

Child labour - is it a curse or a reality: Role of Government of Bangladesh and ILO in the elimination of child labour from dangerous industries in Bangladesh

ASM Anam Ullah

Correspondence:

ASM Anam Ullah

Email: russell_adib@yahoo.com.au

ASM Anam Ullah's Bio: Anam's expertise is in globalisation and neoliberalism, ILO, WTO, HRM, employment relations, industrial relations, workplace safety and OHS regulations, Bangladesh and global RMG industry, international business, supply chains management, ethical business and CSR and CSV. Anam was appointed academic by The University of New South Wales, The University of Sydney, The University of Wollongong, Charles Sturt University, The University of Newcastle, and CQUniversity, Australia.

Submitted : September 2021, Accepted October 2021, Published November 2021.

Citation: ASM Anam Ullah. Child labour - is it a curse or a reality: Role of Government of Bangladesh and ILO in the elimination of child labour from dangerous industries in Bangladesh. Middle East Journal of Business. 2021; 16(2): 20-36.

DOI: 10.5742/MEJB.2021.93891

Abstract

Should child labour be considered a social curse or a reality? This inevitable debate has long been taking place in both the public and academic spheres. If child labour has become a curse, then who should be held responsible for creating this curse in society. On the other hand, if socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political aspects of marginalised states worldwide have become a reality, then why such a reality cannot dwindle has long been a fundamental question for policy-makers and capitalists in the world. Whether the extreme form of child labour in Bangladesh is due to the failure of the state's policy and administrative system, or a curse, is another academic discourse. The ILO officially started working in Bangladesh in 1972, and in the same year, Bangladesh ratified several ILO conventions, including a few fundamental conventions. The Bangladesh Government endorsed the "C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)" on 12 March 2001. However, since 2001, Bangladesh's child labour has not decreased significantly due to a lack of constructive and substantial policy from the Government of Bangladesh and the ILO. The fundamental question, therefore, for both the ILO and Bangladesh Government is whether there is the necessity to formulate a more constructive national policy to see the eradication of child labour in Bangladesh rather than considering it as a social curse.

Keywords: Globalisation and neoliberalism, child labour, ILO, UNICEF, UN, Bangladesh Labour Act, BGMEA, collective bargaining, RMG, ethical business, COVID-19

Research aims and objectives

This article aims to review and evaluate the global child labour situation and Bangladesh as a case study to see if the Government of Bangladesh and the ILO have been succeeded in eradicating the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh or any factors hindering their success.

Study design and methodology

This article has primarily been written from a range of secondary sources such as scholarly journal articles, newspapers, media coverage, published reports from the World Bank, IFC, Better Work Bangladesh, ILO and UNICEF.

Findings and contributions to knowledge

The investigation of this article shows that the Government of Bangladesh lacks political commitment to implement the national Labour Act and the ILO conventions. Most importantly, the ILO's piecemeal intervention strategy at the state and organisational level have created academic discourse on whether the ILO can see any significant results in the eradication of child labour in Bangladesh sooner or later.

Conclusions and recommendations

The political commitment of the Government of Bangladesh is essential for the respect and implementation of the ILO Convention (C182), while the enforcement of the national Labour Act is also the biggest challenge for the Government of Bangladesh. Therefore, consideration should also be given to formulating effective policies and intervention strategies of the Government of Bangladesh to control and reduce the worst child labour from the most dangerous industries in Bangladesh. However, without the genuine contribution of significant stakeholders of the Government of Bangladesh such as the ILO, the World Bank, ADB, the IMF, IFC, and national and international NGOs, and donor countries like Australia, Canada, the USA, the UK and the EU, the elimination of any child labour project would not be successful.

Introduction

Any form of child labour is a social stigma. The exploitation of children should have been stopped yesterday; today is too late. Children are the future of the world - they need proper education, health care, and a conducive environment to make their bodies and minds build a sustainable tomorrow.

Child labour - is it a social curse or a reality? This fundamental question needs to be addressed more deeply to understand why child labour is still prevalent globally, particularly in Bangladesh. Child labour is not a curse; it is a reality in some regions or countries (see Lau & Chan, 2021). The failure of most disadvantaged states, including the failed policies of international organisations in child labour eradication programs, has exacerbated the situation in the world (see Ahamed, 2013; Lau & Chan, 2021; Anjum, 2021). In Bangladesh, since the nation's independence in 1971 the consecutive governments have failed to address the child labour issue, which significantly expedited the worst form of child labour in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, an extreme form of child labour is apparent in almost every informal sector, such as agriculture, construction, leather, transportation and the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry (see Naeem, Shaikat & Ahmed, 2011; Henry, 2011; Ahmed & Ray, 2014; Beaubien, 2016; Bakkar, 2019; Lau & Chan, 2021; Anjum, 2021). Bangladesh ratified the ILO "C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)" on 12 March 2001 (see ILO Convention, C182). However, respecting and enforcing the ILO conventions and the national Labour Act have been a significant challenge for the Government of Bangladesh. As a result, child labourers are still employed in various informal sectors, and they often face death in hazardous factory fires (see Ahamed, 2013; Anjum, 2021).

According to the 1996 Labour Force Survey conducted by the Government of Bangladesh, there are more than 6.3 million children between the ages of five and 14 who worked for wages and who are not enrolled in school (see Douglas, Ferguson & Klett, 2004; Henry, 2011). Afrin (2021) published a report in Dhaka Tribune, a leading online newspaper revealing that: "Bangladesh fourth worst-hit country in the world in terms of [a] number of children affected by elevated blood lead level". Now the question is how to wipe out child labour in Bangladesh? Bangladesh Government has taken some strategies to eradicate child labourers, for example, by forming the Child Labour National Action plan in 2012, but its progress has not been satisfactory. Significantly, Bangladesh lacks an adequate data collection and storage system (centrally), which prevents researchers from finding out the genuine number of child labourers in Bangladesh. However, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey report shows that as of 2015, the country had some 3.45 million active child labourers. There would be at least more than 4 million child labourers in Bangladesh now, from earlier estimates of BBS (Rezvi, 2017). Due to COVID-19, the percentage of child labourers might increase significantly over the next few years in Bangladesh and globally (ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

Therefore, this article aims to reflect on the critical discussions that should provide a clear understanding of the facts that

have determined child labour in the world and Bangladesh. The recommendation in this article might be fruitful for the Bangladesh Government, ILO and other countries to reduce the dangerous form of child labour in the future. However, two essential research questions that we need to address carefully in this article are: (a) why still child labour occurs in the world and Bangladesh and (b) how to eliminate child labour? The second research question mainly draws recommendations at the end of this article.

Definitions of child labour

Before discussing the facts of child labour in the world and Bangladesh through theoretical lenses, it is crucial to know the definitions of child labour first. According to Dayio lu Tayfur (2013, p1):

"Child labourers constitute a group of working children who are either too young to work or are engaged in hazardous activities – that is, work that is potentially harmful to their physical, social, psychological, or educational development"

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNICEF (2020, p.18) jointly defined child labour, which is:

"Child labour comprises work that children are too young to perform and/or work that, by its nature or circumstances, is likely to harm children's health, safety or morals. In more technical terms, child labour encompasses work performed by children in any type of employment, with two important exceptions: permitted light work for children within the age range specified for light work; and work that is not classified as among the worst forms of child labour, particularly as hazardous work, for children above the general minimum working age. A broader statistical definition includes hazardous unpaid household services, commonly referred to as hazardous household chores)"

However, the ILO again has defined the term "child labour" which refers to work that:

- *is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harm to children; and/or*
- *interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO, n.d.).*

The definition of child labour is clear from both scholars and international organisations such as the ILO and UNICEF. However, the question is whether the state or the organisation is following the guidelines of the international organisation or is it still the worst form of child labour everywhere in the world?

Critical theoretical discourse for child labour

The contemporary scholarship reflects upon various issues that considerably produce child labour in the world. For example, Lau and Chan (2021) argue that poverty should have been considered one of the significant causes of child labour. However, other factors, such as family size, geography, education, socio-economic and socio-cultural and global political economics, also play a crucial role in child exploitation and child labour worldwide (Lau & Chan, 2021). For example, most child labourers are engaged in the Least Developed Countries

(LDCs) and Asian, African and Sub-Saharan African belts due to the high rate of poverty in those countries (UNICEF, 2021). Scholars, e.g., Ullah and Amanullah (2021), argue that LDCs are seriously behind in capital accumulation than most western, European and other developed countries. In addition, LDCs have inadequate education systems, low regulation in the workplace, and socio-economic structural barriers etc. Thus, the fact that these disadvantaged states can deal with their socio-economic and other cultural and political problems that have long persisted in their

countries should be given another important consideration by scholars and policy-makers worldwide. For example, scholars (Ullah & Amanullah, 2021) further argue that approximately 880 million people in 46 countries have contributed two per cent to the global GDP and one per cent to worldwide trade. Therefore, there is a compelling call for significant changes in politico-economic policies to reduce poverty and other socio-economic barriers and eliminate child labour from these countries (see Ullah & Amanullah, 2021; Lau & Chan, 2021).

