

# COMBATING CHILD LABOUR IN BANGLADESH: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS\*

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*Child labour has become a very serious issue nowadays and the situation is getting worse day by day. The rate of child labour is increasing in an alarming way. Children are the future hope and leaders of our country. If we do not protect our country's children now, the future of our country will be threatened. Children who work don't get the opportunity to go to school. It is known to everyone that the backbone of a nation is education. If the backbone is weak then there is very low chance for a nation to stand strongly. For the betterment of our country, we must stop child labour. That is why this paper will focus on the current scenario in the context of Bangladesh. This paper is a doctrinal research paper, which has been prepared on the basis of the existing literature, laws and case laws regarding child labour. This paper intends to identify the causes, trends, and the impact of child labour and to raise awareness about the issue of child labour in Bangladesh. This study is an attempt to explore ways to combat child labour and gradually reduce the rate of child labour.*

**Keywords:** child labour, Bangladesh, Convention on the Rights of the Child

## Introduction

In many regions of the developing world, child labour has become a severe and pervasive issue. When children are meant to be going to school with books, colouring with coloured pencils, and playing with their friends, a large percentage of youngsters are instead working to support their families. Bangladesh is also part of this serious phenomenon which cannot be ignored. As Bangladesh is a developing country with a huge population and poverty, child labour has become a major obstacle to our overall progress (Akter 2019). Children who are employed usually drop out of school at an early age, resulting in a lack of information and skills that diminishes their future employment possibilities. International legal instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, address the problem of child labour. Bangladesh is one of the nations that continues to confront the issue of many children working in situations regarded to constitute child labour. Bangladesh's extreme poverty is the underlying cause of this issue. In recent years, Bangladesh has made several attempts to resolve the problem, including legislative regulations. This thesis paper will attempt to evaluate the reports on the issue of child labour in Bangladesh. It will also examine the present legal framework for child labour and demonstrate that there are gaps in Bangladesh's legal and regulatory framework.

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## 1. The research problem and rationale of the study

In Bangladesh, day by day, the rate of child labour is increasing in an alarming way. It is known to everyone that children are the future of any nation including ours. If we cannot build them up properly, then, in the future, our nation will not be enriched, and we will fail to achieve our estimated goals. It is, however, impossible to completely eliminate child labour immediately. Therefore, we must first focus on reducing child labour gradually. As such, in this specific thesis paper, we have chosen to concentrate on this extremely important topic, to investigate its causes throughout the nation and to seek solutions to eradicate this phenomenon.

This paper will cover the different laws which are related to child labour as well as the judicial decisions relating to this issue. Moreover, this paper will focus on the different international conventions whose provisions discuss the different aspects of child labour. The study will also focus on some ways by making a comparative study of how other developing countries are decreasing their rates of child labour, including our neighbouring countries.

We know that Bangladesh is a poverty-stricken country, so we cannot actually solve the issue of child labour immediately. That is why child labour is increasing in an alarming way in our country. This problem needs to be sorted out very seriously, affording it a lot of importance. In this paper, we also suggest possible solutions to reduce the rate of child labour.

The hypothesis of the paper is the following: child labour in Bangladesh is not a new concern because children remain here as the most abused, disadvantaged, unprotected, and neglected part of society. Therefore, there is a need to analyse the causes behind the increasing trend of child labour in Bangladesh and the possible ways to combat child labour in Bangladesh.

The study's primary aims are as follows:

1. To determine the present situation and the trends of child labour in Bangladesh.
2. To identify the reasons for the existence of child labour all over Bangladesh.
3. To focus on the drawbacks of the existing laws due to which we are failing to stop child labour.
4. To find some possible ways out to get rid of this problem.

This paper is a doctrinal research paper, which has been prepared on the basis of the existing literature, laws and case laws regarding child labour.

## 2. The conceptual framework in the literature of child labour

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989 and the International Labour Organization Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour of 1999 define a child as person who is not still eighteen years age.

