The Impact of Price Hike on Child Labour Participation in Bangladesh

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Abstract

In this paper, the authors have examined the extent and the determining factors of child labour in poor households living in some selected areas of Bangladesh. They have also examined if there was a substantial increase in child labour in these poor households as a consequence of the price hike of essentials over the 2006-08 periods. Child labour increased substantially during that price hike period. While 1 in every 10 children worked as a child labourer in paid jobs in 2006, 1 in every 9 got engaged in similar jobs in 2008. When paid jobs and unpaid jobs in family enterprises are combined, 1 in every 6 children worked as a child labourer in 2008 in contrast to 1 in every 7 in 2006. When household work is also considered, 1 in every 3 children was found working as a child labourer in 2008 in contrast to 1 in every 4 in 2006. There is a significant increase in the work hour too. The mean hours per month that children spent on paid jobs and family enterprises jumped up substantially over the two year period. This shows that children take up more economic activities during economic hardship as adults are already occupied in jobs and household enterprises. Interestingly, the decrease in child labour hour in unpaid jobs was often associated with an increase in child labour hour in paid jobs indicating a switching of child labour from unpaid family enterprises to paid jobs.

Parental education and occupation are likely to be important determining factors of child labour. Educated households are less likely to send their children to work during economic hardship. Three quarters of the head of the households who sent their children to work have no education. Child labour increased in greater extent among the vulnerable occupational groups, where the head of the household was a farmer, rickshaw puller, day labourer, garment worker and so on. There was a substantial increase in child labour working in the nonagricultural sector. Some of the jobs in this sector such as working in brick fields, factories, and transportations are perceived to be risky for the children. Gender of the child is also an important determining factor of child labour. Both The mean hours worked and the number of child labour in paid and unpaid outside jobs has increased considerably more for boys than girls. In case of domestic work the involvement dynamics clearly shows the third world phenomenon that girls are always busy to maintain the works in household chores.

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1. Introduction

The incessant increase in the prices of essentials has been an economic issue that caused a huge public resentment in recent times. Price hike in essential commodities in last few years, especially in mid 2007 had turned into one of the key challenges of caretaker Government of Bangladesh. During 2007 – 2008, the prices of key staples increased by 50% in Bangladesh till price declines started since April 2008. A particular reason for concern about the impacts of high food prices arises from the fact that poor and low income households spend almost three quarters of their income on food (Hertel, Preckel, and Cranfield, 2004). The share of food in total expenditure is 65% for the low income groups in Dhaka city while it is 82% for the same groups in rural areas of Bangladesh (Raihan and Haque, 2007).

Another reason for concern is that the prices of such goods as rice, wheat, edible oil, sugar, onion and some other food items increased much more than the prices of the non-food items during the last few years. Since food items form a large fraction of the consumption basket of the poor and low income people, a large segment of Bangladesh population is perceived to have been adversely affected by the spiraling price increases of daily essentials. Thus, it is important to figure out how these hard-pressed people cope with the price hike of essentials. Households may try to cope with rising prices through many ways such as by disposing of financial and non-financial assets, working longer hours, dropping many items or drastically cutting back their consumption of (expenditure on) many others.

Also, as coping strategies, households may have been forced to reduce non-food expenditures such as expenditures on education, health etc. to ensure a minimum level of food consumption (Helal et al, 2009). All these are likely to have significant impacts on the livelihood of children. The children may be forced to work for extra earning or substitute adult labour in the reproductive economy as an income enhancing strategy. Thus, it is important to figure out how the coping strategies adapted by poor households affect the children of poor households with an adverse effect on child labour.

In the recent literature on child labour responses to income shock, there is a debate on the extent to which child labour responds to income among poor households. Price hike changes the real income of a household, and thus it is likely to affect the allocation of child labour in that household. Despite the limitation that none of the few studies on child labour attempts to evaluate how unusual price hike of essentials affects the prevalence of child labour in poor households, there are many studies to find out the determining factors of child labour in different economic activities.

One of the papers uses data from Bangladesh to examine household decisions involving child schooling and child labour (Khanam, 2006). Another study that focuses on Tanzania shows that transitory income shocks measured by the value of crop lost by farming households lead to a significant increase in child labor (Beegle et al, 2008). Price hike of essentials is interpreted as the decline in real income and many researchers try to establish that child labour is the consequence of low real income of households.