Graph One: Bangladesh's GDP from 2010 to 2020



Source: Tradingeconomic.com

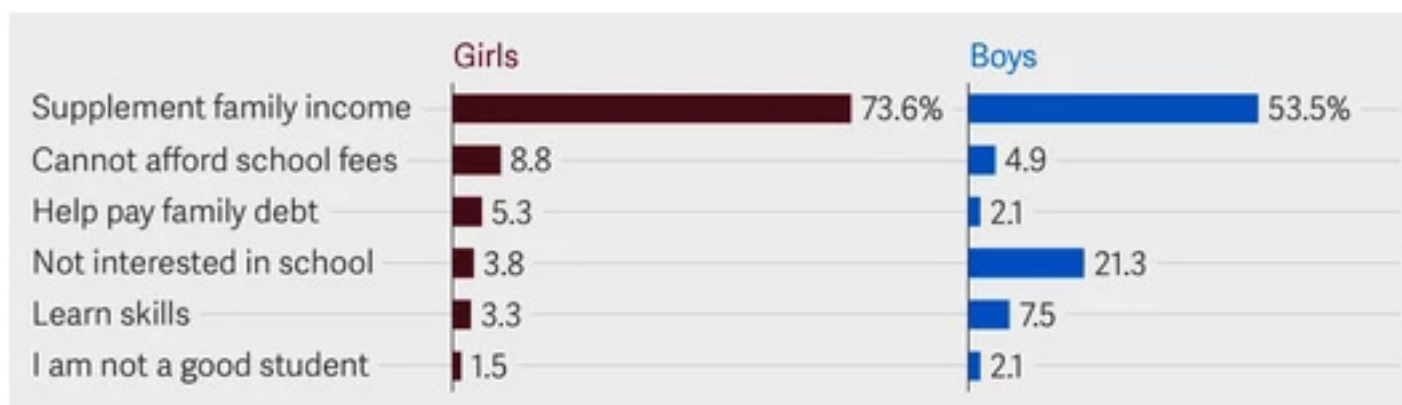
Scholars, e.g., Ullah and Amanullah (2021) argue that Bangladesh is about to be ousted from the list of the LDCs by 2026 as the review Committee for Development Policy of the UN set some obligations to fulfil on 12 March 2018 despite Bangladesh's ongoing progress on socio-economic aspects in the last decade.

With approximately 170 million people and an estimated US\$325 billion GDP, Bangladesh has secured its 37th largest economic position globally. Graph One shows how Bangladesh's economy has grown steadily over the past decade. Bangladesh's economy is boosting because of the direct support of the informal sectors of the country. For example, Bangladesh's RMG industry's contribution to the national economy has been phenomenal over the last few decades (see Labowitz, 2016; Siddiqi, 2019; Rahman & Rahman, 2020; Ullah, 2021). The RMG industry's contribution to the national GDP would be approximately 13 per cent or more when it aims to make a profit of US\$50 billion within the next few years from its current US\$40 billion (see Haque & Gopalakrishnan, 2019; Ullah, 2021). However, scholars, e.g., Ashwin, Kabeer & Schuessler (2020), argue that global clothing brands are culprits and have connections with the Bangladeshi RMG traders who have the 'Porsches, Rolexes, and helicopters', while RMG workers are starving and fighting for their basic needs (see also Ullah, 2016; Ullah, 2021; IndustriALL Global Union, 2021).

Child labour in the RMG industry in Bangladesh dates back to the early days of the 1980s (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.; Islam & Akther, 2015). Due to the socio-economic and other social obstacles, a Bangladeshi girl or a boy at an early age when they should be at school and home may instead work in dangerous RMG

and other informal industries. Children work long hours at minimum wages and sometimes without regular payment in the RMG and most informal sectors in Bangladesh (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.). Here we can find an example of Ms Kalpona Akter, a labour activist from Bangladesh, who was also child labour in Bangladesh's RMG sector for a while. In the early 1990s, Ms Akter started working in the RMG factory after her father's death when she was just 12 years old (see Human Rights Watch, 2016). However, Ms Akter, in several of her public speeches, acknowledged the reality and her awful experience as child labour and how child labourers are brutally abused in the RMG industry in Bangladesh. Ms Akter's case reflects the actual child labour condition and how pitiful it was. Unfortunately, Bangladesh's current child labour conditions did not change much (see Lau & Chan, 2021). Ms Akter later fled the industry as a child labourer but began working as a union organiser to support RMG workers defending their fundamental rights in the RMG sector. Ms Akter is also the Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity founder and executive director and was awarded Human Rights Watch's Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism in 2016 (see Human Rights Watch, 2016).

There are thousands more examples of child labour exploitation in the RMG sector of Bangladesh, although we only know of a few cases like those of Ms Akhtar (see Ahamed, 2013). The situation of child labour in the RMG sector is not well controlled due to insufficient intervention by the Bangladesh Government. Moreover, due to the low participation of trade unions, the control of child labourers in this sector has become challenging (see Lau & Chan, 2021).

Table One: The reasons for child labour in Bangladesh

Source: ADRA (2019)

Contemporary scholarship suggests that trade unionism in Bangladesh has been discouraged from attracting FDIs since the 1980s, which weakens the power of trade unionism to organise collectively against any kind of exploitation at the factory level in the RMG sector (see Siddiqi, 2015; Ashraf & Prentice, 2019; Bair, Anner & Blasi, 2020). In the entire process, children are more exploited as they cannot raise voices or form trade unions to protect their fundamental rights. Scholars argue that conflict between the sectoral and federation trade union bodies in Bangladesh and their association with the right-wing political parties should also be considered a severe matter towards protecting Bangladesh's RMG workers' rights (see Ashraf & Prentice, 2019).

Capitalists are always closely associated with the state and power, and workers are consistently devalued and exploited (see Harvey, 2007; Brown, 2018; Munck, 2010; Ullah, 2021). Scholars argue that capitalists do not consider workers as a supporting force in industrial relations which creates complex situations and often creates antagonistic relationships between employers and workers (see Munck, 2010). However, the state must be proactive to safeguard children and child labour from any exploitation. Still, scholars, e.g., Harvey (2007), Munck (2010), raised this fundamental question whether the state can protect workers' basic rights in the capitalist mode of the production process that is strongly apparent in the world?

A study result recently published in ADRA (2019) shows why child labour occurs in Bangladesh. The survey (ADRA, 2019) has shown the results based on six categories, and the top variable was related to poverty when most child respondents stated that their income had been a supplement to their families. So, poverty is again a dilemma to many of Bangladesh's children, who have often been compromised of their present and future by working hard in dangerous workplaces throughout the country for supplementing their families (see ADRA, 2019). After 50 years of Bangladesh's independence, it is hard to believe that abundant children still live in the streets of the capital city of Dhaka, where multi-billion-dollar business deals and transactions take place every day (Gilbert, 2018). Globalisation perhaps was a blessing for western and Bangladeshi capitalists (RMG traders) who are mainly responsible for an extreme form of child exploitation on top of poverty and other socio-economic and socio-cultural barriers in Bangladesh (see Saxena, 2019; Crinis, 2019; Siddiqi, 2019; Lau & Chan, 2021; Ullah, 2021).

On the other hand, contemporary scholarship suggests that the issue that needs to be seriously considered is whether the demand for child labour in the global supply chain has been reduced or is still increasing (see Crinis, 2019; Lau & Chan, 2021). The exploitation

of child labour by international clothing brands like Nike, Adidas, Walmart in developing countries (Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh) have been in the academic discourse for a long time (see Ahamed, 2013; Ullah, 2021). Multinationals come to low regulated countries to exploit workers and child labourers to pay low wages and often force them to work in unhealthy production hubs. If the global and local capitalists exploit children, then it is also essential to find a solution by capitalists who mainly use and exploit children mostly in impoverished countries. However, theoretically and practically, it would be a worthy dream to consider that child labour will be completely eradicated from this world soon, especially when the capitalist mode of production has been more potent in the world (see Harvey, 2007; Munck, 2010; Ullah, 2021). Hence, we can considerably say that poverty should not be considered only the issue for child labour in Bangladesh. Scholars should consider other important factors such as globalisation, which has lessened most developing countries' potentials and why these countries remain ineffective in formulating effective policies and strategies to eradicate child labour. Notably, scholars should also consider the capitalist mode of the production method, which perhaps would not end up child labour in this world. Thus, how capitalism can be better structured and how capitalists can spend more on their CSR budgets can also be a topic of discussion for the elimination of child labour in the world and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, another theoretical debate could be whether Bangladesh needs to develop a far-sighted plan to eradicate child labour with political commitment, which has been absent since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971.



Child labour in Bangladesh

Source: The Daily Observer (2015).

Literature

A brief history of child labour

When we mainly consider the modern form of child labour or slavery, we should not undermine the historical discourse on child labour, as it provides the background of child labour in the world. Historically, it is not well traced, but it can be assumed that from the very beginning of human history, child labour or child servant was common practice in society (see History. Com Editors, 2009). However, the industrial revolution made the situation for child labour worse. In the early centuries, business traders and factory owners began recruiting child labour in crowded and unsafe and unclean factories, where factory codes and the proper industrial Act were missing. Throughout the first half of the 1800s, the USA had recruited a considerably high number of child labourers in the handicraft and agricultural industry, when slavery was also a severe issue. Surprisingly, in 1900, almost 18 per cent or more of all American workers were under the age of 16 (see History. Com Editors, 2009). Harry McShane, a young American factory worker, was a prime example of a machine belt injury in a spring factory in May 1908. His arm was pulled close to his shoulder, and his right leg was broken. Unfortunately, he did not receive any compensation from the factory owner when he was only 16 years old, and the fate of many RMG workers in Bangladesh today is the same (Inspireeducation, n.d.). The fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on 25 March, 1911 in Greenwich Village, Manhattan, New York City, was the deadliest industrial disaster in the history of America. Events such as the Harry McShane's accident and Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, saw the rise of the labour movement that brought occupational health and safety issues to the forefront of society (Kleeberg, 2003; Aldrich, 1997; Fishback & Kantor, 2007; Inspireeducation, n.d.). The timeline for child workers:

- 1802: *Children's working day is 12 hours*
- 1819: *Minimum work age is 9 in the cotton industry*
- 1833: *Minimum work age is 9 in all large factories. Children aged between 9 and 12 may only work 8 hours a day, and have 2 hours of compulsory education.*
- 1842: *Children may no longer work underground in mines*
- 1847: *Children's working day is 10 hours*
- 1878: *Minimum work age is 10*
- 1901: *Minimum work age is 12 (ACTUWORKSITE, n.d.).*

The world is much more civilised now, but the question is whether the capitalists have changed their attitude towards child labour, perhaps not. Further elaboration and evidence from recent exploitation of child labour (see *The Diplomat*, 2021) create inevitable arguments as to whether the world is still ready to see a positive outcome in the child labour eradication program, especially in Bangladesh. Before we move into a discussion on global and Bangladesh's perspectives on child labour elimination, it is also imperative to know how the ILO evaluate its progress and success in the child labour elimination process in the last one hundred years (see ILO, n.d.).