In the Qur'an, it is mentioned that wealth and children are the adornment of this worldly life. The Qur'an has serious concerns regarding children. The meaning of the child is mentioned in the Qur'an in various terms such as Walad, Usbah, Rabaib, Zurriyah and so on.

In the book titled 'Lectures on Labour Laws of Bangladesh' the author Md. Mahbubur Rahman described some effects of child labour. He said that child labour

involves children being enslaved. He also noticed that this separates children from their families. Child labour also exposes the children to serious hazards and illnesses which he mentioned on his book (Rahman 2019). In his book 'A textbook of The Bangladesh Labour Act 2006', Dr. Zulfiquar Ahmed claimed widespread poverty and the lacuna of laws as a primary reason why a lot of children start to work at a very early age (Ahmed 2006).

Also, in the paper titled "Child Labour in Bangladesh: A Socio-Economically Significant and Sensitive Issue," Ahmed Ragib Chowdhury asserts that legal inadequacies are the major cause of child labour. According to the 2006 Labour Act, a child is defined as a person under the age of fourteen, while an adolescent is a person under the age of eighteen. While the Labour Act does not explicitly define a child as a person under 18 years of age, it closely follows the Children Act and CRC definitions. The author of the article "Child Labour in Bangladesh – An analysis of Gaps and weaknesses of the existing legal framework" discovered a major shortcoming of the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006. This author states that the Act has a limited area of categorical application because domestic work, agriculture, and small-scale family businesses are excluded (Aktar 2014).

Growing awareness of child labour concerns in recent years has led to a vast literature on the subject. Researchers and policy makers continue to try to identify root causes and suggest appropriate remedial measures. In traditional literature, it is often held that severe poverty is the fundamental cause of widespread child labour in the developing world, as it drives individuals with big families and children to enter the labour market in order to maintain their families.

Dr. Sumaiya Khair in her book titled 'Child Labour Revisited: Gender, Culture, Economics and Human Rights' talked about the growing rate of child labour. In her book, she focused on the role of gender, culture and economic factors behind the growing rate of child labour. She also recommended a lot of suggestions regarding this significant issue (Khair 2011). Grutert and Kanbur (1995) give an overview of early writings on child labour. Bose (1999) reviewed the literature on child labour with special attention on concepts, theories and policies and revisited existing theoretical literature on child labour by Cigno, Rosati and Tzannatos (2002) and Basu and Tzannatos (2003).

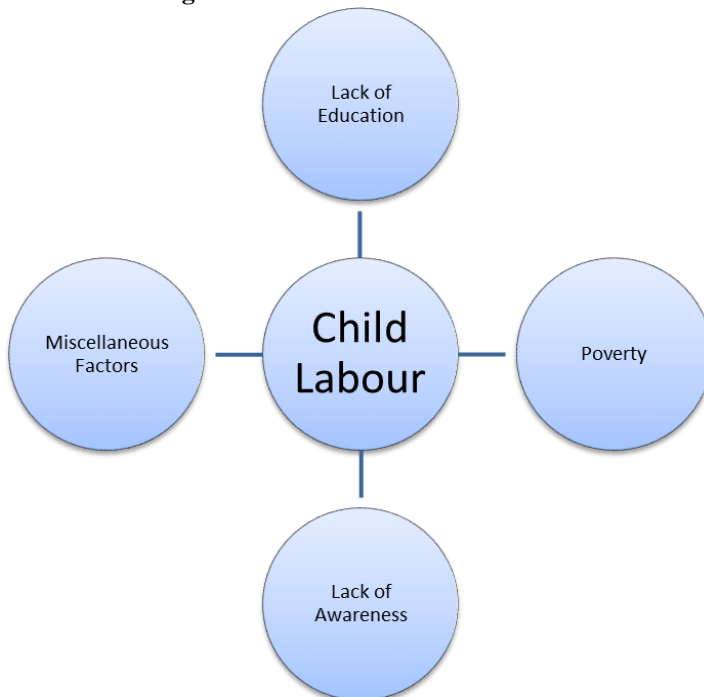
### **3. Definition and causes of child labour**

A child is somebody younger than 18 years old. The phrase "child labour" refers to the illegal and immoral employment of youngsters. Child labour may also be described as employment that robs children of their youth and future and is detrimental to their physical and mental development. According to the CRC and the ILO Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour, a child is a person under the age of 18. The Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006 states that a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age is considered as a 'Child' and a person between fifteen to eighteen years old is categorized as an 'Adolescent.' (Bangladesh Labor Act 2006).

