compulsory.

TABLE - 6: PROVIDING SOME FACILITIES TO THE CHILDREN

Type of Facilities	Number of Employers	Percentage of Employers
Food	38	95.00
Clothing	17	42.50
Shelter	18	70.00
Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE CHILDREN

Due to young age, there are some problems of the children at work. According to the restaurant owners the major problem is making mistakes at work. Then gradually come quarrel with other children, slow working, slow understanding, emotion for family and other problems such as stealing food or money etc.

TABLE - 7: PROBLEMS OF THE CHILDREN

Problems	Rank
Making Mistake	1
Quarrel with Other Children	2
Slow Working	3
Slow Understanding	4
Emotion for Family	5
Other Problems	5

Source: Field Survey.

Half of the employers stated that they resolve problems through counseling. However, some have admitted that they (17.50%) resolve through rebuking or even some (20%) through beating. Salary cutting is also used as punishment (at 5% cases). In this regard, it can be cited that a study conducted into the conditions and composition of one of the largest group of child labourers—household domestics in the January-March 1997 Child Workers in Asia bulletin described the findings: "Violence ranges from verbal abuse to physical abuse and torture. The most common types of violence include calling names, shouting, complaining and finding faults, the use of insulting and filthy language, obscene words, beating, slapping, whipping, and being burnt with hot spoons or rods." (Priyangika 1999)

TABLE - 8: MANAGING PROBLEMS OF THE CHILDREN

Management Technique	Number of Employers	Percentage of Employers
Through counseling	20	50.00
Rebuking	7	17.50
Beating	8	20.00
Cutting from Salary	2	5.00
Others	3	7.50
Total	40	100.00

Source: Field Survey.

AWARENESS OF THE LABOUR LAW

Half of the restaurant owners admitted that they are aware about the labour law. Still they prefer the children to employ in their work. The main reason is cheap labour. Another important issue is that the children are easy to manage comparing with the adult persons. The Ministry of Labor and Employment is designated to enforce labor legislation; however, there are no penalties for breaking child labor laws. Due to a lack of manpower, child labor laws are seldom enforced outside of the garment export industry.

CONCLUSION

The condition of the children in the restaurant sector is not acceptable. Yet the prevailing socio-economic conditions do not permit outright elimination of child labour overnight. Experiences indicate that the elimination of child labour from one particular industry may culminate in an increase in child labour in another. In this context, the government should immediately come forward to formulate a comprehensive National Plan of Action, aimed at gradual elimination of child labour from the country.

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