

Range of earnings

The earnings of the children vary greatly from trade to trade and also from city to city. There are jobs which receive daily rates, others weekly rates and others receive monthly wages. The amounts mentioned range from 8 Taka's per day to 500 Taka's per month.

From FGD's with NFE Project 3 HTR Learner's in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna conducted by Protikriti Communications –

Children's Income –

(From Dhaka) For girls the payment for domestic help ranges from Taka 100-900 per month.

(From Rajshahi) For domestic help some of them get monthly payments and others get daily payments. Monthly payment ranges from Taka 100-300 and daily payment ranges from Taka 3-10.

(From Chittagong) The payment for domestic help ranges from Taka 7-20 per day. The payment for breaking bricks ranges from Taka 20-50 per day.

(From Khulna) The earning for domestic help ranged from Taka 100-800 per month and Taka 4-7 per day.

From FGD's in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna conducted by Data Management Aid –

Children's Income –

Daily – Varied from Tk.3 to Tk.50 per day in wide range of jobs

Waste picker boys and girls earned between Tk.5 to Tk.30 per day. Hotel boys earned Tk.3-27 per day in addition to food and breakfast. Some of them worked for food only and no salary. Tiffin carrier boys earned Tk.3-20 per day. Vendor boys and girls earned Tk.10-50 per day. Tempo helpers of Rajshahi earned Tk.10-22 while those from Dhaka earned Tk.20-90 per day with one meal. The shop workers earned between Tk.7 to Tk.50 per day. The brick chippers, which include both boys and girls, earned Tk.15-30 per day. The rickshaw garage workers were paid between Tk.20-40 per day and the fish porters Tk.10-40 per day

Weekly –

The welding helpers earned Tk.20-400 per week. A lot works only for food and no salary

Monthly – Domestic earned Tk.60 to Tk.200 per month

Hazardous work:

What the children considered to be hazardous work varied. Some included activities like wiping floor, fetching water, hawking. For most it meant activities where they could hurt themselves such as working near a fire (e.g. cooking), working with sharp objects (e.g. chopping vegetables), grating spices, breaking bricks, etc. It also included hard work like carrying weights, pulling carts and welding.

Generally the children feel that it is up to them to avoid getting hurt or injured. The protection measures that they mentioned were mainly being more careful and attentive, so as not to get hurt. The children felt that the solution to their problems lay in better mastering the skills required for the job so that they would not get hurt. Some of the children seemed to have knowledge about protective measures such as gloves or protective goggles for the eyes but did not use them.

Girls in occupations such as brick chipping said that they felt that the work was hazardous and they were exposed to people on the streets and mastans. The domestic workers spoke of the various risks they faced and also said that they considered many of the tasks to be hazardous to their health and well being. The girls doing brick chipping had said that they felt this to be safer than even vending in the sense that they could be with their families and outside people would not be able to bother them (even if the work itself was more arduous).

Verbal abuse:

The children are often subjected to verbal abuse, both by their parents and their employers. They also mention being scolded by the teachers at school. Some of it is because of mistakes they make or because they have been disobedient. This makes them very unhappy and resentful. The children are very sensitive to being disciplined in front of others.

When talking about the negative sides of school the children mentioned that they did not like it when the teacher scolded them or used abusive language towards them. The worst would be when they were punished for mistakes and sent home. This they found to be most humiliating and even worse would be when the parents found out that they were sent home as a punishment. Then there would be further scolding from the parents.

Derogatory behaviour:

Employers and customers would call the children bad names or names like “Chheri” or “pichhi”. This they resent a lot. They also don’t like being called a domestic worker (kajer meye) in front of others. This hurts their pride and their self-esteem.

Beatings

Some of the children are subjected to beatings at the workplace and at home. Girls mentioned feeling ashamed if they are beaten in front of their brothers, fathers or strangers. Boys and girls feel very bad about being beaten and also when their siblings are beaten. They themselves sometimes beat their younger brothers and sisters but later feel bad about it.

Sexual abuse

Most of the children seem familiar with the issue, although they did not talk about it. This is probably due to the circumstances not being “comfortable” enough for them to open up. Sexual abuse can take place in three locations: at the workplace, at home and in public places e.g. on the way to work or on the way home. This highlights the fact that the home is not safer than the “outside” for girls. Also the findings also make it clear that boys are also very much at risk. The children feel very upset, uncomfortable and humiliated by such experiences. In some cases they were able to take action so that such incidences did not occur again, in many other cases they did not seem to know how to prevent them taking place. Particularly this may be so for the cases when the perpetrator is the boss or other older co-workers, where they fear punishment if they complain.

