



International
Labour
Office

BANGLADESH CHILD LABOUR DATA COUNTRY BRIEF

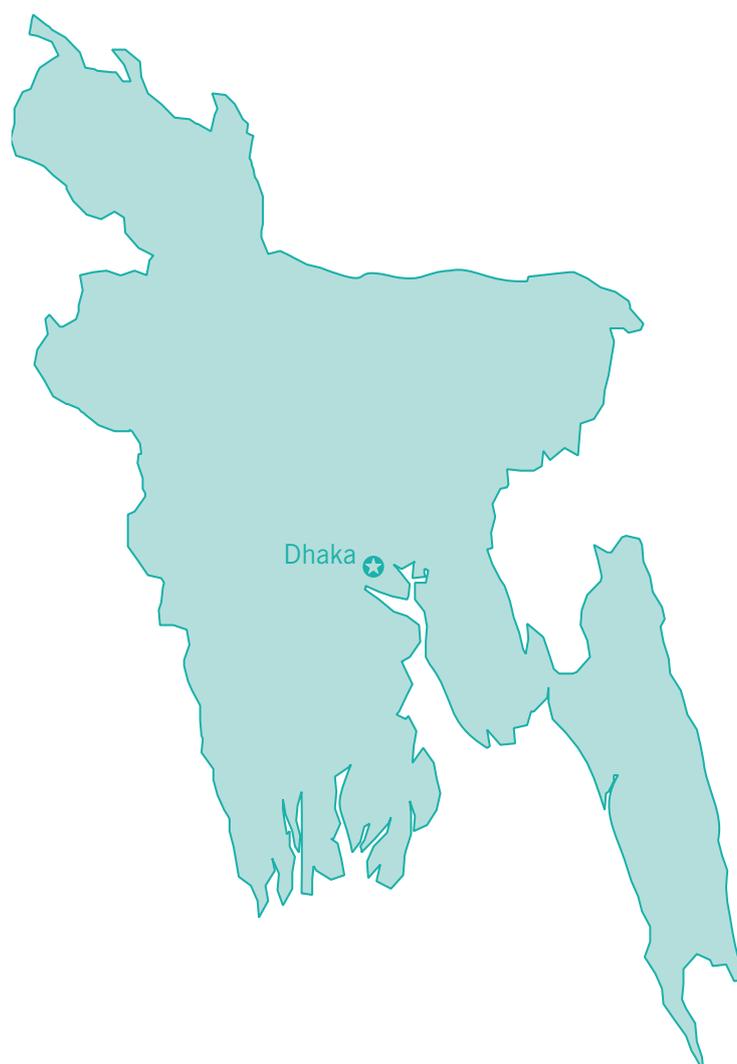


International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour
(IPEC)

SELECTED SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS

Population (millions)	139.2
Population under 15 years (percentage of total)	35.9
Literacy rate (percentage of people ages 15 and above)	41.1
Net primary school enrolment ratio (2002/3)	94
GDP per capita, PPP	\$1,870
Human Development Index Value	0.53
HDI ranking	137/177

Source: 2004 data from UNDP Human Development Report 2006



I. Legislative Framework

RATIFIED CONVENTIONS RELATING TO CHILD LABOUR

Convention	Ratification	Entry into force
The Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)	Not ratified	
The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)	12-03-2001	12-03-2002
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	03-08-1990	02-09-1990

RELEVANT NATIONAL LEGISLATION

- The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (as amended 1991);
 - Employment of Children Act (No. 26 of 1938), (as amended 1974);
 - The Factories Act, 1965 (No. 4 of 1965);
 - The Factories Rules, 1979;
 - The Mines Act, 1923 (No. 4 of 1923);
 - Tea Plantations Labour Ordinance, 1962 (No. 39 of 1962) (as amended);
 - Road Transport Workers Ordinance, 1961 (No. 18 of 1961);
 - Shops and Establishments Act, 1965 (No. 7 of 1965);
 - Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933 (No. 11 of 1933);
 - The Children Act, 1938;
 - The Children Act, 1974;
 - Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1990. (Education compulsory for children ages 6-10)
- Further legislation relevant to the worst forms of child labour*
- The Penal Code, 1860;
 - The Suppression of Violence against Women and Children Act, 2000;
 - The Narcotics Control Act, 1990;
 - The Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1933.