The ILO as a labour organisation and its structure

The ILO, as a labour organisation, despite its limitations in enforcement and implementation of significant conventions in the member states, has played a role in critical historical junctures. The ILO has experienced the Great Depression, decolonisation, the creation of solidarity in Poland, the victory against apartheid in South Africa - and construct a moral and productive framework for a just globalisation today. Under the Treaty of Versailles after World War I, the ILO was founded in 1919 to reflect the belief that universal and long-lasting peace can only be achieved by ensuring social justice (see Helfer, 2006; Standing, 2008; Rodger et al., 2009; Henry, 2011). The ILO tripartite type of social dialogue approach is unique in the world. However, several scholars argue whether this tripartite intervention structure is effective enough to stop exploitation around the globe (see, e.g., Helfer, 2006; Standing, 2008; Rodgers et al., 2009). Beyond ILO's criticisms on its success at the state level on workers exploitation, its several conventions are the guideline for the state members to follow towards eliminating child labour or workers exploitation, and some are discussed below.

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 1998

The ILO's "*Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*" was adopted by governments, multinational companies and labour right NGOs in 1998. "In line with the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", ILO's "Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work it aimed for:

- (a) *freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;*
- (b) *the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;*
- (c) *the effective abolition of child labour; and*
- (d) *the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (ILO, 1998).*

C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

The ILO recommends the member states ratify, respect and enforce Convention 182 to eradicate child labour by following the five crucial recommendations that mainly creates the worst form of child labour;

- *Slavery or similar practices, such as the sale or trade of children or the use of children in debt bondage or serfdom;*
- *Obligatory or forced work, including the compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflicts;*
- *The recruitment, use or offer of a child for involvement in prostitution, pornographic material or pornographic shows;*
- *The use, recruitment or offer of a child for illicit activities, notably in the production or trafficking of drugs, as defined in the specific international treaties;*
- *Work which, by its very nature or the conditions in which it is undertaken, is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or morality of children (Humanium, n.d.).*

The overview of child labour from global perspectives

To get an accurate picture and estimates of global child labour is a challenging task because many developing countries do not keep a record of their actual number of child labour. According to UNICEF and ILO, by 10 June 2021 - the number of children in child labour worldwide had reached 160 million - an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years - with millions more at risk due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, UNICEF and ILO also warned we will see another 9 million children at work by 2022, due to the COVID-19 pandemic (UNICEF, 2021). Understandably, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation for child labour, but previous efforts have not been even conducive towards eliminating child labour worldwide (Henry, 2011; Ospina & Roser, 2016). In addition, without emergency mitigation step by step, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to push millions of more children into child labour.

Contemporary research shows some astonishing results that children aged 5 to 11 in child labour now account for more than half of the global child labour. Dangerous work for children aged 5 to 17 - defined as work that could harm their health, safety or morals - has increased from 65 million to 79 million in 2016 (UNICEF, 2021). Graph Two shows that the progress of child labour elimination was quite well followed until 2016, but after, the rate of child labour has started increasing again in the world. Nevertheless, Graph Three shows the world's child labour mainly occurs in rural areas rather than urban slums.



Photo source: Humanium (n.d.).

Impact of COVID-19

Without mitigation measures, the number of children in child labour could rise from 160 million in 2020 to 168.9 million by the end of 2022

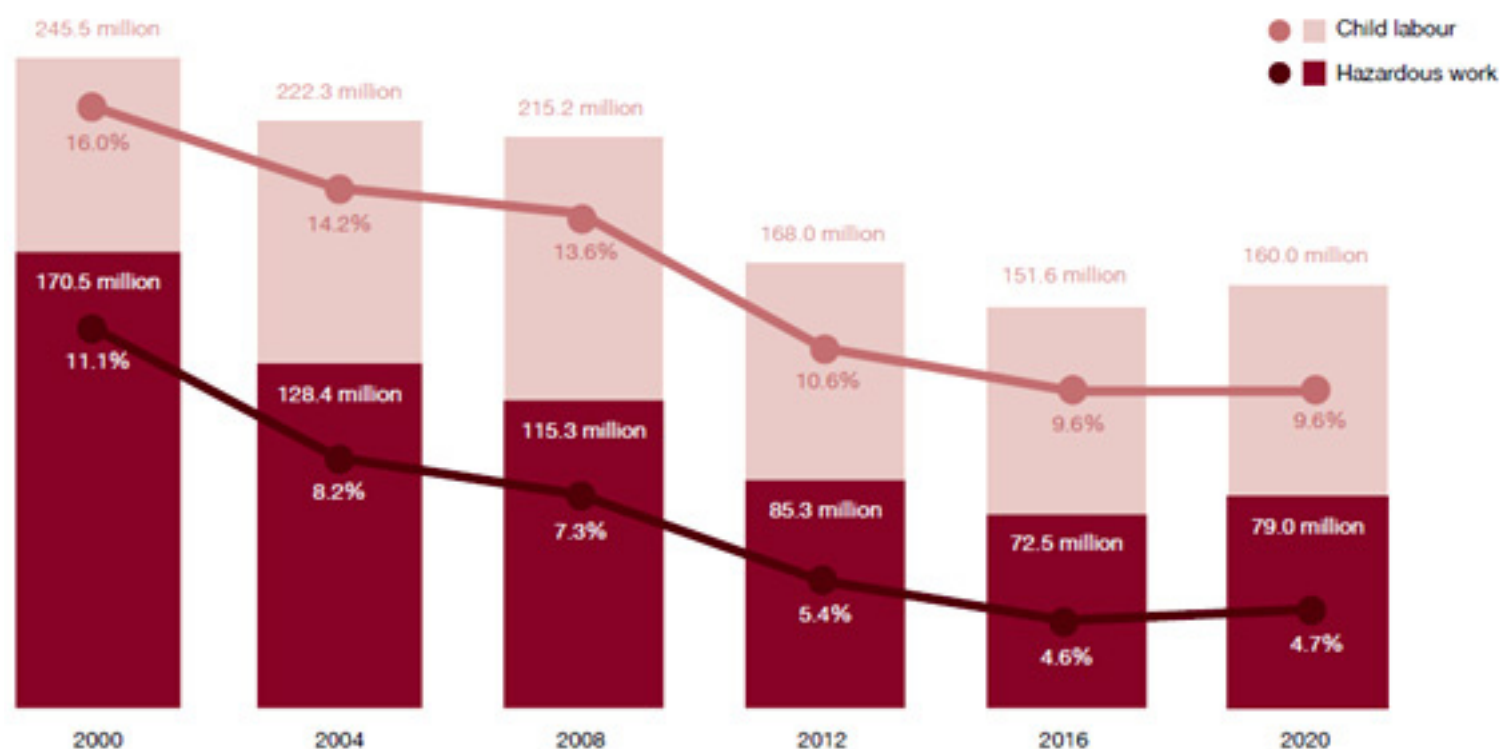
Number of children aged 5 to 17 years in child labour, projected to the end of 2022



© UNICEF/UNI274800/Soumaila

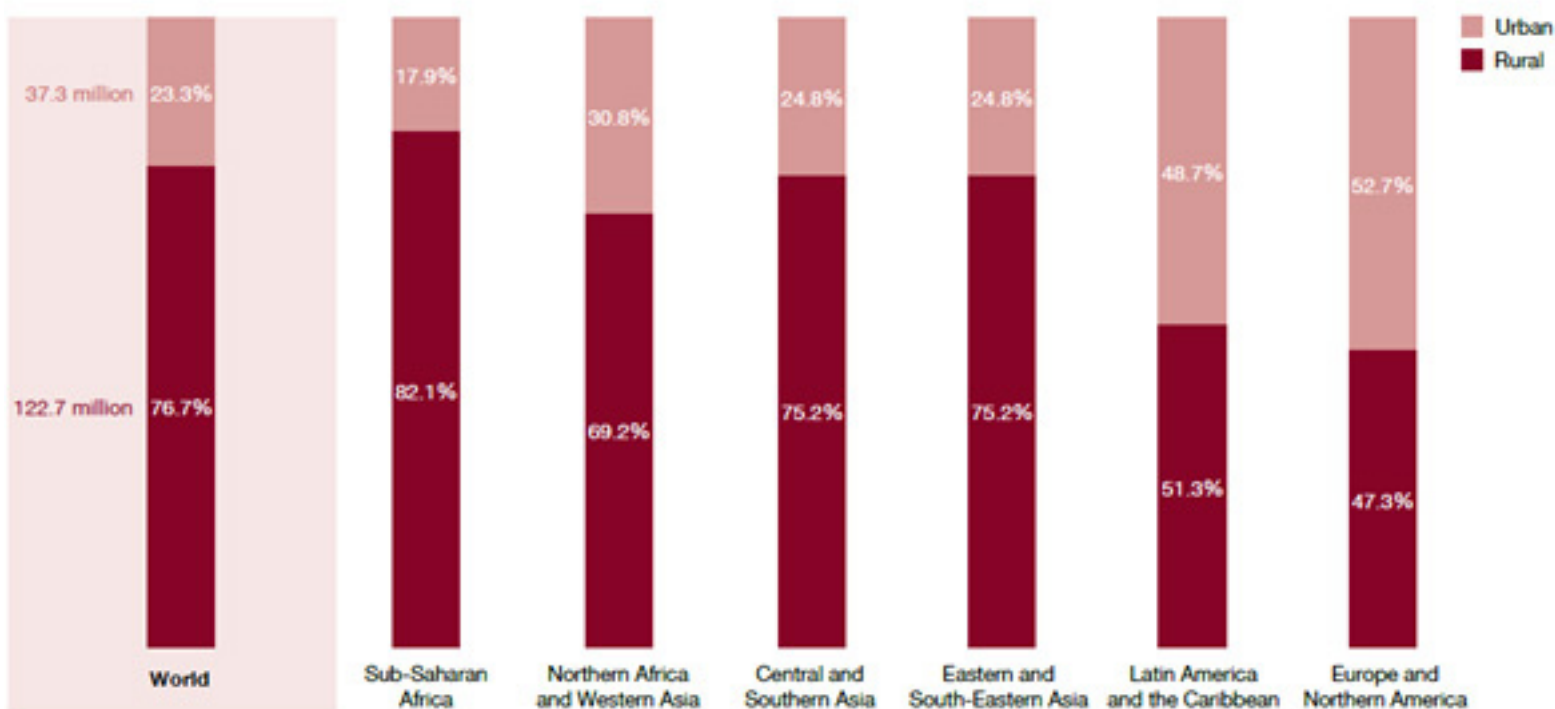
Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