However, price hike of essentials does not necessarily imply lower real income for households (Helal et al, 2009). This means price hike of essentials may not necessarily be associated with increased child labour. Edmonds and Pavcnik (2002) show that increases in rice prices were strongly associated with declines in child labour in Vietnam. It could be due to greater real income of households resulted from higher rice prices. In contrast, Kruger (2002) shows that child labour increases and school attendance decreases as coffee prices increase in Brazil.

Schooling is often traded for work during economic hardship according to some others (Edmonds, 2003; Edmonds and Turk, 2004; Beegle, Dehejia, and Gatti, 2005). But child labour may not necessarily trade off much with schooling as it also depends on occupation of the parents (Parikh and Sadoulet, 2005). There is another paper on child labour which is motivated by the remarkable observation that children in land-rich households are often more likely to be in work than the children of land-poor households (Bhalotra and Heady, 2003). Besides, many other correlates related to households or household members are likely to influence the economic structure of households affecting the allocation of child labour in that household.

Thus, understanding the extent of child labour and the influences of economic factors on child labour allocation is important for the design of child labour related policies in Bangladesh. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the extent of child labour in poor households and to identify the determining factors of child labour allocation in poor households with special emphasis on how child labour responds to economic hardship of a poor household resulted from the price hike of essentials.

For this purpose the study will concentrate on the poor households characterized by occupational groups living in different part of the country with special attention toward the most vulnerable households such as day labourers, landless farmers in rural areas and garment workers, rickshaw pullers in urban areas.

2. Data and Methodology

Information on the correlates required for this study is obtained from the primary dataset generated from the household survey in the context of a price hike study anchored by ERG and funded by the Save the Children, UK. This dataset provides information on household consumption, income, occupation, education, job availability, gender, size, location, number of children in the household, and other proxy variables for ability and consciousness.

Besides poor households living in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan areas, the information on households was collected from Ulipur upazila of Kurigram from north-west, Darampasha upazila of Sunamganj from haor, Shyamnagar upazila of Satkhira from coastal, and Khagrachari sadar upazila of Khagrachari from Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) regions. It is commonly perceived based on prior information from BBS study that there is a large concentration of extreme poor in these areas.

To avoid misleading conclusions driven by considerable external help to certain areas, the areas were selected dropping rat infested districts in the CHT, Sidr-affected upazilas in the coastal areas and Monga-affected upazilas receiving substantial external assistance, in the north-west. Representation of vulnerable occupational groups such as landless farmers, day labourers, rickshaw pullers and garment-workers were ensured.

Thus, of the 664 households used in this analysis, 99 are from Kurigram, 95 are from Satkhira, 92 are from Sunamganj, 96 are from Khagrachhari, 187 are from Dhaka, and the rest 95 are from Chittagong metropolitan areas.[1]

To capture the dynamics and strategies of household behavior the most appropriate way is the recall method through cross section study. One of the most appropriate ways of applying recall methods is asking questions on household aspects like how much child labour a household used two years ago exactly in the year 2006 when the phenomenon of price hike was not so concerned as in 2008. Then by comparing the amount of child labour that a household used in 2008 when the price rise phenomenon was quite unbearable for the families that earned fixed income. Then by combining the two year data we analyze how the dynamics of child labour evolved overtime.

The 2 year-recall is chosen because there was a remarkable price difference between the year end of 2006 and 2008 and the former is a good reference point to remember as it was the closing point of BNP-led government.

3. Child labour participation

3.1 Definition of child labour

To understand the change in the child labour, we need to know how child labour is defined in this study. The concept of child labour does not necessarily refer to simply any work done by a child, rather it means works that limits the child's development or puts the child at risk. However, maintaining this fine distinction in data is difficult, and thus before proceeding further it is useful to define different forms of child labour to be discussed below.

Child labour is defined as the total hours spent by a child working in economic activities and chores, i.e., substituting adult labour in the reproductive economy. Economic activities for children consist predominately of working for an extra earning, working in family enterprises or businesses and farms (Edmonds, 2003). Family enterprises are entities of any type owned by households that enhance income of the households. In a rural setting, children help their parents in farming, fishing (both capture and culture fishing), weaving (handloom), rearing livestock and poultry, making bamboo/cane products, begging and so on.