At the workplace girls, as domestic workers, are vulnerable to their employers as well as the employers’ visitors and relatives. Boys living with their employers are vulnerable to advances from the employers and other older workers. Even apart from “live-in” situations, both boys and girls at the workplace are sometimes faces with sexual abuse by the employers or other workers. In some cases the girls complained to the employers (if the other workers were bothering her) and action was taken (firing the other worker).

At home some of the girls reported receiving unwelcome advances from other relatives or neighbours. They were able to tell their mothers about it and she then helped them avoid the person concerned. Interestingly, some of the boys also mentioned few incidences at home, concerning advances by their relatives.

Due to previous experiences of sexual abuse, threats of abuse or abusive language by people on the street, the parents of some of the working girls curtails their movements, send a brother to accompany them to work, or put them into employment where the parents can keep an eye on them (e.g. brick chipping where the family can work together). Girls whose occupations entail being out on the streets, such as waste pickers and vendors are even more exposed and are often approached for prostitution. The waste pickers are socially looked down upon and are often also regarded as thieves.

Boys too are exposed to indecent exposure by older men and strangers. There were also stories of boys being accosted by total strangers and subjected to humiliating treatment. Unlike the girls, the boys did not seem to have special protection against such incidences. Perhaps this is due to the fact that such risks are less well recognized for boys.

Harassment by police and mastans:

Vendors and small traders routinely face problems from the police and mastans. The flower vendors, for example, are often harassed by the police. Some of the young boys would sometimes feel at risk because of the “political” activities carried out by the local “muscle men”, who would try to “recruit the boys for various activities.

They also shared the negative sides of work. The scolding and abusive language of the employer at times made them feel like leaving the job. At times they were slapped or even hit by the employer. But they shared they kept quiet and shed tears silently cause talking back would only worsen the situation. They unnecessarily faced such verbal abuse in the streets for not being able to manage the man pulled non-machine vehicles among the automobiles in the streets or for domestic work if by accident they broke anything. The children shared that they have their own way and strategies of getting the their wishes fulfilled. If the employer didn't allow them to take

Negative sides of Work

They also shared the negative sides of work. The scolding and abusive language of the employer at times demoralized them. The worst humiliation would be when the employer scolded them in front of others. The other negative side they shared was when work hampers their education. Due to workload at time they could not go to school. It so happened that even the employer prevented them from going to work. When asked how this could be addressed some of them shared while joining the job they had discussed that they would need a break to go to school. So they faced no problem regarding this from the employer.

These young children are naïve at heart. They realize that stealing is bad but shared that they did steal at times and it felt bad when they were caught for that. The shame and the humiliation from this effected their self-esteem. They also realized that they were working children but it was a pressure on them when they were forced do thing against their will. Though young they knew what their responsibilities involved. But they shared they were not allowed to accomplish their work according to their wish. This hurt them a lot. The following bar graph shows the way they ranked the negative sides of work.

Hazardous Jobs

Yes they recognized the importance of work but at the same time felt that they were involved in **hazardous jobs**. They mentioned **breaking bricks** may cause damage to the fingers and for that a rubber made finger glove could be worn. Chips of brick may jump into eye and cause harm. Almost all the groups considered **welding** as a hazardous job.

They felt these were inappropriate for children. Here they mentioned protective glass for the eye may help the situation for welding. Similarly working as a *motor mechanic or workshop helper* was also considered as hazardous work and being careful was the only way they could continue to be involved in these jobs. They said working chemical and with acid inappropriate for children. *Acid is used in the jewelry shop and for car battery*. They felt if one had to continue with such jobs all that could be done would be to remain very careful. They also said if acid went into the eye then that would destroy the vision. They also *carrying heavy load or bricks up the stairs* were hazardous jobs for children and they should not come into such jobs. They said here, selling flowers, nuts or water are not hazardous work. One girl said, “Even if these bring less money they felt it was better to do these jobs (*Jukipuro Kaaj Kora Motae Uchit Na. Er Chaite Pani, Badam, Full Becha Bhalo*).” Not many housework was considered as hazardous. *Going up the stairs and getting the dried clothes from the roof* was considered as hazardous. They felt this was dangerous