Graph Two: The child labour elimination progress



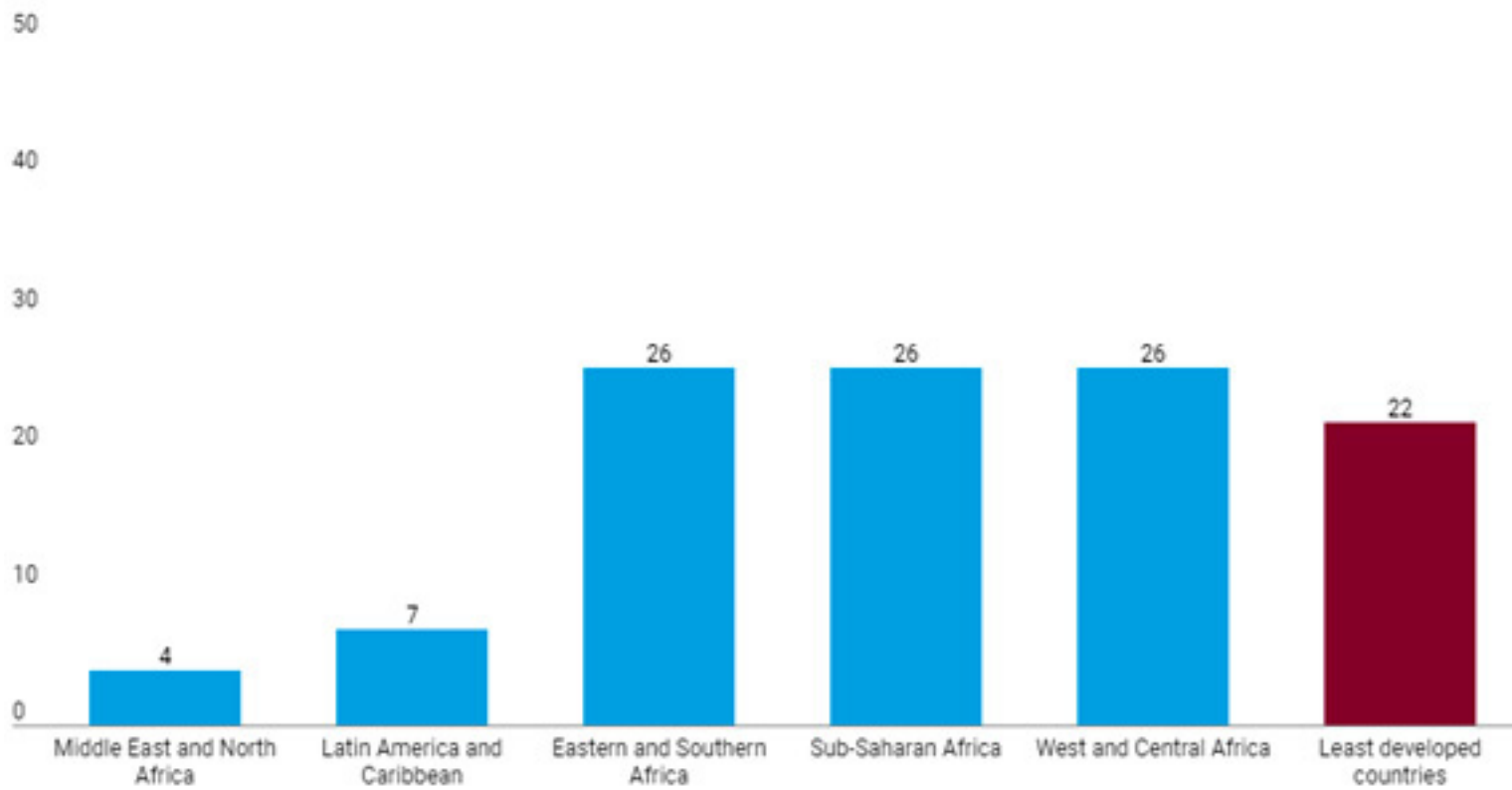
Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

Graph Three: Comparison statistics between urban and rural child workers in the world



Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

Graph Four: The regional child labour aged between 5 to 17

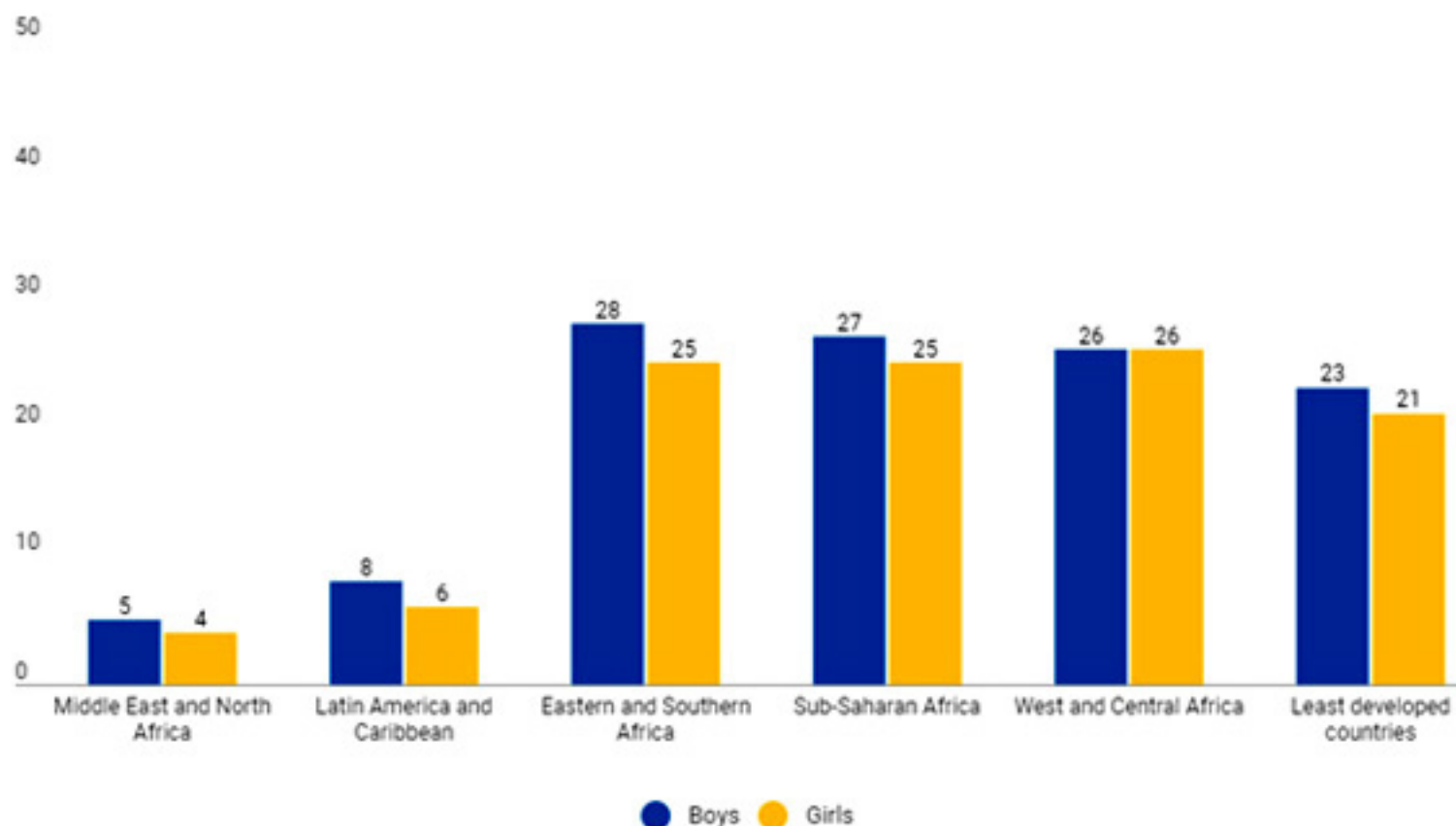


Source: UNICEF (2021) based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other national surveys, 2012-2019.⁽¹⁾

Graph Four shows the percentage of child labour based on the regions. Eastern and Southern Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, West and Central Africa, and LDCs, such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Cambodia) produce the larger scale of child labour (see, e.g., Naeem, Shaukat & Ahmed, 2011; Bakkar, 2019; UNICEF, 2021). The gender disparities research shows that both boys and girls are almost equally involved in child labour in these regions, despite

a slightly higher percentage of boys than girls in some regions (see UNICEF, 2021). Nevertheless, the study indicates that girls are primarily involved in most household services as unpaid child labour. Graph Five shows the percentage of boys and girls engaged in child labour aged between 5 to 17 in these regions.

(1) Notes: Regional estimates represent data from countries covering at least 50 per cent of the regional population of children aged 5 to 17. Data coverage was insufficient to calculate a global estimate and regional estimates for East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, North America, South Asia and Western Europe.

