Role of Education on child Labor

Introduction

Bangladesh is a country of wide spread illiteracy and economic underdevelopment. About 40% of the rural households lie under poverty line (Rahman. 1995) and nearly one forth of the school aged children are out of school (Nath, 1994). According to ILO convention 1973. completion of 14th year is the minimum requirement to enter in the labor market although the existing labor laws in Bangladesh permits to hire children as labor depending on the nature of work (Rahman 1981). The government and NGOs have been making efforts to raise enrollment and literacy rates among children. But available information suggests that the proportion of children active in labor force has been increasing. According to the Labor Force Survey 1990-91. about 5.8 million (18.2%) children aged 5-14 years, were in the labor force which constituted nearly 11.3% of the total labor force of the country (BBS, 1995).

Education plays a major role in the development of society. Child labor, though legally prohibited in Bangladesh, may be determined by educational achievements of the household members. This report examines the role of education on child labor in two rural areas in Bangladesh.

Methodology

BRAC has been operating an intensive monitoring system, known as *Watch*, in three rural unions within its project area in Manikganj district (central area) since 1986. The system was introduced to document changes induced by a development project which includes health, income generation, education and women's program. The *Watch* was expanded in 1987 to three more rural unions in Joypurhat district (northern area) where no such development intervention was underway. The system has conducted a survey on child labor for the first time in January 1995. All children aged 6-14 years of every fifth households were the eligible respondent of that survey. A child aged 10-14 years participated in any type of work at least three hours at the reference day (previous day of interview) was considered as child labor in this report. Information of 3,809 children was used for this report.

Findings

According to our definition. 39.7% children of age 10-14 years participated in labor force in two rural areas of Bangladesh during the survey. The

proportion of child labor was 39.7% in central and 39.8% in northern area (Figure 1). More boys then girls in

Figure 1. Distribution of child labor by sex and area
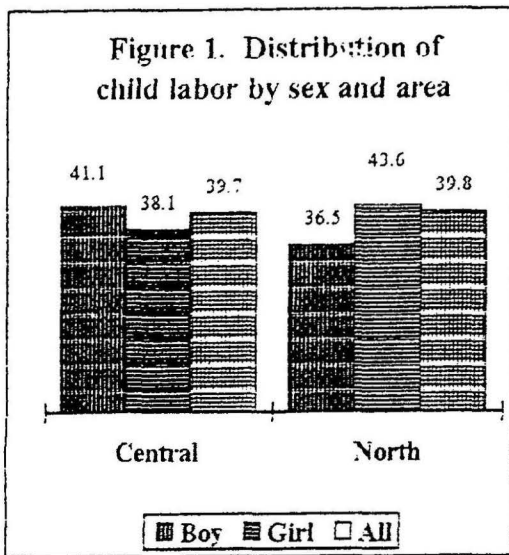
central area (41.1% vs. 38.1%) and more girls than boys in northern area (43.6% vs. 36.5%) were at work. Gender difference was shown significant (p<0.01) only in the northern area.

The enrollment rate among study children was 83.4%. According to their activity status, 54.2% children were only

Figure 2. Proportion of children by activity status
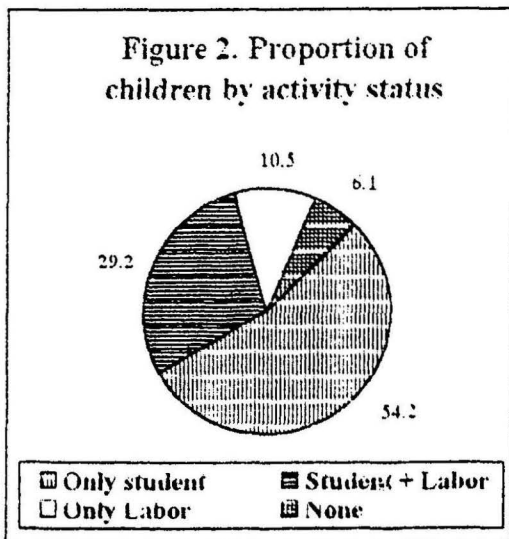
student, 29.2% were both student and labor, 10.5% were only labor and the rest were doing nothing (Figure 2).