Globally, child labour has become a big issue. It deprives children of a normal upbringing, an appropriate education, and the possibility for mental and physical well-being. According to UNICEF, one of five children in the world's poorest nations are

involved in child labour. The ILO conventions address the problem of child labour, which is still common in developing nations in Africa, South America, Asia, and the Middle East, in contrast to Europe, North America, and Australia, where laws against child labour are frequently accepted. It is acknowledged that the issue of child labour is disproportionately prevalent in developing nations. Bangladesh is one of the developing nations with the highest proportion of minors working in hazardous situations. The causes of child labour may be examined from several perspectives. Certain of them are summarised in *Figure 1*.

**Figure 1. Causes of child labour**



Source: Author's compilation

### 3.1. Poverty

The primary reason for child labour is poverty. Due to poverty, millions of youngsters are compelled to work as workers. According to the National Child Labour Elimination Policy of 2010, this is the primary cause of child labour (The National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010). Some may start their working life even before entering school and many children leave the school for starting work to meet their daily needs. Unemployment or a low level of parental income increases the likelihood of sending children to work because children have to contribute to the family income. According to UNICEF (2010), 46% of working children in Bangladesh live below the poverty line and a quarter live in extreme poverty (UNICEF 2010). Living in poor and ultra-poor

families, these children are deprived of basic needs like food, shelter, medical care, drinking water and sanitation services. This is how low living values and poverty stimulate the use of child labour in Bangladesh.

### **3.2. Absence of awareness and ingrained custom**

Lack of knowledge and deeply rooted traditions also play a significant influence in the continuation of child labour. In reality, the majority of parents are unaware of the term "child labour." They are unaware of the meaning of child work and its negative implications. They do not comprehend or attempt to comprehend what their children will do if they join the profession without basic schooling; they will have no chance of finding a decent job when they reach majority age. Again, owing to the traditions ingrained in our culture, the majority of parents anticipate that their children will begin earning and contributing to the family budget at a young age, despite their being no legal necessity. It also occurs due to the naivety and stupidity of parents, who mistakenly believe their children are learning a worthwhile skill.

### **3.3. Lack of education**

Despite being free and mandatory until the eighth grade, education becomes a burden for disadvantaged households. The majority of youngsters do not complete elementary school and begin working. According to the ILO (2013), just 28.6% of child workers attend school, indicating that access to education is adversely correlated with child labour. Inadequate schools, bad curricula, the absence of competent nursing and care for kids by instructors, the lack of relevance of education to their vocation of survival, and the lengthy hours required for schooling cause some children to begin working at a young age. In the absence of education, child work is thus also promoted (Aktar 2013).

Due to a lack of knowledge, some parents may not comprehend what child labour is or its repercussions. Therefore, they are unaware of the rights of children. They often urge and even force youngsters to work instead of attend school, despite the fact that they do not need employment. A UNICEF assessment of selected nations in South Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Sub-Saharan Africa found that children whose mothers are illiterate are at least twice as likely to drop out of primary school as children whose mothers finished elementary school (UNICEF 2010).