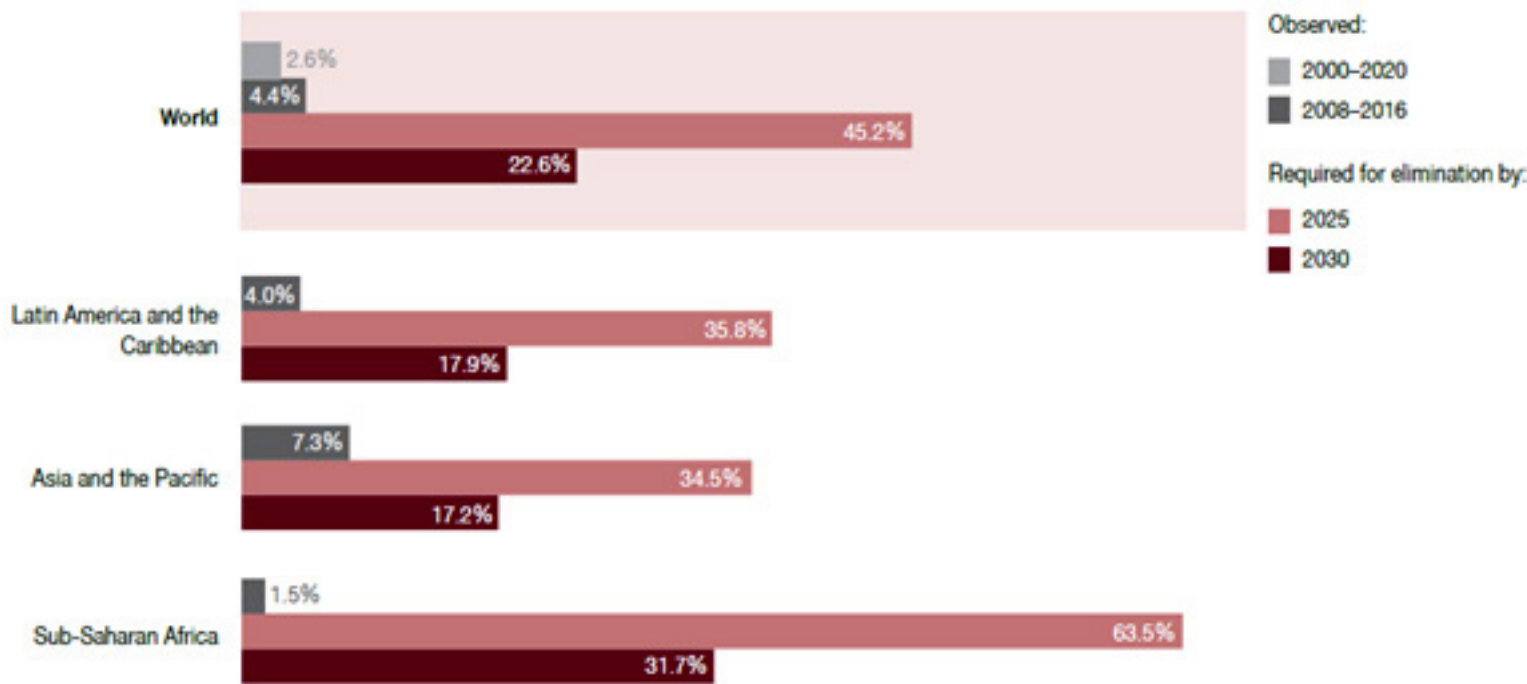
Graph Five: The regional child labour aged between 5 to 17 (boys & girls)

Source: UNICEF, 2021, based on Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other national surveys, 2012-2019.

Data from the National Household Survey are calculated based on the extrapolation of 2020 every four years from 2000, consistent with the child labour estimates produced. The new Numan uses a survey of more than 100 households to cover two-thirds of the world's children aged 5 to 17. What is said in the report is worrying. Global advances against child labour have stalled for the first time since it began producing two global estimates decades

ago (see ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Graph Six shows the actual picture of the current status of the child labour elimination project of SDG8 that has to be ended by 2030. Still, there is significant concern whether SDG 8 will be achieved by then due to COVID-19 and other socio-economic variars in the world (see ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

Graph Six The target to meet SDGs to eliminate child labour by 2030



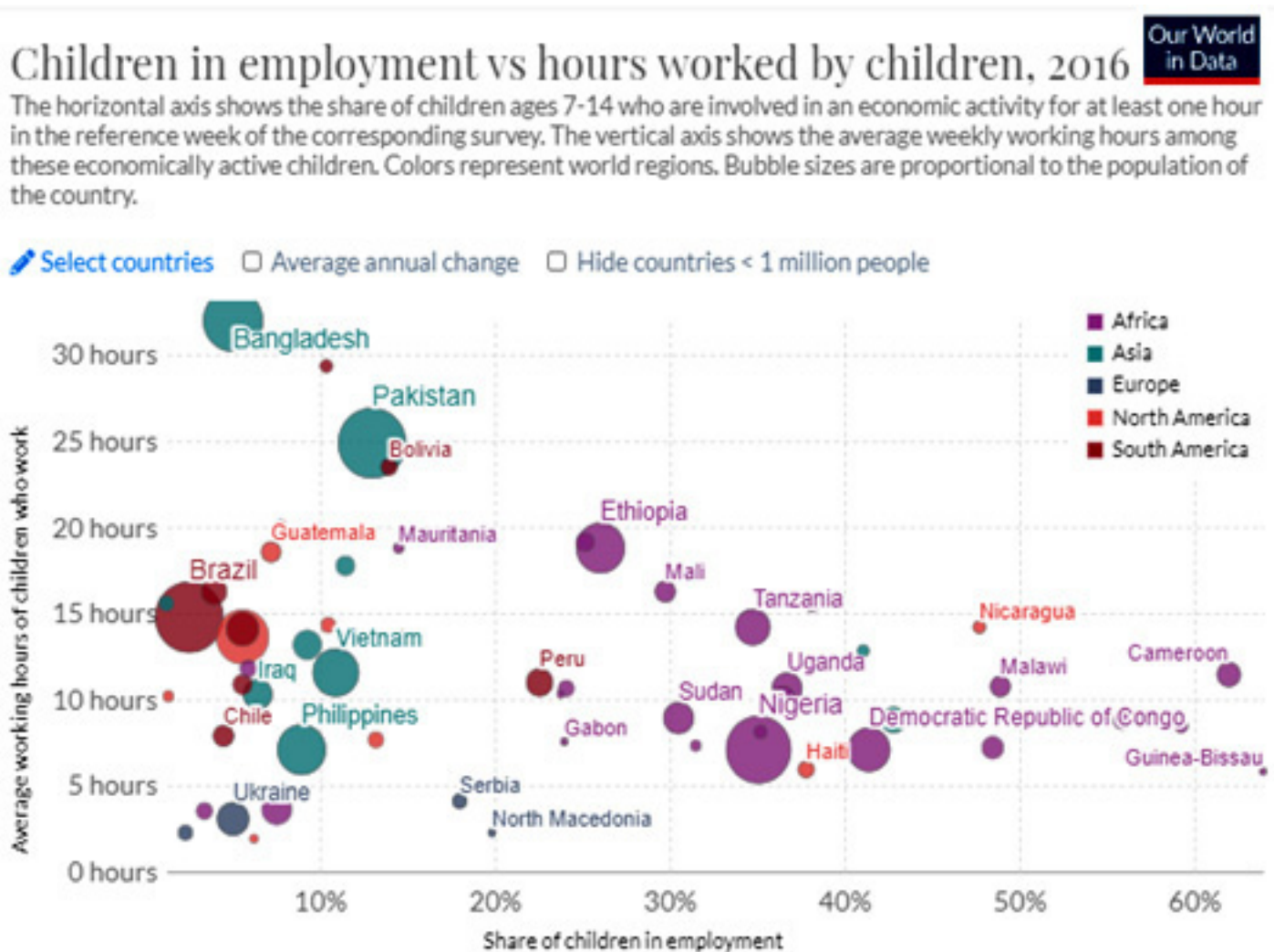
Source: ILO & UNICEF (2021).

The overview of child labour from Bangladesh's perspectives

- Currently, 4.3 percent of children (between the ages of 5 and 14) in Bangladesh engage in exploitative work to support their families. Statistics determine that not all Bangladeshi children attend school. Lack of education is frequently a barrier to higher-paying jobs.
- Eighty-three percent of child laborers work in rural areas. Since resources and jobs are more readily available in the city, children may seek employment in urban areas for low wages.
- Children are especially vulnerable to exploitation and therefore receive minimal compensation for their work.
- There are regulations on child labor in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics informs the existing legislature which defines child laborers as those working between the ages of 5 and 14. In 2006, the Bangladeshi government outlawed work by children under the age of 14. Despite this, the number of child laborers has continued to rise in the past decade, given that most children work at small local businesses, factories or homes. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that approximately 5 million children are full-time workers.
- Bangladesh also has the fourth-highest rate of child marriage in the world. While families rely on their children to work, many encourage their young daughters to marry due to being unable to support them. Reducing poverty is a promising start for addressing gender discrimination (Powell, 2019).

When the government of any state fails to provide basic needs for children, they go to work. In Bangladesh, many families have only one person to earn money, and children get jobs to help their families when a member of the family dies or suffers for a long time (see Ahamed, 2013; Lau & Chan, 2013). In addition, another significant obstacle to eliminating child labour in Bangladesh is the natural disasters that occur almost every year. Tsunamis, cyclones and floods are the main ones. When daily life collapses due to natural disasters like cyclones, it becomes difficult for many families to survive in the remote coastal areas of Bangladesh. So, families move to major cities of Bangladesh, mainly to the capital city Dhaka, where some jobs are available. However, due to the non-enforcement of the National Labour Act and the ILO convention, the industry in which children get jobs is not healthy and often suffers from catastrophic factory casualties. Recent research (RMG Bangladesh, 2021) exhibit children aged between seven to 17 work 12 to 14 hours, six days a week, in most unhealthy and dangerous industries such as leather. Children employed at the leather factories usually do all kinds of work, including animal slaughter, skinning, dyeing, waste disposal and manufacturing of leather products and by-products such as glue and meat (see RMG Bangladesh, 2021). Almost every informal economic sector in Bangladesh lack proper OHS regulation (see Ullah, 2021). Although children are often employed in unhealthy informal and non-regulated economic production houses, Bangladesh's domestic (household) work is also dangerous. Most underage children do not receive adequate wages, food and health care in household work in Bangladesh. Most importantly, underage children engaged in domestic work in Bangladesh are mentally and physically abused (see Chart Two of this article). They primarily work long hours day and night, revealing the worst forms of child labour considered modern slavery (see Ahmed, 2013; Beaubien, 2016; ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Hiba, Jentsch, & Zink, 2021).