The pattern of child labor according to three educational status of household members (child him/herself, mother and father) are presented in Figure 3. Labor force participation among children was found negatively associated with their

Figure 3. Distribution of child labor by education
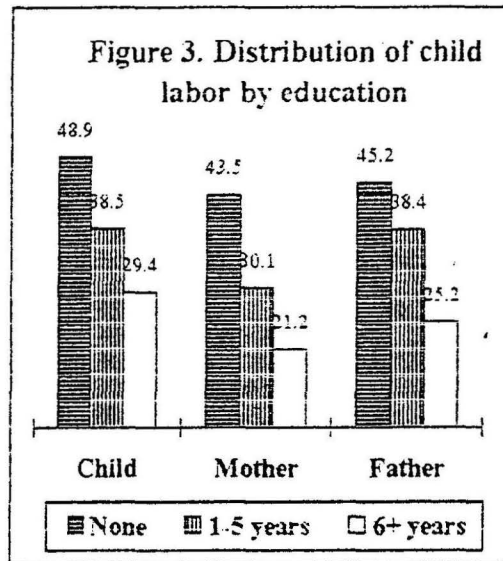
years of schooling (p<0.001). About half of the illiterate children were in labor force. The rate was 38.5% for children having 1-5 years of schooling and 29.4% for those having more than five years of schooling. Similar pattern of relation was observed between child labor and the years of schooling of both mother and father. The labor force participation among children reduced with the increase of their years of schooling.

Table 1 shows that children of the farmers were more likely to be in the labor force than the children whose father were not engaged with agriculture (p<0.01). Child labor appeared to have significant negative association with the years of schooling themselves and their parents regardless of the occupation of father.

Table 1. Proportion of children participated in labor force by father's occupation and education

| | Fathers occupation | |
Education	Agri.	Non-agri
Child		
None	50.9	46.7
1-5 years **	41.1	35.6
6+ years	32.3	27.1
Mother's		
None *	45.5	41.1
1-5 years	32.5	27.6
6+ years	24.0	19.5
Father's		
None *	47.5	42.7
1-5 years	39.1	37.4
6+ years **	29.5	21.1
All**	42.4	36.9

** p< 0.01   *p< 0.05

labor (Table 2). Children of the households with land were less likely to be participated in labor force compared to the children of landless households (p<0.01). When differentiated by household land size, the inverse association between education and child labor persisted for all three categories of land. The relationships were statistically significant.

Table 3 shows that labor force participation among children varied by labor sale status of the household. Children of the labor households (adult persons sale labor at least 100 days a year) were more likely to participate in the labor force than the children of non-labor households (p<0.01). The difference was found statistically significant where the child and the mother had less than 6 years of schooling. Significant difference was also observed among those children whose father had no education or 6-years of schooling.

Land size of the household has also found negatively associated with child

Table 2. Proportion of children participated in labor force by household's land size and education

| | Land size (in decimal) | | |
Education	0	1-199	200+
Child			
None	52.3	43.9	44.9
1-5 years **	40.6	40.8	27.8
6+ years	33.7	29.8	26.0
Mother's			
None **	46.1	43.5	33.2
1-5 years	30.5	33.1	25.7
6+ years	24.6	21.6	18.3
Father's			
None **	47.3	45.7	31.8
1-5 years	38.5	39.4	36.0
6+ years	27.1	26.0	22.6
All**	43.6	40.3	28.8