[1]From the collected data set, 36 observations were discarded for the purposes of estimation because an analysis of outliers in the data revealed that 36 households had distinct outliers (one or more of the variables for a household were more than 2.5 standard deviations away from the mean), thus challenging the reliability of these observations.

In an urban setting, children help their parents in small enterprise (shop), small business (vegetable selling, tea stall), begging and so on. These helps are classified as child labour on unpaid jobs in family enterprises. In fact, all except paid labour and unpaid household activities in rural, urban and metros are included in this child labour category. However, unpaid labour outside family enterprises are included as paid labour. This happens when a child labourer works as an apprentice on paid jobs.

We include chores as well as economic activities because the concept of child labour typically (e.g., in the ILO standard) encompasses both, although we distinguish between them to explain differences in our results. We also differentiate between unpaid work in family enterprises and household activities. The household activities include cooking, washing cloth and dishes, cleaning house, caring children, shopping groceries, feeding animals, teaching children, gardening, helping other members and so on. Thus, the focus is on the three forms of child labour; paid labour, and unpaid labour in family enterprises or business, and household activities.

3.2 Change in child labour participation rates

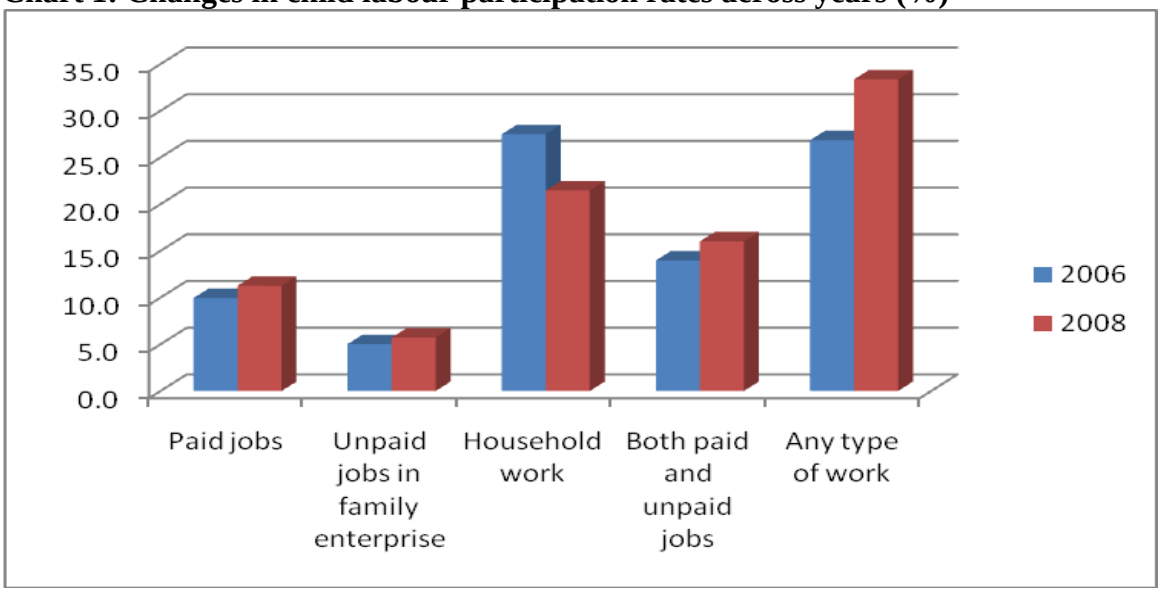
Child labour participation rate is the ratio of the number of children between 6 to 17 years old who work and the total number of children in that age group. While 1 in every 10 children worked as a child labourer in paid jobs in 2006, 1 in every 9 engaged in similar type of jobs in 2008 (Chart 1). If involvement in any of the first two job categories (paid or unpaid labour in family enterprises) is considered then 1 in every 6 children is found to be working as child labourer in 2008 in contrast to 1 in every 7 in 2006. This shows a substantial increase in the child labour over the two-year period.[2]

The scenario is opposite in case of household activities showing fewer children for household work in 2008. A fraction of the sampled households are mostly subsistence farmers who rely on agriculture and some animal farming activities; agricultural participation of children (classified as unpaid labour in family enterprises) is not uncommon and overall child labour, including household activity, is a commonplace. The rest of the households are from the poor section of upazila towns and slums in metro cities where child labour in household activity is also a common feature. Since the children of these poor households often engage in household economic activities, significant increase is not highly expected in this category.