Chart One: Childrens' working hours in the various destinations in the world and Bangladesh



Source: Ospina & Roser, 2016, cited in Our World in Data).

The London-based Overseas Development Institute surveyed about 3,000 families in the slums of Dhaka city. They found in the survey that children work full-time as young as 6 for 100 to 110 hours a week. On average, working children earn less than \$2 per day. So the London based survey report shows more working hours than the "Our World Data" in child labour in Bangladesh, and both surveys were conducted in 2016. In addition, the London based survey also found 13 per cent of young respondents aged below 13 works in the textile and clothing sector (Beaubien, 2016).

Bangladesh's commitment to ILO and UN conventions and labour standards

ILO, since 1972, has been working with the Government of Bangladesh following a social dialogue or tripartite approach to establish social justice and build a healthy work environment in Bangladesh, but results have not been satisfactory. The ILO has been significantly unable to persuade the Bangladesh Government to respect and enforce the ILO conventions that were already ratified, while the National Labour Act 2006 (amended in 2013) is not also well-enforced (see Human Rights Watch, 2013; Afrin, 2014; Rahman & Rahman, 2020).

From 1919 to date, 190 Conventions, 206 Recommendations, and six Protocols have been adopted by the ILO (see ILO, n.d.). Conventions like child labour elimination, forced labour, collective bargaining and freedom of association, minimum wage, gender discrimination, social security, working time, occupational health and safety are the few among so many other conventions that the ILO adopted, and its member states from time to time ratify those conventions and aim to respect and enforce their jurisdictions. However, due to changes like work and patterns globally, the ILO has modified some conventions and replaced older ones (see, e.g., Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014). The ILO aims to promote its Conventions and Recommendations by stating that:

An international legal framework on social standards ensures a level playing field in the global economy. It helps governments and employers to avoid the temptation of lowering labour standards in the belief that this could give them a greater comparative advantage in international trade... Because international labour standards are minimum standards adopted by governments and the social partners, it is in everyone's interest to see these rules applied across the board, so that those who do not put them into practice do not undermine the efforts of those who do (Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014, p. 447).

The above excerpt suggests that ILO's member states should adopt the Conventions and Recommendations that the ILO adopted since 1919 towards ensuring the international labour standards, which is crucial for workers and their families. The above quote also appeals to the member state to ratify the ILO Conventions and Recommendations so that other states can become motivated to ratify ILO's conventions and Recommendations (see Alli, 2008; Baccini & Koenig-Archibugi, 2014). However, despite this appeal from the ILO, not all states have yet ratified all ILO conventions. Scholars argue that it lacks the political will of the state governments or socio-economic or global political economy policy that might significantly hinder ratification of the ILO conventions (see also Rodgers et al., 2009; Ullah, 2020). Bangladesh, however, has ratified 35 ILO conventions altogether, which includes seven fundamental conventions. The fundamental convention that the Bangladesh Government has not still approved is "C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)". Out of 35 Conventions ratified in different categories by Bangladesh since 1972, 30 are in force, one convention has been denounced, four instruments abrogated, and none have been ratified in the past 12 months.

Bangladesh Government is the signatory of the United Nations Human Rights Convention 1948, and in line with Article 23, Bangladesh is also the signatory of the 2011 UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, which require:

(a) *States' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms;*

(b) *The role of business enterprises as specialised organs of society performing specialised functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights;*

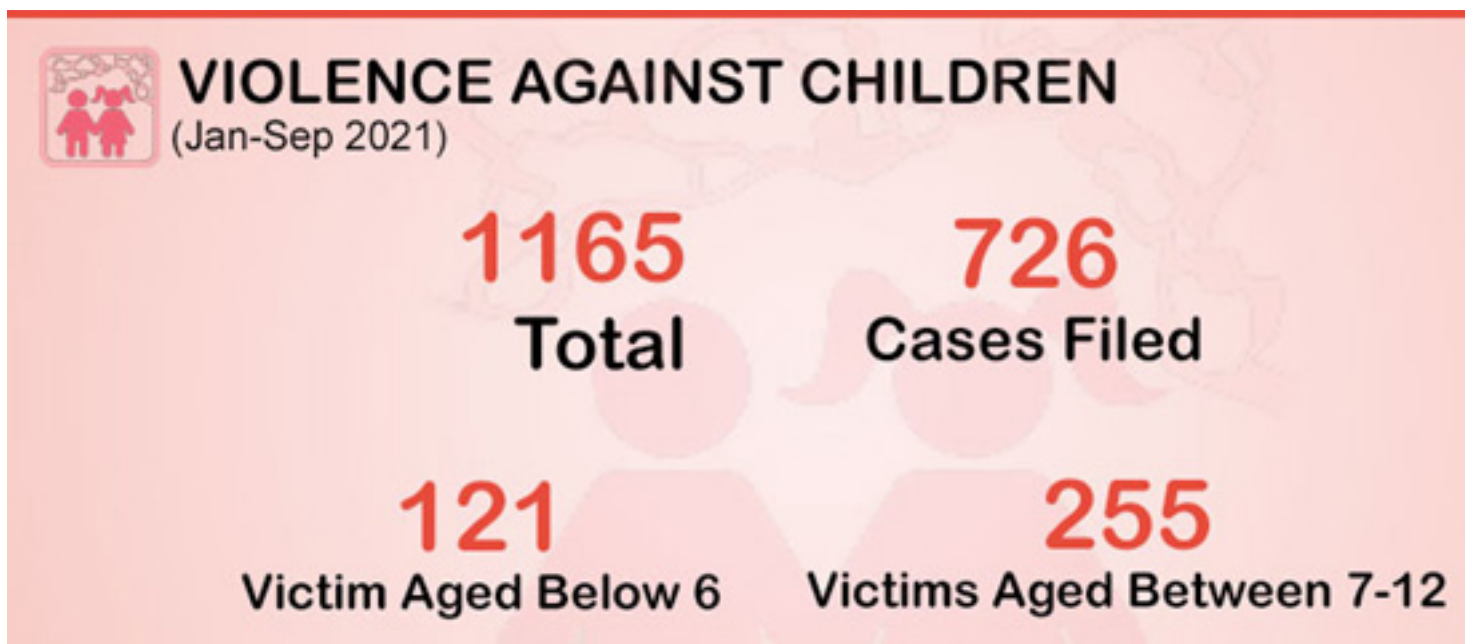
(c) *The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached* (UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, 2011, p. 1).

Most importantly, Bangladesh lacks respect and proper enforcement for the ILO and UN conventions that have already

been ratified. For example, *The Diplomat* published a report stating that on 8 July 2021 afternoon, a fire broke out on the ground floor of the renowned Hashem Food & Beverages factory at Rupganj, an industrial district on the outskirts of Bangladesh's capital city. The reason for the fire was the illegal storage of chemicals and plastics. Hashem Food & Beverages factory fires killed at least 50 workers in which a number of under-aged and relatively young children were employed. According to *The Diplomat*, the age of some of these children were: (12), Takiya (14), Munna (14), Nazmul (15), Mahmud (15), Kompa (16), Himu (16), Ripon (17), and Taslima (17), in addition to many more (Anjum, 2021 cited in *The Diplomat*). So, what ILO, BGMEA, Bangladesh Government claim about child labour elimination in Bangladesh is inaccurate (see Ahamed, 2013; Lau & Chan, 2021; Hiba, Jentsch & Zink, 2021).

On the other hand, the actual child labour condition can be understood from Ain o Shalish Kendro (ASK), a Bangladeshi legal aid organisation. According to their information, between 2008 and 2011, 2709 cases were published in the various national newspapers in Bangladesh on violence against domestic workers, including 729 children (cited in Rezvi, 2017). However, Chart Two reflects the statistics of violence on children between January and September 2021 in Bangladesh, which is more vigorous than the previous statistics, and this is alarming. Thus, it has been a fundamental question whether ratification of any ILO conventions is enough to stop any forms of exploitation, injuries and death of a child worker in Bangladesh? Bangladesh Government has shown demotivation to respect the national Labour Act and the ILO conventions. At the same time, employers in various informal economic sectors have the same mentality as the government and show disrespect to the national Labour Act and the ILO conventions. From time to time, the ILO is constantly witnessing all these things, but it has hardly been able to stop all these atrocities in Bangladesh. However, scholars, e.g., Deva (2012), still argue that the state must show political or social commitments to respect the UN conventions that were created to save humans from adverse calamities, which is absent in Bangladesh.

Chart Two: Violence against children between January and September 2021 in Bangladesh



Source: Ain o Shalish Kendro (ASK) (2021).

Critical discussions

Child labour is a crime, and it is a serious social problem for states that lack adequate policies to control it; therefore a country like Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world, child labour has still not come under control. Countries like Bangladesh deliberately violate the ILO Convention and the National Labour or Child Act, which seriously prevents the control of child labour. Scholars, such as Ospina and Roser (2016), argue that child labour is particularly problematic because it significantly interferes with children's development and schooling. But the question is, if the state and other social organisations fail to provide the children's basic requirements that they might have needed for a living, what do they have to do to survive. In some states, as discussed earlier, mainly in economically disadvantaged countries, parents have no choice but to allow their children to work for a living so that they can at least manage their livelihoods. The lack of proper social security for citizens in some states exacerbates the child labour situation that is now significantly taking place in Bangladesh (see Ahmed & Ray 2014; Islam & Akther, 2015; ADRA, 2019).