REGULATION OF WORK FOR PERSONS BELOW 18 YEARS

GENERAL MINIMUM AGE FOR ADMISSION TO EMPLOYMENT OR WORK Bangladesh has not ratified the Minimum Age Convention No. 138, and has not established a uniform minimum age for admission to work. National legislation sets forth several minimum ages for employment: 15 years for occupations connected with transport of passengers, goods or mail by train, or handling of goods within the limits of any port [Section 3 of the Employment of Children Act]; 12 years for tea plantations [Section 23 of the Tea Plantations Labour Ordinance]; 15 years for mines [Section 26 of the Mines Act]; 14 years for factories [Section 76 of the Factories Rules]; 12 years for shops and commercial establishments [Section 22 of the Shops and Establishments Act]; 18 years for road transport services [Section 3 of the Road Transport Workers Ordinance].

ADMISSION TO LIGHT WORK ACTIVITIES No explicit provision limits the engagement of children to light work only, but the legislation provides for specific conditions, such as limits to working hours and the prohibition of night work.

ADMISSION TO HAZARDOUS WORK The legislation does not contain a general prohibition of work likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children under 18 years. The applicability of the prohibitions is limited to children up to 16 or 17 years [Section 3 of the Employment of Children Act]; [Section 24 (2) and Section 29 of the Factories Act]; [Section 26 (A) of the Mines Act]; [Section 23 of the Tea Plantations Labour Ordinance]. Some of these provisions require a certificate of fitness instead of prohibiting the work for children.

A young person (under 18 years) is prohibited from working on dangerous machines without proper instruction about the dangers and necessary precautions, in addition to sufficient training or supervision [Section 25 of the Factories Act]. A woman or a child (under 16 years) is prohibited from cleaning, lubricating or adjusting any part of a machine while that part is in motion, or to work between moving parts or between fixed and moving parts of any machinery which is in motion [Section 24 (2) of the Factories Act].

Regulation of work for persons below 18 years	Age	Legislation
General minimum age for admission to employment or work	No general minimum age	
Specific sectors:		
Transport of passengers, goods or mails by train, or handling of goods within the limits of any port	15 years	Section 3 of the Employment of Children Act
Tea plantations	12 years	Section 23 of the Tea Plantations Labour Ordinance
Mines	15 years	Section 26 of the Mines Act
Factories	14 years	Section 76 of the Factories Rules
Shops and commercial establishments	12 years	Section 22 of the Shops and Establishments Act
Road transport services	18 years	Section 3 of the Road Transport Workers Ordinance
Admission to light work activities	No minimum age for admission to light work specified	
Admission to hazardous work	No general minimum age for hazardous work specified	No list of the types of hazardous work determined
Specific sectors:		
Transport of passengers, goods or mails by train, or handling of goods within the limits of any port	17 years	Section 3 of the Employment of Children Act
Tea plantations	17 years	Section 23 of the Tea Plantations Labour Ordinance
Mines	17 years	Section 26 (A) of the Mines Act
Factories	18 years	Section 76 of the Factories Rules
Shops and commercial establishments	18 years	Section 22 of the Shops and Establishments Act

II. Child Labour Indicators

Key child labour indicators can be derived from the National Child Labour Survey (NCLS), conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in 2002-03. The survey was carried out within the framework of the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme (SIMPOC) of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). The NCLS was an independent survey intended to collect information on the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of boys and girls 5 to 17 years of age and their households.

Children's activities

Results from the SIMPOC-supported Bangladesh National Child Labour Survey indicate that 13.4 per cent (4.7 million) of all children ages 5-14 work; this is 18.5 per cent (3.4 million) of boys and 7.8 per cent (1.3 million) of girls in this age group.