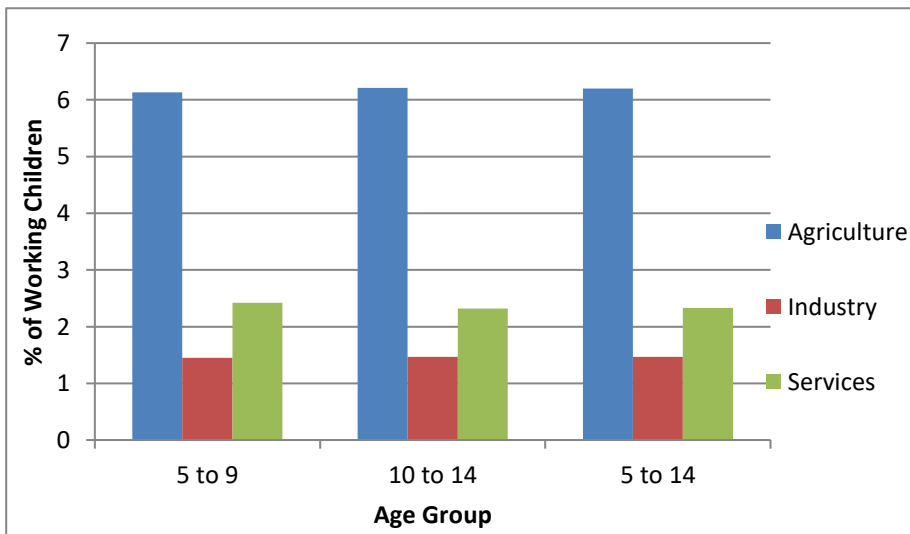
### **3.4. Miscellaneous factors**

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, many youngsters work to support the family income, and their parents do not prohibit them. They believe that working at a young age is not exceptional. In addition, many individuals in our nation hire minors in violation of labour rules, yet there are no penalties for doing so. Although the government has several laws, they are not well implemented. Even though this does not create child labour, this lack of execution encourages employers to utilize child labour in the production of their goods or the operation of their businesses. Finally, it may be said that poverty is the primary reason for child labour, but there are other causes as well.

#### 4. Present scenario of child labour in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is an emerging nation. Every day, progress is being made toward achievements. A significant proportion of children in Bangladesh are subject to a variety of human rights violations. It is not only detrimental to their natural development, but also a major impediment to national progress. Bangladesh is a nation plagued by poverty with a massive population. Therefore, it is very hard to eliminate child labour quickly. However, it is one of the greatest obstacles to progress if a big number of youngsters are employed without attending school. The following statistic shows the distribution of working children by sector and age group.

**Figure 2. Distribution of working children by sector and age group**



Source: Bangladesh Child Labour Data Country Brief 2008

In these statistics, it can be seen that, among working children aged 5-14, approximately 3 out of every 5 are working in the agricultural sector, 14.7 per cent are working in the industrial sector and the remaining 23.3 cent are working in services. This distribution by industry is similar in both age sub-categories of 5-9 and 10-14 years. Girls are more likely than boys to be working in the industrial sector (17.8 vs. 13.5 per cent) and less likely to be working in services (18.2 vs. 25.2 per cent) (Bangladesh Child Labour Data Country Brief 2008).

**Table 1. Distribution of working children by hours worked by week and age group**

Hours Worked	Child Age Group				Total
	5	6-11	12-13	14-17	
<=12	3490	35249	4918	36639	80296
13-42	15830	378740	386580	1486249	2267399
>42		18199	12283	1072192	1102674
Total	19320	432188	403781	2595080	3450369

Source: Bangladesh Child Labour Survey 2013

From *Table 1* it is obvious that only 80,296 out of 3.45 million working children work 12 hours or less per week at the national level. The biggest subgroup (2,267,399 children) work between 13 to 42 hours per week. On the other hand, we can see that 1,102,674 children work more than 42 hours per week. Weekly working hours should also be reviewed by age group. There are 15,830 five-year-olds, 378,740 six-to-eleven-year-olds, 386,580 twelve-to-thirteen-year-olds and 1,486,249 fourteen-to-seventeen-year-olds in the largest category of those working 13-42 hours weekly (Bangladesh Child Labor Survey 2013).