The global political-economic policy aimed to bring a new dogma on international trade since the 1980s by introducing neo-liberalism through corporate globalisation. Scholars argue that it was a political agenda that vastly served capitalists rather than marginalised people worldwide (see Harvey, 2007; Munck, 2010; Ullah 2021, Hiba, Jentsch, & Zink, 2021). International organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF have played a significant role to make globalisation more potent and operative, but WTO and its free trade agreement between the member states was the turning point for the rapid expansion of globalisation in the world (see Harvey, 2007; Rahman, 2013; Ullah, 2021; Aked, 2021). Globalisation aimed to reduce income inequality between developed and developing countries and alienate the exploitation of workers, but it did not happen (Harvey, 2007; Rahman, 2013; Ullah, 2021). On the contrary, more child labourers are now being employed worldwide in manufacturing hubs, where they are given low wages and forced to work in unhealthy and dangerous production hubs, and Bangladesh is no exception (Lau & Chan, 2021). From several international studies, it has been identified that child labourers are still significantly employed in most of Bangladesh's dangerous informal economic sector, but employers, the ILO and the state government continue to make negligible progress in child labour eradication policy from the most precarious industries in Bangladesh (ADRA, 2019; UNICEF, 2021).

On the other hand, globalisation has lessened ILO's effectiveness in its social programs, mainly in controlling workers' exploitation worldwide (see Rodgers, et al., 2009; Munck, 2010). Scholars still argue that the ILO, as a labour organisation, lacks enforcement power which is the major obstacle for this organisation to obtain any significant and constructive results on many issues such as workers exploitation etc. (see Standing, 2008; Rodgers et al., 2009). Nevertheless, ILO has created many international conventions and recommendations that are essential for the member state to follow and respect while enforcement is the final step. For example, Juan Somavia, the former ILO director General in 1919 introduced "*Decent Work*", which is defined as the "*convergence of four interdependent strategic objectives encompassing rights at work, employment, social protection, and social dialog*" (ILO, 1999, cited in Hiba, Jentsch & Zink, 2021, p. 148). ILO's "*Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation*" was introduced

in 2008, though it was too late. Again, in 2011, ILO announced "*Making Globalisation Socially Sustainable*". But the question that has been very fundamental now to ask ILO is whether globalisation has socially been sustainable or not. Global supply chains still hunt cheap corporate labour in low regulated countries and make robust profits from workers' exploitation (see Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; Rahman, 2019; Ullah, 2021). Thus, the fundamental question is whether the ILO is still strong enough to fight globalisation and capitalism. Ratifying and respecting the ILO convention on controlling and eliminating child labour from dangerous industries and their exploitation is essential. However, the fundamental question is whether the ILO, as a UN body, can still raise this issue vigorously in the UN General Assembly and give state members a piece of critical advice on ratifying ILO conventions and respecting and enforcing the country's Labour and Child Labour Acts.

On the other hand, in 2020, Bangladesh has made moderate progress in its efforts to eradicate the worst forms of child labour, but the question is whether that is enough. The government has extended the implementation period of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour from 2021 to 2025. The Ministry of Labour and Employment has also drafted an update on the list of dangerous jobs. In addition, the government has formed and funded seven anti-trafficking organisations in individual tribunals to handle human trafficking cases. Unfortunately, all these steps were not stopping the exploitation of children and child labour in Bangladesh. For example, eradicating underage prostitution, another common form of child labour, should also be a government priority in Bangladesh. The earlier report of the National Child Labour Survey report 2015 showed that about 1.2 million children (see ILO, n.d.) are still trapped in their worst form in different informal sectors in Bangladesh. The recent report of Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2020) revealed that forced child labour is still found in different informal economic sectors in Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh enacted the Labour Act in 2006, including a chapter on child labour with special clauses to stop child labour, but it has not been well enforced in Bangladesh (see Ahamed, 2013). The new Act prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14 and dangerous forms of child labour for persons under 18. Children 12 years of age or older may engage in 'light work' that does not pose risks to their mental and physical development and interfere with their education. However, such provisions were written only in the Act and were rarely implemented in Bangladesh (see Afrin, 2014; Lau & Chan, 2021). Scholars such as Ahamed (2013) and Lau and Chan (2021) still argue that Bangladesh is a country where the worst forms of child labour are severely apparent. Hence, the fundamental question is whether the Bangladesh Government ought to take necessary and significant steps to stop child labour and ensure affordable children's attendance at school.

Directions for future research

This article should be considered a guideline for conducting empirical research to investigate further the cause of extreme child labour in some sectors, e.g., scrap metal, leather, dry-fish, RMG, transportation and construction industries in Bangladesh. It is necessary to understand Bangladesh Government's and ILO's views when other crucial stakeholders are also to be conducted to know more specifically why child labour in Bangladesh is still considerably high and how it can be reduced.

Recommendations and conclusions

Child labour is a stigma for the state and the capitalists, who are primarily responsible for producing the worst forms of child labour as modern slaves in the world. Child labour was man-made, so the problem should be solved by humans as well. Children are the nation's future leaders; their minds and bodies should substantially be built to face any adverse calamities in the world. Hence, parents, society, and mainly state governments' responsibility is very high. Moreover, the world community, especially international organisations such as the ILO, WTO, IMF, the World Bank, ADB, IFC and national and international NGOs, should adopt a unified strategy to eradicate child labour in Bangladesh and other countries. Child labour needs to be strictly prohibited following trade sanctions on those states that place child labour seriously in hazardous industries. Nevertheless, state governments should be held accountable for safeguarding and securing a bright future for the new generation for their country and the world. Most importantly, the Bangladesh Government must establish a social security scheme to provide financial aid to families that need support to manage their livelihoods without sending their children to jobs. Above all, to protect children's rights, Bangladesh must implement the National Labour Act, the ILO and the UN conventions and adopt more effective strategies to work with other essential stakeholders to eradicate child labour in Bangladesh.

References and further reading

- ACTUWORKSITE. (n.d). The history of child labour: from farm to factory. Retrieved from <http://worksite.actu.org.au/history-child-labour-farm-factory/>
- ADRA. (2019). Child Labor in Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://www.adrabangladesh.org/single-post/2019/12/19/Child-Labor-in-Bangladesh>
- Afrin, S. (2014). Labour condition in the apparel industry of Bangladesh: Is Bangladesh Labour Law 2006 enough? *Development Country Studies*, 4(11), pp. 70-78.
- Afrin, S. (2021). Lead poisoning and child labour: Bangladesh has a long way to go. *Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2021/10/27/lead-poisoning-and-child-labour-bangladesh-has-a-long-way-to-go>
- Ahamed, F. (2013). Child labour and Bangladesh: To what extent can Bangladesh remove child labour particularly in the Bangladesh Ready-made Garment (RMG) sector?. *International NGO Journal*, 8(2), 31-37.
- Ahlquist, J.S., & Mosley, L. (2020). Firm participation in voluntary regulatory initiatives: The Accord, Alliance, and US garment importers from Bangladesh. *The Review of International Organizations*, pp. 1-27.
- Ahmed, S., & Ray, R. (2014). Health consequences of child labour in Bangladesh. *Demographic Research*, 30, 111-150.
- Ahsan, N. (2018). What has changed since the Spectrum disaster? *The Daily Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/interviews/what-has-changed-the-spectrum-disaster-1560922>.
- Ain o Shalish Kendro (ASK). (2021). Violence against children (Jan-Sep 2021). Retrieved from <http://www.askbd.org/ask/2021/10/07/violence-against-children-jan-sep-2021/>
- Aked, J. (2021). Supply Chains, the Informal Economy, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour. *Alamgir, F., & Banerjee, S. B. (2019). Contested compliance regimes in global production networks: Insights from the Bangladesh garment industry. Human Relations*, 72(2), 272-297.
- Aldrich, M. (1997). *Safety first: Technology, labour, and business in the building of American work safety, 1870-1939* (Vol. 13). JHU Press.
- Alli, B. O. (2008). *Fundamental principles of occupational health and safety* Second edition. Geneva, International Labour Organization, 15, 2008.
- Amin, S., Quayes, M. S., & Rives, J. M. (2004). Poverty and other determinants of child labor in Bangladesh. *Southern Economic Journal*, 876-892.
- Anjum, S. (2021). Factory Fire Reveals Bangladesh's child labor problem. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/factory-fire-reveals-bangladeshs-child-labor-problem/>
- Ashadullah, M. (2020). An empirical analysis of the competitiveness of the Bangladesh readymade garment sector: the impact of the MFA phase-out and the Rana Plaza collapse on export competitiveness. *Policy Science*, 28(1), 79-95.
- Ashraf, H., & Prentice, R. (2019). Beyond factory safety: Labor unions, militant protest, and the accelerated ambitions of Bangladesh's export garment industry. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 43(1), pp. 93-107.
- Ashwin, S., Kabeer, N., & Schuessler, E. (2020). Contested understandings in the global garment industry after Rana Plaza. *Development and Change*, 51(5), 1296-1305.
- Baccini, L., & Koenig-Archibugi, M. (2014). Why do states commit to international labor standards? Interdependent ratification of core ILO conventions, 1948–2009. *World Politics*, 66(3), 446-490.
- Bair, J., Anner, M., & Blasi, J. (2020). The political economy of private and public regulation in post-Rana Plaza Bangladesh. *ILR Review*, 0019793920925424.
- Bakkar, A. (2019). *Situation of Rural Child Labour in Bangladesh: A Study in Two Upazillas* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Dhaka).
- Barua, U., Wiersma, J.W.F., & Ansary, M.A. (2018). Safety in RMG sector: Performance and progress of DIFE after Rana Plaza. In: Wiersma, J.W.F. E., Ansary, M.A, Ahsan, R. ed. *Safety in Garment Industry, five years after Rana Plaza*, pp. 2-11.
- Beaubien, J. (2016). Study: Child laborers in Bangladesh are working 64 Hours a week. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/12/07/504681046/study-child-laborers-in-bangladesh-are-working-64-hours-a-week>
- BGMEA. (n.d.). About garment industry of Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://www.bgmea.com.bd/page/AboutGarmentsIndustry>
- BKMEA. (n.d). BKMEA at a glance. Retrieved from <https://new.bkmea.com/about-us/bkmea-at-a-glance/>
- Brown, G. (2018). Global capitalism undermines progress in workplace safety in Bangladesh's garment industry. *The Daily Star*.