About 7.3 per cent (2.6 million) of children in the above age group participate in the labour force and do not attend school. The percentage is nearly twice as high for boys (9.8 per cent) than for girls (4.6 per cent). Children in rural areas are more likely to work without attending school than those in urban areas (7.4 vs. 6.8 per cent). The gender gap between working children who do not attend school is slightly higher in urban areas (5.5 percentage points, i.e. boys: 9.4 vs. girls: 3.9 per cent) than in rural areas (5.1 percentage points, i.e. boys: 9.9 vs. girls: 4.8 per cent).

CHILDREN AGED 5–14, BY SEX, TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND RESIDENCE

Sex	Activity	Urban		Rural		Total	
		%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Male	Work only ^a	9.4	375,956	9.9	1,409,950	9.8	1,785,906
	Study only ^b	73.9	2,966,904	70.5	10,046,505	71.2	13,013,409
	Work and study ^c	6.1	244,464	9.4	1,342,305	8.7	1,586,769
	Total work*	15.5	620,420	19.3	2,752,255	18.5	3,372,675
	Total study**	80.0	3,211,368	79.9	11,388,810	79.9	14,600,178
	Neither	10.6	426,886	10.2	1,453,145	10.3	1,880,031
Female	Work only ^a	3.9	141,215	4.8	626,735	4.6	767,950
	Study only ^b	83.5	3,028,483	82.0	10,797,935	82.3	13,826,418
	Work and study ^c	2.4	87,507	3.5	462,920	3.3	550,427
	Total work*	6.3	228,722	8.3	1,089,655	7.8	1,318,377
	Total study**	85.9	3,115,990	85.5	11,260,855	85.6	14,376,845
	Neither	10.2	369,937	9.8	1,286,070	9.9	1,656,007
Total	Work only ^a	6.8	517,171	7.4	2,036,685	7.3	2,553,856
	Study only ^b	78.5	5,995,387	76.0	20,844,440	76.5	26,839,827
	Work and study ^c	4.3	331,971	6.6	1,805,225	6.1	2,137,196
	Total work*	11.1	849,142	14.0	3,841,910	13.4	4,691,052
	Total study**	82.8	6,327,358	82.6	22,649,665	82.6	28,977,023
	Neither	10.4	796,823	10.0	2,739,215	10.1	3,536,038

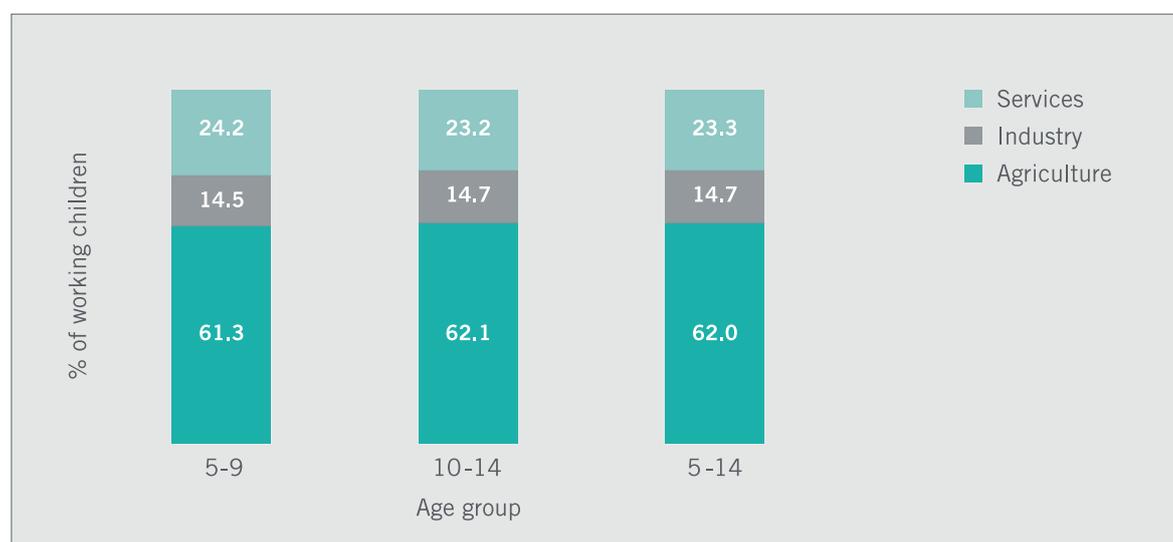
* "Total work" refers to children that work only and children that work and study, i.e. a+c.