One reason for observing a substantially higher level of child labour (13% for paid job and 14% for unpaid labour in family enterprises) in 2008 in the first two categories is that the children of poor households is expected to get highly involved in these two earning activities during economic hardship, and thus the increased child labour in these categories is well taken as one of the coping strategies.

[2]The latest figure provided by UNICEF is 1 in every 6 children is working as a child labourer in Bangladesh (Barkat et al, 2009). The UNICEF figure is likely to be a representative of the entire Bangladesh whereas the corresponding figure of this study is obtained from a purposive sample of extreme poor households living in the selected small pockets.

Chart 1: Changes in child labour participation rates across years (%)



Source: Constructed from ERG survey (2008)

Obviously, many more children in the first two categories imply fewer children in the third category saying more outside work limits children to do less household work. When household work is considered in addition to two other categories, that is, when any type of labour is considered then 1 in every 3 children was found working as a child labourer in 2008 in contrast to 1 in every 4 in 2006 (Chart 1).

Table 1. Child labour participation rates across regions (%)

	for paid job		unpaid (enterprises)		household work		Both paid and unpaid jobs	
Region	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008
Kurigram	11.2	17.4	7.6	7.6	38.2	31.0	15.1	19.1
Satkhira	9.7	10.4	0.6	1.2	12.6	10.3	11.4	11.5
Sunamgonj	5.8	7.1	8.4	7.7	44.8	34.6	11.7	12.2
Khagrachhari	2.6	2.7	3.9	1.3	22.7	14.0	6.5	3.3
Dhaka metro	16.2	17.4	5.5	9.7	28.4	23.8	21.4	26.8
Chittagong metro	4.7	9.8	3.7	2.8	21.2	15.8	12.7	13.9

Source: Constructed from ERG survey (2008)

3.2.1 Regional disparity

The participation rates for paid jobs in 2006, as presented in Table 1, showed up highest for the children of Dhaka metro which was 16.2% and the lowest, 2.6%, was for Khagrachhari. The participation rates for paid jobs increased for all the regions over the two year period. The participation rate was doubled for Chittagong metro and the second largest increase, which is 55%, was observed for Kurigram. Obviously, households living

in metro areas were pushed hard by the price hike and they were desperate to make up for their low income.
Since many households living in Dhaka metro used to send their children to work even before the recent price hike, they were not left with much scope to increase income through child labour. But households in Chittagong metro increased the work of their children to make up for their lower real incomes. The participation rates for unpaid labour in family enterprises did not show any clear pattern. For both the years, the lowest participation rates in this category were observed for Satkhira.

Lesser self employment opportunities in forestry dependent works such as honey, wood, fruit,vegetable, and leaf collection resulted from the damages occurred by cyclone SIDR and other natural calamities and increased salinity in the soil of coastal region reduced work opportunities in this area. When involvement in paid jobs and unpaid jobs in family enterprises are combined, the obvious trend is a substantial increase in the child labour for most of the regions with an exception for Khagrachhari. However, the participation rates for household work decreased for all the regions.

3.2.2 Participation rates across rural, urban, and metro

The participation rates for paid jobs showed up highest for the children of metro areas which were 13.5% in 2006 and 14.2% in 2008 (Table 2). Even though a substantial increase was observed for rural and urban households, the highest increase, 35%, was observed for the children of floating households in Dhaka metropolitan areas. When unpaid jobs in family enterprises category is considered, the increase was 88% for the same set of children. This means the children of floating households are most affected by the price hike of essentials.