In Bangladesh, children are exposed to the most hazardous forms of child labour, including agricultural and domestic service-related tasks. Children who labour in agriculture do a variety of tasks and may be exposed to hazardous equipment and instruments, toxic chemicals, and heavy loads. In Bangladesh, children, mostly girls, are employed as domestic workers in private households. Some child domestic workers are overworked and are at danger of sexual assault and abuse. Everyone is aware of Bangladesh's history of forced child labour. In the fish drying business, children were compelled to labour. Additionally, Bangladeshi children are used in the commercial sex industry.

## 5. Domestic laws relating to child labour

### 5.1. The Bangladesh Labour Act 2006

One of the most remarkable legislations in our country for regulating child labour is the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006. This Act comes with a chapter on child labour. In 2006, the Bangladesh Labour Act was enacted to ensure the welfare, protection and the rights of the workers of our country, including those involved in child labour. In order to make it much more relevant and suitable to the present time scenario, this act was amended in 2013 and 2018. Chapter 3 of the Labour Act covers the issues related to child labour. As per Section 2(63) of the Labour Act a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age is considered as a 'Child' and a person between fifteen to eighteen years old is categorized as an 'Adolescent' [Labor Act 2006, Section 2(63)].

The main provision on child labour is in Section 34 of the Act. Section 34 (1) strictly prohibits the employment of children in any type of occupation or institution. Also, in Section 35, it is prohibited for parents or other guardians of a child to make any agreement about the employment of the child. The conditions for the employment of adolescents are discussed in Section 34 (2). For joining any job every teenager must have a reference to a certificate of fitness for that particular job and that certificate should be issued by a licensed physician. The validation of this certificate will remain for twelve months from the date on which it was released. The employer must cover the cost of certification. This Act also stipulates that minors are prohibited from undertaking certain forms of hazardous labour. Furthermore, Section 42 forbids the employment of minors for subterranean and underwater work. However, this Act of 2006 lacks a robust mechanism for enforcing the child labour requirements. In addition, most youngsters are employed in the informal sector, posing a difficulty to the implementation of the applicable laws. In addition, given child labour is not the only labour law concern in the nation, it is debatable whether state inspectors' official monitoring is a credible enforcement method.

### **5.2. Children Act 2013**

The Children Act of 2013 replaced the previous Children Act of 1974. It supplements the existing national legislative framework on child labour. The Children Act of 2013 is the first national legislation to provide children the ability to defend themselves using legal tools. Section 2 of the Children Act of 1974 defines a child as a person under sixteen years of age. This Act attempts to safeguard children from economic exploitation by implementing different penalties, including prison time and fines, for engaging minors in begging or exposing them to the risk of seduction, sodomy, prostitution, or any other immoral scenario. The new Children's Act is largely based on the UN CRC. The 2013 Children Act offers more protections for children than its predecessor. Nonetheless, the implementation of the 2013 Children Act represents a tremendous advance.

### **5.3. Constitution of Bangladesh**

The Constitution of Bangladesh is among the most essential laws. It established human rights as a cornerstone of governmental policy. It also defends the rights of Bangladeshi children. Our constitution's Articles 14 and 15 safeguard the rights of children and the right to social security. Article 17 protects the right to education for children. Article 17 of the constitution provides free and mandatory education for all children until they reach the age specified by legislation. Article 18 permits the state to establish special provisions for children's wellbeing. In addition, the Constitution's Article III specifies the fundamental rights of children. Article 34 criminalizes all forms of forced labour. However, it should be noted that the Bangladeshi constitution does not outlaw child labour explicitly (The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh).



#### **5.4. National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010**

The primary goal of the National Child Labour Elimination Policy is to improve the lives of children by eliminating all types of children labour, including dangerous jobs and the worst forms of child labour. It proposes a hospitable environment for children in the working sector and offers a standard system for health, education, treatment, and leisure, particular working conditions, working environment, and security, as well as social awareness to reduce the danger of child abuse by employers. In addition, it specifies that a distinct ministry is necessary to oversee concerns related to child labour. The Child Labour Elimination Policy of 2010 would achieve the abolition of all kinds of child labour, including the worst forms and dangerous jobs (The Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010, 20).