** "Total study" refers to children that study only and children that work and study, i.e. b+c.

Characteristics and conditions of child labour

Among working children ages 5-14, approximately three out of every five are employed in the agricultural sector, 14.7 per cent are employed in the industrial sector and the remaining 23.3 per cent work in services.¹ This breakdown by industry is consistent in both age sub-categories 5-9 and 10-14. Girls are more likely than boys to be employed in the industrial sector (17.8 vs. 13.5 per cent) and less likely to be employed in services (18.2 vs. 25.2 per cent).

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING CHILDREN BY INDUSTRY AND AGE GROUP



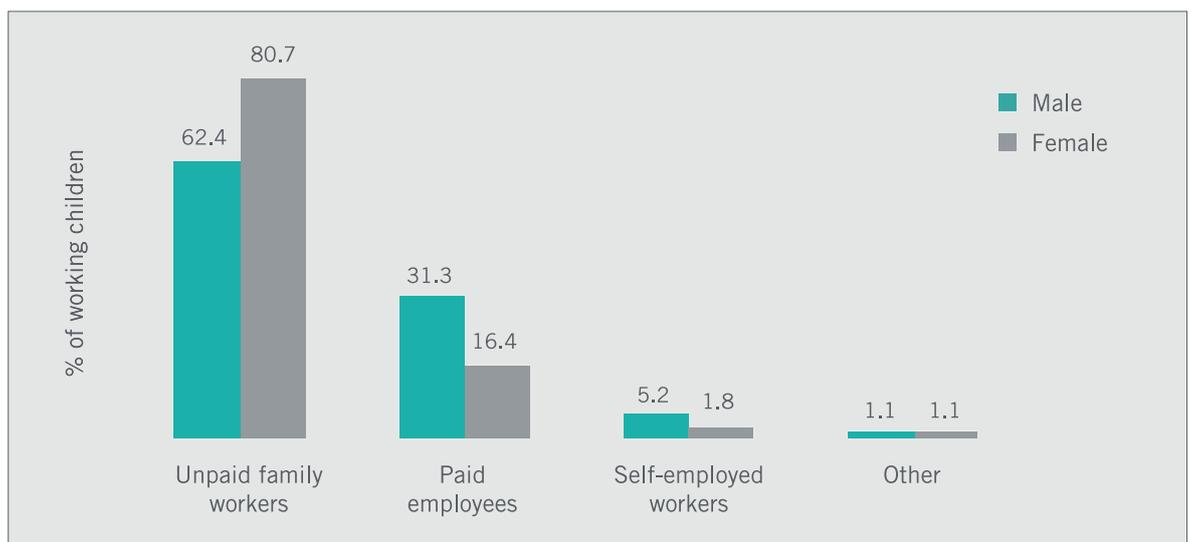
¹ According to the Bangladesh Standard Industrial Classification (BSIC), which is in line with the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, Revision 2 (1968) and 3 (1990), Bangladesh has three main sectors of economic activity: agriculture, industry and service. The agricultural sector comprises activities in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing. The industrial sector comprises mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction and public utilities (electricity, gas and water). The services sector consists of wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communications, finance, insurance, real estate and business services, and community, social personal services.