Table 2. Child labour participation rates for rural /urban/ metro (%)

	for paid job		for family enterprise		for household work	
Region	**2006**	**2008**	**2006**	**2008**	**2006**	**2008**
rural	8.0	9.4	6.0	4.0	29.0	23.1
Urban	6.6	8.1	4.2	4.4	28.9	21.2
metro	13.5	14.2	4.8	7.6	25.4	20.5
slums	13.5	13.8	4.2	6.2	25.9	20.2
floating	13.0	17.5	9.3	17.5	22.2	22.2

Source: Constructed from ERG Survey (2008)

However, a substantial decrease for these unpaid jobs was observed for the children of rural households. It is likely that some children moved from unpaid jobs to paid jobs and some migrated from rural to urban and metro areas. Interestingly, the decrease in unpaid labour hours per month is often associated with increase in labour hours per month in paid jobs. This indicates instances of switching of child labourer from unpaid family enterprises to paid jobs. This will be clarified more if we dig into the prevalence of paid child labour across occupations.

3.2.3 Occupation of child labour

In 2006, 28% child labourers worked as garment workers, 24% as nonagricultural workers, 9% as employees, 6% as agricultural workers, and the rest one third was

Figure 1a

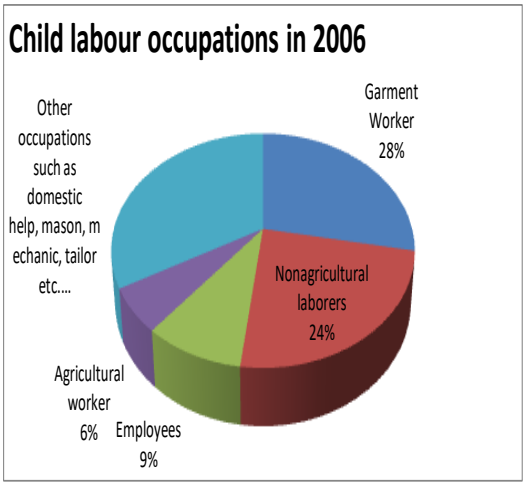


Figure 1b

involved in different other occupations such as domestic help, mason, mechanic, tailor etc (figure 1b). To the contrary, in 2008, 31% of the child labourers were engaged as nonagricultural workers, 23% as garment-workers, 12% as employees, 4% as domestic helps and the rest as tailors, carpenters, fishermen, hawkers, jewelers, transportation helps, helps in food processing, leather and chemical factory etc (figure 1a).

Thus, there was a substantial increase in child labour working in the nonagricultural sector despite the fact that there were no significant changes in nonagricultural wages and a 35% increase in agricultural wages. Unpaid jobs in family enterprises are widespread in agricultural farms in rural areas. The substantial increase in nonagricultural jobs and a significant decrease in unpaid jobs in family farms indicate a shift in child labour from unpaid family enterprises to this sector.

Some of the jobs in this sector such as working in brick fields, factories, and transportations are risky for the children. Shyamnagar has many brickfields where a large number of children are employed. Most of them are under 10 and they work there to help the adult workers. Some of them work during school breaks. These child labourers were not substantially covered in the collected sample due to the fact that they are concentrated mostly in nearby brickfield villages none of which was covered in our sample.

3.3 Parental characteristics

It would be unreasonable to think that children make their choices on work or study independently. Rather, it is reasonable to think that their parents are in command of making such vital choices for them. Hence any decision on children's involvement in work or study can be explained as a parental decision. Parents value the current consumption of the household as well as the human capital attainment of the children through education. However, there is a tradeoff between current consumption (which is

gained by engaging the children in productive activities) and human capital accumulation (education for children).

If a child is engaged in working, it receives more current consumption and less education, which determines fewer earnings in future and hence less future consumption. A child can go to school full time or can work full time or can combine work and school or can do neither work nor study. However, what a child will do that will be determined by parents (Becker and Lewis, 1973; Parikh, and Sadoulet, 2005; Khanam, 2006). Thus, what a child does in this context crucially depends on the parental characteristics such as parental education, occupation, and so on.

3.3.1 Parental occupation

As discussed above, parental occupation or occupation of the head of a household is likely to be an important determinant of child labour. We have found that child labour was found in case of household head's occupation of farmer, rickshaw puller, small store, peasant, vegetable seller, carpenter, labour in plastic factory, painter, fruit and vegetable collector, quilt sewing, labour in leather factory in 2008 while this phenomenon is absent in these household in 2006. Many households involved in agriculture or agricultural related works use their children in their farms. This also goes for peasants who are involved in poultry, dairy, and fishing activities.