** p< 0.01   *p< 0.05

Table 3. Proportion of children participated in labor force by labor sale status of household and education

| | Labor sale status | |
Education	Sale	Don't sale
Child		
None *	51.9	44.9
1-5 years **	45.0	35.2
6+ years	39.3	28.6
Mother's		
None **	47.9	40.1
1-5 years *	40.4	28.2
6+ years	26.7	20.8
Father's		
None **	48.5	42.0
1-5 years	42.5	37.2
6+ years *	35.9	24.0
All**	47.1	35.6

** p< 0.01   *p< 0.05

Probabilities of children to be in the labor force at different education categories are shown in Figure 4. The chart clearly shows negative relationship between child labor and education. If the children and his/her parents have more than primary level of education then his/her probability to be a labor would be about 0.16, which would doubled when education of each reduced to 1-5 years of schooling. Otherwise when each of them are illiterate then the chance of being labor rose to 0.49. Comparing bars B to D and F to H it can be said that child education is the most responsible educational factor to reduce child labor followed by father's and mother's education respectively.

Figure 4. Estimated probabilities of child's being participated in labor force

Note: Categories are on years of schooling
A= Child 0, Mother 0, Father 0;
B= Child 0, Mother 6+, Father 0;
C= Child 0, Mother 0, Fathers 6+;
D= Child 6+, Mother 0, Father 0;
E= Child 1-5, Mother 1-5, Father 1-5;
F= Child 0, Mother 6+, Father 6+;
G= Child 6+, Mother 6+, Father 0;
H= Child 6+, Mother 0, Father 6+;
I= Child 6+, Mother 6+, Father 6+;

Summary and Conclusion

About 40% of the children aged 10-14 years were currently participated in labor force. Though there was no areal variation, significant proportion of girls were in the labor force in northern area. Increase of education of the children and parents have been found responsible in reducing child labor. Of these three types of educational factors, child schooling was the most responsible factor to discourage child labor, followed by father's and mother's education. So to eradicate child labor school enrollment among children should be ensured.

References

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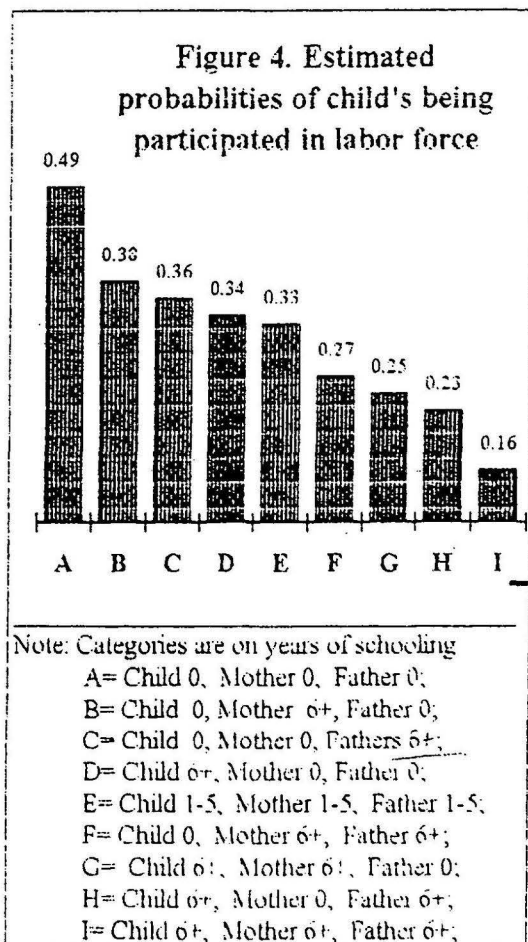
Table 4 (continued)

Item No.	Difficulty	Disc. Index	Bisc. Corr.	Selected
82.	41	.63	.62	
83.	41	.38	.42	
84.	57	.82	.68	
85.	47	.60	.56	Yes
86.	43	.53	.59	Yes
87.	41	.54	.53	Yes
88.	22	.04	-.05	
89.	38	.35	.40	
90.	41	.40	.46	Yes
91.	21	-.17	-.31	
92.	24	.37	.56	
93.	33	.49	.55	Yes