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING CHILDREN AGED 5-14 BY INDUSTRY AND SEX



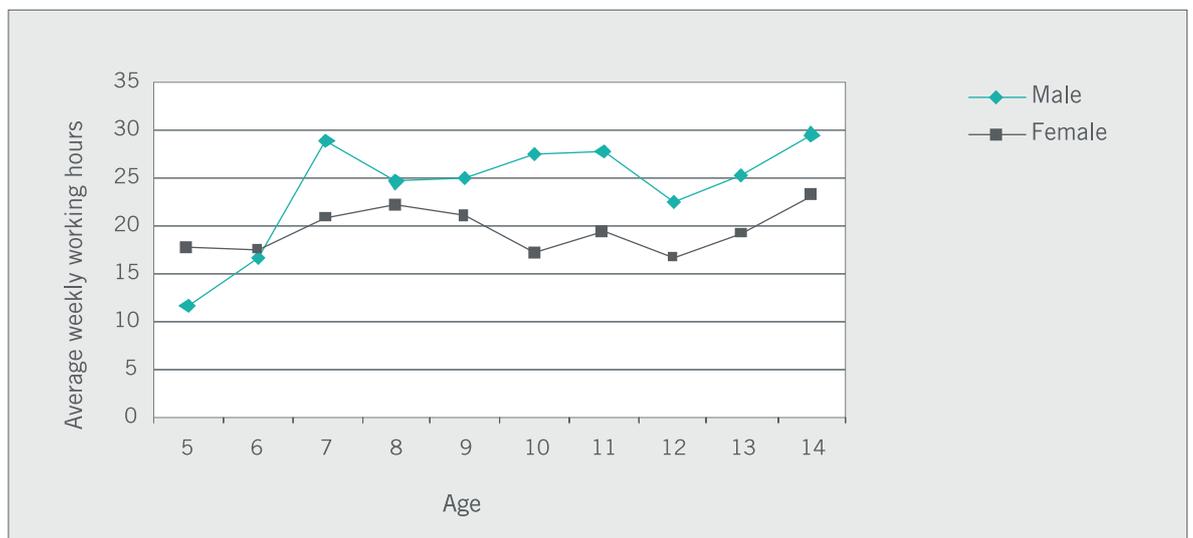
A high percentage of working children ages 5-14 are employed as unpaid family workers (62.4 per cent in the case of boys and 80.7 per cent in the case of girls). More working boys (36.5 per cent) than girls (18.2 per cent) are either salaried or self-employed.

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING CHILDREN AGED 5-14 BY STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT AND SEX



Working children ages 5-14 tend to work an average of 24 hours a week with boys working more than girls (25.7 vs. 19.7 hours). It should be noted that the number of working hours increases only marginally with age.

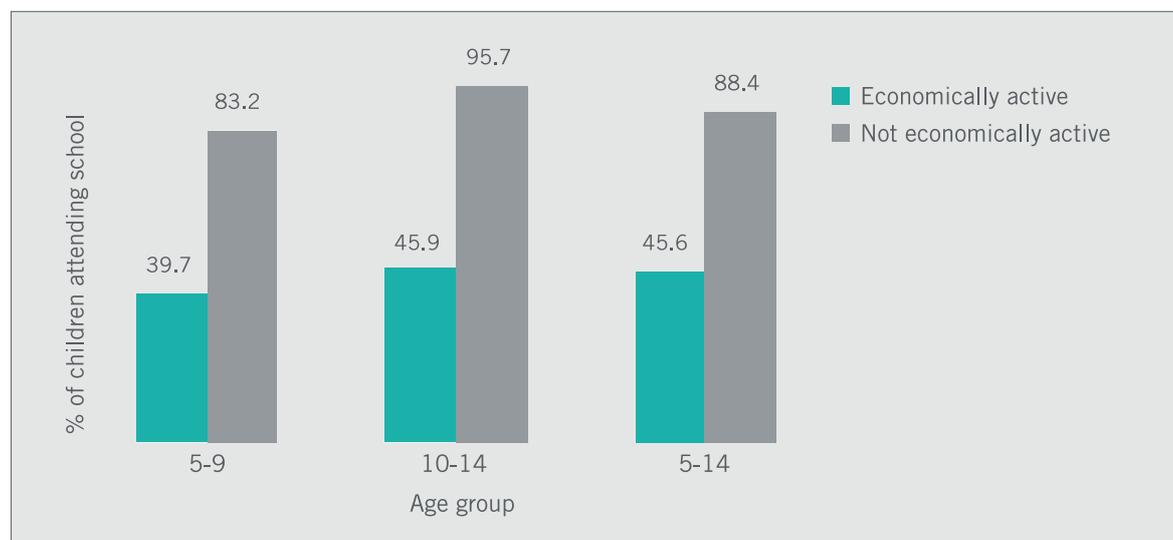
CHILDREN WORKING: AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS BY AGE AND SEX