#### **6. International conventions regarding child labour**

International Labour Standards on Child Labour elaborated in the framework of the International Labour Organization (ILO) identified child labour as a violation of basic human rights, and it has been determined that it impedes children's development and may cause permanent bodily or mental damage.

##### **6.1. ILO Minimum Age Convention 138 (C138), 1973**

In 1973, "The Convention Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment" has been adopted in the framework of the ILO. This Convention replaced other comparable ILO treaties in labour. According to this agreement, the minimum age of employment should be 15 years old. However, according to Article 7.4 of the Convention, "light labour" is permitted for children as young as twelve in developing nations. Additionally, Article 3 (1) of the Convention stipulates that the minimum age for hazardous employment may not be less than 18 years (ILO Minimum Age Convention 1973).

##### **6.2. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

The CRC is one of the most valuable treaties in the field of human rights law. It protects and ensures the rights of children worldwide. It is more comprehensive than any other treaties regarding human rights. Also, this convention protects a child from economic exploitation and from performing any kind of risky works, and ensures education for the children (CRC).

According to this convention, a child is a person who is below the age of 18 years. According to Article 28, primary education should be mandatory and available without any cost to ensure the right to education. Article 31 ensures every child the right to play, to take rest and to have leisure. Article 32 of the CRC states that State parties must respect children's right to be free from economic exploitation and forced labour. Forced labour may be damaging to the child's health or physical, mental, moral, spiritual, or other well-being; may be hazardous to the child's safety or education; or may be

harmful to the child's physical, mental, moral, spiritual, or other well-being (CRC, Article 32).

### **6.3. ILO Worst Forms Convention 182 (C182), 1999**

The ILO conventions are the most notable international agreements regarding child labour. Conventions of the ILO firmly ban all forms of child labour. Under the Worst Forms Convention, a 'kid' is a person under the age of eighteen. The Convention outlines swift and efficient measures to ban and eradicate the worst types of child labour, including all forms of slavery, child prostitution and pornography, and employment that is likely to be hazardous to health. According to this agreement, governments are required to remove children from the worst types of child labour and facilitate their rehabilitation. It also advises that states provide free fundamental education (ILO Worst Forms Convention 1999).

### **6.4. National and international cases on child labour**

In *Ain-o-salish Kendra (ASK) v. Bangladesh*, 63 DLR (2011), the High Court Division of Bangladesh (HCD) recommended the the Ministry of Education take steps to ensure that compulsory education is provided in accordance with Article 17 of the Constitution. The Court examined child labour and compulsory education provisions in depth, making recommendations on how to ensure that children of compulsory school age receive an education. In addition, the court ruled that a child's school attendance should not impair the family's earning potential and that it should always be kept in mind that youngsters are unable to agree to labour and are compelled to do so owing to the poverty of their homes and their parents' incapacity to provide for their food security and education.

Again, in the same instance, the HCD noted that the saddest aspect of these children's suffering is that they have no history of participating in harmful activities and sometimes violent jobs. Children engaging in hazardous labour must be registered as such, and their movements must be monitored to ensure that they have access to education, rest, and leisure facilities.

In *Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) v. The Cabinet Division*, represented by the Cabinet Secretary and others (Writ Petition No. 272 of 2010), the court advised the Bangladeshi government to take immediate action to strengthen its protection of the fundamental rights of child domestic workers. These laws prohibit children under the age of twelve from working in any manner, even within a family setting. In addition, the implementation of the Labour Act of 2006 and the National Child Labour Elimination Policy of 2010 for domestic workers are included. The Court also ordered the government to implement mandatory health checks for domestic workers, keep track of the locations of domestic workers to combat human trafficking, monitor and prosecute instances of violence against child domestic workers, and tighten the laws governing these child domestic worker populations.

These restrictions include prohibiting children under the age of twelve from working in any manner, even inside the family; In addition, the implementation of the Labour

Act of 2006 and the National Child Labour Elimination Policy of 2010 for domestic workers are included.