- Brown, G. (2018). Global capitalism undermines progress in workplace safety in Bangladesh's garment industry. *The Daily Star*.
- Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. (n.d). Kalpona Akter. Retrieved from <https://eca.state.gov/ivlpparticipants/kalpona-akter>
- Bureau of International Labor Affairs. (2020). Child labor and forced labor reports: Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/bangladesh>
- Campaign, C. C. (2019). Six years after deadly garment factory fire, Bangladesh risks new wave of factory incidents. Retrieved from <https://cleanclothes.org/news/2018/11/24/tazreen-fashions-6-years>
- Dayio-lu Tayfur, M. (2013). Impact of unpaid household services on the measurement of child labor.
- Deva, S. (2012). Guiding principles on business and human rights: Implications for companies. *European Company Law* 9(2), pp.101-109.
- Douglas, W. A., Ferguson, J. P., & Klett, E. (2004). An effective confluence of forces in support of workers' rights: ILO standards, US trade laws, unions, and NGOs. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 273-299.
- Fishback, P. V., & Kantor, S. E. (2007). A prelude to the welfare state: The origins of workers' compensation. University of Chicago Press.
- Gilbert, P. R. (2018). Class, complicity, and capitalist ambition in Dhaka's elite enclaves. *Focaal*, 81(43-57).
- Glaeser, E. L., & Shleifer, A. (2003). The rise of the regulatory state. *Journal of economic literature*, 41(2), 401-425.
- Haque, A., & Gopalakrishnan, K. (2019). Bangladesh targets \$50 billion in RMG exports by 2021. *The Textile Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiantextilemagazine.in/bangladesh-targets-50-billion-rmg-exports-by-2021/>
- Haque, M. (2018). Workers at 3,000 subcontracting RMG units in danger. *The Newage* Retrieved from <http://www.newagebd.net/article/39148/workers-at-3000-subcontracting-rmg-units-in-danger>
- Harvey, D. (2007). A brief history of neoliberalism. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Hasan, J. (2013). The competitiveness of ready-made garments industry of Bangladesh in post MFA era: How does the industry behave to face the competitive challenge?. *Journal of Economics, Management and Trade*, pp.296-306.
- Head, M. (2018). Accelerating concentration of wealth in Australia. *World Socialist Web Site*. Retrieved from <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/01/29/ineq-j29.html>
- Helfer, L. R. (2006). Understanding change in international organisations: globalisation and innovation in the ILO, *Vanderbilt Law Review*, 59 Vand. L. Rev. 649.
- Henry, C.D. (2011). The committee on the application of standards of the international labour conference: a dynamic and impact build on decades of dialogue and persuasion / International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO
- Henry, C.D. (ed.) (2009). Rules of the game: a brief introduction to international labour standards. ISBN 978-92-2-122183-8 (webpdf)
- Hiba, J. C., Jentsch, M., & Zink, K. J. (2021). Globalization and working conditions in international supply chains. *Zeitschrift für Arbeitswissenschaft*, 75(2), 146-154.
- History. Com Editors (2009). Child labour. Retrieved from Child Labor - Laws, Definition & Industrial Revolution - HISTORY
- Human Rights Watch. (2013). Bangladesh: Amended labor law falls short. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/15/bangladesh-amended-labor-law-falls-short>.
- Human Rights Watch. (2016). Kalpona Akter, Bangladesh 2016 Recipient of the Alison Des Forges Award for Extraordinary Activism. Retrieved from Kalpona Akter, Bangladesh | Human Rights Watch (hrw.org)
- Humanium. (n.d.). Convention 182 on The Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999. Retrieved from <https://www.humanium.org/en/child-labour-convention/#:~:text=Convention%20182%20on%20The%20Worst%20Forms%20of%20Child,1999%20in%20Geneva.%20The%20origins%20of%20Convention%20182>
- ILO. (2021). WHO/ILO: Almost 2 million people die from work-related causes each year. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_819705/lang-en/index.htm
- ILO. (n.d). How international labour standards are created. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/introduction-to-international-labour-standards/international-labour-standards-creation/lang-en/index.htm>
- ILO. (n.d.). Child Labour in Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Areasofwork/child-labour/lang-en/index.htm>
- ILO. (n.d.). What is child labour? Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang-en/index.htm>
- Inspireeducation. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.inspireeducation.net.au/blog/a-short-history-of-occupational-health-and-safety-with-videos/>
- International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021. License: CC BY 4.0.
- Islam, F., & Akhter, G. A. (2015). Child abuse in Bangladesh. *Ibrahim Medical College Journal*, 9(1), 18-21.
- Islam, M. A., & McPhail, K. (2011). Regulating for corporate human rights abuses: The emergence of corporate reporting on the ILO's human rights standards within the global garment manufacturing and retail industry. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 22(8), 790-810.
- Kleeberg, J. M. (2003). From strict liability to workers' compensation: The Prussian Railroad Law, the German Liability Act, and the introduction of Bismarck's accident insurance in Germany, 1838-1884. *NYUJ Int'l. L. & Pol.*, 36, 53.
- Labowitz, S. (2016). New data on the number of factories in Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://bhr.stern.nyu.edu/blogs/-data-on-number-of-factories-bd>
- Lau, Y. Y., & Chan, E. M. H. (2021). Exploratory Study on Preventive Measures to Prevent Child Labour Exploitation in Belt and Road Countries from Perspective of Fashion Industry. 15(6), 462-494.

- Naeem, Z., Shaikat, F., & Ahmed, Z. (2011). Child labor in relation to poverty. *International journal of health sciences*, 5(2 Suppl 1), 48.
- Ospina, E.O., & Roser, M. (2016) - "Child Labor". Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from: 'https://ourworldindata.org/child-labor'
- Powell, J. (2019). 8 facts about child labor in Bangladesh. Retrieved from <https://borgenproject.org/child-labor-in-bangladesh/>
- Rahman, S. (2013). Broken promises of globalisation: The case study of the Bangladesh garment industry. Lexington Books
- Rahman, S. (2015). The compliance of labour regulations by TNCs in Bangladesh — a host state's perspective, Issue 3, *European Journal of Law and Political Sciences*, pp. 66-75.
- Rahman, S. (2019). Post-Rana Plaza responses: Changing role of the Bangladeshi government. In *Labor, Global Supply Chains, and the Garment Industry in South Asia* (pp. 131-148). Routledge.
- Rahman, S., & Ishty, S. I. (2020). COVID-19 and the ready-made garment sector. Retrieved from <https://www.policyforum.net/covid-19-and-the-ready-made-garment-sector/>
- Rahman, S., & Yadlapalli, A. (2021). Years after the Rana Plaza tragedy, Bangladesh's garment workers are still bottom of the pile. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/years-after-the-rana-plaza-tragedy-bangladeshs-garment-workers-are-still-bottom-of-the-pile-159224>
- Rezvi, M.R. (2017). Child labour in Bangladesh. The Daily Observer. Retrieved from <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=81370>
- RMG Bangladesh. (2021). Bangladesh's leather industry has a child labour problem. Retrieved from <https://rmgbd.net/2021/07/bangladeshs-leather-industry-has-a-child-labour-problem/>
- Rodgers, G., Lee, E., Swepston, L., & Van Daele, J. (2009). The International Labour Organization and the quest for social justice, 1919-2009. Book Samples, 53.
- Saxena, S. B. (2019). Introduction: How do we understand the Rana Plaza disaster and what needs to be done to prevent future tragedies. In *Labor, Global Supply Chains, and the Garment Industry in South Asia* (pp. 1-18). Routledge.
- Sehnbruch, K., Burchell, B., Agloni, N., & Piasna, A. (2015). Human development and decent work: why some concepts succeed and others fail to make an impact. *Development and Change*, 46(2), 197-224.
- Shafiqul, I. M. (2014). Informal labor Incentives and Firm Performance: a case study of RMG industry in Bangladesh. *International Business and Management*, 8(2), 19-27.
- Siddiqi, D. M. (2015). Starving for justice: Bangladeshi garment workers in a 'post-Rana Plaza' world. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 87, 165-173.
- Standing, G. (2008). The ILO: An agency for globalisation? *Development and Change*, 39(3), 355-384.
- Siddiqi, D.M. (2019). Spaces of exception: National interest and the labor of sedition. In: Saxena, S.B. ed., 2019. *Labor, Global Supply Chains, and the Garment Industry in South Asia* (pp. 100-114). Routledge.
- Ullah, A. ASM. (2015). Garment industry in Bangladesh: an era of globalisation and neo-liberalisation, *Middle East Journal of Business*, 10(2), pp. 14-26.
- Ullah, A. ASM. (2016). The impact of free-market economy or neo-liberalisation on labour: evidence from the garment export sector in Bangladesh. *Middle East Journal of Business*, 11(2), 38-44.
- Ullah, A. ASM. (2018). The ILO: An agency for globalisation or humanity? *Daily Observer*. Retrieved from <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=122608>
- Ullah, A. ASM. (2020). The lack of political will to address OHS. *The Business Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/lack-political-will-address-ohs-136078>
- Ullah, A. ASM. (2020). The moral obligation of the global supply chains during the pandemic. *The Business Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/moral-obligation-global-supply-chains-during-pandemic-124840>
- Ullah, A. A. (2021). Covid-19: The role of global clothing brands/retailers in vaccinating and providing financial aid to the RMG workers in Bangladesh. *Middle East Journal of Business*, 16(2), 5-11.
- Ullah, A. ASM., & Amanullah, ASM. (2021). Vaccinating RMG workers in Bangladesh: Why it's urgent and how international brands can help. *The Business Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/vaccinating-rmg-workers-bangladesh-why-its-urgent-and-how-international-brands-can-help>
- Ullah, A. ASM., & Hasan, M. K. (2020). Occupational health and safety culture. 7 July, *The Daily Observer*. Retrieved from [Occupational health and safety culture – Op-Ed – observerbd.com](https://www.observerbd.com)
- Ullah, A. ASM. (2020). 7th anniversary of Rana Plaza tragedy: Who should and can be held responsible? *The Daily Observer*. Retrieved from <https://www.observerbd.com/details.php?id=254605>
- UNICEF. (2021). Child labour rises to 160 million – first increase in two decades. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/child-labour-rises-160-million-first-increase-two-decades>