Some Rickshaw and van pullers, who did not send their children to work in 2006, sent their children in paid and self employed jobs in 2008 reducing their participation in domestic works. Small businessmen and hawkers, who found themselves in harder economic situation in 2008 due to essential price hike, involved their children in their businesses and household activities giving the older members opportunities to work more outside. Even in case of households, whose members are involved in odd jobs such as domestic helps, cleaners and so on, increased involvement of their children in paid jobs was observed in 2008.

3.3.2 Education of the household head

What we have found is absolutely consistent with the prior that educated families are less likely to send their children to work. In the construction of Table 3, 'literate' is defined as who can only able to sign and in some cases they know how to write letters and they have no formal education. As predicted in the relevant literature, prevalence of child labour is likely to be lower for educated households. It may be due to the success of educated families in assessing the opportunity cost of child labour. These types of households value the education most; even their calculation of net present value of future income is more accurate.

Table 3: Child labour prevalence based on hh head education

	% of child labour	
Education level of hh head	**2006**	**2008**
No education	49	45
Literate	28	31
Class 1-5	18	15
Others	5	9

Source: Constructed from ERG Survey (2008)

Some studies attempts to establish the two way relationship that either children work because they do not go to school or children do not go to school because they work or both. Whichever happens in reality, it is fairly conclusive that educated households are less likely to send their children to work during economic hardship.

3.4 Household characteristics

3.4.1 Income of the household

It is observed from the data set that 5.5% more households (29 households) have sent their children to work in 2008. The increment in the income of some of these households is due to their own children's involvement in work. On the other hand, additional 3% (16 households) have switched their children out of self business or self farm as their income has increased in 2008 as compared to 2006. Thus, the direction of causal relationship between child labour and income is not conclusive, exactly what is observed in the related literature. It is quite difficult to establish if child labour is the consequence of lack of income.

Table 4: Change in child labour hour with respect to change in real income

	Paid job				Unpaid job in family enterprises				household activities	
	days/month		hours/day		days/month		hours/day		hours/day	
Income Change	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008
Decreased	20	23	8	10	21	22	8	7	2	2
Increased	16	21	7	9	10	16	3	5	2	2

Source: Estimated from ERG survey (2008)

Some households who were net consumers sent their children to paid work or engaged them in family enterprises to generate income. Some other households who were net producers took price hike as an opportunity to increase their income, so they seemed to involve their children in work in their farms or businesses. Thus, both lower income and higher income are likely to affect child labour in a similar direction (Table 4). This, in turn, makes it difficult to establish if child labour is the consequence of lack of income.

3.4.2 Other household and child characteristics

Household size is also found to be a factor that sometimes plays an active role in case of a decision whether to send a child to work or not. Similarly, the number of earning members of a household plays an important role in case of child labour decisions. The vast majority of working children in rural Bangladesh are in agricultural work, predominantly on farms operated by their families. Land, which is typically distributed very unequally, is the most important store of wealth in a rural setting. Thus, household landholding is expected to play a vital role in child labour decision, but no significant role of landholding was observed here.

Child characteristics such as age and gender appear to be important determinant of child labour. As children grow up they acquire more experience and more human capital which

creates a prospect of higher wages that induces them to leave school and get involved in work. Obviously, older children were found more into child labour in both years. In case of boys, not only the mean working hour has increased but also the number of boys involved in paid and unpaid outside jobs has increased, which goes with the common notion that boys work outside.

The close observation about the magnitude of increase shows that the mean hours of working has increased more for boys than girls. This is the case may be due to social constraints of not having the workplace security, managing family and children etc. as well as physical constraints such as nutritional deficiency for girls, lower average weight for girls than boys and so on. In case of domestic work the involvement dynamics clearly shows the third world phenomenon that girls are always busy to maintain the works in household chores. It is in fact due to the traditional mindset that girls are adroit in house-keeping activities.

3.5 Resilience of child labour

Thus so far the intensity of child labour has not been explored. The intensity of child labour is measured by working hours per day and days per month. Child labourers worked on average more in 2008 than 2006 which is reflected in more days per month or more hours per day or both. For instance, child labourers in rural Kurigram worked on average 22 days per month and 8 hours per day in 2008 for paid jobs in contrast to 15 days per month and 8 hours per day in 2006. The average child labour hours per month on paid jobs increased substantially from 2006.