In *Sheela Barse v. Secretary, Children's Aid Society and others* [1987 (3) SCC 50] the necessity of protecting children has been discussed. The future of the country will be dark if there is no opportunity for proper growth for the children of today. The honourable judge also said it is the duty of every generation to properly nurture those who will be the citizens of the future. Furthermore, he mentioned the fact that the children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow who will uphold the banner of the country and protect the dignity of the nation. According to him it would indeed be a fault of the society and the present government if they don't take the attempt to save the future generation. In *Bandhua Mukti Morcha v. Union of India* (1997, 10 SCC 549), the Supreme Court of India ruled as follows: It was said that the destiny of any country is tied to the dignity of its children. Neglecting children harms the whole community. If children are denied of their childhood - socially, economically, physically, and psychologically - the country is deprived of the human resources necessary for social development, social stability, good citizenship, economic empowerment, and peace.

In the case *Baran Shanta v Ma Chan Tha May* (1925) AIR Rangoon 198, it was held that it is against public policy to encourage child labour by assuming that an eleven-year old child should contribute. Every child has the right to at least primary education. In *M C Mehta v State of Tamil Nadu* (1991) 1 SCC 283, the court reiterated that poverty is the main factor, which compels parents to send their children for employment and observed that no parent, especially a mother, wants a child of tender age to toil in a factory under harsh conditions, instead of enjoying his childhood at home under paternal eyes. More recently a lawsuit was filed against the global brand Nestlé for child slavery on Ivory Coast cocoa farms [*Nestlé USA v. Doe* (2020) No 19-416].

## 7. Findings of the study

Nowadays child labour has become one of the biggest issues for developing countries worldwide. In Bangladesh, the rate of child labour is increasing day by day. Basically, poverty is the main reason for the growth of a problem like this. Bangladesh is a poverty-stricken country and, for this reason, some people are trying to benefit from using children. Children are working in both rural and urban areas. However, child labour is not increasing only because of poverty. The illiteracy of parents also plays a big role in the increase of child labour. Parents or guardians are unaware of the rights of their children. Children are getting involved in child labour by their family members and close relatives.

When they are starting to work, they cannot go to school to study, because they are working a full-time job and they don't have enough time to go to school, which violates their right to education. This is contrary to Article 17 of our Constitution. Also, when the children are busy with their work, they have no time to play. So, the moral development of the children is being sabotaged. Every child needs to play so that they can refresh their mind.

Because of child labour, many children are abused sexually, physically and emotionally. Most of the female child workers are not safe in their working place. They are being sexually abused by their employers and co-workers. When the children are

physically abused, they lose their confidence and trust. Because of some hazardous jobs, many children are suffering from diseases, which actually shortens their lifetime.

Due to child labour, children are getting money in their hand at a very early age. Therefore, they are getting involved in different kinds of offences like drug addiction or antisocial activities, which are very unethical. Also, we can see that children are working properly in their own workplace but sometimes they do not get the proper wage or respect they deserve and are instead neglected by their employers.

Sometimes children are forced to work by their family members or employers. Forced labour is prohibited in our constitution. It violates Article 34 of the Constitution, which establishes a fundamental right of the people of Bangladesh. Basically, child labour conflicts with our constitutional provisions, which should not be happening.

There are many existing laws made to combat and control child labour, but these are not able to properly solve this problem. So, the government should create a policy framework and take the necessary initiatives for this. Also, a review of existing laws is very necessary.

## **8. Recommendations**

Child labour is not the type of problem which comes suddenly out of nowhere. It is one of the problems which are developed in the long term. So, it is not an easy issue to resolve with short-term initiatives. Removing child labour completely is not that easy. That is why, at first, we have to take initiatives to combat child labour. A lot of steps need to be made to decrease child labour in our country. Based on the analysis, we identified some major obstacles which need to be handled strongly.

