

## ***'One crore children involved in hazardous work in Bangladesh'***

BMSF, Dhaka: May 6, 2007:

About one crore children, that is 23.5 percent of total population in Bangladesh, are involved in hazardous work, reveals a study on April 30, 2007 at Dhaka.

The study also reveals that 40 percent children of the country aged between five and 17 years work casually or to earn some money while 24 percent children are forced to work to earn their livelihood.

The statistics were disclosed at a press conference at the Cirdap auditorium in the capital city in Bangladesh.

Save the Children, UK and Human Development Research Centre (HDRC) jointly conducted the study on 345 households in mostly poverty-stricken areas of Dhaka, Khulna and Kurigram.

Terming poverty the main reason of children's involvement in hazardous jobs, Prof Abul Barkat of department of Economics, Dhaka University said the social structure, which hinders poverty reduction, is still prevailing due to lack of political commitment.

"Almost one crore children of the total population are engaged in hazardous jobs and it is quite inhuman that 60 percent of them said that they were happy with this status attributing it to their birth in the poor family," he said.

As child labour cannot be eliminated right away due to the existing social structure, we should have separate wage scale for the child labourers in order to protect their rights, Barkat added.

In the survey titled 'Prevalence of Child Labour in Harmful Work', it was suggested that comprehensive measures should be taken to increase income of some targeted poor segments of households and raise their awareness so that they support their children's schooling at least up to completion of primary level.

The suggestions also include use of protective equipments, regulations concerning procedures and safety practices to control occupational health hazards and to lessen the degree of harm in child labour.

In another study titled 'Prevalence of Violence and Abuse Against Children', it was revealed that children are often victims of verbal and physical abuse and even the parents and teachers sometimes torture them.

The study recommended that the traditional notion of the virtue of physical punishment should be replaced by counselling and psychotherapy for the children.

It was also suggested that awareness of the society against eve-teasing, early marriage and dowry should be raised.

Stressing the need for fair politics, Justice Muhammad Golam Rabbani said the governing system should be changed and the children's issues should be prioritised.

This programme seems to be a mourning session where we came to know that around one

crore children are engaged in hazardous jobs who are the future of the nation, he added.

Among others UM Habibun Nessa, Suman Sengupta, Munir Ahmed of Save the Children UK, Ronald E Berghuys of International Labour Organisation (ILO) and child representatives were also present.

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