Child labour and children's education

Among children ages 5-14, economically active children are less likely to attend school compared to non-working children (45.6 vs. 88.4 per cent). In the age group 5 to 9 only 39.7 per cent of economically active children attend school.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: CHILDREN IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY VERSUS CHILDREN NOT IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



Children's activity status and household income level

Children coming from the poorest households are more likely to be engaged in the labour force and not attend school than children in households with the highest levels of per capita expenditure (9.3 vs. 4.1 per cent). These findings are consistent between boys (12.3 vs. 5.6 per cent) and girls (6.3 vs. 2.4 per cent).

The percentage of children from the lowest-expenditure households that attend school without working was 72.8 as compared to 84.7 in the richest households.

Sex	Type of activity	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5	Total
Male	Work only	12.3	11.2	11.5	9.6	5.6	10.2
	Study only	67.6	70.0	69.7	73.6	80.3	71.9
	Work and study	7.9	9.1	10.4	10.0	8.7	9.1
	Neither	12.2	9.7	8.3	6.8	5.4	8.8
Female	Work only	6.3	5.2	5.3	3.2	2.4	4.7
	Study only	78	81.4	81.9	86.3	89.7	82.9
	Work and study	3.5	3.5	3.9	3.3	2.7	3.4
	Neither	12.3	9.9	8.9	7.1	5.2	9.1
Total	Work only	9.3	8.3	8.5	6.6	4.1	7.5
	Study only	72.8	75.5	75.6	79.6	84.7	77.2
	Work and study	5.6	6.4	7.3	6.9	5.9	6.3
	Neither	12.2	9.8	8.6	7.0	5.3	8.9

Note:

1. The household expenditure is used as a proxy for income. "Quintile 1" represents lowest expenditure category and "Quintile 5" the highest.
2. The totals in table do not match the totals in the previous table because expenditure information is not available for all children.
3. Totals may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

III. Information on the worst forms of child labour

RATIFICATION OF SPECIFIC TREATIES

Convention	Ratification	Entry into force
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography	06-09-2000	18-01-2002
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict	06-09-2000	12-02-2002
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (CTOC)	Not ratified	
Human Trafficking Protocol, supplementing the CTOC	Not ratified	
Smuggling of Migrants Protocol, supplementing the CTOC	Not ratified	
The ILO Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)	Not ratified	

SIMPOC STUDIES

- Report on National Child Labour Survey 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, December 2003).
- Baseline Survey on Child Domestic Labour (CDL) in Bangladesh (ILO, Dhaka, December 2006).
- Baseline Survey for Determining Hazardous Child Labour Sectors in Bangladesh 2005 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, July 2006).
- Report on the Working Children in Metropolitan Cities of Bangladesh 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, December 2003).
- Report on Baseline Survey on Street Children in Bangladesh, 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, December 2003).
- Report on Baseline Survey on Working Children in Automobile Establishments 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, December 2003).
- Report on Baseline Survey on Child Workers in Welding Establishments 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, December 2003).
- Report of the Baseline Survey on Child Workers in Road Transport Sector 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, May 2004).
- Report of the Baseline Survey on Child Workers in Battery Recharging/ Recycling 2002-03 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Dhaka, May 2004).

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