As we have mentioned earlier, poverty is the main reason behind child labour. It can be called the harvest of poverty. Poverty must be wiped out first to stop child labour. It leads the children to start working for their livelihood. Therefore, an effective solution to child labour should be based on reducing chronic poverty through comprehensive economic and social development with an emphasis on human resource development. Although it is not likely that child labour will completely vanish if we enhance our economic development, as we know that a lot of children are working in family environment. Moreover, alongside poverty, the lack of awareness on a social, political and family level is also problematic.

The effective solution to the above mentioned problem is to provide free education to all children. Besides, government should provide free meals and school equipment such as textbooks, pencils, rulers, etc. Although, in our country, education is free up to class five and textbooks are also given without any cost. But the illegal sale of those free textbooks is not a new issue. It is happening and actions should be taken against this kind of illegal business. Also, the budget for the education sector should be extended. The number of schools should be increased in rural areas. Also, a budget for the transportation of school-going students may increase the number of attendances.

Another major cause of child labour is that most of the parents who let their child work are uneducated. They do not know about the rights of their children. In particular, the education of the mother plays a huge role here. There is a famous saying of Napoleon, "Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you the birth of a civilized,

educated nation.” Some steps should be taken to ensure the minimum education for the uneducated adults.

Some initiatives should be taken to increase awareness about the rights of the children. Children are basically the future of any nation. So, we must save the children for the future of our nation. Some awareness-raising lectures about the rights of children should be included in the school curriculum. Also, the government and other non-governmental organizations can create awareness among the people by distributing leaflets among the public, showing commercials, short films and movies on the television.

We should also boycott the products or services made using dangerous child labour so that the employers stop involving children in risky work. Also, the government and non-governmental organizations should establish some taskforce in the field so that they can mark the areas of child labour and inform the authority to take steps. Also, a registry book should be maintained with all information on child labour so that it will be easy to monitor and control child labour.

Also, a review to the existing laws which include child labour is very necessary. Our constitution does not directly prohibit child labour. It has other provisions regarding children’s rights, but it is necessary to include direct provisions regarding child labour. Also, the implementation of the existing laws needs to be handled strictly.

So, from the above discussion we can take the following necessary steps soon to combat child labour:

- Creating new working places for the adults to remove unemployment and poverty.
- Developing social awareness.
- Ensuring free education and establishment of more schools.
- Establishment of a centre collecting information on child labour.
- Ensuring social and legal support to the victims.
- Including information on child rights in the NCTB curriculum.
- Increasing social security.
- Review of law and stricter implementation.
- Regular monitoring of child labour at Divisional, District and Upazila level.
- Developing social services including basic rights.
- Moreover, social awareness is mostly necessary to combat child labour.

## **8. Conclusion**

Children are the future hope and leaders of our nation and country. If we do not protect them now, they will not be able to contribute to the welfare of the country in the future. As Bangladesh is a developing country with a huge population and poverty, child labour has become a major issue in Bangladesh’s social practice. It seems to be fruitful that children are earning money at this age, but if we think about the future, this is leading to many more hazards to the economic progress of Bangladesh as these children are nowhere near the light of education. Therefore it is high time to take strict measures to combat child labour. Child labour brings many serious dangers and difficulties in the lives of children. It can lead them to major physical and mental damage and some

children can go through some serious mental difficulties, which can even lead to their death. Child labour deprives children of access to schooling and healthcare which are fundamental principles of state policy according to our constitution. So it is completely contrary to our constitution.

Above all, no one can remove this serious problem alone from our society. Therefore, if we want to end child labour, we have to take extremely effective measures to protect our children. To instil in parents the value of education, we must keep them informed. If we make education free and raise public awareness, we will be able to educate an increasing number of children who will no longer be forced to work as children. Furthermore, raising public awareness of the negative consequences of child labour is critical. We all must come forward to stop child labour and protect the rights of children for the betterment of our country. So instead of weakening our society with such a generation leading the way, let's address this issue now and prepare these children to participate positively in the future world.

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