Table 5: labour days/month and labour hours/day for men, women, and children

	paid job outside the household				unpaid job in family enterprises				household activities	
	days/month		hours/day		days/month		hours/day		hours/day	
Type	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008	2006	2008
children	17	22	8	10	15	19	5	6	2	2
women	21	21	8	8	17	18	5	5	5	5
men	18	18	8	9	19	19	8	8	2	2

Source: Estimated from ERG Survey (2008)

There were no significant differences for men and women with respect to work hours/day and work days/month for all types of work (Table 5). However, the average number of days per month and hours per day spent for paid jobs and unpaid jobs in family enterprises by children jumped up substantially over the two year period. One explanation for the dynamics observed in the first two categories is that children have to take up more economic activities during economic hardship as adults are already occupied in jobs and household enterprises. This is a very disturbing observation for children in poor households.

Increased child labour is also reported by 21% households as one of their coping strategies. Some 11% of the households removed their children from school to send them

to work for extra earning. Thus, it is conclusive that children are relatively more resilient in coping with the adversaries of price hike of essentials in Bangladesh.

4. Summary of findings and Conclusions

Child labour increased significantly for paid jobs and household enterprises over the two-year period. When paid jobs and unpaid jobs in family enterprises are considered, 1 in every 6 children worked as a child labourer in 2008 in contrast to 1 in every 7 in 2006. However, household activities showed fewer children for household work in 2008. Obviously, many more children in paid jobs and family enterprises imply fewer children for household activities. Obviously, more outside work limits children to do less household work. Above all, 1 in every 3 children worked as a child labourer in 2008 in contrast to 1 in every 4 in 2006 when any type of labour is considered.

The children of floating households are most affected by the price hike of essentials. Even though a substantial increase in the participation rate, the highest increase, 35%, was observed for the children of floating households in Dhaka metropolitan areas. When unpaid jobs in family enterprises are considered only, the increase was 88% for the same set of households. However, a substantial decrease for these unpaid jobs was observed for the children of rural households. Interestingly, the decrease in unpaid labour hours is often associated with increase in labour hours th in paid jobs indicating instances of switching of child labour from unpaid family enterprises to paid jobs.

There is no conclusive causal relationship between child labour and income in any direction. Some net consumers of essentials sent their children to income enhancing activities. Some other households who were net producers took price hike as an opportunity to increase their income, so they seemed to involve their children in work in their farms or businesses. Thus, both low and high incomes are likely to affect child labour in a similar direction. This, in turn, makes it difficult to establish if child labour is the consequence of lack of income. However, it is conclusive that income shock driven by the price hike of essentials lead to a significant increase in child labour.

Education of household heads plays a crucial role in child labour determination during economic hardship. Three quarters of the households who sent their children to work have no education or they are literate where literate is defined as who are only able to sign and in some cases who know how to write letters even though they have no formal education.

Parental occupation is also likely to be an important determinant of child labour. Child labour increased substantially more among the households, where the occupation of head of the household was a farmer, rickshaw puller, owner of a small store, vegetable seller, carpenter, labourer in a plastic factory, painter, fruit and vegetable collector, quilt sewing, labour in leather factory and so on. Nonagricultural sector experienced a substantial increase in child labour. One of the concerns is that some of these jobs such as working in brick fields, factories, and transportations are perceived to be risky for the children.

Finally, gender bias is obvious in child labour incidences and work hours. The mean hour worker per month and the number of children involved in paid and unpaid outside jobs has increased substantially more for boys than girls. The child labour participation dynamics clearly shows the third world phenomenon that girls are always busy to maintain the works in household chores.

Thus, it is beyond question that the price hike of essentials has an adverse impact on the children of poor households. Government should put priority on controlling the price hike of the essentials. During economic hardship resulting from various economic shocks, government undertakes various safety net programmes targeting the poor. Government should tie no child labour with safety net programmes. Government should enact laws restricting child labour in the perceived risky jobs. Over all, government should emphasize on improving the working conditions, especially where children go to work. NGOs can play a crucial role campaigning for consciousness building on the child labour issue.

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