Negative sides of work

They also shared the negative sides of work. Work is the source of earning and thus food. So even though in the initial stages of job life the *scolding and abusive language of the employer* at times made them feel like leaving the job they ultimately continued to work. At times they were slapped or even hit by the employer. But they shared they kept quiet and shed tears silently because if they talked back then they would lose their job. The *Discriminatory attitude of the employer* hurt them seriously. They felt bad when they did *not get any customer* for their van only because they were small. They felt bad when vendors had to shout aloud to sell the product in hot day. But at the end of the day, work pays much in life that it takes them back to the work place for another day. On the other hand it is important to notice the children stated more negative sides of work than the negative sides of school. These young children are naïve at heart. They realize that stealing is bad but shared that they did steal at times and it felt bad when they were caught for that. The shame and the humiliation from this effected their self-esteem. The following table shows the main issues the respondents identified as negative sides of work and how they ranked them.

Hazardous jobs

Yes they recognized the importance of work but at the same time felt that they were involved in **hazardous jobs**. They mentioned *breaking bricks* may cause damage to the fingers and for that a rubber made finger glove could be worn. They considered *welding and pushing cart or van* in the street to be hazardous jobs. They felt these were inappropriate for children. Here they mentioned protective glass for the eye may help the situation for welding. But for the streets they felt they could only be more careful while pushing a cart. Similarly working as a *motor mechanic or workshop helper* were also considered as hazardous jobs and being careful was the only way they could continue to be involved in these jobs. One boy was involved in collecting bricks from under the water. When the brick full of boat comes to riverbank and brick is unloaded from it some bricks get dropped into the water. This boy's job was to dive into the water *fetch the*

brick. For every brick he received one Taka. But he, said he felt this was a hazardous job. Girls mentioned children should not be asked to *cook* as this is close to fire. This they mentioned could cause any mishap.

Negative sides of Work

They also shared the negative sides of work. The scolding and abusive language of the employer at times demoralized them. The worst humiliation would be when the employer scolded them in front of others. The other negative side they shared was when work hampers their education. Due to workload at time they became tired but it felt bad when he refused give them a break or leave from work. They also realized that they were working children but it was a pressure on them when they were forced do thing against their will. Though young they knew what their responsibilities involved. But they shared they were not allowed to accomplish their work according to their wish. This hurt them a lot. At the same time they felt bad if they failed to accomplish a given task. For domestic help and also in the workshops if the respondents had broken something accidentally then they would be beaten up. The following

Hazardous Jobs

Yes they recognized the importance of work but at the same time felt that they were involved in **hazardous jobs**. They mentioned ***breaking bricks*** may cause damage to the fingers and for that a rubber made finger glove could be worn. Chips of brick may jump into eye and cause harm. Almost all the groups considered ***welding*** as a hazardous job. They felt these were inappropriate for children. Here they mentioned protective glass for the eye may help the situation for welding. Similarly working as a ***motor mechanic or workshop helper*** was also considered as hazardous work and being careful was the only way they could continue to be involved in these jobs. They said working chemical and with acid inappropriate for children. They also ***carrying heavy load or bricks up the stairs*** were hazardous jobs for children and they should not come into such jobs. They considered ***jobs where electricity was used*** as to be hazardous. Like during repairing a refrigerator electric shock may cause harm to children. They said if one was careful and turned off the main switch while working that would lower the risks. They said on the road to be ***helper of tempo (public vehicle like a baby taxi)*** is dangerous. The girls mentioned ***cooking*** would require handling with fire and this was risky. They said this was simply in appropriate for children. They collecting trash was also dangerous for children. At times there are pieces of glass or other risky particles, which could be harmful for children.

Hazardous Jobs

Yes they recognized the importance of work but at the same time felt that they were involved in hazardous jobs. They mentioned breaking bricks may cause damage to the fingers and for that a rubber made finger glove could be worn. Chips of brick may jump into eye and cause harm. Almost all the groups considered welding and pushing cart or van in the street to be hazardous jobs. They felt these were inappropriate for children. Here they mentioned protective glass for the eye may help the situation for

welding. But for the streets they felt they could only be more careful while pushing cart. Similarly working as a motor mechanic or workshop helper was also considered as hazardous work and being careful was the only way they could continue to be involved in these jobs. They said here, selling flowers or beetle leaves are not hazardous work. But these bring very little money. Girls mentioned children should not be asked to cook rice and drain the hot water after cooking (Maar Gala). This they mentioned could cause any mishap.

Negative sides of Work